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The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy

Editor
Todd Donovan

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Editorial

The Promise and Perils of Direct Democracy: An Introduction

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Abstract
Direct democracy promises politics that improve links between citizens and their representatives, and satisfies popular demand for increased engagement. In practice it may fall well short, given limited citizen capacity, poor information from campaigns, and ill-designed processes. The articles here represent the opportunities that direct democracy offers for the study of these promises and perils.

Keywords
comparative politics; deliberation; direct democracy; initiatives; referendums; representation; secondary effects

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

This issue of *Politics and Governance* includes a collection of articles examining direct democracy. The volume demonstrates the broad but by no means exhaustive range of topics and questions associated with referendums, initiatives and public deliberation. Many of the questions asked here—about voting, campaigns, inequality, minority rights, trust, and participation—may apply generally to the study of elections and representation. The context of direct democracy, however, provides a unique lens through which we might view these matters, as direct democracy brings with it a set of promises and perils distinct from representative democracy. The promise may be a politics that satisfies growing popular interest in politics (Tierney, 2012), or increases citizen engagement (Smith & Tolbert, 2004), or provides better links between citizens and their representatives (Altman, 2010). Perils include limited citizen capacity, poor information, and ill-designed processes that may fall well short of filling these promises.

Not long ago direct democracy was seldom considered in the social sciences as the practice of direct democracy was less common. With increased use since the 1970s (Qvortrup, 2018), scholarly attention to direct democracy has also increased. Why more use and attention? Qvortrup (2018, p. 11) suggests that as people demanded more referendums, parties in government responded. Whatever the case, democratic practice and popular expectations changed. Several newer eastern European democracies use referendums regularly, and provisions for use of direct democracy expanded in Europe since 2000 (Colin, 2019). Groups outside of government have long championed the use of initiatives and referendums while established parties were less keen (Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2006). But established parties are less dominant, with newer parties on the left (Podemos), right (UKIP, AfD), and Five Star Movement embracing direct democracy. The 2016 Brexit referendum is an example of the changed context—a polarizing vote on an issue divinding established parties internally, driven by a fringe party having scant representation in Parliament. That was much different than the 1975 UK vote on the Common Market, and certain to receive more academic attention.

Where studies of direct democracy were mostly limited to the American states and Switzerland, articles in this volume demonstrate that although Switzerland and the US continue to provide fertile ground for study, the scope here extends to Columbia, Ireland, Italy, Finland,

Spain, the UK, and beyond. A number of these articles provide cross-national analysis, and most have a focus beyond Switzerland and the US. In addition to geographic breadth, several of these contributions can be seen as part of a third wave of social science literature on direct democracy. Some of the more influential early studies (e.g., Butler & Ranney, 1978; Magelby, 1984) were broad in considering the promise and perils of direct democracy, offering numerous avenues of future study yet with such scope, there was limited empirical analysis of discrete questions. A second wave built on this, with more narrowly focused questions, and greater empirical rigor. These studies expanded our understandings of voter competence, voter decision-making, threats to minority rights, the role of organized interests, the policy consequences of direct democracy, and much more. The 'secondary effects' literature has also expanded since the early 2000s, with empirical studies testing if use of direct democracy could increase political interest, knowledge, trust, participation, and political efficacy (see Dyck & Lascher, 2019, for a review). A third wave of research has been reexamining the assumptions, methods, and conclusions of earlier research on direct democracy.

2. Secondary Effects of Direct Democracy

Three articles in this volume reexamine the promise of secondary, or 'educative' effects of direct democracy. Some of the more frequently cited results from the secondary effects literature is that initiative use increases turnout, and, potentially, trust. Christensen (2019) examines the context of Finland's relatively new agenda initiatives to see if involvement can built trust and finds that signing initiatives may be associated with lower trust—unless the initiative was approved. These results complement the "initiated distrust" findings of Dyck (2009), yet also suggest direct democracy can increase trust in some situations. Motos (2019) uses a much different approach in considering participatory opportunities provided by Podemos in Spain, concluding that Podemos' claims about participatory democracy are not translated into institutions capable of creating educational values associated with political participation. LaCombe and Juelich (2019) report results more consistent with previous studies finding a link between direct democracy and political engagement. They demonstrate that when questions on the ballot are of interest to younger voters in the US, turnout is greater among the young.

3. Popular Interest in Direct Democracy

Two of these articles consider popular interest in direct democracy. Studies have found widespread support for the use of referendums but there is not consensus on what this support reflects. Rojon, Rijken and Klandermans (2019) advance our understanding of this by examining how people respond to different modes of participatory decision making. They find that people have nuanced understandings of participating in public meetings versus binding or non-binding referendums and initiatives. Americans appeared less interested in public meetings than referendums and initiatives, and people in states with binding referendums and initiatives were less supportive of those than people living in states without binding votes. Advisory votes, moreover, may allay some public concerns about some of the perils of public incompetence. Bowler and Donovan (2019) consider public attitudes about direct democracy in Europe in terms what people might expect from referendums, and how people perceive that referendums are actually used in their country. Perceptions of actually having a say via referendum democracy fall short of expectations about democracy—a form of democratic disappointment—in countries with greater corruption and inequality, and among right-populist voters and those who distrust politicians.

4. Voting and Campaigns

Several articles in this volume expand our understanding the potential perils of referendum campaigns, and voting on referendums. Morsi and Masullo (2019) and Organ (2019) examine the role of campaign information in two high stakes cases. Morsi and Masullo's (2019) study of Columbia's peace referendum suggest one way to generate support for such proposals would be highlighting opportunities, rather than focusing on the possible risks. Organ (2019) considers the Brexit campaign and raises the question of how a government might regulate false statements. He contends laws should expanded opportunities to challenge false statements, and that expanded opportunities for deliberative democracy are needed during campaigns. In addition, Nai and i Coma (2019) use the lens of direct democracy to examine when Swiss referendum campaigns might 'go negative'. They find that frontrunners rarely go negative, that campaigns behind in the polls are more likely to go negative, and that personal attacks were more likely when the election day was close. Bernhard (2019) studies two Swiss asylum referendums to provide a rare analysis of the dynamics of coalition formation on referendum campaigns.

Three of these articles focus directly on voting. Leininger (2019) demonstrates that voting on a referendum having little to do with the economy—the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum—can be heavily structured by voters' evaluations of the economy. Quinlan, Elkink and Sinnott (2019) contribute another study of economic voting on referendums, focusing on two Irish referendums on the EU—one before and one after the global financial crisis of 2008. They find the economy mattered in both but that sociotropic motivations were more critical after the global financial crisis. Tolbert and Witko (2019) ask when American voters might approving increased income taxes and find that, unlike a proposal that would have increased income taxes on every-

one, lower income conservatives in California supported increased income taxes when the rich were targeted.

5. Outputs: Inequality and Minority Rights

The Tolbert and Witko (2019) article provides an example where referendums could potentially mitigate income inequality. Two other articles here examine the relationship between direct democracy and income inequality head on. Geißel, Krämling and Paulus (2019) find that 'bottom-up' referenda fostered socioeconomic equality, suggesting that low socioeconomical status groups can use direct democracy to advance their interests. However, they note such referendums hindered legal and political equality. In contrast, Dyck, Hussey and Lascher (2019) offer theoretical reasons to expect direct democracy should not lead to redistribution, and provide evidence that initiative use did not reduce income inequality in California. Veri (2019) complements Geißel et al. (2019) in finding that introducing citizenship rights through a popular initiative is likely to fail, unless the policy is not visible to voters.

6. Conclusion

The fifteen articles here are only a small sample of contemporary social science research on direct democracy. Articles such as these are typically appear one off in general political science journals, or specialized journals of elections, representation, and the like. When found in isolation, we might under estimate the scope of research questions available when politics is studied through the lens of direct democracy. By collecting these together here, we can better sense the scope of existing research on direct democracy and, hopefully, the potential for more.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Boosting Political Trust with Direct Democracy? The Case of the Finnish Citizens' Initiative

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Abstract
Complementing representative democracy with direct-democratic instruments is perceived to boost levels of political trust. This was why Finland in 2012 introduced an agenda initiative, which gives citizens the right to propose legislation and thereby provides citizens a say between elections. However, it remains unclear whether involvement in such mechanisms helps restore political trust and what factors shape developments in political trust during involvement. This article contributes to this research agenda by examining how using the Finnish agenda initiative affected developments in political trust. The study uses two surveys to determine developments in political trust: a four-wave panel survey (n = 809 – 1419) and a cross-sectional survey (n = 481) where the perceived change method is used. The results suggest that using the citizens' initiative did not necessarily cause positive developments in political trust. Nevertheless, positive developments in political trust occurred when users achieved their intended aim and/or the process was seen as fair, which shows that direct-democratic instruments can increase levels of political trust under some circumstances.

Keywords
citizens' initiative; direct democracy; Finland; political trust

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

Direct-democratic mechanisms give citizens the chance to take part in political decision-making (Altman, 2011; Qvortrup, 2013; Setälä & Schiller, 2012). Despite their popularity, it remains unclear how involvement in these affects developments in political trust (Bauer & Fatke, 2014; Kern, 2017), and critical voices maintain that such mechanisms frequently fail to improve democracy (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Blaug, 2002; Dyck, 2009; Ladner & Fiechter, 2012; Voigt & Blume, 2015). Bauer and Fatke (2014) note that people involved in direct-democratic instruments may experience negative developments in political trust because of their involvement even when the availability has positive effects. To ascertain how being active shapes developments in political trust, it is imperative to use appropriate data and methods (Quintelier & van Deth, 2014).

Furthermore, it remains unclear what factors shape developments in political trust, especially whether it is necessary to achieve the desired outcomes, or it suffices that decisions are taken in an appropriate manner (Christensen, Karjalainen, & Nurminen, 2015; Esaiasson, Gilljam, & Persson, 2012; Tyler, Casper, & Fisher, 1989; Ulbig, 2008).

This study contributes to this research agenda by examining how supporting citizens' initiatives affected political trust in Finland, where a citizens' initiative was introduced in 2012. Citizens' initiatives allow citizens to put issues on the political agenda by collecting signatures in support of a proposal (Schiller & Setälä, 2012, p. 1). A distinction is made between full-scale initiatives, where decisions are made through a ballot vote, and agenda initiatives, where representative bodies make the final decision (Schiller & Setälä, 2012, p. 1). The Finnish citizens' initiative is an agenda initiative where the Finnish Parlia-

ment takes the final decision on initiatives put forward by citizens. It is debated whether agenda initiatives are a type of direct democracy since they do not make citizens the final decision-makers (Altman, 2011; Qvortrup, 2013; Setälä & Schiller, 2012), and some scholars refer to them as soft forms of direct democracy to avoid confusion (Jäske, 2017). Agenda initiatives resemble parliamentary e-petition systems (Lindner & Riehm, 2011), where citizens also make proposals to parliament. However, since agenda initiatives lead to formal legislative proposals that are dealt with by parliamentary committees and requires a formal decision by parliament, they provide citizens with stronger agenda-setting powers than e-petition systems, where proposals can be dismissed without giving them serious consideration (Schiller & Setälä, 2012, p. 6). Compared to referendums, which are rare in most political systems, agenda initiatives offer citizens a continuous say in political decision making, and the impact on legislation may even exceed that of ostensibly stronger mechanisms (Qvortrup, 2013, p. 71). Finally, such mechanisms may have particularly important repercussions for developments in political trust precisely because they rely on interaction with elected representatives (Carman, 2010). There are therefore valid reasons to assess the impact of agenda initiatives on political trust.

The hypotheses are examined with two surveys from users of two websites central for the functioning of the Finnish citizens' initiative, which allow for exploring developments in trust over time. The results show that users experienced negative developments in political trust, thereby casting doubts on the possibilities for boosting political trust through direct democracy. Nevertheless, the effects were positive when users achieved their goals, and/or the decision-making process was considered fair. Hence direct democratic involvement can have positive effects under certain circumstances.

2. Direct-Democratic Involvement and Political Trust

Direct democracy has been flourishing worldwide in recent decades (Altman, 2011; Qvortrup, 2013). However, the idea of sustaining democratic legitimacy by increasing popular involvement has been questioned. Achen and Bartels (2016, pp. 73–75) maintain that direct-democratic instruments fail to deliver policies favoured by a democratic majority, catering instead to the preferences of organized interests. Furthermore, even when majorities do prevail, it does not necessarily lead to better policies (Achen & Bartels, 2016, p. 76). Such arguments and several empirical studies (Dyck, 2009; Ladner & Fiechter, 2012; Voigt & Blume, 2015) cast doubt on whether direct democracy can help restore positive attitudes towards the political system.

Political trust is here defined as 'a basic evaluative orientation toward the government founded on how well the government is operating according to people's normative expectations' (Hetherington, 1998, p. 791). Political trust has following Easton (1965) been considered a central element of political support (Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999). According to Dalton (2004, pp. 23–25), political trust in institutions and actors serve as indicators for affective orientations that he considers equivalent to what Easton labels diffuse support. Although some argue that critical attitudes in the form of low political trust can be beneficial for democracy (Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999), many consider political trust necessary to achieve a stable democratic system (Easton, 1965; Hetherington, 1998; Marien & Hooghe, 2011). Regardless of what level of trust is considered optimal for democracy, it is important to examine how political trust develops through direct-democratic involvement to understand how these participatory mechanisms affect the viability of democracy.

The link between direct democracy and political trust remains unclear as previous studies show conflicting results (Talpin, 2018, p. 409). It is a central idea of participatory democracy that political involvement fosters positive developments in civic attitudes and skills (Barber, 1984; Pateman, 1970). There are valid reasons to expect direct-democratic involvement to have a positive effect on trust since it provides citizens with a rare possibility to influence political decision-making, even when the act itself takes little effort. Empirically, Smith (2002) finds that inhabitants in US states with ballot initiatives have higher levels of political knowledge, while Gherghina (2016) finds that countries with more direct-democratic instruments have higher levels of regime support. Nevertheless, being politically active can also be a frustrating experience that does not necessarily appeal to ordinary citizens (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Accordingly, Dyck (2009) and Voigt and Blume (2015) both find that direct-democratic involvement reduces levels of political trust and Ladner and Fiechter (2012) find that the impact of direct democracy at the local level in Switzerland is negligible.

These conflicting results show the importance of distinguishing between availability and usage of direct democracy. In their study of direct democracy in Switzerland, Bauer and Fatke (2014) find that the availability of direct democracy has positive consequences for political trust while usage has a negative association with political trust. Although intriguing, the authors do not explore the mechanism at the individual level and they rely on cross-sectional data and therefore cannot firmly establish causal linkages, as they also note. Most previous studies fail to determine developments in political trust over time. This highlights the importance of using appropriate methods and data when seeking to establish causal mechanisms for the link between political participation and attitudes, a point also made by Quintelier and van Deth (2014) in their study of how being politically active affects political attitudes.

Despite the conflicting results, the first hypothesis aligns with the positive view and states that:

> H1. Using the citizens' initiative causes positive developments in political trust.

However, involvement in itself may fail to generate positive developments in political trust (Ulbig, 2008). The ensuing hypotheses therefore concern what factors shape how involvement affects political trust. Here a current debate involves the role of outcome versus process satisfaction, where there is mixed empirical evidence on the relative importance of these two factors (Arnesen, 2017; Christensen et al., 2015; Esaiasson et al., 2012; Marien & Kern, 2017; Tyler et al., 1989).

Previous studies show that there are consistent differences in developments in trust depending on whether participants achieve their goals, since several studies find a gap in satisfaction between electoral winners and losers (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, & Listhaug, 2005; Curini, Jou, & Memoli, 2012) and policy satisfaction to generate positive political attitudes (Easton, 1965; Page, 1994). Budge (2012) considers it one of the primary benefits of direct-democratic instruments such as citizens' initiatives that they help ensure policy outcomes that are in line with the preferences of the median citizen. Marien and Kern (2017) also find that referendum voters are more likely to experience positive developments in political support when they get their preferred outcome. The notion that outcomes matters also entails that involvement through an agenda initiative, which is a soft form of direct democracy where citizens are not the final decision-makers, may cause negative developments in political trust. As Blaug (2002) points out, critical activists may well be disappointed with participatory institutions that fail to help them achieve their goals. This suggests that any positive developments in political trust only materialize when a citizens' initiative is approved. Based on this, the second hypothesis states that:

> H2. Users who achieve their goal experience positive developments in political trust.

Other studies suggest that users may accept not getting their preferred outcomes as long as the results come about through a decision-making process that is perceived as fair (Carman, 2010; Christensen et al., 2015; Esaiasson et al., 2012; Tyler et al., 1989). According to this idea, users of the citizens' initiative may experience positive developments if they feel that their grievances are given due concern by decision-makers. Participants not only care about achieving certain policy goals, they also care about broader objectives such as ensuring a richer democratic dialogue that ensures that all decisions are reached through open discussions and careful attention to the pros and cons of the decisions. When they feel that this is the case, they are even willing to accept not getting their preferred outcome. The perception of procedural fairness may be even more important for mechanisms such as the agenda initiative, where the decision-making powers remain in the hands of parliament (Carman, 2010, p. 747). This also entails that participation can have detrimental effects for civic attitudes when participants feel that decision makers fail to take their demands seriously (Ulbig, 2008). This suggests that positive developments in political trust can occur when participants feel that the decision on an initiative was reached through a fair process. Based on this, the third and final hypothesis is:

> H3. Users who are satisfied with the decision-making process experience positive developments in political trust.

The following section outlines how the hypotheses are examined.

3. Data and Variables

The Finnish citizens' initiative was introduced in 2012. According to the regulations, the organizers can submit an initiative to the Finnish Parliament if it gathers support from at least 50,000 Finnish citizens. The representatives must then decide whether to accept the citizens' initiative, possibly in an amended form, or reject it altogether. The official website www.kansalaisaloite.fi facilitates the collection of signatures in support of proposals by making it possible to collect signatures online. Prior to the launch of this, an independent website called Avoin Ministeriö (www.avoinministerio.fi, English translation Open Ministry) aimed to crowdsource citizens' initiatives by allowing members to discuss the contents of individual initiatives and facilitate the collection of signatures (Christensen et al., 2015). Avoin Ministeriö was instrumental in developing contents and promoting four of the first initiatives where the Finnish parliament made decisions.

From the launch in 2012 until parliamentary elections in April 2015, citizens launched more than 300 initiatives that collected over one million signatures in support (Christensen, Jäske, Setälä, & Laitinen, 2017). Nine of these managed to collect the required 50,000 supporters within the stipulated time limit and Parliament decided on six citizens' initiatives during 2012–2015. Parliament rejected all but one of the initiatives; an initiative to make marriage legislation gender neutral. Despite the limited legislative impact, the citizens' initiative is a popular mechanism that is widely believed to have improved Finnish democracy (Christensen et al., 2017, p. 421). However, as Bauer and Fatke (2014) argue, even when availability is beneficial, usage is not necessarily connected to positive developments in attitudes.

3.1. Data

The data come from two surveys administered to users of two different websites that facilitates the use of the citizens' initiative. The first survey consists of a four-wave panel data collected 2013–2015 among users on Avoin Ministeriö following decisions of Parliament on four initiatives. The first concerns the very first decision by Parliament on a citizens' initiative, which involved a pro-

posal to ban fur farming (Ban Fur Farming). The second wave was conducted following the decision on an initiative on copyright legislation (Copyright), while the third wave measures attitudes following the decision on an initiative to make marriage legislation gender neutral (Gender neutral marriage legislation). This initiative gathered more than 150,000 supporters and was the first to be approved by Parliament. The fourth and final wave took place after a rejection of an initiative to make it voluntary to learn Swedish in Finnish elementary schools (Swedish). For the first wave, all users on Avoin Ministeriö received an invitation to fill in the survey by email, which 2147 respondents did. For the following three waves, invitations to fill in surveys were sent by email to these 2147 respondents following the decision of Parliament on the initiative in question. To ensure data quality, the dataset was subsequently restricted to respondents who adequately filled in at least two waves, meaning the number of included respondents in the first panel was restricted to 1419 respondents. The survey includes an overrepresentation of young males with a university education living in the Helsinki area. Attrition was present, but analysing the attrition pattern with respect to the demographic and attitudinal variables of interest (age, gender, education, political interest and social trust), ANOVA analyses show that the differences were only significant when it comes to age ($F(3, 4174) = 5.37$, $p < 0.001$)), since respondents are older in the last wave (mean 40.6, SE = 0.48) compared to the first (mean 38.5, SE = 0.34, $p < 0.001$) and the second (mean 38.5, SE = 0.39, $p < 0.01$) waves. Despite the decreasing number of respondents in the waves, it is not a uniform dropout of respondents. The response patterns show that about 1/3 filled in all four rounds, another third filled in three rounds and the final third only filled in two rounds (round 1 and one more). Hence, even if a respondent did not fill in Wave 2, it is for example possible he or she did fill in Wave 3 and 4. This panel data is used to test all three hypotheses.

The second survey is a cross-sectional survey of users on www.kansalaisaloite.fi collected during April–May 2016. The users were invited to fill in the survey by clicking a banner on the site and 481 respondents accepted to do so. This survey is valuable since it provides an alternative approach to discerning the impact of using the citizens' initiative over time. The survey includes measures that asks respondents to estimate the amount and direction of change in political trust they underwent because of their use of the citizens' initiative in line with the perceived change method (Hill & Betz, 2005; Pratt, McGuigan, & Katzev, 2000), which has been used in previous studies with similar aims (Åström, Jonsson, & Karlsson, 2017). This survey is only used to test H1 on the consequences of involvement for developments in political trust. Even if it is less reliable than panel data for establishing developments over time, it makes it possible to determine whether participants also subjectively experience the developments objectively measured with panel data. Furthermore, this survey makes it possible to explore whether there are differences in the developments depending on the extent of involvement, i.e. how many initiatives the respondents supported.

An overview of the data is provided in the Appendix (data is available upon request to the author).

3.2. Variables

The dependent variable is political trust. The proper operationalization of this concept is disputed (Zmerli & Hooghe, 2011), but I here follow the predominant approach in previous studies and conceive political trust as a one-dimensional phenomenon (Åström et al., 2017; Bauer & Fatke, 2014; Dyck, 2009; Kern, 2017;). Exploratory factor analyses justify this approach since political trust is clearly one-dimensional in both surveys (see online Appendix). Furthermore, robustness checks show similar results for the individual trust items (see Appendix). Accordingly, political trust is measured with a sum index combining levels of trust in government, political parties, politicians, and the Parliament in all three surveys.

The main independent variable is direct-democratic involvement in the form of using the citizens' initiative. In the panel data from Avoin Ministeriö, the independent variable is whether the respondent supported a specific citizens' initiative in each round. The independent variable in the other survey also takes into consideration the extent of the involvement since the respondents indicate the approximate number of initiatives signed. These different operationalizations make it possible to draw firmer conclusions on the impact of using the citizens' initiative on political trust.

To examine the impact of process satisfaction on developments in political trust across rounds, a question is used that asks respondents whether they thought Parliament handled the initiative in a suitable manner. Respondents gave answers on a five-point scale 'Strongly agree'–'Strongly disagree' but these were recoded to a dichotomy whereby respondents who agree are satisfied while those who are neutral or disagree are unsatisfied. This coding entails a restrictive view of satisfaction, but excluding the neutral category leads to similar conclusions.

To ascertain the results, the models include control variables that have been argued to affect political trust: Age, gender, education, political interest and social trust (Dalton, 2004; Hetherington, 1998; Zmerli & Hooghe, 2011). Similar control variables are used in both surveys, although the operationalizations differ slightly (see online Appendix).

3.3. Methods of Analysis

To examine H2 and H3 with panel data, a series of growth curve models analyse developments over time. Growth curve models are a special case of the random-

effects model approach to analysing panel data where developments in longitudinal data are examined (Curran, Obeidat, & Losardo, 2010; Singer & Willett, 2003; Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2012). This multilevel approach models the shape of trajectories of individual subjects over time and how these trajectories vary randomly and systematically due to occasion level and subject-level covariates (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2012). Compared to traditional fixed effects models, this approach has several advantages (Curran et al., 2010). Most importantly for the present purposes, it is possible to include respondents even when they fail to answer every wave, although it is preferable to have several estimates over time for all respondents (Singer & Willett, 2003, p. 148). A fixed effects model using the xtreg procedure in Stata showed similar substantial results.

For H1, a model examines the impact of using the citizens' initiative across rounds, while testing H2 and H3 involves including a three-way interaction effect to examine whether the effects of involvement and process satisfaction differ across rounds. These hypotheses are only examined in the panel data since this makes it possible to tie involvement to specific initiatives. Only the initiative proposing gender neutral marriage legislation was approved, meaning H2 suggests that the effect of supporting should be positive for this round and negative in the others whereas H3 predicts similar positive effects of process satisfaction in all rounds regardless of the outcome.

4. Analysis

Table 1 shows results for H1 on the developments in political trust because of involvement.

The significant estimates for signing initiatives in the Avoin Minsteriö survey ($B = -0.016$, $p < 0.000$) and the kansalaisaloite.fi survey ($B = -0.036$, $p < 0.000$) both suggest that using the citizens' initiative diminished political trust. Figure 1 shows the implications of signing for developments in trust.

Figure 1a shows that among Avoin Ministeriö users, using the citizens' initiative on average decreased political trust with about 0.016 on the scale 0–1 when controlling for other factors. Although the effect is not particularly strong, the significant negative effect shows that there are no signs of the expected positive effect from involvement. The results from kansalaisaloite.fi in Figure 1b show that the cumulative effect may be substantial, since the extent of involvement mattered for users on kansalaialoite.fi. Here political trust on average declined more drastically among more avid users. The results therefore clearly contradict H1 and the suggestion that involvement enhances political trust.

Hypotheses H2 and H3 concern how outcomes and process satisfaction affected developments in political trust. To test these propositions among Avoin Ministeriö users, the model in Table 2 includes a three-way interaction effect between involvement, process satisfaction

Table 1. Using the citizens' initiative and developments in political trust.

	Avoin Ministeriö			kansalaisaloite.fi		
	B	**(SE)**	**P**	**B**	**(SE)**	**P**
Supported citizens' initiative	−0.016	(0.004)	0.000	−0.036	(0.010)	0.000
Age	0.002	(0.000)	0.000	−0.003	(0.001)	0.000
Gender	−0.015	(0.010)	0.120	−0.016	(0.022)	0.477
Education	0.029	(0.008)	0.000	0.039	(0.015)	0.012
Political interest	0.060	(0.013)	0.000	0.009	(0.051)	0.857
Social trust	0.135	(0.013)	0.000	0.294	(0.053)	0.000
Round (Ref: Ban Fur Farming)						
Copyright legislation	−0.021	(0.004)	0.000			
Gender neutral marriage legislation	0.011	(0.005)	0.014			
Make Swedish voluntary	−0.001	(0.005)	0.746			
Constant	0.237	(0.021)	0.000	0.338	(0.063)	0.000
Random effects						
var(round)	0.000	(0.000)				
var(cons)	0.033	(0.002)				
cov(round, cons)	−0.002	(0.000)				
var(Residual)	0.009	(0.000)				
Snijders/Boskers R2 Level 1		0.14				
Snijders/Boskers R2 Level 2		0.16				
ICC		0.79				
N		4105/1399			395	
R2					0.21	

Notes: Avoin Ministeriö: Entries are coefficients (B) with robust standard errors (SE) and significance levels (P) from growth curve models estimated with the xtmixed command in Stata. Kansalaisaloite.fi: Entries are coefficients (B) from linear regression analyses with robust standard errors (SE) and significance levels (P).

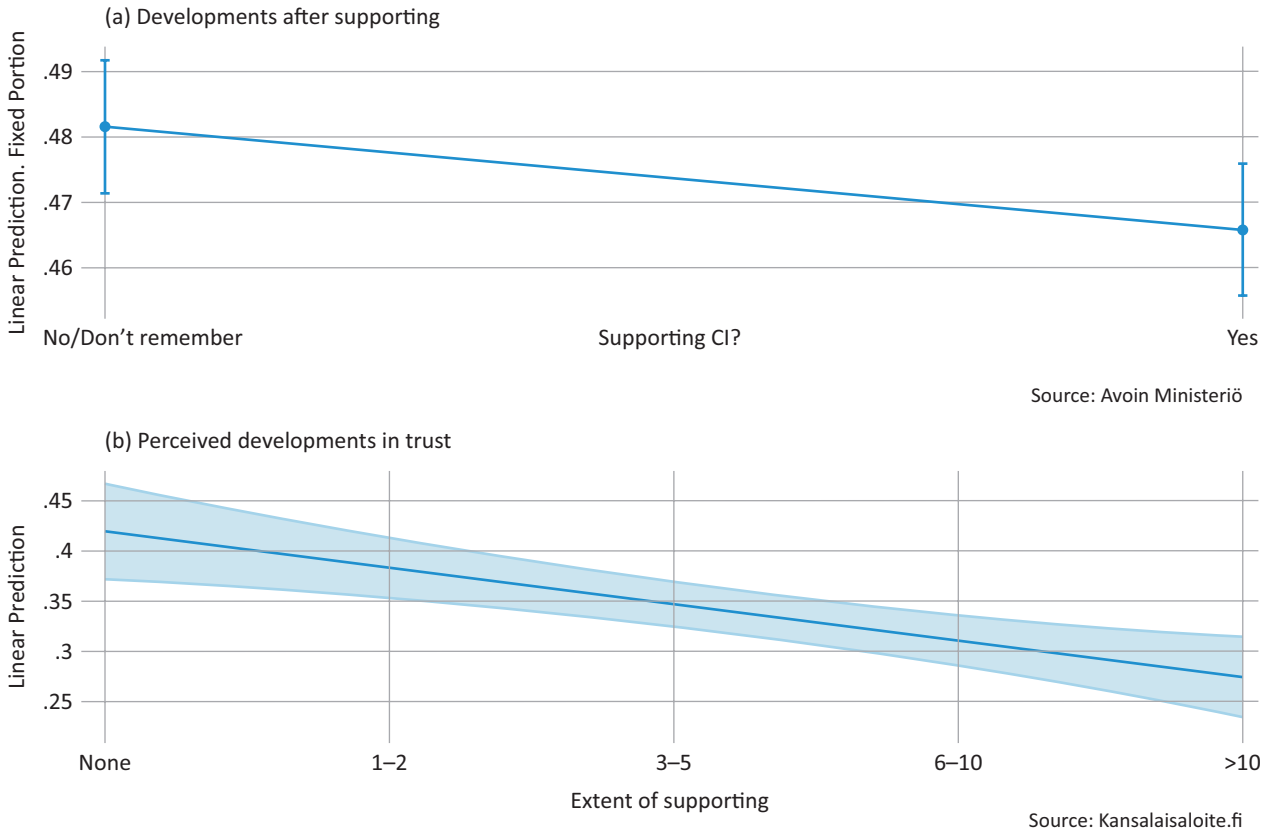

Figure 1. Effects on political trust from using the citizens' initiative: (a) Development after supporting, (b) Perceived development in trust.

and round to examine whether the effect of using the citizens' initiative differs across rounds. The expectation in line with H2 is here that the effect of supporting the initiative on gender-neutral marriage legislation should differ from the other three since this was the only initiative that Parliament approved, whereas H3 suggests that the effect of process satisfaction should be similar across rounds.

When it comes to the impact of outcomes, there is a significant interaction effect for the panel conducted following the decision on the gender-neutral marriage initiative, which means that the effect of using the citizens' initiative in this round differ from the reference category. There are no significant interaction effects when it comes to the impact of process satisfaction, although the estimate for the interaction effect concerning Equal marriage comes close (B = 0.030; p = 0.054). It is noteworthy that the interaction effect between outcome support and process satisfaction is non-significant since this shows that the effect of process satisfaction is independent of whether the preferred outcome is achieved. To see what the results entail for the impact of outcome and process satisfaction, Figure 2 shows the differences in developments in trust for these two sets of interaction effects.

Figure 2a shows that there are clear differences in the predicted developments depending on the outcome of the citizens' initiative. When Parliament rejected the citizens' initiatives, the users developed lower levels of trust compared to those who did not make use of the citizens' initiative. For the initiative on gender-neutral marriage legislation, which Parliament approved, those who used the citizens' initiative developed a higher level of political trust compared to those who did not support this initiative. This pattern indicates that the outcome of the decision-making matters since using the citizens' initiative had a positive effect when Parliament approved the initiative. The pattern in Figure 2b for process satisfaction differ strikingly since those who are satisfied with the process experience positive developments compared to the dissatisfied in all four rounds. These results support H2 and H3 since users experience positive developments in political trust when they either achieve the intended target or consider the process to be fair.

5. Conclusions

The results show that involvement served to further decrease levels of political trust among users on both Avoin Ministeriö and kansalaialoite.fi. Those who had signed an initiative on average experienced a decline in trust compared to those who did not sign. Although the decline in trust caused by signing a single initiative was small, the evidence from kansalaisloite.fi suggested that

Table 2. Outcomes of citizens' initiatives and developments in political trust.

	Avoin Ministeriö		
	B	**(SE)**	**P**
Supported citizens' initiative (CI)	−0.019	(0.009)	0.036
Process satisfaction	0.044	(0.009)	0.000
Age	0.002	(0.000)	0.000
Gender	−0.012	(0.009)	0.211
Education	0.028	(0.008)	0.000
Political interest	0.058	(0.013)	0.000
Social trust	0.135	(0.013)	0.000
Round (Ref: Ban Fur Farming)			
Copyright legislation	−0.018	(0.008)	0.032
Gender neutral marriage legislation	−0.023	(0.011)	0.028
Make Swedish voluntary	−0.003	(0.008)	0.752
Supported CI # process satisfaction # round (Ref: Ban Fur Farming)			
Yes # Yes # Copyright legislation	0.011	(0.025)	0.646
Yes # Yes # Gender neutral marriage	−0.009	(0.021)	0.681
Yes # Yes # Make Swedish voluntary	0.030	(0.024)	0.218
Supported CI # round (Ref Ban Fur Farming)			
Yes # Copyright legislation	0.005	(0.012)	0.710
Yes # Gender neutral marriage	0.041	(0.014)	0.003
Yes # Make Swedish voluntary	0.001	(0.014)	0.957
Process satisfaction # round (Ref Ban Fur Farming)			
Yes # Copyright legislation	0.012	(0.014)	0.197
Yes # Gender neutral marriage	0.030	(0.016)	0.054
Yes # Make Swedish voluntary	0.002	(0.012)	0.855
Supported CI (Yes) # process satisfaction (Yes)	−0.022	(0.015)	0.139
Constant	0.235	(0.021)	0.000
Random effects			
var(round)	0.000	(0.000)	
var(cons)	0.031	(0.002)	
cov(round, cons)	−0.002	(0.000)	
var(Residual)	0.009	(0.000)	
Snijders/Boskers R2 Level 1		0.18	
Snijders/Boskers R2 Level 2		0.20	
ICC		0.79	
N		4103/1399	

Note: Entries are coefficients (B) with robust standard errors (SE) and significance levels (P) from growth curve models estimated with the xtmixed command in Stata.

the negative effect is cumulative, meaning that signing more initiatives leads to a more pronounced decrease in trust. There is therefore a risk that continuous use of the citizens' initiative creates a downward spiral of political trust.

This does not bode well for the prospects of restocking levels of trust with the help of citizens' initiatives. This may indicate that some users had unrealistic high expectations for the possibilities of determining legislative outcomes by using the citizens' initiative. The Finnish citizens' initiative does not make citizens the final decision-makers but is a soft form of direct democracy that entails an interplay between direct and representative democracy (Jäske, 2017). While the introduction has empowered citizens, usage does not guarantee getting the preferred outcome as losing forms part of democratic decision making. This problem is clearly visible in the results for H2 and H3 concerning factors that shape developments in political trust.

For H2, outcomes clearly mattered for developments in trust since users experienced a positive development in political trust when Parliament approved the initiative. This finding corroborates previous studies showing a gap between winners and losers (Anderson et al., 2005; Curini et al., 2012; Marien & Kern, 2017) and indicates that involvement is not enough, any positive impact hinges on citizens being empowered to achieve their desired target through their involvement (Budge, 2012; Ulbig, 2008). What also matters is how users perceive the quality of decision making (Carman, 2010; Christensen et al., 2015; Esaiasson et al., 2012; Tyler et al., 1989). Regardless of the outcome, users experienced positive de-

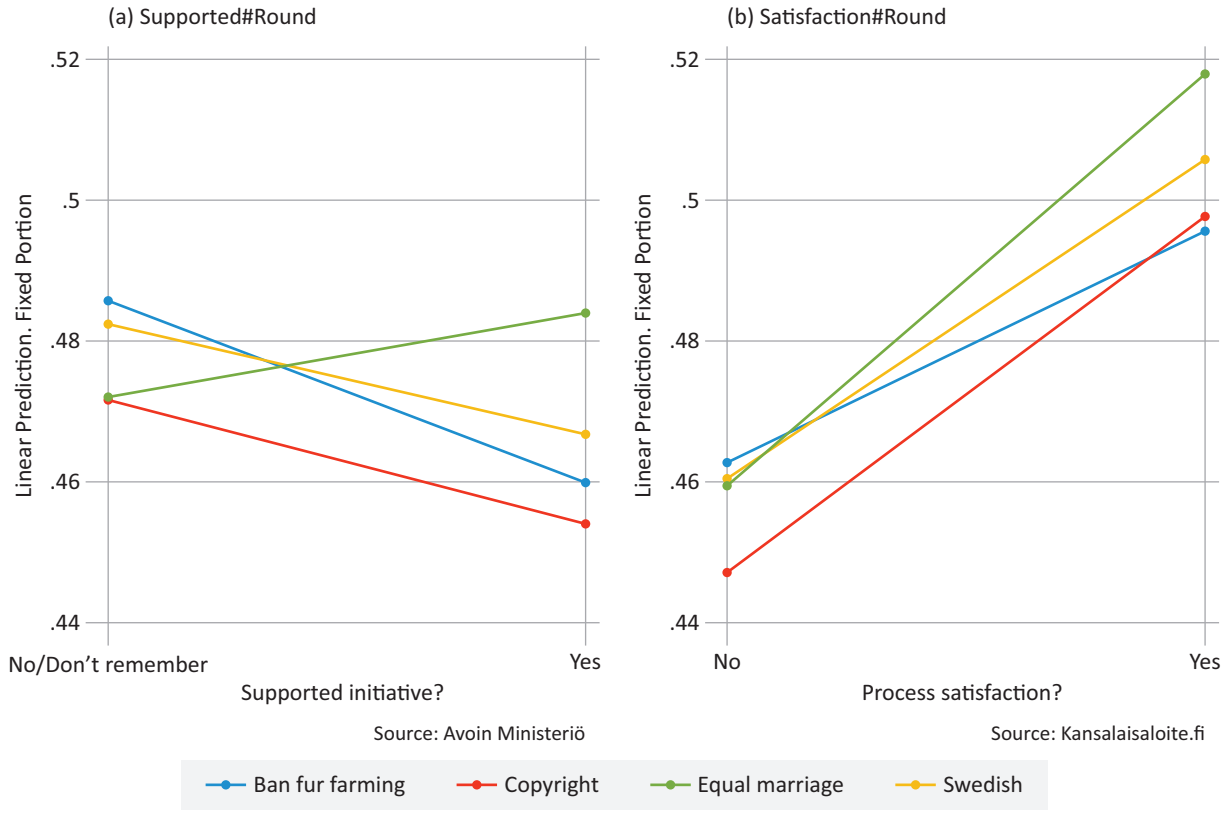

Figure 2. Differences in developments in political trust depending on outcome and process satisfaction: (a) Supported#Round, (b) Satisfaction#Round.

velopments in political trust when they felt that Parliament gave the proposal due consideration. This means that it is possible for decision-makers to generate positive developments not only by approving all initiatives, but also by giving them serious consideration and carefully explaining the motivations behind the decisions to the supporters. Hence it is possible to break any downward spiral either by giving people what they want, or at least convince them that their concerns are given adequate consideration (Carman, 2010).

These findings provide several theoretical insights. First, the results complement previous studies by establishing that involvement causes negative developments in political trust over time, thereby contradicting the expectation that direct-democratic involvement should generate positive political attitudes (Barber, 1984; Gherghina, 2016; Pateman, 1970). While the results are in line with other more negative findings (Dyck, 2009; Voigt & Blume, 2015), they are also congruent with Bauer and Fatke (2014), who also find that the availability of direct democracy in Switzerland is connected to higher levels of political trust, whereas usage is connected to lower levels of trust. It is therefore important to distinguish between availability and use when discussing how direct democracy affects political trust. Furthermore, the relevant question may not be whether involvement causes negative or positive developments, but what factors shape these developments. The results also provide new insights into this question. As noted, outcomes and process satisfaction both matter and their effects were independent of each other. This entails that negative perceptions of the quality of decision making was not largely an artefact of not getting the desired outcome, as has been suggested (Arvai & Froschauer, 2010). In the current study, the results suggest that participants were able to distinguish between outcomes and the quality of decision-making. It is an important task for future research to determine under what circumstances can decide whether a decision-making process is fair, regardless of whether they achieve their preferred outcome. Although speculative, it is worth keeping in mind that even a negative development in political trust is not necessarily bad for democracy since all forms of dissatisfaction are not equal (Christensen, 2016). When negative developments are accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the sense that involvement matters and hence increased mobilization, it may benefit democracy when critical citizens help hold decision-makers accountable (Åström et al., 2017).

These results come with uncertainties. The data used is not representative, and although findings on mechanisms may still be valid, it is unclear how pervasive it is in the general population. Furthermore, the data only covers a single approved initiative, meaning it remains unclear whether the results can be generalized beyond the specific issue of gender-neutral marriage legislation. This topic forms part of a postmodern or postmaterial political agenda (Inglehart, 1997). Based on the current re-

sults, it is impossible to exclude the possibility that the results are only valid for measures of this type, especially considering that users tend to be younger citizens (Christensen et al., 2017) who are also more likely to support this agenda. The current analyses are also unable to take account of whether individuals supported government or opposition parties in the election, meaning their attitudes toward broader political developments are unclear. The results are also based on early experiences with an agenda initiative and different results may be found when the initiative becomes an ingrained part of the Finnish political system, or indeed in countries where citizens' initiatives traditionally form part of the political system. It should also be reiterated that agenda initiatives constitute a particular form of soft direct democracy, and these results may not be valid for other direct-democratic mechanisms. Regardless of these uncertainties, the findings indicate that although introducing citizens' initiatives can further political trust in the general population, a positive effect on users cannot be taken for granted.

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Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Table A1. Characteristics of surveys on www.avoinministerio.fi and www.kansalaisaloite.fi.

	Avoin Ministeriö				Kansalaisaloite.fi
	Wave 1	**Wave 2**	**Wave 3**	**Wave 4**	
Type	Panel	Panel	Panel	Panel	Cross-sectional
Date of collection	June 2013	October 2014	December 2014	March 2015	April–May 2016
Topic	Ban Fur Farming	Copyright legislation	Gender-equal marriage legislation	Voluntary Swedish	All initiatives launched on website
Contact method	Email to all participants on website	Email to those who filled in Wave 1	Email to those who filled in Wave 1	Email to those who filled in Wave 1	Banner
Emails sent	About 10000	2147	2147	2147	
Filled in survey	2147	1022	930	809	481
Valid n	1419	1022	930	809	481

Table A2. Operationalisation of variables.

	Survey Avoin Ministeriö	**Survey Kansalaisaloite.fi**
Dependent variables		
Political trust	Sum index coded to vary between 0–1 based on trust in government, political parties, politicians, and the Parliament (each item scored on 0–10 scale; Cronbach's alpha = .92).	Development in political trust: Sum index coded 0–1 based on perceived change in trust in government, political parties, politicians, and the Parliament (each item scored on five point Likert scale: 'Increased a lot'–'Decreased a lot'; Cronbach's alpha = .94).
Independent variables and control variables		
Supported citizens' initiative	Dichotomous: Supported specific initiative in each round: Yes (1)/No or do not remember (0).	Extent of supporting: 'Did not support any ', 'Supported 1–2', 'Supported 3–5', 'Supported 6–10', 'Supported more than 10'. Coded to vary between 0–1.
Process satisfaction	'Parliament handled the citizens' initiative in a suitable manner', Likert scale with 5 categories: 'Agree completely–Completely disagree': coded dichotomous Agree completely + Agree= 1/ Neutral, Disagree and Disagree completely = 0.	N/A
Age	Age in years (2013–year of birth).	Age in years (2016–year of birth).
Gender	Dichotomy, Male = 1.	Dichotomy, Female = 0, Male = 1.
Education	Highest level of educational attainment, 4 categories. Coded to vary between 0–1 (Highest level of education attainment).	Highest level of educational attainment, 4 categories. Coded to vary between 0–1 (Highest level of education attainment).
Political interest	Level of political interest, 4-point scale 'Not interested at all'–'Very interested'. Coded to vary between 0–1 (High interest).	Level of political interest, 4-point scale 'Not interested at all'–'Very interested'. Coded to vary between 0–1 (High interest).
Social trust	'Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful', scale 0–10, recoded to vary between 0–1 (Highest level of social trust).	Perceived change in trust in other people because of involvement in citizens' initiative, answer on five-point Likert scale: 'Increased a lot'–'Decreased a lot'; coded to vary between 0–1 (Increased a lot).

Table A3. Descriptive statistics of variables.

Survey: Avoin Ministeriö	n	mean	SD	Min	Max
TOTAL					
Political trust	4158	0.47	0.21	0.00	0.98
Supported citizens' initiative	4180	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Process satisfaction	4177	0.32	0.47	0.00	1.00
Age	4178	39.02	13.09	17	80
Gender (1 = male)	4136	0.64	0.48	0.00	1.00
Education	4173	1.68	0.64	0.00	3.00
Political interest	4175	0.76	0.24	0.00	1.00
Social trust	4180	0.67	0.23	0.00	1.00
WAVE 1 (Ban Fur Farming)					
Political trust	1397	0.47	0.21	0.00	0.93
Supported citizens' initiative	1419	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Process satisfaction	1416	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Age	1418	38.49	12.93	17	80
Gender (1 = male)	1401	0.63	0.48	0.00	1.00
Education	1417	1.67	0.64	0.00	3.00
Political interest	1414	0.75	0.24	0.00	1.00
Social trust	1419	0.64	0.24	0.00	1.00
WAVE 2 (Copyright legislation)					
Political trust	1022	0.45	0.21	0.00	0.88
Supported citizens' initiative	1022	0.57	0.50	0.00	1.00
Process satisfaction	1022	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
Age	1022	38.50	12.57	17	80
Gender (1 = male)	1013	0.66	0.47	0.00	1.00
Education	1020	1.70	0.64	0.00	3.00
Political interest	1022	0.74	0.24	0.00	1.00
Social trust	1022	0.67	0.23	0.00	1.00
WAVE 3 (Gender neutral marriage legislation)					
Political trust	930	0.49	0.20	0.00	0.98
Supported citizens' initiative	930	0.70	0.46	0.00	1.00
Process satisfaction	930	0.39	0.49	0.00	1.00
Age	930	39.02	13.28	17	80
Gender (1 = male)	923	0.62	0.49	0.00	1.00
Education	929	1.68	0.64	0.00	3.00
Political interest	930	0.76	0.23	0.00	1.00
Social trust	930	0.69	0.23	0.00	1.00
WAVE 4 (Make Swedish voluntary)					
Political trust	809	0.48	0.20	0.00	0.90
Supported citizens' initiative	809	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Process satisfaction	809	0.34	0.48	0.00	1.00
Age	808	40.62	13.70	17	80
Gender (1 = male)	799	0.65	0.48	0.00	1.00
Education	807	1.69	0.65	0.00	3.00
Political interest	809	0.77	0.23	0.00	1.00
Social trust	809	0.68	0.23	0.00	1.00
Survey: Kansalaisaloite.fi	**n**	**mean**	**SD**	**Min**	**Max**
Perceived development in political trust	475	0.33	0.23	0.00	1.00
Supported citizens' initiative	477	0.54	0.30	0.00	1.00
Age	436	41.91	15.85	18	86
Gender (1 = male)	449	0.44	0.50	0.00	1.00
Education	478	1.49	0.74	0.00	3.00
Political interest	472	0.75	0.22	0.00	1.00
Social trust	474	0.57	0.22	0.00	1.00

Table A4. Factor analyses of political trust items.

	Survey: Avoin Ministeriö					Survey: Kansalaistaloite.fi
	Round 1	**Round 2**	**Round 3**	**Round 4**	**Combined**	**Change pol. trust**
Trust parliament	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91
Trust politicians	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.96
Trust political parties	0.89	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.90	0.92
Trust government	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	0.88	0.91
Eigenvalue	3.24	3.28	3.26	3.23	3.26	3.43
Eigenvalue Factor 2	0.32	0.32	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.26
Cronbach's alpha	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.94
Observations	1393	1022	930	809	4154	475

Notes: Entries are unrotated factor loadings from principal-component factor analyses using the Principal Component Factoring (PCF) procedure in Stata. Substantially identical results were obtained using the Principal Factor method (FP), the Iterated Principal Factor method (IPF) and Maximum-Likelihood factor method (ml). Since a one-dimensional solution under all circumstances appear optimal, there is no need for rotation to interpret the results.

Table A5. Regression analyses of individual trust items.

Avoin Ministeriö	Trust parliament			Trust politicians			Trust political parties			Trust government		
	B	(SE)	P	B	(SE)	P	B	(SE)	P	B	(SE)	P
Supported citizens' initiative	−0.013	(0.005)	0.011	−0.013	(0.005)	0.008	−0.011	(0.005)	0.030	−0.011	(0.005)	0.043
Age	0.002	(0.000)	0.000	0.001	(0.000)	0.088	0.001	(0.000)	0.027	0.002	(0.000)	0.000
Gender	−0.007	(0.011)	0.492	−0.014	(0.010)	0.158	−0.046	(0.011)	0.000	−0.038	(0.012)	0.002
Education	0.044	(0.008)	0.000	0.034	(0.009)	0.000	0.027	(0.008)	0.000	0.046	(0.009)	0.000
Political interest	0.065	(0.016)	0.000	0.090	(0.015)	0.000	0.101	(0.016)	0.000	−0.020	(0.017)	0.226
Social trust	0.165	(0.017)	0.000	0.154	(0.015)	0.000	0.144	(0.016)	0.000	0.167	(0.017)	0.000
Round (Ref: Ban Fur Farming)												
Copyright legislation	−0.042	(0.006)	0.000	−0.018	(0.005)	0.001	−0.015	(0.006)	0.007	−0.028	(0.006)	0.000
Gender neutral marriage legislation	−0.001	(0.006)	0.820	0.013	(0.006)	0.018	0.014	(0.006)	0.014	0.005	(0.006)	0.422
Make Swedish voluntary	−0.025	(0.006)	0.000	0.000	(0.006)	0.943	0.002	(0.006)	0.775	−0.016	(0.007)	0.014
Constant	0.224	(0.025)	0.000	0.174	(0.023)	0.000	0.176	(0.024)	0.000	0.239	(0.026)	0.000
Random effects												
var(round)	0.001	(0.000)		0.000	(0.000)		0.001	(0.000)		0.001	(0.000)	
var(cons)	0.038	(0.003)		0.034	(0.002)		0.041	(0.003)		0.052	(0.003)	
cov(round, cons)	−0.001	(0.001)		−0.001	(0.001)		−0.003	(0.001)		−0.003	(0.001)	
var(Residual)	0.015	(0.001)		0.014	(0.001)		0.014	(0.001)		0.014	(0.001)	
Snijders/Boskers R2 level 1		0.14			0.13			0.11			0.11	
Snijders/Boskers R2 Level 2		0.17			0.16			0.13			0.13	
ICC		0.72			0.71			0.75			0.76	
N		1399/4121			1399/4120			1399/4114			1399/4111	
Kansalaisaloite.fi	**Trust parliament**			**Trust politicians**			**Trust political parties**			**Trust government**		
	B	**(SE)**	**P**	**B**	**(SE)**	**P**	**B**	**(SE)**	**P**	**B**	**(SE)**	**P**
Supported citizens' initiative	−0.040	(0.011)	0.000	−0.033	(0.011)	0.002	−0.036	(0.010)	0.001	−0.035	(0.010)	0.001
Age	−0.003	(0.001)	0.000	−0.003	(0.001)	0.000	−0.004	(0.001)	0.000	−0.003	(0.001)	0.000
Gender	−0.027	(0.026)	0.292	−0.005	(0.024)	0.828	−0.040	(0.023)	0.084	0.010	(0.024)	0.675
Education	0.047	(0.018)	0.010	0.040	(0.017)	0.017	0.028	(0.016)	0.090	0.041	(0.017)	0.015
Political interest	0.010	(0.057)	0.859	0.017	(0.055)	0.762	0.080	(0.052)	0.125	−0.078	(0.055)	0.153
Social trust	0.320	(0.060)	0.000	0.317	(0.057)	0.000	0.319	(0.057)	0.000	0.218	(0.058)	0.000
Constant	0.357	(0.072)	0.000	0.283	(0.070)	0.000	0.315	(0.065)	0.000	0.407	(0.069)	0.000
N		0.17			0.16			0.20			0.23	
R2		397			395			397			397	

Notes: Avoin Ministeriö: Entries are coefficients (B) with robust standard errors (SE) and significance levels (P) from growth curve models estimated with the xtmixed command in Stata. Kansalaisaloite.fi: Entries are coefficients (B) from linear regression analyses with robust standard errors (SE) and significance levels (P).

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Article

‘Let the Citizens Fix This Mess!’ Podemos’ Claim for Participatory Democracy in Spain

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Abstract
The declining trust in the representative institutions of liberal democracy after the 2008 economic crisis has generated a rise in appeals to substitute the representative model in favor of a participatory democracy. Although political representation has been in crisis since its very inception, for the first time the new technologies of communication based in the Web 2.0, smartphones and social media make replacing the elites’ intermediation in decision-making a real possibility. Aiming to critically address this issue, the article uses a political theory framework to analyze the role of political participation within the main models of democracy as a first step from where to question the viability and convenience of participatory democracy nowadays. Then, the article focuses on the case of Podemos in Spain, a left-wing populist party that advocates for instruments like referendums and citizen initiatives as a solution for the Spanish political crisis. Here, the article highlights the shortcomings of Podemos’s participatory proposal, mainly focused on aggregating predetermined positions instead of addressing the dynamics that undermine the quality of political debate. Finally, we conclude that dealing with the citizens’ political disaffection requires institutional innovations designed to increase the deliberative quality of our representative democracies.

Keywords
deliberative democracy; participatory democracy; Podemos; political representation; referendums; Spain

Issue
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1. Introduction

The claim that representation is in crisis is certainly not a new statement. Opinion studies since at least the 1970s have been detecting a progressive decline in citizens’ trust in the institutions that uphold the liberal democratic model (Crozier, Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975; Montero & Torcal, 2006; Pharr & Putnam, 2000). In this regard, the economic crisis that started in 2008 has magnified a pre-existing disaffection with the parties, governments and parliaments in most Western democracies (European Social Survey, 2013, p. 14; Latinobarómetro, 2018, pp. 34–43). Consequently, the consideration that democracy is the best possible form of governance compared to other alternatives has decreased significantly in recent studies, especially among the youngest citizens (Stefan & Mounk, 2016).

Like in previous crises, the current disaffection with representative democracy is accompanied by voices crying out to replace this model with a participatory democracy that grants greater influence to citizens in decision making. In this regard, the prevailing zeitgeist is a furious anti-elitism that denigrates any type of political intermediation as opposed to the popular sovereignty on which true democracy is based. This phenomenon can partly be explained by the combined effect of an increased self-perception of political competence and the revolution of communication technologies.

Increasingly more citizens perceive themselves as politically competent, which leads them to judge the authority of elites more critically and to seek unconventional participation formulas (Matsusaka, 2005, p. 163). In parallel, the widespread use of web-based technologies, smartphones and social media makes it easier for in-

dividuals and social groups to autonomously coordinate in order to present their demands in the public sphere. In cases as the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013 or the Arab Spring uprisings, digital technologies and especially the social media have been a key resource in the democratic struggle against authoritarian regimes (Howard & Hussain, 2011). In turn, a manifestation of the anti-elitist trend in democratic countries is the symbolic impact achieved in 2011 by the assembly-type protests of Spain's *Indignados Movement*, *Occupy Wall Street* in the United States and Greece's *Syntagma Square Movement*. Another example of this political mood is representatives turning increasingly to referendums to resolve dilemmas such as Scotland remaining in the United Kingdom in 2014 or Greece's acceptance of the EU economic bailout in 2015, to set out two recent cases. However, the unexpected outcome of the referendum on *Brexit* in 2016, or the rise of xenophobic and populist parties in many European countries have challenged the cognitive and moral virtues attributed to the citizenry as well as the trust on new technologies as an agent of democratic progress.

Is participatory democracy a good idea? To answer this question, we must first reflect on the normative value attributed to participation within democratic theory. Along with this, any alternative to liberal democracy must rely on the best empirical data available on citizens' attitudes and abilities and, further, specify the sustainability of its model under the structural conditions of mass society. Aiming to critically address these matters, this article first contextualises the debate on political participation within the complex balance between the liberal and democratic traditions that lay at the core of liberal democracy, pointing out the theoretical and empirical weaknesses that challenge the benefits attributed to citizen participation. Thus, the article presents three main shortcomings of the participatory model: its tendency to offer a monistic legitimation of political participation, the fallacy of the virtuous citizen, and its lack of institutional precision. These flaws undermine the appeal of participatory proposals as a solution to the democratic malaise.

From this theoretical framework, the article then analyses the specific case of Podemos (*We Can*), a left-wing populist party that presents several mechanisms of direct democracy as a route to deal with institutional disaffection in Spain. The interest of this study case is twofold. At the Spanish level, the irruption of Podemos in 2014 has completely transformed a party system (*imperfect bipartisanship*) that remained unchanged since the democratic restoration in 1977. Also, the discourse, proposals and organizational style of this party—openly populist according to the statements of its main leaders—has fostered the change in the Spanish political culture initiated with the *Indignados Movement* in May 15, 2011 (Sampedro & Lobera, 2014). On the other hand, the case of Podemos in Spain is representative of the left-wing populist challenge to liberal democracy that, at present, has similar manifestations in other European countries such as France (*La France Insoumise*), Italy (*Movimento 5 Stelle*), Grece (*Syriza*) and Germany (*Die Linke*), among others. Therefore, the shortcomings in Podemos's participatory model allow us to present a broader critique to a certain type of democratic claims which ignore that the real dichotomy is not between direct or representative democracy but between aggregative and deliberative conceptions of democracy. Finally, the article concludes that citizen participation in liberal democracies should transcend the mere expression of predetermined positions to focus instead on the deliberative quality of the public sphere.

2. The Debate on Participatory Democracy

Evaluating the suitability of participatory democracy requires that we first contextualise this model within a broader discussion on the contemporary idea of democracy. Thus, the first thing to point out is that liberal democracy is the result of the union of two traditions—liberal and democratic—that were initially opposed. The liberal tradition, developed by enlightened figures such as Locke, Montesquieu, Constant and Mill, assumes that the best way to maximise collective happiness is to guarantee a private realm of autonomy that allows each individual to defend its own life project against any arbitrary meddling of power. On its part, democratic tradition draws inspiration from the *liberty of ancients* (Constant, 1819), understood as the capacity of every citizen to practice self-governance via an equal participation in the ruling of its community. This tradition lays at the core of Rousseau's republicanism, concerned about preventing the private interests of a small elite from prevailing over the common good. To secure self-rule, all citizens should be active in deciding what is best for the community, that is, in expressing the *general will*. Since sovereignty cannot be represented, both the deputies and the government are merely agents of the people's will (Rousseau, 1996, pp. 510–513).

Therefore, the representative government born out from the liberal revolutions of the late eighteenth century is more liberal than democratic (Manin, 1997). Its key institutions—Constitution, Rule of Law, separation of powers—set a counterweight to majorities in order to protect individual autonomy. On the other hand, the main democratic feature in this model is participation through electoral vote. Although the extension of suffrage since the late nineteenth century reinforces equality among citizens, political representation introduces an elitist bias that separates the electoral body from its deputies, which are entitled to 'refine and expand' public opinion (Madison, Hamilton, & Jay, 1987).

Pointing out the normative tension inside liberal democracy, the model of participatory democracy came about in the 1960s and 1970s based on thinkers close to the New Left, political ecology and social movements like Pateman (1970), Macpherson (1977) and Barber (1984). Highlighting Rousseau's ideal of freedom as self-

government, these authors argue that the asymmetries in power and resources in liberal democracies refute the formal consideration of individuals as free and equal (Held, 2006, p. 210). Since political representation introduces a clear imbalance in favour of liberal elitism, reviving democracy as 'government of the people' requires implementing mechanisms for citizens' direct involvement in decision making. The underlying idea here is that only by practicing virtues in the public sphere it will be possible to control the elite and achieve citizen excellence in terms of political judgement and orientation towards the common good (Pateman, 1970). Thus, among the benefits attributed to participation, two of them become essential: first, participation develops the cognitive skills needed to attain a competent political judgement; second, the involvement in public affairs favours respect, empathy and solidarity, which are necessary for putting the common good before individual interests.

Despite sharing many values with the classic Athenian democracy, participatory democrats as Pateman and Macpherson move away from orthodox Marxism to question the viability of direct democracy as a complete alternative to representative democracy. Instead, they claim that the state must be democratized by extending citizen participation to the key dimensions in which most people spend their lives, such as the workplaces and the local level, but also to political parties, parliaments and state bureaucracies (Held, 2006, pp. 211–213; Pateman, 1970, p. 104). Here, it is possible to identify contemporary mechanisms that help to promote these ambitious goals: referendums, popular initiatives and town hall meetings are among the main resources for the citizens' direct involvement in our days (Matsusaka, 2005, p. 158). The common point in all of them is that citizens can bypass representatives and participate directly in drafting bills and voting on substantive political decisions. Specially, referendums and popular initiatives play a prominent role in countries like Switzerland and Italy, as well as in the American state of California (Budge, 1996, pp. 89–104). Also, the participatory model has inspired a wide range of experiences at the local level, with formulas like participatory budgeting, advisory councils and municipal consultations, to mention just a few examples.

However, the high normativity of this model makes it difficult to critically assess its viability under the less than ideal conditions of mass society (Held, 2006, pp. 214–216). In this regard, the debate between proponents and opponents of participatory democracy tend to confusingly mix theoretical-normative type arguments with others that are empirical-descriptive (Haller, 2017, p. 57). Concretely, participatory democracy faces three core problems: the tendency to offer a monistic legitimation of participation, the fallacy of the virtuous citizen and a lack of institutional precision. Let's take a look at them.

Firstly, we must reflect on the political legitimacy attributed to participation. The participatory ideal can be self-referential if, following Arendt (1958), we state that the citizen's mere capacity to express a political stance who affects the collective decision represents an intrinsic value regardless of its practical consequences (*expressive justification*). However, an instrumental legitimation can also be considered, via which participation would be desirable due to the benefits it provides, either generating empathetic citizens who are interested in the common good (*educational justification*); or providing an ideal method for reaching the best decisions in moral and technical terms (*epistemic justification*). Here, advocates of participatory democracy tend to omit the diversity of values associated with participation, ignoring empirical evidence that shows that the expressive, educational and epistemic values are extremely difficult to make compatible with each other in most of participatory experiences, which thus requires to sacrifice the monistic approach in order to set priorities among them. It would be unsustainable to state that the expressive value of participation justifies poor economic and social results. Also, emphasising its educational value involves recognising that citizens have previous civic shortcomings, which raises doubts about the epistemic quality of proposals that—like referendums—are based on the mere aggregation of their opinions.

Secondly, accrued empirical research challenges the ideal of the well informed, empathetic and tolerant individual on which the participatory model is based. Studies in recent decades repeatedly point out that a significant percentage of individuals have inconsistent opinions on substantial topics and do not know even basic details about their political systems (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1980; Converse, 1964; Shapiro, 1998; Somin, 2010; Zaller, 1992). The endurance of this phenomenon would confirm the theories of Schumpeter, who attribute lay citizens' political ignorance to a rational calculation of utility: in modern societies, individuals perceive political affairs as somewhat distant from their daily experiences and as competing with other demands in their private lives. This is the reason why they devote less attention and responsibility to them than other issues, reaching to poorly considered judgements (Schumpeter, 1976, pp. 259–264). Although the lack of substantive knowledge about many subjects could be compensated for with 'cognitive shortcuts' (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998), the fact is that the utility of these heuristics depends on the individuals' skills to verify their reliability, what constitutes a circular argument (Hoffman, 1998). Moreover, the plummeting of information costs linked to new technologies has been achieved at the cost of introducing such a vast diversity of sources that they end up creating greater confusion, also making it possible to find information suitable for confirming any pre-existing biases that individuals want to keep (Rosenberg, 2007).

On the other hand, advocates of the participatory model argue that representation undermines citizens' wishes to be involved more frequently in poli-

tics, as shown by their support to referendums and popular initiatives in the majority of surveys conducted in democratic countries (Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007, pp. 351–352; Donovan & Karp, 2006, pp. 673–674). Nonetheless, specific studies on this matter reveal a more complex reality. The research of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse in the United States, duplicated in several European countries, found that along with a significant number of citizens who want to participate, there are also many people who would prefer instead an increase in the technical and moral skills of their representatives (Bengtsson & Christensen, 2014; Font, Wojcieszak, & Navarro, 2015; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Webb, 2013). In this sense, behind the disaffected citizens there would not always be a greater desire to participate, but instead frustration about the poor functioning of political representation which leads them to support any alternative that promises more control over governing elites (Bowler et al., 2007, p. 360).

In line with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), data reveal that—beyond electoral participation—the actual involvement in initiatives such as protests, political rallies, referendums and the like tend to be limited and unequal (Budge, 1996, pp. 14, 95–96). This seems to indicate that both the attitudes towards citizen participation and the preference for a specific model of democracy depend on where individuals stand with regards to sociodemographics, education and ideology (Donovan & Karp, 2006; Font, Galais, Wojcieszak, & Alarcón, 2014). For this reason, direct democracy mechanisms such as referendums, popular initiatives, town hall meetings and participatory budgeting have the risk of over-representing the viewpoints of active individuals, thus ignoring a majority of population who does not take part in these processes (Ganuza & Francés, 2012). Along with this, the homogeneity of participants creates dynamics of 'groupthink' that end up generating cognitive biases and more radicalised positions than the original ones (Sunstein, 2002). As a result, a participation that does not represent the overall population ends up damaging the epistemic and educational quality of these mechanisms even on moral issues that, in principle, would not require expert knowledge.

Finally, the demand for more participation conflicts with the structural conditions of contemporary democracy, characterised by a large *demos*, division of labour and individuals' lack of time (Dahl, 1989; Dahl & Tufte, 1973). In this context, suggesting that all citizens should spend a substantial part of their lives studying information, debating and making decisions would entail putting participation above other important areas of modern life as family, leisure or work. This is why the relationship between representation and participation is better understood as a matter of degree and not as a dichotomy. From this stance, it would be about determining whether mechanisms like referendums and popular initiatives should serve as an occasional complement to representation or, conversely, should entail the core of decision making (Budge, 1996, pp. 43–46). However, many proposals for participatory democracy are not clear in this respect, so that many disputes around this model arise due to misunderstandings caused by its lack of institutional specificity (Held, 2006, pp. 214–216). Moreover, although many Western constitutions recognize some mechanisms of direct democracy and cases like Switzerland or California prove that referendums and citizen initiatives are a viable option in terms of time and effort, problems of ignorance and unequal participatory attitudes still have no cogent response.

Nevertheless, there is another democratic model that can fare better concerning inclusion, equality and epistemic quality. Emerged at the end of the last century, deliberative democracy grounds the self-government in the popular will generated after a collective reasoning between free and equal citizens (Cohen, 1989; Habermas, 1994; Held, 2006). When people deliberate, 'they carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view' (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 255). The deliberative citizen does not get involved in the political process to enforce given judgments and preferences, but to reevaluate his positions from the viewpoint of the common good and in the light of new arguments and better information (Manin, 1987).

In this sense, citizen juries, consensus conferences or deliberative polls are good examples of deliberative *mini-publics*, that is, 'groups small enough to be genuinely deliberative, and representative enough to be genuinely democratic' (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006, p. 220). What distinguishes them from other participatory mechanisms is that they are focused on generating optimal conditions for an informed deliberation in small groups of lay citizens (for a detailed account see Gastil & Levine, 2005). Thus, for example, a Citizen Jury gathers a small group of citizens to debate face-to-face for several days on a specific topic with background materials and in-depth information. After deliberating and receiving further clarifications from a panel of experts, the participants reach a conclusion that is sent to public authorities (Smith & Wales, 2000). On the other hand, a Deliberative Poll selects a larger sample of citizens (often over a hundred) who take a survey both at the beginning and at the end of the process to check to what extent their opinions on the issue at stake changed as a result of in-depth discussion with rigorous information and expert clarifications (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005). Unlike other participatory designs, deliberative polls look for the sociodemographic representativeness of the sample of citizens what, in turn, guarantees a plurality of viewpoints and avoids the problems of cognitive bias and group polarization. In addition, representativeness legitimizes the process's outcome, since it constitutes the reflective judgement reached by a miniature recreation of the population. Furthermore, it does so without asking for an unrealistic involvement of all citizens.

To sum up, in the less than ideal context described by the empirical research, the expressive value of participa-

tion can end up contradicting its supposed educational virtues and, above all, the efficiency required in making decisions. For this reason, those who prioritise epistemic considerations reject the high levels of citizen involvement in the participatory model, since it could lead to short-term and sectarian measures that are unable to evaluate the complexity of the issues at stake (Sartori, 1987, pp. 116–120). Deliberative *minipublics* as citizen juries or deliberative polls offer a cogent alternative to these weaknesses but advocates of participatory democracy tend to set aside these mechanisms in favor of referendums and other non-deliberative formulas. By focusing on the expressive value of participation as the sole or main moral justification, these proposals can end up producing dynamics far from the epistemic and civic benefits they presume will occur. Some recent cases highlight these risks: assembly type protests dominated by 'groupthink' that only recognise those who share radical postulates as 'the people' (Marangudakis, 2016, p. 791); referendums characterised by serious informational imbalances or false information, or where the initial question has been distorted (Gastil & Richards, 2013, pp. 262–263; Haller, 2017, pp. 67, 70–71). The next section analyses the case of Podemos, the party that has hoisted the flag of citizen participation in Spain.

3. From Theory to Practice of Participation: The Case of Podemos

The emergence of Podemos (*We Can*) in Spanish politics is closely connected to the protests of the *Indignados Movement* on May 15, 2011, the moment in which the effects of the economic crisis that started in 2008 were strongly felt in the country. The squares filling with thousands of demonstrators to the cry of 'They don't represent us!' and 'Real democracy now!' projected an egalitarian image of politics based on open assemblies, transparency and direct democracy (Díaz-Parra & Jover-Báez, 2016, p. 685; Kioupkiolis, 2016, p. 101; Maeckelbergh, 2012, p. 208). Thus, after the European elections in May 2014, Podemos appeared as the political force that wanted to institutionally channel the cultural change symbolised by the *indignados* (outraged). Consistent with the critical claims of 15-M, this party argued that the Spanish economic and institutional crisis was not only due to the poor management of the traditional parties—PP (*People's Party*, centre-right) and PSOE (*Spanish Workers Socialist Party*, centre-left)—but also to the lack of a genuine democracy. In Podemos's populist discourse, the crisis was used as an excuse by the neoliberal elite to undermine the institutions that allowed the people's sovereignty. Therefore, Spanish politics—claimed Podemos—was better understood by pitting the 'people' against a 'political caste' than relying on the traditional right and left division.

Assuming the anti-elitist framework of participatory democracy, Podemos centres its political proposal on the need for new forms of citizen involvement aimed at regenerating public life and regaining the institutions for the people (Podemos, 2014, p. 6, 2017a, pp. 4–6). Thus, instruments like referendums, consultations and popular initiatives are recurrent features in Podemos's project. In short, Podemos's participatory 'medicine' is manifested via three broad areas: its internal organisation, its electoral programme and its participatory formulas at the local level. In all them, an innovative use of digital technologies helps this party to reduce the costs of engaging in political activities such as debating or voting.

With regards to internal organisation, Podemos fits within the category of 'ciber parties' which 'use web-based technologies to strengthen the relationship between voters and party' and also offer voters and supporters rights traditionally associated with formal membership (Margetts, 2006, p. 531). The intensive use of digital technologies sets Podemos substantially apart from all other Spanish parties, by ensuring that its supporters can participate in the party's organic life at a low cost in terms of time and effort. Podemos blurs the traditional political militancy by letting anybody registered on its website—515,304 citizens as by February 5, 2019—to participate in the party's internal decisions as a full-right member, which encompass everything from electing the party leaders and institutional candidates in open primaries to drafting the electoral programme through processes that alternate face-to-face debates with online discussions and voting. Podemos's online debating platform is *Plaza Podemos 2.0* (Podemos Square 2.0). Evolving from the original platform Reddit, it uses the free software Consul developed by the Madrid City Council. In this platform, the proposals that reach a 10% of support from the total census qualify for a referendum among the party's registered members (Plaza Podemos, n.d.-a).

Podemos also incorporates binding consultations about sensitive matters—either raised by the party elites or by a given number of registered members—such as the policy on pacts and electoral alliances, or the removal of the party's leaders and public offices (Mikola, 2017; Podemos, 2017b, art. 14, 2017c, p. 5). There is another online platform to vote on these consultations and in the internal primaries (https://participa.podemos.info/es). Podemos uses the Agora Voting technology, a web platform that provides services of safe online voting to public administrations, political parties and other civil society organizations. Voting requires a computer or other digital devices—like smartphones or tablets—connected to internet. It is also necessary to have a cell phone to receive a security code before casting the vote. Thus, for example, 107,488 people out of the 250,000 registered participated in the final vote on the party's founding principles, held in October 2014, while in the Second Podemos's Citizen Assembly, held in February 2017, 155,190 people voted out of the 450,072 registered (Alameda, Galán, & Abad, 2018).

However, Podemos's online participation manifests some flaws. In the first place, the digital divide—linked to age, education and income—generates differences be-

tween those able to participate via digital technologies and those unable to do it. Trying to balance this gap, Podemos presents its *círculos* (circles) as a space for face-to-face debating and voting. However, there is still an imbalance in favor of online participation. Thus, for example, in the 2018 primaries to elect Podemos's candidates for the local elections of 2019, the party rules established that in-person voting was only mandatory in municipalities with less than 50,000 inhabitants, while telematic voting would be the normal method in bigger cities (Podemos, 2018, pp. 7–8). To compensate for the digital divide in those cities, Podemos's rules only encourage the people in the territories where internal elections are held 'to put polling stations at street level or indoors'. Even in these cases, in-person voting should use telematic means instead of traditional paper ballots (Podemos, 2018, p. 20). In the second place, online voting systems are based on a complex software, which makes difficult for an average citizen to understand and check the key steps of the process. Hence, the trust on the process and its outcomes is undermined. In addition, apps like Appgree—initially used by Podemos to simplify debates and voting procedures—can store sensitive data about users. These dilemmas often go unnoticed due to the widespread technological enthusiasm.

Leaving aside the internal organization, Podemos proposes extending its organizational practices to the Spanish political system. To do so, its electoral programme, crafted via participatory means for the 2015 general elections, incorporates a wide range of measures aimed at strengthening citizen participation and controlling the elite. Along this line, it proposes institutionalising revocatory referendums to remove governments that have incurred a 'clear and substantial' noncompliance with its electoral programme, as well as the public offices 'in specific situations involving loss of legitimacy'. In parallel, it suggests to ease the procedures for popular legislative initiatives, as well as fostering new types of citizen initiatives, including those aimed at vetoing regulations approved by representatives that are considered detrimental (Podemos, 2015, measures 225 and 226). Also, the 'right to decide' includes 'the call for a referendum with guarantees in Catalonia so that its citizens can decide on the type of territorial relationship they want to establish with the rest of Spain' (Podemos, 2015, measure 277). In general, Podemos's programme makes referendums a regular procedure for taking decisions in areas as diverse as culture, education, public works or foreign policy, among many others.

Finally, local politics represents an ideal arena to show the virtues of Podemos's participatory model. Thus, after the municipal elections in 2015, cities like Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia—in which Podemos is part of the governing coalition—have implemented ambitious policies for citizen participation based on digital technologies, especially with regards to participatory budgeting and citizen consultations. In Madrid, for example, all registered residents can freely pose their expenditure proposals within the annual participatory budget, which go through successive stages of collecting endorsements from other citizens, an evaluation of cost and technical viability by the pertinent municipal department and, finally, an open vote—in-person or online—for those of legal age 16 and older registered in the municipality (Madrid City Council, n.d.). Again, replicating Podemos's organizational model, digital technologies play a key role in the stages of proposal, endorsement and final voting. Similarly, citizen consultations allow those at least 16 years old to vote electronically to decide on matters submitted for consideration by the city council or by citizens themselves in the municipal website for citizen participation (https://decide.madrid.es) after achieving the endorsement of at least 1% of the local census. Thus, the first consultations took place in 2017 and were focused on topics related to remodelling public spaces, transport and urban facilities (Madrid City Council, n.d.).

At this point, the critical analysis of Podemos's proposals makes the contrast clear between the theory and practice of participatory democracy. The first thing that draws our attention is the great importance given to the direct aggregation of citizens' preferences, as compared to the lack of concern about the quality of the debate that should illustrate these positions. For example, in the case of the consultations organised by the Madrid City Council in 2017, 94% of participants voted in favour of 'integrating public transport in a single ticket', while 89% voted for the proposal of 'making Madrid 100% sustainable' (Madrid City Council, n.d.). This result was to be expected, if we bear in mind that the proposals never detailed the costs or possible negative consequences of these decisions and there was no public debate about other alternatives (Pérez Colomé & Llaneras, 2017). Nothing in the logic of these consultations guarantees that the final decision will be the outcome of a reflective debate with an exchange of diverse arguments and the best information available (Rico Motos, 2019, p. 176).

Further, the issue, date and terms of the consultation are strategic decisions in the hands of those who plan the referendum, which can favour a specific result in advance, or make participants end up responding to a different issue than that which is apparently formulated. That was the case of the internal consultation called by Pablo Iglesias and Irene Montero, both prominent leaders of Podemos, to face the criticism caused by their purchase of a luxurious villa outside Madrid. Due to the literal wording of the question—not addressing the purchase but the continuity of Iglesias and Montero at the forefront of the party—those registered in Podemos were forced to consider the party's stability above any moral judgement about the possible incoherence between the lifestyles of both leaders and their anti-elitist rhetoric (Marcos, 2018). In addition, practically all the consultations posed by Podemos have ended with percentages close to 80% of support to the option defended by the party elite who raised the consult, which warns about the

plebiscitary tendency of this mechanism (Plaza Podemos, n.d.-b).

Going more in depth on Podemos's internal activities, despite the low costs in terms of time and effort involved in online voting, participation of those registered in the primaries and internal consultations has never surpassed the 43% obtained in October 2014, with the approval of the party's initial rules, and even dropped by 4% in voting for the 2015 electoral programme or by 9.7% for electing the party candidates to the 2019 European elections. At best, the most successful participation percentages are some 38% of active registered members (Alameda et al., 2018; Piña, 2018). These data question the claim of a general desire for political involvement, even among the supporters of a party that defends participatory democracy.

Moving the focus towards local politics, the low participation in Madrid's 2017 consultations highlights the problem of the actual representativeness of these experiences. By posing representation and participation as dichotomous alternatives, Podemos omits that referendums, participatory budgeting and open assemblies are an indirect type of representation, in so far as the citizens who take part in them become *de facto* representatives of those absent (Rico Motos, 2019, pp. 174–175). Thus, in consultations on reforming Gran Vía and Plaza de España—two iconic areas in the centre of Madrid—only 8% of the municipal census voted, so that the remodelling of these spaces was decided by a small percentage of participants, replacing a local corporation that represented the 68% of Madrid residents who voted in the 2015 municipal elections (Pérez Colomé & Llaneras, 2017). Further, since the citizens who get involved in these mechanisms tend to share an ideological and sociodemographic profile, bias problems arise that could explain—for example—the controversial result of another consultation, in which the favourable vote of 2,528 residents out of 176,000 people registered in the district (1.7% of the census) ended up removing the name of king Felipe VI, Head of State, from the park in this district. As we explained previously, these biases can be addressed by statistically representing the plurality of population and securing in-depth debates in a respectful environment, as it is the case in deliberative polls. However, this participatory mechanism is marginal in Podemos's proposal.

Finally, Podemos's project manifests the lack of institutional definition that is often associated to the participatory model. Despite its mythification of direct democracy, no political document of the party openly poses a complete alternative to representative democracy, but instead advocates an imprecise mix of representative institutions and direct mechanisms that cause conceptual confusions such as proposing at the same time a 'real, representative, egalitarian and participatory democracy' (Iglesias, 2015). Instead of clarifying the respective role of participation and representation in a non-dichotomous proposal, Podemos seems to prefer a discursive ambiguity around its claim for participatory democracy, since it allows this party to circumvent the model's practical problems.

However, when delving deeper into Podemos's organisational model—presented as a reference for Spanish politics—we find that the participatory rhetoric conflicts with a vertical and centralised organisational reality, based on the hyper-leadership of the general secretary (Díaz-Parra & Jover-Báez, 2016, p. 690; Kioupkiolis, 2016, pp. 111–113). Although online primaries are potentially more inclusive than offline ballots, the specific design of the voting procedure becomes a key factor, since it can also 'strengthen the party leadership vis-à-vis the party intermediary elites and thus foster anti-democratic tendencies' (Mikola, 2017, p. 39). That seems to be the case of the controversial voting procedure in the 2015 Podemos's primaries, which adopted a system of closed lists and the possibility of approving a whole list without expressing any individual preference. In this sense 'only three of the 65 selected candidates following Pablo Iglesias were not identical to the ones on his list', which underscores the party leader's dominance of the candidate selection process (Mikola, 2017, pp. 44–45).

Moreover, Podemos's internal documents recognize the abandonment of its 'circles', the assembly participation mechanism that was called upon to become the 'guarantee for the control and critical evaluation of Podemos's representative bodies and public offices' (Podemos, 2017a, pp. 11, 48). Once again, the anti-elite rhetoric clashes with the structural imperatives in any complex organisation, which is obliged to become bureaucratic and delegate functions to an elite in exchange for efficiency (Michels, 1959). Thus, while Podemos has implemented an innovative system of internal participation, the online consultations—and, to a lesser extent, the primaries—often end up as a complement to the leadership of party elites or, at worst, as a strategic resource at their hands. From a 'movement party' close to social movements Podemos has evolved towards a more hierarchical structure (Della Porta, Fernández, Kouki, & Mosca, 2017).

In summary, relying on an idealised vision of citizen participation by which any decision that arises from the popular will is intrinsically virtuous, Podemos turns to either a self-referential justification of participation regardless of its concrete results, or the monistic fallacy that upholds that referendums, open assemblies and citizen initiatives are capable of simultaneously maximising the expressive, educational and epistemic values of participation. The analysis of the participatory formulas implemented by this party shows that the reality of participation is more complex than the ideal picture projected in Podemos's discourse.

4. Participation: Aggregative or Deliberative?

The irruption of Podemos in Spanish politics is framed within a generalised wave of disaffection that—especially after 2008—blames elites and liberal demo-

cratic institutions for the lack of effective response to the uncertainties generated by globalisation. In parallel, the case of Podemos also illustrates the contradictions of participatory democracy, which calls for citizen empowerment without offering a viable alternative to representative democracy (Kioupkiolis, 2016, p. 106). Thus, the leaders of Podemos do not translate their participatory claim into a concrete institutional design capable of materializing the expressive, educational and epistemic values associated to political participation.

Participatory democrats could argue that the criticisms of citizens' abilities raised to reject direct democracy could be extended to challenge democracy itself (Budge, 1996, p. 66): if individuals are ignorant and sectarian, why let them participate in the selection of their representatives? Here, the fact that representative democracy coexists with high levels of ignorance and sectarianism highlights the core problem: an aggregative vision of democracy that discards the importance of public deliberation. From this viewpoint, 'it is no improvement that the mass of citizens, rather than select elites, should be the ones to make ill-considered choices in a disrespectful civic climate' (Gastil & Richards, 2013, p. 256).

Faced with this situation, the deliberative model states that truly significant participation is that which includes interaction with other points of view in shaping individual political judgements and, at times, changing preferences as a result of public debate (Habermas, 1996). Thus, the real boundary is not between direct or representative democracy, but that which distinguishes aggregation from deliberation. Representation and participation are not necessarily dichotomic ideas but any balance between them should be evaluated through the lens of the deliberative quality of the political system. It is not only about making better information available to citizens, but about creating the conditions so that they care about taking part in inclusive debates endowed with due epistemic conditions.

If citizen participation is to move beyond merely expressing predetermined positions, Western democracies must pay more attention to the quality of debates within the partial public spheres arisen from the technological revolution. Nowadays, the democratisation of communication via Web 2.0, smartphones and social media supports the democratic struggle against hierarchical elites but, on the other hand, it can also generate a loss of control over the truthfulness of the information on the web. In terrain as emotionally laden as politics, this phenomenon opens up the possibility that groups and individuals turn to 'information bubbles' in which they only receive the information and discourses that strengthen their own original prejudices. Along with this, the incorporation of new broadcasters generates an aggressive competition in traditional media, thus fostering a structural trend that stimulates whatever content that captures people's attention, meaning novel, spectacular, conflicting and simple ones (Habermas, 2006). All of this sets the ground for trivialising politics in a public sphere where monologues, *infotainment*, *post-truth* and *fake news* tend to prevail over more in-depth debates. Ignoring these dynamics, Podemos entrusts the success of participatory democracy to an informed and virtuous citizen who has been largely disproven by empirical research.

However, the reform of liberal democracy does not necessarily entail focusing on the aggregation of poorly considered positions, but instead of developing institutional innovations that can increase its deliberative quality (Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012). A deliberative enrichment of liberal democracy is possible both at the broad level of the public sphere (Fraser, 1990) and also via *minipublics* such as citizen juries or deliberative polls. These mechanisms could be strategically introduced into the institutional design of representative democracy to produce deliberative dynamics in different stages of decision-making, or as a previous requirement for holding referendums or electing representatives (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005; Gastil & Richards, 2013; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006). For example, *minipublics* could be used to deal with matters subject to strong partisan divides, such as the proposal for electoral reform developed by the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly in 2004 (Warren & Pearse, 2008). In addition, deliberative polls could critically assess candidates and electoral programmes as a mandatory requirement during electoral campaigns, generating a deliberative impact in the public opinion by receiving extensive media coverage (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2002).

In short, instead of an expressive participation based on aggregation, it is an enlightened participation that should guide the reforms within liberal democracies to address the political malaise at the beginning of the 21st century. Even if a fully deliberative democracy may never be achieved, well-designed institutions can increase the deliberative quality of our political systems and, over time, generate a more civic environment.

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Article

Salient Ballot Measures and the Millennial Vote

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Abstract
We explore the relationship between ballot measures on issues salient to Millennials and their turnout in presidential and midterm elections. Both scholars and observers in the media have worried about decreasing levels of citizen participation, particularly among young voters. We demonstrate that one way to engage Millennials into traditional forms of political participation is through ballot measures that focus on issues salient to their generation (marijuana liberalization and higher education reform). We show that not only do these measures increase Millennial voting, but they erase difference in turnout levels between Millennials and older generations. This effect is primarily concentrated in low-turnout contexts such as midterm elections, indicating that these measures may be playing a similar mobilization role in midterm elections as presidential campaigns do in turnout out low-propensity voters.

Keywords
ballot measures; direct democracy; generation; Millennials; political behavior; turnout; voting

Issue
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1. Introduction

Scholars have documented a significant decrease in turnout across the US and other Western democracies over the past half century (Franklin, 2004; McDonald, 2018). Millennial voters (those born between 1982 and 1996) are no exception to this trend. Millennial voter turnout barely reached 50 percent in the 2016 presidential election, compared to 70 percent for Baby Boomers (Fry, 2016). Some activists want to use high profile ballot measures on issues such as marijuana legalization to increase youth voter turnout, similar to how activists on the right attempted to use same-sex marriage bans to turn out social conservatives in the 2004 Presidential election (Campbell & Monson, 2008).

We test if Millennial salient measures increase Millennial voter turnout in both presidential and midterm elections. We argue that Millennial-oriented ballot measures provide a path for engaging these voters, who appear to be disenchanted with politics due to years of perceived political dysfunction (Foa & Mounk, 2016). Millennials have a cynical view of politics as the issues most important to them scarcely make it onto a party's platform (Lawless & Fox, 2015). Understanding what drives turnout among the largest cohort of potential voters is fundamental to understanding democracy in the US. This is especially important as Millennials are now the largest living generation. Understanding their political behavior and opinions, and how they compare to those of older generations, is vital to understanding the trajectory of participation in American politics.

We argue that ballot measures increase Millennial turnout in midterm and presidential elections most when the proposals are focused on issues particularly salient to them. We focus on higher education reform and marijuana liberalization because of their unique level of interest in both issues. Millennials began enrolling in college at the same time as the cost of college tuition, fees, and room and board skyrocketed. They hold the highest amounts of student debt of any gener-

ation. Millennials' experience with higher education is uniquely marked by a hyper-concern for the cost of and access to higher education institutions (Rouse & Ross, 2018; Taylor & Keeter, 2010). Millennials are also the most supportive of marijuana legalization. In 2016, 71 percent of Millennials said that marijuana use should be legal. Just 33 percent of the silent generation, 56 percent of Baby Boomers, and 57 percent of Generation X respondents say marijuana should be made legal (Geiger, 2016). Their distinct opinions on marijuana and unique experience with higher education make both policy areas highly salient for Millennial voters relative to the rest of the population. These two issues should mobilize Millennials more than other generations[1].

Over the past sixteen years, measures on marijuana liberalization and higher education reform have been placed on the ballot and voted on across the country. We collect a unique dataset of state ballot measures on marijuana liberalization and higher education reform. We pair these data with the Current Population Survey from 2002–2016 to model voter turnout. We find that Millennials are more likely to vote when there are more measures on issues salient to them. The increases in turnout erase differences between Millennials and other generations. When Millennials can vote on issues that are important to them, they are just as likely to vote as the rest of the population.

2. Millennial and Their Political Behavior

Much of the research on age or youth turnout has focused on life-cycle effects and maturation, which is the idea that at different points, or ages, in one's life political participation becomes more important, such as having a family or nearing retirement (Converse, 1972; Plutzer, 2002). However, many have found that the young turnout to vote at the lowest rates not due to life-stage effects but because of a variety of generational factors, like low social capital, apathy towards the government, and lack of interest in politics overall (Putnam, 2000; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Most simply, there are group-wide trends of lower participation, and the gap is not closed as one ages, thus indicating a cohort effect rather than an effect of aging.

Research in comparative politics on voter turnout has moved beyond life-cycle effects to evaluate generational differences in political behavior (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This research emphasizes the distinct socioeconomic context that each cohort of voters' face. Currently, the youngest voters in Western countries vote at lower rates than previous generations when they were the same age (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1980; Franklin, 2004; Miller, Shanks, & Shapiro, 1996). Failure to account for cohort-effects in political behavior leads researchers to omit the shared experiences and opinions of a generation and overestimate the effect of age. Incorporating generational effects into models of voter turnout provides us with a way to separate the persistent effect of generation and the temporary effect of age.

Scholars over the past 50 years have conceptualized age-related cohorts in the US into generations. In demographic research, like that done by Pew Research Center, current generations are categorized as, the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, the Millennials, and Generation Z. Those belonging to the Silent Generation are the oldest Americans. They are classified as those born before 1946. Baby Boomers, the next oldest group are those born between 1946 and 1964. Generation X are those born between 1965 and 1980. Millennials are those who were born in 1981 to 1996, and Generation Z are those born after 1996 (Taylor, 2016).

Political differences between generations have been well documented (Putnam, 2000; Robinson & Jackson, 2001). Inter-generational differences extend beyond beliefs and include differences in political behavior (Dalton, 2015). Millennials are less likely to vote, donate money, and contact legislators than all previous generations (Franklin, 2004; Henn, Weinstein, & Forrest, 2005; Klecka, 1971). Dalton (2008) attributes low levels of Millennial turnout to dissatisfaction with the political elites and the economic system. Dalton also documents a generational inclination towards non-traditional, or engaged, forms of political participation, like protesting, consumer activism, and volunteering with non-profits in their communities.

The 2008 Presidential election sparked increased interest in understanding what drives youth political behavior due to their uncharacteristically high turnout, interest, and activism in President Obama's presidential campaign. Obama's success in mobilizing young voters led researchers to seek to explain why youth turnout was so high in this election but not in others. Some of these scholars found that the youth are not participating in politics as much as other generational cohorts because of perceptions of the political system being unresponsive or corrupt. Lawless and Fox (2015) argue the mean-spirited and dysfunctional nature of American politics has led the youth to doubt the ability of elected officials and the government to be an effective entity for promoting positive change. Obama's message of hope and change may have cut through this perception. As demonstrated by the Obama and Sanders campaigns, when candidates or campaigns respond to young people's disillusionment, we observe relatively high levels of young voter turnout. Although younger generations, including Millennials, are not engaging in politics as much as earlier generations, some conditions lead to spikes in their participation. In this study, we explore if direct democracy can counteract Millennial disillusionment with the political system to increase their turnout.

3. Direct Democracy and Voting

Direct democracy in American states, particularly the ballot initiative, has been thoroughly studied for decades

[1] All estimations will compare turnout of Millennials to turnout of Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation.

both for its effect on state policy outputs (Gerber, 1996; Matsusaka, 2001) and the public (Smith, 2001; Tolbert, Bowen, & Donovan, 2009; Tolbert, McNeal, & Smith, 2003). Every state has some form of direct democracy, be it the initiative process, referendums, or both, although there is significant institutional variation in whether they have the initiative process and the ease of qualifying measures on the ballot (Bowler & Donovan, 2004). While ballot measures are used to accomplish specific policies goals, their usage changes the election environment for states, and has been found to produce externalities in voter participation and attitudes.

There are two principle explanations for how direct democracy increases voter turnout. One is that direct democratic institutions have a long term educative effect, increasing voter interest in their government and in being active democratic participants (Bowler & Donovan, 2002; Tolbert & Smith, 2005; Tolbert et al., 2003). Progressive activists hoped the ballot initiative would foster the citizenry in becoming a new branch of government that could be active in the policy making process. Activists hoped that over time, as the institutions of ballot initiatives and referendum matured, voters would become more engaged in the political process because they were given more influence in policy making. Researchers have also found that previous initiative use increases turnout (Bowler & Donovan, 2002; Hero & Tolbert, 2004). Tolbert, Grummel and Smith (2001) show an increase in voter turnout in initiative states regardless of the number of measures on the ballot. Based on these findings, a key understanding of direct democracy is that it seems to empower voters even if it is not being used in that specific election.

The second explanation argues that having a procedure for direct democracy is insufficient for driving turnout. Rather, turnout effects are observed when measures qualify to be on the ballot. There is large variation in the types of direct democracy (initiatives, popular referendum, veto referendum, etc.) as well as the requirements for placing measures on the ballot, leading to large variation in ballot measure usage in the states (Bowler & Donovan, 2004). Once on the ballot, direct democracy increases turnout by mobilizing individuals in support of specific issues (Biggers, 2011; Childers & Binder, 2012; Tolbert et al., 2009). This effect is particularly large when ballot measures are salient to the public (Dyck & Seabrook, 2010). The most notable examples of this phenomena were the same-sex marriage bans on the ballot in the 2004 general election. These measures increased turnout among Evangelicals and other conservative Christians relative to the rest of the population (Campbell & Monson, 2008; Smith, DeSantis, & Kassel, 2006). These voters felt disproportionately passionate about the issue, and the mobilization from the measures comparatively increased their turnout. This supports Nicholson's (2003) argument that direct democracy will have the strongest effect when voters are aware of ballot measures. Holding all else constant, ballot measure usage increases turnout above and beyond the effect of having a direct democratic process.

Like most research on ballot measures, turnout effects must be contextualized. Direct democracy typically increases turnout in low-turnout contexts, such as midterm elections (Schlozman & Yohai, 2008). Presidential elections have significantly higher levels of voter turnout (A. Campbell, 1960; J. E. Campbell, 1987), so any mobilization effects from ballot measures may be washed out by the overwhelming turnout effects of presidential campaigns. Research on the educative effects of direct democracy (and more specifically, ballot initiatives) has been more mixed (Seabrook, Dyck, & Lascher, 2015). Political scientists have generally found support for more ballot measures being associated with higher voter turnout, particularly in conditions where turnout is historically lower (midterm elections, for example). Higher turnout may be a result of both the long-term and short-term effects of direct democracy.

4. Direct Democracy and Millennial Voting

We believe that an understudied area of direct democracy's mobilization effect is how it interacts differently with each living generation. We argue that when measures are salient to Millennials, they will vote at relatively high rates. First, the empowering effect of ballot measures has been shown to be concentrated most among low-propensity voters and in low-turnout environments (Schlozman & Yohai, 2008; Tolbert & Smith, 2005). Highly engaged voters will likely vote with or without measures on the ballot. However, the decreased turnout in midterm elections creates the opportunity for interest groups to mobilize and persuade non-regular voters who are passionate about an issue to participate. Even a small increase in turnout from low-propensity voters can lead to a proposal being adopted or struck down (Anzia, 2011, 2013). Most Millennials are non-habituated voters, but potential voters with strong and serious concern for salient issues like higher education reform and marijuana liberalization.

The turnout effects should be primarily focused on voters who are on the cusp of voting but need some additional stimulus to turnout. Historically, there is a population of low propensity voters that turnout in competitive presidential elections (A. Campbell, 1960), but turnout at much lower rates in midterm elections when the president they voted for is not on the ballot (J. E. Campbell, 1987). Compared to other ages, younger voters are less likely to turnout to vote, especially in midterm elections (Campbell et al., 1980; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). We have also observed generational declines in political participation, including in voting, across all of the Western industrialized democratic nations (Franklin, 2004). Turnout in midterm and presidential elections varies greatly, with much lower turnout in midterm elections where information and excitement are lower. Millennials make an ideal candidate for researching the effects

of direct democracy on turnout because they are a large pool of potential voters who decide to stay home during midterm elections, but that could potentially be mobilized under the right conditions.

An additional reason to study Millennials is because they are relatively new to politics and may lack the influence of older generations in the policy-making process. There is a substantial literature that finds that not all groups are treated the same by policy-makers (Boushey, 2016). We argue that the record levels of disenchantment with the democratic process among Millennial voters (Foa & Mounk, 2016) is a product of a lack of policies salient to their preferences. These disengaged voters feel that traditional policy-making institutions do not respond to their preferences, thus they feel that voting is less important. Ballot measures provide a way to empower Millennials to actively pass legislation that corresponds with their policy preferences. A similar dynamic has been observed in off-year elections voters with a stake in the election outcome, such as members of an interest group that is affected by election results, vote in disproportionately high levels (Anzia, 2011, 2013). While Millennials are not organized as a unified interest group, we follow a similar logic by arguing that Millennials will be more likely to vote when elections incorporate issues important to their generation. Two such issues are higher education reform and marijuana liberalization. We identify these issues as salient to Millennials for several reasons.

Millennials are the most educated generation in American history in terms of earning college degrees (Taylor, 2016). Millennials also reached college age at the time where the rate of inflation for a higher education rapidly increased. As of December 2016, the average American student left university with over $30,000 in student loan debt (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). This number, even when adjusted for inflation, has risen by over 530 percent since the 1960s. Unlike other generations, Millennials cite the rising cost of education as one of the most important issues facing them today (Rouse & Ross, 2018). For Millennials, a politician's stance on higher education funding and debt forgiveness is a top policy issue when considering who to vote for, unlike non-Millennial voters (Rouse & Ross, 2018).

Second, we consider marijuana liberalization as a salient issue because Millennials have distinct attitudes about marijuana. Millennials support both medical and recreational marijuana legalization at higher levels than any other generation (Hargit & Geiger, 2018). In 2018, 74 percent of Millennials approved of legalization, compared to 54 percent of Boomers. Generation X approval is in the middle of the two generations, with 63 percent supporting legalization. Generational differences in attitudes on marijuana are much larger than differences by education and race (Hargit & Geiger, 2018). Hargit and Geiger (2018) conclude that the legalization of marijuana connects to deeper values held by the Millennial generation, such as tolerance and support for ethnic and racial justice.

Although Millennials have distinct views on these two topic areas, they are similar to other generations on a number of issues. For comparison Millennials hold similar opinions to other generations on issues like abortion, Social Security, and Medicare. In 2017, the 62 percent of Millennials said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared to 59 percent of Generation Xers, 53 percent of Baby Boomers, and 48 percent of the Silent Generation (Doherty, Kiley, & O'Hea, 2018). For Social Security the difference across those who oppose cuts in Social Security benefits is also moderate. 61 percent of Millennials, 67 percent of Generation X, 69 percent of Baby Boomers, and 74 percent of the Silent Generation believe benefits should not be reduced (Taylor, 2016). Finally, overwhelming majorities of each generation support Medicare. There is only a seven percent range between the low end of support (Baby Boomers, 85 percent) and the high end (Silent Generation, 92 percent). Millennials and Generation X fall between the two with support at 87 percent and 89 percent respectively (Taylor, 2016). In summary, Millennials are not systematically different than other generations on every issue; higher education reform and marijuana liberalization are two policy areas that are particularly distinct to the Millennial generation, especially compared to other generations.

The usage of Millennial salient ballot measures over the last two decades provides the context for testing a few hypotheses. First, we predict that the number of Millennial salient measures will increase Millennial turnout relative to the rest of the population. Just as ballot measures emphasizing issues important to evangelical voters boosted their turnout (Campbell & Monson, 2008), we expect measures on higher education and marijuana to have the same effect for Millennial voters.

> *Hypothesis 1*. Millennial turnout is expected to increase as the number of Millennial measures increases.

Additionally, the effect should be more pronounced in midterm environments than presidential elections. Historically, there is a sharp drop in voter turnout from presidential to midterm elections (A. Campbell, 1960; J. E. Campbell, 1987; McDonald, 2018). In midterms, we expect measures to have a larger role because there is a large pool of voters who vote in presidential elections, but not in midterms. Midterm elections create a strategic opportunity for interest groups to mobilize bases of support to pass preferred policies (Anzia, 2011, 2013). We argue that Millennial measures will provide the stimulus to increase turnout among Millennials that regularly vote in presidential elections, but that do not in Midterms. Salient measures will have less of an effect in presidential years because these elections are more salient to the average voter, and presidential campaigns have extensive mobilization efforts that may supersede the effect of ballot measures.

Hypothesis 2. The turnout effects of Millennial salient measures on Millennial turnout will be larger in midterm than presidential elections.

5. Data and Methods

We use voter turnout data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration Supplement to test our theory. This survey includes 700,000 individual turnout records from 2002–2016. This telephone survey has been conducted every two years in November and includes US citizens age eighteen or older. The survey is drawn from a stratified sample to create a representative sample of adult citizens.

We choose 2002 as the start year for our sample because it is the first year Millennials make up a substantial percentage of the CPS data: approximately 7 percent of the sample[2]. The percentage of the CPS that is Millennial grows each year as more Millennials become voting age. Millennials constitute 28 percent of respondents in the 2016 CPS[3]. We combine the CPS with a unique data set of the number of Millennial salient ballot measures from 2002–2016 using the National Conference of State Legislatures' (2016) Statewide Ballot Measures Database. We identify any initiative or referendum that liberalizes marijuana laws (both recreational and medicinal) or aims to make higher education more affordable or accessible. We identify 1,599 statewide ballot measures (either initiative or referendum) during general elections in this time period, with 90 being coded as Millennial-salient, composing just over 6 percent of the sample. 55 percent of the Millennial-salient measures were on higher education reform, and 45 percent on marijuana liberalization. We did not code measures as Millennial-salient if they focused on making marijuana laws more restrictive or if they were about higher education but did not emphasize affordability or availability. The average state had .225 Millennial salient measures in each election, meaning there was one measure roughly every four elections per state in our sample. The sample has a high of five measures in a state in a single election, and a low of zero.

Like other research in direct democracy (Bowler & Donovan, 2004), we find that not all states are equal in their usage of Millennial-salient measures. Rhode Island and New Mexico had ten Millennial measures between 2002–2016, followed by Arizona (eight). Seven states had three measures, six had two measures, seven had one measure, and twenty-three states had no salient measures in the sample. Figure 1 shows the total number of salient measures in our data by state.

Our dependent variable is voter turnout. We interact our key independent variable, *Millennial Measures*, with a measure of generation. We use Pew Research Center's age range for each living generation. Table 1 shows the distribution of generations. Boomers make up the largest cohort in the sample, followed by Generation X. Millen-

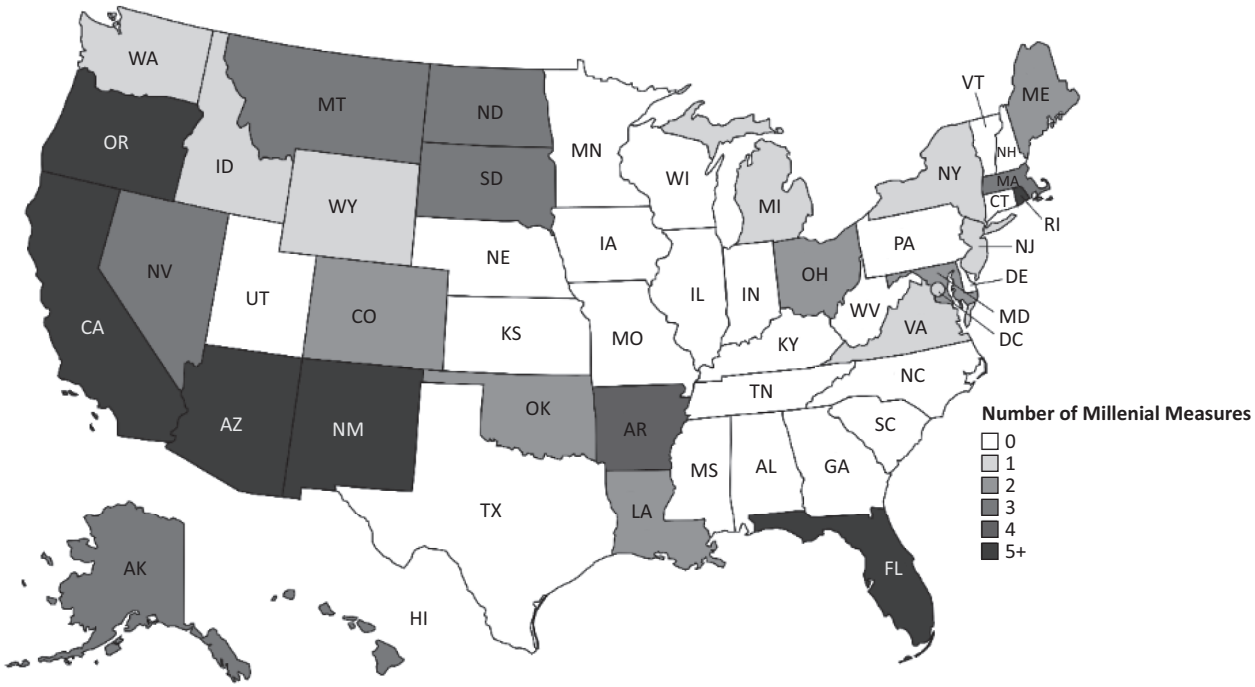

Figure 1. Number of Millennial salient measures. Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (2016).

[2] While the oldest of Millennials reached voting age in 2000, they did not make up a sufficiently large proportion of the sample for state level analysis.
[3] Beginning in 2016, those born in 1997 and 1998 (Generation X) were eligible to vote. They make up .2 percent of the sample and are not large enough to include as a separate generation, so they are omitted from the sample.

Table 1. Distribution of Generations. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2002–2016).

Generation	Sample Size
Millennial	148,170 (19.7%)
Gen X	202,243 (26.8%)
Boomer	259,663 (34.4%)
Silent	143,229 (19%)
Total	753, 308

nials and the Silent generation are roughly the same size. We also use a binary indicator for Millennials in a parallel set of analyses. These two measures of generation provide insights for how Millennials compare to other cohorts as well as how they are different from the rest of the population overall. In both sets of models, we include age to control for lifetime effects. Including age allows us to distinguish between lifetime effects (aging, retirement, etc.) versus generational effects that emerge from the collective socialization of each generation. Specifically, life cycle effects are the idea that one's habits and opinions change over the course of their lives, and from their maturation from being children, to young adults, to adults, and to retirees. Alternatively, cohorts are a group of individuals who have experienced the same event within the same time interval (Ryder, 1965). One way to better parse out age or maturation effects from cohort effects is to include a control for age, and use binary indicator for generations (O'Brien, Stockard, & Isaacson, 1999).

We estimate a multilevel logistic regression to model individual voter turnout, with random intercepts for state and fixed effects for year to account for state-level differences in turnout and turnout effects of individual election years. We estimate four models for each generational indicator; a pooled model with no interaction, a pooled model interacting generation with Millennial measures, the same interaction model but of only respondents in initiative states, and finally the interaction model of respondents living in a state with at least one Millennial measure in that year. We choose initiative states as a subsample because these states may have a historical legacy of direct democracy that makes them systematically different than non-initiative states. They chose to adopt the initiative process, which potentially indicates these states respond differently to voters. The final set of models will compare midterm and presidential election turnout. These models will subsample the data with both generational measures in just mid-term and just presidential elections. This approach will test if salient ballot measures can activate low propensity voters that are activated by presidential campaigns but do not typically vote in midterm elections. These models will identify contexts in which Millennial measures have a greater effect on turnout, and which ones they do not.

Because the effects of direct democracy have been shown to be conditional on electoral context, we include an indicator for presidential election years, and identify states that have competitive statewide elections for president, US Senate, and governor. To further model competitiveness, we include a measure for the total spending per capita of all US Senate, House, and presidential campaigns in a state. We also use Li, PomanteII, and Schraufnagel (2018) Cost of Voting index, which is an index of 33 state election and registration laws that measure the level of difficulty for voters to vote. Higher values indicate a higher cost of voting. These contextual variables help isolate the influence of ballot measures on voting from other sources of increased voter turnout. Finally, we include individual demographic controls, including income, age, race, and education. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for each variable and Table 3 provides a brief description of variables.

6. Results

Table 4 models turnout using the categorical measure of generation. The last three models interact each generation with the number of Millennial salient measures. The first model shows differences across generations, but without the interaction. The reference category is the Baby Boomer generation. Figure 2 compares the predicted probability of voting for each generation based on the results in model 4 of Table 4. Without accounting for the potential moderating effect of Millennial salient ballot measures, Millennials are eight to ten percentage points less likely to vote than Baby Boomers or members of the Silent Generation, while they vote at slightly lower rates than Generation X voters. This supports the existing literature that even when controlling for age, education, income, and other factors that influence voter turnout, there are differences in turnout between generations (Franklin, 2004).

Model 2 shows the results for all elections in the sample. Millennials are less likely to vote than Baby Boomers when the number of Millennial measures is zero. Generation X voters are also less likely to vote than Boomers, and the Silent Generation is more likely to vote, holding all else constant and the number of Millennial measures at zero. Increasing the number of Millennial salient measures has no effect on Generation X or Silent Generation voters compared to Boomers but increases turnout among Millennials. This model supports our hypothesis that Millennial salient measures will increase turnout specifically among Millennials. If there are five Millennial measures in an election, turnout differences between Millennials and Boomers disappear. Figure 3 shows the

Table 2. Summary statistics.

Variable	Mean	Sd	Min	Max
Vote	0.622	0.485	0.000	1.000
Mil Measures	0.244	0.524	0.000	5.000
Millennial	0.171	0.376	0.000	1.000
Male	0.474	0.499	0.000	1.000
Age	47.846	17.695	18.000	85.000
Initiative State	0.482	0.500	0.000	1.000
Income	9.815	4.885	0.000	16.000
Missing Income	0.092	0.289	0.000	1.000
Education	3.219	1.546	1.000	6.000
Total Spending per Capita (Standardized)	−0.000	1.000	−0.588	7.026
Competitive Gubernatorial Election	0.269	0.443	0.000	1.000
Competitive Senate Election	0.164	0.370	0.000	1.000
Competitive Presidential Election	0.175	0.380	0.000	1.000
Presidential Election	0.496	0.500	0.000	1.000
Cost of Voting Index	0.000	1.000	−3.979	1.841

Sources: US Census Bureau (2002–2016), National Conference of State Legislatures (2016) and The Campaign Finance Institute (2019).

Table 3. Description of variables.

Variable	Description
Vote	Binary Indicator for Vote/No Vote
Millennial	Binary Indicator Millennial Generation
Generation	Categorical Measure of Millennial, Generation X, Boomers, and Silent Generation, generated by year of birth
Millennial Measures	Number of Ballot Measures on marijuana liberalization or higher education reform in a state in the general election
Age	Age of respondent
Male	Binary indicator for male/not male
Hispanic	Binary indicator for Hispanic
Black	Binary indicator for Black
Initiative	Binary indicator for an initiative state
Income	Categorical measure of income (CPS) from 1–16, grouping individuals by ranges of income
Missing Income	Binary indicator for respondents with no information on their income. This was used to preserve cases and not omit any systematic difference in the sample between those that gave their income versus those that refused
Education	6 category measure of education ranging from less than high school to advanced degree
Federal Campaign Spending	Amount of money spent by major party federal campaigns (House, Senate, and President) in an election year in a state per capita. (This variable has been standardized)
Competitive Gubernatorial Race	Binary indicator-Campaign Finance Institute's measure of competitive gubernatorial elections
Competitive Senate Race	Binary indicator for senate race where margin of victory was less than 10 percent
Competitive Presidential Race	Binary indicator for presidential race where margin of victory was less than 10 percent
Presidential Election	Binary indicator for presidential election year
Cost of Voting	Lee et al's (2018) measure of the cost of voting using a measure of 30 different electoral laws in the states such as voter ID, registration regulations, and other laws

Table 4. Generational model of turnout using total count of ballot measures in an election.

	All States	All States	Initiative States	States with Any Measures
Millennial	−0.3954*	−0.3514*	−0.4068*	−0.3943*
	(0.0198)	(0.0184)	(0.0306)	(0.0249)
Generation X	−0.2888*	−0.2818*	−0.2858*	−0.2722*
	(0.0131)	(0.0115)	(0.0214)	(0.0173)
Silent/Greatest	0.0869*	0.1124*	0.0961*	0.0675*
	(0.0154)	(0.0136)	(0.0252)	(0.0201)
Total Measures	−0.0008	0.0035*	−0.0025	−0.0013
	(0.0017)	(0.0014)	(0.0022)	(0.0019)
Millennial # Total Measures	0.0124*		0.0196*	0.0140*
	(0.0021)		(0.0028)	(0.0025)
Generation X # Total Measures	0.0020		0.0041	0.0011
	(0.0018)		(0.0025)	(0.0022)
Silent # Total Measures	0.0076*		0.0070*	0.0084*
	(0.0021)		(0.0029)	(0.0025)
Age	0.0277*	0.0277*	0.0288*	0.0282*
	(0.0005)	(0.0005)	(0.0008)	(0.0006)
Male	−0.1118*	−0.1117*	−0.1270*	−0.1170*
	(0.0057)	(0.0057)	(0.0082)	(0.0067)
Hispanic	−0.1679*	−0.1662*	−0.1547*	−0.1321*
	(0.0118)	(0.0118)	(0.0160)	(0.0138)
Black	0.4814*	0.4813*	0.4407*	0.4550*
	(0.0104)	(0.0104)	(0.0170)	(0.0126)
Initiative State	0.1149*	0.1142*		0.1059
	(0.0542)	(0.0541)		(0.0551)
Income	0.0870*	0.0870*	0.0866*	0.0862*
	(0.0008)	(0.0008)	(0.0012)	(0.0010)
Missing Income	0.7687*	0.7687*	0.7515*	0.7319*
	(0.0138)	(0.0138)	(0.0204)	(0.0165)
Education	0.3938*	0.3937*	0.3845*	0.3909*
	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0032)	(0.0025)
Federal Campaign Spending	0.0133*	0.0131*	−0.0213*	0.0090
	(0.0044)	(0.0044)	(0.0060)	(0.0049)
Competitive Gub Race	0.0785*	0.0780*	0.1045*	0.0947*
	(0.0076)	(0.0076)	(0.0106)	(0.0091)
Competitive Senate Race	0.1052*	0.1049*	0.1474*	0.1172*
	(0.0088)	(0.0088)	(0.0142)	(0.0105)
Competitive Presidential Election	0.1203*	0.1202*	0.0735*	0.1008*
	(0.0107)	(0.0107)	(0.0159)	(0.0133)
Presidential Year	0.7404*	0.7409*	0.8141*	0.7424*
	(0.0151)	(0.0151)	(0.0217)	(0.0184)
Cost of Voting	−0.0457*	−0.0471*	−0.0433*	−0.0490*
	(0.0058)	(0.0058)	(0.0077)	(0.0068)
Constant	−3.2652*	−3.2801*	−3.2043*	−3.2677*
	(0.0480)	(0.0478)	(0.0583)	(0.0526)
var(β_{State})	0.0359*	0.0359*	0.0340*	0.0363*
	(0.0073)	(0.0073)	(0.0100)	(0.0075)
Observations	668,352	668,352	321,885	478,033

Notes: * $p < .05$. All models include random intercepts for State and fixed effects for year.

marginal effect of Millennial measures on turnout by generation. While these measures have no effect on other generations, they increase Millennial turnout by one percent for each additional measure.

Models 3 and 4 compare the contextual effects of salient measures by the ballot measure context. In both models, Millennial measures have a mediated effect on turnout for Millennials but not for other generations.

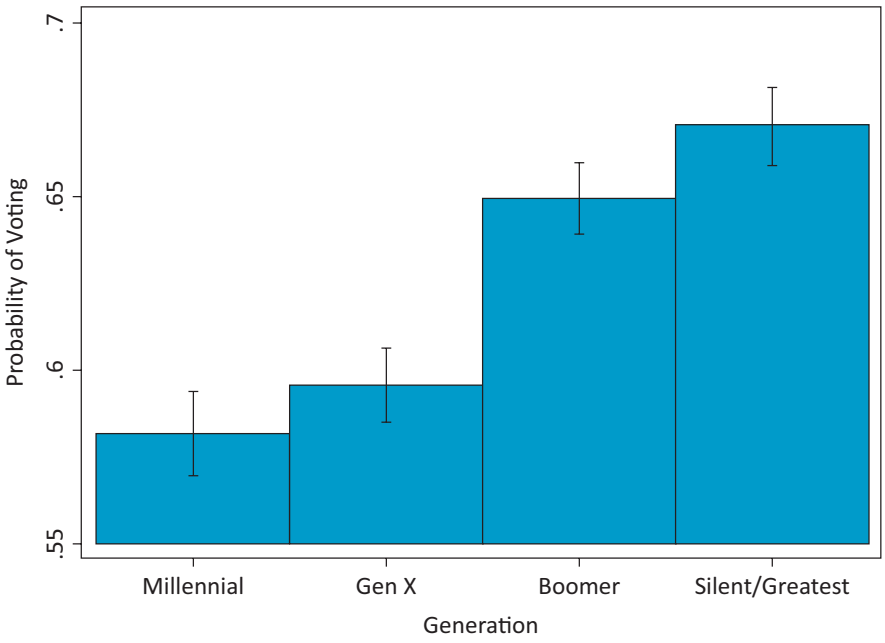

Figure 2. Probability of voting by generation. Probabilities shown are population-averaged probabilities.

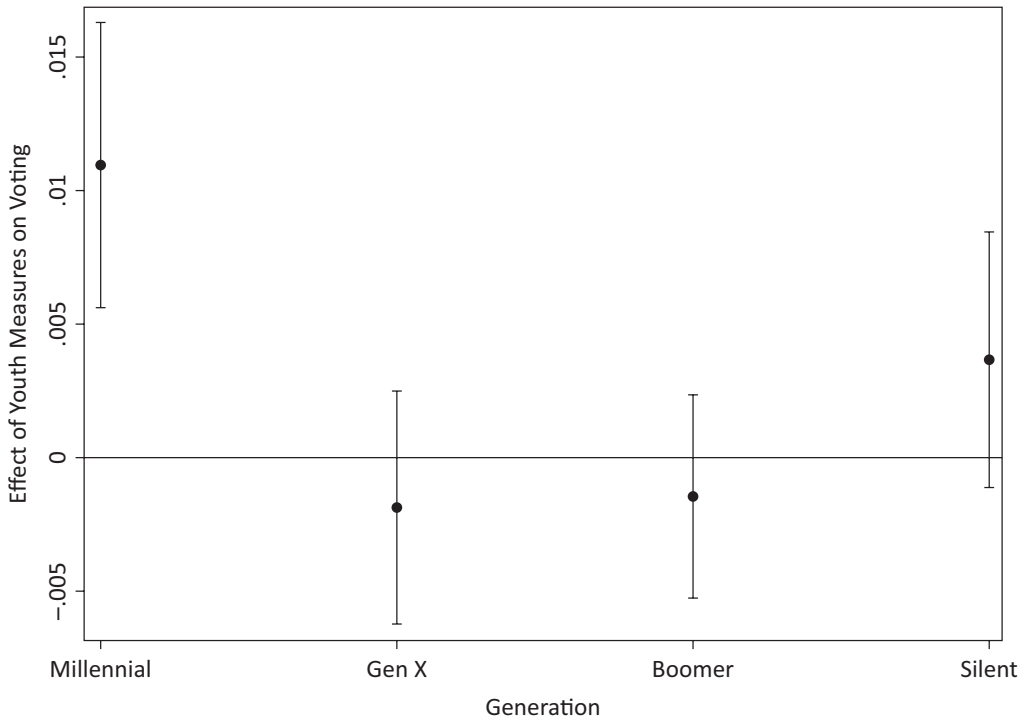

Figure 3. Marginal effect of Millennial measures on turnout by generation. Marginal effects shown are population-averaged.

Note that when the number of measures is zero, there are still persistent and substantively large turnout gaps between generations. The fourth model shows that the relationship is not being driven by just whether states have any measures salient to Millennials, but that the number of measures is also important. Even when isolated to just states that have measures on the ballot in an election, additional Millennial measures increase turnout among Millennials.

Other contextual variables are largely congruent with our expectations. Initiative states have somewhat higher turnout, and competitive gubernatorial, senatorial, and presidential elections in a state all increase voter turnout. As the cost of voting increases, citizens become less likely to vote. In the pooled model, increased federal campaign spending per capita is significantly related to increased voter turnout. Additionally, presidential elections see higher turnout than non-presidential elections.

Table 6 compares the effect of salient ballot measures in midterm and presidential elections. As can be seen, Millennial measures have no generational effects in presidential elections, but have a positive and significant effect on Millennial turnout in midterm elections. Salient measures appear to be activating Millennials in midterm elections, taking a similar role to presidential campaigns in presidential election years.

7. Millennials versus the Rest of the Population

Table 5 is the same specification as Table 4 but uses a binary measure to compare Millennials to the rest of the population. In the model with no interaction, Millennials do not vote at significantly different rates than the rest of the population after controlling for demographic factors. This is likely because Generation X voter turnout is much closer to Millennial turnout than Boomer or Silent Generation voters. Yet despite similarities in baseline levels of turnout between Millennials and other voters when there are no Millennial measures on the ballot, only Millennials appear to be affected by measures on marijuana liberalization or higher education reform. When the interaction is included, Millennials are less likely to vote than the rest of the population when there are no salient measures. The difference in turnout is small enough that

Table 5. Binary Millennial measure model of turnout using total count of ballot measures.

	All States	All States	Initiative States	States with Any Measures
Millennial	−0.0421*	−0.0064	−0.0546*	−0.0548*
	(0.0117)	(0.0098)	(0.0191)	(0.0157)
Total Measures	0.0017	0.0036*	0.0006	0.0011
	(0.0014)	(0.0014)	(0.0018)	(0.0015)
Millennial # Total Measures	0.0101*		0.0165*	0.0117*
	(0.0018)		(0.0025)	(0.0022)
Age	0.0370*	0.0370*	0.0382*	0.0370*
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Male	−0.1097*	−0.1096*	−0.1253*	−0.1150*
	(0.0057)	(0.0057)	(0.0082)	(0.0067)
Hispanic	−0.1699*	−0.1680*	−0.1565*	−0.1346*
	(0.0118)	(0.0118)	(0.0160)	(0.0138)
Black	0.4833*	0.4831*	0.4416*	0.4566*
	(0.0104)	(0.0104)	(0.0170)	(0.0126)
Initiative State	0.1145*	0.1136*		0.1058
	(0.0542)	(0.0542)		(0.0552)
Income	0.0880*	0.0879*	0.0872*	0.0870*
	(0.0008)	(0.0008)	(0.0012)	(0.0010)
Missing Income	0.7777*	0.7778*	0.7582*	0.7400*
	(0.0138)	(0.0138)	(0.0204)	(0.0165)
Education	0.3918*	0.3917*	0.3825*	0.3891*
	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0031)	(0.0025)
Federal Campaign Spending	0.0134*	0.0132*	−0.0212*	0.0093
	(0.0044)	(0.0044)	(0.0060)	(0.0049)
Competitive Gub Race	0.0788*	0.0780*	0.1048*	0.0949*
	(0.0076)	(0.0076)	(0.0106)	(0.0091)
Competitive Senate Race	0.1049*	0.1045*	0.1463*	0.1164*
	(0.0088)	(0.0088)	(0.0142)	(0.0105)
Competitive Presidential Election	0.1205*	0.1204*	0.0737*	0.1014*
	(0.0107)	(0.0107)	(0.0159)	(0.0133)
Presidential Year	0.6258*	0.6264*	0.6994*	0.6327*
	(0.0138)	(0.0138)	(0.0198)	(0.0169)
Cost of Voting	−0.0456*	−0.0470*	−0.0429*	−0.0485*
	(0.0058)	(0.0058)	(0.0077)	(0.0068)
Constant	−3.7763*	−3.7818*	−3.7110*	−3.7562*
	(0.0419)	(0.0419)	(0.0471)	(0.0447)
var(β_{State})	0.0360*	0.0360*	0.0341*	0.0364*
	(0.0073)	(0.0073)	(0.0100)	(0.0075)
Observations	668,352	668,352	321,885	478,033

Notes: * $p < .05$. All models include random intercepts for State and fixed effects for year.

one Millennial measure is enough to result in Millennials being more likely to vote than the rest of the population.

Figure 4 shows the predicted probabilities for model 2 of Table 5. When there are no measures on the ballot, Millennials vote at basically the same rate as the rest of the population, controlling for other factors. As the number of measures increases, so does Millennial turnout while the rest of the population barely changes and moves in a slightly negative direction. Millennial turnout increases by roughly one percentage point for each additional salient measure on the ballot. When states have five measures on the ballot, there is roughly a six percent difference in turnout between Millennials and the rest of the population. In models 3 and 4, there is no significant difference between Millennial turnout and the rest of the population when there are no Millennial measures, but Millennial measures still increase Millennial turnout.

Controlling for other factors, Millennials are more likely to vote than the rest of the population in a variety of contexts as the number of measures increases. The contextual electoral variables largely have the same effect as in Table 3. Voters in initiative states with competitive elections, a low cost of voting, and with a presidential election are more likely to vote. Table 6 compares the models in midterm and presidential elections using both the generational and binary measures to identify Millennials. Again, Millennial measures do not have a significant interactive effect with generation in presidential elections but does in midterm elections. Millennial measures still have a mediating effect after controlling for context, but the effect is concentrated in midterm elections.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

These findings have several important implications. First, we have demonstrated that there are real differences between generations in political participation. Controlling for a variety of factors (including age and electoral competitiveness), Millennials are less likely to vote than other generations. We find consistent generational declines in voter turnout, which could have long lasting implications for American democracy as an increasing number of citizens stop participating.

We have also shown that the electoral context has a different effect depending on the generation. For all sets of models, Millennials are significantly more likely to vote when there are more measures on the ballot salient to them. The effect cancels out any generational differences between Millennials and other cohorts. Millennials are the only age group affected by these measures as we observe no significant increases or decreases in turnout in other generations. They are not completely disengaged from the political process but will be more likely to participate when the system is responding to their preferences. These findings provide more support for arguments that much of Bernie Sanders' success with youth voters was due to his emphasis on issues important to Millennials, particularly his support for tuition free university education. When elections include discussion of issues salient to Millennials, they turnout at higher rates.

Substantively the effect size of increased Millennial ballot measures is between a one and two percentage point increase in turnout for Millennials for each additional salient ballot measure. Given that the 2016

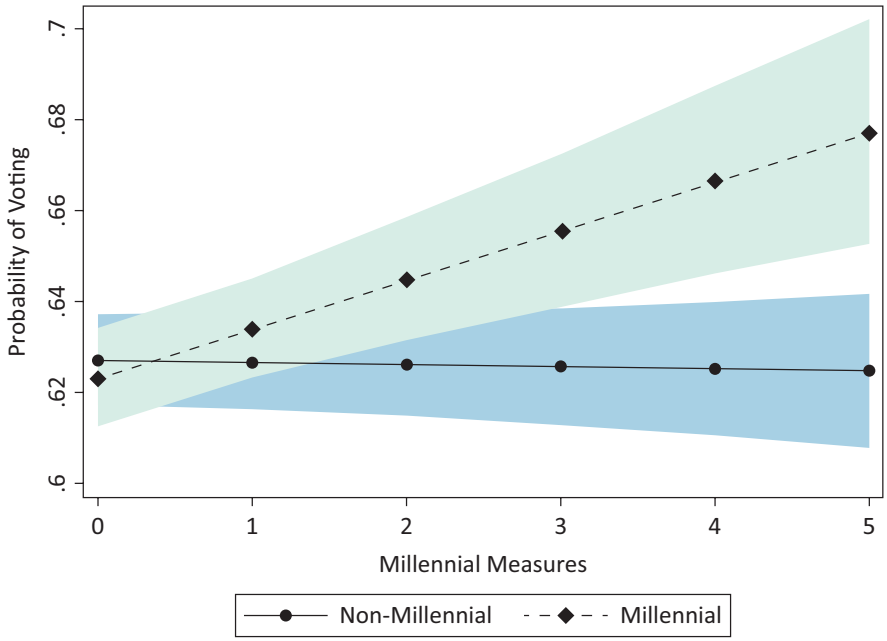

Figure 4. Predicted probability of voting- Millennials vs rest of population. Probabilities shown are population-averaged probabilities.

Table 6. Comparing presidential and mid-term elections.

	Presidential-Generational	Mid-Term-Generations	Presidential-Binary Measure	Mid-Term-Binary Measure
Millennial	−0.3194∗	−0.5110∗	−0.0064	−0.1511∗
	(0.0279)	(0.0253)	(0.0149)	(0.0152)
Gen X	−0.2520∗	−0.3089∗		
	(0.0179)	(0.0158)		
Silent	0.0997∗	0.0826∗		
	(0.0212)	(0.0186)		
Millennial Measures	−0.0167	−0.0113	−0.0018	−0.0049
	(0.0138)	(0.0148)	(0.0091)	(0.0111)
Millennial # Millennial Measures	0.0109	0.1182∗	0.0132	0.1124∗
	(0.0207)	(0.0258)	(0.0181)	(0.0238)
Gen X # Millennial Measures	0.0053	−0.0113		
	(0.0194)	(0.0202)		
Silent # Millennial Measures	−0.0065	0.0419		
	(0.0215)	(0.0221)		
Age	0.0216∗	0.0323∗	0.0299∗	0.0417∗
	(0.0008)	(0.0007)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Male	−0.1981∗	−0.0422∗	−0.1971∗	−0.0391∗
	(0.0085)	(0.0077)	(0.0085)	(0.0077)
Hispanic	−0.1622∗	−0.1897∗	−0.1261∗	−0.1922∗
	(0.0153)	(0.0177)	(0.0153)	(0.0177)
Black	0.6175∗	0.3790∗	0.6200∗	0.3822∗
	(0.0157)	(0.0139)	(0.0158)	(0.0139)
Income	0.0899∗	0.0842∗	0.0910∗	0.0859∗
	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)
Missing Income	0.7590∗	0.7641∗	0.7666∗	0.7787∗
	(0.0201)	(0.0190)	(0.0200)	(0.0190)
Education	0.4564∗	0.3520∗	0.4560∗	0.3500∗
	(0.0034)	(0.0028)	(0.0034)	(0.0028)
Cong Campaign Spending	0.0114	0.0392∗	0.0157∗	0.0394∗
	(0.0063)	(0.0042)	(0.0065)	(0.0042)
Competitive Gub Race	0.0179	0.0961∗	−0.0341∗	0.0959∗
	(0.0164)	(0.0090)	(0.0168)	(0.0091)
Competitive Senate Race	0.0301∗	0.1514∗	−0.0083	0.1509∗
	(0.0142)	(0.0119)	(0.0151)	(0.0118)
Competitive Pres Election	0.0635∗		0.0384∗	
	(0.0109)		(0.0144)	
Initiative State	0.4262∗	0.2016∗	0.2143∗	0.2010∗
	(0.0139)	(0.0093)	(0.0135)	(0.0092)
Cost of Voting	−0.0004	−0.0888∗	−0.0268∗	−0.0892∗
	(0.0055)	(0.0046)	(0.0053)	(0.0047)
Constant	−2.3079∗	−3.3161∗	−2.6720∗	−3.8476∗
	(0.0446)	(0.0390)	(0.0303)	(0.0246)
var(β_{State})	2.0725e+08*	86564960.66*	1.9222e+08*	86624295.89*
	(10679863.1088)	(3920093.018)	(13332112.51)	(3854348.487)
Observations	329,368	338,984	329,368	338,984

Notes: All models include random intercepts for State and fixed effects for year. * indicates $p < .05$.

presidential election was decided by roughly 100,000 voters in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and many razor thin margins in US House and Senate elections in 2018, a two-percentage point increase in Millennial turnout could have a tremendous effect on election results. A two-percentage point increase in Millennial turnout translates into 1.5 million more voters participating in elections.

Secondly, our findings support existing research that direct democracy has a context-dependent effect on

voter turnout, and that the effect is largest in low turnout contexts. We find that the turnout effect is mostly concentrated in midterm contests, which historically have lower levels of turnout, particularly for Millennial voters. It appears that these salient measures act in a similar way as presidential campaigns in mobilizing Millennial voters. Differences between Millennial and other generations are largest when there is no presidential election or salient measures. That being said, not all measures are created equal. The turnout effect of ballot measures is concentrated on issues that are salient to a particular voter group. Just as Smith et al. (2006) and Campbell and Monson (2008) find that same sex marriage bans increased conservative Christian turnout in the 2004 presidential election, we find that when measures focus on issues salient to Millennials, their turnout increases.

Lastly, we want to emphasize the implication of these findings on American political behavior over time. The surge in turnout in the 2018 midterm non-withstanding (McDonald, 2018), there are fears that disillusionment with the political system is leading to increasingly low turnout elections, particularly in midterms. A key point of emphasis for activists is getting low propensity voters to participate. Salient ballot measures may be a way to not only accomplish policy goals, but to also engage populations that turnout at lower levels. Repeated elections with mobilizing measures could create millions of habitual voters (Plutzer, 2002) who will be more likely to participate in future elections even without the stimulus of salient measures.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

A Survey Experiment on Citizens' Preferences for 'Vote–Centric' vs. 'Talk–Centric' Democratic Innovations with Advisory vs. Binding Outcomes

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Abstract
Previous research on public support for participatory decision-making fails to distinguish between vote-centric (referendums and initiatives) and talk-centric (deliberative-style meetings) instruments, despite a deliberative turn in democratic theory suggesting that political discussion among ordinary citizens improves decision-making. In an online factorial survey experiment conducted among a sample of 960 Americans recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, we compared support for the use of referendums and public meetings, arguing that attitudes towards these instruments depend on whether they are used to inform legislators or take binding decisions. Public meetings were rated considerably lower than referendums and initiatives, especially when the outcomes were binding. Contrary to expectations, we did not find a preference for binding (over advisory) referendums and individuals from referendum and initiative states, where these instruments are legally binding, expressed less support for binding participatory reforms than individuals from non-direct democratic states. Despite the many critiques of direct democracy, public debate in the US has not considered whether advisory outcomes might appease some of these concerns. The results also demonstrated that individuals expressing concerns about the inability of ordinary citizens to understand politics and about the welfare of minority groups were not as negative about participatory decision-making when legislators had the final say.

Keywords
direct democracy; deliberative democracy; democratic innovations; factorial survey experiments; participatory decision-making; public opinion; referendums; vignette experiment

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

Several studies in established democracies document broad popular support for allowing citizens a greater role in political decisions (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007; Craig, Kreppel, & Kane, 2001; Dalton, Burklin, & Drummond, 2001; Donovan & Karp, 2006). Data from cross-national surveys such as the European Social Survey (Round 6, 2012) and the International Social Survey Program (ISSP Research Group, 2016) demonstrate that 70–80% of respondents agree with the use of referendums for making political decisions. However, previous research on public support for participatory decision-making fails to distinguish between 'vote-centric' and 'talk-centric' instruments—despite a 'deliberative turn' in democratic theory—and between consultative and legally binding outcomes. These are important distinctions because they tell us more about *how* citizens want to be involved in political decision-making and whether they want to be in control of policymaking, or are satisfied simply being heard.

Participatory reforms or democratic innovations are 'instruments designed to increase citizen participation in the political decision-making process' (Smith, 2009,

p. 1). Whereas some of these instruments are more 'vote-centric' e.g., referendums and initiatives, others are more 'talk-centric' e.g., mini-publics and deliberative polls (LeDuc, 2015). Normative political theorists have urged more deliberation to improve decision-making processes (Chambers, 2012; Fishkin, 1991; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1996), however previous research on citizens' perceptions measures only support for referendums or for the general idea of 'giving citizens more opportunities to participate in political decision-making' (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2001; Dalton et al., 2001; Donovan & Karp, 2006). By means of a factorial survey experiment where respondents are randomly assigned vignettes about referendums and initiatives or about 'public meetings where citizens collectively discuss political issues', we investigate whether people are more favorable towards vote-centric or talk-centric decision-making processes.

Public support for these instruments may depend on how much control citizens have over policy outcomes. In recent years, politicians in New Zealand (Karp & Aimer, 2002), the Netherlands (Qvortrup, 2018), and the UK (Merrick, 2016) have debated whether the outcomes of referendums should be respected or subject to parliamentary approval. Talk-centric instruments generally do not constitute a formal part of the decision-making process, although some normative theorists have argued for 'empowered' deliberative forums (Fung, 2007; Pateman, 2012; Setälä, 2011). Therefore, with our factorial survey experiment, we also test whether support for vote-centric and talk-centric instruments depends on whether they are used to inform policymakers or to take binding decisions.

Finally, we develop several hypotheses about the skeptics of participatory reforms, testing whether their attitudes towards these instruments are 'less negative' when the outcomes are advisory as opposed to binding. Critics of referendums and initiatives express concerns about the inability of ordinary citizens to understand the issues on the ballot and about the harmful consequences of majoritarian democracy for minorities (Bowler & Donovan, 2000; Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Gamble, 1997; Gerber & Hug, 2001; Haider-Markel, Querze, & Lindaman, 2007; Kang, 2002; Lewis, 2013; Magleby, 1984). Surprisingly, public debate in the US, where binding referendums are commonly used at the state level, has not more carefully considered whether advisory outcomes might alleviate some of these concerns.

The experiment was conducted among a sample of 960 US respondents recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Due to the variation in the use of direct democratic instruments across states, the US provides a particularly interesting case study. 26 out of 51 states provide for referendums and/or initiatives that are in most cases legally binding (Cronin, 1999, p. 176). Nonetheless, Americans remain deeply divided over the use of direct democratic instruments and their consequences for democracy (Cronin, 1999; Haskell, 2018; Lewis, 2013). Some institutions such as the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 2002) recommend switching to advisory procedures and several states have flirted with the idea of advisory referendums in the past (Schaffner, 1907).

2. Theory

2.1. Vote-Centric Instruments

In the 26 American states providing for direct democracy, referendums and initiatives are generally binding, although some states only allow indirect initiatives where successful petitions go to the legislature before going on the ballot (NCSL, 2018). This stands in contrast to the European experience where referendums are usually government-initiated and advisory (except Switzerland and Italy) and where citizens can vote on national issues (Setälä, 2006). Despite the many criticisms of referendums and initiatives, public debate around the possibility of advisory measures is lacking in American states. In the early 20th century, advisory referendums and initiatives were adopted in some cities but the idea never took off nationally. Several Congressmen promoted an advisory referendum on national issues, which received considerable public support in a Gallup Survey (Cronin, 1999).

Political scientist David Magleby has advocated greater use of advisory instruments in the US mainly because current referendum and initiative (R&I) procedures are too complicated. The process would run more smoothly if, instead of requiring citizens to propose actual legislation, legislatures polled citizens about their general policy preferences (Magleby, 1984, p. 195). Advisory referendums can signal a lack of consensus on an issue whereas a binding initiative is enacted by as slim a majority as 50%. Advisory referendums are also more flexible because they allow for proposed legislation to be improved or amended after the vote (Cronin, 1999, p. 178). Studies on the indirect effects of referendums and initiatives suggest that proposals can have an impact on politics even if they do not make it to a popular vote or are not approved by a majority of voters (Gerber & Hug, 2001).

Although there is somewhat of a scholarly debate around the amount of control referendums and initiatives have over policy outcomes, the question of whether citizens want to play a decisive role in policymaking seems to be overlooked. A preference for advisory outcomes implies that citizens trust legislators to make the right decisions, provided they have been sufficiently informed, whereas a preference for binding outcomes suggests that citizens desire more opportunities to keep legislators in check (Bowler et al., 2007).

2.2. Talk-Centric Instruments

Vote-centric instruments are more commonly used than talk-centric instruments, however deliberative democrats are critical of the unreflective, aggregative,

and majoritarian qualities of referendums (Chambers, 2001; Setälä, 2011). Deliberative democracy identifies political discussion among citizens, who must be prepared to defend their views with reasoned argument, as the key component of political decision-making (Dryzek, 2007). Examples of participatory instruments emphasizing discussion are citizens' juries, mini-publics and deliberative polls (Pateman, 2012).

Advocates of a discussion-based approach emphasize a range of positive outcomes: among others, participants learn important civic skills, consolidate their political views, empathize with opposing viewpoints, and set aside personal interests in the pursuit of common goals (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1996; Roberts, 2004). Critics argue that talk-centric instruments make unrealistic demand on ordinary citizens who lack interest and knowledge of politics (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Mutz, 2006; Warren, 1996). Others express concerns about inequalities in deliberation due to diverging communication styles and the status effects of sex, race, culture, and ethnicity (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014; Sanders, 1997). Nonetheless, there seems to be a growing consensus among democratic theorists that deliberation enhances democracy (Pateman, 2012).

Talk-centric instruments are very loosely connected to policymaking and seldom have more than advisory force (Setälä, 2011). Some deliberative theorists promote the idea of 'empowered deliberation', arguing that when citizens see a real connection between participation and outcomes, they are more willing to participate and take their role seriously (Fung, 2007; Johnson & Gastil, 2015; Pateman, 2012; Smith, 2009). Others contend that talk-centric instruments cannot perform a decision-making function: these instruments are primarily 'schools of democracy' where citizens acquire important civic skills (Fishkin, 1991); higher stakes privilege emotions over rational thought and inhibit the potential for compromise (Mansbridge, 2007); and decisions require that participants reach a consensus which, according to Warren (2017), is neither feasible nor desirable in deliberative settings.

2.3. Citizens' Support for Advisory vs. Binding Talk-Centric and Vote-Centric Instruments

We argue that ordinary citizens do not follow the normative debate about deliberative democracy and are therefore not familiar with the reasons why this approach to political decision-making might produce better solutions. Talk-centric instruments are not commonly used for informing or making political decisions and are likely to be perceived as chaotic, inefficient, and less inclusive, especially in comparison to referendums and initiatives. Therefore, we hypothesize that citizens express greater support for vote-centric than talk-centric decision-making instruments (H1).

Public meetings are less inclusive than referendums because only a small subsection of the public can participate, hence the decisions made in these meetings are likely to be perceived as less representative of what the general public wants than the decisions made by referendums (Parkinson, 2003). Deliberations produce outcomes that are considered legitimate by the body that deliberated, but are not necessarily legitimate as binding decisions over a wider democratic polity (Johnson & Gastil, 2015). Therefore, we hypothesize that advisory outcomes are preferred for talk-centric instruments (H2a).

Voting is the most common deciding rule in contemporary democracies and the decisions are perceived as legitimate by citizens because they correspond to the views of the majority. The counting of votes reveals more about the strength of an opinion (Warren, 2017). Vote-centric instruments are more inclusive than talk-centric instruments because every citizen can participate and they may be perceived as more democratic in the sense that every vote weighs equally, whereas equality of voice is difficult to achieve in deliberative settings where louder or 'privileged' voices tend to dominate (Sanders, 1997). Finally, considering claims of widespread dissatisfaction with representative institutions, especially in the US context (Cooper, 2018; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002), it seems logical to expect that citizens would want preferences upheld by the majority of the polity to be implemented and not just accounted for. Therefore, we hypothesize that binding outcomes are preferred for vote-centric instruments (H2b).

2.4. Direct vs. Non-Direct Democratic States

The US offers a particularly interesting case study for this research because half of the states provide for referendums and initiatives. Surveys conducted in R&I states demonstrate that citizens tend to regard these instruments in a positive light (Bowler & Donovan, 2002; Craig et al., 2001; Cronin, 1999). Since South Dakota first adopted the initiative and referendum in 1898, no state has ever chosen to do away with them and states without are gradually adopting them at a rate of about one state per decade since the end of World War II (Matsusaka, 2005, p. 186). Furthermore, studies in the US (Bowler & Donovan, 2002) and Switzerland (Stadelmann-Steffen & Vatter, 2012) have demonstrated that exposure to referendums and initiatives is associated with more positive attitudes towards government. If these instruments contribute to greater satisfaction with government, then citizens who have access to referendums and initiatives are probably more positive about them than those who do not have access. Therefore, the previously hypothesized preference for vote-centric (over talk-centric) decision-making instruments is expected to be stronger for individuals living in R&I states than for individuals in non-direct democratic states (H3).

Finally, given that in the US the decisions made in R&I procedures are usually binding, switching to advisory decisions may be perceived by individuals in R&I states as a step back for democracy. By contrast, individuals resid-

ing in non-direct democratic states might consider advisory instruments as a step forwards and therefore not differentiate as much between advisory and binding outcomes. We hypothesize that the positive effect of residing in a R&I state on support for participatory reforms is weaker when the decisions are advisory as opposed to binding (H4).

2.5. The Skeptics of Participatory Reforms

Several political scientists have criticized direct democracy on the grounds that citizens lack sufficient knowledge to make political decisions (Bowler & Donovan, 2000; Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Kang, 2002; Magleby, 1984) and that majority rule via referendums and initiatives contributes to the suppression of minority rights (Gamble, 1997; Gerber & Hug, 2001; Haider-Markel et al., 2007; Lewis, 2013). However, with the exception of Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010), who argue that these are the reasons why highly informed voters are skeptical of referendums, no studies have investigated whether these concerns influence ordinary citizens' attitudes towards participatory reforms.

Pollsters consistently demonstrate that citizens are not just ignorant about policy issues, but also about the basic structure of government and how it operates, for example a recent poll by the Annenberg Policy Centre found that only 36% of Americans could name the three branches of federal government (Somin, 2014). Majorities of voters in Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington agree that initiative and referendum measures are too complicated to understand (Cronin, 1999; Kang, 2002). Magleby's (1994) examination of voting materials from four states found that they required the reading level of a third-year college student. Studies demonstrate that citizens often cast votes supporting the opposite outcome from what they actually intended (Dubois & Feeney, 1998).

A second critique of direct democratic instruments is that they can provide a tool for majority action against unpopular minorities, as demonstrated by the Swiss and American experience with referendums and initiatives (Dalton et al., 2001, p. 151). Examples of anti-minority measures in the US include initiatives banning same-sex marriage, revoking affirmative action programs, and establishing the preferential treatment of persons from specific racial or ethnic backgrounds for employment or housing (Gamble, 1997). In recent years, initiatives repealing anti-discrimination laws for LGBT persons were submitted in several states, including California's infamous Proposition 8 attempting to reverse the high-court's ruling in favor of same-sex marriage. In a Gallup Survey Poll, 32% of Americans agreed that 'if people were allowed to vote directly on important issues at the state and local levels, minority groups in the population *would not* get a fair say' (Cronin, 1999, p. 99).

These concerns about participatory decision-making could be mitigated if the instruments were restricted to informing decisions and legislators were allowed more discretion. For example, legislators would be able to critically examine proposals that received only limited media coverage, as this would imply limited public debate and public knowledge of the issue at hand, or proposals that infringe on civil rights and liberties. Therefore, we hypothesize that the negative effect of concerns about public incompetence on support for participatory decision-making is weaker when the outcomes are advisory as opposed to binding (H5) and the negative effect of concerns about minority rights on support for participatory decision-making is weaker when the outcomes are advisory as opposed to binding (H6). However, concerns about minority rights may apply more to vote-centric instruments than talk-centric instruments. Referendums contribute to fears of a 'tyrannical majority' because they promote an aggregative form of democracy where outcomes are determined by a contest of numbers (Setälä, 2011). Deliberations, on the other hand, encourage participants to consider a range of alternatives and perspectives (Warren, 2017). Therefore, we hypothesize that the negative effect of concern for minority rights on support for participatory decision-making is weaker (or absent) when the instrument is talk-centric as opposed to vote-centric (H7).

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Sample

The survey was programmed and administered on Qualtrics between December 2016 and February 2017. Respondents were recruited on MTurk, an online crowdsourcing website where people complete tasks in exchange for a small compensation (usually around 1–2 USD for surveys). In order to prevent ballot-box stuffing, the survey was programmed so that each respondent received a unique completion code that could only be entered once. 985 people participated in the survey, 25 of which did not complete the survey and were excluded from the final sample (N = 960). On average, respondents took 7.10 minutes to complete the survey and only 34 respondents took less than 3 minutes. Analyses with and without these 34 respondents yielded the same results and only very small differences in effect sizes, therefore we decided to keep them in the final sample.

Mturk is an increasingly popular recruitment tool among social scientists, however respondents from this platform are often younger, higher educated, and more liberal than the general population (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). In order to obtain a sample that was more similar to the general population in terms of age, education, and political ideology we made use of MTurk's 'premium qualifications'. This function enabled us to target and over-recruit respondents who were older, lower educated, and conservative. In the final sample, some groups are slightly under or overrepresented, but the deviations from the general population are not large (for

descriptives comparing the sample to the general population see Table 1). As will be explained in the following section, representative samples are not crucial for factorial survey experiments where the emphasis is on interactions between respondent characteristics and the experimental manipulations.

Despite these concerns about sampling bias, several studies have found that respondents recruited on MTurk are relatively similar to those recruited for nationally representative surveys. For example, Huff and Tingley (2015) report similar voting patterns among respondents from an MTurk sample and the Cooperative Congressional Election Survey, concluding that 'MTurk could be an excellent means for exploring how experimental manipulations influence voting tendencies' (p. 4). Weinberg, Freese and McElhattan (2014) compare the results of an online factorial survey for a sample recruited from a population-based Internet panel and a sample recruited on MTurk, demonstrating that the results are similar and the data quality is higher for the MTurk sample.

3.2. Factorial Survey Experiment

Factorial survey experiments are commonly used in sociology, but less frequently used in research on political attitudes and behaviors (Wallander, 2009). Notable exceptions are Jasso and Opp (1997) and Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer and Sokhey (2010). In a factorial survey experiment respondents rate hypothetical descriptions of a person or situation, commonly referred to as 'vignettes'. The vignettes include several theoretically relevant factors (or attributes) consisting of two or more values or 'levels', which are randomly allocated to respondents.

Factorial survey experiments combine the advantages of a survey with the advantages of an experiment. Whereas most standard survey research is correlational, these experiments allow for causal inference about the effects of the vignette factors (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015, p. 11). We can investigate with greater certainty how the different attributes of a situation influence respondents' evaluations of the situation (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015; Wallander, 2009). Incorporating the experiment in a survey with a large sample makes it possible to investigate whether the effects of the vignette factors differ for different respondents. Therefore, when testing interactions between the experimental factors and respondent characteristics, having sufficient variation in the respondent characteristics within the sample is more important than having a representative sample (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015, p. 61).

In our factorial survey experiment, respondents evaluated vignettes describing a situation where citizens are given more opportunities to influence political decisions. The vignettes were composed of five factors, each of which has two levels: 1) administrative scale; 2) instrument of decision-making (vote-centric vs. talk-centric); 3) topic of discussion; 4) source of information; and 5) outcome (advisory vs. binding). For this study, only the effects of the instrument and outcome factors were analyzed. The factors in the story are not correlated because the levels were randomly distributed, therefore it is not necessary to control for the other three factors in the story. Indeed, we found that when the other factors were included in the models our results were not affected. Below is the vignette text with all possible factor levels (the factors that are analyzed in this study are italicized):

> Imagine that citizens in your [town or city/state] were given more opportunities to influence political decisions by [*voting directly on issues in referenda and initiatives/participating in public meetings where randomly selected citizens are invited to discuss issues and collectively make decisions*]. The citizens will be able to make decisions on all kinds of topics [including sensitive topics/except for sensitive topics], such as civil rights. To ensure that the citizens make well informed decisions [an independent commission of experts will provide information on each issue/each political party is responsible for communicating its position on the issue to the public]. Any decision the citizens make will be [*advisory, meaning the local/state government can choose whether to carry it out/binding, meaning the local/state government must carry it out*].

The variation of these levels produces a total of $2^5 = 32$ possible combinations, or experimental conditions. In order to increase the number of ratings per vignette, but also because we wanted respondents to compare vignettes, each respondent was randomly assigned two vignettes. Each of the 32 experimental conditions was rated by an average of 60 respondents (range: 54–66). The two vignettes were presented in random order on the same screen to facilitate comparison.

In order to account for the nested structure of the data, i.e. vignettes clustered in respondents, the data were analyzed with multilevel modeling techniques, as is recommended for factorial survey designs (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015; Hox, Kreft, & Hermkens, 1991). The state was not included as a third level because an empty three-level model revealed that approximately 0% of the variation in support for participatory reforms was at the state level (including the state level also did not affect the results). To test our hypotheses about the difference in the effect of advisory vs. binding decisions on support for vote-centric and talk-centric instruments (H2a and H2b), we included an interaction between the outcome and instrument factors. To test our hypotheses about how the vignette factors and respondent characteristics interact (H3–H7) we included cross-level interactions between the respondent-level variables and the vignette-level variables (the factors). All analyses were done in Stata13.

3.3. Variables

3.3.1. Dependent Variable

Support for participatory reforms is measured by asking respondents, after each vignette, 'do you think this is a good or bad way of making political decisions?' (0 = very bad/10 = very good).

3.3.2. Vignette Factors

The 'instrument' factor represents whether the mode of decision-making is talk-centric i.e. a public meeting (= 1) or vote-centric i.e. referendums and initiatives (= 0). The 'outcome' factor represents whether the decisions made by citizens are advisory (= 1) or binding (= 0).

3.3.3. Respondent Characteristics

Residing in a R&I State. Respondents indicated which state they currently reside in. All 51 states (as well as Puerto Rico) are represented in the sample with an average of 13 respondents per state, although California, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Texas are overrepresented. The states were recoded into a dummy variable where '0' means referendums and initiatives are not provided for by the state constitution and '1' means referendums and/or initiatives are provided for by the state constitution. Approximately half of the sample resides in a referendum or initiative state. Information about the availability of direct democratic instruments across states was obtained from the website of the NCSL (2018).

Skeptics. Concern for public incompetence is measured with a reverse code of the statement: 'most people have enough sense to tell whether the government is doing a good job' (0 = strongly disagree/4 = strongly agree). Concern for minority rights is measured with a reverse code of the statement: 'in a democratic society, letting the majority decide is more important than protecting the rights of minorities' (0 = strongly disagree/4 = strongly agree).

Control variables. Age, sex (0 = male, 1 = female), political interest, and education were included as control variables as they might confound the relationship between the respondent characteristics described above and support for participatory reforms. For political interest respondents were asked 'how interested are you personally in politics?' (0 = not at all interested/4 = very interested). Education is a categorical variable representing the respondent's highest level of education (0 = middle or high school; 1 = vocational degree or some college experience; 3 = college graduate). Several studies have found that education is negatively correlated with referendum support (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Collingwood, 2012; Donovan & Karp, 2006) and Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010) argue that highly informed voters express concern for public incompetence and minority rights.

For descriptives of the variables see Table 1.

4. Results

The overall mean support for participatory reforms is 5.89 on a scale from 0 to 10 (see Table 1), which is not overwhelming but still above the midpoint (5). The descriptive results in Table 2 demonstrate that respondents evaluate vote-centric instruments more favorably than talk-centric instruments. Advisory outcomes seem to be preferred but especially for talk-centric instruments; the difference in support for binding vs. advisory referendums is quite small.

The main effects of the factors and respondent characteristics are presented in Table 3, Model 1. The interactions for H2–H7 are included separately in Models 2–7. All Models are based on the total sample of vignettes (N = 1,920 or 2 experimental conditions per re-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (N = 960).

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	%
Dependent variable					
Support for Participatory Reforms	0	10	5.89	2.88	
Independent Variables					
Residing in Referendum & Initiative State	0	1	0.50	0.50	
Concern for Public Incompetence	0	4	1.86	1.08	
Concern for Minority Rights	0	4	2.33	1.13	
Controls					
Female	0	1	0.51	0.50	
Age	20	81	42.91	13.88	
Political Interest	0	4	3.04	0.80	
Education	0	2	1.03	0.85	
—Middle to High School					34.58
—Vocational or Associate's Degree					27.81
—College Graduate					37.60

Table 2. Mean support for participatory reforms by instrument and outcome.

	Vote-Centric (R&I)	Talk-Centric (Public Meetings)
Advisory	6.31	5.76
Binding	6.24	5.19

spondent). Starting with the main effects presented in Model 1, talk-centric instruments receive considerably less support than vote-centric instruments (almost a full point on an 11-point scale), confirming H1. Advisory decisions lead to more support for participatory reforms than binding decisions, although the effect is not very large (0.31 on an 11-point scale). Given that each respondent rated two vignettes, we checked whether these two vignette factors had similar effects within and between respondents, which was indeed the case. Taking the instrument factor as an example this means, simply said, that respondents who were assigned two public meeting vignettes gave a lower average rating than respondents who were assigned two referendum vignettes (between-person effect), but also that respondents who got one public meeting vignette and one referendum vignette, on average rated the public meeting vignette lower than the referendum one (within-person effect). This strengthens our findings on the effects of the vignette factors.

Model 1 also demonstrates that individuals residing in R&I states do not differ in support for participatory reforms from those residing in non-direct democratic states. An empty model in which the state-level was included as a third level showed no variation in the dependent variable at the state level, making it unlikely that we would find a main effect of state characteristics. However, it could still be that living in a R&I state interacts with the vignette factors, which we test in Models 3 and 4. Confirming expectations, individuals with less faith in the political competence of the general public and individuals expressing concern for minority rights are less favorable towards participatory reforms, which was the case even when controlling for education. The three education groups hardly differ in their mean scores on public incompetence and minority rights, which suggests that these concerns are not unique to higher educated individuals. Turning to the controls: women express greater support than men; age and political interest do not have an effect; college graduates express less support for participatory reforms than non-graduates.

In Model 2 we added the interaction between the outcome factor and the instrument factor. The main effect of advisory vs. binding (which in this model is the effect in the condition public meeting = 0, or the effect on support for vote-centric instruments) is not significant demonstrating, contrary to H2b, that people do not have a preference for advisory vs. binding decisions when the instrument of decision-making is vote-centric. The main effect of public meeting (which is the effect in the condition advisory = 0) shows that binding meetings are evaluated less favorably than binding referendums. The interaction coefficient is positive and borderline significant ($p = 0.88$), suggesting that the negative effect of public meetings on support is weaker when the outcomes are advisory. This provides some support for our expectation that talk-centric instruments are evaluated more favorably when they play an advisory role (H2a). More straightforward evidence for this hypothesis is provided by an additional regression analysis of the public meeting vignettes only, i.e. on half of the sample of vignettes: in this model the advisory factor has a positive effect ($B = 0.599$, $p = 0.001$) on support for talk-centric instruments (see Appendix Table 2).

The interaction between the instrument factor and residing in a R&I state was included in Model 3. This interaction is not significant, demonstrating that the preference for vote-centric instruments over talk-centric instruments does not depend on whether one lives in a R&I state or not. Hence, we did not find support for our expectation that the preference for vote-centric instruments would be stronger among individuals in R&I states (H3).

In Model 4 we added the interaction between residing in a R&I state and the outcome factor to test our hypothesis that the positive effect of residing in a R&I state on support for participatory reforms is weaker when the decisions are advisory as opposed to binding (H4). We did not find an overall positive effect of residing in a R&I state (see Model 1) and the main effect of R&I states in Model 4 (now representing the effect of R&I states in the condition advisory = 0) shows that individuals from R&I states are less positive about participatory reforms with binding outcomes than individuals in non-direct democratic states. The interaction coefficient is positive and borderline significant ($p = 0.061$), suggesting that the negative effect of living in a R&I state disappears when the outcomes are advisory.

The interaction between concerns about public incompetence and the outcome factor was included in Model 5. The significant interaction effect demonstrates, consistent with H5, that individuals expressing concerns about the average citizens' inability to understand politics are not as negative about participatory reforms when the outcomes are advisory as opposed to binding. In fact, the negative effect of public incompetence concerns disappears when the decisions are advisory, suggesting that this is no longer a concern when citizens play a consultative role.

In Model 6 we added the interaction between concern for minorities and the outcome factor. The significant interaction effect demonstrates, consistent with H6, that individuals expressing concern for minority rights

Table 3. Multilevel regression estimates of support for participatory reforms (N = 1920 vignettes nested in 960 respondents).

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Vignette Characteristics	*b(se)*	*b(se)*	*b(se)*	*b(se)*	*b(se)*	*b(se)*	*b(se)*
Advisory = 1 (Binding = 0)	0.306(0.12)*	0.100(0.17)	0.305(0.12)*	0.074(0.18)	0.306(0.12)*	0.306(0.12)*	0.306(0.12)*
Public Meeting = 1 (R&I = 0)	−0.912(0.13)***	−1.127(0.18)***	−0.874(0.18)***	−0.902(0.13)***	−0.905(0.13)***	−0.912(0.13)***	−0.912(0.13)***
Respondent Characteristics							
Residing in R&I State	−0.197(0.14)	−0.190(0.14)	−0.159(0.19)	−0.434(0.19)*	−0.204(0.14)	−0.189(0.14)	−0.196(0.14)
Public Incompetence	−0.194(0.07)**	−0.193(0.07)**	−0.193(0.07)**	−0.197(0.07)**	−0.424(0.09)***	−0.197(0.07)**	−0.194(0.07)**
Minority Rights	−0.196(0.06)**	−0.196(0.06)**	−0.196(0.06)**	−0.192(0.06)**	−0.202(0.06)**	−0.306(0.08)***	−0.217(0.08)**
Controls							
Female	0.437(0.15)**	0.440(0.15)**	0.436(0.15)**	0.442(0.15)**	0.443(0.15)**	0.430(0.15)**	0.437(0.15)**
Age	0.004(0.01)	0.004(0.01)	0.004(0.01)	0.003(0.01)	0.004(0.01)	0.004(0.01)	0.004(0.01)
Political Interest	0.006(0.09)	0.006(0.09)	0.006(0.09)	0.006(0.09)	−0.007(0.09)	0.009(0.09)	0.004(0.09)
Education							
—Middle-High School	(ref)	(ref)	(ref)	(ref)	(ref)	(ref)	(ref)
—Vocational or Associate's	−0.002(0.18)	0.002(0.18)	−0.003(0.18)	−0.002(0.18)	0.013(0.18)	0.006(0.18)	−0.001(0.18)
—College Graduate	−0.529(0.17)**	−0.529(0.17)**	−0.530(0.17)**	−0.530(0.17)**	−0.497(0.17)**	−0.532(0.17)**	−0.525(0.17)**
Interactions							
Advisory × Public Meeting		0.425(0.25)†					
Public Meeting × R&I States			−0.077(0.25)				
Advisory × R&I States				0.468(0.25)†			
Advisory × Public Incompetence					0.456(0.12)***		
Advisory × Minority Rights						0.222(0.11)*	
Public Meeting x Minority Rights							0.045(0.11)
Constant	6.071(0.35)***	6.165(0.36)***	6.051(0.36)***	6.207(0.36)***	6.053(0.35)***	6.058(0.35)***	6.072(0.35)***
Random Effects							
sd(constant)	1.320(0.10)	1.313(0.10)	1.321(0.10)	1.314(0.10)	1.318(0.10)	1.321(0.10)	1.321(0.10)
sd(residual)	2.476(0.06)	2.476(0.06)	2.475(0.06)	2.476(0.06)	2.464(0.06)	2.472(0.06)	2.475(0.06)

Notes: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

are not as negative about participatory reforms when the outcomes are advisory as opposed to binding. In conclusion, our expectation that the critics of participatory reforms would be less skeptical if the outcomes were advisory is confirmed for both public incompetence and minority rights.

Finally, the interaction between the instrument factor and concern for minority rights is included in Model 7. The interaction effect is not significant demonstrating that concern for minorities is associated with lower levels of support for participatory reforms, regardless of whether the decisions are made in referendums and initiatives or public meetings. Therefore H7, which predicted that the negative effect of concern for minorities is weaker (or absent) for talk-centric instruments, is rejected.

5. Conclusion

Deliberative democrats claim that political discussion among ordinary citizens improves decision-making processes and enhances democracy (Dryzek, 2007; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Mansbridge, 2007; Pateman, 2012). Political discussion has an educative effect, by stimulating participants to develop their argumentation skills, and a reconciling effect, by encouraging participants to consider opposing viewpoints (Fishkin, 1991; Habermas, 1996). By contrast, decision-making processes centered on voting mechanisms are perceived as unreflective and polarizing (Chambers, 2012). On these grounds, some scholars have suggested incorporating political discussions into participatory decision-making and empowering these forums to take binding decisions (Fung, 2007; Pateman, 2012; Setälä, 2011). However, the main finding of this study suggests that such an approach to political decision-making would not go unquestioned by ordinary citizens. Respondents are considerably less enthusiastic about talk-centric decision-making instruments than vote-centric decision-making instruments: vignettes about public meetings are rated on average one point lower on a 0–10 scale than those about referendums and initiatives. Public meetings are evaluated more favorably when they are restricted to an advisory role, but even then support is far from overwhelming (advisory meetings score just above the midpoint of the scale).

This experimental finding contrasts with standard survey research demonstrating that citizens score similarly on single items about referendums and public assemblies (Font, Wojcieszak, & Navarro, 2015). The vignettes encouraged respondents to consider these decision-making instruments more carefully and therefore provide a more fruitful way of disentangling citizens' attitudes towards participatory decision-making. This finding also contrasts with a survey experiment by Neblo et al. (2010, p. 573) demonstrating that a large majority of Americans (83%) are interested in participating in a deliberative session with a member of Congress. Empirical evidence from mini-publics shows that citizens both welcome and enjoy the opportunity to take part and to deliberate, and that they take their duties seriously (Pateman, 2012). However, the low level of support for the use of public meetings in our study suggests that respondents are not enthusiastic about more active engagement in political decision-making, closer to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's more pessimistic claim that what most Americans want is a 'Stealth Democracy' (2002).

On the other hand, support and participation are not necessarily the same: citizens may dislike the idea of using public meetings to inform political decisions, but still happily participate in a deliberative forum. Future research should investigate why citizens support talk-centric decision-making instruments less. Is it because they do not want to participate in more demanding activities or is it because the decisions made by a small selection of citizens are not perceived as legitimate for the wider democratic polity? The common complaint of political elites not representing the interests of ordinary citizens makes it difficult to imagine that citizens would accept the decisions made by an unelected body that cannot be held accountable.

Ordinary citizens do not follow the normative debate about deliberative democracy, which might explain why they are less enthusiastic about talk-centric instruments. By informing citizens about the benefits of political discussion for political decision-making and by advertising these forums among the general public, deliberative democrats can build support for talk-centric instruments. Based on evidence from 41 deliberative forums, Michels (2011) demonstrates that participants in deliberative forums are considerably more positive about the process and the outcomes than non-participants. Therefore, future research could investigate whether participation improves attitudes towards talk-centric decision-making, or whether positive attitudes are caused by a self-selection bias.

Although referendums and initiatives were rated more favorably than public meetings, respondents did not have a clear preference for binding referendums over advisory ones. This is surprising because concerns about growing dissatisfaction with representative institutions suggest that citizens desire more mechanisms to control their representatives (Bowler et al., 2007; Cooper, 2018), but also because binding referendums are a common feature in many American states. Comparing the attitudes of citizens with and without access to referendums and initiatives leads to findings that might concern the proponents of direct democracy. First, individuals in R&I states are not more enthusiastic about the use of referendums and initiatives than those in non-direct democratic states, which suggests that access to these instruments does not contribute to more participatory attitudes about political decision-making. Second, contrary to expectations, individuals in R&I states (where these instruments are usually binding) are less positive about binding outcomes than individuals in non-direct

democratic states, which may imply some dissatisfaction with the role these instruments currently play in political decision-making.

Finally, the results demonstrate that concerns about public incompetence and minority rights are two potential reasons why some citizens are skeptical of participatory decision-making. However, individuals who express these concerns are found to be more favorable towards participatory reforms when outcomes are advisory, giving politicians the final say. In fact, concerns about public incompetence no longer influence citizens' attitudes towards participatory reforms when the decisions are advisory. Legislatures could address concerns about public incompetence and minority rights by using advisory referendums for issues that are either too technical or highly divisive. The finding that concerns about minority rights apply to talk-centric instruments as well is potentially troubling for theorists who claim that deliberation provides a platform for minority perspectives to be heard (Mendelberg, 2002). Respondents may fear that public meetings are overshadowed by the loudest voices.

Turning to the limitations of our study, the sample is not representative which means that the absolute levels of support for participatory reforms and the main effects of respondent characteristics should be interpreted with caution. However, our hypotheses are largely about effects of the experimental factors and how these differ between respondent groups, for which sufficient variation in the respondent characteristics matters more than a representative sample. Even so, the results raise important questions about the extent to which direct and deliberative decision-making instruments are welcomed by ordinary citizens and warrant further investigation on a representative sample.

On one hand, the vignette text could be expanded to provide more details about a deliberative meeting. On the other hand, the task of reading and comparing the two vignettes is cognitively demanding, especially in comparison to standard survey items. Therefore, a more detailed description would make the experiment even more challenging for respondents, especially those with lower levels of schooling. A qualitative pilot among a convenience sample of students revealed that vignettes with more factors were difficult to rate. The complexity of the vignettes might explain some of the small effect sizes. Perhaps a larger sample size would have resulted in more significant interactions, as some relatively large interaction effects had p-values between 0.05 and 0.10. Despite the complexity of the vignettes, the factors did produce effects, suggesting that citizens can have opinions about more complicated political questions and that factorial survey experiments can be a useful method for studying political norms and attitudes.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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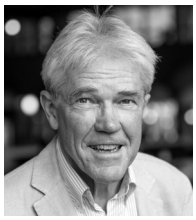

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Appendix

Table 1. Distribution of age and education groups.

	Census (%)	Our Sample (%)
Age Group		
19–25	13.16	6.35
26–34	15.79	33.12
35–54	34.21	37.50
55–64	17.12	14.79
64+	19.74	8.23
Highest Education Level		
High School or more	88.40	99.79
Vocational Certificate or more	58.90	65.41
Associate Degree or more	42.30	57.08
Bachelor's Degree or more	32.50	37.60
Postgraduate Degree or more	12.00	8.75
Party Affiliation		
Republican	28.00	30.00
Democrat	29.00	37.00
Independent	39.00	33.00

Sources: Data on age and education were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey 2016. Data on party affiliation were obtained from a Gallup survey conducted during the same period as our survey (December 2016).

Table 2. Multilevel regression estimates of support for vote-centric and talk-centric instruments (on split samples of vignettes).

Variables *Sub-Sample of Vignettes*	**Model 1** *Vote-Centric*	**Model 2** *Talk-Centric*
Vignette Characteristic		
Advisory = 1 (Binding = 0)	0.041(0.17)	0.599(0.18)***
Respondent Characteristics		
Residing in R&I State	−0.138(0.18)	−0.171(0.21)
Public Incompetence	−0.110(0.09)	−0.256(0.09)**
Minority Rights	−0.224(0.08)**	−0.161(0.09)
Controls		
Female	0.347(0.19)	0.497(0.21)*
Age	0.006(0.01)	0.002(0.01)
Political Interest	0.073(0.12)	−0.045(0.14)
Education		
— Middle-High School	(ref)	(ref)
— Vocational or Associate's	−0.104(0.23)	0.144(0.26)
— College Graduate	−0.682(0.22)**	−0.327(0.25)
Constant	5.992(0.44)***	5.087(0.52)***
sd(constant)	1.166(0.19)	1.947(0.13)
sd(residual)	2.471(0.10)	2.122(0.10)
N(Vignettes)	981	939
N(Respondents)	723	702

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

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Article

Perceptions of Referendums and Democracy: The Referendum Disappointment Gap

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Abstract
We examine the gap between perceptions of seeing referendums as an important democratic principle, versus perceiving how referendums are used in practice. We term this the "referendum disappointment" gap. We find support for referendums as a democratic principle is strongest among those most disaffected from the political system, and that the disaffected are more likely to perceive they are not given a say via referendums. We also find context-specific effects. Disappointment was greater in countries with higher corruption and income inequality. We also find higher disappointment among right-populist voters, those who distrusted politicians, and among people who viewed themselves at the bottom of society. Overall, these patterns reflect disappointment with democracy among sections of society who have a sense of not being heard that conflicts with how they expect democracy should work in principle.

Keywords
democracy; direct democracy; inequality; political disaffection; populism; public opinion; referendums

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

Given tensions between the need for representative democracy and the growing use of referendums (Qvortrup, 2014), and tensions between representative democracy and the use of referendums, it is important that we better understand popular attitudes about democracy as related to referendums. We use multilevel models to estimate responses across 25 countries to questions about referendums and democracy that were included in the European Social Survey (ESS) in 2012–2013. We examine popular preferences for the use of referendums. We pay particular attention to the gap between how important people see referendum use in principle, and how they see it actually practiced. We test competing explanations of support for referendums. One sees support for referendum democracy as a function of cognitive mobilization and a sign of engaged citizens. A different argument locates support for referendums in the views of disaffected people who are at the periphery of the regular political process. We find more support for the idea that it is this latter group, individuals who are disaffected, who are most supportive of referendums as a democratic principle and who are more disappointed with the practice of referendum democracy in their country.

This article makes several contributions. Our cross-national approach allows us to test for national context as well as test individual-level hypotheses. We incorporate national level contextual factors such as income inequality and political corruption alongside individual-level attributes as we model support for referendum

use and "referendum disappointment." We thus raise two points of wider relevance. First, for most people in the countries we examine, majority rule (via referendums) is a component of their conception of democracy in principle. Second, the contrast between how referendums are experienced in practice and how they are expected in principle suggests many citizens are disappointed with democracy in practice as it relates to using referendums. Use of referendums falls short, sometimes far short, of this popular expectation about democracy. In other words, attitudes about referendum use provide us with a window into wider concerns people have about their political system and the workings of democracy.

2. Popular Support for Referendums

The use of referendums varies substantially across the globe (see LeDuc, 2003, for discussion on the range and variety of direct democracy; Vatter & Bernauer, 2009). Switzerland represents the extreme case: the popular veto was adopted as early as 1831 and nearly 600 national referendums and citizen initiatives have appeared on Swiss ballot since 1848 (Serdült, 2013). Denmark, Italy, Ireland and Slovenia also provide examples of regular use of referendums (Qvortrup, 2014), and Iceland, Great Britain, France, Spain, Slovakia, and Latvia all have histories that include the occasional use of national referendums. Referendum use is rare in countries such as the Czech Republic, Belgium, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands, however recurring use of referendums in neighboring countries on European integration (Hobolt, 2005) and other matters, and referendum use at the subnational level (Scarrow, 1999) likely means that even residents of places where national referendums are not used nonetheless have a sense of what referendums are.

Figure 1 illustrates responses to two ESS 6 questions, one asking about how important it is to "democracy in general" that people have a say through referendums, and another that asks their perception of the extent to which people in their country actually have a say through referendums. Responses to the first item suggest that people in numerous countries included in Round 6 of the ESS (see Ferrin & Kriesi, 2016) placed substantial value on referendums as being an important principle of democracy. When asked to rate on a 0–10 scale how important it was to "democracy in general…that citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums," the modal response was 10 in nearly every country where the ESS was conducted (see Appendix for full question wording;

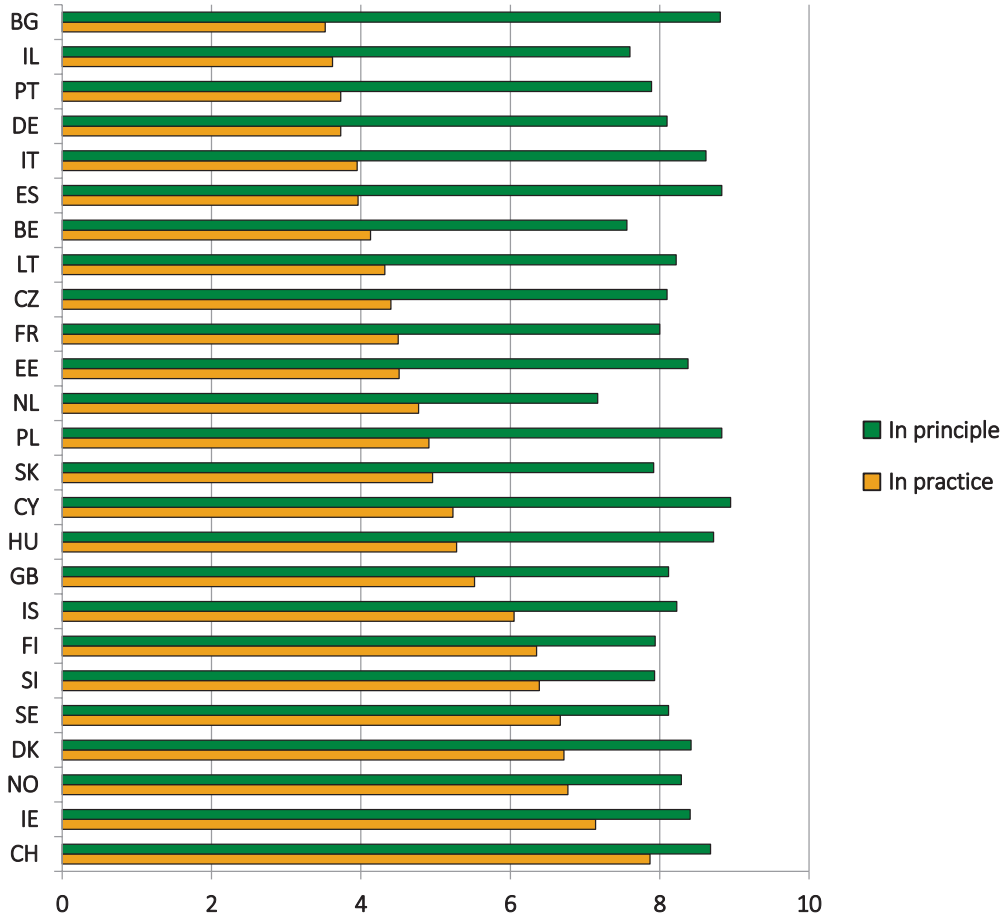

Figure 1. Attitudes about referendums being important for democracy (in principle), and perceptions of having a final say in their country on important issues via referendums (in practice). Source: ESS Round 6 (2012).

for a study using related World Values Survey items measuring perceptions of how essential referendums are to democracy, see Fuchs & Roller, 2018). The country-level averages for attitudes about the importance of referendums as a general *principle* of democracy are plotted with the shaded bars in Figure 1. This level of support is also found elsewhere. Survey data from Canada (Mendelsohn & Parkin, 2001), Australia, New Zealand (Donovan & Karp, 2006), and the United States (Cronin, 1989; Gilljam, Pesonen, & Listhaug, 1998) also show high levels of popular support for using referendums.

Responses to the second item suggest much greater variation in perceptions that referendums give people in their country a say. People were asked to rate on a 0–10 scale, "to what extent do you think…citizens in [country] have the final say by voting…directly in referendums." These responses are displayed in Figure 1 with the dark bars. The use of referendums in practice varies quite widely across these countries, and so to do perceptions that people feel they have the final say via referendums. Thus, while expectations of having the 'final say' by referendum is high, and has little variance across these countries, it appears many people do not perceive they experience the referendum democracy they expect.

What do popular expectations about referendums and democracy actually reflect, and who are those that expect referendums but are disappointed? One set of arguments (Donovan & Karp, 2006) sees support for referendum use as consistent with the cognitive mobilization thesis (Dalton, 1984; Inglehart, 1970). Dalton (1984) defines cognitive mobilization as the spread of education, access to mass media and low-cost information in advanced democracies, where people are increasing politically engaged. From this perspective, more people are now capable of dealing "with the complexities of politics" on their own (Dalton, 2007, p. 276). This process is somewhat similar to Norris' concept of the "critical citizen" (Norris, 1999). Signing petitions, boycotting, demonstrating, and protesting are forms of participation that Dalton (2008) links to a politically engaged (rather than duty-based) form of citizenship. Donovan and Karp (2006, p. 679) have found some evidence from New Zealand, Canada, and Switzerland consistent with the idea that use of referendums is supported by those more politically engaged.

It follows that one might view citizens' expectations for referendums as a healthy sign of political engagement, or even the reflection of people being interested in participating more actively, and directly, in setting policy. We have less clear expectations about how the more politically engaged or interested may perceive referendum use in practice, as this may be contingent both on how interested a person is in politics and how much referendums are actually used in a respondent's country. If engagement and interest drive expectations that referendums are important, a person with a great interest in politics may evaluate practice more positively where referendums are used more frequently. Conversely, if the politically engaged expect referendums and perceive their use is not sufficient, they may be more disappointed with referendum democracy.

An alternative view is that popular support for referendums indicates disillusion with social conditions and with established parties and representative democracy. Findings from Dalton, Burklin and Drummond (2001) suggest that support for direct democracy in Germany was strongest among those who felt excluded from establishment politics and those at the 'periphery' of politics. Right-wing populist parties that exploit dissatisfaction with status quo democracy (e.g., UKIP in Britain or the FN in France) champion the use of referendums to give people a greater voice, and to provide an end run around establishment parties and politicians (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015; Bowler, Denemark, Donovan, & McDonnell, 2017; Mudde, 2004, 2007). Pauwels (2014, p. 159) found that the call for referendum use motivated some people to vote for populist parties in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Given this, we expect that right-populist voters will be more supportive of giving citizens a direct say via referendums. We might also expect that the expectation of having a say through referendums could be more appealing to people who reside in countries where institutions do a poor job processing conflict and allocating resources. We thus expect poor governance, poor economic performance, and tensions associated with income inequality to affect expectations for referendums and perceptions of their use.

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) offer a view of support for direct democracy related to this latter argument (also see Webb, 2013). Support for referendums as an important democratic principle may thus reflect public disdain for the perceived inappropriate influence that "special" interests have over elected officials in a representative democracy. From this perspective, enthusiasm for referendums may reflect a mistrust of incumbent parties and establishment politics, rather than greater political engagement. Relatedly, perceptions that referendums are not used in practice could reflect discontent among the disaffected who expect another avenue of voice than is available via representative processes they may not trust.

Much existing literature considers support for referendum use in general terms, without modeling how interest in referendums relates to a person's expectations about how democracy should work or perceptions of how it does work. Nonetheless, there are studies that examine support for using referendums, mostly focusing on individual countries. Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) found greater support for direct democracy in Finland among people with less education, less information, and among those who felt unrepresented. Schuck and De Vreese (2011) found greater support for referendums among the politically disaffected and those exposed to tabloid-style news in the Netherlands, and emphasized the role of cynicism in their subsequent work (Schuck & De Vreese, 2015). Coffé and Michels (2014) also found

lower educated Dutch respondents were more likely to prefer direct and stealth democracy over representative democracy. Dalton et al. (2001) concluded that the greatest support for direct democracy in Germany can be found among those "at the periphery of politics," including the less informed, those less interested, and supporters of extremist parties. Anderson and Goodyear-Grant (2010) also found greater support for direct democracy among less-informed Canadians, which they explained as reflecting that "political sophisticates" have greater confidence in government and are better able to identify the dangers that referendums may present. These findings are consistent with the idea that those who are more disillusioned, disaffected, and less politically engaged may be more likely to view referendums as important to democracy.

In contrast, Donovan and Karp (2006) found those more interested in politics were more supportive of referendums in three of six countries studied, and those participating in elections were more supportive in two of those. Another study from the early 2000s across 16 countries (Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007) found that in nearly all countries, support for using referendums was greatest among those who thought it was important for people to have more opportunities to participate, and, in many countries, among those who were more politically engaged. These results are consistent with the idea that those more engaged are more likely to see referendums as important to democracy.

The literature provides us these two contrasting expectations about how people assess the importance of having referendums, each finding some support in previous research. We suggest we might find a deeper understanding about how people view referendums and democracy by simultaneously considering their attitudes about the importance of referendums to democracy, and their perceptions about whether referendums are giving people a say. We are interested in the importance that people place on using referendums (again the shaded bars in Figure 1), the extent to which they perceive that referendums give people a say in their country (represented by the dark bars in Figure 1), and the difference between these. This difference, we suggest, represents how much a person who expects having a say via referendums might be disappointed by perceiving those opportunities are limited in their country.

In the next section, we develop hypotheses that consider country-level factors and individual-level factors that may explain variation in: 1) attitudes about how important people view referendums as part of democracy; 2) perceptions of the extent that referendums give people a say in their country; and 3) the difference between how important people view referendums as part of democracy and their perceptions that referendums give people in their country a say. In the analysis that follows, we consider country-level factors and individual-level factors that might affect attitudes about, and perceptions of, referendum democracy.

3. Hypothesis and Model Specification

We expect attitudes about democracy and referendums, and perceptions of having a say via referendums, are shaped both by characteristics of individuals, and by the social and political context of the country in which the individual resides. We test hypotheses about: 1) factors that structure attitudes about referendums as a general principle of democracy; 2) factors structuring perceptions of referendum use in practice; and 3) factors that explain the gap (or disappointment) between respondents' expectations about referendums as a principle and their perceptions of referendum use in practice. We thus estimate three models, one estimating attitudes about referendums and democracy, one estimating perceptions of referendum use, and one estimating the gap between these first two measures.

3.1. Country-Level Hypotheses

Popular expectations about the role of referendums in democracy, and perceptions of the use of referendums, are not likely to occur in a vacuum. Rather, discontent and disaffection with social and political conditions might make referendums a seemingly appealing alternative to status quo representative democracy. We expect people in countries with greater corruption, higher unemployment, and greater income inequality to be more disappointed with referendum democracy, while people in countries using referendums more frequently are expected to be less disappointed. The former factors may reflect a context of disaffection that drives expectations for use of referendums, and disillusionment about political practices generally. Use of referendums, we expect, may mitigate some of this. There are few studies that examine country-level factors that might affect attitudes about referendum use (for an exception see Schuck & de Vreese, 2015, on support for referendums on EU integration).

Our expectation here is that having a say through referendums could be more appealing to people who reside in countries where institutions do a poor job processing conflict and allocating resources. One difficulty in operationalizing this argument comes in selecting a measure of governance. A key factor here is public corruption, which we see as the antithesis of good governance. It has been shown to erode political trust, and it is associated with pessimism about the performance of democracy in a country (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003). We expect higher levels of (perceived) corruption to correspond with greater expectations for referendums. Our models are specified with the Transparency International measure of *perceptions* of public corruption.

Poor economic performance may breed similar discontent, creating additional demands for referendum use. We expect higher unemployment to be associated weaker support for established institutions (Alesina, Özler, Roubini, & Swagel, 1996; Robertson, 1983) and

thus with heightened expectations for referendums. Economic inequality, likewise, where a wealthy elite has disproportionate influence over a country's political institutions, may also increase support for using referendums. Solt (2008) provides evidence that greater income inequality produces greater political inequality, and Dotti Sani and Magistro (2016) contend that inequality is linked to political cynicism in Europe. Han and Chang (2016, p. 94) argue that inequality can breed resentment toward traditional democratic practices, undermine democratic attitudes, and decrease satisfaction with democracy. Higher levels of economic inequality, then, could lead to greater support for the use of referendums. Unemployment is measured with World Bank data, and inequality is represented by a CIA gini index. We account for party system disproportionality as a national-level control, since this may also affect perceptions of democratic institutions (Anderson & Guillory, 1997).

Further, we expect that people in countries that used referendums more frequently will be more familiar with the process, and thus more likely to accept and expect referendums as a regular feature of democracy. Likewise, we expect people in countries with greater referendum use to be more likely to perceive that citizens in their country have a say via referendums. Our measure of referendum use is a count of national-level referendums used in a country, calculated from Qvortrup (2014). These nations differ in terms of institutional features that affect how consequential various referendums may be on policy (Hug, 2004; Leemann & Wasserfallen, 2016). Our measure does not account for this qualitative aspect of referendum use. Rather, our count measure acts as a proxy for experiences respondents' might have with referendums, rather than an indicator of policy consequences of referendums.

3.2. Individual-Level Hypotheses

The engaged citizen thesis as related to referendum democracy has us expect that those scoring higher on participation, education, and interest are more likely to expect referendums as an important part of democracy. Their perceptions of referendum use, and thus potential for disappointment, may depend on how often referendums are used. Highly interested respondents may find their expectations for referendum use met where referendums are used more. This hypothesis flows from the idea that the politically interested have a greater expectation of regularly influencing policy via referendums, while having the capacity to do so. We expect those with greater political interest to be more likely to expect having a say via referendums, and to be disappointed if they perceive they are not able to. The engaged citizen idea also leads us to expect people with greater education, and those who are generally engaged with participating in politics, to be more likely to expect to decide matters via referendums. Interest is measured with a four category self-reported item ranking interest in politics. We use a battery of ESS questions to build a six-item index of political participation (or engagement) that reflects working for a party, for an organization, displaying a badge or sticker, signing petitions, protesting, and boycotting. Education is measured with a 7-category ordinal measure.

The rival disaffected citizen thesis as related to referendum democracy has us expect that those who distrust politicians, those who did not supported the main party in government, and populist party supporters would be more inclined to agree that referendums were important. Trust is measured on a 0–10 scale where 10 is most trusting of politicians. Supporters of a governing party, and populist party supporters, are represented with dichotomous measures coded by the authors.

We may also see broader kinds of social disaffection. It could be those who perceive themselves as social "have-nots" see referendums as way in which their voice may be heard. The ESS included two items that tap such sentiments. One asked respondents if they felt their "place in society" was at the bottom (versus the top), and another asked people if they felt they were part of a group "discriminated against in this country."[1] We expect people who see themselves in these terms may be more likely to view referendums as important to democracy. Social place is a self-reported 0–10 scale where 0 is "bottom" and 10 is "top of society." Perceptions of discrimination is a dichotomous measure.

As noted, the ESS contained questions about referendums that measured two different concepts: attitudes about referendums as a principle of democracy, and attitudes about how much the respondent perceived that people in the respondent's country had a say via referendums in practice. Given the second item asks about perceptions, we expect a somewhat different pattern of results with the item asking about referendum use in practice than with the item asking about expecting referendums as a democratic principle. Specifically, we expect that people who might be more sanguine about status quo politics to be less likely to perceive that people in their country do not have a say in general, and thus less likely to agree that people do not have a say via referendums. As such, people who supported the main parties in government, those who trusted politicians, and those who viewed themselves in the upper echelon of society, could be more likely to respond positively when asked if people have a "final say" by referendums.

We expand these hypotheses to considering the gap between attitudes about referendums as a principle of democracy, and perceptions or referendum use (or, referendum disappointment). Country-level factors that we expect to correspond with disaffection (e.g., corruption, inequality) are expected to predict greater disappointment. We expect more disappointment among people

[1] This included discrimination based on race, nationality, religion, language, ethnicity, ethnic group, age, sexual orientation, disability, and (the modal category) "other grounds."

who live in a country where referendums are used infrequently. We also expect greater referendum disappointment among those who we hypothesized would be more likely to view referendums as an important democratic principle. As noted in the previous section, a potential effect of referendum use may be contingent on how interested a person is in politics. If interest is associated with placing more importance on referendums as part of democracy, we may find less referendum disappointment among those with high interest in countries where referendums are used more. We examine this with postestimation analysis in Stata.

Finally, we include age, gender, and frequency of attending religious services as individual-level control variables. We also control for ideology, a 0–10 scale where high scores are self-reported "right" ideology. The Appendix provides details on the variables and codings.

3.3. Measuring Attitudes about Referendums in Principle and in Practice

The ESS 6 (2012) covered 29 countries, but we omit four cases (Albania, Kosovo, Russia, and Ukraine) that were arguably less than fully democratic. The ESS 6 included two items asking about referendum democracy; one asked respondents to consider how important referendums were for "democracy in general," and a second asked about how the respondent perceived people in the respondent's country had a say through referendums.

This provides us three dependent variables. The first measures a respondent's view of how important it was to democracy in general that citizens have the "final say" on important matters of policy "by voting on them directly in referendums." This is our first dependent variable—the perceived importance of referendums as a general *principle* of democracy. This item ranges from 0 to 10 with the highest scores reflecting the attitude that referendums are extremely important for democracy (the mean is 8.2).

The second ESS question asked respondent's their perception of whether or not people had the "final say" on important issues in their country "by voting on them directly in referendums." This is our second dependent variable, also ranging from 0–10, with higher scores reflecting a person thought citizens in their country had the final say *in practice* via referendums. The mean for perceptions of referendum use *in practice* is 5.0, much lower than the mean for attitudes about referendums being an important principle of democracy. These two items are only modestly correlated (0.14).

We use these two items to construct a third dependent variable that represents a respondent's disappointment with referendum democracy, as related their expectations and perceptions about the use of referendums. It is created by subtracting a person's score on the first item (perceptions of referendums as a principle of democracy) from their score on the second item (perceptions of referendums in practice). A respondent scoring high on this referendum disappointment measure would be someone who thought it was important for people to have a say via referendums, but viewed their country as a place where this was unlikely. This measure ranges from −10 to 10 (or 0 to 10, depending on specification, see Appendix). This third dependent variable is the gap between what a person views as a general principle of democracy and what they see as its practice, more than simply a measure of support for using referendums. We employed multi-level models to estimate these attitudes about referendums and democracy. Baseline random intercepts models were also estimated to calculate the proportion of variance explained by country-level versus individual-level factors (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002).

4. Results

Table 1 reports results of a model estimating attitudes about referendums being an important democratic principle, and a model estimating perceptions of referendum use in practice. Table 2 reports models estimating referendum disappointed (the gap between expectations about referendums as a democratic principle, and perceptions of how referendums are used).

We can make a number of points based on the results. First, the major source of variation in attitudes about referendums as a democratic principle is at the individual rather than the country level. In some ways this is not much of a surprise given what we have seen in Figure 1: there is little variation in opinions cross-nationally when it comes to judging the importance of referendums. The Intra-class correlation (ICC) calculated for a baseline version of Model 1 in Table 1 estimates that just 4.5% of variance in attitudes about referendums being a general principle of democracy is explained by variance across countries. In contrast, a baseline version of Model 2 in Table 1 illustrates that a modest amount of variation in perceptions of referendum use in practice (15.6%) is explained by country-level differences.

Second, at the individual-level we find the politically and socially disaffected—those who voted for right populist parties, who had low trust in politicians, and who perceived they were discriminated against—were more likely to agree that having a say via referendums was important as a democratic principle, and were more likely to see citizens not having a say via referendums in practice. Those who viewed themselves at the bottom of society were also more likely to say referendums were not used enough in practice. Supporters of governing parties, conversely, were less likely to see referendums as important.

Third, we find some mixed support for the expectation that engaged citizens view referendums as important to democracy. Citizens who were more engaged in terms of political participation were more likely to view referendums as important in principle, and lacking in practice. Furthermore, people more interested in politics were also more likely to see referendums as important to

Table 1. Attitudes about referendums as a principle of democracy, and perceptions of referendum use in practice.

	Model 1 Refs as dem. principle	Model 2 Ref use in practice
Country-level factors		
Corruption	.0057	−.0266*
	(.0047)	(.0136)
Unemployment	.0348**	.0205
	(.0141)	(.0474)
Gini Index (inequality)	−0.7945	−7.492*
	(1.823)	(3.217)
Number of referendums	.0016**	.0041**
	(.0002)	(.0006)
Party system disproportionality	−.0042	.1384
	(.0151)	(.0320)
Individual-level factors		
Support right-populist party	.5592**	−.3022**
	(.0651)	(.0998)
Support government party	−.0933*	.1473
	(.0420)	(.0972)
Distrust politicians	.0634**	−.2408**
	(.0115)	(.0252)
Perceive as discriminated against	.1974**	−.5201**
	(.0531)	(.1286)
R's place in society (top)	.0152	.1091**
	(.0101)	(.0201)
Participation	.0508**	−.1718**
	(.0156)	(.0226)
Education	−.0369*	−.1484**
	(.0185)	(.0210)
Interest	.0730**	−.0688*
	(.0203)	(.0337)
Left/right self-placement	−.0071	.0397*
	(.0093)	(.0192)
Age	.0004	.0020
	(.0007)	(.0017)
Female	.1536**	.0107
	(.0337)	.0386)
Freq. attend religious services	.0190	−.0873**
[high = never]	(.0125)	(.0163)
Constant	7.846**	7.484**
	(.5075)	(1.032)
Random effects (variance)		
Constant	.130	.651
	(.032)	(.199)
Residual	3.97	7.66
	(.184)	(.240)
Observations	41,560	41,034
Number of countries	25	25
Baseline ICC	.045	.156
Level-1 R^2	.026	.146
Level-2 R^2	.320	.581

Notes: ** = significant at p. < .01; * = at p. < .05. (two-tail). DV in Model 1 is response to question asking how important it is for democracy that citizens have final say via referendums (0–10, with 10 = extremely important). DV in Model 2 is response to question asking how much citizens in r's country have the final say via referendums (0–10, with 10 = agree completely). Estimated with weights. Standard errors in parentheses. R^2 are Snijders & Bosker (1994).

Table 2. Disappointment with democracy, as related to referendum use.

	Model 1 Disappointment	Model 2 Disappointment
Country level factors		
Corruption	.0319*	.0322**
	(.0135)	(.0117)
Unemployment	.0158	.0144
	(.0424)	(.0394)
Gini Index (inequality)	6.563**	5.813**
	(2.837)	(2.375)
Party system disproportionality	−.0183	−.0202
	(.0276)	(.0246)
Number of referendums	−.0025**	−.0022**
	(.0005)	(.0004)
Individual level factors		
Support Populist Party	.8621**	.7727**
	(.1205)	(.1269)
Support Government Party	−.2433*	−.2102*
	(.1023)	(.0977)
Left/right self-placement	−.0487*	−.0431*
	(.0225)	(.0220)
Distrust politicians	.3042**	.2910**
	(.0294)	(.0281)
Perceive discrimination	.7121**	.6813**
	(.1304)	(.1278)
R's place in society (top)	−.0920**	−.0892**
	(.0233)	(.0226)
Participation	.2225**	.2127**
	(.0271)	(.0257)
Interest	.1482**	.1393**
	(.0233)	(.0226)
Education	.1099**	.1029**
	(.0171)	(.0150)
Age	−.0023	−.0015
	(.0018)	(.0008)
Female	.1440**	.0973**
	(.0498)	(.0420)
Freq. attend Religious services	.1068**	.0985**
[high = never]	(.0226)	(.0211)
Constant	0.374	0.817
	(0.885)	(0.803)
Random effects (variance)		
Constant	.495	.396
	(.202)	(.161)
Residual	9.80	8.14
	(.447)	(.460)
Observations	40,505	40,505
Number of countries	25	25
Baseline ICC	.126	.137
Level-1 R^2	.149	.160
Level-2 R^2	.677	.704

Notes: ** = significant at p. < .01; * = at p. < .05. (two-tail). High scores on DVs represent larger gap between r's report of how important it is for democracy that citizens have final say via referendums, and r's report of how much citizens in r's country have the final say via referendums. DV in Model 1 includes negative values (−10 to 10, with 10 = most disappointed). DV in Model 2 sets negative values at 0. Estimated with weights. Standard errors in parentheses. R^2 are Snijders & Boske (1994). Source: ESS Round 6 (2012).

democracy, and to potentially find them lacking in practice. However, support for referendums in principle was greater among those with lower levels of education, and those with more education were less likely to think people were having a say via referendum use in practice.

As noted above, 15.6% of variance in perceptions of how often referendums are used in practice is due to country-level differences, and our country-level variables explain 58% of this variance. Our measures of corruption and inequality are both associated with the perception that citizens were not having "a final say" via referendums. We find unemployment associated with expectations for referendum use in principle, but not in practice. Further, the number of referendums used in a country had a positive effect on whether citizens viewed referendums as an important part of democracy, and also had a positive effect on perceptions that people actually had a say via referendums. The proportionality of the party system was not associated with support for referendums as a democratic principle or views of its use in practice.

Table 2 reports estimates of our measure of disappointment with referendum democracy, in terms of the gap between perceptions of referendums being important for democracy, and perceptions of how much they are used in the respondent's country. Higher values on this dependent variable reflect greater disappointment over not having a say via referendums, relative to the importance a respondent places on referendums. Model 3A includes negative values on our disappointment measure, while Model 3B has all negative values set at zero. The mean value for this measure across the sample on the former measure is 3.3, and 3.1 on the latter, implying some disappointment is present. Moreover, 25% of the sample had a 5-point difference or greater between their attitudes about the importance of referendums as a democratic principle and their perceptions of referendum use in practice on the measure bounded at 0–10. A 5-point difference suggests a sizable amount of disappointment.

Table 2 documents that those we assume to be disaffected were more disappointed in democracy as it relates to the use of referendums. Right-populist voters, those who did not support a governing party, those who did not trust politicians, those who felt discriminated against, and hose who rated themselves at the "bottom" of society were each more disappointed—in that they viewed referendum use as important while also being less likely to perceive having a say via referendums practice. Tests using the disappointment measure also produce some results that may be seen as consistent with the engaged citizen thesis; those who scoring higher on our participation measure, the higher educated, and those more interested in politics, respectively, scored higher on this form of referendum disappointment. These respondents may have expected more from referendums relative to what they perceived as occurring in practice. Women, those on the political left, and those who with lower (or no) attendance at religious services (included in the models as controls) were also more disappointed.

The ICC for models in Table 2 demonstrates a modest amount of variation in referendum disappointment (12.6% for Model 3A, 13.7% for Model 3B) is explained by country-level factors. Inequality and corruption are key here. Income inequality corresponded with higher levels of disappointment, and we find greater disappointment in countries with higher levels of public corruption.

Figure 2 plots postestimation predictions of referendum disappointment from Model 3B (Table 2) for key county-level variables. It illustrates that a respondent in a country with the highest values on corruption (Bulgaria and Italy) would score 1.5 points higher on the disappointment measure than a demographically identical respondent in the least corrupt countries (Finland and Denmark). Inequality has a similar, but slightly smaller effect. A person in a country with high income inequality (e.g., Portugal) would score a full point higher than someone in the least unequal country (Sweden). Figure 2 also illustrates all else equal, a respondent in a country with the highest use of national level referendums (Switzerland) would score 1.1 points less disappointed than a person in a country that never had held more than one national referendum (e.g., Belgium, Finland, Israel).

Figure 3 and Figure 4 display the estimated substantive effects of our key individual-level variables, with Figure 3 plotting estimates for variables associated with the disaffection hypotheses, and Figure 4 plotting effects for variables associated with the engaged citizen hypotheses. These figures suggest the substantive magnitude of the relationship between some variables representing disaffection, and referendum disappointment (Figure 3), is more substantial than the relationships between most of the engagement variables (Figure 4) and referendum disappointment. This is particularly evident with trust. All else equal, a respondent with no trust in politicians (nearly one-fifth of respondents) is estimated to score nearly 3 points higher on referendum disappointment than a respondent who completely trusted politicians. Supporters of right-populist parties ("rwp voter" in the figure) score nearly a point higher on disappointment than supporters of a party in government. Considering that these are additive models, the additive effects of disaffection—right-wing populism, distrust, and rating one's self at the bottom of society—are substantial.

Some results here are consistent with the idea that this referendum disappointment could reflect engaged citizens who desire greater opportunities to participate in policymaking. However, the only noteworthy substantive effect in Figure 4 is for our six-item index of participation. Table 2 demonstrates that the ranks of those scoring significantly higher on referendum disappointment include those with more education, more political interest, and those who participate more. On this latter measure, a respondent scoring 6 (highest) is estimated to be nearly 1.5 points higher on disappointment than someone scoring at 0, however only 20% of respondents score higher than 1 on this measure. The estimated effect of political interest illustrated in Figure 4, moreover, is less

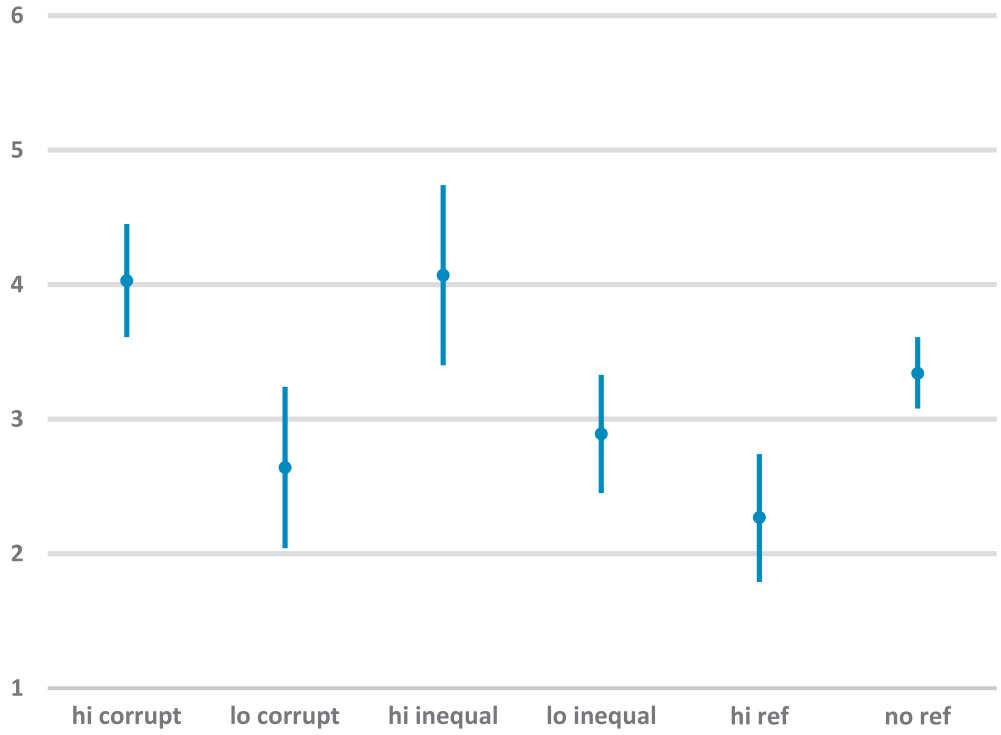

Figure 2. Referendum disappointment: Post-estimation predicted magnitude of country-level variables. Notes: From Model 3B. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Range is 0–10.

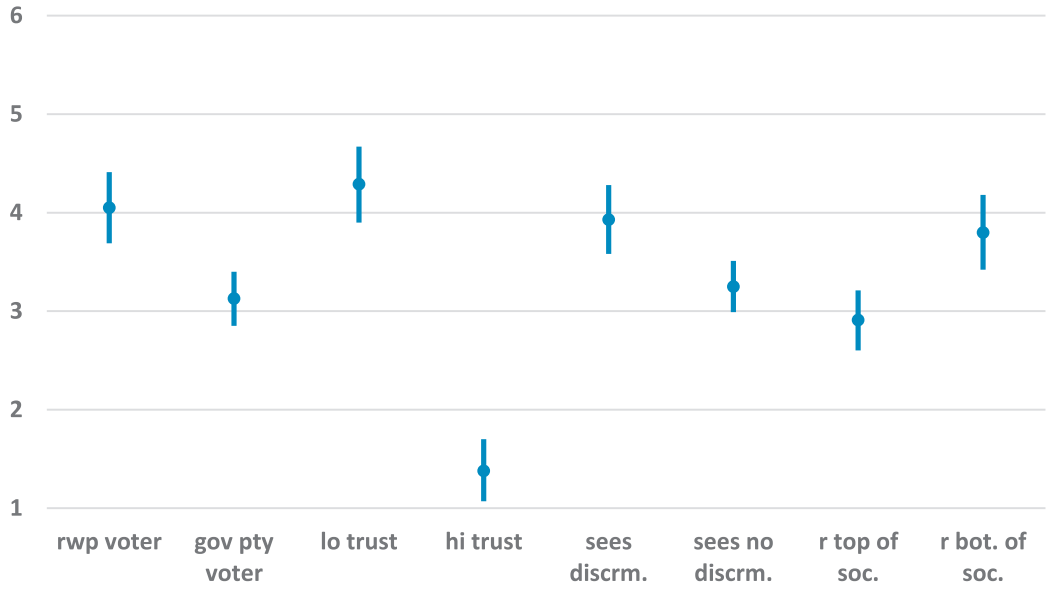

Figure 3. Referendum disappointment: Post-estimation predicted magnitude of individual-level disaffection variables. Notes: From Model 3B. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Range is 0–10.

than half a point. We did consider that effects of engagement may be contingent on how often referendums were used. Table 1 illustrates that those with more political interest placed value on having referendums as part of democracy, while also perceiving that people were not having a say via referendums. In a model not reported here, and in postestimation analysis of Model 3B, we found a significant interaction between political interest and referendum use, where those with more political interest had less referendum disappointment if they lived where more referendums were used. However, a highly interested person only had significantly less referendum disappointment than a person with low interest when referendum use was set at a level equal to Switzerland.

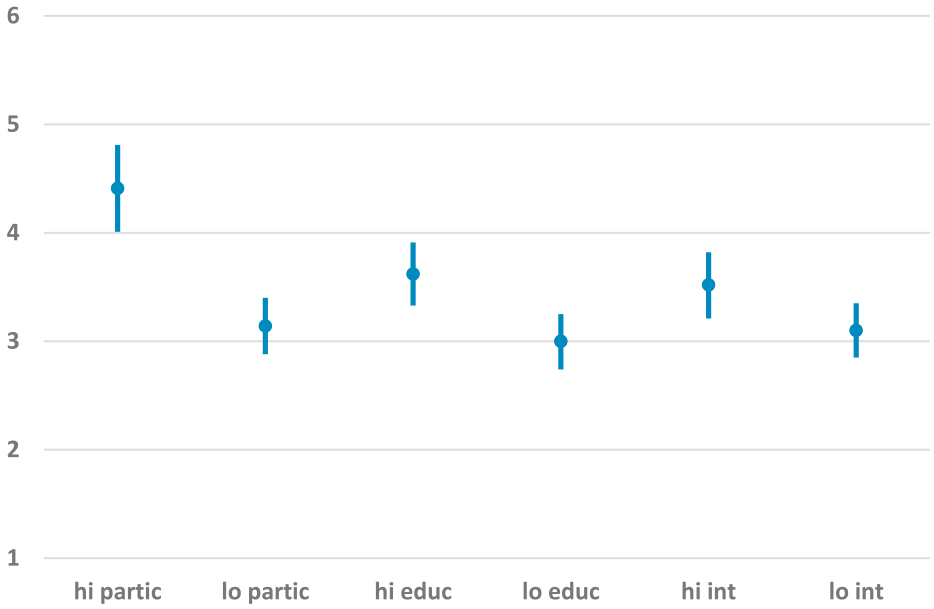

Figure 4. Referendum disappointment: Post-estimation predicted magnitude of individual-level engagement variables. Notes: From Model 3B. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Range is 0–10.

5. Conclusion

Much research on attitudes about referendum use has been grounded in single country studies which do not account for context. Many previous studies have examined general attitudes about the use of referendums (on a specific policy matter) rather than examining attitudes about referendums in terms of expectations people have about democracy.

We found broad support for the idea that referendums are important to democracy. Limited variation in this expectation was best explained by how people were oriented to the political system. Those people we assume as politically disaffected—people who supported populist parties, those who did not support a party in government, those who distrusted politicians, and those who felt themselves on the bottom of society—were most likely to say that referendums were important to their conception of democracy. By contrast, those who supported a party in government, and people more trusting of politicians, felt less strongly that democracy requires voters have the final say via referendums. Although we find some evidence that markers of political engagement were associated with viewing referendums as important to democracy, indicators of political disaffection appear more consequential.

That noted, our main goal was to examine the *gap* between this widely held expectation that democracy involves voters having a say through referendums, and their perceptions of how referendum democracy was giving people a say in practice. We find a substantial amount of disappointment regarding the use of referendums. It is not only individual-level markers of political disaffection—right-wing populist voting, distrust of politicians, and seeing one's self at the bottom of society—that most substantially predict this form of referendum disappointment. Country-level forces such as income inequality and political corruption also corresponded with people who viewed referendums as important while perceiving that people were not being given a say through referendums. These results suggest that experiences with inequality and corruption may be factors that lead some people to look beyond established parties and representative democracy for referendums as alternative modes of political influence. Particularly in countries where things were not going as well, respondents were more likely to report a gap between their expectation that democracy should provide a say through referendums, and their perceptions of having opportunities to actually have that say. For many people who are disaffected, democracy in practice was not living up to this widely held democratic principle of allowing people to have a direct say via referendums.

This gap between the widely held democratic expectations of referendums, and variable perceptions of not having a say via referendums in practice, may provide space that allows political entrepreneurs to exploit frustrations disaffected people have with representative democracy. Political consequences of this may be seen in growing support for populist parties, in demands for the Brexit referendum, for a second Brexit vote, and in calls for additional referendums that have occurred since. All of this suggests that "outsider" movements may tap into disaffection, and potentially gain additional support, with calls for increased use of referendums—calls that may not simply be calculated to set policy, but to manufacture a sense that people will finally have their say.

That said, we must end with some caveats. Referendums are frequently "top down," in that they are placed on the ballot by incumbent politicians. Although we find

corruption and income inequality associated with perceptions that people are not having a say though referendums, and with our referendum disappointment measure, these factors could depress trust in democratic institutions generally, including trust in top down referendums. Additionally, we cannot tell from these data which types of referendums it is that people value, nor which types of referendums they perceive as providing a meaningful say.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Note on robustness

As demonstrated in Table 2, our results are not contingent on how negative values of the disappointment measure are coded. Model 1 in Table 2 estimates disappointment where values range from -10 to 10. As a robustness check, Model 2 estimates the same model with all negative values set at 0. We consider negative values as reflecting a lack of disappointment. Any value at 0 or lower may also reflect a lack of disappointment and/or indifference. Model 2 in Table 2 demonstrates that the results are not affected by how negative values are coded.

Moreover, in results not reported here we re-estimated models reported in Table 1 and Table 2 with cases limited to European Union nations, with a different measure of income inequality (from the European Union), and with a different measure of government performance (a World Bank governance measure, rather than the TI corruption rating). Regardless of the permutation of cases and measures, our substantive results were unchanged. Results are also consistent whether or not Switzerland (an outlier on referendum use) is included or excluded from the analysis.

Our findings are also robust across a range of different model specifications including case selection (e.g., excluding Switzerland), excluding some individual level measures (e.g., religious attendance—which we include as a control), and controlling for "former Communist" states.

Individual level variables (ESS variable name in parenthesis where appropriate)

Support populist party. Coded as 1 if respondent reported voting for a party identified as right-wing populist (e.g., Swiss People's Party, Danish People's Party, Vlaams Belang, True Finns, Front National, Lega Nord, PVV [List Wilders], Progress Party [Norway], Swedish Democrats [Sverigedemokraterna]).

Support government party. Coded as 1 if respondent reported voting in the last election for a party that was in government, 0 if otherwise.

Left/right scale (*lrscale*). Respondent self-placement on left–right scale. 0–10 scale, 0–left, 10 = right. "Don't know" responses coded as 5.

Trust in politicians (*trstplt*). Trust in politicians 0–10 scale, 0 = no trust at all, 10 = complete trust. Reverse coded so high values = distrust.

Participation. 1 point each if respondent worked for "a party or action group" (*wrkprty*), "another organization" (*wrkorg*), displayed a badge or sticker (*badge*), signed a petition (*sgnptit*), boycotted product (*bctprd*), or took part in a lawful protest (*pbldmn*) in the last 12 months. 0–6 scale. 0 = no participation, 6 = all forms of participation.

R's place in society (*plinsoc*). Respondent's self-placement when asked "Your place in society?" 1–10 scale; 0 = "bottom of our society"…10 = "top of our society."

Age (*agea*). Age of respondent in years.

Education (*eisced*). Highest level of education, ES–ISCED. 1–7 scale; 1 = less than lower secondary…7 = higher tertiary education.

Interest (*polintr*). Interest in politics, recoded 1 = low, 4 = high.

Female (*gndr*). 1 = female, 0 = male.

Experienced discrimination (*dscrgrp*). Respondent self-reported perception of being "member of a group discriminated against in this country." 1 = yes, 0 = no.

Attend religious services (*rlgatnd*). How often attend religious services apart from special occasions? 1–7 scale, 1 = every day…7 = never.

Country level variables

Number of referendums. Calculated from reports in Qvortrup (2014)

Party System Disproportionality. Gallagher index for recent election result. Ranges from .73 (Denmark) to 17.6 (France).

Unemployment. 2012 levels, from World Bank. Ranges from 3.2 (Norway) to 25.2 (Spain).

Gini index (inequality). From CIA database. Ranges from .23 (Sweden) to .45 (Bulgaria).

Corruption. Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. Scale ranging from 41 (Bulgaria), 44 (Italy) to 90 (Finland, Denmark). Transposed so higher scores reflect greater corruption.

Dependent variables (original question wording)

Referendums in principle (*votedir*). "Thinking generally rather than about [country], how important do you think it is for democracy in general that citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on they directly in referendums" 0 (not at all important for democracy in general) through 10 (extremely important for democracy in general).

Referendums in practice (*votedirc*). "To what extend you think…the following statement applies in [country]. Citizens in [country] have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums." 0 (does not apply at all) through 10 (applies completely).

Disappointment with referendums. Calculated as *votedir*–*votedirc*. −10 through 10, high scores reflect greater gap between greater regard for referendums as a democratic principle and perceptions of referendum use in practice.

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Article

Risks and Opportunities of Direct Democracy: The Effect of Information in Colombia's Peace Referendum

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Abstract
Voting decisions in high-stakes referendums can have crucial consequences for the fate of national governments and the implementation of major reforms. Prior studies have found that referendum campaigns can substantially influence their outcomes. Yet few have taken into account the fact that the effect of campaign arguments depends on a number of factors, including individual knowledge levels and the degree of uncertainty surrounding the alternatives on the ballot. In this study we investigate how political knowledge and campaign arguments stressing risks and opportunities influenced vote choice in Colombia's 2016 peace referendum. Drawing on a nationally representative survey (Study 1) and an original experiment (Study 2), we find that stressing the opportunities that the peace deal could bring to the country, rather than the risks associated with failing to conclude it, increased the probability that Colombians voted Yes in the referendum. While highly knowledgeable voters were more likely to support the deal than those with little knowledge, we find that pro-referendum opportunity arguments reduced the gap between these two groups by increasing the likelihood of a Yes vote among those with little knowledge. These findings contribute to research on voting behavior and campaign effects in direct democracies. Additionally, by exploring the crucial issue of attitudes towards peace, our findings also have important implications for countries trying to secure citizens' approval of high-stakes issues—such as negotiating the end of decades of war—through democratic instruments.

Keywords
attitudes towards peace; Colombia; information processing; peace agreements; political knowledge; referendum campaigns; voting behavior

Issue
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1. Introduction

Using direct democratic consultations (such as referendums) as a tool of political decision-making—on a range of issues from the implementation of new policies to the approval of constitutional reforms—remains controversial. While critics of direct democracy have often claimed that citizens are not sufficiently qualified to participate directly in policy making (Budge, 1996; Matsusaka, 2003), others have provided evidence that citizens can make competent decisions in consultations in the United States (Bowler & Donovan, 1998), Switzerland (Colombo, 2018; Kriesi, 2005), and various European countries (Hobolt, 2009).[1] The results of at least three controversial referendums that took place in 2016 in countries as diverse as the UK (on whether to remain in the EU), Italy

[1] For a review of the consequences of the use of referendums in modern democracies, see Qvortrup (2005).

(on a constitutional reform) and Colombia (on a peace agreement between the government and the country's main rebel group) have reignited the debate on the legitimacy of direct democracy when it comes to voting on crucial matters.

The consequences of referendums are also a matter of contention. There is evidence that direct-democratic initiatives can spur political engagement (see, for example, Tolbert, Grummel, & Smith, 2001; Donovan, Tolbert, & Smith, 2009), but research from Latin American countries with a strong tradition of presidentialism shows that populist presidents can use referendums to manipulate the consensus and undermine legislative opposition (Breuer, 2007, 2009; Durán-Martínez, 2012; Walker, 2003).[2] This debate, and the increasing popularity of direct democracy worldwide (Altman, 2011), highlights the importance of investigating how citizens make voting decisions on high-stakes referendum proposals. In this study we empirically examine the determinants of voting behavior in referendums, concretely exploring whether information influences citizens' support for this type of consultations.

There is recent evidence that the information delivered during referendum campaigns can significantly affect voting behavior (Christin, Hug, & Sciarini, 2002; Colombo, 2018; De Vreese, 2007; Gherghina & Silagadze, 2019; Hobolt, 2005; Kriesi, 2005). Yet the question of whether campaign arguments can have asymmetric effects in direct democratic consultations has been largely overlooked (LeDuc, 2002; Morisi, 2016). Referendums contain two intrinsically different vote choices: citizens can either vote Yes to an uncertain change or No to maintain the status quo. Given the unknown potential effects of the proposed change, campaign messages can be expected to have differential effects when they focus on the *consequences* of a referendum proposal. How do voters react to arguments that stress the risks or opportunities related to the outcome of a direct democratic consultation? Furthermore, it is unclear whether the effects of these campaign messages differ depending on individuals' levels of knowledge, given that relatively uninformed voters tend to prefer to maintain the status quo compared to those who are more politically sophisticated (Barber, Gordon, Hill, & Price, 2017; Bowler & Donovan, 1998; Christin et al., 2002; Kriesi, 2005). Can information balance the gap between voters with low and high levels of political knowledge with regard to support for a referendum proposal?

We address these questions by focusing on the referendum proposed by Colombia's former president, Juan Manuel Santos, in October 2016 to obtain popular approval for a peace agreement his government had negotiated with the rebel group of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) over a period of about six years. The decision to either approve or reject the deal involved various risks and opportunities. While supporters of the agreement chiefly framed it as an opportunity to end over five decades of civil war, the opposition stressed the risks of admitting the members of a "terrorist group" into Colombia's political system and society.

To investigate the role of both information and political knowledge in influencing voting preferences, we analyze two data sources: a nationally representative survey that was fielded by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in the two months preceding the referendum (Study 1), and an experimental study that we conducted shortly before the vote with a convenience sample of voters (Study 2). Our findings show that stressing the opportunities of the peace deal increased the probability that citizens voted Yes in the referendum. Although highly knowledgeable voters were more likely to support the deal than those with low levels of knowledge, pro-deal opportunity arguments reduced the gap between these two groups by increasing the likelihood of a Yes vote among those with less political knowledge. Campaign arguments that stressed the risks involved in the peace agreement or the opportunities associated with maintaining the status quo did not affect voting preferences. These findings contribute to our knowledge of voting behavior and campaign effects in direct democracy, and, by examining the crucial issue of attitudes towards peace, have important implications for countries that aim to strengthen peace settlements and implement conflict resolution reforms by involving the population through democratic mechanisms.

2. The Colombian Peace Agreement

After several failed attempts to sign a peace agreement with FARC,[3] in 2012 the Colombian government—led by Santos—started a new round of negotiations with the insurgents and agreed to an agenda that defined six key issues for negotiation.[4] In January 2013, as the negotiations progressed, Santos proposed a plebiscite to approve any potential agreement, even if he was not legally mandated to so do.[5] After four years of intense talks and several setbacks and delays, in June 2016 both parties announced a bilateral ceasefire and defined the conditions for the demobilization and reintegration of FARC. In September they announced and signed their

[2] For a positive example of referendums as a counter-power tool in Bolivia, see Welp & Lissidini (2016).

[3] Before 2012, three different Colombian governments unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate with FARC: in 1984, 1991 and 1998. For a brief description of these negotiations, see González Posso (2004). For recent summaries and analysis of the Colombian conflict more generally, see Steele (2017, Chapters 2 and 3) and Vargas and Caruso (2014).

[4] The six items included comprehensive rural reform; political participation by former rebels; the cessation of hostilities and disarmament; a comprehensive solution to the illicit drugs problem; establishment of a special system for truth, justice, reparations and non-repetition; and, mechanisms for the implementation and verification of the agreement.

[5] According to Colombian legislation, the consultation was defined as a "plebiscite" because the minimum turnout threshold was reduced to 13 percent from the 25 percent required for referendums. For consistency with the majority of studies on direct democracy, we refer to this consultation as a referendum.

final agreement. The main aim of the deal was to end conflict with the country's strongest rebel group fighting one of the longest-running internal wars in the Western hemisphere, which killed approximately 220,000 people between 1958 and 2012 (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

The popular consultation took place on October 2. Despite opinion polls suggesting wide support, the peace agreement was rejected by a razor-thin margin: "No" won with 50.2 percent of the vote. Turnout was low, at less than 38 percent of the electorate. Following the unexpected result, the government resumed its negotiations with FARC and Congress approved a revised deal at the end of November 2016.

Throughout the negotiations and during the referendum campaign, two factions emerged among elites: Santos and his administration strongly supported the negotiations and urged the population to vote Yes, while Álvaro Uribe Vélez, a very popular former president who is credited with militarily weakening the FARC, fiercely opposed the process and campaigned for No. Matanock and Garbiras-Díaz (2018, p. 15) described the referendum as "a battle of narratives between divided elites".

The No camp criticized the provisions of the peace agreement as unjustified concessions to the rebels, and emphasized the risks of promoting a culture of impunity in which "terrorists" could participate in politics. The Yes camp repeatedly emphasized the potential risks of not approving the agreement, such as returning to deadly cycles of violence and years of armed conflict. They somewhat vaguely framed the deal as a historical opportunity for peace, reconciliation, and social and economic development without citing specific provisions of the agreement. As Arjona (2016) noted, the government failed to explain how the components contained real opportunities for change.

Given the complexity of the six-year negotiation process that led to a final agreement of almost 300 pages touching on a large variety of crucial themes for the future of the country, commentators predicted that information about the peace deal would be decisive in the plebiscite. However, current explanations of why the referendum was rejected—and, more generally, of the determinants of attitudes towards the peace deal—have focused on factors other than information and knowledge.

For example, some scholars have examined the "violence–voting nexus", following the lead of Weintraub, Vargas and Flores (2015) who provided evidence from presidential elections that residents of areas with moderate levels of violence tend to support "peace candidates" more than those from areas with very high or very low levels of violence. In an early analysis shortly after the referendum, Arjona (2016) showed that voters living in areas that suffered more from violent conflict were more likely to support the deal (see also Fergusson & Molina, 2016). Similarly, Kreiman and Masullo (2019) found that victims of FARC tended to support the referendum more than victims of the paramilitaries.

By contrast, Liendo and Braithwaite (2018) found that attitudes towards the peace process were driven more by political preferences than by experience of violence. This is in line with evidence showing that in Colombia and Latin America more broadly, political support for the president tends to correlate with approval of the issues proposed in direct-democratic consultations (Breuer, 2007; Durán-Martínez, 2012; Ruth, Welp, & Whitehead, 2017). Furthermore, Matanock and Garbiras-Díaz (2018) found that rebel endorsement of the agreement's electoral provisions diminished support for it.

We expect that the "information aspect" of the campaign might also play an important role in explaining voting decisions in the Colombian referendum. If the campaign leading up to the referendum was really a "battle of narratives" between deeply divided elites, to what extent did the arguments from both camps influence voting decisions? In the next section we advance different theoretical expectations building on research on campaign effects in direct democracy, which we then test with both observational and experimental data.

3. Political Knowledge and Information Effects in Referendum Campaigns

Since early research on public opinion, political knowledge has been considered one of the main determinants of political reasoning (for a review, see Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1997). Numerous studies have shown that political sophistication and political knowledge moderate voters' decision-making processes (e.g., Jerit, Barabas, & Bolsen, 2006; Slothuus & De Vreese, 2010; Zaller, 1992). In the specific context of direct democracy, there is evidence that undecided and less informed voters (Bowler & Donovan, 1998, p. 49; Christin et al., 2002) are more likely to vote No to a referendum proposal compared to those with high levels of political knowledge. Similarly, experimental evidence confirms that support for the status quo in voting on social issues is strongest among the least-informed individuals (Barber et al., 2017). In line with this evidence, and considering claims that the lack of knowledge played a central role in driving the results of the Colombian referendum (Arjona, 2016; Idler, 2016), we expect voters with high levels of political knowledge to be more likely to vote Yes in the peace referendum than those with low levels (*Hypothesis 1*).

While we hypothesize that individual differences in political knowledge correlate with voting preferences in direct democracy, we can expect that voters also react to campaign messages supporting both sides of a referendum campaign, and that the influence of such messages is moderated by their pre-existing levels of knowledge. Drawing on the literatures on framing (for a review, see Chong & Druckman, 2007) and information effects in elections (e.g., Alvarez, 1997; Bartels, 1996) and referendum campaigns (Christin et al., 2002; De Vreese, 2007; Hobolt, 2009; Kriesi, 2005), we can derive two competing expectations about how messages that stress the

risks and opportunities involved in a referendum proposal should influence voting preferences.

The first expectation draws on prospect theory and studies on loss aversion (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991). Research in political and social psychology has stressed that negative information tends to have a stronger influence on political decisions than positive information (for a review, see Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Soroka, 2014), partially because of a "negativity bias" in individuals' reactions to negative events compared to positive ones (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Evidence from health communication points in this direction, indicating that by motivating preventive health behavior, "loss-framed" messages are more persuasive than "gain-framed" ones (Schneider et al., 2001). Additional evidence confirms that negative economic information has a stronger impact on individuals' attitudes than positive information (Soroka, 2006). Building on these premises, we argue that if "losses loom larger than gains" (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), "risk arguments" (which stress the risks related to either accepting or rejecting a referendum proposal) should be more persuasive than "opportunity arguments" (which highlight the opportunities involved on both sides of a referendum) (*Hypothesis 2a*).

The competing expectation draws on the "uncertainty-reduction" effect of information identified in elections (Alvarez & Brehm, 2002) and referendums (Hobolt, 2009). The evidence shows that arguments used in direct democratic campaigns can influence voting preferences not only by persuading voters, but also by modifying their levels of uncertainty (LeDuc, 2002; Morisi, 2016). A key assumption is that the value that voters attribute to a referendum proposal increases as the uncertainty related to the proposal decreases (Hobolt, 2009, pp. 40–50). Therefore, campaign arguments that stress the opportunities of either accepting a referendum proposal or maintaining the status quo should be particularly persuasive because they *directly* reduce the uncertainty related to these options. However, risk arguments are based on a somewhat more complex reasoning. They *indirectly* promote referendum options by pointing out the drawbacks of their alternatives and predict what could happen if the referendum is approved/rejected; thus they are less likely to reduce uncertainty. Following this reasoning, therefore, we can expect opportunity messages to be more persuasive than risk messages, because they reduce the uncertainty related to referendum options (*Hypothesis 2b*). In addition, we can expect such an effect to be particularly large when the arguments stress the opportunities related to approving (instead of rejecting) a referendum proposal, since in most cases—such as Colombia's peace referendum—the uncertainties related to the "change option" (i.e., voting Yes) are higher than those associated with maintaining the status quo (Hobolt, 2009, pp. 40–50; LeDuc, 2002).

Lastly, we can assume that individual political knowledge should moderate the effect of campaign arguments. Kam (2005) has argued that voters' pre-existing knowledge levels influence the reception of campaign messages. More specifically, experimental evidence has shown that voters with low levels of knowledge are more likely to be influenced by the content of campaign messages than those with high levels (Lee, Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1999; Schuck & De Vreese, 2006; Slothuus & De Vreese, 2010). One of the main reasons for this finding is that people with low knowledge lack the necessary "ammunition with which to counterargue" persuasive messages (Taber & Lodge, 2006, p. 757). Thus, we hypothesize that campaign arguments—regardless of whether they focus on the risks or the opportunities of the referendum—should have a stronger effect on those with low political knowledge compared to those with high knowledge (*Hypothesis 3*).

In the next two sections we empirically test these expectations using data from two separate studies—a nationally representative survey to test H1 (Study 1) and an experiment conducted in the weeks preceding the Colombian referendum to test the other hypotheses (Study 2). While Study 1 allows us to identify the determinants of voting preferences and in particular the role of political knowledge in a representative sample of Colombian voters, Study 2 provides causal evidence of how campaign arguments influenced support for the peace agreement.

4. Study 1: LAPOP Survey

4.1. Data and Measures

Between 2016 and 2017, the LAPOP of Vanderbilt University conducted the most recent round of the Americas Barometer surveys. This article analyzes data from the survey conducted in Colombia between August 3 and October 29, 2016 in conjunction with the *Observatorio de la Democracia* of the Universidad de los Andes, which included questions on the peace referendum. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a national probability sample of voters that was selected using a multistage probability design with geographical regions, municipality size, and urbanization as the main strata. Our analysis excludes respondents who were interviewed on the day of the referendum or afterwards (N = 207), which leaves us with a total sample of 1,356 respondents (a complete description of the variables, summary statistics and question wording are available in the Appendix.)

Our main dependent variable is a measure of respondents' voting intentions in the event that a referendum was used to ratify the agreement, which we recode as a binary choice variable with a value of 1 for those who intended to vote Yes, and a value of 0 otherwise (excluding "Don't know" and no response)[6]. In alternative models,

[6] The question reads as follows: "in the event that a popular vote will be held to endorse the peace agreement between the government and the FARC, how would you vote?" Possible answers included: "I would vote in favor", "I would vote against", "I would not vote", "Don't know", "No reply".

we use either a dummy variable with Yes votes versus No votes (excluding all other options), or a choice variable that includes three categories (voting Yes, voting No, and not voting).

To measure political knowledge, we combined the responses to three questions about factual knowledge in an additive index, which we subsequently dichotomized into two categories to increase comparability with the experimental design: a "high knowledge" category (corresponding to the one-third of respondents who responded correctly to all three questions) and a "low knowledge" category for all others[7]. In Appendix A, we replicate the analysis using two alternative measures of knowledge: self-assessed knowledge level or frequency of attention to political news in the media.

In addition to the measures of political knowledge, in the regression analysis we control for standard demographics such as age, education, and in particular gender, since research has shown that women are less likely to support referendum proposals that involve a high degree of uncertainty (Verge, Guinjoan, & Rodon, 2015). We also include other covariates that might influence both voting intentions and knowledge, such as monthly household income and respondents' self-perception of their personal economic situation, since previous studies show that economic evaluations (Clarke, Kornberg, & Wearing, 2000) and economic expectations (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005) are key determinants of vote choice in direct democratic consultations in Europe. Lastly, we control for trust in the president and vote choice in the 2014 presidential election, since prior studies have found that trust in the government (Kriesi, 2005), government approval (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005), and partisan considerations (e.g., Christin et al., 2002; Colombo & Kriesi, 2017; Kriesi, 2005) are strong predictors of voting behavior in referendums (on presidential approval, see also Breuer, 2007, 2009; Durán-Martínez, 2012; Walker, 2003).

4.2. Results

Figure 1 displays the results from our full logistic regression model of the intention to vote Yes in the referendum on the peace agreement. As the plot shows, political knowledge is positively and significantly correlated with the probability of voting Yes, even when all covariates are included in the model. Depending on model specifications (see Table A2 in Appendix A), those with a high level of political knowledge are 9–11 percentage points more likely to vote Yes than those with low levels of political knowledge, keeping all other factors constant. Alternative specifications confirm the existence of a substantial and significant correlation: those who perceive themselves as having a very high level of political knowledge are 14–19 percentage points more likely to vote Yes than those with a very low level of perceived political knowledge, while those who look for political news in the media on a daily basis are 11–16 percentage points more likely to vote Yes than those who never look for news (see Table A4 in Appendix A). These findings confirm our expectation (H1) that a higher level of political knowledge is associated with a higher probability of supporting the referendum proposal.

In alternative binomial logistic regressions, we find that a high level of knowledge also correlates with the intention to vote Yes compared to the intention to vote No, although the effect is marginally significant at the 0.1 level (see Table A5 and Figure A1 in Appendix A). When we run multinomial logistic regressions, however, we find that a high level of knowledge significantly correlates with Yes votes compared to non-voters, but not to No votes. These results suggest that the positive effect of knowledge on support for the peace agreement operates mainly through a "mobilization channel", in line with evidence that political knowledge influences turnout (Larcinese, 2007). In other words, those who know more about politics are more likely to both vote in the referendum and to vote Yes compared to those who know less, while political knowledge has no effect on the probability of voting No.

In addition to highlighting the role of knowledge, the regression results reveal other determinants of voting in the Colombian referendum that resemble those identified in research on other direct democratic consultations. Figure 1 shows that the strongest predictors of voting preferences are trust in the president and past vote for President Santos: moving from no trust at all to complete trust in the president increases the chances of a Yes vote by 45 percentage points, while those who voted for Santos in the 2014 election are 21 percentage points more likely to vote Yes than those who did not vote. Additional models show that presidential approval is also a crucial determinant of Yes votes (see Table A3 in Appendix A). These findings support previous evidence that presidents play a key role in influencing voting behavior in referendums in Latin America (Durán-Martínez, 2012). In addition, the findings confirm that those whose economic situation improved over the past 12 months are significantly more likely to vote Yes than those whose economic situation remained stable, and that women are less likely to vote for a change than men—a finding that confirms the existence of a gender gap in support for direct democratic proposals involving a degree of uncertainty (Verge et al., 2015).

5. Study 2

5.1. Experimental Sample

Although the analysis of the LAPOP data allows us to test the effect of political knowledge in a representative sample of voters, the observational nature of the survey prevents us from exploring the potential causal effects of in-

[7] The three questions are: "What is the name of the current president of the United States of America?"; "On what continent is Nigeria?"; and "How long is the presidential term in Colombia?". Replies have been coded with a value of 1 for correct answers, and a value of 0 otherwise.

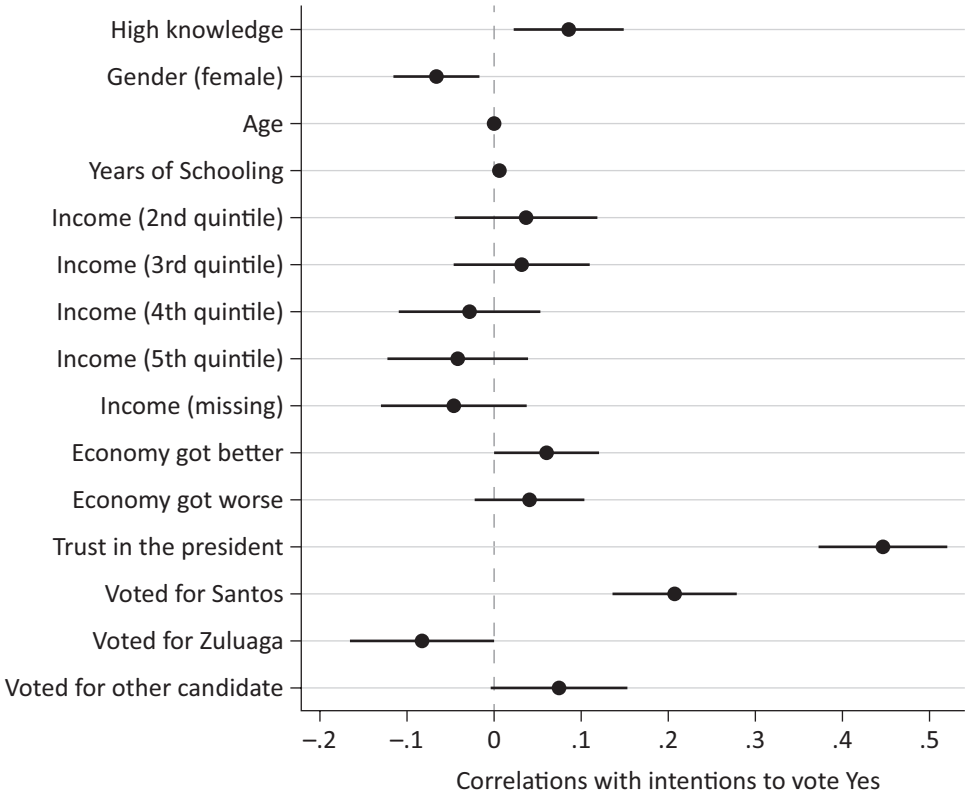

Figure 1. Determinants of intentions to vote Yes to the peace agreement. Notes: Average marginal effects based on logistic regressions (Model 3 in Table A2 in Appendix A, N = 1261). Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum. Horizontal lines correspond to 95 percent confidence intervals.

formation on voting preferences. How did voters react to the different arguments highlighting the opportunity and risks involved in the Colombian peace agreement?

To answer this question and address our theoretical predictions, we conducted an experimental study in the few days between the signature of the peace agreement in Cartagena (September 26, 2016) and the day of the referendum (October 2, 2016). The experiment was fielded online and included a convenience sample of 478 eligible Colombian voters, recruited mostly through readers of the magazine *Vice Colombia* and students of Javeriana University. The median age of our sample was 32 years, and the respondents were 58 percent women. Our sample differed importantly from the average Colombian citizen, since it included mostly residents of Bogota (66 percent), university students (43 percent), and a large share of supporters of the peace agreement (79 percent of the participants in the control group intended to vote Yes). Balance tests indicate that there are no major differences between the treatment groups and the control group with regard to the socio-demographic dimensions recorded in the study (see Table C2 in Appendix C).

Considering the nature of our experimental sample, we should necessarily be cautious about extending the results from Study 2 to the entire Colombian electorate. Although recent evidence shows that experimental estimates from convenience samples (including student samples) are similar to those obtained from national samples (Coppock, 2018; Coppock, Leeper, & Mullinix, 2018; Druckman & Kam, 2011; Mullinix, Leeper, Druckman, & Freese, 2016), it is possible that the effect *size* of risk and opportunity arguments would differ within a population-based sample. For example, we might expect the information effects to be larger if our sample included a larger share of low-knowledge voters (in line with the evidence reviewed above), or we might expect the effect of pro-peace agreement arguments to be smaller if our sample included more opponents of the peace deal, in line with the theory of motivated reasoning (Lodge & Taber, 2013), as discussed below.

However, we do not envisage strong reasons why the *direction* of the average treatment effects should be substantially different within a nationally representative sample. Why would a group of voters, including a large share of young university students, react to risk and opportunity arguments in a markedly different way than the general electorate? Although we cannot address this question directly, we inspected whether students' voting patterns differed significantly from non-students using LAPOP data. The analysis indicates that: a) being a student does not correlate with the probability of voting Yes, once we control for the other factors included in previous analysis; b) students do not differ significantly in their voting intentions from the rest of the sample (see Table A7 in Appendix A); and c) the determinants of Yes votes are substantially the same for students and

non-students, although the precision of the estimates changes due to the small number of students in the LAPOP survey (see Figure A2 in Appendix A). For these reasons, we believe that our experimental study can provide valid estimates, even if we should keep in mind the limitations related to a convenience sample of voters.

5.2. Experimental Design

After replying to a few socio-demographic questions, the participants in Study 2 were randomly assigned to one of five experimental conditions, as summarized in Table 1. Those assigned to the treatment groups read a short argument of around 70 words that was either in favor (pro argument) or against (con argument) the peace agreement. The texts highlighted either the risks or the opportunities of both sides of the referendum campaign, and were created on the basis of the main arguments used in the campaign debate in major news outlets. Thus, the participants were not exposed to fictional arguments, but only to publicly available information. Deception was not used in the experiment.

To illustrate, the following is the English translation of the argument stressing the opportunities of the peace deal that we presented in Group 1 (the complete list of arguments and the original wording in Spanish is available in Appendix E):

> Those who support the Yes argue that voting Yes in the referendum constitutes a historical opportunity to end violence in the country. They contend that it is key to bringing peace to the rural areas and for the displaced to come back to their lands, without poverty, landmines and illicit crops. Victims will know what happened with their beloved ones, will be repaired and non-repetition will be guaranteed. They see in the referendum an opportunity to decide if we want to end the war.

After reading the text, we asked the participants whether they intended to vote Yes or No to the proposed peace agreement. Those assigned to the control group replied to the same question without reading any information. Voting intentions in the control condition therefore serve as a baseline against which we measure eventual changes in the treatment conditions. Participants then replied to two questions about basic facts concerning the peace agreement. Those who replied correctly to both questions (70 percent) were assigned a value of 1 ("high knowledge"), while the other participants (30 percent) were assigned a value of 0 ("low knowledge").

5.3. Results

Table 2 summarizes the results of different logistic regressions in which we estimate whether the intention to vote Yes differed by group assignment, with the control group set as the reference category. As Model 1 shows, pro arguments that stressed opportunities related to the peace agreement significantly increased participants' likelihood of voting Yes. However, pro arguments that stressed the risks of a No vote and the arguments used by the opponents of the peace agreement (con arguments) had no influence on voting preferences. The results are substantially similar in Model 2, in which we introduce socio-demographic covariates to increase the precision of the estimates (Angrist & Pischke, 2009, pp. 23–44).

The results from the regression analysis therefore partially support H2b (but not H2a) that campaign arguments should be more persuasive when they highlight the opportunities (instead of the risks) related to a referendum proposal, although the effect applies only to the arguments that support a Yes vote. By contrast, the arguments against the peace deal do not seem to influence participants' voting preferences significantly.

Next, we tested whether the observed effects differed depending on whether the participants correctly answered factual questions related to the peace agreement. First, analysis of the participants in the control condition confirms that those with high levels of knowledge were significantly more likely to vote Yes than those with low levels, which is in line with the survey results. However, the negative interaction coefficients in Models 3 and 4 indicate that the effect of pro-deal opportunity arguments is significantly lower for those with high political knowledge compared to those with low political knowledge. The difference between these two groups of voters is evident when we plot the average marginal effects in Figure 2. If we first consider all the participants, the left-hand plot of Figure 2 confirms that pro-opportunity arguments increase the probability of voting for the peace agreement by 13 percentage points compared to no information. When we break down the effects by level of knowledge (right-hand plot), we find that pro-opportunity arguments increase the likelihood of voting Yes by 30 percentage points among low-knowledge participants, while the effect is not significant among their high-knowledge counterparts. These find-

Table 1. Design of the Experiment.

No information	*Opportunity arguments*		*Risk arguments*	
Control group	**Group 1 (PRO)**	**Group 2 (CON)**	**Group 3 (PRO)**	**Group 4 (CON)**
	Opportunity of voting Yes	*Opportunity of voting No*	*Risk of voting No*	*Risk of voting Yes*
(N = 95)	(N = 94)	(N = 96)	(N = 96)	(N = 97)

Table 2. Treatment effects on support for peace agreement.

	Intentions to vote Yes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment groups (ref: control)				
— **Group 1**	1.053**	0.822*	2.391**	2.498**
(opportunity — PRO)	(0.447)	(0.474)	(1.079)	(1.116)
— **Group 2**	0.288	0.246	0.578	0.789
(opportunity — CON)	(0.372)	(0.401)	(0.549)	(0.594)
— **Group 3**	0.214	−0.002	0.550	0.349
(risk — PRO)	(0.367)	(0.400)	(0.578)	(0.618)
— **Group 4**	0.636	0.455	1.004	0.978
(risk — CON)	0.636	0.455	1.004	0.978
High knowledge		0.388	1.466***	1.240**
		(0.302)	(0.551)	(0.595)
Group 1 × High knowledge			−2.314*	−2.502**
			(1.229)	(1.272)
Group 2 × High knowledge			−0.888	−1.084
			(0.786)	(0.829)
Group 3 × High knowledge			−1.008	−0.756
			(0.793)	(0.832)
Group 4 × High knowledge			−1.061	−1.020
			(0.861)	(0.907)
Gender (female)		0.566*		0.576*
		(0.295)		(0.302)
Age		−0.028**		−0.031***
		(0.011)		(0.012)
High education		0.591**		0.608**
		(0.292)		(0.295)
Employment (ref = working, not student)				
— Unemployed, not student		−0.334		−0.251
		(0.397)		(0.409)
— Student		−0.065		−0.050
		(0.361)		(0.362)
Living in Bogotá		0.037		−0.036
		(0.297)		(0.303)
Constant	1.322***	1.753***	0.654*	1.462**
	(0.252)	(0.676)	(0.342)	(0.702)
Pseudo R^2	.018	.096	.042	.109
N	478	472	472	472

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Coefficients are log-odds based on logistic regressions (for average marginal effects see Table C3 in Appendix C). Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes versus other options. Standard errors in parentheses.

ings support the expectation that information about a referendum proposal has a greater impact when voters know less about the content of the proposal (H3).

Lastly, we investigated why the arguments used by the opponents of the referendum did not reduce support for the peace agreement within our sample. The analysis in Appendix D suggests that the presence of disconfirmation bias and the complexity of risk messages might explain this lack of effect.

6. Conclusions

The results of a recent wave of direct-democratic consultations that took place in Europe and Latin America has made clear that voting decisions in high-stakes referendums can have substantial consequences for the fate of national governments and the implementation of major reforms. The case of the 2016 Colombian referendum reveals that opening up a peace process to direct consultation with the population can potentially derail years of negotiation, even in a country where one would expect wide popular support for measures to end a long and bloody civil war (Flores & Vargas, 2018). Moreover, although the government eventually managed to ratify the peace deal despite the opposition of a (minimal) majority of Colombian voters, policy experts argue that peace in Colombia cannot be maintained without popular consent (e.g., Llorente, 2016). Even if the deal is now sealed,

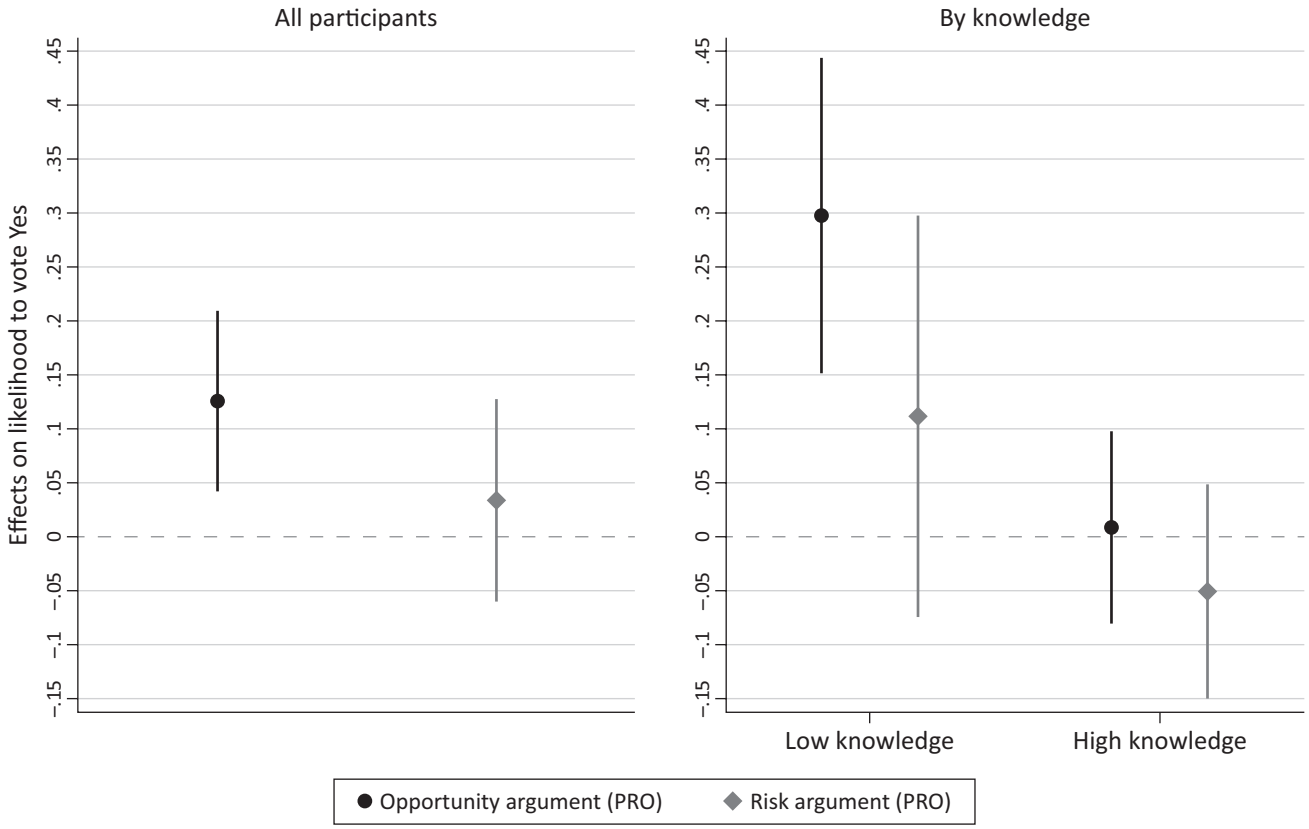

Figure 2. Effects of pro arguments on intention to vote Yes. Notes: Marginal effects based on models 1 and 3 in Table 2. Value 0 on Y-axis equal to control group. Vertical bars correspond to 90 percent confidence intervals.

successful implementation is likely to hinge largely on popular support, especially after Iván Duque, who has been openly critical of the peace agreement, became president. With so much at stake, understanding the determinants of political attitudes towards peace and voting behavior more generally becomes even more relevant for the country's future.

Our findings provide evidence that information plays a crucial role in influencing voting preferences in high-stakes referendums. More specifically, they indicate that voters in this type of direct democratic consultation care more about the opportunities that approving a proposal could potentially imply for them and their country than the possible risks associated with its rejection. Furthermore, we show that political knowledge plays a central role in both determining voting preferences and in the reception of information in two ways. First, we find that in the 2016 Colombian referendum, higher levels of political knowledge are associated with a higher probability of voting Yes. Knowledge seems to influence support for the proposal mostly by mobilizing potential Yes voters, since those who know more about politics are more likely to both vote and to vote Yes than those who know less about politics. Second, positive arguments that stress the opportunities of the referendum proposal have a greater influence on poorly informed voters. This suggests that when a referendum concerns a salient but complex proposal, information is especially crucial for those with low levels of political knowledge.

It is important, however, to highlight the limitations of the sample in Study 2, which included a higher share of "Yes voters" and highly educated voters than the general population. Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that our "con arguments" would have had a different effect in a representative sample with a larger share of No voters. In line with the theory of motivated reasoning (e.g., Lodge & Taber, 2013), it might be the case that campaign arguments are persuasive as long as they "resonate" with respondents' prior attitudes towards a referendum proposal. Besides these limitations, the fact that we do find information effects in a "hard case"—that is, a campaign in which the stakes were high and in a study conducted just a few days before the crucial vote—strengthens the contribution of our findings.

Finally, the implications of our findings for securing peace making and peace building extend beyond Colombia. Although attempting to seal a peace deal with a referendum is not a common strategy, the number of civil wars in countries where elections take place is growing (Matanock & García-Sánchez, 2017). This suggests that understanding how to successfully harness (electoral) support for peace might be crucial for political leaders in conflict-affected countries working to end armed strife through negotiated settlements. For Colombia and other

countries facing the historical opportunity to end war through democratic solutions, understanding citizens' attitudes about the risks and opportunities involved in a peace process is a key step towards securing broad popular support for a peaceful future.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Appendix A. Study 1 (LAPOP), analysis.

Table A1. Summary statistics.

	Percentage	*(out of total N)*
Intend to vote Yes	39.4	(1296)
Intend to vote No	20.8	(1296)
Would not vote	39.8	(1296)
High knowledge (versus low)	34.7	(1356)
Females	50.0	(1356)
Income (1st quintile)	19.8	(1356)
Income (2nd quintile)	15.3	(1356)
Income (3rd quintile)	21.2	(1356)
Income (4th quintile)	17.3	(1356)
Income (5th quintile)	13.7	(1356)
Income (missing)	12.7	(1356)
Personal economic situation got better	25.9	(1346)
Personal economic stayed the same	43.2	(1346)
Personal economic situation got worse	31.0	(1346)
Voted for Santos in 2014	32.6	(1345)
Voted for Zuluaga	8.5	(1345)
Voted for other candidate	20.1	(1345)
Did not vote	38.8	(1345)
	Mean	*St. dev*
Perception of political knowledge: 5 categories, from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high)	0.50	0.23
Frequency of attention to news in the media: 5 categories, from 0 (never) to 1 (daily)	0.84	0.27
Age (from 18 to 88)	39.52	15.13
Years of schooling (from 0 to 18)	9.75	4.22
Trust in the president (from 0 to 1)	0.32	0.32

Table A2. Determinants of intentions to vote Yes to the peace agreement (logistic regressions).

	Intentions to vote Yes					
	(1)		(2)		(3)	
High knowledge	0.103**	(0.035)	0.112**	(0.035)	0.086**	(0.032)
(odd ratios)	*1.564***	*(0.238)*	*1.639***	*(0.255)*	*1.594**	*(0.288)*
(log odds)	*0.447***	*(0.152)*	*0.494***	*(0.156)*	*0.466**	*(0.181)*
Gender (female)	−0.086**	(0.027)	−0.087**	(0.027)	−0.066**	(0.025)
Age	0.004***	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)	0.001	(0.001)
Education (years of schooling)	−0.002	(0.004)	0.001	(0.004)	0.007	(0.004)
Income (ref = 1st quintile)						
— 2nd quintile			0.018	(0.047)	0.037	(0.042)
— 3rd quintile			0.001	(0.043)	0.032	(0.040)
— 4th quintile			−0.068	(0.045)	−0.028	(0.042)
— 5th quintile			−0.098*	(0.040)	−0.041	(0.041)
— Unreported/Don't know			−0.116**	(0.044)	−0.046	(0.043)
Economic situation (ref = same)						
— Got better			0.096**	(0.034)	0.061*	(0.031)
— Got worse			−0.001	(0.035)	0.041	(0.032)
Trust in the President (0–1)					0.446***	(0.038)
Past vote (ref = did not vote)						
— Voted for Santos					0.207***	(0.036)
— Voted for Zuluaga					−0.082	(0.042)
— Other vote					0.074	(0.040)
Interviewed last week						
Constant (odds ratio)	0.359**	(0.111)	0.304**	(0.104)	0.100***	(0.036)
N	1283		1275		1261	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Coefficients are average marginal effects (except where otherwise specified) based on logistic regressions, with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum versus other choice. High knowledge equal to correct response to three questions on factual political knowledge (for question wording see Appendix B). Stratified estimate using svyset command in Stata (number of strata = 6; number of unit per strata = 62). The sample was selected with a multi-stage probability design, using geographical regions, municipality size, and urbanization as the main strata. Respondents were selected in clusters for urban and rural areas. Within each cluster, six participants (three male, three female, divided into three age groups) were randomly selected.

Table A3. Determinants of intentions to vote Yes to the peace agreement (additional models).

	Intentions to vote Yes					
	(1)		(2)		(3)	
High knowledge	0.075*	(0.031)	0.075*	(0.031)	0.076*	(0.032)
Gender (female)	−0.059*	(0.025)	−0.059*	(0.025)	−0.060*	(0.025)
Age	0.001	(0.001)	0.001	(0.001)	0.001	(0.001)
Education (years of schooling)	0.007	(0.004)	0.008	(0.004)	0.007	(0.004)
Income (ref = 1st quintile)						
— 2nd quintile	0.028	(0.042)	0.027	(0.042)	0.027	(0.042)
— 3rd quintile	0.038	(0.038)	0.038	(0.038)	0.037	(0.038)
— 4th quintile	−0.011	(0.042)	−0.012	(0.042)	−0.014	(0.041)
— 5th quintile	−0.039	(0.041)	−0.036	(0.041)	−0.039	(0.041)
— Unreported / Don't know	−0.044	(0.043)	−0.043	(0.043)	−0.044	(0.044)
Economic situation (ref = same)						
— Got better	0.065*	(0.030)	0.064*	(0.030)	0.066*	(0.031)
— Got worse	0.059	(0.033)	0.058	(0.033)	0.055	(0.033)
Trust in the President (0–1)	0.249***	(0.050)	0.250***	(0.050)	0.249***	(0.050)
Past vote (ref = did not vote)						
— Voted for Santos	0.177***	(0.034)	0.176***	(0.034)	0.178***	(0.034)
— Voted for Zuluaga	−0.079	(0.042)	−0.080	(0.042)	−0.078	(0.042)
— Other vote	0.071	(0.040)	0.070	(0.040)	0.069	(0.039)
Presidential approval (0 = min, 1 = max)	0.383***	(0.057)	0.384***	(0.057)	0.385***	(0.057)
Interviewed last week			−0.045	(0.047)		
Day of interview					−0.001	(0.001)
N	1259		1259		1259	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$. Coefficients are average marginal effects (except where otherwise specified) based on logistic regressions, with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum versus other choice. Presidential approval: five-category variable (including the options "very good", "good", "neither good nor bad", "bad", "very bad"), treated as a continuous variable, with values reversed and rescaled from 0 ("very bad") to 1 ("very good"). Interviewed last week: dummy variable with a value of 1 for those who have been interviewed in between the signature of the referendum in Cartagena (September 27) and the day of the referendum (October 2). Stratified estimates using svyset command in Stata (number of strata = 6; number of unit per strata = 62).

Table A4. Alternative measures of political knowledge.

	Intentions to vote Yes					
	(1)		(2)		(3)	
Panel A: perceived level of political knowledge						
Perceived knowledge						
— Log odds	0.813**	(0.250)	0.808**	(0.258)	0.762*	(0.304)
— Odd ratios	2.256**	(0.564)	2.243**	(0.578)	2.143*	(0.651)
— Marginal effects	0.188***	(0.057)	0.184**	(0.058)	0.141*	(0.055)
N	1273		1266		1252	
Panel B: frequency of attention to news in the media						
Attention to news						
— Log odds	0.679**	(0.246)	0.709**	(0.255)	0.595*	(0.278)
— Odd ratios	1.972**	(0.485)	2.033**	(0.518)	1.813*	(0.503)
— Marginal effects	0.156**	(0.056)	0.161**	(0.057)	0.110*	(0.050)
N	1281		1273		1259	
Demographics	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Income	No		Yes		Yes	
Economic evaluations	No		Yes		Yes	
Trust in the President	No		No		Yes	
Past vote	No		No		Yes	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Coefficients based on logistic regressions, with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum versus other choice. Perceived knowledge level: 5 categories ("very high", "high", "neither high or low", "low", "very low"), rescaled from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high). Frequency of attention to news in the media: 5 categories ("daily", "some times a week", "some times a month", "rarely", "never"), rescaled from 0 (never) to 1 (daily). The models include the same set of covariates included in Table A2. Stratified estimate using svyset command in Stata (number of strata = 6; number of unit per strata = 62).

Table A5. Correlations between knowledge and intentions to vote Yes (vs. No).

	Intentions to vote Yes (vs. No)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
High knowledge	0.406†		
	(0.216)		
Perceived knowledge		0.790†	
		(0.422)	
Attention to news			0.536
			(0.364)
Evaluation of the economy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-demographics	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trust in the president	Yes	Yes	Yes
Past vote	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	768	765	767

Notes: † $p < 0.1$. Coefficients are log odds based on logistic regressions, with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum versus vote No. Stratified estimate using svyset command in Stata (number of strata = 6; number of unit per strata = 62).

Table A6. Correlations between knowledge and voting intentions (multinomial logistic regressions).

	Base category = vote No					
	(1)		(2)		(3)	
	Vote Yes	Would not vote	Vote Yes	Would not vote	Vote Yes	Would not vote
High knowledge	0.339	−0.199				
	(0.224)	(0.187)				
Perceived knowledge			0.639	−0.177		
			(0.395)	(0.372)		
Attention to news					0.531	−0.088
					(0.332)	(0.329)
	Base category = would not vote					
	(4)		(5)		(6)	
	Vote Yes	Vote No	Vote Yes	Vote No	Vote Yes	Vote No
High knowledge	0.538**	0.199				
	(0.188)	(0.187)				
Perceived knowledge			0.816**	0.177		
			(0.330)	(0.373)		
Attention to news					0.619*	0.088
					(0.308)	(0.329)
Evaluation of the economy	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Socio-demographics	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Trust in the president	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Past vote	Yes		Yes		Yes	
N	1261		1252		1259	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. Coefficients are log odds based on multinomial logistic regressions, with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: voting intentions, including three categories: intention to vote Yes, intention to vote No, and intention not to vote in the peace agreement referendum. Stratified estimates using svyset command in Stata (number of strata = 6; number of unit per strata = 62).

Table A7. Voting intentions by being a student or not a student.

	Not a student	*Student*
Intend to vote Yes	40.1	31.2
Intend to vote No	20.5	23.4
Intend not to vote	39.4	44.3
Total	100	100
(N)	(1183)	(113)

Notes: Unweighted percentages. P-value for Pearson's chi-squared test: 0.231.

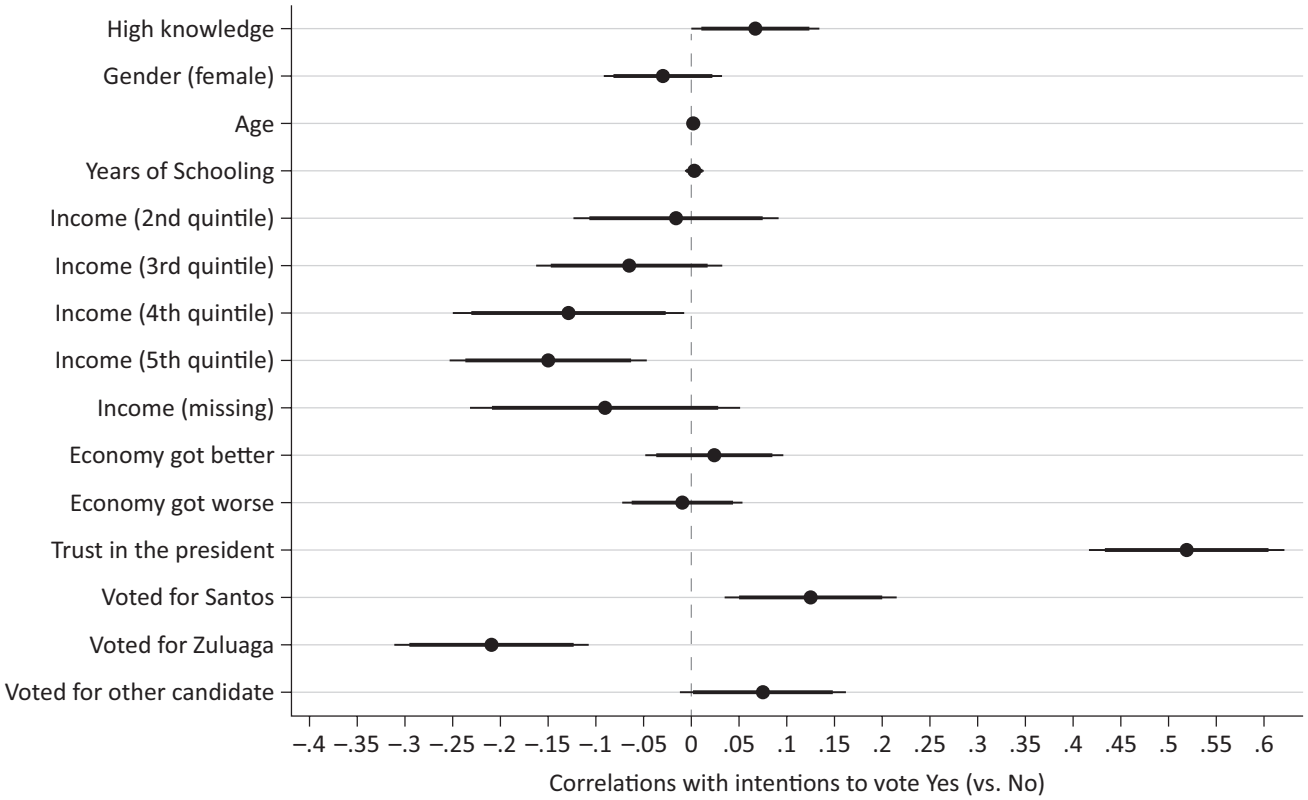

Figure A1. Determinants of intentions to vote Yes (versus vote No) to the peace agreement. Notes: Average marginal effects based on logistic regressions (Model 1 in Table A5, N = 768). Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum versus vote No. Horizontal lines correspond to 95 percent confidence intervals (thin lines) and 90 percent confidence intervals (thick lines).

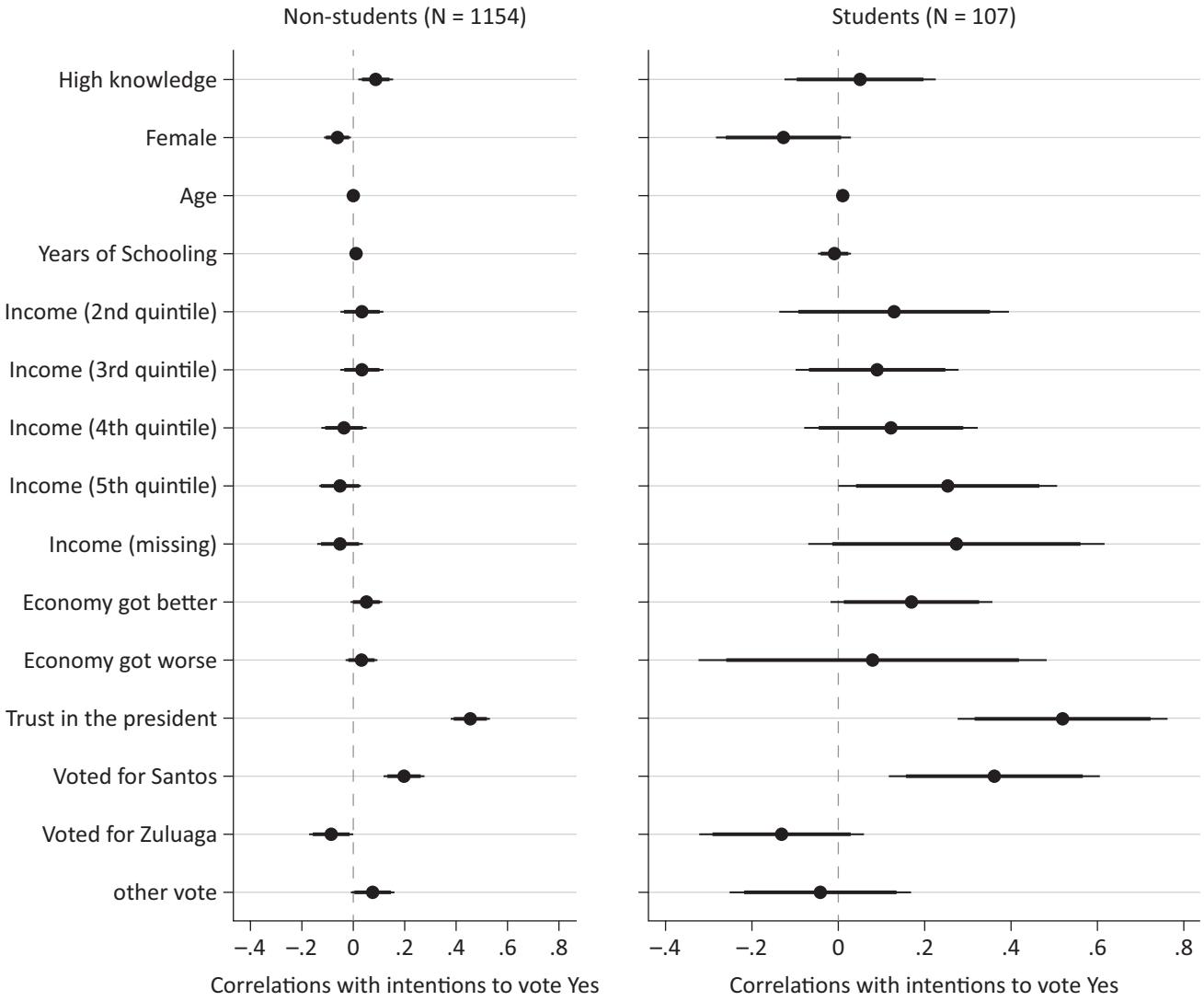

Figure A2. Determinants of intentions to vote Yes for students and non-students (logistic regressions). Notes: Average marginal effects based on the same logistic regression in Model 3 in Table A2, conducted with two separate samples: non-students (left-hand panel, N = 1154), and students (right-hand panel, N = 107)40). Dependent variable: intention to vote Yes in the peace agreement referendum. Horizontal lines correspond to 95 percent confidence intervals (thin lines) and 90 percent confidence intervals (thick lines).

Appendix B: Study 1 (LAPOP), question wording.

(Authors' own translation. Original wording in Spanish in italics)

Intention to vote in the peace agreement referendum

Q: In the event that a popular vote will be held to endorse the peace agreement between the government and the FARC, how would you vote?
A: I would vote in favor / I would vote against / I would not vote / DK / NA

Q: Y en el evento en que se realizara una votación popular para refrendar el acuerdo de paz entre el gobierno y las FARC, ¿cómo votaría usted?
A: Votaría a favor / Votaría en contra / No votaría / No sabe (no leer) / No responde (no leer)

Factual political knowledge (3 items)

Q: What is the name of the current president of the United States of America?
Q: On what continent is Nigeria?
Q: How long is the presidential term in Colombia?
A: Correct / Incorrect / DK / NA

Q: ¿Cómo se llama el actual presidente de los Estados Unidos de América?
Q: ¿En qué continente queda Nigeria?
Q: ¿Cuánto tiempo dura el período presidencial en Colombia?
A: Correcto / Incorrecto / No sabe (no leer) / No responde (no leer)

Self-reported perceived political knowledge

Q: Using the scale presented below, please rate your perception of your level of political knowledge
A: Very high / High / Neither high nor low / Low / Very low

Q: Usando la escala que se presenta abajo, por favor califique su percepción sobre el nivel de conocimiento político del entrevistado
A: Muy alto / Alto / Ni alto ni bajo / Bajo / Muy bajo

Frequency of attention to news in the media

Q: How often do you follow the news, whether on television, radio, newspapers or the Internet?
A: Daily / Some times a week / Some times a month / Rarely / Never / DK /NA

Q: ¿Con qué frecuencia sigue las noticias, ya sea en la televisión, la radio, los periódicos o el Internet?
A: Diariamente / Algunas veces a la semana / Algunas veces al mes / Rara vez / Nunca / No sabe (no leer) / No responde (no leer)

Personal economic evaluation

Q: Do you think your current economic situation is better, the same or worse than twelve months ago?
A: Better / Equal / Worse / DK / NA

Q: ¿Considera usted que su situación económica actual es mejor, igual o peor que la de hace doce meses?
A: Mejor / Igual / Peor / No sabe (no leer) / No responde (no leer)

Trust in the President

Q: I'm going to ask you a series of questions, and I would like you to answer using the numbers on this scale. Remember that you can use any number. To what extent do you trust the president?
A: 1 (Nothing) / ... / 7 (Much)

Q: Voy a hacerle una serie de preguntas, y le voy a pedir que para darme su respuesta utilice los números de esta escalera. Recuerde que puede usar cualquier número. ¿Hasta qué punto tiene confianza usted en el presidente?
A: 1 (Nada) / … / 7 (Mucho)

Past vote in 2014 presidential election

Q: Did you vote in the last presidential elections of 2014?
A: Yes, I voted / No, I did not vote

Q: Who did you vote for President in the last presidential elections of 2014? [Do not read alternatives]
A: (00) None (went to vote but left the ballot blank) / (97) None (annulled vote) / (801) Clara López / (802) Enrique Peñalosa / (803) Marta Lucía Ramírez / (804) Juan Manuel Santos / (805) Oscar Iván Zuluaga / (877) Other / DK /NA

Q: ¿Votó usted en las últimas elecciones presidenciales de 2014?
A: Sí votó / No votó

Q: ¿Por quién votó para Presidente en las últimas elecciones presidenciales de 2014? [No leer alternativas]
A: (00) Ninguno (fue a votar pero dejó la boleta en blanco) / (97) Ninguno (anuló su voto) / (801) Clara López / (802) Enrique Peñalosa / (803) Marta Lucía Ramírez / (804) Juan Manuel Santos / (805) Oscar Iván Zuluaga / (877) Otro / (888888) No sabe [NO LEER] / (988888) No responde [NO LEER] / (999999) Inaplicable (No votó) [NO LEER]

Appendix C. Study 2 (experiment), analysis.

Table C1. Summary statistics.

	Frequency (total N = 478)	*Percentage (total = 100)*
Females	278	58.2
High education	253	52.9
Employed (not a student)	205	42.9
Unemployed (not a student)	69	14.4
Student	204	42.7
Living in Bogotá	313	65.5
	Median (mean)	*St. dev.*
Age	32 (36)	15.8

Notes: High education corresponds to "Especializacion/maestria" or above.

Table C2. Balance tests (multinomial logistic regression).

	Group assignment (reference category = control group)			
	Group 1 (opportunity—PRO)	Group 2 (opportunity—CON)	Group 3 (risk—PRO)	Group 4 (risk—CON)
Gender (female)	−0.049	0.279	−0.394	0.011
	(0.315)	(0.319)	(0.310)	(0.313)
Age	0.002	0.016	0.008	0.004
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)
High education	−0.081	−0.404	−0.302	−0.649*
	(0.320)	(0.316)	(0.316)	(0.315)
Employment (ref = working, not student)				
— Unemployed, not student	−0.599	−1.158*	−0.743	−0.595
	(0.500)	(0.505)	(0.475)	(0.472)
— Student	0.230	−0.082	−0.107	−0.178
	(0.365)	(0.366)	(0.364)	(0.365)
Living in Bogotá	0.111	0.036	0.075	0.091
	(0.329)	(0.326)	(0.322)	(0.327)
Constant	−0.080	−0.329	0.220	0.307
	(0.695)	(0.695)	(0.663)	(0.674)
Pseudo R^2		.012		
N		478		

Notes: * $p < .05$. Multinomial logistic regression of random assignment to treatment groups on socio-demographic covariates. Coefficients are log odds. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table C3. Treatment effects on support for peace agreement (average marginal effects).

	Intentions to vote Yes			
	(Model 2)		(Model 4)	
Treatment groups (ref: control)				
Opportunity (PRO)				
— All respondents	0.090*	(0.050)		
— Low knowledge			0.257***	(0.083)
— High knowledge			−0.001	(0.059)
Opportunity (CON)				
— All respondents	0.032	(0.052)		
— Low knowledge			0.126	(0.094)
— High knowledge			−0.032	(0.062)
Risk (PRO)				
— All respondents	−0.001	(0.055)		
— Low knowledge			0.062	(0.108)
— High knowledge			−0.045	(0.062)
Risk (CON)				
— All respondents	0.055	(0.052)		
— Low knowledge			0.149	(0.099)
— High knowledge			−0.004	(0.058)
N	472		472	

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$. Average marginal effects calculated on logistic regressions in models 2 and 4 in Table 2.

Appendix D. Why con arguments did not influence respondents?

We attempted to investigate why the arguments used by the opponents of the referendum did not reduce support for the peace agreement within our sample. A possible explanation concerns the fact that our sample included a large share of supporters of the peace agreement who might have rejected No campaign arguments because they "disconfirmed" what they already believed in. Indeed, we find that those who read a con argument stressing the risks of voting Yes spent more time replying to the voting question compared to the control group (see Table D1 below). This finding supports the idea that the participants engaged in rejecting counter-attitudinal arguments—a so-called "disconfirmation bias" (e.g., Redlawsk, 2002)—and is consistent with the fact that several arguments of the No campaign were intended to cause fear (Arjona, 2016), thus potentially leading to opposite reactions in the Yes camp.

On the other hand, we also find that those who read the risk argument supporting the peace agreement spent more time replying to the voting question. This finding suggests that risk messages *in general* implied longer information processing, which did not necessarily translate into persuasion, in line with theoretical expectations (*Hypothesis 2b*) and with research on negative information (Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998). In other words, participants might have found the risk arguments more difficult to process and, therefore, also less convincing.

Table D1. Regression of time spent replying to voting question on group assignment.

	Time spent replying	
	(1)	(2)
Treatment groups (ref: control)		
— **Group 1** (opportunity—PRO)	−0.951	−0.748
	(1.490)	(1.484)
— **Group 2** (opportunity—CON)	0.220	0.053
	(1.482)	(1.466)
— **Group 3** (risk—PRO)	2.969**	3.121**
	(1.482)	(1.473)
— **Group 4** (risk—CON)	4.060***	3.672**
	(1.474)	(1.465)
Demographics	No	Yes
Constant	11.984***	12.649***
	(1.048)	(2.552)
R^2	.035	.062
N	470	464

Notes: ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Coefficients from OLS regressions with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: time spent replying to voting question measured in hundredth of seconds, values trimmed at 1percent and 99 percent levels. Model 2 includes the same set of covariates included in Model 2 in Table 2.

Appendix E. Study 2 (experiment), question wording and information stimuli.

Main variables used in the experiment (original wording in Spanish in Italics)

Vote
The question for the upcoming Plebiscite on the 2nd of October is: "Do you support the Final Agreement for the termination of the conflict and the building of a stable and lasting peace (Art. 1, decree 1391, 2016)". If the Plebiscite was held tomorrow, you would vote:

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do not know
☐ Will not vote

La pregunta del Plebiscito del próximo 2 de octubre es: "Apoya usted el Acuerdo Final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera? (Art. 1 decreto 1391 de 2016)". Si el Plebiscito fuera mañana, usted votaría:

☐ *Sí*
☐ *No*
☐ *No sabe*
☐ *No va a votar*

Knowledge
Which of the following was NOT one of the 6 items of the negotiation agenda?

☐ Political participation
☐ Illicit drugs
☐ Education policies
☐ Integral agrarian reform
☐ Do not know

¿Cuál de los siguientes NO fue uno de los 6 puntos de la agenda de negociación?

☐ *Participación política*
☐ *Drogas ilícitas*
☐ *Políticas educativas*
☐ *Reforma rural integral*
☐ *No sabe*

In which month was the Peace Agreement signed?

☐ September 2016
☐ June 2016
☐ April 2016
☐ January 2016
☐ Do not know

¿En qué mes se firmó el Acuerdo de paz?

☐ *Septiembre 2016*
☐ *Junio 2016*
☐ *Abril 2016*
☐ *Enero 2016*
☐ *No sabe*

Texts used in the experiment (original wording in Spanish in Italics)

Group 1 (PRO—opportunity)
Those who support the Yes argue that voting Yes in the Plebiscite is a historical opportunity to end with violence in the country. They assert that it is the key for bringing peace to the rural areas and for the displaced population to return to their lands, without poverty, without landmines and without illicit crops. They anticipate that victims will know what happened with their beloved ones, and reparation and non-recurrence will be guaranteed. They see in the Plebiscite the opportunity to decide whether we want to stop war or continue with it.

Quienes apoyan el Sí sostienen que votar Sí en el Plebiscito es una oportunidad histórica para acabar con la violencia en el país. Afirman que es la clave para llevar la paz al campo y para que los desplazados regresen a trabajar a sus tierras, sin pobreza, sin minas y sin cultivos ilícitos. Anticipan que las víctimas sabrán qué pasó con sus seres queridos, serán reparadas y se les garantizará la no repetición. Ven en el plebiscito la oportunidad para decidir si queremos finalizar o continuar con la guerra.

Group 2 (PRO—risk)
Those who support the Yes argue that voting No in the Plebiscite would mean throwing away four years of negotiations. They affirm that the No would take us to a blind alley and eventually lead us back to armed confrontation, condemning future generations to more years of war. They highlight that we would lose the trust and support of the international community and predict that the insurgents would not seat again to renegotiate.

Quienes apoyan el Sí sostienen que votar No en el plebiscito sería tirar por la borda cuatro años de negociaciones. Afirman que el No nos conduciría a un callejón sin salida y a un eventual retorno a la confrontación armada, condenando futuras generaciones a más años de guerra. Resaltan que perderíamos la confianza y el apoyo de la comunidad internacional y auguran que la guerrilla no volvería a sentarse a renegociar.

Group 3 (CON—opportunity)
Those who support the No argue that rejecting the agreements does not mean going back to war. They see it as an opportunity to renegotiate, addressing several aspects of the Agreement that they find problematic and involving other representatives of the society that were not present in the process. They highlight that the No is an opportunity to demand peace with dignity.

Quienes apoyan el No sostienen que rechazar los acuerdos no es volver a la guerra. Lo ven como una oportunidad para renegociar, replanteando varios puntos del Acuerdo que encuentran problemáticos e incorporando otros representantes de la sociedad que no estuvieron presentes en el proceso. Resaltan que el No es una oportunidad para solicitar una paz digna.

Group 4 (CON—risk)
Those who support the No argue that the agreements are bad for the country. They affirm that if we approve them, impunity will rise as the high commanders of the guerrilla will not go to jail. They also highlight that it would damage democracy as the rebels would be awarded with the possibility of participating in politics. This would go against the Constitution and question fundamental values of our society such as private property.

Quienes apoyan el No sostienen que los acuerdos son perjudiciales para el país. Afirman que de aceptarlos la impunidad en el país incrementaría porque los máximos comandantes de la guerrilla no pagarían cárcel. Resaltan también que se deterioraría la democracia porque a los guerrilleros se les premiaría con la posibilidad de hacer política, lo que atentaría contra la Constitución y pondría en riesgo aspectos fundamentales de la sociedad como la propiedad privada.

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Article

Legal Regulation of Campaign Deliberation: Lessons from Brexit

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Abstract
There has been significant attention paid to explaining and understanding the impact of the UK's vote to leave the EU on UK politics and its constitution. There has also been criticism of the political campaigning, from both the "leave" and "remain" sides, and of people's understanding of what they were voting for. There has been limited discussion, though, of how to improve the quality of campaign deliberation, which is fundamental to the legitimacy of both representative and direct democratic processes. Using the UK's vote on EU membership as a case study, this article examines the importance of the law to regulate and improve deliberation prior to direct public votes on specific policy issues. It also considers options for changes to the law and for its implementation, using the current provisions about false statements in electoral law as a starting point. The article argues that the quality of deliberation during UK referendum campaigns needs to improve and that legal regulation should be developed. There are, however, significant challenges in drafting legislation that appropriately defines and limits the use of misleading statements, and at the same time avoids excessive restriction of free speech, or an excessively political role for regulatory bodies and the courts. Given the nature of political campaigning and the challenges in reducing the use of misleading statements by political actors through legal regulation, increased deliberative opportunities for citizens are proposed as a complementary, perhaps more effective means to positively enhance deliberation in political campaigns. Whatever approach is taken, direct democracy needs to be combined effectively with representative democracy, based on a common underlying principle of the importance of deliberation, and not treated as a separate part of a state's democracy.

Keywords
Brexit; deliberation; democracy; electoral law; false statements; plebiscite; referendum

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

The vote on the UK's EU membership was one of the most important decisions ever put to the UK electorate. In a plebiscite[1] people were asked a single, seemingly straightforward question—should the UK remain a member of the EU or leave the EU? There were active, high-profile campaigns involving political and non-political actors, a high turnout by UK standards and a clear, if narrow, vote to end the UK's EU membership. The response from the electorate, in theory, provided a clear, democratic mandate on this crucial policy issue; the sort of legitimate democratic mandate delivered to a political party every few years at a general election. Despite the similarities to previous votes, the UK's EU membership plebiscite received heavy criticism, particularly with regard to the quality of information, level of debate and how well-informed voters were (Lamond & Reid, 2017). The campaigning of both the "leave" and "remain" sides was criticised for its inaccuracy, tone and weakness in supporting effective public deliberation, and over half of voters thought that the campaigning was not fair and balanced (The Electoral Commission, 2016, p. 7). Despite the legitimacy of the result being undermined by these

[1] The UK's vote on EU membership was a government-initiated public vote and therefore a plebiscite. The term 'plebiscite' is used in this article when referring specifically to the UK's EU membership vote and 'referendums' as a generic term when talking about plebiscites and referendums in general.

problems, there has been limited discussion of how to improve the quality of deliberation and reduce the manipulation of voters through misleading and inaccurate information in political campaigning (The Constitution Unit, 2018).

There was a clear problem with political actors making inaccurate and misleading claims during the campaigning prior to the UK's plebiscite on EU membership. Perhaps, the best-known example from the remain side was the prediction that each household would be £4,300 worse off (Her Majesty's Treasury, 2016). This precise government prediction based on just one possible future EU–UK relationship was described as "at best a red herring…an unhelpful summary of the underlying research" (Full Fact, 2016). Another less memorable, but even more unsound claim was the "demonstrably false" statement by Alan Johnson that: "Two thirds of British jobs in manufacturing are dependent on demand from Europe" (Stone, 2017). On the "leave" side, we had the controversial prediction that a million Turkish migrants would come to the UK, if the UK stayed in the EU, and the false claim that the UK would save £350 million per week, if it left the EU (Vote Leave, 2016). Should all of these claims be an illegal practice or are they an accepted part of free political discourse? The final two claims, which citizens were most likely to remember after the plebiscite was held, are discussed in more detail below in relation to this question. Through the lens of the UK's 2016 plebiscite on EU membership, therefore, this article looks at how electoral law and deliberative democratic instruments might be used to improve deliberation prior to any future referendums (Tierney, 2013). With direct democracy apparently here to stay as part of the constitution in the UK—perhaps another vote on the UK's EU relationship or on Scottish independence—and also in other states across Europe (Qvortrup, 2018; Mendez, Mendez, & Triga, 2014), such changes are urgently needed.

Access to impartial, accurate information from trusted sources about the issues related to a decision put to citizens at a referendum or an election is an essential aspect of democratic deliberation. Having received this information, there needs to be well-informed, reasoned debate and deliberation about the value implications of the options put to them. As Tierney (2015) said:

> If a referendum is to overcome the elite control and deliberation deficit criticisms it must be shown to offer a meaningful space for an exercise in collective public reason by citizens who understand an issue, engage with it, and are able to make an informed decision relatively free from elite-led influences and pressures. (p. 637)

Without this, key democratic principles, such as popular sovereignty and equality, and criteria for democratic legitimacy, such as effective participation and enlightened understanding, Dahl (1989) are undermined. Referendums can meet the criteria for democratic legitimacy but they need careful process design and drafting of the law. Tierney (2012) This article focuses on increasing the quality of deliberation during referendum campaigns, which is one method to limit the opportunity for elite political interests to manipulate a referendum vote. "Elite control" is a particular concern for plebiscites because, by definition, these votes are controlled by the executive (Mendelsohn & Parkin, 2001). To analyse deliberation within the wider debate about the legitimacy of referendums, this article proceeds as follows: First it examines the UK law on false statements and the scope of its application. Secondly, it discusses two misleading statements from the Vote Leave group in light of electoral law and challenges in framing an extension to the law. Thirdly, there is discussion of how an extended electoral law might be implemented and enforced in practice. Given the difficulties in developing legal controls of deliberation in the referendum process, and that this focus on legislation might not be sufficient (Henderson & Tierney, 2018), the article's final section proposes deliberative methodologies as a complementary, perhaps more effective means to positively enhance deliberation in political campaigns from a citizen rather than political actor perspective.

The overall argument is that the law needs to change to act as a stronger deterrent for false statements during political campaigning to increase the quality of deliberation prior to a public vote, and hence the legitimacy of the result. There are challenges, though, in drafting legislation to regulate deliberation in the political environment of an electoral or referendum campaign, particularly if the legal scope were to be increased to include political statements of the sort that were problematic during the UK's EU membership plebiscite. A careful balance needs to be struck between political freedom and robust campaigning, and the desire to increase accuracy of information and deliberation during those campaigns (Rowbottom, 2012). An extension of electoral law also runs the risk of bringing the courts, and other regulatory bodies, inappropriately in to the political arena. Given the limited degree to which the law can control political actors' attempted manipulation of the public discourse, increased use of deliberative instruments, such as citizens' assemblies, during campaigns are proposed as a further means to enhance deliberation and reduce the effect of misleading statements. Whatever approach is taken to improving the quality of political discourse and to having well-informed citizens, referendums need to be combined effectively with representative democracy, based on a common underlying principle of the importance of deliberation to democratic legitimacy, and not regulated or developed as a separate part of a polity's democracy.

2. Electoral Law Relating to False Statements

The focus in UK electoral law is on "vote rather than voice" (LeDuc, 2015, p. 139), on the fairness of the vote itself rather than on prior deliberation. The UK has a high

level of regulation for voting processes (Suiter & Reidy, 2015) but the only legal provision in UK law that directly influences deliberation is the obligation not to make false statements during an election campaign. This has been an offence since the 19th century, and is now Section 106 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA). The Act states:

> S106 False statements as to candidates.
>
> (1) A person who, or any director of any body or association corporate which—
>
> (a) before or during an election,
>
> (b) for the purpose of affecting the return of any candidate at the election,
>
> makes or publishes any false statement of fact in relation to the candidate's personal character or conduct shall be guilty of an illegal practice, unless he can show that he had reasonable grounds for believing, and did believe, that statement to be true. (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1983)

If the petition to the election court is upheld and the respondent is found guilty of an illegal practice according to S106 RPA 1983, then their election shall be void (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1983, S159 (1)). The Court can also restrain a person from repeating false statements by granting an interim injunction. (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1983, S106(3)). The law is not applicable to referendums and is limited in scope in relation to the election of representatives. This is highlighted in two recent cases: the Phil Woolas case in 2010 and the Alistair Carmichael case in 2015.

In 2010, during his campaign to be MP for the Oldham and Saddleworth constituency, Mr Phil Woolas claimed in a pamphlet and other media that his nearest rival, Mr Robert Watktins, had attempted to woo the vote of Muslims who advocated violence, had refused to condemn extremists who advocated violence against Mr Woolas, and had reneged on his promise to live in the constituency. Mr Watkins brought a petition to the electoral court that these three claims were false statements that contravened S106 RPA (*Watkins v. Woolas*, 2010). The court upheld Mr Watkins petition for the first two claims: beyond reasonable doubt the statements relating to extremists and violence were false, they related to the personal conduct or character of Mr Watkins, and Mr Woolas had no reasonable grounds for believing the statements were true and did not believe they were true (*R (Woolas v Parliamentary Election Court*, 2010). As a result, the Court declared the election of Mr Woolas void and he lost his seat in Parliament. The third claim that Mr Watkins reneged on his promise to live in the constituency was deemed to be a false statement, but not one that was an illegal practice in contravention of S106 RPA as it was a political matter, rather than one that spoke to Mr Watkins' personal character or conduct.

During the general election campaign in 2015, a memo was leaked that falsely indicated that the Scottish Nationalist Party leader Nicola Sturgeon wanted the Conservative Party leader David Cameron to be re-elected as Prime Minister. Alistair Carmichael of the Liberal Democrat Party originally denied that he knew anything about the memo, but following a cabinet inquiry, he was forced to acknowledge that he had been aware that the memo was going to be leaked. In effect, he admitted to having lied during the election campaign. The court agreed that Mr Carmichael had lied (*Timothy Morrison and Others v. Alistair Carmichael MP*, 2015, p. 44–45) but he did not lose the election petition and did not lose his seat as an MP. The court stated:

> We are not persuaded that the false statement proved to have been made was in relation to anything other than the first respondent's awareness (or lack of awareness) of a political machination. Accordingly we are not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the words used by the first respondent amounted to a "false statement of fact in relation to [his] personal character or conduct. (*Timothy Morrison and Others v. Alistair Carmichael MP, 2015*, p. 59)

Carmichael lied but could not be held to account because the lie fell outside S106 RPA. According to UK law, false statements that relate to political matters are not impermissible during campaigns.

These two cases indicate that existing UK electoral law, although a useful starting point for discussion of how to develop laws that might help regulate deliberation, is framed in such a way and has such limited scope in the UK that it can have almost no impact on referendum campaigns. An election for a place in Parliament is a contest between a limited number of individuals that each represent a wide-range of policy positions. The character and conduct of those individuals is therefore an important factor in a person's voting decision. In a referendum, on the other hand, particularly a national one, the opposite is true: there are usually a wide-ranging number of people campaigning to support a specific policy position. This greatly reduces the value of attacking individuals involved in a referendum campaign, and in the UK's recent EU membership plebiscite false statements tended to be about political positions, such as migration and public budget issues, rather than personal character or conduct. Therefore, if legislation is to give the courts the authority to declare the making of false statements an illegal practice during referendum campaigns, it needs to be extended to include political statements, and not be restricted to statements relating to "personal character or conduct". This extension could also be applied to campaigns for the election of representatives. This distinction between political statements and statements relating to personal character or conduct is not easy to

draw Hoar (2011), but it would be useful, as Grist (2015) suggests: "to assess whether this offence [of making a false statement], and all other relevant offences, properly cover conduct that a modern electorate considers should invalidate elections". For example, does the electorate think Alistair Carmichael should have been censured for lying, and Woolas also censured for making a false statement about his rival's pledge to live in the constituency they were contesting? Although UK law is the focus for analysis in this article, there is also scope for comparative research that includes the law relating to false statements in other parts of the world such as the US and Australian states.

Freedom of speech during political campaigns is an important principle and any law regulating statements made during the course of a political campaign needs to make sure it does not excessively restrict freedom of speech and political debate (Rowbottom, 2012). It is expected that false statements remain as only being regulated in specific contexts, Alexander and Sherwin (2003) but if the scope for challenging statements is extended, then freedom of speech must be considered. As Suiter and Reidy (2015) put it: "In general, the requirement to regulate referendums is framed in terms of normative assumptions and in particular in terms of regulated equality versus maximum democratic freedoms". Space precludes a full analysis, in relation to freedom of speech, of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to framing the law relating to false statements and how it might be implemented in practice. The presumption here is simply that the more regulation is imposed on political campaigning and activity, the greater there is a chance of restricting freedom of speech beyond what is necessary, and that this issue should be carefully considered before electoral law is reformed.

3. False Statements in the UK Plebiscite and Increasing the Scope of Electoral Law

The discussion of the scope of false statements continues by looking at two examples of misleading claims from the UK plebiscite on EU membership: the "£350 million a week" and "invasion of Turkish migrants" claims. As both these claims are political matters and do not relate to personal character or conduct, there is currently no recourse in law either to sanction the use of the information as presented, or to hold to account those that used this information to influence the referendum result. Assuming that there is a need to increase the accuracy and integrity of statements in political campaigning, the question addressed in this section is how electoral law might define when a misleading political statement is an illegal practice. Misleading statements are a concern because they manipulate public debate and have the potential to unfairly influence people's voting decisions. Political campaigning, though, tends to be robust and the line between accuracy and inaccuracy may often be blurred as campaigners vie for the best way to present their political position. This means that, if the threshold is set too low, there could be a high number of statements open to challenge and the freedom of political campaigning could be excessively restricted. Furthermore, the courts do not want to be dragged excessively in to arguments of a political nature (*Watkins v. Woolas*, 2010, p. 118). On the other hand, if the threshold for a false statement is set too high, the law will not act as a deterrent to the use of misleading or inaccurate statements. Next, the article considers some factors that might be taken in to consideration when deciding whether a misleading statement is an illegal practice: the extent of the impact on the result, the regularity of its use, whether it needs to be both misleading *and* inaccurate, and deliberately or just negligently used.

The misleading claim that the UK's EU membership costs £350 million pounds a week is based on a theoretical gross figure of the UK's financial contribution. Importantly, though, this figure of £350 million does not include the abatement negotiated in the 1980s, which reduced the money sent to the EU in 2016 to £267 million per week, and ignores the funds the UK receives from the EU through, for example, regional development funds, which further reduced the net contribution to £181 million per week in 2016. Office of National Statistics Report (2017) It is false, therefore, to claim that EU membership costs the UK £350 million per week and that this amount could be spent on other public services in the UK, if the UK left the EU. It is a clear example of a misleading and inaccurate statement that distorts the quality of the public debate and limits effective deliberation between citizens, but should it be an illegal practice according to electoral law? This claim was a high-profile part of the Leave campaign and was transported around the country on the side of a bus. It was the most remembered slogan from the campaign and a significant percentage of people believed the claim, despite the regular, informal challenges to its veracity (Ipsos MORI, 2016). Although causality between any specific campaign slogan and voting decisions is difficult to prove, the "£350 million a week" claim is likely therefore to have significantly manipulated voting decisions. This claim was also an objectively verifiable claim about current, ongoing practice, not a prediction whose accuracy or likelihood could be disputed. Finally, the "£350 million a week" claim was used deliberately throughout the campaign. It was not a mistakenly attributed figure and there was no defence possible that those making the claim were unaware it was misleading or inaccurate. Therefore, even if the law set a relatively high threshold that required false statements to be repeated, objectively verifiable claims that were likely to have a clear impact on people's voting preferences, and also to be misleading, inaccurate, and deliberately, knowingly made, the "£350 million a week" claim is likely to be deemed a false statement and an illegal practice. Our second example is not as clear-cut.

The second misleading statement analysed here is the claim that a wave of Turkish migrants would come to

the UK, if it stayed in the EU: "we can expect to see an additional million people added to the UK population from Turkey alone within eight years" (Boffey & Helm, 2016). This scaremongering on its own is difficult to regulate in law because it is just the expression of an opinion linked to a possible, if unlikely, political event, and therefore unlikely to be in scope of a law relating to false statements. This is a regular part of political campaigning and in general it is up to the voter to decide whether they value this type of persuasion. However, the misleading presentation of the political and legal reality underpinning this statement might justify the wider "invasion of Turkish migrants" claim being considered a false statement according to electoral law.

A government minister and member of the Vote Leave campaign group, Penny Mordaunt, stated in a BBC interview on 22nd May 2016 that Turkish EU membership was imminent and that the UK could not stop this, even if it was an EU member, as it did not have a veto over accession decisions (BBC News, 2016). This is misleading for two reasons. First, from a legal perspective the UK, as an EU Member State, could veto the accession of Turkey to the EU, if it was proposed, because unanimous approval is needed from the Council of the EU. Penny Mordaunt, therefore, made a misleading and factually inaccurate statement based on a misunderstanding of the law to support the claim about migration. However, if we consider the other criteria suggested above, it seems unlikely that this specific comment would come within the definition of a false statement. The inaccurate claim about the UK's veto is unlikely to have had a significant impact on voting, as it was a negligent, one-off mistake in an interview rather than a deliberately repeated campaign slogan. Despite being inaccurate and misleading, this sort of mistake, as long as it does not start to be repeated, seems difficult to justify as falling within the scope of legislation that defines false statements, and is perhaps best dealt with in the interview itself.

Secondly, from the political perspective, although accession talks are formally alive, the likelihood of Turkish membership of the EU had receded considerably in the years prior to the UK's vote on EU membership. For example, Chancellor Angela Merkel stated on 16th March 2016 that Turkey's bid to join the EU was "really not on the agenda now" (Lorenz, 2016). Turkish EU membership was not likely, therefore, to imminently trigger a wave of migration of new EU citizens, if the UK did not leave the EU. Is this sort of misrepresentation of the current political reality sufficient to fall within the scope of false statements, according to electoral law? It could be argued that this is such a clear misreading of a current political position that it should be treated as misleading *and* inaccurate. The "£350 million a week" claim, though, is a misleading and inaccurate presentation of a verifiable fact, whereas the claim that Turkish accession to the EU is imminent is based on a misleading interpretation of the current political situation regarding the status of Turkey's application to be an EU member, which could change. The wider claim of an invasion of Turkish migrants has unsound foundations and is misleading in the sense that it is very unlikely to occur. However, it is still a prediction that could occur, if Turkey was granted EU membership, and the UK chose not to use their veto; however unlikely this may be. Therefore, despite its potential impact on voting and its repeated use, this wider "invasion of Turkish migrants" claim is not a verifiable fact that would be likely to fall within the scope of the definition of a false statement even if it was extended to include statements of a political character. If this sort of statement were deemed false, then it would significantly extend the scope of electoral law and substantially lower the threshold at which a statement becomes an illegal practice. This would require the regulators and courts to regularly assess political matters and could significantly limit free speech during political campaigns.

The decision rests with the drafters of any future legislation whether they want to limit the definition of false statements only to claims, like the £350 million pounds a week claim, that are verifiable facts, have a significant impact on voting, and are deliberately repeated despite being inaccurate and misleading. Or whether, perhaps, they follow the Advertising Standards Agency's wider approach to defining misleading statements. Advertisements are misleading if they are likely to deceive consumers and are likely to cause consumers to take transactional decisions that they would not otherwise take, even when they do not include false information (UK Government, 2008). This approach would mean the second Turkish migrant claim is likely to be misleading enough to bring it within scope of a law relating to false statements. The claims discussed show that there is a need to extend the definition of a false statement as it stands in UK electoral law to include political statements, not just statements made about a political rival's personal character or conduct. Deciding how to define a false statement in law, though, requires further analysis and there are a number of difficult issues that need addressing. For example, where does the burden of proof lie? Should there be an obligation of truthfulness written in to the law that would require the person making the statement to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the statement is not false, as is found in some Australian states? Does the respondent need to have knowingly made a false statement? Does manipulation of voting intentions need to be proved beyond doubt? These questions and others will need to be addressed when deciding how to widen the definition of a false statement in political campaigns beyond personal conduct and character.

4. How Should a New Law Be Regulated and Enforced?

In the UK there is no formal process to challenge false statements during campaigning, or an organisation with overall responsibility for identifying when statements are inaccurate and/or misleading. The electoral law on false statements is applied retrospectively in the election

court after the election has taken place. The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), though, has been involved in verifying the accuracy of campaign claims through its statutory objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that "serve the public good". As a result, during the campaigning, Norman Lamb MP asked the UKSA to assess the "£350 million a week" claim against this standard. Sir Andrew Dilnott, Chair of the UKSA, replied that the claim that leaving the EU would free up £350 million to spend in the UK on other priorities, such as the NHS, was potentially misleading (UKSA, 2016). The Vote Leave campaign responded twice to Andrew Dilnott's letters to challenge the UKSA explanation of the available statistics; insisting that £350 million a week would be available to spend elsewhere in the public sector, if the UK left the EU (UKSA, 2016). This misleading claim has continued to be used since the plebiscite result despite the UKSA intervention, which is advisory and not legally enforceable. The current chairman of the UKSA wrote to Boris Johnson in September 2017 to rebuke him for continuing to use this figure and remind him that "It is a clear misuse of official statistics" (UKSA, 2017). This UKSA experience highlights the political nature of the role of evaluating the accuracy of statistics used in campaigns, and also the need for an authority that can robustly examine the use of statistics and enforce their decisions.

So, how can the law relating to false statements during political campaigns be enforced and how can people that use misleading statements be held to account? There are likely to be two phases to the legal evaluation of potentially false statements. *First*, a formal, non-judicial opportunity for citizens to query whether a statement is accurate and/or misleading. This is not limited to statements about personal character or conduct, but it may perhaps be prudent to limit the non-personal scope to statements based on statistics or a legal position that can be objectively assessed. To have an effect on deliberation and the quality of public discourse the assessment of the accuracy of campaign statements will need to be done in a timely manner to stop the spread of misinformation, and so that a retraction or correction can be ordered, where appropriate. A formal, non-judicial process should enable swifter, in-campaign resolution of issues of misinformation or misleading statements, which is preferable to post-event accountability that has no impact on the campaign already run. This should also reduce the burden on the courts, which will be reserved for appeals and more complex cases. The principle role at this first stage would therefore be to adjudicate whether a statement made during the campaign was false, and perhaps to order corrective action.

A key decision is selecting the independent body that would adjudicate on whether statements are false. A number of public bodies could take on this role, such as the Electoral Commission, which is the UK electoral regulator, or the Advertising Standards Agency. The Electoral Commission, despite already overseeing and adjudicating on financial and administrative aspects of referendums, have repeatedly stated that they think it inappropriate for their role to be extended in to more political territory that could put their independence at risk (The Electoral Commission, 2016, p. 7). The Electoral Commission (2016) states:

> The role of regulating the truthfulness of campaign arguments would draw us into political debate and compromise the perception of our independence and neutrality that is required for our current roles. This would not be in the best interests of voters or improve public confidence in the regulatory system. (p. 52)

The Advertising Standards Agency relinquished a role that included political campaign communications because of the risk of damage to the perception of its independence. This was after the political controversy that followed its decision to rule against an advert used by the Conservative party depicting the then Labour leader Tony Blair with "demon eyes" (McCann, 1997). The decisions of the body that investigates complaints about practices during political campaigning will be challenged, as we saw from Vote Leave's response to the UKSA's assessment of the "£350 million a week" claim. A new body, such as an Office of Electoral Integrity might need to be established. This was already proposed to the Houses of Parliament as an Early Day Motion in July 2016. Ironically, one of the proposers was the MP found guilty of lying, Alistair Carmichael. Alternatively, the politicisation of the process could be reduced by including citizens in the decision-making process. A citizens' jury made up of a random, representative sample of the population could be convened for the duration of the campaign period as part of the regulatory body charged with overseeing the veracity of campaign claims. Based on the established methodologies and good practice of mini-publics (Gronlund, Bachtiger, & Setala, 2014), this citizens jury would hear from experts, deliberate and then recommend whether the statement(s) presented to them for consideration was misleading and inaccurate, and therefore a false statement according to the law. Whatever option is taken, the independence of the regulatory body will remain an important aspect of its legitimacy and will need to be managed and defended in the politically charged atmosphere of a political campaign.

Secondly, the decision-making process would need a court or tribunal to review the initial decision taken by the regulatory body as to whether a statement is false, and to hold further enforcement powers. The petition to the court, if the law on false statements were extended, would be for a statement to be voided, rather than the result of the vote. The sanction imposed in the Woolas case of voiding the result of the vote is unlikely to be proportionate for referendums. In a general election it is a single member of parliament that loses their seat and the rerun of the vote in a single constituency is not a large administrative task. Rerunning a national vote because

of a false statement is likely to be disproportionate to the level of offence, unless perhaps where there were a large number of egregious offences used to manipulate voters that had a direct, significant and demonstrable impact on the result. As with current election law, the election court would likely be able to issue an injunction to stop statements being used further. They may also need legal powers to fine organisations that continue to use statements even after the regulator issues a negative decision. As the main sanctions for false statements will be fines and injunctions on the use of claims and campaign slogans, the sooner these decisions can be reached, the greater the influence on the quality of discourse during the campaigns. Requiring campaigns to publicly correct misleading statements, perhaps through leaflets or other media outlets, could be an effective response as it would have financial and reputational implications, and could be swiftly implemented.

There is also the question of personal liability. A fine would reduce the budget of the campaign group and their ability to campaign for their preferred outcome and will act as a deterrent to some degree. Personal liability, though, is a stronger incentive to stop the use of false statements during campaigns than an injunction or a fine, which the campaign group may think is worth the cost. Furthermore, by the time an injunction is issued, the false statement may have had the desired effect of manipulating public opinion, and the campaign group may be little inconvenienced by the injunction. The option of personal liability is therefore important if the law is to be a strong deterrent for false statements.

Holding an individual or individuals to account for false statements through electoral law is more difficult for a political campaign prior to a referendum, than it is for a campaign to elect a political representative. During the campaign for representative election, the candidate is easily identifiable as the political actor ultimately responsible for false statements, and their removal from office is a direct and proportionate response. During a referendum campaign to win a policy vote, a campaign group, rather than an individual, is responsible for decisions about its slogans and statements. Moreover, no individual will directly benefit politically from using false statements during a campaign about a policy issue. It would be possible to require the nomination of a lead campaigner from each of the official campaign groups nominated prior to a UK public vote, who would be responsible for any false statements made. Perhaps this could be appropriate for a high-profile decision such as putting the "£350 million a week" claim on the side of a bus, where authorisation from the campaign group to use a statement would almost certainly have been given. However, it is less clear when a "lead campaigner" might be held responsible for false statements made by campaigners or other politicians. If someone could be held personally accountable, the question then arises of what sanction to impose. Should a politician be removed from their political office for an offence of making false statements during a referendum campaign, and is a fine the only option for a member of a campaign group who is not a politician? The question of effective enforcement and personal liability for false statements during political campaigning is therefore a difficult one to resolve.

5. Strengthening Citizen Deliberation

Broadening electoral law relating to false statements and increasing regulatory control, which is the main focus of this article, will have an impact on deliberation during political campaigns, but, as the discussion above has highlighted, there are significant challenges in drafting legislation that will effectively define and reduce the proliferation of false statements. Even if these challenges are overcome, misleading statements will only be reduced to a limited degree, particularly given the need to uphold the commitment to free speech. Control of the campaign discourse will also largely remain with the main political actors. The legitimacy of election and referendum campaigns would also benefit, therefore, from complementing the legal restrictions on false statements with enhanced opportunities for citizen-focused deliberation, which should reduce the impact of misleading and inaccurate statements more generally. One way to achieve this is through the application of deliberative democratic instruments:

> The theory and practice of deliberative democracy, in which great strides have recently been taken in finding new ways in which to engage the popular participation of citizens in democratic decision-making, offers a vehicle with which to introduce good practice in referendums. (Tierney, 2015)

Strengthening the deliberative environment in this way, for both elections and referendums, should facilitate reasoned debate between citizens, allow citizens' voices to be heard, and mean that they are better informed at the point of voting, which addresses one of the most common criticisms of referendums (Tierney, 2012). It should also help reduce the current dominance of personality and party politics (The Electoral Reform Society, 2016). Increasing reasoned deliberation should reduce the manipulative effect on voting of false campaign claims and slogans, and allow a more equal, effective and legitimate reflection of the popular will when voting for a political representative or policy (Kildea & Smith, 2016).

Decision-making bodies and researchers across the world have been experimenting with a wide range of democratic innovations at all levels of governance for many years (Smith, 2009). With these innovations in deliberative democracy well tested now and with key principles becoming established (Fung, 2007; Gronlund, Bachtiger, & Setala, 2014), it is time to move from experimentation to implementation of deliberative democracy in to political systems (Council of Europe, 2018; The Constitution Unit, 2018; The Electoral Reform Society,

2016). Events based on mini-public methodologies, such as citizens assemblies and citizen juries, are perhaps the most suitable to have the positive influence on political campaigning outlined above. Often these have been stand-alone democratic instruments (Citizens Assembly for Northern Ireland, 2018; Organ, 2018; Renwick et al., 2017), but they have also been combined with direct democratic processes. Perhaps the best-known example is the Irish citizens' assembly that was part of the process of setting the terms for a referendum on abortion (Ireland Citizens' Assembly, 2017). Much of the evidence from Ireland suggests that citizens' assemblies can have a positive effect on wider public discourse during referendum campaigns (The Constitution Unit, 2018, p. 100). There are, therefore, a range of deliberative mechanisms with a tested methodology that could be implemented to enhance deliberation in political campaigning, prior to both referendum and election votes.

Although these deliberative instruments have been tested and analysed, and could be implemented, the permanent institutionalisation of mini-publics in democratic processes is still in its infancy. Europe's first institutionalized deliberative body with annual rotation of randomly selected participants will be established in Madrid this year. There are still a number of issues related to deliberative democracy, and mini-publics in particular, that need further examination (Elstub & McLaverty, 2014). It is unclear exactly how deliberative democratic instruments will fit in to existing governance structures. At what stage of the referendum process should the citizens' assembly be held? How would these events interact with other sites of deliberation? What should the outcome of these events be? More specifically, should the recommendations from a citizens' assembly impose obligations, or just be advisory? (Setala, 2006) This would have to be considered in light of the significant cost of these events, and the amount of time participants will have committed. As would the need to ensure that a citizens' assembly has impact beyond the relatively limited number of people that physically participate. Again, there would need to be a regulatory body responsible for these deliberative events to oversee their design and operation and ensure, for example, that interest groups do not capture their agenda and outcomes. These and other important questions deserve extensive analysis once there is further formal, institutionalisation of these instruments as part of the deliberative process during election and referendum campaigns. Legal accountability for false statements will go some way to enhancing the deliberation of political actors, but it is also important to develop the voice of citizens, particularly given the challenges to drafting legislation that were discussed earlier in the article. Citizens' assemblies, or similar deliberative instruments, have the potential to make a significant contribution to the quality of deliberation during political campaigns, but they too face challenges, as these questions reflect, and will need to be carefully monitored. The next step is for the political establishment to accept the value of the deliberative role of citizens, and to have the political will to institutionalise these democratic instruments and work through any new challenges that arise during their introduction.

6. Conclusion

It is argued here that the scope of electoral law should be widened to include the ability to challenge false statements on political issues, and deliberative democracy should be institutionalised to give citizens formal, proactive opportunities for deliberation during political campaigns. There would be an improvement in the quality of the deliberative environment through a reduction in the use of false statements that unfairly manipulate citizens' voting preferences, and through citizens that are better placed to filter and interpret statements that are not misleading enough to fall within the definition of a false, illegal statement. Reducing political manipulation and strengthening the quality of citizen deliberation are important for both representative and direct democratic processes and their development should reflect common underlying principles for the democratic systems as a whole. "Voice" is equally as important in political campaigns for elected representatives as it is for referendums. All votes in legitimate democratic systems rely on well-informed voters who have participated in a fair political campaign. The changes discussed in this article should increase the democratic legitimacy of the specific campaigns and the democratic system more broadly, and therefore increase trust in the democratic process and politicians, whose activities citizens can more effectively influence and hold to account. In turn, this should lead to a greater number of "happy losers" in elections and referendums, which will help reduce the type of divisiveness the UK has seen following its EU membership plebiscite, and help facilitate the implementation of referendum results. The changes proposed here are not a magic bullet that will resolve all the democratic ills that have been highlighted by the UK's recent use of direct democracy, and the discussion is part of a much wider debate. Further issues such as the provision of information, the role of the media, freedom of speech, the role of Parliament, and others, would benefit from further, perhaps comparative, research. Nevertheless, addressing the issue of false statements is an important, specific step in the wider efforts to improve the quality of deliberation in political campaigns and therefore a state's democratic legitimacy.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Losing in the Polls, Time Pressure, and the Decision to Go Negative in Referendum Campaigns

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Abstract
Why do parties and candidates decide to go negative? Research usually starts from the assumption that this decision is strategic, and within this framework two elements stand out: the prospect of electoral failure increases the use of negative campaigning, and so does time pressure (little reaming time to convince voters before election day). In this article, we contribute to this framework by testing two new expectations: (i) political actors are more likely to go negative when they face unfavourable competitive standings *and* voting day is near; and (ii) they are less likely to go negative when they faced a substantive degradation in their competitive standing over the course of the campaign. We test these expectations on a rich database of newspaper ads about national referenda in Switzerland and provide preliminary empirical evidence consistent with those expectations. The results have important implications for existing research on the strategic underpinnings of campaigning and political communication.

Keywords
anxiety; advertisement timing; competitive standing; direct democracy; polls; strategic behaviour; Switzerland; negative campaigning

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

Negative campaigning—that is, the use of messages intended to attack political rivals instead of promoting one's own ideas and record—matters. Existing evidence suggests that the use of attacks during election campaigns have a wide range of effects, for instance on voters' information memorability and information search (Lau, 1982; Lau & Redlawsk, 2015), election outcomes (Lau & Pomper, 2004), turnout (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Nai, 2013), support and affect for the attacker and the sponsor (Banda & Windett, 2016), issue ambivalence and vote consistency (Lanz & Nai, 2015; Nai, 2014), political "mood" and cynicism (Yoon, Pinkleton, & Ko, 2005), and so forth. Research on *what drives* parties and candidates to "go negative" also has flourished in recent years (Nai & Walter, 2015). This research starts from the assumption that the decision for competing parties to attack their rivals is strategic, and that threy operate a trade-off between benefits (e.g., degraded evaluation of the opponent in the eyes of the voters, or reduced mobilization of undecided voters potentially in favour of the opponent) and costs (potential "backlash" effects, such as reduction in support for the sponsor in the eyes of the voter, as these latter usually dislike negative messages).

In deciding whether to go negative, two elements are particularly relevant: the competitive standing of actors, that is, if they are facing the prospect of electoral failure (or are instead ahead in the race); and the advertisement timing, that is, how much time is left before election

day. Existing literature shows that unfavourable standings drive the use of attacks (e.g., Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995; Walter, van der Brug, & van Praag, 2014). Strong evidence also exists that as the election day draws near, the frequency of negative messages increases substantially (e.g., Freedman & Goldstein, 2002; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Ridout & Holland, 2010). We still, however, lack systematic evidence about how these two major drivers interact and, more specifically, about how the *dynamics* of competitive standings affect the use of attack messages (however see Blackwell, 2013). Do unfavourable competitive standings create even stronger incentives to go negative at the end of the campaign? And what happens when a party faces a substantive loss of popular support over the campaign? With this in mind, we discuss and test two new expectations: 1) political actors are more likely to go negative when they are lagging behind in the polls and election day is near (*frantic loser hypothesis*); and 2) political actors are *less* likely to go negative when they faced a substantive degradation in their competitive standing over the course of the campaign (*anxiety hypothesis*). Do competing candidates "plan all of their rallies, write all of their speeches, and film all of their advertisements at the beginning of a campaign, then sit back and watch them unfold until Election Day? Clearly this is absurd" (Blackwell, 2013, p. 504).

Our article contributes to the emerging literature assessing the dynamics of election campaigns, starting from the assumption that competing parties and candidates adjust their strategies based on the evolution of the information they are exposed to.

We test our dynamic expectations on a rich database of campaign ads published in newspapers before federal referenda in Switzerland between 1999 and 2012. Comparing with the USA, undoubtedly the most studied case when it comes to negative campaigning, trends for Switzerland will probably represent a conservative estimate. Referenda are different than elections, as competition is not between opposing candidates but between camps supporting opposing policy proposals. This, as we argued elseqhere (Nai, 2013), probably makes that "character assasinations" are less frequent than in (first-past-the-post) elections. Second, Swiss election campaigns are still not fully professionalized, nor "Americanized" (Marquis & Bergman, 2009); Swiss campaigns rarely rely on consultants, spin-doctors or opposition research techniques, which have been shown to increase the use of negative advertising (Geer, 2012). Third, culturally, whereas in the USA negativity is endemic to the political game, in Switzerland political attacks are decidedly less frequent and at odds with the deep-rooted tradition of consensual agreements and cordial decision-making and governance (but see Hänggli & Häusermann, 2015). Fourth, voting via postal ballots in the weeks before the election is very common in Swiss referenda, which implies that a non-negligible share of the electorate is de facto uninfluenced by campaign dynamics because they already voted. Nonetheless, the share of undecided voters making up their minds at the very last minute—who have been shown to be particularly affected by election campaigns (Nai & Walter, 2015)—is still important, and thus there is no reason to believe that campaign dynamics should not play a major role in Switzerland as well, albeit probably a subdued one in international comparison. Indeed, we are not the first to have studied campaign dynamics in Swiss referenda. For instance, evidence exists that intense referendum campaigns increase the interest and mobilization of voters (Kriesi, 2005; Marquis & Bergman, 2009) and are more likely to affect voting choices (Sciarini & Tresch, 2011); at the same time, campaigns are able to alter the nature of the media debate, as the content of media frames about the referenda tends to reflect issue framing by the campaigns (Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010). More recently, some studies have assessed more specifically the use of negative campaigning techniques in Swiss referendum campaigns (e.g., Bernhard, 2012; Lanz & Nai, 2015; Nai, 2013, 2014, 2015; Nai & Sciarini, 2018). However, to the best of our knowledge, this article is the first attempt at studying the dynamics of competitive standing in polls and use of negative campaigning during referenda, in Switzerland and elsewhere.

Political attacks can broadly be classified into two main types: *person-based* and *policy-based* attacks (e.g., Benoit, 1999; Lau & Pomper, 2004). Policy attacks focus on the shortcomings of the opponents' program, record or policy propositions, whereas character attacks focus on the opponents themselves—their persona, character, profile, and even physical attributes ("ad hominem attacks"). In this article we focus on character attacks, for two reasons. First, from a logistical standpoint, it makes little sense to study the presence and effects of policy attacks in a direct-democratic setting; the very nature of referendum campaigns is all about criticizing policy propositions of the opposing camp (Nai, 2013). Second, from a theoretical standpoint, personal attacks are more likely to generate backlash effects (Budesheim, Houston, & DePaola, 1996; Carraro & Castelli, 2010), probably because citizens dislike them even more than policy attacks (e.g., Fridkin & Kenney, 2011; Nai & Walter, 2015). Thus, personal attacks potentially provide a fertile ground to test our new hypotheses, which all start form the premise that actors strategically assess the chances of a potential backlash before going negative.

2. Competitive Standing, Advertisement Timing, and the Chances to Go Negative

Why do parties and candidates decide to run negative campaigns? Modern campaigns are supported by a professional apparatus. It relies on public opinions consultants, internally-run opinion polling, media consultants, research and analysis divisions, fundraising consultants, opposition research to uncover dirty business of opponents and disliked candidates, multimedia consultants, social media specialists, and so forth (see, e.g., Plasser,

2000). This creates a situation in which the decision to "go negative" is by all likelihood a *strategic one*, and political actors weigh uncertain benefits against potential costs when deciding whether to attack their opponents (Lau & Pomper, 2004). On the benefits side, political actors "go negative" in an attempt to attract undecided voters or to diminish positive feelings for opposing candidates or parties, thus indirectly increasing their popular support (Budesheim et al., 1996; Lau, Siegelman, & Rovner, 2007). On the costs side, running excessively negative campaigns is considered to be a potentially dangerous strategy, as attacks are unpopular and generally disliked by the public (Fridkin & Kenney, 2011). Thus, attackers face the risk that thir messages will "backlash" and generate negative feelings towards them instead of towards the target (Garramone, 1984; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991; Roese & Sande, 1993).

Within this strategic framework, two elements stand out as particularly relevant: the competitive standing of competitors, that is, if they are lagging behind or are ahead in the race; and the advertisement timing, that is, how much time in the campaign is left to attract voters (or scare voters away from the opposite camp). First, the *competitive standing* of parties and candidates (Haynes & Rhine, 1998) is a good predictor for the chances they will run negative campaigns. Pre-election polls are a central component of the "horserace" framing in political journalism (e.g., Broh, 1980; Iyengar, Norpoth, & Hahn, 2004), but their direct effect on election results is still debated. Some scholars argue that identifying a winner in polls acts as a powerful heuristic to motivate undecided voters to support a candidate likely to win in the election, thus not wasting their vote (bandwagon effect; Marsh, 1985), in which cases opinion polls can be seen as "self-fulfilling prophecies" (Rothschild & Malhotra, 2014); others argue instead that polls can provide a boost for the loser, as people tend to like "underdogs" (Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007). Whatever their direct effect on voters, it is incontestable that pre-election polls provide vital information to campaigners to (re)shape their communication strategies. The prospect of electoral failure has been shown to trigger incentives for attack politics (Harrington & Hess, 1996; Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995; Walter et al., 2014). Positive campaigning is principally used to attract and entice voters, whereas:

> Negative campaigning is used to reduce the support of the opponent…[Thus], the one lagging behind in the polls has not succeeded in attracting undecided voters and, therefore, has to scare off the opponent's voters to stand a better chance. (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010, p. 141)

In addition, actors lagging behind have little to lose—and much to gain—from a negative strategy. They are, therefore, more willing the bear the risk of "backlash effect", i.e., the risk that negative campaigning might "scare off" voters in the attacker camp (Brooks & Murov, 2012; Walter, 2012). By contrast, actors who are expected to succeed are less likely to rely on negative campaigning: As potential winners they feel much more concerned by the possible backlash effect; for them, the cost-benefit calculation should result in a risk-adverse strategy.

Second, the advertisement *timing* is also a good predictor of the tone of the campaign: as the election day draws near, the frequency of negative messages is likely to increase (Damore, 2002; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Freedman & Goldstein, 2002; Ridout & Holland, 2010). The rationale for this is threefold. First, parties and candidates run campaigns to inform voters about their propositions, which should strategically come first:

> At the outset of a campaign, it may be more effective for candidates to provide voters with information about who they are and what issues are important to them. If candidates attack early, they are unable to define themselves to voters because all they are communicating is negative information about their opponents. (Damore, 2002, p. 672)

In this sense, attacks are more likely to appear towards the end of the campaign, in order to increase voters' support once they are saturated with positive information (Damore, 2002; Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011; Peterson & Djupe, 2005). Second, as a consequence of the first rationale, negative campaigning should be more effective when the parties and candidates are considered credible on the issues at stake. Thus, "by waiting to go negative until after they have established themselves in the mind of voters, candidates may be perceived as more credible, which may increase the veracity of their attacks" (Damore, 2002, p. 673). Third, late negativity could be especially efficient to capture the attention of the batch of voters who make up their mind at the very last moment. Many undecided voters wait until the last moment to make a decision vote, and negative campaigns have been shown to be particularly effective on undecided voters. Recent research has confirmed that these dynamics also exist in direct democratic contests (Nai & Sciarini, 2018). Thus:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Unfavourable competitive standings increase the use of negative advertising.
> *Hypothesis 2:* Little remaining time before the vote increases the use of negative advertising.

3. The Dynamic Effects of Competitive Standing and Advertisement Timing: Two New Expectations

The strategic relevance of losing in the polls and time pressure for the use of negative campaigning is backed by strong scientific evidence across different countries, electoral systems, and types of contests. However, the existing literature usually relies on static causal inferences where the determinants and the decision to go nega-

tive are measured at a single point in time (however see Blackwell, 2013). To the best of our knowledge, no existing study has been able to show that the strategic decisions of going negative as a result of a negative competitive standing (i.e., losing in the polls) has a dynamic component and is a function of the advertisement timing.

In this article, we propose and test two new expectations about the dynamics between advertisement timing and an unfavourable competitive standing: i) the *reinforcing interaction* between competitive standing and advertisement timing; and ii) the effect of a negative *evolution of competitive standing* over time. Our overall argument can be summarize as follows: during the course of the campaign, competing actors are *more* likely to go negative when they are lagging behind in the polls *and* election day is close (*frantic loser* hypothesis). This should always be the case, *unless* they faced a substantive loss in poll support; in such a case, we argue that the anxiety resulting in being confronted with a worsening competitive standing makes them adopt a more risk-free approach (*anxiety* hypothesis). We disentangle these two new hypotheses below.

First, we expect unfavourable competitive standing to play an even greater role when time is running out. Ice hockey games provide a good example for this; as per standard regulations, each competing team can, at any time during the game, "pull the goalie" (i.e., remove that player from the ice) in exchange for an extra attack player. In doing so, the team sacrifices defence over offense: they increase their chances to score, but face at the same time a greater risk as they are, after all, playing with a defenceless net. This scenario, quite frequent in USA and European competitions, is a good example for us here because this "reckless" strategy is usually implemented (i) by the losing team, and (ii) at the end of the game. Another reason why the scenario is a good fit for our case is that sport teams and electoral campaigns have in common highly professionalized managers. In both cases, strategic considerations based on risk-averse principles are likely to guide future actions. In both cases, those who make these decisions face a changing environment and have to adapt their strategies. Both are aware of the advantages and risks of more aggressive strategies. Thus, it should come as no surprise that riskier strategies are undertaken by losers only when no other solution exists. This should incite, strategically, to go negative only as a means of last resort, and especially when risks of backlash are irrelevant because of an already negative standing. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 3:* Negative advertising is especially likely in case of unfavourable competitive standings at the end of the campaign (frantic loser hypothesis).

Second, what happens as the competitive standing of parties and candidates evolves over time? More specifically, is the use of negative advertising influenced by unfavourable new polls? As for the *frantic loser* hypothesis (H3), this second dynamic also takes into account the interaction between competitive standing and advertisement timing. In this case, we expect an effect of an unfavourable evolution in the polls *during the campaign*. More specifically, we expect that *losing support* in the polls over the course of the campaign has a *detrimental* effect on the use of negative campaigning. The rationale for such expectation comes from the *emotional* effects of new and surprising information on decision making and, more generally, social and political behaviour. The Affective Intelligence Model (Marcus, 2002; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000), on which we base our assumptions, describes two fundamental emotional systems that work in parallel, depending on the specific situation that individuals are confronted with (MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman, & Keele, 2007). First, the *disposition* system "generates enthusiasm/satisfaction or depression/frustration as incoming information reports that the execution of one's plans either matches or does not match expectations (or success)" (Brader, 2006, p. 60).

Second, the *surveillance* system "generates anxiety/unease or relaxation/calm as incoming information suggests it is either safe or potentially unsafe to go about one's business as usual" (Brader, 2006, p. 60). The surveillance system is activated when individuals face new and surprising information, which directly generates unease and anxiety. In our case, this should happen when political actors face a drastic drop in their popular support expressed in pre-electoral polls.

The effects of anxiety on decision-making are largely known: anxiety triggers more careful behaviors, thus potentially reducing the use of aggressive campaign techniques. Anxiety "causes individuals to become more aware of their surroundings, in particular, novel or threatening circumstances [and] stimulates a desire to more fully understand and analyze the source of a potential threat" (Steenbergen & Ellis, 2006, p. 111). Even more important for our purpose is that anxiety has been shown to increase risk perception and risk aversion (Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Lahav, 2005; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). Anxiety might produce "a sense of uncertainty and lack of control that elevates future judgments of risk […while also increasing] perceived risk because it heightens the salience of self-relevant negative thoughts" (Huddy et al., 2005, p. 595). If new and threatening information leads to anxiety, and if anxiety leads to a higher chance of adopting risk-averse strategies, then it seems logical to expect that actors who face a drastic loss in public support are more likely to be afraid of backlash effects, thus perhaps thinking twice before going negative. This should be a function of the magnitude of the support lost between polls: the higher the support lost, the higher the anxiety felt, thus the higher the chances of adopting risk-averse strategies, and the *lower* the chances of going negative. Of course, polling results are subject to a great deal of interpretation when it comes to anticipating a final outcome based from them. Furthermore, it is a well-known phenomenon in Swiss

referenda that many proposals (especially popular initiatives) are affected by a steady erosion of support over the course of the campaign—which is undoubtedly something that campaigners are aware of and are able to anticipate. Nonetheless, we believe that an argument can be made that even with this in mind campaigners are never shielded from negative surprises when it comes to competitive standings, and that facing a sudden drop in support is very likely to affect the strategic considerations about the content of campaign messages. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 4:* A negative evolution in competitive standings leads to lower chances of using negative advertising over the course of the campaign (anxiety hypothesis).

It is important to note that we assume the evolution of competitive standing (H4) as having more profound effects than the interaction between losing and timing (H3). Parties and candidates whose competitive standing deteriorates should be *less* likely to go negative *even when* they are losing in the polls and time is running out. The literature highlighting the prevalence of emotional reasoning over rational and conscious reasoning provides the argument. Emotional experiences (in our case, anxiety) have a structuring effect on cognitive processes (in our case, the decision to go negative or not; Damasio, 1994). "[T]he weight of opinion in psychology has shifted to a view that these unconscious evaluations are far more active, and hence far more important, than conscious cognitive processing" (Marcus, 2000, p. 231). Especially during decision-making processes, affective evaluations and cognitive processes are two sides of a same process (Nai, Schemeil, & Marie, 2017), and rational thinking depends on prior emotional evaluations. In other words, underlying emotions are more important than higher rational reasoning. The two new hypotheses can thus be articulated as follows: actors are more likely to go negative when they are lagging behind in the polls and voting day is near (H3), *unless* they faced a substantive degradation in their competitive standing over the course of the campaign, in which case they are less likely to go negative, ceteris paribus (H4).

4. Data and Measures

Political commercials on TV and radio are banned in Switzerland. Although political commercials can be broadcasted elsewhere (e.g., in cinemas and online) the culture of campaigning in Switzerland leads to parties and candidates usually not relying on those type of advertising in elections or referenda. In this context, newspapers ads are virtually the only option for political actors to campaign through mass media and are one of the most important campaign instruments for political parties and interest groups, as well as one of the main sources of information for Swiss voters (Kriesi, 2006). In addition, newspaper ads are a reliable indicator of the intensity, direction, and frame of direct democratic campaigns in Switzerland (Nai, 2013; Sciarini & Tresch, 2011). In this article we rely on a comprehensive database of all campaign ads published in six Swiss newspapers for all national referenda that have taken place in Switzerland between 1999 and 2012, which includes 121 legal or constitutional amendments (see full list in Appendix). We selected six major Swiss newspapers: *Tribune de Genève*, *Le Temps* (French), *Neue-Zürcher Zeitung*, *Tages-Anzeiger* (German), *Regione*, and *Giornale del Popolo* (Italian). Given the fragmentation of Swiss media market along distinct linguistic regions, two newspapers for each of the three main languages were selected. These newspapers are approximately representative of the main ideological cleavages in each linguistic region (e.g., for the Italian-speaking region the *Regione* has a center-left editorial line, whereas the *Giornale del Popolo* is usually considered to be center-right). For these newspapers we collected and content-coded all ads published over the four weeks before each vote between 1999 and 2012. We collected and coded more than 10,000 ads, each of them recommending either supporting or rejecting the amendments. Due to missing data for pre-ballot polls (see below), our analyses are run on a subsample of 67 referenda, for which approximately 7,000 newspaper ads were identified. A manual coding of all ads was undertaken, where we identified for each ad the use of "negative" messages where the ad sponsor explicitly criticized their opponents. If one or more of such attacks were present, the ad was qualified as "negative" (Nai, 2013; Nai & Sciarini, 2018). The dependent variable is thus binary, where 1 measures the presence of one or more personal attack(s) in the ad. Table A1 in the Appendix lists the percentage of ads with personal attacks for each referendum in our database.

We use representative pre-ballot polls to evaluate the competitive standing of actors (Haynes & Rhine, 1998). For this, we rely on the polls conducted by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (*Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft*, henceforth SRG) the most important and widely-circulated poll for referenda in Switzerland. The data are gathered though surveys on random samples of Swiss citizens (see Nai & Sciarini, 2018). The SRG polls are conducted twice before each vote: national trends for the first survey are published six weeks before the vote, whereas trends for the second survey are published two weeks before the vote. Based on these trends, we measure competitive standing comparing the relative support for the "yes" and "no" camps (undecided voters are excluded); ads supporting the camp with the lowest relative score are classified as being in the losing camp, and whereas ads with the higher relative share of support in polls are coded as being in the winning camp. Based on the two polls, three variables are created: the first measures competitive standing for the first poll (six weeks before the vote), the second measures competitive standing for the second survey (two weeks before the vote), and the third

measures the average competitive standing during the whole campaign (average for both surveys).

Furthermore, comparing the two surveys allows us to measure the *evolution* of competitive standing. By subtracting for any given camp the share of support in the second survey from the share of support in the first survey, we have a direct measure of the relative loss (or gain) in support during the campaign. As an example, the "yes" camp during the popular initiative "For democratic naturalisations", launched by the far-right Swiss People's Party (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, henceforth SVP) and voted in June 2008, was supported by 48% of voters in the first survey (thus being virtually in the winning camp, if we take into account that 15% of voters were still undecided), but only supported by 33% of voters in the second survey, two weeks before the vote. The "yes" camp for that initiative thus lost 15% between the two surveys (48–33%) and was virtually the losing camp after the second survey.

SRG pre-ballot polls are available only for a subset of votes. Over the 121 referenda voted on in Switzerland between 1999 and 2012, SRG polls are available only for 69; furthermore, for six votes out of those 69 only the first survey wave (six weeks before the vote) is available. Our analyses will be run only on the subsets of referenda for which pre-ballot polls are available. The Appendix specifies for which referenda the SRG poll data are available.

Based on the day the ad was published in press we can calculate the time remaining between the publication of the ad and the voting day; in our models, we use a variable that differentiates between the week in which the ad was published (either first, second, third, or fourth and last week of the campaign), which provides a valid proxy of the time pressure the actors are facing when publishing their ads. This variable, in conjunction with the variable measuring competitive standings (losing in the polls) will be used to test for our new H3. The timing of the different data sources used in the article is illustrated in Figure 1. As the figure shows, the first SRG survey (6 weeks before the vote) establishes the benchmark in terms of winners and losers used during the first half of the "campaign" measured in our newspaper ads data; we assume that the decision to go "negative" during the first half of the campaign is driven by the knowledge of competitive standings (that is, who is ahead and which camp is lagging behind) provided by this first survey. Half-way during this "campaign", two weeks prior to the vote, the second SRG survey changes the dynamics by re-assessing who the frontrunners (potential winners) and losers are at that specific point in time. It is the change between the two surveys, two weeks before the vote, that drives most of the dynamics of (negative) campaigning studied in this article.

Our models include several controls intended to take into account the specific nature of (Swiss) referenda, as well as additional dimensions of the "race". First, we control for the direction of the ad (i.e., whether the ad supports the "yes" or the "no" camp), which has been shown to partially affect the use of negative advertising (Nai, 2013), and include a variable that discriminates between popular initiatives—bottom-up instruments through which any group can put any issue on the political agenda, and which usually generate more negative campaigns and are less successful (Nai, 2013)—and referendums, called in reaction to an amendment of the law or Constitution by the elites. Controlling for these two factors simultaneously allows us to also control, indirectly, for whether the actor is part of the "challenger" coalition—i.e., endorsing the "no" camp in a popular initiative implies endorsing the camp promoting the status quo against the constitutional challenge. Furthermore, our models control for the presence of personal endorsements of the ad (i.e., whether or not the ad is explicitly endorsed by a public figure, such a politician); good reasons exist to expect anonymous (i.e., not personally endorsed) ads to be more negative, as anonymity uncouples the attacker from potential backlash effects (Brooks & Murov, 2012; Nai & Sciarini, 2018). Finally, our models control also for the referendum issue (domestic v. foreign policy), and for overall turnout; the latter is intended as proxy of general saliency of the vote and indirectly controls for the fact that negativity could naturally be higher when the public perceives that the issues at stake are important (which usually translates into higher turnout). Descriptive statistics for all variables in our models are presented in Table 1.

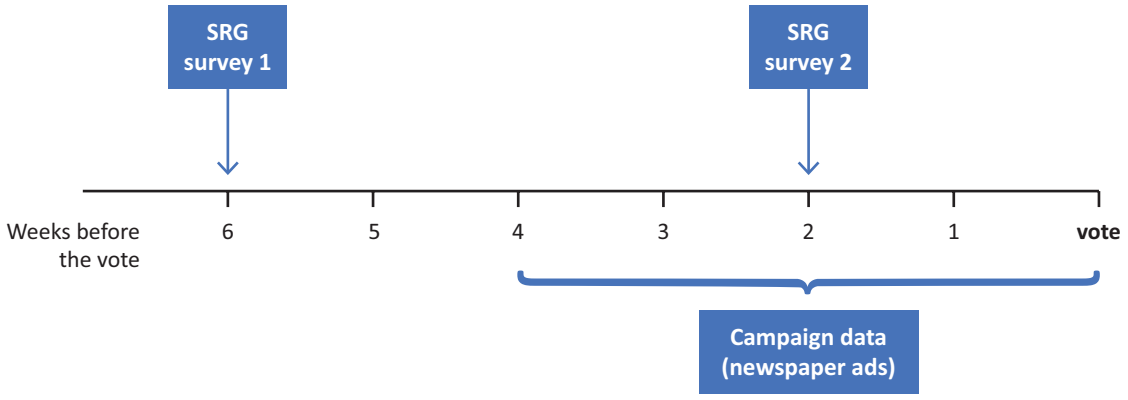


Figure 1. Data and timing of the vote.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Personal attacks in ad [a]	6,741	0.10	0.30	0.00	1.00
Losing in polls [b]	6,741	0.46	0.50	0.00	1.00
Total support lost [b]	5,718	–0.02	0.08	-0.28	0.23
Week [a]	6,741	2.62	1.05	1.00	4.00
Explicit endorsement in ad [a]	6,741	0.32	0.47	0.00	1.00
Ad supports YES vote [a]	6,741	0.52	0.50	0.00	1.00
Popular initiative [a]	6,741	0.41	0.49	0.00	1.00
Turnout [a]	6,741	47.04	5.81	35.84	58.43
Foreign policy issue [a]	6,741	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00

Notes: [a] Own dataset. [b] SRG survey results; gfs.bern.

5. Analyses and Results

Our data have a hierarchical structure, where ads are nested within specific referenda. We thus rely on two-level models where the likelihood to use personal attacks in any given ad (our dependent variable) is regressed on determinants at both the ad and context levels. As the dependent variable is binary we use hierarchical generalized linear models with logit transformations.

Our models are able to go beyond the problem of "single-shot" causal inference, biased because causes and actions are measured in a given single time-point (Blackwell, 2013, p. 505). We take into account the fact that surveys are made public *before* the publication of ads in newspapers (thus ensuring that the time causality is respected through a naturally lagged independent variable). We are not interested in the effect of negative advertising on election results (or on the evolution of competitive standings during the campaign), but on the reasons *why* actors decide to go negative. Thus, our models should not excessively suffer from *posttreatment bias* (i.e., the fact that negativity in earlier phases of the campaign might influence poll results; Blackwell, 2013). Even assuming the worst case scenario in which this happens massively (poll results during the campaign are strongly driven by previous campaign tone), the subsequent behaviour of actors should not be dramatically affected for two reasons: i) actors are not *aware* if the evolution in polls is due to their previous campaign strategies and thus their behaviour should not be endogenously biased; and ii) referendum campaigns are made up of a *multitude of different actors*, unlike electoral races, and thus the causal link between any given ad and subsequent poll results for the side they support (yes vs. no) is tenuous at best.

Table 2 shows, first, that the prospect of electoral failure and advertisement timing significantly affect the use of negative advertising. The direct effect of losing in the poll is quite strong, and significantly positive at $p < .001$ (M1). Ceteris paribus, facing a negative competitive standing uncouples parties from the Damocles' sword of potential backlash effects, which increases the appeal of negative advertising. This confirms trends in the USA and beyond (e.g., Damore, 2002; Elmelund-Præstekær, 2010; Harrington & Hess, 1996; Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995; Walter et al., 2014).

Also, ceteris paribus, when election day draws near political ads are more likely to go negative; ads published during the last week are significantly more negative than ads published during the first week of the campaign (reference category). This is in line with what has been found in several studies (e.g., Damore, 2002; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Peterson & Djupe, 2005; Ridout & Holland, 2010). The first model, thus, confirms the effects already known in the literature concerning the direct effect of competitive standing and advertisement timing (H1 and H2), thus acting as initial benchmark for our additional hypotheses (H3 and H4).

Model M2 presents a first test for the joint effect of losing in the polls and advertisement timing, via an interactive term between the two. The interaction effect is significant at $p < .05$, but its magnitude is quite small, as substantiated in Figure 2 via marginal effects.

Models M3 and M4 present additional tests for the joint effect of losing in the polls and advertisement timing. We expected that the simultaneous presence of unfavourable polls and time pressure would trigger the use of personal attacks even more substantively. We expected, in other terms, that losers tend to become *frantic* when time is running out. Model M3 is run only on ads published within the first two weeks of the campaigns (respectively 4 and 3 weeks before the vote), and thus published after the first SRG poll, but before the second. We expect that ads published in this first half of the campaign are affected by the first survey only. Model M4 is very similar, but run only on ads published in the last two weeks in the campaign (2 and 1 weeks before the vote), and thus just after the second SRG poll. We might thus expect that ads published in the last two weeks of the campaigns are especially affected by results of this second poll. Using another sport metaphor, one can think about those two models as follows: M3 estimates a more aggressive behaviour for the losing side during the first half of the game; M4 estimates the same, but for the second half of the game. The fact that models M3 and M4 are run on subsamples of ads is the reason why these mod-

Table 2. Use of personal attacks by competitive standing and advertisement timing.

	Whole campaign						First two weeks of campaign			Last two weeks of campaign		
	M1			M2			M3			M4		
	OR	(Se)	Sig	OR	(Se)	Sig	OR	(Se)	Sig	OR	(Se)	Sig
Intercept	0.00	(0.01)	**	0.00	(0.01)	**	0.08	(0.21)		0.01	(0.01)	**
Losing in polls	2.02	(0.27)	***	3.34	(9.92)	***						
Losing in polls (survey 1)[a]							1.38	(0.36)				
Losing in polls (survey 2)[b]										1.63	(0.27)	**
Week [c]												
— second	0.95	(0.14)		1.06	(0.16)							
— third	1.16	(0.16)		1.46	(0.26)	*						
— fourth (and last)	1.34	(0.18)	*	1.89	(0.41)	**						
Losing * week				0.83	(0.7)	*						
Endorsement	0.31	(0.04)	***	0.31	(0.04)	***	0.33	(0.07)	***	0.28	(0.05)	***
Ad supports YES vote	0.85	(0.11)		0.85	(0.11)		0.59	(0.15)	*	0.81	(0.14)	
Turnout	1.05	(0.04)		1.05	(0.04)		0.97	(0.06)		1.05	(0.04)	
Popular initiative	1.84	(0.80)		1.82	(0.80)		3.33	(1.85)	*	1.29	(0.49)	
Foreign policy	2.72	(1.61)	†	2.73	(1.62)	†	5.18	(3.94)	*	2.23	(1.07)	†
Log Likelihood	−1782			−1780			−729			−1032		
Rho	0.40	(0.07)		0.40	(0.07)		0.45	(0.08)		0.28	(0.07)	
N (ads)	6,741			6,741			2,956			3,211		
N (projects voted)	67			67			65			58		
N per group (min/avg/max)	3/100.6/327			3/100.6/327			1/45.5/161			2/55.4/193		

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.1$. [a] Pre-ballot survey 1 published six weeks before voting day. [b] Pre-ballot survey 2 published two weeks before voting day. [c] Reference category is first week of campaign (4 weeks prior to voting day). Dependent variable is the presence of negativism in the ad (binary variable), random effects logistic regressions run with Stata 14.1. Coefficients are odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses. Model M1 run for ads published during the whole campaign (four weeks prior to voting day). Model M2 run only for ads published during the first two weeks of the campaign (respectively four and three weeks prior to voting day). Model M3 run only for ads published during the last two weeks of the campaign (respectively two and one weeks prior to voting day).

els have, comparatively, a smaller N. The two models provide evidence that suggests the presence of a joint effect between competitive standing and advertisement timing (H3). Even though in both cases the effect of losing in the polls is positive, this effect is stronger and statistically significant only in the last two weeks of the campaign (model M4). The magnitude of this effect, compared with the direct effect of losing in the polls, is substantiated in Figure 3.

Table 3 introduces a new set of analyses. The relevant variable measures how much support the camp has lost between the two SRG polls (total support lost); positive values signal a loss between polls (decreasing popular support), and thus a net degradation in competitive standings, whereas negative values signal a gain in popular support between polls.

We expected degradation in competitive standings—that is, losing popular support over the duration of the campaign—to decrease the likelihood of negative advertising (H4). Our analyses provide preliminary support for this expectation. When the difference between support in poll 1 (six weeks before the vote) and poll 2 (two weeks before the vote) is positive—that is, when the actor faces deteriorating polls—the probability of running ads with personal attacks decreases significantly. The effect, although positive and significant (as expected) is however not particularly strong, as substantiated in Figure 4 through marginal effects.

The final two models in Table 3 test for the same effect, but by differentiating between ads published by the winning camp (that is, the camp that is still winning in the polls even after results of the second survey are published; M6) and ads published by the losing camp (M7) during the last week of the campaign only (which explains the lower N overall in the models). The direction of the main results is as expected and are relatively substantial, as illustrated in Figure 5 via marginal effects. Ads published in the last week of the campaign by the winning camp (top panel) are not substantially more negative when the camp lost support between polls. On the other hand (bottom panel), the probability of running ads with personal attacks decreases quite substantially with increasing loss in poll support for the losing camp. This supports our expectation that deteriorating polls makes them more cautious and less likely to go negative on their opponents (H4).

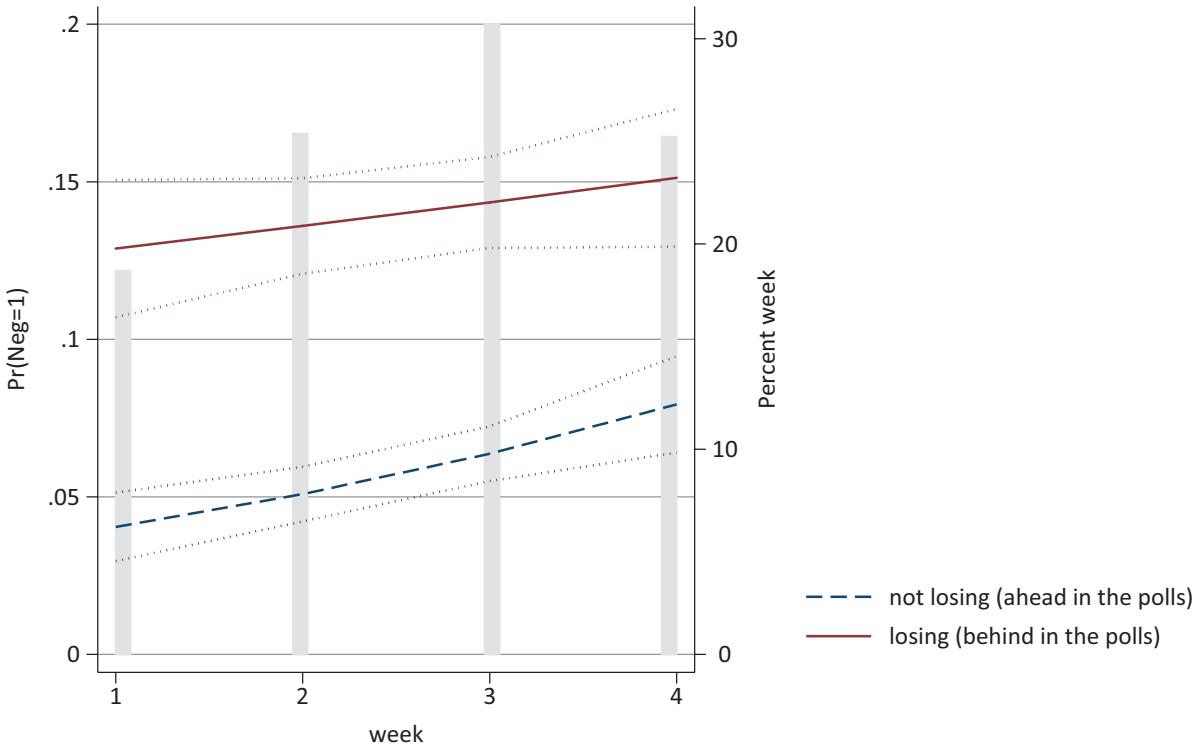


Figure 2. Negative campaigning by losing in polls * week, marginal effects. Notes: Marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, based on coefficients in Model M2 (Table 2). The grey bars represent the distribution of the variable "week" (percentage histogram).

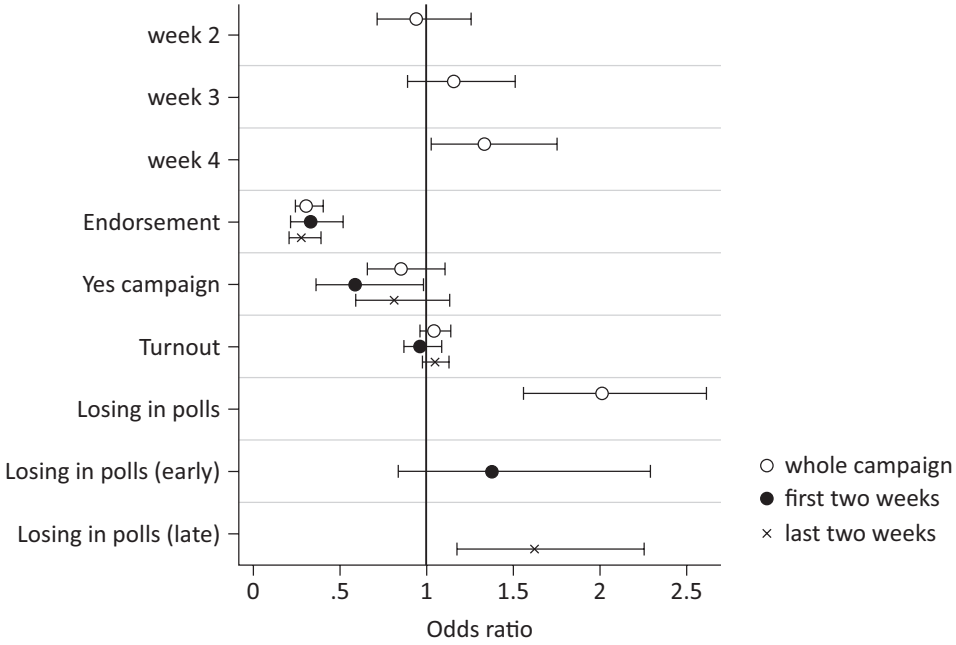


Figure 3. Standardized effects losing in the polls and advertisement timing. Notes: scores represent odds ratios for regression models predicting the presence of personal attacks in ads. Coefficients for the whole campaign are from model M1, coefficients for the first two weeks are from model M3, and coefficients for the last two weeks are from model M4 (Table 2). Coefficients for initiative and foreign policy not presented in the figure to simplify visualization, due to high confidence intervals.

Table 3. Use of personal attacks by evolution of competitive standing.

	All ads			Winning camp			Losing camp		
	M4 OR	(Se)	Sig	M5 OR	(Se)	Sig	M6 OR	(Se)	Sig
Intercept	0.04	(0.01)	***	0.00	(0.00)	***	1.64	(3.39)	
Total support lost[a]	0.12	(0.08)	**	0.87	(2.56)		0.01	(0.01)	†
Endorsement				0.18	(0.07)	***	0.73	(0.22)	
Ad supports YES vote				0.90	(0.54)		2.07	(1.48)	
Turnout				1.11	(0.05)	**	0.92	(0.04)	†
Popular initiative				0.57	(0.26)		1.84	(1.03)	
Foreign policy				0.84	(0.40)		10.06	(6.23)	***
Log Likelihood	−1796			−214			−266		
Rho	0.43	(0.07)		0.13	(0.08)		0.21	(0.12)	
N (ads)	5,744			796			661		
N (projects voted)	59			56			50		
N per group (min/avg/max)	3/97.4/328			1/14.2/54			1/13.2/73		

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.1$. [a] *Total support lost* measures the difference in support between Survey 1 (six weeks before the vote) and Survey 2 (two weeks before the vote). Thus, positive values mean that the camp *lost* support between Survey 1 and Survey 2, whereas negative values mean that the camp *gained* support between Survey 1 and Survey 2. Dependent variable is the presence of negativism in the ad (binary variable), random effects logistic regressions run with Stata 14.1. Coefficients are odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses. All models run only for ads published during the last week of the campaign (one week prior to voting day).

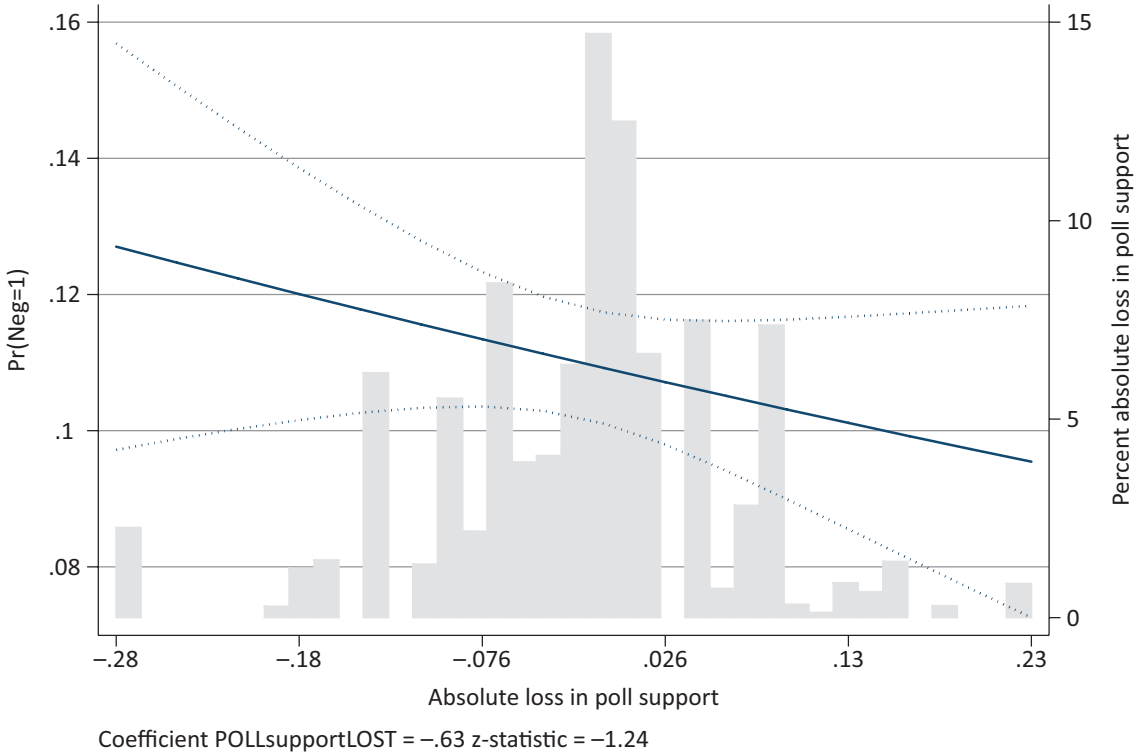
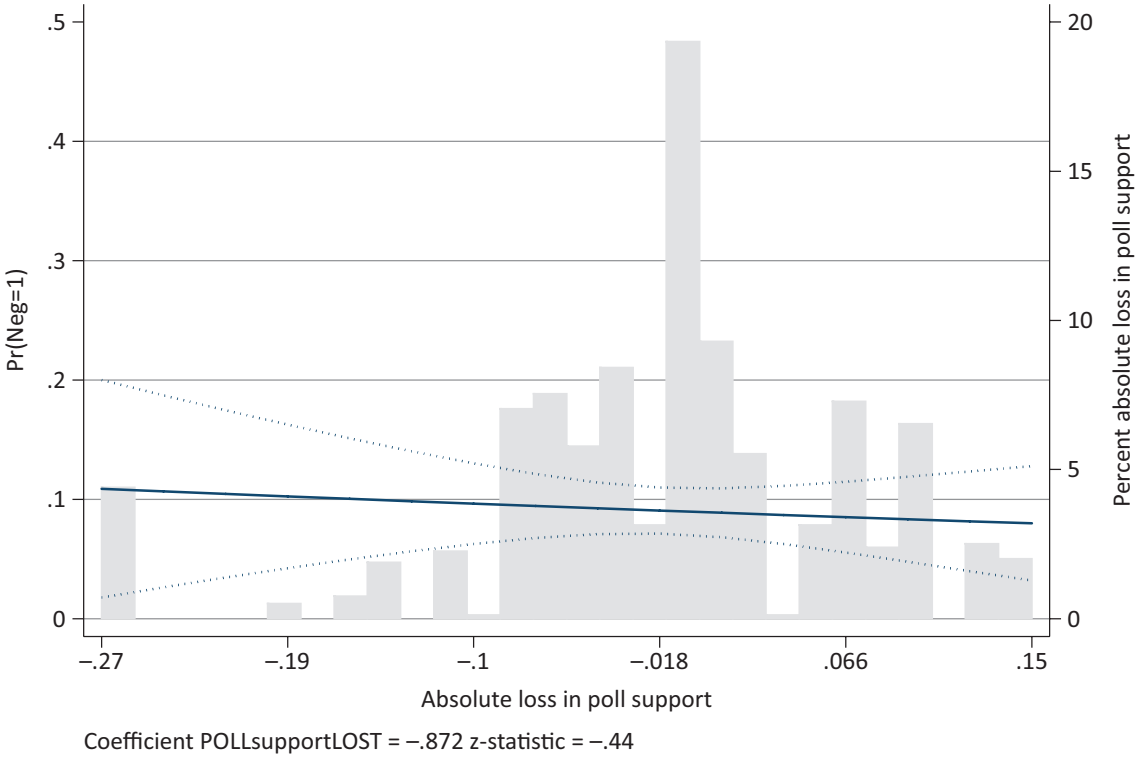
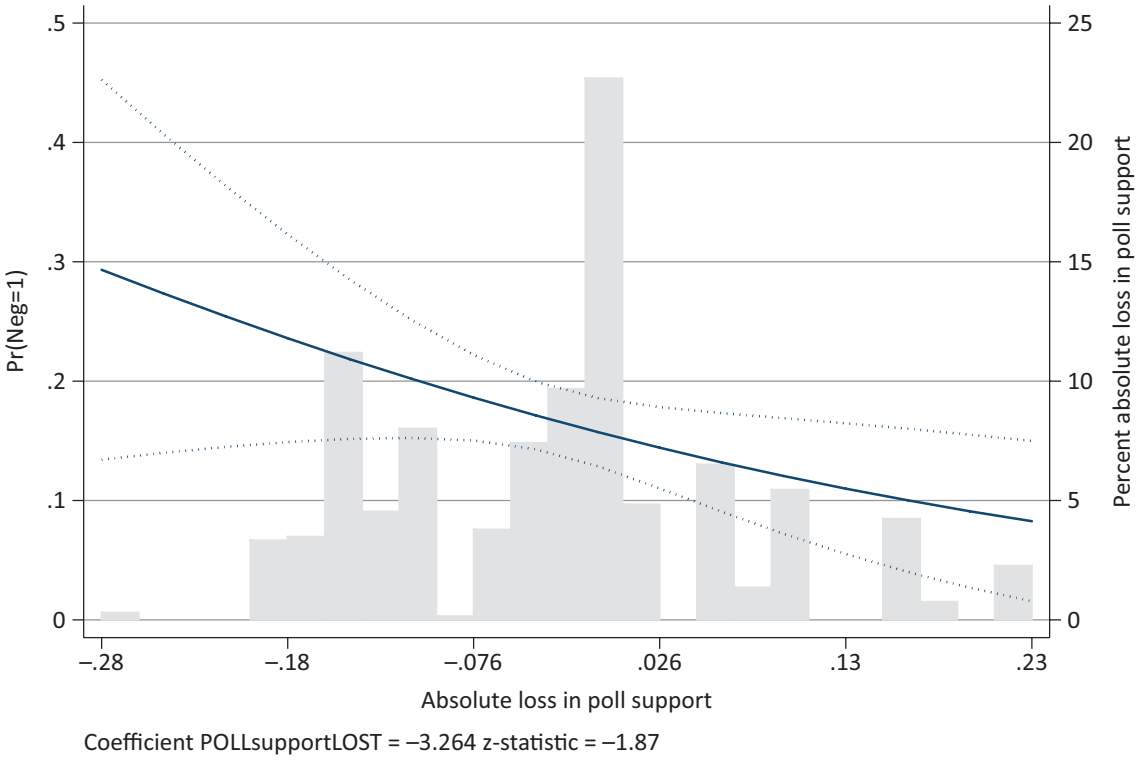


Figure 4. Negative campaigning by percentage of support lost between polls, marginal effects. Notes: Marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, based on coefficients in model M5 (Table 3). The grey bars represent the distribution of the variable "absolute loss in poll support" (percentage histogram).

Our data does not, of course, allow us to test for the underlying emotional components of such effects. We do not have data that measure the emotional state of campaign managers, nor do we know how they actually reacted to the publication of poll results; we do not know if seeing a drop in poll support makes them more attentive to potential risks associated with more aggressive communication strategies. We do not even know who makes the decision ultimately to go negative on the opponents. The realm of strategic decisions of campaign consultants



(a)



(b)

Figure 5. Negative campaigning by percentage of support lost between polls, marginal effects (winning vs. losing in polls). **(a)** Winning in polls during week 4. **(b)** Losing in polls during week 4. Notes: marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals, based on coefficients in model M6 (top panel) and M7 (bottom panel) of Table 3. All estimations computed for ads published within the last week of the campaign; top panel presents estimations for ads published by the camp winning in the polls (regardless of evolution of poll support), whereas bottom panel presents estimations for ads published by the camp losing in the polls (regardless of evolution of poll support).

and PR managers is, in our case, hidden inside the black box of campaign strategies. All in all, our results can be read as follows: Frontrunners do not go negative, especially not when they only have a little time left before the vote (why would they, after all? They are already ahead in the race and attack messages can be a risky business). Underdogs, on the other hand, are more likely to go negative, especially when they have nothing to lose (in which case they "pull the goalie"). This asymmetry between runners, that grows stronger as time to campaign runs out, holds in most situations *but one*: when underdogs see their position in the polls deteriorate drastically they would rather not use personal attacks.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

It seems today undeniable that *attack politics matter*. It is usually disliked by citizens, and might thus contribute to some of the systemic illnesses of Western electoral democracies, such as low turnout (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995) and increased cynicism (Yoon et al., 2005). It might, on the other hand, increase citizens' attention (Geer, 2006; Lau & Redlawsk, 2015). Perhaps more importantly, attacks have the potential of being electorally consequential as they might reduce positive feelings for the target (Banda & Windett, 2016; Nai & Seeberg, 2018; Pinkleton, 1997). Within this framework, it is thus not a surprise that most studies on the reasons to go negative have focussed on the strategic underpinnings of such decision, focussing on the trade-off between benefits (decreasing support and turnout for the opponent, discouraging undecided voters to turn out and vote for the opponents, and ultimately win the race) and costs (potential "backlash" effects coming from voters usually disliking negative messages). Two factors seem to stand out as particularly relevant: the competitive standing of actors and the advertisement timing. Existing literature rather strongly agrees that the prospect of electoral failure increases the use of negative advertising (e.g., Harrington & Hess, 1996; Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995) and that the frequency of negative messages seems to increase when voting day looms (e.g., Freedman & Goldstein, 2002; Ridout & Holland, 2010).

The existence of those dynamics was our starting point. In this article, we studied campaign dynamics on a particularly conservative case (Swiss referenda), but by focussing on a particular type of campaign messages that are more likely to backfire and lower evaluation of the sponsor: *personal* attacks (Budesheim et al., 1996). Our preliminary goal was to confirm, for this specific case as well, the known effects of competitive standing and advertisement timing. Our results show that, indeed, personal attacks are more likely when actors are lagging behind in the polls and when voting day is close.

Beyond replicating these effects, however, our goal was to advance our understanding about strategic dynamics by testing two new hypotheses, that we named the *frantic loser* and the *anxiety* hypotheses. We provided preliminary support for these hypotheses. Our analyses show that frontrunners go negative very rarely, especially when they only have a little time to recover from potential *faux pas*. On the other hand, underdogs are sensibly more likely to go negative, especially when they have nothing to lose and time to campaign runs out. Our analyses also showed, in support of our *anxiety* hypothesis, that when underdogs see their position in the polls deteriorate they are less likely to use personal attacks.

We postulated that this effect might exist due to the intervention of forces that go beyond (and beneath) pure rationality and strategic reasoning: emotional states, in this case anxiety experienced when facing drastic degradation of competitive standings. Due to the nature of our data, the intervening and moderating effect of emotions is only postulated here. Our analyses do, however, provide evidence that supports this rationale. All in all, our results suggest that a more encompassing approach is needed for the study of the drivers of negativity: first, by adding a dynamic component and acknowledging that campaigns are highly volatile and evolving social phenomena, and second by acknowledging that pure rational thought and economic strategies are necessarily affected by the underlying emotional states of those, humans after all, that face the decision whether or not to run negative ads. Correlational effects such as those described in this study should thus, as a next step, be tested through sociological studies of actors involved in strategic campaign decisions (e.g., Levenshus, 2010; Plasser, 2000).

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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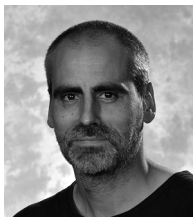

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Appendix

Table A1. List of referenda between 1999 and 2012 at the Swiss federal level.

Ref. ID	Referendum issue	Date voted	Type	Percentage of ads with attacks	SRG survey available?
661	Federal Council membership eligibility	07.02.1999	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
662	House ownership for everyone	07.02.1999	Initiative	0.34	No
663	Spatial planning law amendment	07.02.1999	Optional referendum	0.00	No
664	Organ transplantation regulations	07.02.1999	Compulsory referendum	*No ads*	No
671	New Swiss constitution	18.04.1999	Compulsory referendum	0.10	No
681	Asylum law	13.06.1999	Optional referendum	0.05	No
682	Federal resolution on foreigners and asylum	13.06.1999	Optional referendum	0.05	No
683	Medical prescription of heroin	13.06.1999	Optional referendum	0.00	No
684	Federal law on disability insurance	13.06.1999	Optional referendum	0.00	No
685	Federal law on maternity insurance	13.06.1999	Optional referendum	0.32	Yes
691	Judicial reform	12.03.2000	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
692	Speeding up direct democracy	12.03.2000	Initiative	0.22	No
693	Women in federal authorities	12.03.2000	Initiative	0.00	No
694	Procreation technology	12.03.2000	Initiative	0.00	No
695	Halving motorised road traffic	12.03.2000	Initiative	0.12	No
701	Sectoral agreements with the EU	21.05.2000	Optional referendum	0.12	No
711	Promoting solar energy	24.09.2000	Initiative	0.00	Wave 1 only
712	Counter-proposal on solar energy	24.09.2000	Counter-proposal	0.00	Wave 1 only
713	Tax contribution for energy efficiency	24.09.2000	Compulsory referendum	0.00	Wave 1 only
714	Regulating immigration	24.09.2000	Initiative	0.27	Yes
715	Referendums with counter-proposals	24.09.2000	Initiative	0.00	No
721	Retirement age for women	26.11.2000	Initiative	0.13	No
722	Flexible retirement age	26.11.2000	Initiative	0.16	No
723	Economising on military and defence	26.11.2000	Initiative	0.02	No
724	Lower hospital expenses	26.11.2000	Initiative	0.20	No
725	Law on federal employees	26.11.2000	Optional referendum	0.00	No
731	European Union membership	04.03.2001	Initiative	0.07	Yes
732	Lower medicine prices	04.03.2001	Initiative	0.11	No
731	European Union membership	04.03.2001	Initiative	0.07	Yes
732	Lower medicine prices	04.03.2001	Initiative	0.11	No
733	Urban speed limit of 30 km/h	04.03.2001	Initiative	0.03	No
741	Federal law on the military amendment (1)	10.06.2001	Optional referendum	0.26	Yes
742	Federal law on the military amendment (2)	10.06.2001	Optional referendum	0.26	Yes
743	Abolishing permits for creating diocese	10.06.2001	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
751	Federal resolution on expenditure	02.12.2001	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
752	For an assured Aged and Bereaved insurance	02.12.2001	Initiative	0.05	No

Table A1. (Cont.) List of referenda between 1999 and 2012 at the Swiss federal level.

Ref. ID	Referendum issue	Date voted	Type	Percentage of ads with attacks	SRG survey available?
753	For an authentic security policy	02.12.2001	Initiative	0.16	No
754	Solidarity creates security	02.12.2001	Initiative	0.15	No
755	For a capital gains tax	02.12.2001	Initiative	0.08	No
761	United Nations membership	03.03.2002	Initiative	0.17	Yes
762	Reducing working hours	03.03.2002	Initiative	0.06	No
771	Amendment on abortion	02.06.2002	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
772	Restricting abortion	02.06.2002	Initiative	0.17	Yes
781	Surplus gold reserves into pension fund	22.09.2002	Initiative	0.02	Yes
782	Counter-proposal on gold reserves	22.09.2002	Counter-proposal	0.00	Yes
783	Electricity market law	22.09.2002	Optional referendum	0.02	No
791	Restricting asylum policies	24.11.2002	Initiative	0.26	Yes
792	Federal law on unemployment insurance	24.11.2002	Optional referendum	0.05	No
801	Referendum process	09.02.2003	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
802	Cantonal contribution to hospital medicine	09.02.2003	Optional referendum	0.00	No
811	Federal law on the army	18.05.2003	Optional referendum	0.06	No
812	Federal law on civil defence	18.05.2003	Optional referendum	0.08	No
813	Motor vehicle-free Sundays	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.03	No
814	Affordable healthcare	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.05	Yes
815	Equal rights for the disabled	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.00	No
816	Fair rents	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.07	No
817	Electricity without nuclear power	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.20	No
818	Ban on new nuclear power plants	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.20	No
819	Provision of vocational education	18.05.2003	Initiative	0.00	No
821	Counter-proposals to motorway initiative	08.02.2004	Counter-proposal	0.13	Yes
822	Amendment to the Obligations (tenancy) law	08.02.2004	Optional referendum	0.06	No
823	Life sentences for dangerous criminals	08.02.2004	Initiative	0.00	No
831	Amending the Aged and Bereaved insurance law	16.05.2004	Optional referendum	0.03	No
832	Financing of Aged and Bereaved insurance	16.05.2004	Compulsory referendum	0.00	No
833	Federal law on taxation	16.05.2004	Optional referendum	0.07	No
841	Federal resolution on naturalisation	26.09.2004	Compulsory referendum	0.03	Yes
842	Citizenship rights of third-generation immigrants	26.09.2004	Compulsory referendum	0.02	Yes
843	Compensation for members of the armed forces	26.09.2004	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
844	Postal services for all	26.09.2004	Initiative	0.00	No
851	Federal and cantonal financial duties	28.11.2004	Compulsory referendum	0.00	Yes
852	Constitutional reordering of the federal budget	28.11.2004	Compulsory referendum	*No ads*	No

Table A1. (Cont.) List of referenda between 1999 and 2012 at the Swiss federal level.

Ref. ID	Referendum issue	Date voted	Type	Percentage of ads with attacks	SRG survey available?
853	Stem cell research law	28.11.2004	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
871	Schengen/Dublin Agreement	05.06.2005	Optional referendum	0.13	Yes
872	Registered partnerships	05.06.2005	Optional referendum	0.00	Wave 1 only
881	Agreement on free movement of persons	25.09.2005	Optional referendum	0.16	Yes
891	Genetically modified food	27.11.2005	Compulsory referendum	0.00	Yes
892	Labour law	27.11.2005	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
901	Constitutional amendment on education	21.05.2006	Compulsory referendum	*No ads*	No
911	Swiss National Bank profits	24.09.2006	Initiative	0.06	Yes
912	Amendment to the foreigners law	24.09.2006	Optional referendum	0.09	Yes
913	Amendment to the asylum law	24.09.2006	Optional referendum	0.08	Yes
921	Law on assistance for eastern Europe	26.11.2006	Optional referendum	0.10	Yes
922	Amendment to the family allowances law	26.11.2006	Optional referendum	0.04	Yes
931	For a Social Unified Health Insurance	11.03.2007	Initiative	0.07	Yes
941	Disability law amendment	17.06.2007	Optional referendum	0.01	Yes
951	Against fighter aircraft noise in tourism areas	24.02.2008	Initiative	0.00	Wave 1 only
952	Business tax reform	24.02.2008	Optional referendum	0.04	Wave 1 only
961	For democratic naturalisation	01.06.2008	Initiative	0.44	Yes
962	Against government run information campaigns	01.06.2008	Initiative	0.88	Yes
963	Counter-proposal on health insurance	01.06.2008	Counter-proposal	0.10	Yes
971	Pornographic crimes against children	30.11.2008	Initiative	0.00	No
972	Flexible state pension age	30.11.2008	Initiative	0.09	Yes
973	Restriction of the right of associations to appeal against building projects	30.11.2008	Initiative	0.04	Yes
974	Legalisation of the personal consumption and production of cannabis	30.11.2008	Initiative	0.03	Yes
975	Revision of the federal statute on narcotics	30.11.2008	Optional referendum	0.05	Yes
981	Extending freedom of movement for workers in EU to Bulgaria and Romania	08.02.2009	Optional referendum	0.08	Yes
991	Future with complementary medicine	17.05.2009	Counter-proposal	0.00	Yes
992	Introduction of biometric passports	17.05.2009	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
1001	Limited increase of VAT to continue financing the Disability Insurance	27.09.2009	Compulsory referendum	0.02	Yes
1002	Decision not to introduce public initiatives	27.09.2009	Compulsory referendum	*No ads*	Yes
1011	Aviation fuel taxation	29.11.2009	Compulsory referendum	0.00	Yes
1012	Ban on exporting war supplies	29.11.2009	Initiative	0.00	Yes
1013	Ban on the construction of new minarets	29.11.2009	Initiative	0.20	Yes
1021	Amendment to the constitution on research on humans	07.03.2010	Compulsory referendum	*No ads*	Wave 1 only

Table A1. (Cont.) List of referenda between 1999 and 2012 at the Swiss federal level.

Ref. ID	Referendum issue	Date voted	Type	Percentage of ads with attacks	SRG survey available?
1022	Providing enhanced legal protection for animals	07.03.2010	Initiative	0.06	Wave 1 only
1023	Change in minimum conversion rate for occupational/disability pension plans	07.03.2010	Optional referendum	0.15	Wave 1 only
1031	Revision of unemployment benefits	26.09.2010	Optional referendum	0.09	Yes
1041	For the deportation of criminal foreigners	28.11.2010	Initiative	0.00	Yes
1042	Counter-proposal to the initiative for the deportation of criminal foreigners	28.11.2010	Counter-proposal	0.15	Yes
1043	Taxation justice initiative	28.11.2010	Initiative	0.20	Yes
1051	For the protection against gun violence	13.02.2011	Initiative	0.15	Yes
1061	For an end to the limitless construction of second homes	11.03.2012	Initiative	0.04	Yes
1062	For tax-supported building society savings to buy living space for self-use	11.03.2012	Initiative	0.00	Yes
1063	Six weeks of vacation for everyone	11.03.2012	Initiative	0.00	Yes
1064	State earnings from gambling to be used for the public interest	11.03.2012	Compulsory referendum	0.00	Yes
1065	Re-introduction of the Fixed Book Price Agreement	11.03.2012	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
1071	For assistance with savings for home buyers	17.06.2012	Initiative	0.01	Yes
1072	For strengthening popular rights on foreign policy	17.06.2012	Initiative	0.00	Yes
1073	Reform of healthcare legislation	17.06.2012	Optional referendum	0.00	Yes
1081	Counter-project to initiative “youth and music”	23.09.2012	Counter-proposal	0.00	Yes
1082	Secure housing in old age	23.09.2012	Initiative	0.03	Yes
1083	Smoking ban referendum	23.09.2012	Initiative	0.06	Yes
1091	Swiss Animal Diseases Act	25.11.2012	Optional referendum	0.00	No

Notes: Referenda excluded from all analyses if SRG survey data missing, and from some analyses if only wave 1 is available. Source: authors’ own data (share of negative ads) and Gfs.bern data (pre-election polls).

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Article

Intra-Camp Coalitions in Direct Democracy: Evidence from Referendums on Asylum

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Abstract
This article seeks to advance the underdeveloped literature on coalitions in direct democracy by considering intra-camp coalitions (ICC) at the level of political elites. The binary format of ballot measures leads to the formation of two opposing camps (i.e., supporters and opponents). However, political actors who belong to a given camp are not obliged to work with each other in the course of direct-democratic campaigns. I argue that the formation of ICC is ideologically driven, as political actors may be inclined to more closely cooperate with those actors who share their beliefs. Therefore, I expect that the actors of a given camp will create ideologically more homogeneous coalitions. The empirical analysis focuses on the salient issue of asylum by examining the cooperative ties between political organizations that participated in two Swiss referendum campaigns. Drawing on the CONCOR algorithm, I identify the actor compositions of the four camps in question. I show that the organizations that form the two main ICC on either side significantly differ from each other in terms of their positioning on the left-right scale. Hence, actors who campaign on the same side tend to separate into coalitions that are ideologically more homogeneous.

Keywords
asylum; coalitions; direct democracy; referendum; Switzerland

Issue
This article is part of the issue, "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

In contrast to electoral studies, the scholarly literature on direct democracy thus far neglects the analysis of coalitions. This article proposes focusing on the actor composition of both supporters and opponents in intra-camp coalitions (ICC) at the level of political elites by examining ballot measures in the context of referendum campaigns. Direct-democratic votes are usually characterized by two options, given that issue-specific propositions can either be accepted or rejected. This binary format leads to the formation of two opposing camps: supporters who advocate for a reform and opponents who want to maintain the status quo. However, political actors who belong to a given camp are not obliged to work with each other during their engagement in a campaign. This article is interested in what shapes the composition of supporters' and opponents' camps in referendum campaigns. I argue that the formation of ICC is ideologically driven and that shared beliefs are expected to facilitate cooperation between actors. In contrast, actors with unshared beliefs are unlikely to join forces, as cooperation would likely give rise to disagreements and conflicts. I therefore expect the actors of a given camp to separate into coalitions that are ideologically more homogeneous.

This empirical analysis focuses on the salient issue of asylum by considering ICC in the context of two referendums that took place in Switzerland at the federal level in 2006 and 2016. These cases differ in terms of actor constellation. While the 2006 referendum essentially gave rise to a divide between the left and the right, the 2016 referendum pitted moderate against extreme actors. The data used in this study are based on cooperative ties that were reported in the framework of ex-

post interviews with representatives of the political organizations (state actors, parties, economic associations, citizen groups, and committees) that actively took part in the two selected referendum campaigns. The empirical investigation relies on network analysis by making use of the CONCOR algorithm in order to identify the compositions of the two main coalitions for each of the four camps under scrutiny (i.e., the supporters and opponents of the two selected ballot measures). In line with my expectation, I show that coalition formation is ideologically driven. More specifically, I demonstrate that the organizations of the two main ICC on either side consistently differ from each other in a statistically significant way in regard to their positioning on the left-right scale. Hence, actors of a given camp tend to split into ideologically more homogeneous coalitions.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Section 2 develops the theoretical argument. Section 3 focuses on the research design, including a discussion of the case selection as well as a description of the data and the method of analysis. Section 4 is devoted to the results of the empirical analysis. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the main findings of this article and presents its main implications.

2. Theoretical Argument

As opposed to electoral studies (e.g., Müller & Strøm, 2000), the analysis of coalitions has not figured prominently in research on direct democracy so far. To my knowledge, the contributions by Bowler and Hanneman (2006), Kriesi (2005, 2006), and Manweller (2005) are the exception. This article aims to contribute to the literature by more closely examining the internal structure of the two opposing camps (i.e., supporters and opponents of ballot measures). In general, political actors face strong incentives to attract a maximum number of allies in referendum campaigns. The rationale behind this assumption relates to the fact that citizens have the final say. As the political elites do not control the outcome of the vote, the formation of large camps is an effective way of attempting to enhance their chances of succeeding at the polls. However, this comes at a price. Due to their actor heterogeneity, broad coalitions are not easy to manage. While the binary format of direct-democratic votes imposes the formation of two camps, the various organizations involved within a given camp may wish to adopt substantively distinct campaign strategies. In order to cope with this conflict potential, political actors are expected to form ICC. In the following, I will argue that their composition is decisively shaped by the beliefs of the participating actors.

Inter-organizational cooperation in direct democracy is best described as *ad hoc issue coalitions* (Mahoney, 2007). Such coalitions form according to an instrumental logic. Their members work together in pursuit of a common issue-specific goal, as they either advocate for or against the passage of ballot measures. In line with resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), political actors can be expected to join coalitions in order to pool different types of resources (such as money, staff, volunteers, know-how, and reputation) and wage effective campaigns. Since ad hoc issue coalitions emerge for the purpose of a single campaign, they typically dissolve once the vote takes place (Manweller, 2005). Therefore, each direct-democratic vote is a rather unique event that is hardly connected to other votes, even those that take place simultaneously.

When it comes to coalition formation, the problem of size occurs in different terms in direct democracy than in representative democracy. According to the literature on government formation, parties in representative democracies tend to form coalitions that are just big enough to obtain a parliamentary majority. In contrast to these 'minimal winning coalitions' (Riker, 1962), actors involved in referendums and initiatives seek to secure the support of as many organizations as possible. Given that the decision-making authority eludes the elites, the formation of broadly supported camps is a central means by which political actors seek to influence the outcome of direct-democratic votes. In line with this reasoning, Kriesi (2005, p. 65, 2006) showed that in the case of Switzerland, the chances of success at the polls increases the larger a given camp is. As coalition size is a key determinant of the outcome of direct-democratic votes, political elites may seek to gather as many actors as possible behind their own position.

Yet the complexity of coalition work gets challenged as the number of organizations increases. Large camps typically face the problem of heterogeneity, since actors are likely to stem from different backgrounds. The so-called 'extension dilemma' (Jasper, 2006, pp. 127–128) states that 'the further you reach out your alliance, the more diverse it will become and the less unified'. Camps with numerous actors are notoriously plagued by ideological conflicts. In particular, disunity between moderate and radical strands is prone to give rise to endless quarrels over the strategies to be adopted during referendum campaigns. Such broad coalitions typically face major difficulties when they are unable to bridge disparate beliefs.

To overcome the problems posed by heterogeneity, political actors are expected to form ICC with other actors who share their beliefs. In other words, even when political actors are on the same camp in a given referendum campaign, they may choose not to work closely together due to ideological barriers. In line with this reasoning, social movement scholars established that groups do not join forces unless they share at least some common beliefs (van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). In a similar vein, Manweller (2005) found that activists who launched initiatives in U.S. states best resolved internal disagreements by fractionalizing into two ideologically purer groups.

Based on these considerations, organizations should split according to ideological criteria. I therefore expect

ideologically distinct ICC to emerge on both supporters' and opponents' sides of direct-democratic campaigns.

3. Research Design

3.1. Case Selection

To test this expectation, I examine two referendums on asylum that took place in Switzerland in 2006 and 2016. As is the case of many OECD countries, this topic has ranked high on the political agenda over the last decades (Steiner, 2000). The well-developed institutions of direct democracy have provided political organizations with a powerful opportunity for politicizing asylum issues in the Swiss context (Bernhard, 2012, pp. 68–72). I selected the 2006 and 2016 referendums in order to analyze varying actor constellations. Whereas the left-right conflict is predominantly available in direct-democratic votes, the unbundling of issues can occasionally lead to cross-cutting cleavages (Bowler & Hanneman, 2006). The ballot measure submitted in 2006 pitted actors from the radical right and the moderate right against challengers from the left, civil society, and some dissidents from the moderate right. This classic antagonism in the Swiss asylum domain was the result of a decisive tightening reform of the federal asylum law. Its main provisions were concerned with restricting access to asylum applications and reducing the attractiveness of Switzerland as a destination country. In contrast, the vote held in 2016 gave rise to a cleavage between moderate and radical forces. While the organizations from the mainstream came out in favor of the reform, both radical left and radical right were against it. This rather unusual alignment was due to the policy orientation of the reform. This ballot measure can be considered as a paradigmatic case of streamlining (Bernhard & Kaufmann, 2018), as it aimed to speed up asylum procedures and to structurally reorganize competences and responsibilities within the Swiss asylum domain. Participating voters eventually delivered a decisive verdict on both reforms by accepting them by a two-thirds majority.

3.2. Data and Methods

The data used for this empirical analysis were collected in the framework of ex-post interviews immediately following the respective votes. The rationale behind this data collection strategy is that information regarding cooperation is gathered most precisely from the actors involved. I surveyed the representatives of the organizations that actively took part in the two referendum campaigns. I selected the organizations on the basis of various sources: the parliamentary debates, the campaign for the collection of signatures, voting recommendations, and the press, as well as websites more generally. Due to this procedure, I am confident that I included the most important organizations. There were no refusals when I contacted the interview partners. The absence of missing information is due to the fact that Swiss political actors are motivated to participate in such interviews. In total, there were 46 interviews in 2006 and 31 in 2016. The elite population in question includes five types of actors: state actors, parties, economic associations, citizen groups, and committees, i.e., umbrella organizations that form in an ad hoc manner for the purpose of specific referendum campaigns.

I relied on the cooperative ties between the organizations in question to identify the ICC. In the framework of the ex-post interviews, campaign managers were presented with the complete list of the selected organizations. They were then asked to mark the organizations on the list with which they had closely collaborated during the course of the campaign. After they had gone through the list, I asked them to indicate the three organizations with which they had collaborated particularly closely. Finally, I asked which one organization from among the three they had most closely collaborated with. I then recoded this information in a square $N \times N$ matrix in which rows and columns consist of the same political organizations. The number '1' indicates a collaborative relationship, '2' indicates a particularly close relationship, and '3' represents the closest collaborative tie. Isolated actors, i.e., organizations without any connections to others, were removed from this analysis. This was relevant to three supporters of the tightening reform—the Geneva Citizens' Movement, the Party of Liberties, and the Swiss Farmers' Union.

I draw on network analysis to examine the coalition structures on the basis of this type of relational data. More specifically, I use *block modeling*, which allows me to distinguish between structurally equivalent groups of actors based on their cooperative relationships. Structural equivalence is met when two or more actors jointly have similar ties with third actors independently of their ties with each other. A block model consists of two elements (Wasserman & Faust, 1999, p. 395): 1) a partition of actors in the network into discrete subsets called positions, and 2) a statement of the presence or absence of a tie within or between the positions for each pair of positions. I use the CONCOR algorithm, which applies successive splits to the network. In the first step, the procedure divides the set of actors into two structurally equivalent groups. Next, each group is broken down into another two structurally equivalent sub-groups, and so forth. Due to the small number of observations, I decided to stop the procedure after the second step. Since the organizations involved in a given campaign do not usually cooperate with peers aligned with the rival camps at all, the first split is expected to generate supporters and opponents. If this is the case, the second split will reveal the composition of the two main ICC on either side.

As to the independent variable, my measure of ideology refers to the self-reported positioning on the left-right axis. As is common in survey questionnaires, I use a scale that ranges from 0 (completely left) to 10 (completely right). For the present analysis, I decided to drop

the Swiss Red Cross from the analysis because its representative refused to answer the question on ideology.

4. Empirical Analysis

As expected, the first split applied by CONCOR divides the supporters from the opponents in both ballot measures. The second split produces two groups for each of the four camps under investigation. Table 1 provides an overview of these eight ICC.

The two main ICC of each camp vary considerably in terms of their ideological orientation. In the case of the opponents to the 2006 *tightening reform*, the mean score of the first coalition on the self-reported positioning of the left-right scale is 2.48, while the second coalition comes close to the political center (M = 4.30). An independent samples t-test reveals that the organizations of the former are significantly more to the left than the latter ($t = -3.264$, $p = 0.003$). The left-leaning coalition has 21 organizations. As is visible in Table A.1 in the Appendix, among these organizations are the main parties from the left (Social Democrats and Greens), some trade unions, several citizen groups that defend the rights of migrants, as well as two committees. However, this coalition is not confined to organizations from the left. In addition to some centrist parties (Evangelical People's Party and two cantonal sections of the Christian Democrats), it counts a dissident organization from the moderate right in its ranks (Free Democrats of Geneva). I therefore label this coalition 'left and allies'. The coalition of 'moderates' is made up of committees and citizen groups (n = 10). The most powerful organization of this ICC is the so-called 'right-wing committee against the asylum law'. Ideologically close to the moderate right, it mobilized quite intensively against the tightening reform. In addition to the Swiss Aid for Refugees and Amnesty International, this coalition attracted several religious organizations (e.g., the Protestant and the Catholic Churches).

In the case of the supporters of the tightening reform, CONCOR separates the 'moderate right' from the 'radical right'. This designation is justified in light of the mean scores displayed by these two ICC (M = 6.43 vs. 8.25). According to a t-test, the ideological positioning of the members of these two groups are significantly distinct at the 5% error level ($t = 2.292$, $p = 0.048$). The exact composition of these two ICC is available in Table A.2. The organizations from the moderate right (n = 7) included powerful federal authorities (Federal Department of Justice and Police and Federal Office for Migration), three parties (Free Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Liberals), as well as two business groups (Small Business Association, and Swiss Employers' Federation). The radical right coalition was only composed of four organizations. The levels of power reveal that it was dominated by the Swiss People's Party, the country's largest party.

I now address the ICC in the case of the 2016 *streamlining reform*. As far as the opponents are concerned, two clearly distinctive coalitions emerge in ideological terms—the 'radical left' and the 'radical right'. The mean of the self-reported ideology on the left-right axis equals 1.00 for the radical left and 7.25 for the radical right. Unsurprisingly, the means of these two groups are significantly different from each other ($t = 9.934$, $p = 0.000$). The list in Table A.3 shows that each ICC included four organizations. On the radical left, three out of the four organizations are based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland (the committee called 'Appeal for the protection of the right to asylum', the Trotskyites from Solidarity, and the citizen group Stop exclusion). On the radical right, the Swiss People's Party joined forces with another party (Swiss Democrats), an economic association (Homeowners Association Switzerland), and a conservative citizen group (Security for all!). A closer look at the cooperative ties in the opponents' camp reveals that there was no joint work at all between the members of these two coalitions. Despite the fact that both campaigned for the rejection of the streamlining reform, the organizations from the 'no camp' restricted their cooperation to actors with similar beliefs. This is due to the fact that these two radical groups opposed this ballot measure for entirely different reasons.

The findings prove to be somewhat less spectacular on the side of supporters. The two ICC significantly differ from each other when it comes to their ideological posi-

Table 1. Overview of ICC by ballot measure.

	Camp Affiliation	Left-Right (0–10)	Number of Organizations
Tightening Reform (2006)			
1 Left and allies	opponents	2.48	21
2 Moderates	opponents	4.30	10
3 Moderate right	supporters	6.43	7
4 Radical right	supporters	8.25	4
Streamlining Reform (2016)			
1 Radical left	opponents	1.00	4
2 Radical right	opponents	7.25	4
3 Left and allies	supporters	3.25	12
4 Moderates	supporters	5.00	11

tioning ($t = 2.888$, $p = 0.009$). The twelve organizations comprising the 'left and allies' coalition exhibit an average score of 3.26 on the left-right scale, while the eleven members of the 'moderates' ICC have a score that is exactly in the middle ($M = 5.00$). Despite this basic pattern, there are some overlaps (see Table A.4). On the one hand, the CONCOR algorithm assigns three centrist organizations to the left-leaning coalition (Amnesty International, Operation Libero, and the Conference of Swiss Bishops). On the other hand, it is striking that the Social Democrats from the left are part of the 'moderates' group. A closer look reveals that this party had close ties with the Federal Department of Justice and Police. This cooperation can be explained by the fact that the minister in charge of this reform was a member of the Social Democrats at that time.

5. Conclusion

This article aimed to contribute to the underdeveloped literature on coalitions in direct democracy by examining the composition of ICC. The binary format of ballot measures leads to the formation of two opposing camps—supporters and opponents. However, political actors who advocate for or against the passage of issue-specific propositions are not obliged to cooperate closely with actors who defend the same position during a particular referendum campaign. While coalitions are advantageous for pooling the resources of their members, increasing the number of coalition partners introduces the problem of heterogeneity. Due to ideological differences among political actors, disagreements and conflicts over substantial campaign decisions are likely to occur. In order to avoid such impediments to cooperation, I expected that political actors on either camp would form coalitions that were ideologically more homogeneous, while being distinctive from each other.

The empirical analysis, which focuses on two referendums on asylum held in Switzerland at the federal level in 2006 and 2016 respectively, finds that the formation of ICC is ideologically driven. Based on network analysis tools, I demonstrated that the organizations that form the four camps under scrutiny significantly differ from one another when it comes to their average positioning on the left-right axis. Hence, diverging beliefs tend to discourage political actors from joining forces during campaigns. The opponents of the streamlining reform probably illustrate this finding best. In this case, the organizations from the radical left and the radical right did not cooperate with each other at all, despite their pursuit of the same goal of defeating the reform.

As to the limitations of this contribution, some caution must be exercised when generalizing the results presented here. Indeed, this empirical analysis focuses on a narrow selection of cases: the organizations that participated in two direct-democratic campaigns on asylum in the peculiar Swiss political system. I would therefore like to encourage scholars who work on coalitions to expand the number of ballot measures, issue domains, and country contexts under examination. Additionally, I believe that more detailed analyses would help to provide an understanding of the dynamic processes of coalition formation in direct democracy by more carefully examining the mechanisms that produce, or fail to produce, coalitions between political actors. Due to the absence of this kind of research, the literature on social movements may provide guidance for such endeavors (van Dyke & McCammon, 2010).

Future studies may further explore the conditions under which political actors that are engaged in direct-democratic campaigns form ideologically homogeneous ICC. Ceteris paribus, this is more likely to occur the more organizations decide to go public on a given camp. It can be assumed that higher numbers of actors increase the probability of diverging beliefs. In order to cope with this challenge, participating actors may factionalize according to ideological criteria. An illustrative example of such intra-camp divisions is the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum (Bull, 2016; Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017), which led to the resignation of Prime Minster Matteo Renzi. In this case, the numerous opponents of this institutional reform regrouped themselves into several committees. The two most important ones were the 'Committee for No', which was formed based on the initiative of the main parties from the right, and 'I Vote No', which was created by civil society actors and attracted opponents from the left. Based on this organizational structure, it seems rather obvious that the members of these two committees did not work together closely. Similar patterns are likely to have emerged from the 2014 Scottish independence referendum (Paterson, 2015) and the 2016 Brexit referendum (Clarke, Goodwin, & Whiteley, 2017), given that in both cases a plethora of actors with distinctive beliefs belonged to the same camp.

Another promising avenue for research involves considering the effects of coalition structures. Given that rational actors ultimately aim to win direct-democratic votes, scholars could analyze whether the formation of ideologically-driven ICC increases their chances of success at the polls. Since homogeneous coalitions are less prone to suffering from internal conflicts, political actors may be able to campaign in an effective manner. However, if members of heterogeneous coalitions manage to avoid major conflicts, they are likely to benefit from economies of scale due to the pooling of their resources. This pooling of resources would allow them to achieve a higher level of attention among citizens, thus increasing the likelihood of bringing their engagement to a victorious end.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Table A.1. Actor composition of the opponents of the tightening reform by ICC.

	Actor type	Standardized power	Left-right (0–10)
Left and allies			
Committee Twofold No	Committee	0.36	3
Social Democrats	Party	0.23	2
Cultural workers against the asylum law	Committee	0.21	2
Stop exclusion	Citizen group	0.17	2
Greens	Party	0.13	1
Solidarity without borders	Citizen group	0.08	1
Forum for the integration of migrants	Citizen group	0.06	3
Sans papiers collective	Citizen group	0.06	2
Unia	Economic association	0.06	2
Swiss Federation of Trade Unions	Economic association	0.05	2
SolidaritéS	Party	0.04	0
Evangelical People's Party	Party	0.04	5
Christian Democrats of the Canton of Geneva	Party	0.04	5
Free Democrats of the Canton of Geneva	Party	0.04	6
AGORA	Citizen group	0.03	3
Comedia	Economic association	0.03	1
Communists	Party	0.03	1
Young Socialists	Party	0.03	1
Christian Democrats of the Canton of Vaud	Party	0.02	5
Travail Suisse	Economic association	0.01	3
Politakt	Citizen group	0.00	2
			2.48
Moderates			
Right-wing committee against the asylum law	Committee	0.34	5
Swiss Aid for Refugees	Citizen group	0.33	3
Coalition for a humanitarian Switzerland	Committee	0.31	5
Conference of Swiss Bishops	Citizen group	0.18	5
Amnesty international	Citizen group	0.13	5
Charity of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland	Citizen group	0.13	4
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches	Citizen group	0.11	5
Charity of Swiss Jews	Citizen group	0.04	5
Christians and Jews for the freedom to Aid	Citizen group	0.04	2
Protestant Church of the Canton of Zurich	Citizen group	0.02	4
			4.30

Note: Within the two ICC, the actors are listed according to their standardized power, which is based on a reputational measure.

Table A.2. Actor composition of the supporters of the tightening reform by ICC.

	Actor type	Standardized power	Left-right (0–10)
Moderate right			
Federal Department of Justice and Police	State actor	0.41	6
Federal Office for Migration	State actor	0.32	5
Christian Democrats	Party	0.13	5
Free Democrats	Party	0.08	7
Liberal Party	Party	0.06	6
Small Business Association	Economic association	0.01	8
Swiss Employers' Federation	Economic association	0.00	8
			6.43
Radical right			
Swiss People's Party	Party	0.55	8
Campaign for an independent and neutral Switzerland	Citizen group	0.11	10
Evangelical Democratic Union	Party	0.01	8
Young4fun.ch	Citizen group	0.01	7
			8.25

Note: Within the two ICC, the actors are listed according to their standardized power, which is based on a reputational measure.

Table A.3. Actor composition of the opponents of the streamlining reform by ICC.

	Actor type	Standardized power	Left-right (0–10)
Radical left			
Appeal for the protection of the right to asylum	Committee	0.13	2
SolidaritéS	Party	0.05	1
Stop exclusion	Citizen group	0.01	1
BastA!	Party	0.01	0
			1.00
Radical right			
Swiss People's Party	Party	0.65	8
Homeowners Association Switzerland	Economic association	0.17	7
Swiss Democrats	Party	0.02	6
Security for all!	Citizen group	0.02	8
			7.25

Note: Within the two ICC, the actors are listed according to their standardized power, which is based on a reputational measure.

Table A.4. Actor composition of the supporters of the streamlining reform by ICC.

	Actor type	Standardized power	Left-right (0–10)
Left and allies			
Operation Libero	Citizen group	0.28	5
Amnesty international	Citizen group	0.19	5
Charity of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland	Citizen group	0.17	3
Greens	Party	0.12	2
Solidarity without borders	Citizen group	0.08	2
Caritas	Citizen group	0.04	4
Young Socialists	Party	0.03	1
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches	Citizen group	0.02	4
Swiss Aid for Refugees	Citizen group	0.01	3
Swiss Workers' Aid Organization	Citizen group	0.01	2
Unia	Economic association	0.01	3
Conference of Swiss Bishops	Citizen group	0.00	5
			3.25
Moderates			
Federal Department of Justice and Police	State actor	0.58	5
State Secretariat for Migration	State actor	0.41	5
Social Democrats	Party	0.27	2
Cantonal Directors of Justice and Police	State actor	0.20	7
Christian Democrats	Party	0.22	6
Free Democrats	Party	0.19	7
Cantonal Social Directors	State actor	0.09	3
Conservative Democrats	Party	0.04	6
Green Liberals	Party	0.03	5
Swiss Associations of Cities	State actor	0.03	5
Evangelical People's Party	Party	0.01	4
			5.00

Note: Within the two ICC, the actors are listed according to their standardized power, which is based on a reputational measure.

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Article

Economic Voting in Direct Democracy: A Case Study of the 2016 Italian Constitutional Referendum

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Abstract
Referendums provide citizens with more control over policy. At the same time, they often entail choices over highly complex policies and are politicised along partisan lines, suggesting that partisan rather than policy considerations will guide voters' choices. I look to the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum, which was particularly complex and polarised, as an opportunity to test for mechanisms of government accountability in a referendum. Using a national survey of voters, I show that the more negative a respondent's evaluation of the state of the economy, the lower their likelihood to vote 'yes' on the government's reform proposal. This relationship is remarkably strong: an average respondent with a very positive evaluation of the state of the economy has an 88% probability of supporting the government's reform proposal compared to only 12% for a respondent with a very negative evaluation. The fact that economic evaluations are a strong determinant of vote choice provides evidence for the existence of an economic vote in a referendum. This further suggests that voters may treat referendums as a sort of second-order election.

Keywords
direct democracy; economic voting; Italy; referendums; second-order election; voting

Issue
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1. Introduction

Referendums often entail choices over complex policies and become politicised along partisan lines which suggests that often partisan rather than policy considerations guide voters' choices. The 2016 Italian national referendum on constitutional reform provides a unique opportunity to test this hypothesis. Using a national survey of voters, I show that the more negative a respondent's evaluation of the state of the economy, the lower their likelihood to vote 'yes' on the government's reform proposal. These findings provide evidence for the existence of an economic vote in a direct-democratic setting. I suggest that voters may treat referendums as a sort of second-order election, with referendums acting as an exercise in government accountability in-between elections.

Referendums provide citizens with more control over policy. While proponents of referendums believe that they can increase the legitimacy of policies, opponents doubt that voters possess the willingness and capacity to inform themselves and make sensible judgements about sometimes complicated and far-reaching decisions. Referendums, especially those concerning substantive issues, effectively allow voters to punish the government in-between elections. One of the most prominent and widely studied determinants of voting for or against the government is the state of the economy. The so-called economic vote implies that voters punish a government for a bad economy and reward it for a good economy (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2007).

I embrace the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum, which was particularly complex and polarised, as an opportunity to test for mechanisms of government accountability in a referendum. It is distinguished as a subject for investigation by two advantages: first, it is one of only a few national level referendums to date which have been subject to survey, and second, it shares many common

characteristics of other national referendums. The government deliberately triggered the referendum and parties took clear stances on the highly complex referendum issue. The polarisation of the campaign between government and opposition along with Renzi's vow to resign if the reform failed provided a clear opportunity for economic voting. Specifically, I ask in this article whether citizens' perceptions of the economy influence how they vote in a referendum.

My analysis is based on data from a survey conducted by the Italian National Election Studies Association (ITANES) project both before and after the 2016 referendum which link respondents' evaluations of the national (as well as their own) economic situation to their vote choice. Results of various specifications and robustness checks consistently show that economic evaluations correlate positively with vote choice: a respondent with a positive evaluation of the economy is on average more likely to vote 'yes' than somebody who has a less favourable view of the economy. This relationship is surprisingly stable and strong. While an average respondent with a very positive evaluation of the economy had an 88% probability of supporting the government, it is only 12% for respondents who evaluated the economy very negatively.

The empirical results provide strong evidence for an economic vote in what is an admittedly most-likely case, because the campaign was strongly polarised, and the prime minister tied his political future to the outcome of the vote. Most-likely cases are strong tests of a theory in the sense that a failure to find the hypothesised relationship would cast strong doubts on the theory in general (George & Bennett, 2004). While this article provides strong evidence for an economic vote in the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum, it remains to be seen whether it extends to other cases as well. For that matter, future research should also incorporate least-likely cases, referendums where parties do not play such a dominant role or are internally divided.

2. Referendums as Second-Order Elections

In a referendum, there are no parties or candidates to elect but only an issue to decide. Therefore, Schoen (2012), for instance, cautions that while determinants of participation in elections and referendums may be similar, determinants of vote choices may differ drastically between elections and referendums. Referendums are thought to be on average more volatile than elections because in some referendums "voters must choose among alternatives that are sometimes unfamiliar and [are] perhaps lacking in reliable voting cues", while at other times referendums can be "highly partisan contests, even without the appearance of party or candidate names on the ballot" (LeDuc, 2002, p. 711).

There are many reasons that referendums can be considered more cognitively demanding than elections. They often involve complex and sometimes technical matters and confront citizens with issues that may be new and unfamiliar to them. Additionally, because less is at stake in a referendum, citizens may exert less effort to inform themselves about the issue at hand. Not surprisingly then, much of the research on voting behaviour in referendums has focused on the issue of voter competence. One of the main findings in this line of research is that low-information voters can mimic informed voters' choices by relying on cues from governments, parties and interest groups (Christin, Hug, & Sciarini, 2002; Clarke, Elliott, & Stewart, 2017; Lupia, 1994).

Work in this vein assumes that voters who possess factual information about politics in general or a particular referendum, take sensible decisions, or less normatively charged decisions, in their own interest. However, it is not clear whether possessing information about a ballot proposition translates into an informed vote. Knowledgeable voters also tend to be more ambivalent about the referendum issues they have to decide upon (Lanz & Nai, 2014; Nai, 2014)—more information does not necessarily make it easier to decide. These papers and the literature they stand for are all based on the assumption that voters do vote on the issues on the ballot. Either they try to weigh the arguments themselves, or they rely on cues to mimic informed decision-making. In the following section, I will provide an alternative viewpoint, which suggests that voters treat referendums, particularly those that are polarised along partisan lines as in the Italian case, quite similar to second-order elections.

Second-order election, a term popularised by Reif and Schmitt (1980) to describe the elections to the European Parliament, denotes any election that can be considered subordinate to the electoral contest that serves to form the national government—in parliamentary systems, the national parliamentary election would be the first-order election, and in presidential systems it would be the presidential election that is first-order. The second order elections model postulates that issues and cleavages of the national first-order contest will largely determine the vote in the second-order contest as well. Specifically, governing parties will lose votes relative to the preceding first-order election.

European elections, despite an increase in the powers of the EU, and in particular the European Parliament, continue to be characterised as second-order to national elections (Schmitt, 2005; Schmitt & Teperoglou, 2015). Coming to the Italian case then, it is reasonable to assume that in spite of Italy's relatively extensive experience with national referendums, that these are second-order to (first-order) national elections. The outcome of the 2016 referendum mirrored the characteristics of a typical second-order election in the sense that turnout was lower than in the preceding national election and the governing parties lost the vote.

The point of this article is not to show that electoral politics dominate referendum policy but rather that they are sufficiently important to have an impact on the vote—similar to what one would see in a second-order

electoral contest. The specific argument I make in this article is that we should also be able to see an economic vote in a referendum. Just as Okolikj and Quinlan (2016) who have shown that an economic vote can also be observed in European parliament elections. The next section discusses the concept of economic voting and how it might apply to referendums more generally and the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum in particular.

3. Economic Voting in Referendums

The so-called economic vote is one of the most important paradigms in electoral research. While the economic vote has developed into a literature of considerable breadth and variety (see, for instance, Duch & Stevenson, 2008; Kayser, 2014), so far it has only rarely been considered in referendum research. To the best of my knowledge, only two contributions to date have estimated an economic vote in referendums; however, with entirely different interpretations and contradictory expectations.

Bowler and Donovan (1998) see the economic vote rooted in risk aversion; they suggest that voters may ask themselves: is this a good time for the state to adopt a new policy? Their analysis is based on survey data on three 1990 California and a 1992 Colorado state referendum and shows a significant correlation between economic evaluations and vote choice, but only for less educated voters and only for some ballot propositions. They take these findings to mean that less-educated voters are more likely to engage in economic voting to make up for a lack of political sophistication. Uncertainty about the consequences of a proposal may lead voters to stick with the status quo rather than voting for a change, which may be why proposals to change the status quo are often defeated (LeDuc, 2003).

In contrast, Jenssen (1998, p. 195), seeking to understand divergent outcomes of three EU membership referendums in the Nordic countries Sweden, Finland and Norway, hypothesizes that "economic hardship led a majority in Sweden and Finland to vote for change—in this case EU membership—whereas better-off Norwegian voters preferred things as they were". However, in almost perfect contradiction of that hypothesis, economic evaluations correlated positively with a vote for EU membership in all countries surveyed.

Although these authors do estimate an economic vote in a sense, their approach is divorced from the original paradigm as applied in electoral research. Their interpretation of the economic vote is seemingly inspired by the literature on cue-taking: voters use external information to make up their mind on an issue on the ballot. However, voting in line with one's preferred party recommendation might just be voting for that party. If political parties take visible and differing positions on a referendum, it might take on the character of a second-order election. Such a perspective takes seriously the possibility that voters treat referendums as an opportunity to vent dissatisfaction with the government.

Economic voting is one of the most important mechanisms of government accountability. I argue in this article that it can also be at work in a referendum. Economic voting is in a sense also more broadly applicable than cue-taking because those without a partisan attachment cannot rely on cues. However, they are easily able to engage in economic voting. In the Italian case analysed here, about a quarter of voters have no partisan affiliation but almost all of them voice an opinion on the state of the economy.

The economy is the most important issue for a large majority of voters in most, if not all, elections. Rather than being positional, it is a valence issue. This means voters agree that they all prefer a good economic situation, stable economic growth and low unemployment and inflation rates, to a bad one. The basic idea underlying the paradigm is that voters hold the reigning government responsible for the economic situation. If it is good, they will reward the government by voting for the governing party or parties, and if it is bad, they will punish the government by choosing one of the opposition parties (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000, p. 138).

The economic vote is largely retrospective (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2013; Wlezien, 2015), the process being as follows: first, voters evaluate the economic situation; they then decide whether to attribute the responsibility to the government to the economic situation and, finally, they punish or reward it with their vote. In this way, voters in elections in large part evaluate government performance in retrospect. This perspective does not apply in the same way in a referendum. Here, the choice at hand seems to be more prospective in nature: what are the anticipated consequences of the proposed policy? Are these consequences deemed desirable? This might explain why the economic vote has been reinterpreted in the two contributions discussed above not as a retrospective evaluation of government performance, but as a prospective calculation of the merits of changing the status quo.

Nevertheless, one can still apply the concept of the economic vote to referendums without engaging in conceptual stretching. Voters can easily identify both a government's position in a referendum as well as the state of the economy. Parties often take sides in referendum campaigns, and the sides they take often mirror a government-opposition divide. Sometimes, even the head of government's fate rests implicitly or explicitly, as in the Italian case, on the outcome of the referendum. Therefore, voters may, as they do in elections, choose to reject the government's position in economically bad times and, vice versa, approve it in good times. Alternatively, we might think that if a citizen is dissatisfied with the government's handling of the economy that they do not put trust in the quality of a constitutional reform formulated and propagated by that same government.

Adapting the economic voting paradigm to direct democracy, I hypothesise that the more positive a voters evaluation of the economic situation, the more likely

they are to vote for the government's position. Formulated differently with the Italian case in mind: the more positive a respondent's evaluation of the economic situation of the country, the more likely it is that they vote 'yes' (in favour of the constitutional reform) in the referendum. Having laid out the expectations for the empirical analysis, in the following section, I briefly present the reform proposal put to a vote, the political situation leading up to the vote and the campaign accompanying it, before going on to describe the research design.

4. The Italian Constitutional Referendum 2016

On 4 December 2016 eligible Italian citizens were asked to vote on a constitutional law which would amend Italy's Constitution to change the composition and powers of the parliament as well as the division of powers between the federal state, the regions and other administrative units. Besides the rather pragmatic reason of data availability, the referendum is a particularly useful case for study for three reasons.[1]

First, the subject of the referendum was a constitutional reform. Such referendums are a common occurrence at the national level. Secondly, the referendum was triggered by the government, as are most national referendums. Finally, the referendum campaign became polarised along partisan lines, pitting the governing parties against essentially all opposition parties.

Unlike other West European states, Italy does not have a differentiated system of two chambers. The Italian Constitution stipulates that both houses of parliament are equal in rights. This institutional arrangement has long been regarded as a problem because policymaking is hampered by laws circulating endlessly between the two chambers with neither chamber having the ability to override the other. This also implies that the government is dependent on the trust of both chambers. Hence, after the parliamentary elections in Italy in 2013, which led to differing majorities in the two parliamentary chambers—the social-democratic Partito Democratico (PD) won an absolute majority in the House, but no party won a majority in the Senate—a political crisis ensued. President Giorgio Napolitano, urged by almost all party leaders to stay on for another term to moderate the crisis (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017, p. 148), appointed Enrico Letta of the PD to lead a grand coalition between the PD and the Popolo della Libertà (PdL), a merger of Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the radical right party Alleanza Nazionale. He tasked that coalition with reforming bicameralism and the electoral system.

Only a year after his appointment Letta was replaced as prime minister by the PD's then party secretary Matteo Renzi after an internal party leadership challenge. Renzi inherited Letta's commitment to reform and would later reference Napolitano's call for reform to justify the need for and the content of his reform proposal (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017, p. 148). Earlier, the PD's coalition partner PdL had split with some ministers and MPs leaving the government and re-joining Forza Italia, while others founded the Nuovo Centrodestra (NCD) and continued in government. Just before becoming prime minister, Renzi, then still party secretary of the PD, reached an agreement with Berlusconi's Forza Italia, the so-called Nazarene Pact, that assured Forza Italia's support. However, Berlusconi withdrew his party from the agreement in February 2015 when Renzi unilaterally put forward Sergio Mattarella as a candidate for President of the Republic who was subsequently elected. The government, and in particular Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, nevertheless pressed on with its plans for reform.

The reform package aimed at simplifying the institutional architecture, speeding up the legislative process and reducing the cost of government. It foresaw a reorganisation of territorial structure, foremost the elimination of the provinces and the National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL), an advisory body to the government. It would abolish Italy's symmetric bicameralism by reducing the Senate's power and size and making it an indirectly elected body.1 Besides the institutional goal of streamlining and centralising the political system, Renzi also pursued a political goal. Having acquired the prime ministership through an intra-party leadership challenge, his "goal was to show to the opposition and, perhaps even more so, to those within the PD who were challenging his reforms and his policies, that he enjoyed the support of a large majority of the Italian people" (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017, p. 153).

The constitutional reform, also named Riforma Renzi-Boschi, after its initiators Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, and the responsible minister for constitutional reforms and relations with the parliament Maria Elena Boschi, was passed by the Senate on 13 October 2015 and by the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, on 11 January 2016. Both houses confirmed their votes on 20 January 2016 and 12 April 2016 respectively. The two parliamentary chambers approved the reform with an absolute majority which, however, fell short of a two-thirds majority. This created a situation where the reform failed in parliament, but the parliamentary vote opened a path to a referendum according to article 138 of the Italian Constitution. The referendum was held on 4 December 2016, and the following question was put to the eligible population of Italy:

> Do you approve the text of the Constitutional Law concerning 'Provisions for overcoming equal bicameralism, reducing the number of Members of Parliament, limiting the operating costs of the institutions, the suppression of the CNEL and the revision of Title V of Part II of the Constitution' approved by Parliament

[1] As outlined above, few referendums are subject to scientific survey and even fewer of these include questions on the state of the economy (for an exception, see Curtis, Jupille, & Leblang, 2014). The ITANES survey used in this paper is unique because of the breadth of items related to the economy included in the questionnaire.

and published in the Official Gazette no. 88 of 15 April 2016? (Wikipedia, n.d.)[2]

Therefore, if voters wanted to approve the reform they had to vote 'yes', and 'no' to reject it. Voter turnout was 65.5%, which is relatively high for a constitutional referendum—only 9.7 points less than the last national election in 2013 and about 13 points more than the last constitutional referendum in 2006. Voters rejected the reform by a substantial margin. 59.1% voted against the reform and only 40.9% in favour. In almost all regions, except for Emilia-Romagna, Toscana and Trentino-Alto Adige, a majority of voters voted against the referendum. The former two regions are strongholds of the PD while the latter is a stronghold of the CD, the junior member of the governing coalition (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017, p. 154). This aggregate pattern provides a first indication that this vote was not just about constitutional reform but also about the current government of the time.

The referendum campaign was described as "unusually bitter and protracted" (Pasquino & Valbruzzi, 2017, p. 153). It pitted the governing parties against essentially all opposition parties. In addition to the authors of the reforms, Matteo Renzi's centre-left PD, their coalition partner the NCD supported the reforms as well as the leftist Christian Democrats of the Centro Democratico (CD). So did the liberal party Scelta Civica and the anti-corruption parties Italia dei Valori and Radicali Italiani. The reforms were most strongly opposed by the MoVimento 5 Stelle (five-star movement) led by comedian Beppe Grillo. Further opponents of the reform included regional and right-wing parties such as the Lega Nord or Forza Italia, but also some left-wing parties such as Sinistra Italiana or the Partito della Rifondazione Comunista.

Many associations and interest groups partook in the campaign. Early on the National Association of Italian Partisans announced its opposition to the reform. They were joined by the leftist trade union CGIL and a wide range of committees for a 'no'-vote that sprang up, most importantly "Libertà e Giustizia". On the other side, the national association of employers Confindustria, the farmers' association Coldiretti and the Christian democratic trade union CISL campaigned for a 'yes'. Unusually, the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, took a public stance in favour of the reform. Experts were divided on the issue. As a testament to the complexity of the issue, in the months leading up to the vote, a dozen books were published in which scientists and other experts on legal and institutional matters argued for or against the reforms, while others, in turn, took on a more neutral tone seeking to inform rather than influence the general public (Ceccarini & Bordignon, 2017, p. 290).

In short, the referendum was preceded by a months-long intensive campaign, which was politicised along partisan lines. The referendum turned into a vote on the population's satisfaction with the government, not least because Renzi promised to resign if he were to lose the referendum. Early in the campaign, Renzi tied his political future to the outcome of the vote in the hope that his (initial) popularity would carry the reform to success. While his approval was already down to 40% (from initially more than 70%) at the time he made the announcement in April 2016, he still was the most popular leader. Consequently, after losing the referendum, Renzi announced his resignation immediately after the result became known. At the request of the Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Renzi postponed his resignation until after the following year's budget was passed on 7 December 2016. In a sense, Renzi lost not a parliamentary, but a popular vote of confidence in his government.

5. Research Design

The 2016 Italian constitutional referendum was covered by a scientific survey fielded by the ITANES project. The data were collected in a two-wave panel survey (pre- and post-referendum) of the Italian population. The survey comprised 3050 respondents in total. My analysis will focus on voters in the referendum only, therefore disregarding non-voters as well as voters casting a blank ballot. I use list-wise deletion in case of missing values on any of the dependent or independent variables.

The dependent variable is a respondent's vote choice, measured as vote intention in the pre-referendum wave and as recall question in the post-referendum wave. Both measures are not without their problems. As far as the item in the pre-referendum questionnaire is concerned: vote intentions may change, and some respondents may voice a vote intention although in the end they will not participate. As far as the post-referendum questionnaire is concerned: there is strong over-reporting of participation and likely a *bandwagoning* effect. It is, however, hard to gauge to what extent this creates bias. A comparison of the aggregated survey data with the actual referendum outcome indicates that vote intentions, while still predicting 'no' to win, predict a much closer outcome than actually occurred. However, a substantial number of voters reported not having made up their minds yet. While strongly overstating turnout, reported vote choices are more accurate, overestimating the 'no'-vote only slightly (see Table 1).

Since vote intentions are more inaccurate than reported vote choices, I rely on reported vote choices from the post-referendum wave. In alternative specifications, vote intentions instead of choices are used as robustness check reported in the Appendix I (see Table A2). Both variables are coded as dummy variables which are 1 if a respondent voted or intended to vote 'yes' (for the consti-

[2] English translation from Wikipedia and accuracy confirmed by an Italian colleague. Italian original obtained from the Ministry of the Interior (http://www.interno.gov.it/it/italiani-voto-referendum-costituzionale): "Approvate il testo della legge costituzionale concernente 'disposizioni per il superamento del bicameralismo paritario, la riduzione del numero dei parlamentari, il contenimento dei costi di funzionamento delle istituzioni, la soppressione del CNEL e la revisione del Titolo V della parte II della Costituzione', approvato dal Parlamento e pubblicato nella Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 88 del 15 aprile 2016?"

Table 1. Vote intentions obtained from the pre-referendum wave, the actual result of the vote and reported vote choices obtained from the post-referendum wave.

	Yes	No	Undecided	Turnout
Pre-referendum wave	36.4%	39.7%	23.9%	
Actual result	40.9%	59.1%		65.6%
Post-referendum wave	38.9%	61.1%		89%

tutional reform) and 0 if they voted or intended to vote 'no' (against the constitutional reform).

The key independent variable is a respondent's retrospective evaluation of the national economy. Respondents were asked to complete the following sentence 'do you think the economic situation in Italy in the last year…' using one of the following answers: 'improved a lot', 'improved somewhat', 'remained equal', 'little worse', 'much worse' or 'don't know?' (see Appendix II for details). This question was asked in both the pre- and post-referendum waves. I use the answers from the pre-referendum wave to avoid that evaluations may be coloured by the referendum result or a respondent's own vote choice.

In Appendix I, I present results for the same specifications replacing economic evaluations from the first wave with evaluations from the second wave. Respondents' evaluations of their economic situation are only available in the post-referendum questionnaire. The literature on economic voting in elections almost unanimously suggests that sociotropic voting, voting based on assessments of the national economy, is stronger than egotropic voting, voting based on one's own economic situation (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2013). Nevertheless, it is interesting to explore whether this holds for referendums as well. Hence, I include variations of my main models testing for egotropic economic voting in Appendix I.

This study is based on cross-sectional survey data, as are most other individual levels studies of economic voting. I correlate differences in the perception of the economic situation between individuals with their vote choice or intention. However, this must mean that some of the interviewees are wrong in their assessment of the economic situation. For the national economy cannot be both good and bad at the same time. One prime reason for these differences in the assessment of the overall economic situation may be a respondent's party identification. Early on, Kramer (1983), a pioneer of economic voting, pointed out that supporters of the governing party or parties tend to view the economic situation more positively than adherents of the opposition party or parties. Thus, the question is whether a greater consistency of results in individual-level studies, vis-à-vis studies based on aggregate data, is not ultimately an artefact of the endogeneity of perceptions of the economic situation.

The concern that political preferences colour economic evaluations is at least partly alleviated by the fact that I use economic perceptions measured before the referendum. Therefore, the outcome of the referendum could not have influenced respondents' economic perceptions. In addition, I control for partisanship as well in additional specifications, such as vote choice in the last national election, government approval, and the popularity of the prime minister (Table 3). I recoded party identification and vote choice in the last national election into dummy variables that indicate whether a respondent identifies with or voted for one of the governing parties at the time of the referendum.

Respondents' factual knowledge about the referendum was measured by their answers to three questions asking about details of the constitutional reform and what the quorum for the referendum was. Respondents are presented with three possible answers per question. I take the sum of correct answers (0 to 3) to derive an index of referendum knowledge. I interact this variable with respondents' economic evaluations in the second model to test hypothesis 2 (see Table 3). I also include approval of the government in general and the Prime Minister Matteo Renzi more specifically in some specifications. Here, respondents were asked to rate Renzi or his government on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = completely negative judgement; 10 = completely positive view). I also include a respondent's gender, their age and education level. The latter is captured by a dummy variable indicating whether a respondent has attended university or is currently doing so. Table 2 presents summary statistics for the key variables.

Binary logistic regression will be used throughout. The dependent variable is a dummy variable indicating whether respondents voted in favour of the proposed constitutional reform ('yes' = 1) or against it ('no' = 0). In a first specification, I regress a respondent's vote choice on their retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation to test whether economic evaluations predict vote choice. Further specifications, included in Table 3, add measures of partisanship as control variables to assess the robustness of these findings. In a second set of models, reported in Table 4, I test for an economic vote in three separate groups of respondents: voters who identify with one of the governing parties, voters who identify with one of the opposition parties and voters who do not identify with any party. This probes whether the economic vote is conditioned by partisanship.

6. Results

My empirical results indicate a strong and persistent economic vote in the 2016 Italian constitutional referendum.

Table 2. Summary statistics for the variables included in the models presented in Table 3.

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote choice	2716	0.39	0.49	0	1
Sociotropic economy	3020	2.58	0.88	1	5
PID (Government)	3050	0.23	0.42	0	1
Vote (Government)	2907	0.13	0.34	0	1
Government approval	2977	3.83	2.76	0	10
Approval (PM)	2864	3.59	3.08	0	10
Referendum knowledge	3049	1.59	1.05	0	3
Age	3027	48.06	17.12	18	88
Female	3027	0.48	0.50	0	1
University education	3027	0.34	0.47	0	1

Table 3. Model (1) correlates a respondent's vote choice with their evaluation of the national economy; further models add partisanship (2), (3) vote choice in the last national election, (4) government approval, or (5) approval of the prime minister as control variable.

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote choice (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sociotropic economy	1.00***	.73***	.99***	.17**	.36***
	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)
Referendum knowledge	.07*	−.02	.05	.15***	.15***
	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
PID (Government)		2.66***			
		(.13)			
Vote (Government)			1.14***		
			(.13)		
Government approval				.57***	
				(.03)	
Approval PM					.44***
					(.02)
Female	−.01	−.04	−.01	−.05	−.07
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.11)
Age	.02***	.01**	.01***	.01***	.01***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
University education	.20**	.07	.17*	.07	.10
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.11)
Constant	−4.07***	−3.35***	−3.98***	−4.19***	−3.84***
	(.23)	(.25)	(.24)	(.26)	(.26)
Observations	2,682	2,682	2,572	2,656	2,567
Log Likelihood	−1,573.14	−1,299.71	−1,472.11	−1,227.44	−1,221.48

Notes: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

A respondent's evaluation of the economy shows a significant positive association with their probability of supporting the constitutional reform (Table 3). The more positively a respondent evaluated the national economic situation in the past year, the more likely they were to vote 'yes'. Because coefficients from a logistic regression do not lend themselves to straightforward interpretation, I also plot the predicted probabilities (Figure 1). A respondent who evaluates the national economy very negatively has only a 12% probability of supporting the constitutional reform, while somebody who rates the state of the national economy to be very good has a probability of 88% to vote 'yes'—a 76-point difference. A regression model including respondents' evaluations of the national economy fares considerably better in predicting a respondent's vote choice than a model which does not, leading to a proportional reduction in error of around 21% compared to the simpler model not including economic evaluations (see Tables A13 and A14).

Because economic evaluations can be considered both a cause and a consequence of partisan preferences, in models (2) to (5) I add a range of measures of a vot-

Table 4. Models correlate a respondent's vote choice with their evaluation of the national economy, separately for subgroups of respondents with a party identification with one of the governing parties (column 1), with no party identification (2) and with a party identification with one of the parties in opposition (3).

	Subgroups:		
	PID (Government) (1)	PID (None) (2)	PID (Opposition) (3)
Sociotropic economy	.54*** (.15)	.83*** (.13)	.72*** (.09)
Knowledge	−.05 (.13)	−.05 (.10)	−.08 (.07)
Female	−.47* (.25)	−.21 (.20)	−.10 (.15)
Age	.03*** (.01)	.01* (.01)	.002 (.004)
University education	.09 (.24)	−.22 (.20)	.22 (.16)
Constant	−1.01 (.62)	−2.78*** (.51)	−3.43*** (.37)
Observations	647	559	1,393
Log Likelihood	−238.66	−347.97	−598.26

Notes: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

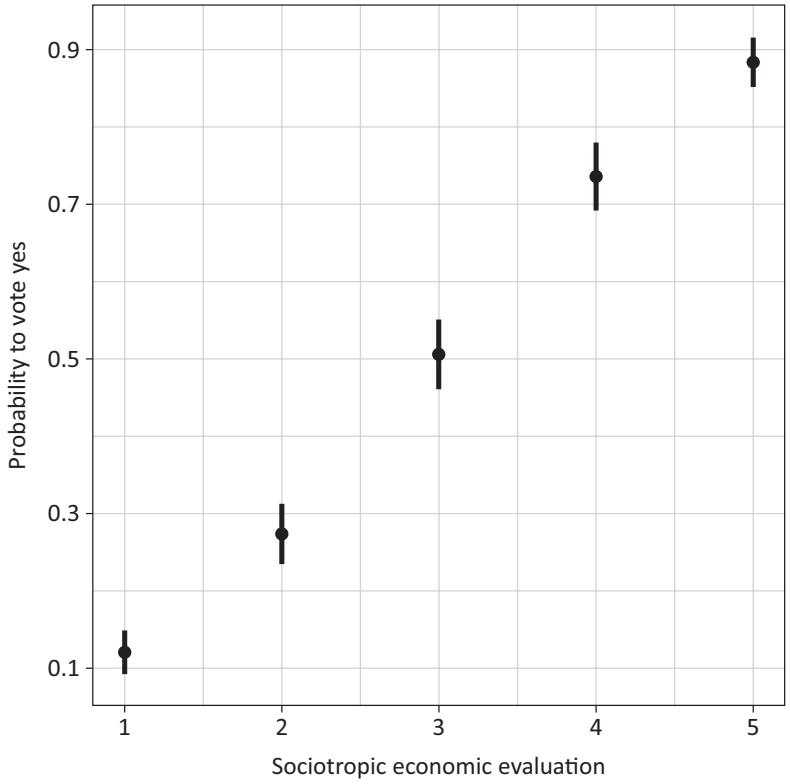

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities for a woman of median age (48) with a university degree to vote 'yes' in the referendum dependent on whether she thinks the national economy (1) got much worse, (2) got a little worse, (3) remained equal, (4) improved somewhat or (5) improved a lot, based on model 1, Table 3.

ers' partisan disposition. When these variables are included as additional explanatory variables the coefficient on economic evaluations is substantially reduced but remains significant. These results should alleviate concerns that economic evaluations are simply a proxy for respondents' partisan predispositions. Economic evaluations correlate with vote choices even when controlling for government approval. Results are also robust to using vote choice in the last national election, government approval, or approval of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi (see Table 3). This is also reflected in the predicted probabilities associated with these models. As shown in Appendix I, a hypothetical female voter of median age with a university degree who, for instance, neither approves nor disapproves of the government is more likely to vote for or against the reform depending on her evaluation of the state of the economy (see Figure A2).

These results hold up in alternative specifications, where I use vote intentions instead of reported vote choices, sociotropic economic evaluations measured after the referendum instead of before the referendum, replace sociotropic with egotropic economic evaluations,

and add a voter's distance on the left-right scale to Renzi's PD (see Tables A2, A3, A4 and A5). For egotropic evaluations, the partial correlation with vote choices is weaker, but not by much (see also Table A6). This is in line with the findings of economic voting literature, which generally finds assessments of the national economy to be more predictive of vote choices than respondents' personal economic situation.

Including government approval as an additional explanatory variable leads to the most substantial reduction in the coefficient on economic evaluations.[3] However, if one assumes that economic evaluations are causally prior to government approval, then one can consider the latter as a mediating factor. Put otherwise, this reflects the view that government approval is an influence on an individual's vote choice, which is itself influenced by economic evaluations. A simple back-of-the-envelope calculation based on the mediation procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) allows me to differentiate between a direct and indirect effect of economic evaluations on vote choice and to calculate the relative importance of these two channels. As it turns out, both channels contribute about equally to the total economic vote. 47% of the correlation between economic evaluations and vote choice, captured in model 1 in Table 3, is a direct effect and the remaining 53% an indirect effect mediated through government approval. I will discuss these results further in the discussion.

The inclusion of partisanship in model 2 in Table 3 implies a comparison between, on the one hand, voters who indicated identifying with one of the governing parties and, on the other hand, voters who either identified with one of the opposition parties or had no partisan attachment at all. In total, 24% of respondents who voted in the referendum did not identify with a political party. The crucial difference between the latter two groups of voters is that those without partisan attachment are not able to rely on partisan cues. However, 99% of those non-partisans were able to provide an assessment of the national economy. Hence, while they are not able to follow partisan cues, they can cast an economic vote.

Therefore, rather than merely treating partisanship as a control variable, I also estimate separate models for partisans of the government, partisans of the opposition and non-partisans to look into the possibility that the strength of the economic vote varies between these groups (Table 4). These results show that all groups of voters engaged in economic voting, meaning that within those three groups, respondents with a more negative assessment of the economic situation were less likely to vote for the reform than those with a more positive assessment. The difference in voting behaviour between those with negative and positive assessments was greatest among the group of non-partisans, suggesting that those lacking partisan cues most strongly relied on an economic vote. These results also hold up in alternative specifications, which replace reported vote choices with vote intentions, sociotropic economic evaluations measured before the referendum with sociotropic economic evaluations measured after the referendum, and which replace sociotropic with egotropic economic evaluations (see Tables A8 to A11).

To facilitate an interpretation of the substantive significance of these results in Figure 2 plots the predicted probabilities for the three models in Table 4. When comparing the plots, two patterns become apparent: the pre-

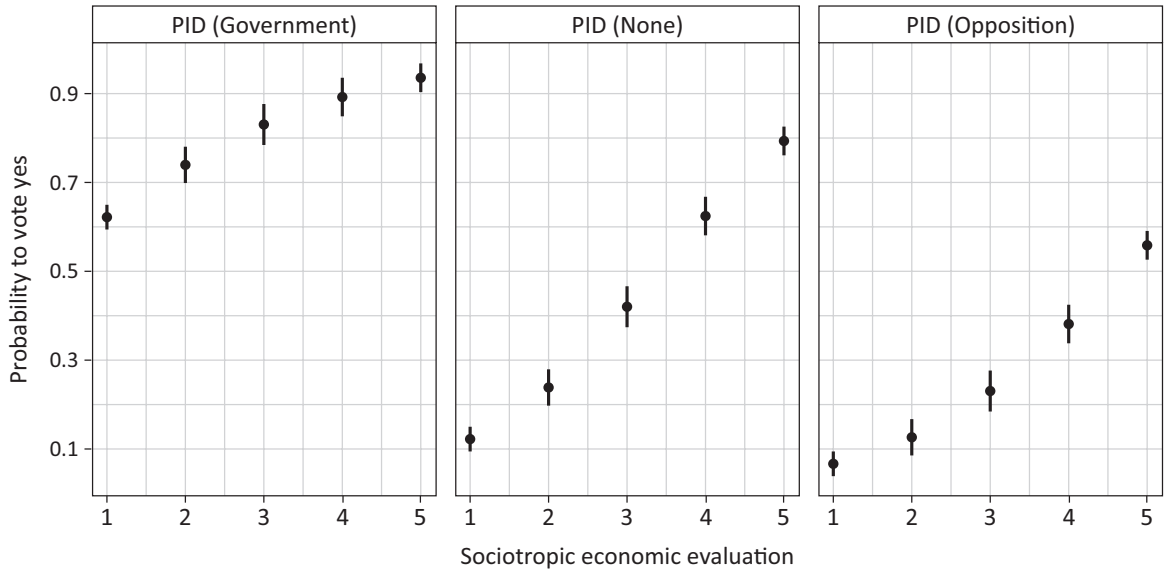

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities for three hypothetical women of median age (48) with a university degree to vote 'yes' in the referendum dependent on whether they think the national economy (1) got much worse, (2) got a little worse, (3) remained equal, (4) improved somewhat or (5) improved a lot, based on models 1 to 3 in Table 4.

[3] Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, this is nothing more than assumption made to support the calculations that follow. These calculations should be treated as merely descriptive and illustrative.

dicted voting patterns differ in levels and slopes. Firstly, independent of their views of the economy, supporters of the government are of course on average much more likely to vote for the reform than non-partisans and supporters of the opposition. Secondly, the relationship between economic evaluations and vote choice is strongest in the group of non-partisans. In this group, the difference between very negative and very positive evaluations amounts to a full 67 points, while the difference is 49 points among opposition and only 31 points among government supporters. However, these differences in the correlation between economic evaluations and vote choice between groups are not statistically significant (see Table A7 in Appendix I, in which I present the relevant formal test in form of a model interacting economic evaluations with the categorical PID variable, which is functionally equivalent to the subgroup analyses, presented here. The interaction terms are not statistically significant). The main take-away here is that economic voting occurs within all groups.

To summarise, these results are in agreement with the theoretical argument made earlier in this article. However, that argument is admittedly not the only possible interpretation of these results, as I will discuss in the next section.

7. Discussion

In the previous section, I have demonstrated a persistent and robust correlation between economic perceptions and vote choice. This is not to say that economic evaluations were the only or even the most important determinant of vote choices; however, the results presented here provide robust evidence in line with my argument that referendums can turn into a sort of second-order election if they become polarised along partisan lines. Following the government-versus-opposition logic of the campaign, voters showed a marked tendency towards economic voting.

However, one must acknowledge that the empirical results do not dictate the exact interpretation of this economic vote. Specifically, Bowler and Donovan (1998, chapter 4) suggest a different frame for interpreting findings such as my own. They argue that when faced with a choice between an uncertain outcome—in this case, ballot initiatives—and a more certain outcome—keeping the status quo—voters tend to be risk-averse. The authors connect this reasoning to the literature on economic voting by arguing that the state of the economy provides information that influences risk aversion. In line with their argument, their findings based on multiple referendum surveys show that voters who hold more positive evaluations of the economic situation are more likely to vote to change the status quo.

Following Bowler and Donovan (1998), one could interpret the results presented in this article as being (partially) driven by status quo bias. Uncertainty about the consequences of the reform package in combination with a negative economic evaluation may have led voters to stick with the status quo. In that case, my interpretation of having witnessed an economic vote in an unusual second-order election would be mistaken. However, these two interpretations are neither theoretically nor empirically in contradiction with each other.

Theoretically, it is perfectly possible that some voters look to the state of the economy to judge whether it is a good time to risk changing the status quo, while others treat the referendum as a second-order election, an opportunity to punish the government. It is also possible that both considerations play a role in an individual voter's mind. Empirically, I have shown that economic evaluations are predictive of vote choice even when controlling for measures of a respondent's orientation towards the government. One could take this to imply that both mechanisms played a role in the 2016 Italian referendum. Specifically, one could argue that the correlation between economic evaluations and vote choice obtained after controlling for government approval, which is substantially reduced but still significant, represents a heuristic economic vote as Bowler and Donovan (1998, chapter 4) frame it.

Adjudicating more conclusively between the two arguments is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this single case study. Therefore, it is impossible to disentangle whether voters who rejected the reform rejected it based on a change in the status quo or the government's position. Given the specifics of the Italian case and the empirical results presented in this article, however, it seems safe to say that the referendum took on the character of a second-order election in which voters exercised an economic vote, although this does not rule out risk aversion as an alternative mechanism. Concerning the Italian case, risk aversion was probably not an essential factor. Two surveys carried out after the referendum indicated that more than four-fifths of respondents were open to changing the constitution and four-fifths of 'no'-voters were open to reforms to make the system more efficient (Ceccarini & Bordignon, 2017, p. 295).

8. Conclusions

In this article, I analysed the relationship between individuals' assessments of the national as well as their personal economic situation and their vote choice in the 2016 Italian constitutional reform based on a survey conducted by the ITANES project. I have chosen to adopt the economic voting paradigm to study voting in this referendum because the campaign was strongly polarised along partisan lines, not least because Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the architect of the reform, promised to resign if he lost the referendum.[4]

As expected, the more positive a respondent's evaluation of the economy, the higher their likelihood to vote 'yes' on the referendum proposed by the govern-

[4] One can of course only speculate as to whether the economic vote would have been as strong as it was if Renzi had not tied his future to the referendum.

ment. This relationship is surprisingly strong and stable. These results concur with Pasquino and Valbruzzi's (2017, p. 155) verdict that 'a significant portion of the electorate decided to punish the government'. When thinking about referendums more broadly, the Italian constitutional referendum of 2016 can be considered a most-likely case for an economic vote—the polarisation of the campaign between government and opposition along with Renzi's commitment to resign if the reform failed provided a clear opportunity for economic voting. In the logic of case studies, a most-likely case exhibits characteristics that make a theoretically predicted outcome very likely. Most-likely cases are strong tests of a theory in the sense that a failure to find the hypothesised relationship would cast strong doubts on the theory in general (George & Bennett, 2004).

Having established the relevance of an economic vote in this particular case, the question now is whether it can also be found in least-likely cases, referendums where parties do not take a dominant role, are internally divided or both of these situations are present. Future research should, in cases studies of least-likely cases or in comparative studies, extend the economic voting paradigm to other referendums and test whether it replicates in other contexts. This could be complemented by aggregate data research, building on early research by Bowler and Donovan (1998) that seeks to establish whether referendums are more likely to pass in economically good times. One important question such research could address is whether an economic vote also occurs when a government takes the position to uphold the status quo in a referendum. That question can only be answered by also looking at referendums where the government defends the status quo (against an initiative, for instance). Ideally, one would study multiple referendums that provide variation in the government's position in a referendum to understand more fully whether an economic vote in a referendum is a form of status quo bias, or government accountability. Lastly, having likened referendums to second-order election raises the question whether the outcome of a referendum also depends on its relative position in the (first-order) electoral cycle, as is the case for second-order elections.

If future research finds the economy to be a relevant factor in referendum voting more generally, then where in the business cycle a referendum is held could be a determinant of its outcome. In the Italian case, a majority of respondents believed that the economy had not improved over the past year and only about every tenth respondent thought the economy had gotten better. Clearly, given that voters' perceptions of the economy were such a strong predictor of vote choice this was not a good time for Renzi to achieve institutional reform by referendum. In a sense, this poses a catch-22 for any political leader pursuing reform: Renzi advocated reforms for a more efficient government as a means of addressing Italy's economic woes. However, it was precisely the economic situation, which he hoped to alleviate, that kept him from implementing his plans for reform.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

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Appendix I

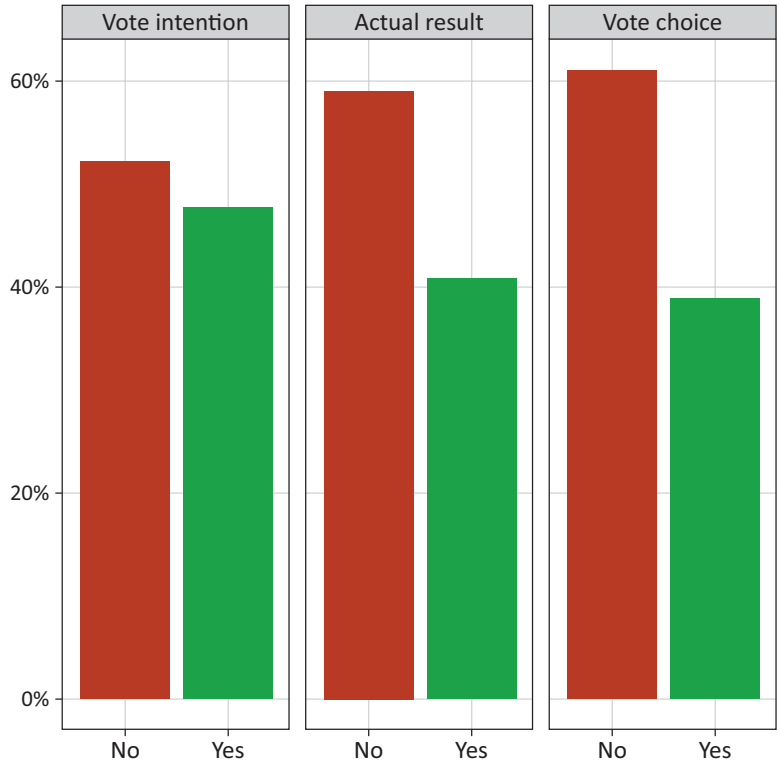

Figure A1. Aggregated share of vote intentions for and against the constitutional reform (ignoring undecided voters and non-voters), the actual result of the referendum, and the aggregate reported vote choices (ignoring those who casted a blank ballot or abstained).

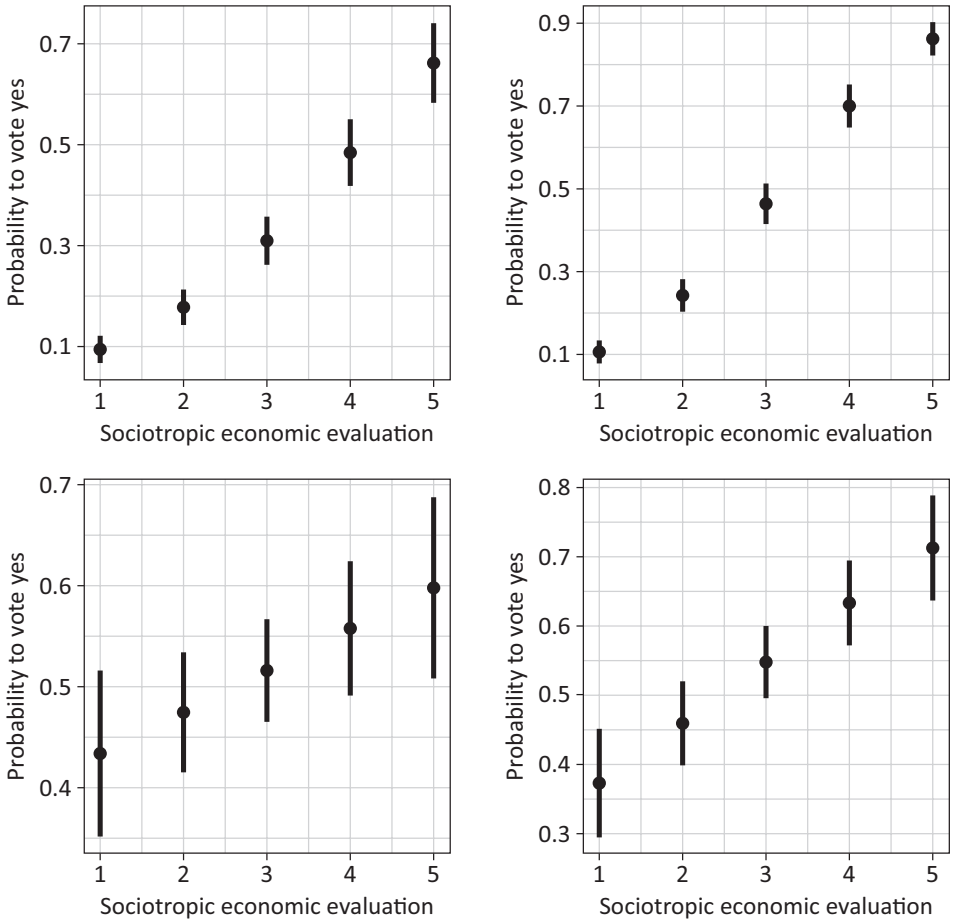

Figure A2. Top left: predicted probabilities for a woman of median age (48) with a university degree and no partisan identification with a governing party (5) to vote "Yes" in the referendum dependent on whether she thinks the national economy (1) got much worse, (2) got a little worse, (3) remained equal, (4) improved somewhat or (5) improved a lot, based on model (2) in Table 1 in the manuscript. Top right: predicted probabilities for the same hypothetical woman who did not voted for one of the governing parties in the last national elections, based on model (3). Bottom left: predicted probabilities for the same hypothetical woman who neither approves nor disapproves of the government, based on model (4). Bottom right: predicted probabilities for the same hypothetical woman who neither approves nor disapproves of the prime minister, based on model (5).

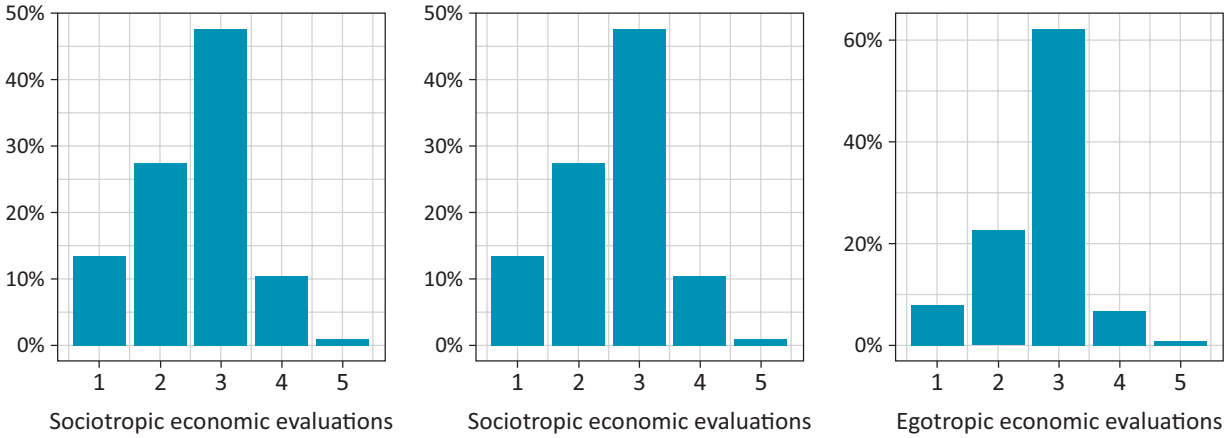

Figure A3. Distributions of economic evaluations: (from left to right) sociotropic economic evaluations (from the pre-referendum wave), sociotropic economic evaluations (from the post-referendum wave) and egotropic economic evaluations.

Table A1. Mediation analysis: model 1 replicates model (1) from Table 1 in the manuscript; model (2) regresses government approval on economic evaluations and control variables; and model (3) replicates model (4) from Table 1 in the manuscript. All models are OLS regression models (linear probability models in case of models (1), and (3)).

	Dependent variable:		
	Vote choice (Yes)	Government approval	Vote choice (Yes)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sociotropic economy	.20***	1.80***	.02**
	(.01)	(.05)	(.01)
Government approval			.10***
			(.003)
Referendum knowledge	.01*	−.05	.02***
	(.01)	(.04)	(.01)
Female	−.003	.03	−.01
	(.02)	(.09)	(.02)
Age	.003***	.01***	.002***
	(.001)	(.003)	(.0005)
University education	.04**	.32***	.01
	(.02)	(.09)	(.02)
Constant	−.31***	−1.36***	−.17***
	(.04)	(.19)	(.04)
Observations	2,682	2,943	2,656
R^2	.15	.34	.35

Notes: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

Table A2. Replication of models 1 to 5 from Table 1 in the manuscript. All models replace vote choice with vote intentions.

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote intention (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sociotropic economy	1.15***	.85***	1.12***	.09	.28***
	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)	(.10)	(.09)
Referendum Knowledge	−.44***	−.61***	−.46***	−.59***	−.62***
	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)
PID (Government)		2.62***			
		(.17)			
Vote (Government)			.92***		
			(.17)		
Government approval				.68***	
				(.03)	
Approval PM					.61***
					(.03)
Female	.23**	.22*	.20*	.22	.23
	(.11)	(.13)	(.12)	(.14)	(.14)
Age	.01*	−.003	.004	−.0001	−.01
	(.003)	(.004)	(.003)	(.004)	(.004)
University education	.04	−.12	.05	−.22	−.27*
	(.11)	(.13)	(.11)	(.14)	(.14)
Constant	−2.72***	−1.72***	−2.60***	−1.95***	−1.59***
	(.27)	(.29)	(.28)	(.32)	(.33)
Observations	1,768	1,768	1,720	1,766	1,745
Log Likelihood	−1,027.80	−862.99	−981.01	−724.78	−693.10

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A3. Replication of models 1 to 5 from Table 1 in the manuscript. All models replace sociotropic evaluations measured before the referendum with sociotropic evaluations measured after the referendum.

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote choice (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sociotropic economy(after referendum)	1.29***	.96***	1.27***	.54***	.71***
	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)
Referendum Knowledge	.03	−.04	.01	.11**	.11**
	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
PID (Government)		2.49***			
		(.13)			
Vote (Government)			1.09***		
			(.14)		
Government approval				.52***	
				(.03)	
Approval PM					.39***
					(.02)
Female	−.02	−.05	−.03	−.04	−.07
	(.09)	(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.11)
Age	.02***	.01***	.01***	.01***	.01***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
University education	.22**	.10	.17*	.07	.10
	(.09)	(.11)	(.10)	(.11)	(.11)
Constant	−4.91***	−4.01***	−4.79***	−5.04***	−4.74***
	(.25)	(.27)	(.26)	(.28)	(.28)
Observations	2,679	2,679	2,571	2,650	2,564
Log Likelihood	−1,474.46	−1,254.61	−1,384.37	−1,198.07	−1,182.76

Notes: **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A4. Models (1) to (5) replicate the models in Table 1 in the manuscript but replace a respondent's sociotropic economic evaluation with their evaluation of their own economic situation (egotropic).

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote Choice (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Egotropic economy	.95***	.70***	.91***	.35***	.50***
	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)
Referendum knowledge	.06	−.04	.05	.13***	.14***
	(.04)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)
PID (Government)		2.80***			
		(.13)			
Vote (Government)			1.20***		
			(.13)		
Government approval				.58***	
				(.02)	
Approval (PM)					.45***
					(.02)
Female	−.05	−.08	−.06	−.06	−.11
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.11)
Age	.01***	.01**	.01***	.01***	.01***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
University education	.28***	.13	.24***	.07	.11
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.11)	(.11)
Constant	−3.94***	−3.27***	−3.79***	−4.74***	−4.33***
	(.25)	(.28)	(.26)	(.30)	(.30)
Observations	2,689	2,689	2,579	2,658	2,572
Log Likelihood	−1,647.76	−1,327.45	−1,541.75	−1,217.66	−1,215.44

Notes: **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A5. Models (1) to (5) replicate the models in Table 1 in the manuscript but, additionally, includes a respondents' distance on the left–right scale to Matteo Renzi's Partito Democratico (PD). It is calculated as absolute distance, treating deviations on left and right equally because the referendum was opposed from parties the right and to the left of the PD. The position of the PD is based on a respondent's own assessment elicited in the survey.

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote choice (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sociotropic economy	1.00***	.61***	.78***	.08	.23***
	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)
Referendum knowledge	.07*	−.06	−.03	.08	.10*
	(.04)	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.06)
LR distance		−.21***	−.32***	−.23***	−.25***
	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	
PID (Government)		2.24***			
		(.14)			
Vote (Government)			.90***		
			(.15)		
Government approval				.53***	
				(.03)	
Approval PM					.39***
					(.02)
Female	−.01	−.13	−.07	−.11	−.15
	(.09)	(.12)	(.11)	(.12)	(.12)
Age	.02***	.01**	.01***	.01***	.01***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
University education	.20**	−.01	.05	.04	.06
	(.09)	(.12)	(.11)	(.12)	(.12)
Constant	−4.07***	−2.15***	−2.09***	−2.98***	−2.47***
	(.23)	(.31)	(.29)	(.32)	(.31)
Observations	2,682	2,168	2,109	2,164	2,121
Log Likelihood	−1,573.14	−1,026.03	−1,128.67	−983.83	−988.90

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A6. Models (1) to (5) replicate the models in Table 1 in the manuscript but includes a respondents' evaluation of the nation's as well as their own economic situation.

	Dependent variable:				
	Vote Choice (Yes)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sociotropic economy	.82***	.59***	.82***	.04	.22***
	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)
Egotropic economy	.52***	.41***	.49***	.33***	.41***
	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.09)	(.09)
Referendum knowledge	.05	−.04	.04	.13**	.13**
	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
PID (Government)		2.63***			
		(.13)			
Vote (Government)			1.11***		
			(.13)		
Government approval				.57***	
				(.03)	
Approval (PM)					.43***
					(.02)
Female	−.01	−.05	−.01	−.05	−.09
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.11)	(.11)
Age	.02***	.01***	.01***	.01***	.01***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
University education	.19**	.06	.16*	.07	.09
	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.11)	(.11)
Constant	−5.02***	−4.08***	−4.86***	−4.79***	−4.59***
	(.28)	(.30)	(.29)	(.31)	(.31)
Observations	2,675	2,675	2,565	2,649	2,563
Log Likelihood	−1,543.73	−1,282.53	−1,447.39	−1,211.59	−1,206.07

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A7. Model mirrors model 1 in Table 1 in the manuscript but interacts a respondent's economic evaluation with their party identification (PID), distinguishing between a PID with one of the governing parties, the base category, with no party or with one of the opposition parties. This model is functionally equivalent to the subsample analyses presented in Table 2 in the manuscript.

	Dependent variable:
	Vote
Sociotropic economy	.54***
	(.15)
Sociotropic economy PID (None)	.27
	(.19)
Sociotropic economy PID (Opposition)	.21
	(.18)
PID (None)	−2.69***
	(.56)
PID (Opposition)	−3.71***
	(.52)
Knowledge	−.07
	(.05)
Female	−.20*
	(.11)
Age	.01***
	(.003)
University education	.05
	(.11)
Constant	−.13
	(.48)
Observations	2,599
Log Likelihood	−1,193.78

Notes: *p < 0.1; ***p < 0.01.

Table A8. Models correlate a respondent's vote intention, instead of vote choice, with their evaluation of the national economy, separately for subgroups of respondents with a party identification with one of the governing parties (column 1), with no party identification (2) and with a party identification with one of the parties in opposition (3).

	Subgroups:		
	PID (Government)	PID (None)	PID (Opposition)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Sociotropic economy	1.08***	.75***	.78***
	(.20)	(.17)	(.10)
Knowledge	−.71***	−.49***	−.70***
	(.19)	(.15)	(.08)
Female	−.45	.14	.26
	(.31)	(.27)	(.17)
Age	.01*	−.001	−.01**
	(.01)	(.01)	(.005)
University education	−.40	−.37	.03
	(.29)	(.27)	(.17)
Constant	−.13	−.93	−1.43***
	(.77)	(.66)	(.39)
Observations	492	294	957
Log Likelihood	−162.51	−183.74	−469.21

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A9. Models correlate a respondent's vote choice, with their evaluation of the national economy (measured after the referendum), separately for subgroups of respondents with a party identification with one of the governing parties (column 1), with no party identification (2) and with a party identification with one of the parties in opposition (3).

	Subgroups:		
	PID (Government) (1)	PID (None) (2)	PID (Opposition) (3)
Sociotropic economy(after referendum)	1.00***	.87***	.97***
	(.16)	(.13)	(.10)
Knowledge	−.10	−.12	−.07
	(.13)	(.10)	(.08)
Female	−.37	−.33	−.08
	(.26)	(.20)	(.16)
Age	.04***	.01**	.0004
	(.01)	(.01)	(.005)
University education	.12	−.06	.19
	(.25)	(.20)	(.16)
Constant	−2.79***	−2.94***	−4.09***
	(.70)	(.53)	(.38)
Observations	647	556	1,394
Log Likelihood	−224.48	−344.83	−576.56

Notes: **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A10. Models correlate a respondent's vote choice, with their evaluation of their own economic situations instead of the national economy, separately for subgroups of respondents with a party identification with one of the governing parties (column 1), with no party identification (2) and with a party identification with one of the parties in opposition (3).

	Subgroups:		
	PID (Government) (1)	PID (None) (2)	PID (Opposition) (3)
Egotropic economy	.62***	.71***	.65***
	(.19)	(.15)	(.10)
Knowledge	−.03	−.08	−.11
	(.13)	(.10)	(.07)
Female	−.46*	−.39**	−.08
	(.25)	(.19)	(.15)
Age	.03***	.01	.001
	(.01)	(.01)	(.004)
University education	.11	−.03	.22
	(.24)	(.19)	(.15)
Constant	−1.29*	−2.39***	−3.23***
	(.71)	(.54)	(.39)
Observations	648	563	1,397
Log likelihood	−239.71	−360.55	−612.37

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A11. Models correlate a respondent's vote choice, with their evaluation of the national economy and that of their own economic situation, separately for subgroups of respondents with a party identification with one of the governing parties (column 1), with no party identification and with a party identification with one of the parties in opposition (3).

	Subgroups:		
	PID (Government) (1)	PID (None) (2)	PID (Opposition) (3)
Sociotropic economy	.41**	.72***	.59***
	(.16)	(.14)	(.10)
Egotropic economy	.42**	.43**	.34***
	(.21)	(.17)	(.12)
Knowledge	−.06	−.08	−.10
	(.13)	(.10)	(.07)
Female	−.44*	−.24	−.11
	(.25)	(.20)	(.15)
Age	.03***	.01*	.002
	(.01)	(.01)	(.004)
University education	.09	−.20	.20
	(.24)	(.20)	(.16)
Constant	−1.90**	−3.64***	−3.99***
	(.76)	(.62)	(.43)
Observations	647	557	1,391
Log likelihood	−236.56	−342.48	−592.36

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Table A12. Sociotropic economic evaluations (pre-referendum wave), sociotropic economic evaluations (post-referendum wave), egotropic economic evaluations (post-referendum wave only), in the rows, and vote choice, in the columns.

0	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**
0.86	0.14	0.88	0.12	0.87	0.13
0.78	0.22	0.82	0.18	0.80	0.20
0.53	0.47	0.59	0.41	0.54	0.46
0.25	0.75	0.16	0.84	0.38	0.62
0.32	0.68	0.26	0.74	0.29	0.71

Table A13. Number of false and correct predictions when always predicting the "Mode" ("No"), using a simple "Reduced" regression model without the economy variable, the "Full model" reported in the paper. For predictions based on the regression models a simple is applied stipulating that prediction above .5 are treated as 1 ("Yes") and prediction below .5 as 0 ("No").

	False	**Correct**
Mode	1046	1636
Reduced model	1032	1650
Full model	827	1855

Table A14. Reduced model, model (1) from Table 1 in the manuscript but without the economic evaluations, and the full model, model (1) from Table 1 in the manuscript with the economic evaluations.

	Dependent variable: Vote choice (Yes)	
	(1)	(2)
Sociotropic economy		1.00***
		(.06)
Referendum knowledg	.11***	.07*
	(.04)	(.04)
Government approval	−.08	−.01
	(.08)	(.09)
Female	.01***	.02***
	(.002)	(.003)
Age	.33***	.20**
	(.08)	(.09)
University education	−1.30***	−4.07***
	(.15)	(.23)
Observations	2,697	2,682
Log likelihood	−1,772.12	−1,573.14

Notes: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

Appendix II

Pre-referendum wave

S18 (sociotropic economic evaluation)

Original

Parliamo di economia. Secondo Lei la situazione economica in Italia nell'ultimo anno è:

1. Molto migliorata
2. Abbastanza migliorata
3. Rimasta eguale
4. Abbastanza peggiorata
5. Molto peggiorata
6. Non saprei

English

Speaking of the economy, do you think the economic situation in Italy in the last year:

1. Improved a lot
2. Improved somewhat
3. Remained equal
4. Got a little worse
5. Got much worse
6. I do not know

S20 (government approval)

Original

Come valuta l'operato del governo guidato da Matteo Renzi, in una scala da 0 a 10 (dove 0 = 'giudizio completamente negativo' e 10 = 'giudizio completamente positivo')?

1. 0 = giudizio completamente negativo
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10 = giudizio completamente positivo
12. Non saprei

English

How do you assess the work of the government led by Matteo Renzi, on a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 = 'completely negative view' and 10 = 'totally positive view')?

1. 0 = completely negative judgment
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4

6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10 = totally positive view
12. I do not know

S30 (Knowledge question 1)

Original

Qual era il quorum (soglia di partecipazione) necessario affinch´e il referendum fosse valido?

- La meta (50%) degli elettori
- I due terzi (66%) degli elettori
- Non c''e una soglia: il referendum sar'a valido qualunque sia il numero di votanti

English

What is the quorum (participation threshold) necessary for the referendum to be valid?

- Half (50%) of voters
- Two-thirds (66%) of voters
- There is no threshold: the referendum will be valid whatever the number of voters

S31 (Knowledge question 2)

Original

La riforma costituzionale prevede che:

1. I senatori non fossero piu' eletti direttamente dagli elettori
2. Una riduzione dei membri della Camera dei Deputati
3. L'abolizione del senato e un Parlamento con una sola Camera

English The constitutional reform provides that:

1. The senators are not elected directly by voters anymore
2. A reduction of the members of the Chamber of Deputies
3. The abolition of the Senate and a Parliament with a single Chamber

S32 (Knowledge question 3)

Original La riforma costituzionale prevede di:

1. Abolire il CNEL
2. Abolire il MIUR
3. Abolire la Cassa Depositi e Prestiti

English

The constitutional reform provides that:

1. Abolition of the CNEL
2. Abolition of the Ministry of Education
3. Abolition of the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti

Post-referendum wave

D1 (sociotropic economic evaluation)

Original

Parliamo di economia. Secondo Lei la situazione economica in Italia nell'ultimo anno è:

1. Molto migliorata
2. Abbastanza migliorata
3. Rimasta eguale
4. Abbastanza peggiorata
5. Molto peggiorata
6. Non saprei

English

Speaking of the economy, do you think the economic situation in Italy in the last year:

1. improved a lot
2. improved somewhat
3. remained equal
4. got a little worse
5. got much worse
6. I do not know

D2 (egotropic economic evaluation)

Original

La situazione economica della sua famiglia 'e:

1. Molto migliorata
2. Abbastanza migliorata
3. Rimasta eguale
4. Abbastanza peggiorata
5. Molto peggiorata
6. Non saprei

English

The economic situation of your family:

1. improved a lot
2. improved somewhat
3. remained equal
4. got a little worse
5. got much worse
6. I do not know

D9 (left-right self-placement)

Original

Molta gente quando parla di politica usa i termini 'sinistr'a e 'destr'a. Qui sotto 'e riportata una fila di caselle che vanno da sinistra a destra. Pensando alle sue opinioni politiche, Lei in quale casella si collocherebbe?

1. Sinistra

2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10. Destra
11. Non saprei
12. Preferisco non colocarmi

English

Many people when talking about politics use the words 'left and right'. Below is a row of boxes that go from left to right. Thinking about your political opinions, in which box would you place?

1. Left
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10. Right
11. I don't know
12. I prefer to not say

D10 (left–right placement of parties)

Original

Pensando invece ai partiti politici, dove collocherebbe ognuno dei seguenti? Utilizzi sempre le stessa fila di caselle che va da sinistra a destra. Se non conosce il partito o non sa che risposta dare, indichi 'Non conosco il partit'o' o 'Non saprei.'

1. Partito Democratico
2. Forza Italia
3. Movimento 5 Stelle
4. Lega Nord
5. Nuovo Centrodestra
6. Fratelli d'Italia
7. Sinistra Italiana Opzioni di risposta:

1. Sinistra
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10. Destra
11. Non conosco il partito
12. Non saprei

Thinking instead of political parties, where would you put each of the following? Always use the same row of boxes that goes from left to right. If you do not know the party or do not know what answer to give, indicate ‘I do not know the party’ or ‘I do not know.’

1. Partito Democratico
2. Forza Italia
3. Movimento 5 Stelle
4. Lega Nord
5. Nuovo Centrodestra
6. Fratelli d’Italia
7. Sinistra Italiana

1. Left
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10. Right
11. I don’t know the party
12. I don’t know

COGITATIO

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Article

Economic Voting in EU Referendums: Sociotropic versus Egocentric Voting in the Lisbon Treaty Plebiscites in Ireland

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Abstract
Economic voting is one of the most studied aspects of electoral behaviour. The dominant view is that sociotropic economic considerations are more important to voters in national elections. However, other research suggests that utilitarian motivations are key to understanding support for the EU. An EU integration referendum offers the opportunity to explore whether and when sociotropic or utilitarian motivations are more important in determining vote choice. The unusual combination of two successive referendums in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty, either side of the Global Financial Crisis, provides the ideal opportunity to test these assumptions. Using data from two post-referendum surveys, we demonstrate that the economy mattered in both referendums but that different economic motivations drove vote choice in each, with sociotropic motivations more critical as a result of the Global Financial Crisis. Our study has implications for economic voting and referendums and demonstrates that context is crucial in determining a voter's economic motivations in a plebiscite.

Keywords
economic voting; egocentric voting; financial crisis; Ireland; Lisbon Treaty; referendum; sociotropic voting

Issue
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1. Introduction

The use of plebiscites to decide matters of public policy in established democracies, even in states with a tradition of representative democracy, has been growing (Bjørklund, 2009; LeDuc, 2002b) to such an extent that 'one is tempted to say that we live in the age of referendums' (Qvortrup, 2018, p. 7). Their increased use has stimulated research into understanding what motivates voters to vote in a particular way in plebiscites. Multiple explanations have emerged. Second-order theories suggest their outcome in large part hinge on an incumbent government's popularity (Franklin, 2002; Franklin, Marsh, & Wleizen, 1994; van der Eijk, Franklin, & Marsh, 1996). Other research highlights the importance of referendum campaigns (Darcy & Laver, 1990; Pammett & LeDuc, 2001; Quinlan, 2012), knowledge among voters of the plebiscite issue and where political elites stand on the issue (Elkink & Sinnott, 2015; Hobolt, 2005, 2009) and voter attitudes on particular issues, for example, identity, or immigration, or in EU referendums sentiments regarding European integration (Clarke, Goodwin, & Whiteley, 2017; Garry, Marsh, & Sinnott, 2005; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2002; Svensson, 2002). Another school of thought focuses on utilitarian benefits or costs expected to accrue from vot-

ing in a particular way in a referendum (Clarke et al., 2017; Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016; Nadeau, Martin, & Blais, 1999). Our contribution fits into this tradition as we dissect the impact of different economic motivations on vote choice in two Irish EU referendums on the same issue with the same government in situ but held in two dramatically different contexts.

Our interest lies in disentangling the different economic motivations, namely sociotropic versus egocentric utility. Our starting point is the extensive literature that has developed in the past two decades highlighting 'winners' from 'losers' of globalization (Gabel, 1998b; Gabel & Whitten, 1997; Kriesi et al., 2008; Teney, Lacewell, & De Wilde, 2014). Cross-cutting traditional economic left-right and conservative-liberal dimensions of political division, 'winners' include middle-class left-wing voters with cosmopolitan values and liberal right-wing voters favouring international liberalization and free trade. Conversely, losers include working-class voters with both traditional left-wing values and those resorting to a stronger anti-immigration, more right-wing perspective (Teney et al., 2014). Studies of EU plebiscites and EU integration have investigated this research strand empirically by using both objective proxies for 'winner' and 'loser' status (Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Rose & Borz, 2016) and using subjective self-perception measures of an individual's personal economic situation (e.g., Clarke et al., 2017; Gabel & Whitten, 1997). While the evidence for utilitarian motivations shaping attitudes to European integration is plentiful, there is much less support for the utilitarian logic in shaping vote choice in elections. From the economic voting perspective, sociotropic motivations—an altruistic drive—are a significantly more potent driver of the voter vis-à-vis utilitarian motivations (Anderson, 2000; Kiewiet & Lewis-Beck, 2011; Kinder & Kiewiet, 1979; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2013). Nonetheless, the impact of sociotropic motivations on support for European integration have been mixed (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Gomez, 2015; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016). Hence, we are confronted with a puzzle that different economic motivations appear to be more important in shaping towards EU integration compared to the electoral arena. An EU integration referendum brings both these dimensions together and thus our interest lies in disentangling which is more important in driving the vote.

However, the role of context is also important. A plethora of literature has implied that the impact of economic motivations on the vote varies cross-nationally and depends on economic circumstances. Moreover, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) brought economics to the forefront of the political agenda and research has shown that economics not only became more salient but also a significant predictor of vote choice in elections (Dassonneville & Lewis-Beck, 2014; Singer, 2011; Talving, 2017). Its impact on referendum voting behaviour is much less known. Additionally, the GFC has sparked an increase in the literature on economic motivations and support for the European project (Bartkowska & Tiemann, 2015; Gomez, 2015; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016). Yet, most of this research has not been from the perspective of the electoral arena. Literature exists implying that given this strength, variations in different motivations underlying economic voting—egocentric or sociotropic, utilitarian or altruistic—will be more starkly separable (Bartkowska & Tiemann, 2015). In sum, our article's mission is to explore not only whether utilitarian or altruistic motives shape vote choice in referendums but also to explore whether differing economic contexts (pre- and post-GFC) shape voters' motivations in EU referendums.

Our study relies on data from two post-referendum surveys in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty. Ireland offers an ideal testing ground for testing our assumptions regarding voting behaviour in EU plebiscites as it is a political imperative, if not a constitutional requirement, to hold a referendum on matters related to EU integration (Sinnott, 2005). As a result, Ireland has had more EU referendums than any other member state. The combination of two referendums in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty either side of the onset of the GFC provides a unique opportunity to explore the impact of the economy in EU referendums where the same Treaty is being voted upon, in the same country, with the same government in situ, but crucially where the economic context between the two plebiscites is dramatically different. At the time of the first vote in June 2008, there appeared to be high confidence in Ireland's economic position with unemployment low, Ireland's fiscal position apparently sound, and voter confidence in the economy mostly positive. However, by the time of the second referendum in October 2009, the full impact of the GFC on Ireland was becoming apparent (Quinlan, 2012). A focus on EU referendums is also timely given their global implications beyond the state and, more recently, in light of Brexit.

We show that voters' economic motivations were different between 2008 and 2009. In 2008, voters were motivated by both utilitarian and sociotropic concerns, being more likely to have voted 'yes' when they felt their personal finances were good, when it was in their sociodemographic economic determined interests and if they felt the Treaty was good for Ireland's economy more generally. However, in 2009, the situation changed. While objective measures of the utilitarian model, such as social class and education, continued to impact voting behaviour, offering support to the theory, we find no evidence that subjective utilitarian measures mattered in 2009 after the onset of the GFC. Rather, voters focused on the national picture, with sociotropic concerns key, and voters substantially more likely to vote 'yes' in the expectation of an improvement in Ireland's economic prospects by doing so. Our results imply that sociotropic motivations are consistently important in shaping the vote in EU referendums despite the context, whereas the importance of utilitarian motives varies more so depending on the context.

Our article proceeds as follows: first, we outline our hypotheses within the literature on economic voting, mo-

tivators of support for EU integration and voting in EU referendums. To put the analysis in context, we then provide a summary of the political and economic landscape in which the referendums took place, followed by our data and empirical analysis and discussion.

2. Voters' Economic Motivations in Referendums

2.1. Economic Voting in Referendums: State of the Art

'It's the economy, stupid!' the phrase coined by Bill Clinton's campaign team during his presidential run of 1992 captures the importance that economic assessments can have on voter behaviour. Numerous studies have confirmed its impact in various types of elections (Lewis-Beck, 1988; Lewis-Beck, Nadeau, & Elias, 2008; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2013; Okolikj & Quinlan, 2016). In studies of referendums, economics has been found to be influential in high stakes plebiscites such as those dealing with constitutional change and succession in Canada and Scotland (Clarke, Kornberg, & Stewart, 2004; Curtice, 2014; Nadeau et al., 1999). In EU referendums, voters' economic considerations were especially important in the swathe of accession referendums in the early 2000s (Doyle & Fidirmuc, 2006; Tverdova & Anderson, 2004) and in votes on specific EU treaties or issues (Aylott, 2005; Jupille & Leblang, 2007) and more recently in accounting for vote choice in Britain's plebiscite on exiting the EU (Clarke et al., 2017). However, much of the existing research on EU referendums has been dominated by the 'second-order' (Franklin, 2002; Franklin et al., 1994) and 'issue-voting' models (Garry et al., 2005; Svensson, 2002), with the economy either gaining less attention, or when it has been the focus, being inter-linked with government popularity and thus subsumed under second-order explanations.[1] There is also cause to assume that the effect of the economy on support for EU integration increased more generally given the extent of economic control that has been delegated to the EU, especially for Eurozone countries. In sum, there is strong reason to assume that economics, be it at the macro or the individual level, will shape vote choice in EU referendums.

Two things are less clear, however. First, what economic motivations drive vote choice in EU plebiscites? On the one hand, the literature on European integration strongly highlights the role of utilitarian economic considerations, that is a focus on self-interest, in determining support for the EU (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Gomez, 2015; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016), thus implying that we might expect this to translate into egocentric motivations determining the vote. However, we are faced with a paradox. While the aforementioned literature shows a correlation between egocentric motivations and support for the EU, there has been much less empirical support found for egocentric voting in national elections (Kiewiet, 1983; Lewis-Beck, 1988; Lewis-Beck, Stubager, & Nadeau, 2013), at least in comparison to the sociotropic model, where voters take a wider approach and focus on national level circumstances as opposed to personal ones.[2] Hence, our contribution's first objective is to tease out the impacts of these different motivations on vote choice in EU referendums. Second, what is the role of context in conditioning the economic motivations of the voter in a referendum? A long tradition of research in the economic voting field has shown that context is crucial in determining how the economy shapes the vote from institutional configurations to the economic conditions voters are faced with (Anderson, 2000; Okolikj & Quinlan, 2016; Powell & Whitten, 1993). And while the GFC has spawned several studies of the economy's impact on vote and support for the EU, there has been scant exploration of how the economic conditions of the GFC influenced referendum voting (an exception is Clarke et al., 2017, and the Brexit referendum) or specifically how it conditioned voter economic motivations. Consequently, our second objective is to test whether economic voting calculus altered because of the GFC. Below, we develop our expectations.

2.2. Egocentric and Sociotropic Economic Motivations in EU Referendums and the Role of Context

As we mentioned above, the literature on economic voting has highlighted two different motivations: egocentric and sociotropic. To recapitulate the egocentric voting premise: it is a self-interested utilitarian response to the evaluation of the economy, where the voter looks primarily at his or her own economic situation (Melzer & Richard, 1981; Nannestad & Paldam, 1995, 1997). While the support for the hypothesis in the economic voting literature is minimal, in the context of support for EU integration the egocentric model has been especially successful in accounting for attitudes to the EU. The egocentric premise, at least regarding support for integration, can be looked at from two standpoints. The first is by exploring the objective socio-demographic characteristics of voters as proxy tests regarding their vulnerability to globalization. Advanced primarily by Gabel (1998a, 1998b), this approach posits that the economic advantages or disadvantages of EU integration will be different for particular social groups. For example, the benefits of the types of economic policies being advanced by the EU are more likely to be reaped by a young highly educated middle class professional who is in a better po-

[1] In addition to the second-order voting model, one might also expect party cues to play an important role in these referendums (cf. Hicks, Milner, & Tingley, 2014). However, in the Irish case, a consensus on the EU has effectively existed between the main political parties, who were all broadly supportive of the notion of European integration. Consequently, Europe has not been a pivotal issue in Irish politics and receives little attention from the main parties outside EU referendums. This de facto 'elite withdrawal', whether by accident or design, has been pointed out by many scholars exploring Irish referendum voting behaviour (Darcy & Laver, 1990; O'Mahony, 2009; Quinlan, 2012) and thus we would not expect partisan cues to be a strong feature in Irish referendums. We do investigate party cues as a robustness check in the Appendix in Table A2.

[2] Although for alternative evidence see Nannestad and Paldam (1997).

sition to take advantage of market liberalization and the opportunities to travel, study abroad, etcetera, than by a middle-aged, low skilled labourer, who faces stronger employment competition from cheaper labour in new member states (Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Gabel & Palmer, 1995). Some scholars go so far as to argue that the onset of globalization has resulted in a new dimension of political contestation taking prominence in domestic politics of several states, with attitudes towards the EU, which by its very nature is a global institution committed to a free-market agenda, being a critical point of difference between political actors, cross-cutting traditional cleavages (Kriesi et al., 2008; Teney et al., 2014).

As the Lisbon referendums in Ireland were integrationist, we might assume that the expectations advanced by Gabel regarding general support for the EU translate into how certain groups behave at the ballot box. To test the Gabel egocentric model, we look at the sociodemographic groups that are most likely to be the 'losers' from globalization. Accordingly, we might expect citizens who are working-class, individuals towards the bottom of the income scale, older voters and less educated voters, both of whom are less likely to be beneficiaries of economic globalization, being less likely to support further integration efforts.

Consequently, we posit that:

Hypothesis 1a: Middle-class voters will have a greater likelihood of voting 'yes' compared with working-class voters in the Lisbon referendums.

Hypothesis 1b: Highly educated voters will have a greater likelihood of voting 'yes' compared with less educated voters in the Lisbon referendums.

Hypothesis 1c: Younger voters will have a greater likelihood of voting 'yes' compared with older voters in the Lisbon referendums.

Testing utilitarian economic motivations does not end there. Our second means of doing so is the more conventional test of egocentric motivations, at least in the economic voting literature. This is where we explore how individuals perceive EU integration has influenced their personal financial situation. The idea is that voters who believe further integration or membership of the EU has been beneficial to them will be more amenable to further European integration. Consequently, in terms of referendum voting, we should see this translate into voting for the integrationist position. In our analysis, we take a retrospective evaluation of the personal economic situation as a proxy measure for this perception (see also Tucker, Pacek, & Berinsky, 2002).

Hypothesis 2: Voters who are satisfied with their personal financial situation compared with voters who are dissatisfied will have a greater likelihood of voting 'yes' in the Lisbon referendums.

The most prominent economic evaluations in shaping vote choice have been sociotropic (e.g., Anderson, 2000; Lewis-Beck, 1988; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000, 2013). In this scenario, voters do not focus on personal circumstances but rather the economic benefits or losses that accrue to the national economy. In the context of an EU referendum, this would be economic benefits that accrue to the country as a consequence of EU integration. For example, voters may decide to vote 'yes' on the basis that support for the Treaty will result in more jobs coming to Ireland. In fact, one could argue that a panic factor is engendered by a crisis and that this results in individuals who had a severe anxiety about their economic situation becoming more likely to support integration. If this is the case, respondents who feel their personal economic situation is bad or segments of the population such as working-class voters are likely to support further integration in times of crisis, but it will also translate into a more general concern about the way the economy is managed and thus to sociotropic economic voting behaviour.

Hypothesis 3: Voters who believe Ireland's economic situation will improve as a consequence of further integration will have a greater likelihood of voting 'yes' in the Lisbon referendums.

All of our above suppositions have been focusing on the first research question concerning how we expect economic motivations to play out in referendum voting. However, our second question assumes context plays a role too. There is good cause to suspect that motivations could be conditional on the context voters face—both the direction and the magnitude of the effect. Between the two Lisbon referendums in Ireland, there was a substantial change in the economic conditions voters were faced with (see Section 3 for details). How might this play into referendum voting? Our supposition is that in an economic crisis, the economy takes on a greater saliency as information about the economy becomes more accessible to voters (Singer, 2011), the media gives greater coverage to the issue (Soroka, 2006), and voters tend to be particularly responsive to negative economic information (Dassonneville & Lewis-Beck, 2014). Similarly, we might expect the referendum campaign in a time of economic crisis to be different to that of a campaign fought in a period of relative economic calm, with more focus on the national economy. As campaigns have been shown to be important in referendums in particular (LeDuc, 2002a), especially those where the partisan configuration is unconventional (LeDuc, 2015), we can expect this to significantly affect voter attitudes. Hence, with the onset of the GFC and the sense of 'panic' instilled on voters through this rhetoric, we expect sociotropic evaluations to be more prominent in determining the vote in 2009 than in times of prosperity, in the 2008 referendum. Hence, we assume that:

Hypothesis 4: Sociotropic economic motivations compared with egocentric economic motivations will be stronger and thus have a greater impact on the likelihood of voting 'yes' in the 2009 Lisbon referendum.

3. The Economic Context and the Two Lisbon Referendum Campaigns in Ireland

As one of our contributions focuses on the impact of economic conditions on voters' economic motivations, some context regarding Ireland and the two referendums is warranted. The first referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland was held in June 2008, where Irish voters rejected it by a margin of 53–47% (for more on the 2008 referendum, see Quinlan, 2009). While several factors contributed to this rejection (Sinnott, Elkink, O'Rourke, & McBride,2009; Quinlan, 2009, for a summary) our interest is in the economic conditions voters were confronted with at the time of this first vote. At face value, the Irish economy appeared to be doing well: unemployment was at 6%, below the EU average, economic growth for 2008 was still being forecast, and the nation's fiscal position appeared to be steady. Irish voters also seemed to be blissfully unaware of the economic tsunami that would hit the country later in 2008, with a Millward Brown/IMS opinion poll finding that 69% of Irish people described their economic situation as 'good' at the time of the 2008 vote (Quinlan, 2009). While the economy did feature as an issue in the first referendum campaign, the argument focused on the impact of the Treaty on Ireland's tax policy (Quinlan, 2009, p. 110). In sum, the 2008 referendum was held in an atmosphere where economic conditions, at least on the surface, appeared to be positive, and where the economy, particularly from a sociotropic perspective was not centre stage during the campaign.

However, the period between the first plebiscite and the second Lisbon referendum in October 2009 saw Ireland's economic landscape radically change, as the country endured its biggest economic downturn in its history. The GFC had serious implications for Ireland, due to the small and open nature of its economy. In autumn 2008 the Irish economy slid into recession for the first time since 1983 as the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States had global implications for banks and their ability to lend. This impact was further exacerbated because the Irish economy had become grossly over-reliant on the property and construction sectors during the economic boom years of the Celtic Tiger. Ireland's banks had engaged in large-scale property-related lending resulting in their balance sheets growing disproportionally large relative to the size of the economy. Consequently, Irish banks were hit particularly badly as the GFC took root. In September 2008, on the verge of insolvency, the government stepped in and guaranteed all Irish bank liabilities and recapitalised them using public funds. The Fianna Fail/Green government also controversially established the National Assets Management Agency, essentially a 'bad bank' which acquired property development loans from the banks in return for government debt bonds, all with the aim of restoring confidence to a banking system that seriously lacked credibility. All of this put a significant strain on Ireland's finances, already suffering from declining revenues with the collapse of the housing and construction booms. Between the two referendums, unemployment rose sharply, from 6 to 13%, and Ireland's debt to GDP ratio increased substantially (Central Statistics Office, 2010a, 2010b). The government responded by introducing two austere budgets within 6 months, which saw sharp tax rises and substantial cuts in public expenditure. In the 17-month period between the first and second referendums, the country's economic decline was unprecedented as GDP fell by between 11 and 12% in the first three quarters of 2009 (Central Statistics Office, 2010a). Voter confidence in the economy also tanked (Sinnott & Elkink, 2010), while government popularity plummeted, with the ruling coalition parties, Fianna Fail and the Green suffering an electoral shellacking in the June 2009 European and local government elections (Quinlan, 2010).

These changed economic circumstances saw the second referendum campaign dominated by the economy (for more detail on the second referendum, see Quinlan, 2012). Those advocating a 'yes' vote linked Ireland's future economic success to membership of the EU, making economic recovery and employment central planks of their campaign. The 'no' side countered that supporters of the Treaty were playing on peoples' economic anxieties and urged voters to use the referendum as an opportunity to punish the government for their handling of the economy. Consequently, the economy was far more central to the 2009 referendum than to the 2008 campaign.

While the economic conditions represented the most seismic changes between the two referendums, two other conditions merit mention. The first was the procurement by the Irish government of legal guarantees in June 2009 stating the Lisbon Treaty in no way affected Irish tax policy or the country's neutrality, and abortion policy, with concern over these issues in the first vote having increased the likelihood of people voting 'no' (Sinnott et al., 2009). Hence, these guarantees reduced the saliency of these issues in the second referendum. Second, the campaigns waged by protagonists on both sides changed considerably. While the 'yes' campaign in the first referendum was of poor quality (Quinlan, 2012, p. 143), in 2009 it was the more active and cohesive of the two campaigns. It received the support of the influential Irish Farming Association (IFA) early on in the campaign, (whereas in 2008 the IFA had been a late convert to the 'yes' side), and the country's largest trade union, Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union, which had remained neutral in 2008. Meanwhile, the 'no' side's main protagonist in the 2008 plebiscite, Libertas, had lost much of its political impetus by 2009 after its defeat in the 2009 European elections (Quinlan, 2012, p. 145).

In sum, while it is evident that the legal guarantees and the campaigns represent two additional changed conditions between Lisbon I and Lisbon II, the primary contextual difference between 2008 and 2009 was that voters faced dramatically different economic conditions. Indeed, it could be argued that the more intense campaigning on the part of the 'yes' side, including the support of the unions and the farmers, was driven by these circumstances. We posit that the shift in economic conditions were the starkest and most important change. Moreover, despite the legal guarantees provided to the Irish government, we should not lose sight that voters voted upon the exact same Treaty in both plebiscites with not one word of the Lisbon Treaty altered because of the first rejection.

4. Research Strategy

4.1. Data

Our data comes from two post-referendum surveys: the first fielded between 24 and 31 July 2008, two weeks after the June 2008 vote, and the second between 20 and 23 November 2009, six weeks after the October 2009 plebiscite. These data were commissioned by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with an independent polling company, Millward Brown Lansdowne. The face-to-face surveys had sample sizes of 2,101 and 1,002 respondents, respectively, and were designed to be representative of all persons eligible to vote. Quotas were set according to the 2006 Irish census based on region, sex, age, and socio-economic group.

4.2. Modelling Strategy and Variable Operationalization

It is common in the analysis of referendums to investigate the decision to vote or abstain and whether the individual voted 'yes' or 'no' separately. While we perform these tests for robustness, our analysis is based on an integration of these two steps in one logistic model. We employ this strategy because of the inherent interdependence between the two behaviours. The decision whether or not to vote can be expected to be influenced by how strongly a voter feels about the referendum issue, such that the utility attached to a 'yes' or 'no' outcome not only influences vote choice, but also turnout. Our model follows that of Sattler and Urpelainen (2012), which is the referendum equivalent to the two-candidate election model developed in Sanders (1998). In these models, a latent utility of a 'yes' vote is interpreted in a number of different, compatible ways: a) a positive value indicates a propensity to vote 'yes'; b) a negative value indicates a propensity to vote 'no'; c) the absolute value indicates how strongly one feels about this preference; and d) the stronger one's preference, the more likely one is to vote despite the cost of doing so.[3] This model implies that voters consider the utilities of a 'yes' or 'no' prior to their decision whether or not to participate in the referendum: those with a strong opinion regarding the referendum outcome will be more likely to vote. Some explanations of turnout, such as those referring to a sense of duty to vote or levels of apathy towards the political system, precede the vote choice decision such that those who do not feel compelled to vote will also not evaluate the relative utilities of either vote outcome. Our modelling approach assumes that these factors capture the cost component of the model.

Turning to the survey questions and operationalizations of our variables, our sociotropic measure is based on a question that looks at people's expectations regarding Ireland's economic prospects given a 'yes' vote. Respondents were asked in 2008: '*Do you think that, as a result of the 'NO' vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum, Ireland's economic prospects have been improved or disimproved or remain unchanged?*', and in 2009: '*Do you think that, as a result of the 'YES' vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum, Ireland's economic prospects have been improved or disimproved or remain unchanged?*' This diverges somewhat from the traditional sociotropic economy question as the formulation of the question assumes a more conscious linkage in the respondent's mind between the vote and the economic consequences of the Treaty, which might result in the sociotropic effect being underestimated, as it is conceivable that citizens might unconsciously vote based on general expectations not implicitly tied up with the Treaty. Given the finding by Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck (2014) that a negative change in the economy has a much stronger effect on sociotropic voting than a positive change in the economy, we separately include a dummy variable for expecting improved economic prospects due to a 'yes' vote and one for expecting worsened economic prospects.

We tap utilitarian economic voting in two different ways. The first is the conventional egocentric measure which asks respondents to evaluate their personal economic situation. We capture this through respondents' answer to the following question: '*What about your own economic situation these days? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?*' Again, this question slightly deviates from the traditional measure which is more explicitly retrospective or prospective and usually imposes a time limit. Hence, the asymmetry between the sociotropic and egocentric measure and the Treaty being voted upon needs to be considered a caveat to our findings. Moreover, we recognize that some question whether voter perceptions of economic circumstances, be they egocentric or sociotropic, are heavily contaminated by partisan bias (Evans & Anderson, 2006; Wlezien, Franklin, & Twiggs, 1997). However, persuasive evidence exists showing economics has a direct effect on vote, and if anything, cross-sectional analysis may suppress the true impact of economic voting (Fraile & Lewis-Beck, 2014; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). In any event, our second measures, in the vein of Gabel (1998a, 1998b),

[3] See Sattler and Urpelainen (2012) for the technical details and the resulting log-likelihood function.

circumvent the endogeneity critique and capture the behaviour of various socio-demographic groups (class, education, and age) to assess if utilitarian motivations are being channelled through an individual's socio-economic circumstances. While our focus is on the economy, we include covariates reflecting several alternative theoretical explanations of vote choice in EU referendums.[4]

5. Results

Table 1 presents the results for Hypotheses 1a–c based on demographic variables where attitudinal variables would be inappropriate controls. Based on these measures it is clear that the utilitarian argument regarding different groups favouring EU integration holds across both Lisbon referendums. Working class voters are significantly less likely to vote 'yes' than middle class voters (H1a)—although the classification between 'unskilled' and 'skilled' does not appear to make much difference. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to vote 'yes' (H 1b).[5] These effects persist with similar magnitude across the two referendums, despite the onset of the GFC. However, the effect on the different age groups is contrary to that expected by the 'winners' and 'losers' hypothesis (H 1c). Instead, older voters were more likely to vote 'yes' than younger voters.

Table 1. Logistic random utility regressions (Sattler & Urpelainen, 2012) explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland, based on demographic variables.

	2008				2009			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Female		−0.12		−0.12		−0.17		−0.16
		(0.08)		(0.08)		(0.12)		(0.12)
Age 18–24	1.06**	−0.22	1.22**	−0.38**	0.95**	−0.43*	1.10**	−0.65**
	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.23)	(0.26)
Age 25–34	0.88**	−0.35**	0.99**	−0.46**	0.41*	−0.36	0.52**	−0.51**
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Age 35–49	0.45**	−0.16	0.52**	−0.24	−0.06	−0.42**	0.03	−0.54**
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.22)
Age 50–64	0.13	−0.16	0.17	−0.20	−0.30	−0.18	−0.25	−0.25
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.23)
Lower middle class	0.15	−0.33**	0.09	−0.27**	−0.25	−0.49**	−0.27	−0.44*
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Skilled working class	0.33**	−0.81**	0.17	−0.65**	0.08	−0.99**	−0.04	−0.78**
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.24)
Unskilled working class	0.55**	−0.86**	0.38**	−0.70**	0.11	−0.99**	−0.05	−0.76**
	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.24)
Farmer	−0.02	0.23	−0.16	−0.07	−0.34	−0.29	−0.46	−0.11
	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.37)	(0.34)
Secondary education			−0.08	0.09			−0.22	0.17
			(0.14)	(0.17)			(0.22)	(0.25)
Third level education			−0.38**	0.35*			−0.46*	0.57**
			(0.15)	(0.19)			(0.26)	(0.28)
Intercept	−1.06**	0.50**	−0.84**	0.28	−0.79**	1.53**	−0.51*	1.20**
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.31)	(0.33)
N	2098		2098		997		997	
AIC	4390.1		4378.0		2016.0		2011.3	

Notes: * $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors in parentheses. Because of high collinearity between age, class, and education, models are estimated with and without education included. Cost is modelled with a dummy for abstention as dependent variable; utility with a dummy variable for a 'yes' vote as dependent variable.

[4] Full details of the operationalizations of our variables and summary statistics are detailed in the Appendix.

[5] Due to high multicollinearity when age, class, and education are all three included, we present separate models with and without the education variable. For Model 2, the highest Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is 4.65, while for Model 1 this is reduced to 2.27; for Model 4 the highest VIF is 5.01, reduced to 2.26 in Model 3. Typically used threshold values for multicollinearity are VIF scores of 4, 6, or 10, and therefore there is no real concern with high multicollinearity in our models (O'Brien, 2007). For the more extensive specification, models 5-8, education is always included, since the demographics are mere control variables and therefore high multicollinearity among them is not a concern. The highest observed VIF score across all models is 5.25, for education.

Table 2 provides the tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3. Here demographic variables are included as controls, alongside other covariates related to government satisfaction and political knowledge, and attitudes towards identity and immigration. We present models with and without attitudinal control variables. In models 5 and 6, which relate to the 2008 referendum and before the GFC took root, we see an effect in line with H2. We observe that a negative evaluation of the voter's personal economic situation led voters to be more likely to reject the Treaty. However, for 2009 (i.e., post the shock of the GFC), this variable, presented in models 7 and 8, has a statistically insignificant, positive effect. This is an important shift—voters' personal economic security shaped vote choice in 2008 when the economic climate was more positive, whereas in 2009, these egocentric considerations were much less relevant when the crisis was apparent. It supports the proposition that context conditions the economic vote and we can deduce support that the GFC resulted in a shift in economic calculus among voters.

In line with H3, voters were strongly inclined to vote 'yes' by sociotropic utility—i.e., by the perception that

Table 2. Logistic random utility regressions (Sattler & Urpelainen, 2012) explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland.

	2008				**2009**			
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Female		−0.06		−0.04		−0.09		−0.19
		(0.10)		(0.10)		(0.15)		(0.17)
Age 18–24	0.97**	−0.39*	0.93**	−0.35	0.66**	−0.41	0.55**	−0.71*
	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.37)
Age 25–34	0.96**	−0.63**	0.90**	−0.60**	0.35	−0.50*	0.28	−0.40
	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Age 35–49	0.54**	−0.29*	0.53**	−0.26	0.09	−0.34	0.01	−0.38
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.30)
Age 50–64	0.19	−0.23	0.22	−0.17	−0.06	−0.30	−0.17	−0.44
	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.29)	(0.32)
Lower middle class	−0.13	−0.10	−0.08	−0.07	−0.46*	−0.20	−0.47*	−0.09
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.30)
Skilled working class	−0.16	−0.41**	−0.14	−0.33*	−0.23	−0.44	0.23	−0.39
	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.33)
Unskilled working class	−0.03	−0.37*	−0.02	−0.28	−0.36	−0.21	−0.39	−0.17
	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.25)	(0.30)	(0.27)	(0.33)
Farmer	−0.32*	−0.05	−0.24	0.07	−0.45	−0.07	−0.96*	0.41
	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.37)	(0.42)	(0.52)	(0.49)
Secondary education	0.09	0.03	0.16	−0.06	−0.21	0.02	−0.15	−0.08
	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.31)	(0.28)	(0.36)
Third level education	0.05	0.10	0.13	−0.03	−0.25	0.38	−0.11	−0.01
	(0.16)	(0.24)	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.28)	(0.35)	(0.32)	(0.40)
Objective knowl. EU	−0.35**	0.31**	−0.29**	0.19	−0.08	0.32*	0.10	0.10
	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.19)
Subjective knowl. EU	−0.18*	0.02	−0.15*	−0.06	−0.31*	0.41*	−0.16	0.26
	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.24)
Subjective knowl. Treaty	−1.14**	0.46**	−1.12**	0.51**	−0.98**	−0.30	−1.15**	−0.31
	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.24)
Own econ. situation bad		−0.38**		−0.31**		0.09		0.16
		(0.12)		(0.12)		(0.16)		(0.18)
Econ. prosp. improved		−0.44**		−0.47**		1.82**		1.53**
		(0.20)		(0.21)		(0.18)		(0.20)
Econ. prosp. disimproved		0.75**		0.73**		−0.94**		−0.41
		(0.11)		(0.11)		(0.26)		(0.30)
Dissatisfaction government	0.20**	−0.65**	0.16**	−0.55**	−0.26	−0.47*	−0.13	−0.36
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.21)	(0.27)

Table 2. (Cont.) Logistic random utility regressions (Sattler & Urpelainen, 2012) explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland.

	2008				2009			
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Fine Gael	0.08	−0.28*	0.06	−0.30*	−0.02	−0.34	−0.15	−0.25
	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.28)
Sinn Fein	0.26	−1.08**	0.27	−0.92**	0.25	−0.96**	−0.01	−0.85**
	(0.17)	(0.29)	(0.17)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.40)
Labour	−0.01	−0.35*	0.07	−0.44**	−0.13	−0.84**	−0.28	−0.64**
	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.27)	(0.29)
Green Party	0.03	−0.52*	−0.07	−0.45	0.73**	−1.00	0.73**	−0.88*
	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.43)	(0.33)	(0.48)
Other	−0.19	−0.86**	−0.14	−0.86**	0.14	−0.61	−0.36	−0.63
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.23)	(0.30)	(0.34)	(0.43)	(0.42)	(0.50)
No party	0.29**	−0.72**	0.25**	−0.77**	0.29	−0.70**	0.20	−0.57**
	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.24)
Irish identity	0.10	−0.45**	0.07	−0.26**	−0.03	−0.63**	−0.18	−0.49**
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.18)
Anti-immigration				−0.39**				0.20
				(0.11)				(0.18)
EU memb. is a good thing			−0.31**	0.69**			−0.37**	1.85**
			(0.08)	(0.15)			(0.16)	(0.22)
Pro-neutrality attitude			0.09	−0.63**			−0.24*	−0.79**
			(0.07)	(0.10)			(0.14)	(0.18)
Intercept	−1.09**	0.94**	−0.81**	0.24	−0.15	1.65**	0.28	0.36
	(0.21)	(0.27)	(0.22)	(0.31)	(0.41)	(0.49)	(0.46)	(0.57)
N	1917		1804		905		811	
AIC	3411.2		3162.5		1501.0		1229.2	

Notes: * $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors in parentheses. Cost is modelled with a dummy for abstention as dependent variable; utility with a dummy variable for a 'yes' vote as dependent variable.

there was a positive link between voting 'yes' and Ireland's economic prospects. Those who expect a 'no' vote to disimprove Irish' economic prospects were more likely to vote 'yes' in 2008 and in 2009 those who expect a 'yes' vote to improve Irish' economic prospects were strongly inclined to support the Treaty. Those who thought economic prospects would worsen were slightly more likely to vote 'no'. While the change in sign is a direct result of the changed question wording, there is also a clearly visible change in effect magnitude, which shows the impact of the changed economic context in which the referendum took place.[6] Figure 1 provides a visualisation of the main effect, showing how pocketbook voting (comparing the 'own economic situation is good' to the 'own economic situation is bad' column) mattered clearly in 2008, but much less so in 2009, where the two columns are near-identical. For sociotropic voting, on the other hand (comparing the rows of the figure), we do see strong effects in both years, but particularly in 2009. This provides strong and statistically significant support for H4. While the effect was significant in 2008, the magnitude of the coefficient is statistically significantly larger in 2009. This implies the economic panic argument—that voters switched their vote between 2008 and 2009 because of the GFC, has some weight to it, evidence again that context is crucial in determining the economic motivations of vote choice. More interestingly, sociotropic utility is consistently important in shaping referendum vote choice, in line with the literature that sociotropic utility is a more consistent predictor of vote choice.

6. Conclusion

The two Irish referendums on the Lisbon Treaty, either side of the onset of the GFC, offer an ideal opportunity to explore economic voting in referendums and to establish whether and in what circumstances sociotropic or egocentric utility drives vote choice. Our study shows that voter's economic perceptions mattered in both referendums. In both referendums, sociotropic motivations

[6] In the Appendix in Table A1 we provide results using conventional logistic regressions instead of the model specification proposed by Sattler and Urpelainen (2012). Overall results are similar, but for the impact of economic prospects, we do not find as strong results in 2008—we nevertheless confirm the stark difference between 2008 and 2009, in the same direction.

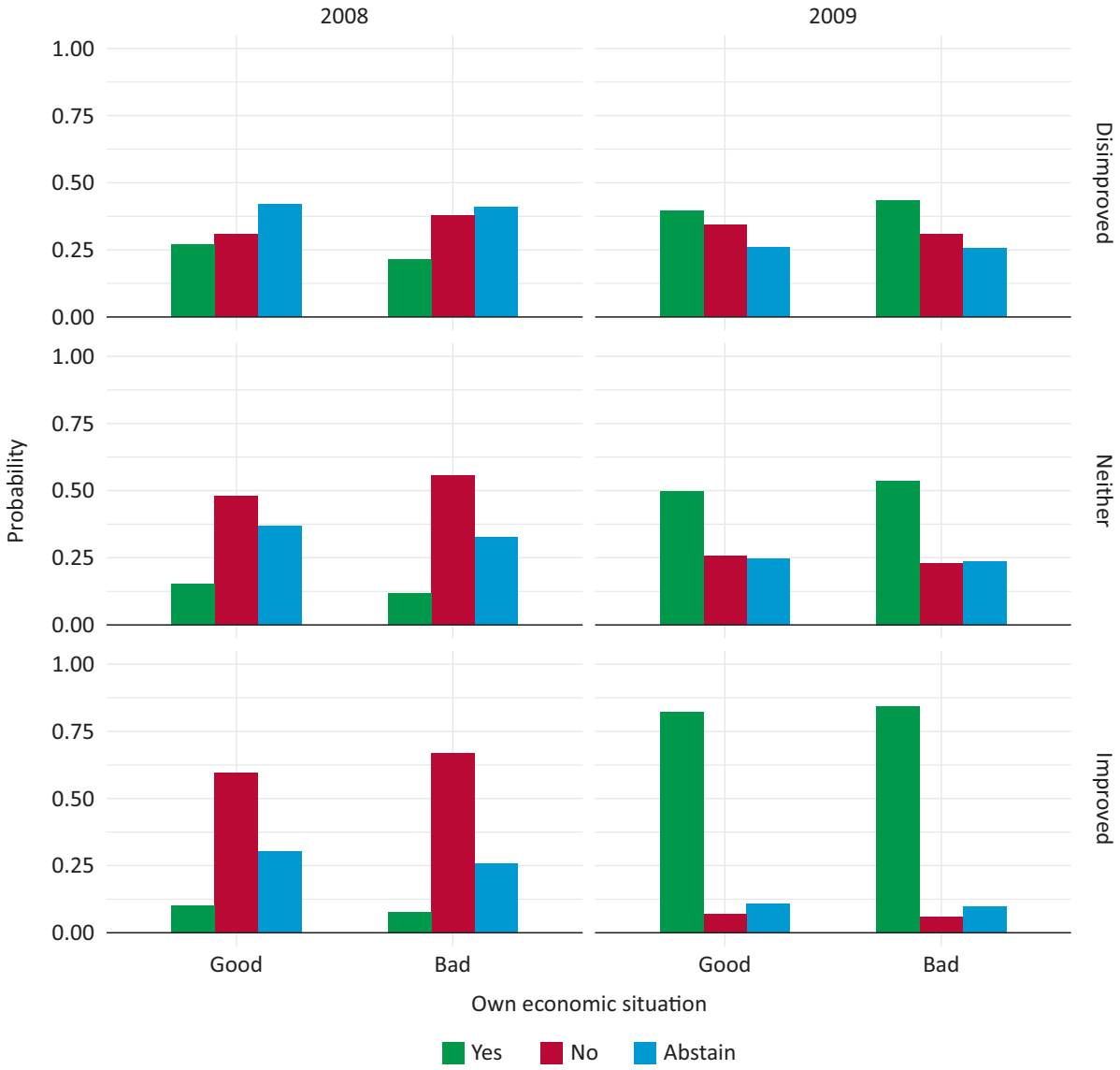

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities based on Model 6 and Model 8, keeping all other independent variables at the mode for categorical variables, based on the 2008 data set, and at zero for the standardized scale variables.

were important, with its effect larger in the 2009 referendum post the onset of the GFC. Meanwhile, egocentric utility was more important in 2008 when particular groups, adversely impact by globalization, and voters who perceived the EU as not having a positive influence on their personal economic situation were more likely to vote against the Treaty. In 2009 however, the egocentric economic evaluation was not a significant factor and while certain groups of voters were still more likely to vote against the Lisbon Treaty, thus offering some support for the utilitarian view, egocentric considerations were less important in 2009 compared with 2008. This highlights the important role of context—in a different economic environment, voters' economic calculations shift, where in times of crisis, sociotropic became even more important and egocentric considerations less so.

While our study of two subsequent referendums on the same Treaty, in the same country, under the same government, provides a unique opportunity to investigate this dynamic, we recognize the second referendum might have been too soon after the onset of the economic crisis. The role of the EU in the resolution to the crisis only became visible in the years after the referendum. We recognize that some scholars suggest that the initial years of the GFC did not have a significant impact on Euroscepticism but rather the latter years.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

This Appendix provides additional robustness checks evaluating our main findings. While we opt for a regression model that simultaneously incorporates the decision to vote and the vote choice, which we consider mutually dependent decisions, the more conventional approach is to run separate binomial regressions with either turnout (or abstention) or vote as dependent variable. Table A1 provides these in the form of logistic regressions, explaining abstention and the 'yes' vote, respectively, for the 2008 and 2009 referendums. Furthermore, Table A1 replicates the full model specification for 2009 in the article, Model 8, with one additional variable—attitude towards further European integration—which was not available in the 2008 data set, and therefore left out of the article.

A further extension evaluates more in depth the interaction between party preference and sociotropic or pocketbook voting, using interaction variables between all party dummies and all economic variables in the model (cf. Hicks, Milner, & Tingley, 2014). These results are presented in Table A2. While results are weaker due to the many variables in the model, overall findings remain the same, and we find limited evidence of interaction effects. Party preference does affect sociotropic voting in the 2009 referendum, but not to such an extent that it changes our main findings—even for those parties where sociotropic voting is weakest (Fine Gael, Labour), the effect is still positive and statistically significant.

Table A1. Logistic regressions explaining vote choice in the 2009 Lisbon referendum in Ireland, evaluating motivations behind economic voting.

	2009		**2008**		**2009**	
	Model 8 with unification		Model 9a	Model 9b	Model 10a	Model 10b
	Cost	*Utility*	*Abstention*	*Yes vote*	*Abstention*	*Yes vote*
Female		−0.16		0.10		−0.10
		(0.18)		(0.15)		(0.26)
Age 18–24	0.48	−0.62	1.58**	−0.56	1.23**	−0.70
	(0.30)	(0.40)	(0.25)	(0.34)	(0.41)	(0.58)
Age 25–34	0.24	−0.47	1.28**	−0.67**	0.76**	−0.23
	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.28)	(0.38)	(0.49)
Age 35–49	−0.01	−0.26	0.74**	−0.42*	0.24	−0.53
	(0.28)	(0.33)	(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.37)	(0.45)
Age 50–64	−0.16	−0.33	0.31	−0.30	0.08	−0.61
	(0.31)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.38)	(0.47)
Lower middle class	−0.40	0.02	−0.10	−0.21	−0.51	−0.29
	(0.26)	(0.31)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.34)	(0.42)
Skilled working class	−0.26	−0.33	−0.27	−0.47*	−0.07	−0.70
	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.21)	(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.46)
Unskilled working class	−0.39	−0.14	−0.14	−0.48*	−0.49	−0.37
	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.29)	(0.37)	(0.46)
Farmer	−1.35*	0.65	−0.46	0.12	−1.50**	0.80
	(0.71)	(0.54)	(0.29)	(0.35)	(0.64)	(0.70)
Secondary education	−0.23	0.04	0.22	−0.14	−0.63	−0.10
	(0.29)	(0.38)	(0.24)	(0.31)	(0.40)	(0.55)
Third level education	−0.12	0.13	0.25	−0.03	−0.54	0.08
	(0.32)	(0.42)	(0.27)	(0.35)	(0.45)	(0.61)
Objective knowl. EU	0.06	0.14	−0.37**	0.37**	−0.07	0.12
	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.22)	(0.27)
Subjective knowl. EU	−0.06	0.21	−0.30**	0.04	−0.38	0.54
	(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.28)	(0.35)
Subjective knowl. Treaty	−1.11	−0.15	−1.71**	0.71**	−1.55**	−0.90**
	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.28)	(0.37)
Own econ. situation bad		0.27		−0.49**		0.07
		(0.20)		(0.20)		(0.27)
Econ. prosp. improved		1.60**		−0.46		2.17**
		(0.22)		(0.35)		(0.31)
Econ. prosp. disimproved		−0.52		1.24**		−0.62
		(0.32)		(0.17)		(0.46)

Table A1. (Cont.) Logistic regressions explaining vote choice in the 2009 Lisbon referendum in Ireland, evaluating motivations behind economic voting.

	2009		2008		2009	
	Model 8 with unification		Model 9a	Model 9b	Model 10a	Model 10b
	Cost	*Utility*	*Abstention*	*Yes vote*	*Abstention*	*Yes vote*
Dissatisfaction government	−0.24	−0.45	0.14	−0.84**	0.12	−0.66
	(0.22)	(0.29)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.29)	(0.42)
Fine Gael	−0.18	−0.08	0.09	−0.50**	−0.10	−0.66
	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.33)	(0.41)
Sinn Fein	0.15	−0.60	0.24	−1.57**	0.05	−1.07*
	(0.36)	(0.44)	(0.28)	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.60)
Labour	−0.30	−0.41	0.02	−0.68**	−0.09	−0.66
	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.23)	(0.29)	(0.34)	(0.44)
Green Party	0.75**	−0.77	0.06	−0.64	1.14**	−1.14
	(0.35)	(0.52)	(0.34)	(0.40)	(0.50)	(0.77)
Other	−0.39	−0.48	−0.40	−1.40**	−0.22	−1.00
	(0.46)	(0.54)	(0.34)	(0.41)	(0.61)	(0.79)
No party	0.29	−0.45*	0.27*	−1.06**	0.53**	−0.77**
	(0.21)	(0.25)	(0.14)	(0.19)	(0.27)	(0.36)
Irish identity	−0.21	−0.52**	0.05	−0.38**	−0.09	−0.88**
	(0.16)	(0.20)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.21)	(0.27)
Anti-immigration		0.65**		−0.62**		0.19
		(0.21)		(0.18)		(0.27)
EU memb. is a good thing	−0.52**	1.91**	−0.09	1.10**	−0.33	2.70**
	(0.18)	(0.25)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.33)
Pro-neutrality attitude	−0.16	−0.70**	−0.19	−0.95**	−0.23	−0.89**
	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.26)
Anti-unification attitude	−0.05	−0.97**				
	(0.15)	(0.20)				
Intercept	0.58	−0.09	−1.78**	0.11	−1.02*	0.49
	(0.47)	(0.61)	(0.34)	(0.44)	(0.62)	(0.85)
N	743		1861	1212	852	642
AIC	1095.8		1963.0	1205.0	762.0	496.0

Notes: * $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors in parentheses. For the expanded Model 8, the logistic random utility model of Sattler and Urpelainen (2012) is used, with the attitude against further integration added as an additional control, which is unavailable in the 2008 data. For the remaining model, regular logistic regression is used, separately modelling abstention and vote choice.

Table A2. Logistic regressions explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland, including interactions between party choice and economic variables.

	2008		2009	
	Model 11		Model 12	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Female		−0.01		−0.18
		(0.10)		(0.17)
Age 18–24	0.93**	−0.36	0.53*	−0.68*
	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.38)
Age 25–34	0.89**	−0.61**	0.26	−0.39
	(0.15)	(0.20)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Age 35–49	0.52**	−0.29	−0.02	−0.35
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.27)	(0.31)
Age 50–64	0.20	−0.18	−0.20	−0.43
	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.29)	(0.32)

Table A2. (Cont.) Logistic regressions explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland, including interactions between party choice and economic variables.

	2008		2009	
	Model 11		Model 12	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Lower middle class	−0.07	−0.09	−0.49*	−0.16
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.30)
Skilled working class	−0.13	−0.32*	−0.24	−0.37
	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.27)	(0.33)
Unskilled working class	0.00	−0.30	−0.41	−0.17
	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.27)	(0.34)
Farmer	−0.22	0.04	−0.98*	0.55
	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.51)	(0.50)
Secondary education	0.17	−0.06	−0.15	−0.24
	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.28)	(0.37)
Third level education	0.13	−0.04	−0.12	−0.14
	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.32)	(0.41)
Objective knowl. EU	−0.30**	0.19	0.11	0.11
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.19)
Subjective knowl. EU	−0.16*	−0.04	−0.14	0.25
	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.24)
Subjective knowl. Treaty	−1.11**	0.50**	−1.16**	−0.26
	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.24)
Own econ. situation bad		−0.26		0.02
		(0.22)		(0.40)
× Fine Gael		−0.04		−0.42
		(0.37)		(0.57)
× Sinn Fein		−0.35		0.45
		(0.54)		(0.86)
× Labour		−0.11		−0.03
		(0.45)		(0.61)
× Green Party		0.86		0.59
		(0.82)		(1.03)
× Other		0.25		1.47
		(0.59)		(0.19)
× No party		−0.20		−0.34
		(0.29)		(0.49)
Econ. prosp. improved		−0.62		2.40**
		(0.41)		(0.47)
× Fine Gael		−0.24		−1.43**
		(0.63)		(0.65)
× Sinn Fein		1.39		−1.44
		(1.56)		(1.01)
× Labour		0.39		−1.21*
		(0.67)		(0.68)
× Green Party		1.38		−0.07
		(1.73)		(1.25)
× Other		0.81		0.94
		(1.01)		(1.59)
× No party		0.18		−0.96
		(0.58)		(0.60)

Table A2. (Cont.) Logistic regressions explaining vote choice in the 2008 and 2009 Lisbon referendums in Ireland, including interactions between party choice and economic variables.

	2008		2009	
	Model 11		Model 12	
	Cost	*Utility*	*Cost*	*Utility*
Econ. prosp. disimproved		0.87**		−0.03
		(0.19)		(0.73)
× Fine Gael		0.25		−0.23
		(0.35)		(0.98)
× Sinn Fein		−1.72**		−1.03
		(0.62)		(1.21)
× Labour		0.04		0.60
		(0.51)		(0.96)
× Green Party		0.20		−1.41
		(0.69)		(2.25)
× Other		−1.59**		0.61
		(0.62)		(1.29)
× No party		−0.16		−1.71*
		(0.28)		(1.00)
Dissatisfaction government	0.15**	−0.55**	−0.18	−0.34
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.21)	(0.28)
Fine Gael	0.09	−0.34	−0.23	0.43
	(0.13)	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.47)
Sinn Fein	0.28	−0.41	−0.09	0.61
	(0.18)	(0.39)	(0.35)	(0.68)
Labour	0.06	−0.44*	−0.38	−0.33
	(0.15)	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.53)
Green Party	−0.08	−0.65*	0.80**	−1.07
	(0.23)	(0.34)	(0.39)	(0.75)
Other	−0.17	−0.50	−0.20	−2.06*
	(0.23)	(0.44)	(0.43)	(1.22)
No party	0.25**	−0.68**	0.16	−0.38
	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.36)
Irish identity	0.06	−0.24**	−0.18	−0.56**
	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.15)	(0.19)
Anti-immigration		−0.39**		0.25
		(0.11)		(0.19)
EU memb. is a good thing	−0.32**	0.72**	−0.37**	1.88**
	(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.23)
Pro-neutrality attitude	0.10	−0.64**	−0.23*	−0.75**
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.18)
Intercept	−0.80**	0.17	0.43	0.28
	(0.22)	(0.32)	(0.46)	(0.61)
N	1804		811	
AIC	3171.9		1245.4	

Notes: * $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$. Standard errors in parentheses. Cost is modelled with a dummy for abstention as the dependent variable; utility with a dummy variable for a 'yes' vote as dependent variable.

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Article

Public Support for Higher Taxes on the Wealthy: California's Proposition 30

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Abstract
It has long been argued that growing inequality would lead to growing demands for redistribution, especially from less affluent individuals who would benefit most from redistribution. Yet, in many countries we have not seen tax increases and even when ballot initiatives allow individuals to directly vote to raise taxes on the wealthy they decline to do so. This raises the question of how economic self-interest shapes voting on tax proposals, and what factors may weaken the links between economic self-interest and tax policy preferences. In the U.S. context partisanship is a factor that has a major influence on attitudes about taxation. To explore how self-interest sometimes overcomes partisanship we take advantage of competing initiatives that were simultaneously on the ballot in California in 2012. California's Proposition 30, a successful 2012 initiative, significantly increased taxes on the wealthy. By comparing voting on Proposition 30 to voting on Proposition 38, which would have raised taxes on nearly everyone, we observe that when tax hikes are focused only on the wealthy a substantial number of lower income Republicans (i.e., conservatives) defect from their party position opposing taxation. We identify these low-income Republicans as "populists." Lower income Republicans are also less supportive of income tax increases on the lower and middle classes, and are more sensitive to income tax increases than sales tax increases. We argue that economic self-interest causes heterogeneity within the parties in terms of attitudes toward tax increases.

Keywords
California; direct democracy; economic self-interest; inequality; partisanship; Proposition 30; redistribution; taxes; voting; wealth

Issue
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1. Introduction

Conflict over redistribution has long been one of the main political fault lines in Western democracies. Political economy models predict that as inequality grows the public, and especially the less affluent, will clamor for more redistribution (Meltzer & Richard, 1981). If this prediction is accurate, we should see major increases in redistribution in the U.S., where inequality has grown more and is higher than in almost any other affluent democracy. In the U.S. the top 1% of the population own about 38% of the all privately held wealth according to federal tax data; the *New York Times* (Kristof, 2014) reports the richest 1% now owns more than the bottom 90% of the population (Piketty, 2014; see also Gilens, 2012; Volscho & Kelly, 2012). Surveys in the U.S. consistently find that two-thirds of Americans believe that the gap between the rich and everyone else has increased over the last decade, and this view is shared by majorities across nearly all groups in the public, including 61% of Republicans (Pew Research Center, 2017). Not surprisingly, then, consistent with political economy mod-

els, Americans express high levels of support for increasing taxes on the wealthy (Dutton, 2012; Roberts, Hite, & Bradley, 1994; Yglesias, 2019). Yet, over the last few decades we have also seen the public support large tax cuts for the wealthy (Bartels, 2005) and sometimes even when the public has the opportunity to increase taxes on the wealthy by voting on ballot initiatives they decline to do so (Franko, Tolbert, & Witko, 2013). Why do abstract preferences for redistribution not always translate into support for specific redistributive tax policies? We investigate how economic self-interest, partisanship and the design of specific tax policies combine to shape support for tax increasing ballot initiatives.

Why the public sometimes supports redistributive tax increases but at other times declines to do so is an important question that has been examined in numerous studies (Alesina & Angeletos, 2005; Ballard-Rosa, Martin, & Scheve, 2017; Boudreau & MacKenzie, 2018; Heinemann & Hennighausen, 2015; Meltzer & Richard, 1981; Tuxhorn, D'Attoma, & Steinmo, 2019). Individuals express support for redistribution and higher taxes on the wealthy in the abstract, but this abstract support can disappear in the context of tax policy debates in real world politics (Bartels, 2005; Franko et al., 2013; Franko & Witko, 2017). One reason is that individuals often fail to link their economic self-interest to congruent positions in specific tax policy debates (Bartels, 2005). Sometimes this is because people do not understand how tax policies will affect them and others (Slemrod, 2006). But, more fundamentally, political economy models ignore the fact that individuals often have strong ideological and partisan attachments, which in the U.S especially are not always closely tied to income position (Mason, 2018), that predispose them for or against particular types of tax increases (Franko et al., 2013). Left-leaning individuals (Democrats) will tend to support many types of tax increases, while conservatives (Republicans) tend to oppose them. But are there conditions in which individuals are willing to elevate their economic self-interest above a general opposition to high taxes along the lines envisioned by political economy models?

It is difficult to distinguish general opposition to taxation from more self-interested opposition because in many policy debates elites opposing taxes focus on the very existence of any tax increase, rather than the specific incidence of who will pay more, and tax cuts that primarily benefit the wealthy usually include at least a small tax cut for others (Bartels, 2005). By comparing attitudes toward competing tax proposals which place burdens on different segments of the population, we could distinguish self-interested opposition to tax increases from more general opposition. Of course, there are seldom competing tax increase proposals put placed on the ballot for a public vote at any one time. Typically, governments develop and then unveil a single proposal and attempt to enact it.

Thus, scholars have used experimental approaches to examine how varying hypothetical tax burdens shapes support from different individuals (Ballard-Rosa, Martin, & Scheve, 2017; Boudreau & MacKenzie, 2018). Of course, the drawback of experimental manipulations of tax policy alternatives is that they are usually not examined in the context of actual political debates and campaigns (but see Boudreau & MacKenzie, 2018). The same limitation applies to surveys asking respondents for their opinions about taxation in the abstract. Here, we take advantage of competing tax proposals that were actually placed in front of California voters as ballot initiatives in 2012 to examine how the structure of tax policies affects individual support, and specifically how economic self-interest (income) and partisanship combine to shape attitudes about taxation. Proposition 30 would have provided additional revenue for a number of government programs and been funded primarily by an increased income tax on the wealthy—individuals earning more than $250,000 a year or couples earning more than $500,000—along with a more general across the board sales tax increase. In contrast, Proposition 38 would have achieved similar revenue and spending goals, but been funded primarily by an income tax increase on virtually all Californians, including substantial increases on the middle class. These competing initiatives on the same ballot in the same year allow us to distinguish between individuals who support or oppose tax increases regardless of their specific structure to those who oppose or support tax increases based on whether they are likely to benefit.

Not surprisingly, we observe that Democrats generally support tax increases of any type at high levels, while Republicans generally oppose raising taxes (see Table 1). However, when tax hikes are focused mostly on the wealthy a substantial number of lower income Republicans defect from their party position opposing taxation. Overall, the effect of self-interest varies depending on one's party and the type of tax in question. Lower income Republicans are less supportive of income tax increases on the lower and middle classes than lower income Democrats and are much more sensitive to income tax increases than sales tax increases. This suggests that one reason that taxes have not increased in response to growing income inequality in the U.S. and other countries is that many individuals choose not to support tax increases due to their partisanship and concerns that their own taxes may be increased, rather than any general antipathy to high taxes per se.

1.1. The Roots of Public Support for Raising Taxes

Political economy models predict that individuals evaluate tax increases on the basis of their economic self-interest, i.e., how the tax hike will negatively impact their income and positively impact the benefits they receive from government. There are a number of reasons why this relationship is not always observed in empirical research (Sears & Citrin, 1982). But one of the key reasons that self-interest is not always associated with individ-

ual tax policy preferences is that broader values and attitudes shape views toward tax policies. Among the most important factors in the U.S. is partisanship, which can weaken the link between economic self-interest and policy preferences.

1.1.1. Economic Self-Interest

The canonical Meltzer and Richard (1981) model of redistributive policy preferences has both macro and micro-level implications. At the macro-level income inequality should spur growing redistribution. The micro-level mechanism is that preferences for redistribution reflect individual choices, with individuals lower in the income distribution more likely to support tax increases on the wealthy because it is in their *economic self-interest*. If a tax increase targets the wealthy, the poor or middle class will not pay the tax, but they can benefit from the government programs that are funded with that tax increase.

While the logic of the Meltzer-Richard model (1981) is intuitive, there are a number of reasons why individuals may not support tax increases on the wealthy, even if they are relatively poor. First, if they believe that individuals achieve their wealth through hard work, they are less likely to support tax increases on the wealthy, compared to if they believe it was by luck or birth (Alesina & Angeletos, 2005; Henninghausen & Heinemann, 2015). Second, they might not support higher taxes on the wealthy if they believe that they will someday be wealthy or financially better off (Alesina, Stantcheva, & Teso, 2018; Benabou & Ok, 2001; Piketty, 1995). They may also be against redistribution if they do not trust that the government will do the right thing with the tax revenue raised (McCall & Kenworthy, 2009; Tuxhorn et al., 2019). It may also be that individual economic policy preferences primarily reflect broader sociotropic (economic or cultural) concerns, and not economic self-interest (Sides & Citrin, 2007).

Nevertheless, a substantial amount of research in the U.S., which is the focus of the empirical analysis here, indicates that lower income individuals do indeed have more left-leaning views on broad redistributive taxation and spending issues than affluent and very wealthy individuals (Bartels, 2005; Kelly & Enns, 2010; Kelly & Witko, 2012; Page, Bartels, & Seawright, 2013). One reason that observed tax rates have not responded to growing inequality in the U.S. may be that individuals with influence in the policy process have different views about taxes than the mass public. For instance, research finds that across a range of issues lawmakers and their staff perceive constituency opinion to be more conservative than it actually is and legislators are more responsive to the wealthy and well-organized interests than average taxpayers (Bartels, 2008; Broockman & Skovron, 2018; Enns, Kelly, Morgan, Volscho, & Witko, 2014; Gilens, 2012; Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, & Stokes, 2019; Witko, 2017).

However, in the context of specific tax policy debates we often fail to observe individuals preferring tax policies that are consistent with their own economic self-interest. For instance, in an analysis of support for the 2001 Bush tax cuts, Bartels (2005, 2008) found that income was not a very important predictor of tax policy preferences, even though these tax cuts would disproportionately benefit the wealthy.

Research shows that the initiative can lead to the closer alignment of public preferences and public policy (Franko & Witko, 2017; Gerber, 1999; Kogan, 2016; Matsusaka, 2004), which *can* lead to higher taxes on the wealthy. For example, research on German local governments shows that where individuals can directly vote on taxes, taxes are higher and they also have a much narrower base (Asatryan, Baskaran, & Heinemann, 2017), suggesting that individuals like taxes, as long as others are paying them. Research finds that lower income individuals were more likely to support a ballot initiative that would have increased taxes on the wealthy in Washington state in the U.S (Franko et al., 2013). However, it is notable that, despite the fact that the vast majority of voters would not have paid any taxes, enough people opposed the initiative that is was not passed. What can explain why even relatively less affluent individuals that express abstract support for increasing taxes on the wealthy in surveys would not vote to do so when given the opportunity? Unlike surveys, once tax proposals leave the realm of abstract survey questions or experimental manipulations and enter into actual political debates competing partisan elites attempt to foment hostility or support for tax increases.

1.1.2. Partisanship

Partisanship is a key factor driving support for a variety of policies (Abramowitz, 2018; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2004; Lenz, 2009). Though ballot proposals are generally nonpartisan, party elites take positions on proposals and thus partisanship is important in voter decision making on ballot measures (Bowler & Donovan, 1998; Lupia, 1994). If individuals choose political parties as a result of their economic position, then partisanship would strengthen the relationship between economic self-interest and voting on tax policy initiatives. While low-income individuals are more likely to identify as Democrats (Kelly & Witko, 2012), many affluent individuals support the Democratic Party, and many poorer individuals support the Republican Party.

According to recent important research by Mason (2018) partisanship in the contemporary U.S. is not based mostly on rational calculations about which party best advances one's interests, but is more akin to rooting for a sports team. A great deal of research shows that voters are influenced by the positions of elites within their parties, rather than or in addition to joining parties on the basis of their preexisting policy preferences (Broockman & Butler, 2017; Lenz, 2009). Even controlling for past issue preferences, party affiliation shapes the subsequent issue positions of partisan voters (Lenz,

2009). Because anti-tax rhetoric and ideological position-taking is so central to the modern Republican Party's economic policy agenda (Grossman & Hopkins, 2016), Republican identifiers are heavily predisposed to oppose taxation, particularly when such proposals are framed by elite rhetoric.

In one of the highest profile tax policy changes in the U.S. in recent decades, Lupia, Levine, Menning and Sin (2007) argue that partisanship explains support or opposition to the 2001 Bush tax cuts better than self-interest, information or other factors. These same patterns are evident in voting on statewide ballot measures. In addition to finding that low-income voters were more supportive, Franko et al. (2013) find that party had the largest effect on support for a 2010 ballot initiative in Washington state that would have significantly raised taxes on the wealthy. State ballot contests are officially non-partisan, but partisanship is nevertheless a critical factor in voting on initiatives over time (Bowler & Donovan, 1998; Branton, 2003; Smith & Tolbert, 2001). Indeed, because voters are responsive to cues from partisan elites (Bowler & Donovan, 1998, 2004) and organized interests that are typically associated with one of the parties, individual partisanship is the most important predictor of voting behavior in initiative elections in the American states over time (Branton, 2003).

But most individuals do not have a consistent liberal or conservative set of policy preferences (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). Research by Claassen, Tucker and Smith (2013) implies that even some self-proclaimed ideologues may not be able to correctly sort into the liberal or conservative party because they do not even know what liberal and conservative mean. Ellis and Stimson (2012) show that many voters who identify as conservatives (and thus are mostly Republicans) actually hold liberal economic and fiscal policy preferences. Thus, when individuals describe themselves as liberal or conservative many are not referring to support for government spending or types of taxation regimes but a social identity based on demographic factors, region or religion (see Mason, 2018). Ellis and Stimson (2012) refer to voters that identify as conservatives but have liberal attitudes toward economic and fiscal policy as conservative "populists," and we adopt this narrow definition of the term here. This means that even though Republicans are predisposed to oppose tax increases due to their partisanship, this opposition is not completely fixed. Under some circumstance, self-interest may trump partisanship.

Similarly, wealthy Democrats may sometimes prefer to not raise taxes, particularly if they are the intended targets of tax increases. However, because the number of very wealthy voters is small, these individuals do not generally have the ability to determine outcomes for ballot propositions, and they appear in very small numbers in conventional surveys. Thus, we focus more on how low-income Republicans may shift their opposition to taxes depending on the structure of tax increases. We argue that economic self-interest causes heterogeneity within the parties in terms of attitudes toward tax increases.

2. Policy Design: The Structure of Tax Increases

One reason that arguments against taxes can be effective even among individuals who might otherwise support them is that tax policy tends to be relatively complicated (compared to say, abortion or gay marriage). Indeed, some research shows that misunderstandings of tax policy can contribute to support for regressive tax increases, even among the poor (Slemrod, 2006). In many tax policy debates it is difficult to tell ahead of time just who the winners and losers are.

Tax increases may vary along a number of dimensions including who pays the tax (e.g., the wealthy, all income earners), the type of tax (e.g., sales v. income), the amount of the tax increase (and revenue raised), and whether the tax increase is permanent or temporary. While for many low-income taxpayers the payroll and sales tax actually are more of a financial burden, the income tax is without question politically the most salient tax for American taxpayers; taxpayers must go through the process of completing an annual tax return form which clearly indicates the amount owed in taxes. In the states, the sales tax is generally the largest or second largest (after the income tax) source of revenue for state governments. But there may be less opposition to sales taxes because they are viewed as a small percentage of purchases and the costs are hidden when individuals make purchases.

Finally, who pays the tax may influence the support for the tax increase. In a democracy where majorities to some extent rule, tax increases targeted at small numbers of individuals may have more support among citizens. In contrast, more broad-based tax increases should have less support among the public, especially among individuals that are already predisposed to be against taxes. Because the wealthy are both a small minority and have substantial resources to put into public coffers, they are likely to be an attractive target for tax increases, potentially even for those that do not generally like the idea of increasing taxes. For instance, Asatryan et al. (2017) find that where Germans had the ability to vote directly on local taxes they were higher and more focused on businesses. This suggests, intuitively enough, that individuals like to tax others.

3. Empirical Expectations

Based on the foregoing discussion we expect Democrats will, of course, be more likely to favor tax increases than Republicans, and that partisanship will be a larger factor in determining voting on tax policy preferences. However, where the incidence of salient (income) taxes very clearly falls on others, individuals that might generally oppose taxation, Republicans, will be more likely to support the tax increase. In our empirical analysis we leverage competing tax proposals to examine this possibility.

Table 1. Voter support for redistributive ballot measures by party.

	N	Support Proposition 30	Support for Proposition 38	Support Neither	Support Both
Democrat	271	0.793	0.645	0.158	0.597
Independent	368	0.570	0.440	0.375	0.385
Republican	317	0.293	0.274	0.605	0.173
Low Income	240	0.658	0.571	0.241	0.500
Median Income	531	0.480	0.392	0.441	0.313
High Income	201	0.557	0.428	0.398	0.383
Taxes Burden Not Too High	657	0.642	0.519	0.292	0.454
Taxes Burden Too High	315	0.327	0.286	0.594	0.206

4. Proposition 30

California state public employee unions and the California Democratic Party gathered signatures to place an initiative before voters which would prevent proposed large reductions in spending on government programs. The main provisions of Proposition 30 were to increase marginal tax rates for seven years by 1% for income between 250–300K, 2% for income between 300–500K and 3% for income over 500K (twice these amounts for couples). It also increased the state sales tax by a ¼ cent for four years and used the revenue to fund public safety, K-12 education (primary and secondary education) and community colleges (i.e., two-year colleges). Proponents argued that Proposition 30 would provide funding for California's public education, help balance the state's budget, and prevent cuts to public safety programs (KCET, 2012). The initiative proposed a tax increase of approximately 30% on earnings above $1 million, a substantial increase by any measure. Though there was also a (regressive) sales tax increase as part of the bill, the more salient aspect of Proposition 30 was the potential income tax increase because the sales tax increase was very small and was to last a shorter period of time.

Proposition 30 was opposed by the Small Business Action Committee and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, the same organization that sponsored Proposition 13 three decades earlier (Sears & Citrin, 1982). Big business groups (like the California Chamber of Commerce) that often oppose tax increases stayed neutral and some large firms actually endorsed the measure, including Bank of America, AT&T, and Kaiser Permanente, citing the need to invest in the state's schools to produce an educated workforce (Buchanan, 2012).

5. Proposition 38

A rival ballot measure, Proposition 38, was intended to increase personal income tax rates on annual earnings over $7,316 using a sliding scale from .4% for lowest individual earners to 2.2% for individuals earning over $2.5 million, for twelve years. The funds were targeted for early childhood programs and K-12 (primary and secondary) education. These competing initiatives are similar in that they both raise taxes and they provide additional revenue for public programs, especially education. However, Proposition 38 would have raised income taxes on the lower and middle classes, and by a substantial amount. Families with incomes of $60,000 would have seen their top marginal tax rate increase from 6.0 to 7.1% with Proposition 38, but the income tax would not increase at all under Proposition 30 (Legislative Analysts Office, 2012). The two ballot initiatives would have both increased funding of government programs from the baseline but with different income tax structures or policy design.

Of course, these treatments are not perfect because there are some differences between the two initiatives. The time horizon of the income tax increase was longer for Proposition 38 (12 years) compared to Proposition 30 (7 years). Proposition 30 would increase the sales tax by a ¼ cent for four years while Proposition 38 did not change the sale tax. Democratic Governor Jerry Brown was a strong and vocal proponent of Proposition 30, which should have offered an important partisan cue to voters; gubernatorial endorsements have influenced other salient initiative contests (Nicholson, 2005; Tolbert & Hero, 1996). Proposition 38 and its campaign were funded by Pasadena civil rights attorney Molly Munger, daughter of Berkshire Hathaway executive Charles Munger. Munger's proposal for how to fund public schools competed with Governor Jerry Brown's favored policy. The public was familiar with the arguments for and against Proposition 30 and Proposition 38 with well-funded add campaigns (Burnett, 2013). Proposition 30's supporters raised over $72 million dollars to the cause, while opponents spent over $76 million, which when combined adds up to almost $4 per voter; this is more than what was spent per voter in recent presidential elections in the state (followthemoney.org). Proposition 30 passed with 55.4% of the vote, and Proposition 38 was defeated, receiving 28.7% yes votes.

Because both measures were on the ballot at the same time, individuals were in the unique position of directly comparing competing tax policy proposals. Thus, the differences in the proposals were very clear and very salient compared to other tax policy debates.

6. Analysis

6.1. Survey Data and Coding

The analysis employs data from the 2012 California Field Poll, which is a random sample computer-assisted telephone survey carried out by the Field Research Corporation. In regard to Proposition 30, the survey presented respondents with the following information:

> Proposition 30 is the Temporary Taxes to Fund Education, Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding initiative. It increases taxes on earnings over $250,000 dollars for seven years and sales taxes by a ¼ cent for four years, to fund schools and guarantees public safety realignment funding. Fiscal impact: Increased state tax revenues through 2018–2019, averaging about 6 billion dollars annually over the next few years. Revenues available for funding state budget. In 2012–2013, planned spending reductions, primarily to education programs, would not occur. (D-Lab, n.d.)

Respondents were then asked whether they would support or oppose Proposition 30. In the following analyses, this question serves as the dependent variable, where 1 indicates support for Proposition 30, and 0 indicates opposition or lack of an opinion. By preceding the question with an informational paragraph, we are able to determine support for Proposition 30 *as if* everyone had been paying enough attention to the policy debate to understand the content of the proposed initiatives. Given the campaign spending and press coverage, there was presumably a high degree of familiarity with Proposition 30's basic provisions in the broader population. Similar coding and question wording was used to measure support for the counter initiative, Proposition 38 (see the 2012 California Field Poll). Because the outcome variables are binary, logistic regression is used in the statistical analysis.

The survey included separate questions for party registration and ideology, but since most theorizing is about the effects of party, we consider this in the analysis. The sample used in the analysis included partisans and independents. Party was coded on an ordinal 3-point scale where Democrat = 1, independent = 2 and Republican = 3. We use this ordinal measure and also estimate models using separate dichotomous variables for whether the respondent is a Democrat (coded 1) or Republican (coded 1), with independents (coded 0) as the reference group to ensure the results don't change based on the measurement of party.

To test the unenlightened self-interest hypothesis, we use a variable capturing respondents' perceptions of their local and state tax burden, where 1 indicated that the respondent believed they were paying "more than you should," and 0 indicted respondents who believed they are paying "just the right amount" or "less than you should."

We include a variable measuring respondents' income to test the economic self-interest hypothesis. It is unclear exactly how many of the survey's respondents would directly feel the impact of Proposition 30 because the field poll asked respondents to indicate which of six income categories they identified with, the highest of which was over $100,000. Thus, we cannot know with certainty whether anyone in the sample earned above $250,000 per year and is therefore subject to the tax. Higher income earners may have a more realistic possibility of paying the tax at some point in the future, so we test income through the use of a continuous ordinal income variable (for the six categories) and binary variables.

We alternatively measure income with binary variables for low (coded 1, all other 0) and high income respondents (coded 1, all others 0). For the models using the binary predictors a variable was created to indicate respondents who do not own a home and who earn under $60,000, which is the category containing the median family income in California since those at or below the median should prefer higher taxes on the wealthy according to economic theory (Meltzer & Richard, 1981). We only include low-income non-homeowners in order to remove retirees who have some material wealth in the form of a home from being considered low-income since a home in California tends to represent a considerable source of wealth. A binary variable was also created to indicate "high income" respondents who earned $100,000 or more annually, with respondents who indicated earning between $60,000 and $100,000 annually as the reference category. Interaction terms are used to measure the conditional effects of economic self-interest and partisanship.

A series of statistical controls include—age (measured in years), gender (male), education, marital status (married = 1), homeownership (equal to 1 if respondent is a homeowner; 0 otherwise) and a series of dummies to control for race/ethnicity (Hispanic, black or Asian, with white as the reference category). Because the debate hinged on whether people wanted to spend more money on government services we also include two dummy variables that measure whether respondents thought that government services have gotten better in recent years, or worse in recent years (with no change as the baseline or reference category).

Because the dependent variable is binary we estimate logistic regressions with robust standard errors clustered by county, since respondents in different areas may have been exposed to different levels of media and campaign effects. We begin by estimating the additive models and then estimate interaction models.

7. Results

Since Proposition 30 was enacted while Proposition 38 failed we can conclude that taxpayers are not particularly concerned about relatively modest sales tax increases,

but are more sensitive to income tax increases. Whereas Proposition 38 would have raised income taxes on nearly everyone, Proposition 30 only targeted the wealthy. But Proposition 30 also had a shorter time horizon, seven years instead of 12, which may have affected overall support. Taken together, this would suggest that short-term sales tax increases are an effective way for governments to raise revenue without too much public opposition.

Table 1 provides frequencies of support for both initiatives broken down by party, perceptions of tax burdens and personal income. While patterns of support for Proposition 30 and 38 are similar across our three explanatory variables, it is interesting that for Democrats and independents there was a big drop off in support for Proposition 38 compared to Proposition 30, but less so for Republicans. Democratic Governor Jerry Brown's strong endorsement of Proposition 30 likely provided a salient cue to voters. While support for Proposition 30 was higher across the board than for Proposition 38, it is interesting that high income voters were 13% more likely to favor tax increases on the wealthy than across the board tax increases, while the gap was 9% for low and middle income respondents.

Table 2 presents the results of the multivariate logistic regression predicting support for Proposition 30, varying the respondent's partisanship (ordinal measure vs a series of dummy variables) and household income (measured as an ordinal variable and with binary variables for low-income and high income with middle income as the reference category). Regardless of how the variables were measured, we find that Republicans were significantly more likely to oppose raising taxes on the wealthy. Similarly, individuals who felt their state and local text burdens were too high are significantly more likely to oppose the measure, providing evidence for the unenlightened self-interest hypothesis.

When personal income is measured by the ordinal variable (columns 1 and 3) the coefficient is not significant, but the binary variable for lower income is positive and statistically significant, indicating that lower income citizens are significantly more likely to favor raising taxes on the wealthy compared to those with middle income or the wealthy. These results are reported in columns 2 and 4. We find some support for that partisanship, self-interest and unenlightened self-interest (opinions about one's own tax burden) mattered.

To understand the substantive effect of these relationships we generate predicted probabilities from the coefficients in Table 2. We measure the change in support for the ballot measure when moving from being a Republican to a Democrat, from being high income to low-income, and from thinking your taxes are too high to thinking your taxes are not too high, while holding all other variables constant at their mean. Figure 1 reports the change in probabilities (first differences) for these three statistically significant variables based on the model in column 2 of Table 2. Moving from stating one's tax burden is "too high" to "not too high or just right," changes the probability of favoring the ballot measure by .28 probability, all else equal. This large substantive effect is the effect of "unenlightened self-interest," consistent with previous research re the Bush 2001 taxes (Bartels, 2008). Moving from a high income respondent to a low-income respondent increases the probability of raising taxes on the wealthy by .075. This is the direct effect of economic self-interest. But partisanship is more important than self-interest in terms of a direct substantive effect. Moving from a Republican to a Democrat, results in a .44 change in the probability of supporting taxes on the rich, controlling for other factors. Thus, partisanship and unenlightened self-interest appear to have the largest direct substantive effects, with party the most important.

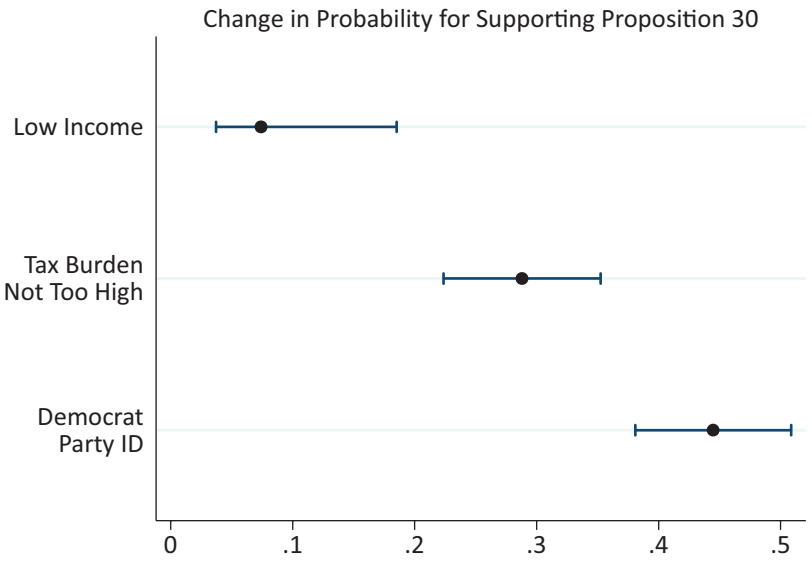

Figure 1. Change (first difference) in the probability of supporting tax increases on the wealthy (from Table 2 column 2).

7.1. Economic Self-Interest and Party

Table 3 replicates the model in column 2 of Table 2 but includes interaction terms for partisanship with tax burden attitudes, and an interaction of partisanship with income. While the interaction term for high income multiplied by partisanship is not statistically significant (column 1), the interaction term for low-income respondents with partisanship (column 2) is positive and statistically significant. This suggests economic self-interest is moderating the effect of party. The interaction effect for attitudes about tax burdens and partisanship is negatively signed in column 3 but not statistically significant. However, the base term for party is statistically significant. Jaccard and Turrisi (2003) argue that if either of the base terms in an interaction equation are statistically significant, the interaction model is statistically significant, even if the interaction term itself is not. We thus graph the predicted probabilities for this interaction model as well.

Predicted probabilities are presented in Figures 2 (coefficients from Table 3 column 3) and Figure 3 (Table 3 column 2). Figure 2 shows that if the respondent thinks they pay the right amount in state and local taxes a majority of Democrats and independents favor raising taxes on the wealthy (holding other factors constant), but support drops among Republicans, even for those who don't think they pay too much in taxes. Among respondents who believe their tax burdens are too high, a majority of both independents and Republicans opposed the ballot measure. For Republicans, who are predisposed to be

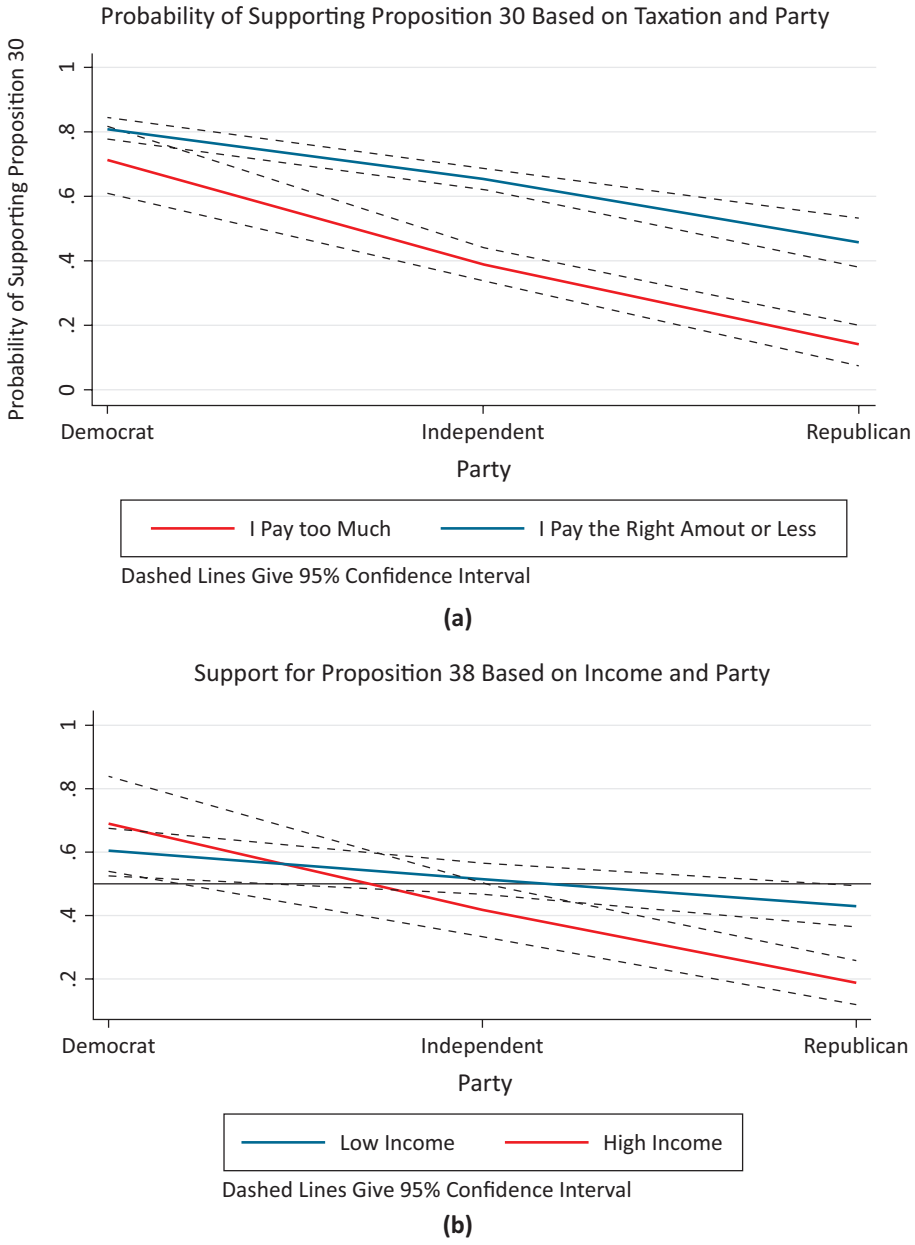

Figure 2. Conditional effect of tax burden and party identification on the probability of favoring tax increases for **(a)** on the wealthy **(b)** for everyone.

receptive to anti-tax messages, the gap between those who think their tax burden was too high and those that think their tax burden is not too high is very large, estimated to be a difference of about 30 percentage points. Thus, partisan affiliation amplified views about tax burdens for Republicans, reducing support, while making it a less important consideration for Democrats.

Figure 3 reports the results of the interaction between partisanship and low-income (incomes at or below the median in the state). For Republicans, increasing income resulted in a decreased probability of supporting the tax increase on the rich, while a majority of low-income Republicans favored it. For Democrats, the effect was the opposite—higher income voters were actually more supportive of Proposition 30, though the differences were fairly modest and not statistically significant. Here, enough lower income Republicans and independents supported the proposal to enact it with the overwhelming support of Democrats. Lower income "populist" Republicans defected from their party's position in supporting higher taxes on the wealthy.

7.2. Counter Initiative: Proposition 38

Tables 1–3 replicate the models above, comparing support for Proposition 30 to Proposition 38. The same pattern of low-income Republicans favoring the tax increase is evident but to a much lower degree (see Figures 3B). While low-income people are more likely to favor both tax increases, the size of the coefficient for

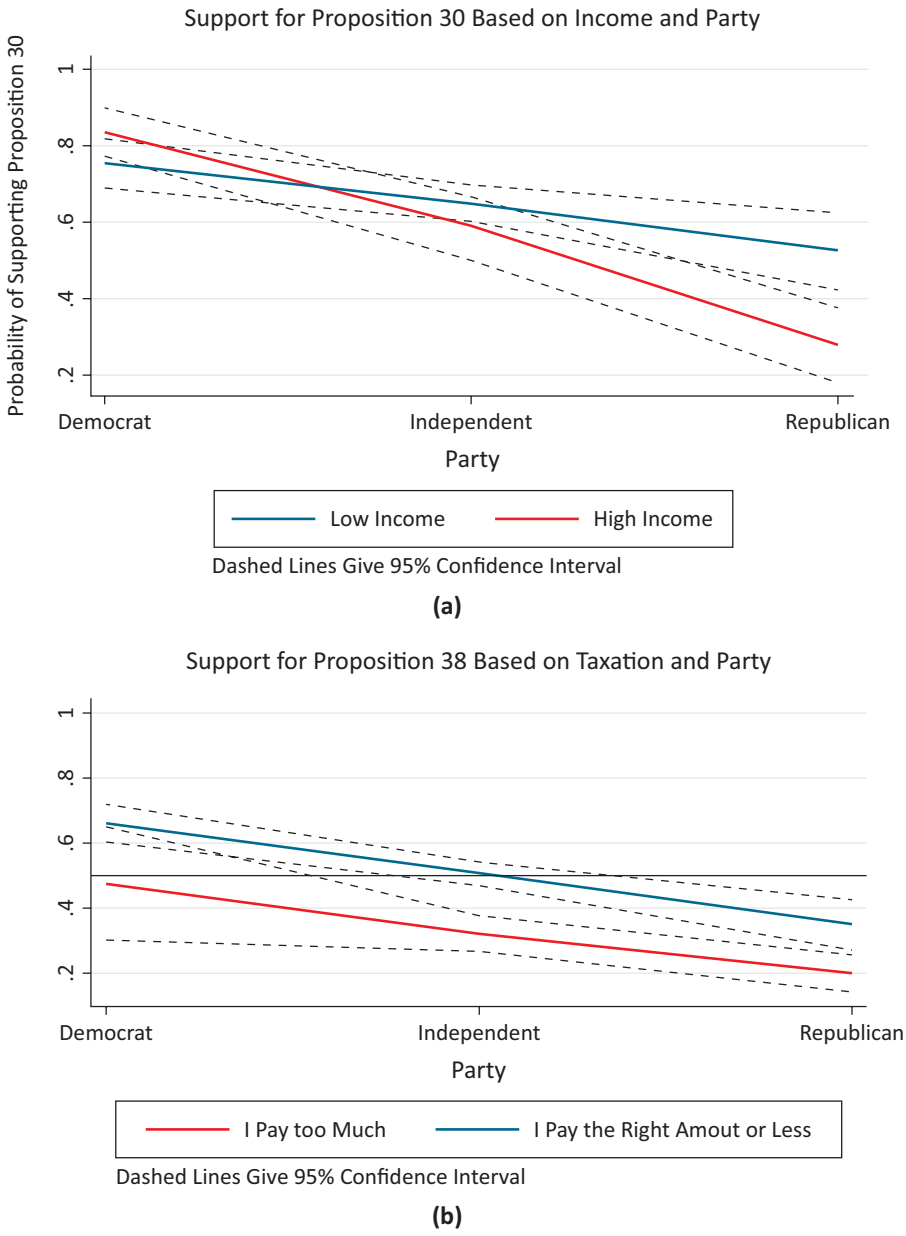

Figure 3. Conditional effect of tax burden and partisanship on the probability of favoring tax increases for **(a)** on the wealthy **(b)** for everyone.

Table 2. Predicting Voter Support for Proposition 30

	Dependent variable:			
	Yes on Proposition 30			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Partisanship (Republican)	−0.970***	−0.973***		
	(0.081)	(0.082)		
Republican			−0.872***	−0.870***
			(0.200)	(0.195)
Democrat			1.087***	1.095***
			(0.200)	(0.197)
Perceive Tax Burden Too High	−1.179***	−1.186***	−1.184***	−1.191***
	(0.140)	(0.143)	(0.136)	(0.139)
Income	0.015		0.013	
	(0.050)		(0.053)	
Income Missing	−0.112	0.034	−0.125	0.027
	(0.374)	(0.298)	(0.383)	(0.300)
Home owner	−0.401**		−0.401**	
	(0.130)		(0.131)	
High income (above 100K)		0.197		0.197
		(0.184)		(0.184)
Low income (below 60K)		0.506**		0.510**
		(0.155)		(0.157)
Services Worse	−0.228	−0.230	−0.232	−0.235
	(0.139)	(0.137)	(0.139)	(0.136)
Services Better	0.162	−0.159	−0.165	−0.162
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.092)
Age	−0.008*	−0.009**	−0.008*	−0.009**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Education	0.099	0.105	0.098	0.104
	(0.067)	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.064)
Hispanic	0.517	0.501	0.518	0.504
	(0.296)	(0.285)	(0.292)	(0.280)
African American	0.612**	0.597*	0.617**	0.602*
	(0.237)	(0.239)	(0.237)	(0.239)
Asian	0.325	0.297	0.334	0.308
	(0.188)	(0.182)	(0.189)	(0.185)
Married	0.075	0.069	0.082	0.075
	(0.152)	(0.156)	(0.150)	(0.153)
Male	−0.108	−0.108	−0.113	−0.113
	(0.110)	(0.111)	(0.113)	(0.114)
Constant	2.842***	2.517***	0.862**	0.521
	(0.343)	(0.392)	(0.313)	(0.380)
Observations	893	893	893	893
Log Likelihood	−540.002	−540.019	−540.002	−540.019
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,112.004	1,114.037	1,112.004	1,114.037

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Proposition 38 is roughly half that of Proposition 30 (see Table 1). While the coefficient for the interaction term (Republican X low-income respondent) is significant for Proposition 38, the size of the interaction coefficient is roughly half the size (.38) compared to the Proposition 30 (.60) (see Table 3). Substantively, as shown in Figure 3B, a majority of low-income Republicans never approved of increasing taxes across the board (Proposition 38). For Proposition 30, the models estimate 55% of low-income Republicans favored the initiative. And for Proposition 38 regardless of economic condition (low-income or evaluation of tax burden) a majority of Republicans never approved of the measure, unlike Proposition 30.

Figure 3B also seems to suggest that low-income Republicans look a lot more like low-income Democrats in their probability of supporting Proposition 38, than they look like high income Republicans. The model suggests the failure to generate higher support across all

Table 3. Predicting Voter Support for Proposition 30, Conditional Models

	Dependent variable:		
	Yes on Proposition 30		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Partisanship (Republican)	−0.898***	−1.118***	−0.818***
	(0.117)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Perceive Tax Burden Too High	−1.164***	−1.173***	−0.004
	(0.173)	(0.173)	(0.552)
Income missing	0.028	0.038	0.073
	(0.283)	(0.291)	(0.288)
High income (above 100K)	1.008	0.190	0.241
	(0.616)	(0.215)	(0.213)
Low income (below 60K)	0.507*	−0.737	0.507*
	(0.210)	(0.534)	(0.212)
Services Better	−0.160	−0.158	−0.148
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.092)
Services Worse	−0.221	−0.205	−0.242
	(0.178)	(0.178)	(0.178)
Age	−0.009*	−0.009*	−0.009*
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Education	0.101	0.094	0.104
	(0.076)	(0.077)	(0.076)
Hispanic	0.499*	0.483*	0.495*
	(0.238)	(0.239)	(0.240)
African American	0.610	0.600	0.584
	(0.364)	(0.364)	(0.373)
Asian	0.313	0.310	0.282
	(0.196)	(0.196)	(0.196)
Married	0.064	0.082	0.077
	(0.173)	(0.175)	(0.174)
Male	−0.106	−0.111	−0.106
	(0.156)	(0.157)	(0.157)
Partisanship X High income	−0.386		
	(0.273)		
Partisanship X Low income		0.607*	
		(0.242)	
Partisanship X Perceive Tax Burden Too High			−0.545
			(0.242)
Constant	2.359***	2.848***	2.203***
	(0.489)	(0.503)	(0.495)
Observations	893	893	893
Log Likelihood	−537.237	−538.432	−539.986
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,110.473	1,112.863	1,115.972

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

groups is important. This illustrates one of our main points that how the tax policies are designed matters.

For a subset of lower income Republicans, self-interest trumped partisanship favoring Proposition 30, but not Proposition 38. The same is true for low-income independents. The results show that economic self-interest (i.e., income) conditions the effects of party in terms of raising taxes on the wealthy, but less so raising taxes on everyone. A key difference is that taxing the rich attracted support from low-income Republicans (and independents), and even independents who felt they paid too much in taxes, which did not occur for tax increases in general.

While it is common for observers to accuse lower-income Republicans of acting against their own economic self-interest (e.g., Frank, 2005), from the same economic perspective, rich Democrats are also irrational, a charge that is leveled less frequently. In any case, when

thinking about voting on an initiative, the views of the very wealthy are not that important for outcomes simply because there are so few wealthy, compared to poor and middle class, people.

8. Conclusions

The unique situation with competing tax increase proposals on the ballot in California in 2012 allowed us to directly examine how the structure of tax policies affects support for tax increases among different groups of voters, and consider the conditions under which partisanship and self-interest shape tax policy attitudes. Because we observe attitudes toward competing tax proposals from the same voters in the same election campaign we account for many individual and contextual factors that are hard to account for when comparing support for different tax proposals at different times or across different polities using observational data. The fact that the tax increases were structured very differently allowed us to determine how general opposition to tax increases rooted in partisanship and ideology may weaken and allow for individual self-interest to shape policy attitudes. We find that partisanship and self-interest influence support for tax increases, but that the effect of party varies depending on one's income and the type of tax increase in question. Specifically, low-income Republicans are more supportive of tax increases in general than high income Republicans, especially income tax increases on the wealthy, but less supportive of income tax increases on the lower and middle classes than Democrats with similar incomes. This indicates that self-interest can trump partisanship for this group of voters when the incidence of tax payment is clearly on other individuals, in this case the wealthy.

As Piketty and others propose high taxes on the wealthy to address growing inequality, and several members of the U.S. Congress and Democratic Presidential candidates have floated similar ideas, understanding how the structure of tax increases shapes support for different tax policy proposals is a salient question for policymakers. Just as California's passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 (which capped property taxes and made it harder to increase taxes) provided an example for other states wishing to reverse high taxes and rapidly growing government spending (Berkman, 1994), Proposition 30 may provide an example for other states wishing to increase government revenue and address income inequality.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

It Depends…Different Direct Democratic Instruments and Equality in Europe from 1990 to 2015

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Abstract
Despite the popularity of direct democracy in recent decades, research on the actual output effects of popular decision-making is rare. This is especially true with regard to equality, where there are at least three major research gaps: 1) a lack of cross-national analyses; 2) insufficient investigation of the differential effects of different direct democratic instruments on equality; and 3) a failure to distinguish between different aspects of equality, i.e., socioeconomic, legal and political equality. This article takes a first step to tackle these shortcomings by looking at all national referenda in European democracies between 1990 and 2015, differentiating between mandatory, bottom-up and top-down referenda. We find that a large majority of successful direct democratic bills—regardless of which instrument is employed—are not related to equality issues. Of the remaining ones, there are generally more successful pro-equality bills than contra-equality ones, but the differences are rather marginal. Mandatory referenda tend to produce pro-equality outputs, but no clear patterns emerge for bottom-up and top-down referenda. Our results offer interesting, preliminary insights to the current debate on direct democracy, pointing to the conclusion that popular decision-making via any type of direct democratic instrument is neither curse nor blessing with regard to equality. Instead, it is necessary to look at other factors such as context conditions or possible indirect effects in order to get a clearer picture of the impacts of direct democracy on equality.

Keywords
direct democracy; direct democratic instruments; equality; Europe

Issue
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1. Introduction

In light of declining conventional political participation and growing dissatisfaction with representative democracy all over the Western world, calls for an expansion of direct democratic options have become quite popular in recent times. Initiatives and referenda are perceived as a possible cure for the current "crisis of democracy" by increasing the involvement of citizens in political decision-making and thereby fostering their support for the political system in general (Bowler, Denemark, Donovan, & McDonnell, 2017; Dalton, 2004). This has already led to an increasing use of direct democratic options worldwide during the last 30 years. Likewise, parties not only from the left (cf. Michels, 2009), but across the ideological spectrum are campaigning to further enlarge those options.

However, the effects of direct democracy on society are far from being uncontroversial among political scientists. An important topic in this regard is the question of how direct democracy impacts equality within modern societies. Up to now, findings on this topic are mixed: some scholars acknowledge the potential of direct democratic instruments to foster equality (Feld, Fischer, &

Kirchgässner, 2010; Frey & Goette, 1998; Garry, 2013), while others warn that they further increase the gap between already influential and non-influential citizens because they advantage the former in pursuing their interests (Merkel, 2011; Merkel & Ritzi, 2017; Schäfer & Schoen, 2013).

Possible explanations for these divergent findings could be that outputs differ depending on the direct democratic instrument, the concept of equality employed or the country investigated. The existing studies in this field find somewhat contradictory results with regard to different instruments and equality dimensions: while it has been reported that welfare expenditure tends to be lower in countries with mandatory referenda and to be higher in countries with national initiatives (hinting at possibly differing impacts regarding socioeconomic equality), legal and political rights of minorities seem to be better protected under mandatory referenda than under optional ones and initiatives (Blume, Müller, & Voigt, 2009; Blume & Voigt, 2012; Vatter & Danaci, 2010).

Against this background, further investigation of the effects of different direct democratic instruments on equality, covering a wide range of countries as well as various dimensions of equality, is needed. This article, which is part of the DFG-funded project "Inequality and direct democracy", aims at taking a first step in this direction by looking at whether there are, at the national level, more successful pro- or contra-equality bills that passed via different direct democratic instruments during the last decades in European democracies. By doing so, we want to gain an overview of how many pro- and contra-equality outputs are produced by the different instruments. Clearly, the results of this article cannot give a definite answer to the question of how direct democracy influences equality, but they can give a first, preliminary overview of which sort of bills are successful in different direct democratic instruments and how they relate to equality.

For the purpose of our study we proceed as follows: we first outline our theoretical considerations regarding equality and its dimensions, direct democracy in its differing forms, and the connection between the two. We proceed by providing an overview of the current literature on direct democracy and equality, pointing out existing research gaps. Afterwards, we present our case selection and coding approach to address the issue. In our result section, we compare the numbers of all successful pro- and contra-equality bills that were put to a direct democratic vote at a national level in European democracies from 1990 to 2015. We draw on a dataset of all popular votes that took place in this time period and distinguish between mandatory, bottom-up and top-down referenda. We acknowledge that this research approach comes with certain limitations: first, we do not look—in detail—at the social and political context in which the referenda took place. Second, our research design does not allow for any inferences about a possible indirect effect of direct democracy with regard to equality. Third, our research design implies a causal impact of different direct democratic instruments on equality but does not allow for an infinite answer with regard to causality. In general, this article should be understood as a first attempt to get an idea of how many successful pro- and contra-equality bills pass via different direct democratic instruments in Europe—and if any interesting patterns emerge in this context. Our results reveal that a large majority of successful bills are not related to equality issues at all and therefore cannot be expected to have an impact in this regard. For any direct democratic instrument, there are relatively small differences with regard to the numbers of successful pro- and contra-equality bills. Still, the pattern emerges that there are slightly more successful pro-equality bills than contra ones and that especially mandatory referenda tend to produce pro-equality outputs. In the conclusion, we discuss how our results can serve as a basis for future research on the topic and give propositions for doing so.

2. Theoretical Background

Before investigating the outputs of different direct democratic instruments for equality, we need to address at least three issues from a theoretical perspective. First, we have to conceptualize our understanding of equality and its various dimensions. Second, we have to give a definition of direct democracy and its different instruments. Third, we have to explain why direct democracy possibly has an impact on equality and why different instruments might differ in their impact. The following paragraphs will address these issues.

First, regarding the conceptualization of equality, in the broadest sense this means a relationship between two or more reference objects (e.g., A and B) with regard to a certain benchmark X (Alexy, 1986; Altwicker, 2011; Westen, 2016). The debate in the social sciences about how to conceptualize equality in a more narrow way revolves mainly around the concepts of "equality in result" and "equal opportunity" (Devins & Douglas, 1998; Siegel, 1998; Strauss, 1992). We stick to the first understanding of equality as closing the gap between disadvantaged (A) and well-off groups (B) with regard to a certain benchmark (X). We do this because in highly unequal societies, i.e., societies with large gaps between disadvantaged and well-off groups, equality of opportunity also tends to decrease. Or, in other words, closing the gap between different social groups within society will also enable and increase equal opportunities (see also Rawls, 1971, p. 278).

Sometimes it is necessary to treat groups unequally in order to foster equality in result—to give benefits to those who are worse off at the expense of those who are better off (Altwicker, 2011; Sartori, 1992). Therefore, all direct democratic bills that aim at making society more equal (by proposing equal or unequal treatment of certain social groups) are considered as pro-equality.

As mentioned in the introduction, equality occurs in different dimensions. Regarding the effects of direct democracy, most of the literature focusses on aspects of socioeconomic equality. Another point of scientific interest are the implications of direct democratic options and decisions for minorities, containing issues of legal and political equality (see Section 3). We want to gain knowledge about direct democratic outputs for equality that is as encompassing as possible. Therefore, we include three dimensions of equality and define them in the following way:

1. *Socioeconomic equality*: equality regarding the socioeconomic status (SES; aspects such as income, education, health, or property);
2. *Legal equality*: equality regarding the legal status of the inhabitants of a country;
3. *Political equality*: equality regarding the scope of political influence (especially of minority groups).

Second, direct democracy is defined as popular votes on issues—excluding direct elections or recalls of politicians. Similar to Blume et al. (2009) and Blume and Voigt (2012), we differentiate between three different types of direct democratic instruments: bottom-up referenda (initiated by citizens, i.e., referenda against parliamentary decisions or new initiatives); top-down referenda (initiated by parliament or government); and mandatory referenda (specific laws—e.g., changes to the constitution—that must be approved by a popular vote according to the constitution).

Third, as mentioned above, in the literature the questions of why and how direct democracy may be expected to have an effect on equality are generally approached from the socioeconomic perspective or with regard to minorities. One prominent argument, mainly linked to socioeconomic equality, is that low SES groups tend to lose in direct democratic decisions because disproportionally few poor people vote compared to well-off upper and middle classes. As a result, the decisions would mirror the socioeconomic interests of the better-off and therefore disadvantage low SES groups. This theoretical expectation of direct democracy decreasing socioeconomic equality is for example promoted by Wolfgang Merkel (Merkel, 2011; Merkel & Ritzi, 2017).

This negative impact of direct democracy on socioeconomic equality might also be expected from the perspective of the median voter theorem (Black, 1948; Downs, 1957). Applied to direct democracy, it is assumed that outputs of direct democratic votes should generally mirror the preferences of the median voter. Increasing government spending on welfare, benefitting low SES groups, is probably not in line with the socioeconomic interests of a median voter, at least in relatively well-off countries with a large middle class.

Regarding the legal and political dimensions of equality, some scholars are more optimistic, once again arguing with the median voter perspective: in their view, the output of direct democracy for minorities should depend on the attitudes of the majority of the voters regarding the respective minority. Therefore, direct democracy is expected to lead to minority-friendlier policies if voters support these policies more than political decision-makers do, and expected to disadvantage minorities if voters oppose minority-friendly ruling (Matsusaka, 2004; Töller & Vollmer, 2013; Vatter & Danaci, 2010). So, as attitudes towards certain minority groups may vary between different regions or countries, so may the outputs of direct democratic decisions in light of legal and political equality.

As discussed above, not only different dimensions of equality, also different direct democratic instruments should be taken into account. Eder and Magin (2008) imply that bottom-up referenda should be more protective of minority rights than the output of top-down ones. This is mainly because in the former case minorities can initiate votes as well as veto bills that would disadvantage them. While the study by Eder and Magin (2008) mainly deals with the legal and political equality of minorities, the same reasoning might also apply to socioeconomic equality—but in the opposite direction: bottom-up referenda might for the most part be initiated by well-off citizens with the financial resources to stem successful campaigns, presumably proposing policies in their interest instead of an extension of welfare programs. In contrast, bills in top-down and mandatory referenda are drafted by politicians who want to be re-elected, so at least some of them might address low SES groups.

Summing up, there are some ideas out there on why and how—different—direct democratic instruments might have an impact on equality, but the matter is far from clear. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that the theoretical approaches we have just briefly introduced build on the idea of a causal impact of direct democracy on equality. However, the other causal pathway must also be kept in mind, i.e., that certain levels of inequality within a society lead to a different use of direct democracy and also to different outputs in direct democratic votes. The aim of this article is not to test any causal relationship or make strong inferences about mechanisms on how exactly direct democracy might impact equality in European countries. Instead, we follow a rather descriptive approach by looking at successful direct democratic votes and their impact on equality in order to see if interesting patterns emerge that can then serve as the basis for further, more in-depth, analysis. Before presenting our results, we give a brief overview of the empirical literature on direct democracy and equality, with a special focus on the few articles that actually differentiated between direct democratic instruments.

3. State of the Art

As options for and the use of direct democracy are increasing, several scholars have addressed its effects on equality in recent years. As mentioned earlier, they ei-

ther concentrate on aspects of socioeconomic equality or investigate political and/or legal equality of minorities. Most of the research has concentrated on the US and Switzerland and many scholars analyzed the effect of the existence of direct democratic options instead of the outputs of concrete bills. Moreover, only few studies differentiated between direct democratic instruments.

The following section will briefly summarize the findings of previous studies that dealt with the impact of direct democracy on equality. We will first present those findings that are mainly concerned with socioeconomic equality and, in a second step, present those that deal with legal and political equality. In the two parts we will consider both studies that look at direct democracy in general and studies that explicitly differentiate between different direct democratic instruments.

For the first part—namely regarding the impact of direct democracy on socioeconomic equality—it can be said that the negative assumption by Wolfgang Merkel (2011, 2015) is backed up by a number of empirical results: educative spending is lower in US states with direct democratic options and resourceful groups benefitted at the expense of worse-off in some German direct democratic votes (Berry, 2014; Schäfer & Schoen, 2013; Töller & Vollmer, 2013). Also, several studies found that Swiss cantons or US states with more direct democratic options invest less in social spending (Berry, 2009; Feld & Kirchgässner, 2000; Freitag & Vatter, 2006; Matsusaka, 2004; Moser & Obinger, 2007; Wagschal & Obinger, 2000). While this is usually assumed to result in less socioeconomic equality, Feld et al. (2010) actually observe no effect of differences in welfare spending on levels of income equality in Swiss cantons with more or less direct democratic options. Moreover, findings by Fatke (2014, p. 112) suggest that "there is no evidence that SES affects participation in direct democracies significantly more or less than in representative systems", which generally speaks against Merkel's (2011) rather pessimistic argumentation regarding direct democracy.

The only studies in this regard that differentiate between direct democratic instruments find contrasting patterns: while countries with national initiatives tend to spend more on welfare, expenditures are lower in countries with mandatory referenda (Blume et al., 2009; Blume & Voigt, 2012). Also, the use of mandatory fiscal referenda decreases redistribution through personal income taxes in Swiss cantons in the short run, while the use of initiatives increases it in the long run (Morger & Schaltegger, 2018). This might tempt one to assume a negative effect of mandatory referenda on socioeconomic equality, and a positive one of bottom-up referenda. However, it is important to note that the authors of the cross-national analysis investigate the legal existence of direct democratic options and not their actual use and outputs.

When it comes to the impact of direct democracy on legal and political equality, results are even more mixed. While Gamble (1997), Haider-Markel, Querze, and Lindaman (2007), and Lewis (2013) emphasize the negative implications of direct democracy in US-American states for (at least some) minority groups, Frey and Goette (1998) find minority rights to be protected by referenda in Switzerland. Regarding political equality, Flavin (2013, p. 130) indicates that a frequent use of initiatives in American states "may be a viable avenue for ensuring that the opinions of disadvantaged citizens are represented in the political arena". The majority of studies on both countries arrives at somewhat nuanced conclusions: context conditions seem to determine whether minorities are discriminated against in the US, and characteristics of the respective minority groups might be decisive for whether their rights are endangered or protected through direct democracy in Switzerland (Bollinger, 2007; Christmann & Danaci, 2012; Donovan & Bowler, 1998; Hajnal, Gerber, & Louch, 2002; Helbling & Kriesi, 2004; Vatter, 2000; Vatter & Danaci, 2010).

Regarding different effects depending on the direct democratic instrument employed, empirical studies are again scarce, but do point in one direction: Gamble (1997) states that the discrimination against minorities in the US mainly happened via bottom-up referenda preventing parliament from protecting these groups—Vatter and Danaci (2010) find bottom-up referenda significantly decreasing the probability of minority protection in Switzerland compared to mandatory referenda.

Overall, empirical results do not offer definite answers to the question of how direct democracy can be expected to impact equality. Regarding the socioeconomic dimension, the tendency is towards a negative effect, while context factors seem to make the difference. This is also especially true in case of legal and political equality. The few existing studies suggest positive effects of bottom-up referenda on socioeconomic equality, but negative ones on legal and political equality, while it might be the other way around for mandatory referenda.

Different instruments of direct democracy should certainly get more attention in terms of their possibly different effects on equality. This can be seen as one research gap in the current literature. Additionally, most studies in the field focus on the US or Switzerland and just one dimension of equality. The few existing comparative analyses mostly look at legal options of direct democracy without regarding actual direct democratic outputs—a fact that, as Berry (2014) shows, is at least somewhat problematic for the causal interpretation of results. Our article aims to take a first step in addressing these research gaps by looking at all national-level direct democratic bills in Europe from 1990 to 2015, and assessing their outputs for socioeconomic, legal and political equality, thereby differentiating between direct democratic instruments. With our results we provide a descriptive overview of how direct democratic outputs in Europe have addressed issues of equality. In the following, we will present our case selection, coding rules, and methodological challenges in more detail before presenting our results.

4. Coding and Data

This article is part of the DFG-funded project "Inequality and Direct Democracy in Europe", which analyzes all direct democratic bills at subnational and national level in European democracies from 1990 to 2015 regarding their output for equality. In this article, we focus solely on successful bills at the national level.

For each successful bill, we assessed if the bill proposed measures that fostered or hampered socioeconomic, political or legal equality. Every bill that proposes measures that would help to close the gap between disadvantaged and better-off groups (by giving the greatest benefit to the worse-off or restricting benefits to the better-off) is considered as pro-equality. Vice versa, bills that would increase this gap (by giving further benefits to the better-off or restricting those to the worse-off) are considered as contra-equality.

This assessment of (potential) equality outputs of a bill is perhaps most straightforward regarding socioeconomic equality. We count as disadvantaged those social groups that are worse off than the general majority with regard to socioeconomic aspects such as income, education, housing or welfare. For legal equality, a bill has to propose measures that improve the legal situation of social groups that do not enjoy the same rights as other groups. Examples are the legalization of same-sex marriages or easier naturalization for long-term residents without citizenship. In order to count as pro-equality in political terms, bills have to propose measures that improve the situation of political minorities and thereby enable them to increase their political influence relative to powerful political mainstream actors. Political minorities are understood as groups whose political aims significantly differ from mainstream political actors (e.g., major parties)—with regard to the social or ethnical groups they primarily represent (e.g., Black Lives Matter Movement) or issues that they put on their agenda (e.g., Pirate Party).

For the coding, we have to keep in mind that the dimensions of socioeconomic, legal and political equality might sometimes overlap and cannot necessarily be seen as independent of each other. A rise of socioeconomic equality within a country is likely to also lead to more political or legal equality, and vice versa. However, for the coding process this was not a major problem as most successful pro- (or contra-) equality bills clearly aimed at one specific dimension of equality. For example, there were bills on extending welfare programs (socioeconomic equality), legalizing same-sex marriage (legal equality) or increasing proportional representation in parliament (political equality). In very few cases more than one dimension came into play, and with these we coded for that dimension on which the bill was mostly concerned with. As a result, bills were not coded pro- or contra-equality on multiple dimensions.

As mentioned earlier, we analyze all national-level direct democratic votes between 1990 and 2015 in European democracies. We count as democratic all European countries that were considered free according to the Freedom House index in the year of the vote. To collect data on the votes and instruments employed, we drew on well-established online search engines for direct democracy such as www.sudd.ch or www.c2d.ch. Between 1990 and 2015, 515 direct democratic bills were voted upon in European democracies, of which 240 took place in Switzerland. 321 referenda were bottom-up, 116 mandatory and 78 top-down. Figure 1 shows the distribution of all votes for each year.

Figure 1 reveals that the frequency of votes varied substantially over the years, with a minimum of 8 in 2007 and a maximum of 31 in 2003. There has been no period of time when direct democracy was especially popular or rarely used at all—the peaks and troughs fluctuate quite regularly. Table 5 (see Appendix) presents a short overview of the countries included in our sample and gives information about which direct democratic instruments are available at the national level. While in some countries such as Norway or the Netherlands we find very few or no referenda at all, other countries such as Italy, Liechtenstein and—obviously—Switzerland make use of referenda quite frequently so that we find a lot of cases for these countries.

Out of our 515 bills, we had to exclude some from our sample. First, we excluded those without sufficient information on the content of the bill to evaluate its output for equality. Second, bills that proposed changes regarding direct democratic procedures were excluded, as keeping them would have required a judgment on the effects of direct democracy on equality—which is exactly what we are looking at. Third, we excluded bills that proposed highly complex measures, for example comprehensive tax systems overhauls. These would have required in-depth case studies and therefore were out of the scope of this article. Fourth, bills on joining international organizations such as the EU or NATO were excluded. Membership in, for example, the EU has so many implications for so many aspects of equality that it is not possible to code it in a straightforward way.

Summing up, we only included those direct democratic bills in our sample for which we were able to make clear and sound judgments on their (possible) outputs for socioeconomic, legal or political equality. Table 1 gives you a few examples of bills that were excluded due to one of the reasons mentioned.

After the exclusion of those cases, we were left with 373 direct democratic bills in our sample. From this sample, we then only looked at those that were successful, meaning those that had an actual political output. We assessed, whether the measures that those bills proposed would foster or hinder equality on our three dimensions—or if they were not related to equality at all. Multiple sources were used for these assessments, such as the bill proposal itself, NGO reports, newspaper articles, political science articles and legal texts. A codebook with several key questions can be found in the Appendix

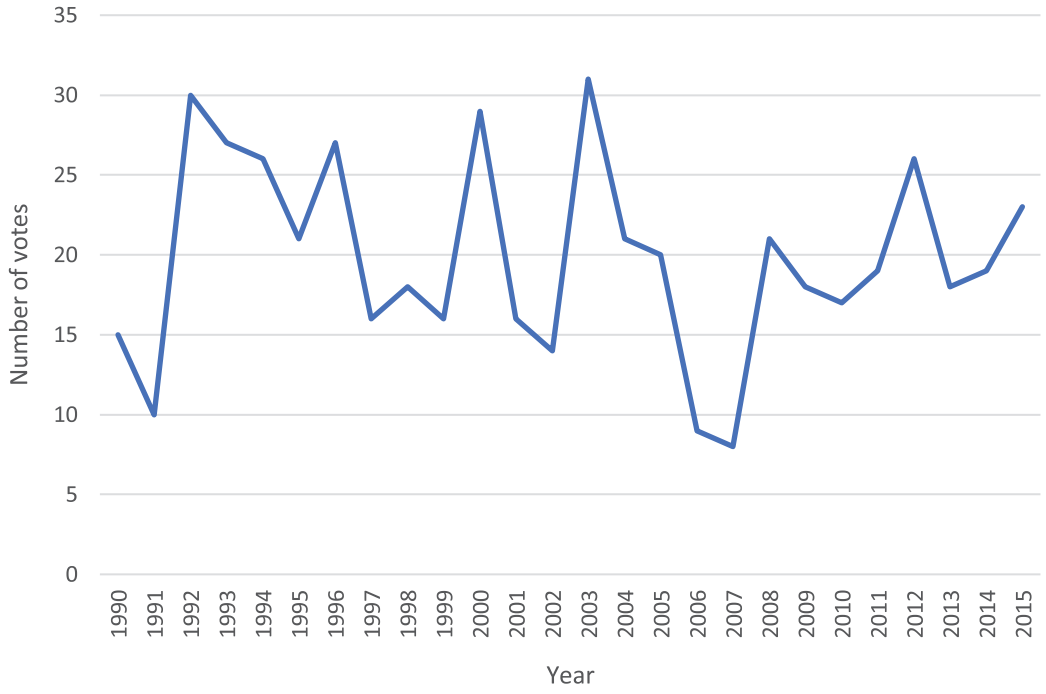

Figure 1. Direct democratic votes in European democracies 1990–2015 (national level).

Table 1. Examples of cases excluded from sample.

Example	Reason for Exclusion
Referendum in Lithuania: 8/27/1994 Referendum on indexing the value of long-term capital investments	Missing data: not enough information on the actual content of the bill accessible
Referendum in San Marino: 7/3/2005 Bill on introducing a 40% approval quorum for direct democratic votes	Bill on direct democratic instruments
Referendum in Liechtenstein: 10/21/1990 Bill on comprehensive tax reform	Complex issue: comprehensive reform with multiple complex aspects to it, no clear assessment of the effects regarding equality possible without in-depth case study

of this article. To make the coding more reliable, it was undertaken by multiple researchers. For the whole sample, we arrived at a congruency of 93.2% and excluded only 6 cases which were coded differently by every coder. Table 2 shows some examples of pro- and contra-equality bills for each dimension:

Table 2. Core examples of pro- and contra-equality bills.

	Socioeconomic Equality	Political Equality	Legal Equality
Pro Equality	Hungary: 03/09/2008 Referendum on abolition of fees for higher public education	Liechtenstein: 08/11/1992 Referendum on abolition of the 8% threshold for parliamentary elections	Ireland: 05/22/2015 Referendum on legalizing same-sex marriage
Non-Equality-Related	Switzerland: 04/01/1990 Initiative against highway between Biel and Solothurn/Zuchwil	Liechtenstein: 03/10/2002 Referendum on raising funds for the Little Big One music festival	Lithuania: 06/14/1992 Referendum on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Lithuania by end of 1992
Contra Equality	Switzerland: 09/27/1998 Referendum on reduction of pensions for orphans and widows	Poland: 09/06/2015 Introduction of majoritarian voting system for parliamentary elections instead of proportional voting system	Slovakia: 02/07/2015 Referendum on banning adoption by same-sex couples

We assessed the output of each bill, based on their title, the wording of the proposal or the data sources at hand, mentioned above. Additionally, some literature exists on most cases, helping us to make sound judgments regarding their connection to our equality dimensions. One example is a referendum in Italy that took place in 1995, which aimed at restricting the number of private television channels owned by one person to one. While this at first glance does not seem to be related to equality, literature tells us that it was intended to limit the political influence of Silvio Berlusconi, thereby increasing political equality (Capretti, 2001; Tagliabue, 1995). It might be possible that bills we coded as not related to equality had effects on equality in their actual outcome (not output). To assess this, we would have had to do case studies of all of the 373 bills, which was beyond the scope of this article.

5. Results

In order to get an impression of the way in which the outputs of national-level direct democratic votes differ depending on the instrument used, Table 3 shows how many successful bills have pro-/contra-equality outputs and how many are not related to equality at all. It entails the three equality dimensions and total numbers, each differentiated between bottom-up, mandatory and top-down referenda. Cramér's V indicates whether there is a significant relationship between the instrument employed and the shares of pro- and contra-equality outputs and those bills that did not relate to equality. In total, 129 out of the 373 bills in our sample were adopted in a direct democratic vote—60 via bottom-up, 52 via mandatory, and 17 via top-down referenda.

When looking at Table 3, it first of all becomes clear that most of the adopted bills are not related to our equality dimensions at all. This is true for over 65% of all successful bills that are included in our analysis. Therefore, numbers for pro- and contra-equality outputs are relatively small and allow only for limited conclusions about differences between instruments and dimensions.

Nevertheless, there is a significant, moderate relationship between the direct democratic instrument and the distribution of pro-, contra- and non-equality-related outputs for every equality dimension and in total. The levels of significance are at 10% and 1% for political equality. This indicates that direct democratic instruments might indeed make a difference when it comes to the adoption of pro- and contra-equality bills, leaving all other things aside. In total, mandatory referenda produce (slightly) more outputs fostering equality than hindering it. For bottom-up and top-down referenda, the numbers are more balanced.

Turning to the single dimensions, first, we see a narrow but positive record for socioeconomic equality across all instruments except top-down referenda, of which none has an output related to equality. This is also the only dimension where bottom-up referenda result in more pro-equality outputs than in contra-equality ones. Second, only very few direct democratic outputs concern political equality and the numbers of pro- and contra-outputs are, more or less, balanced with only minor differences for bottom-up referenda. Finally, bottom-up referenda more often widen the gap between legally disadvantaged groups and the rest of society, thus decreasing legal equality. The opposite is true for mandatory and top-down referenda: their outputs more often increase than decrease legal equality. But here again, the numbers are very small and therefore differences should not be overestimated.

As Switzerland is a special case, both because of its long history of direct democracy and its widespread use, we repeated our tabulations without the Swiss cases. The respective results can be found in the Appendix (Table 6). Without the Swiss cases, the relationships between instruments and outputs lose their significance. This comes as no surprise as almost half of the bills are from Switzerland, and underlines the preliminary character of our findings and the need for further research on the topic. Still, there are some other differences in the results worth mentioning. The record of bottom-up referenda especially improves when excluding Switzerland: taking all equality dimensions together, they now result slightly more often in pro-equality outputs than in contra-equality ones. While they still have a negative ratio regarding legal equality, it is not as distinct as it is when including the Swiss cases. When it comes to political equality, numbers for bottom-up referenda are now balanced. Patterns for mandatory and top-down referenda remain more or less the same, with the number of mandatory votes dropping considerably without the Swiss ones. The differences regarding bottom-up instruments, although only small in numbers, underline the importance of context when judging the output of direct democratic instruments: further research should investigate if the negative record for bottom-up votes for political and legal equality in Switzerland holds over a longer time period and, if yes, why this is the case, when in other countries outputs of these votes are more balanced.

Clearly, the results presented above might appear somewhat confusing at first glance. For this reason we have summarized them in Table 4.

In Table 4 you find an overview on the proportions of successful pro- and contra-equality bills for each direct democratic instrument and each equality dimension, including and excluding the Swiss cases. + stands for more pro-equality outputs, – for more contra-equality ones, and 0 for a balanced number of pro- and contra-equality outputs.

Summing up, our findings make clear that a great majority of successful—national-level—direct democratic bills in Europe are not related to equality issues at all. Those differences that we find regarding different direct democratic instruments, different equality dimensions and the number of successful pro- and contra-equality bills are generally rather small. Generally, there are

Table 3. Pro- and contra-equality outputs.

	Socioeconomic Equality			Political Equality			Legal Equality			Total		
	Bottom-up	Mandatory	Top-down	Bottom-up	Mandatory	Top-down	Bottom-up	Mandatory	Top-down	Bottom-up	Mandatory	Top-down
Pro Equality (+1)	9 (15%)	7 (13.46%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.67%)	0 (0,00%)	2 (11.76%)	1 (1.67%)	4 (7.69%)	2 (11.76%)	11 (18.33%)	11 (21.15%)	4 (23.53%)
Non-Equality-Related (0)	47 (78.33%)	45 (86.54%)	17 (100%)	56 (93.33%)	52 (100%)	13 (76.47%)	51 (85%)	47 (90.38%)	15 (88.24%)	34 (56.67%)	40 (76.92%)	11 (64.71%)
Contra Equality (–1)	4 (6.67%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.76%)	8 (13.33%)	1 (1.92%)	0 (0%)	15 (25%)	1 (1.92%)	2 (11.76%)
Number of Votes (Total)	60 (100%)	52 (100%)	17 (100%)	60 (100%)	52 (100%)	17 (100%)	60 (100%)	52 (100%)	17 (100%)	60 (100%)	52 (100%)	17 (100%)
Cramér's V		0.1746*			0.2290***			0.1966**			0.2215**	

Notes: * = 10% significance (Chi^2); ** = 5% significance (Chi^2); *** = 1% significance (Chi^2).

Table 4. Overview of the proportions of pro- and contra equality outputs/bills.

	Bottom-Up		Mandatory		Top-Down	
	Incl. Switzerland	Excl. Switzerland	Incl. Switzerland	Excl. Switzerland	Incl. Switzerland	Excl. Switzerland
Socioeconomic Equality	+	(+)	+	(+)	0	0
Political Equality	−	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Equality	−	(−)	+	(+)	+	(+)

Notes: the parentheses () indicate that the relationship between direct democratic instrument and equality output is insignificant.

slightly more pro-equality outputs than contra- ones—which is especially true for socioeconomic equality. As Table 4 indicates, mandatory referenda produce more pro- than contra-equality outputs, for both the socioeconomic and the legal equality dimension—again keeping in mind that we are talking about minor differences here. Bottom-up referenda produce slightly more pro-equality outputs on the socioeconomic dimension but also slightly more contra-equality ones for legal equality. All in all, it is important to keep in mind that these results stem from a very limited number of cases—a majority of the national-level direct democratic outputs analyzed in our article do not relate to equality at all, and differences between the instruments lose significance when omitting Switzerland. Therefore, the findings presented in Table 4 are only first impressions that can serve as a starting point for future research on the topic.

6. Conclusions

In this article, we have dealt with the question of whether there are, at the national level, more successful pro- or contra-equality bills that passed via different direct democratic instruments (bottom-up, top-down and mandatory referenda) during the last decades in European democracies. In order to answer this, we built on three equality-dimensions—namely socioeconomic, political, and legal equality—and we drew on a dataset of all national-level referenda in European democracies from 1990 to 2015.

The aim of the article was to gain a first impression of the relationship between direct democratic instruments and equality by presenting descriptive statistics, thereby encouraging further analytical, in-depth research. In order to give an overview that is as encompassing as possible while at the same time sticking to a reliable coding procedure, we had to exclude those direct democratic votes where the output in equality terms could not be evaluated in a straightforward way. Of course it may be that the excluded cases would show a picture that is completely different from the one we present now. Nevertheless, we are able to make statements about a majority of the national-level bills that were voted on in our studied period—namely 373 out of 515 bills in total, and 129 successful ones.

Our first major finding was that most of the remaining outputs were not related to any of the three equality-dimensions at all—somewhat easing concerns about direct democracy as a serious threat to equality, but at the same time limiting its promises as a potential "road to equality". This left us with relatively small numbers of pro- versus contra-equality outputs and differences between those. We therefore cannot draw generalized conclusions from our findings. Nevertheless, some patterns emerged that deserve further investigation.

First, our results indicate that the outputs of bottom-up referenda fostered socioeconomic equality slightly more often than hindered it—a finding that fits the theoretical assumption that minority groups (in this case low SES ones) can use this direct democratic instrument to foster their interests. However, it was the other way around for legal equality, where bottom-up votes slightly more often hindered than fostered equality. This might support previous findings on the negative impact of bottom-up referenda on minority protection (Gamble, 1997; Vatter & Danaci, 2010).

Second, the bivariate test of the relationship between instruments of direct democracy and equality hints to a relatively good record of mandatory referenda in terms of fostering equality. This might speak against the findings by Blume et al. (2009) and Blume and Voigt (2012) on the option for this instrument resulting in less welfare spending. However, three things are important here: first of all, in our dataset only seven national-level mandatory votes resulted in an output that was related to socioeconomic equality at all. While all of these outputs were pro-equality, such a small number of cases without controls does not allow for major inferences. Second, if our finding would also hold in replications covering more cases and including context factors, the differentiation between option and use became apparent: the opportunity to hold mandatory referenda does not necessarily mean that they are also employed—at all or with regard to welfare spending. Therefore, it is quite difficult to come to solid conclusions about the influence of direct democracy on socioeconomic equality by only looking at legal options. While this might capture indirect effects of direct democracy, the direct effects of actual votes are ignored. Third, confirmation of our findings would also point to the importance of taking

other aspects of socioeconomic equality besides welfare spending into account.

Generally, this article is a first attempt to look at the outputs of successful direct democratic bills in Europe with regard to equality. In our investigation of all national-level referenda from 1990 to 2015, we have discovered some interesting patterns but the limited character of our findings does not allow for any final conclusions. Instead, future research can investigate if similar—or different—patterns emerge when taking into account more cases and also when looking at potential context factors. Clearly, a number of different aspects such as citizens' attitudes towards minorities, the composition of the electorate, interactions between direct democratic instruments and the representative system, the general level of equality in a country, or the existence of voting and approval quora could play an important role in this context. Therefore, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the matter, it would be necessary for future research projects to look at these factors in detail. The results of this article give us first ideas of how different direct instruments have had an impact on equality in Europe and can serve as a starting point for such future research projects.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Table 5. Overview of available direct democratic instruments in European democracies.

Country	Bottom-Up*	Top-Down**	Mandatory
Andorra	No	Yes	Yes
Austria	No	Yes	Yes
Belgium	No	No	No
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	No
Croatia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	No	No***	No
Cyprus (North)	No	Yes	No
Czech Republic	No	No***	No
Denmark	No	Yes	Yes
Estonia		Yes	Yes
Finland	No	Yes	No
France	No	Yes	Yes
Germany	No	No	Yes
Gibraltar	No	Yes	Yes
Greece	No	Yes	No
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iceland	No	Yes	Yes
Ireland	No	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	No
Latvia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liechtenstein	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	Yes	Yes	No
Malta	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	No	No	No
Norway	No	No***	No
Poland	No	Yes	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	No	Yes	Yes
Serbia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	No	Yes	No
Spain	No	Yes	Yes
Sweden	No	Yes	No
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	No	Yes	Yes

Notes: * Includes those that are listed as *citizen initiative* by IDEA; ** Includes those that are listed as *optional referendums* by IDEA; *** but ad hoc referendums are possible. Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (n.d.).

Codebook

Dimension	Guiding Questions (Code *pro-equality* if any of these questions can be answered with "yes" except 1.8)
1. Socioeconomic Equality	1.1) Does the bill propose measures that will increase income for low SES groups? (i.e., raising the minimum wage, give tax cuts to low income people, raising pensions etc.) 1.2) Does the bill propose measures that make (higher) education more affordable for low SES groups? 1.3) Does the bill propose measures that make healthcare more affordable for low SES groups? Does it lower patient contributions in the health care sector? 1.4) Does the bill propose measures that make housing more affordable for low SES groups? (i.e., raising housing subsidies, expand public housing, etc.) 1.5) Does the bill propose measures that expand social welfare programs? 1.6) Does the bill propose measures that abolish/lower other kinds of fees that are not proportionally rising with income? 1.7) Does the bill propose measures to invest in common goods mainly benefitting low SES groups? (e.g., public transportation) 1.8) Does the bill propose measures that increase the retirement age? (if yes code *contra-equality*)
2. Political Equality	2.1) Does the bill propose measures that strengthen the political voice/powers of (political) minorities? 2.2) Does the bill propose measures that lead to a more proportional composition of parliament? (i.e., get rid of/weaken majoritarian voting procedures, get rid of certain % thresholds for parliamentary elections) 2.3) Does the bill propose measures that increase the media presence of (political) minorities? Does it propose measures against media monopolies of certain political actors?
3. Legal Equality	3.1) Does the bill propose measures that give more legal rights to disadvantaged groups? (i.e., allowing same-sex marriage, allowing adoption for same-sex couples, allowing permanent residents without citizenship to vote in elections, etc.) 3.2) Does the bill propose measures that facilitate the way to citizenship? (i.e., for immigrants that are long-term residents of the country, for children of immigrants that were born/raised in the country, etc.) 3.3) Does the bill propose measures that give more rights to immigrants/asylum seekers? Does it increase protection against deportation? 3.4) Does the bill propose measures that improve the legal status of foreign residents of a country? (i.e., allow them to buy property, allow them to work in certain professional fields, make them eligible to apply for social welfare programs/unemployment benefits, etc.)

Table 6. Pro- and contra-equality outputs without Switzerland.

	Socioeconomic Equality			Political Equality			Legal Equality			Total		
	Bottom-Up	Mandatory	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Mandatory	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Mandatory	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Mandatory	Top-Down
Pro Equality (+1)	3 (11.54%)	1 (7.14%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.76%)	1 (3.85%)	2 (14.29%)	2 (11.76%)	5 (19.23%)	3 (21.43%)	4 (23.53%)
Non-Equality-Related (0)	23 (88.46%)	13 (92.86%)	17 (100%)	24 (92.13%)	14 (100%)	13 (76.47%)	22 (84.62%)	11 (78.57%)	15 (88.24%)	17 (65.38%)	10 (71.43%)	11 (64.71%)
Contra Equality (–1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.85%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (11.54%)	1 (7.14%)	0 (0%)	4 (15.38%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (11.76%)
Number of Votes (Total)	26 (100%)	14 (100%)	17 (100%)	26 (100%)	14 (100%)	17 (100%)	26 (100%)	14 (100%)	17 (100%)	26 (100%)	14 (100%)	17 (100%)
Cramér's V		0.1918			0.2078			0.1731			0.0763	

Reference

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Article

American State Ballot Initiatives and Income Inequality

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Abstract
Some have argued that the ballot initiative process prevalent in many American states might lower inequality. We contend this is improbable based on what is known about whether expansion of democracy leads to redistribution, the attitudes of citizens, and the characteristics of the initiative process. Nevertheless, the proposition needs testing. We examine three types of evidence. First, we analyze the content and passage of all post-World War II initiatives going to voters in California, a state that makes heavy use of ballot propositions. Second, we model institutional factors influencing differences in inequality at the state-level from 1976–2014 to test the aggregate-level effect of ballot initiatives on income inequality. Third, we use individual level data to evaluate the claim that frequent initiative use makes lower income people happier because it helps to reduce inequality. Our analyses consistently indicate that the ballot initiative process fails to reduce income inequality.

Keywords
direct democracy; life satisfaction; income inequality; state ballot initiatives; redistribution

Issue
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1. Introduction

Might direct democracy in the American states be a means for reducing income inequality? Some have hoped this would be the case. Indeed, people commonly tell the story that the initiative process was a Progressive Era created tool allowing the public to bypass state legislatures corrupted by large moneyed interests and catering to the wealthy (see Eule, 1990). Presumably the initiative was a means of correcting the imbalance, which logically might include redistributing income (some advocates also favored measures directly aimed at doing so such as the progressive income tax). Careful historical analysis has not been kind to the presumption that the initiative process, eventually established in 24 of 50 states, was important to fighting corporate power or advancing a Progressive economic agenda (see especially Ellis, 2002). Nevertheless, modern day Progressive organizations such as the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center (The Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, n.d.) still argue that direct democracy can be a key tool in advancing the interests of the many relative to the wealthy. Moreover, one recent academic book (Franko & Witko, 2018) argues that in the current era of greater public concern within the American public about growing inequality, the initiative process encourages adoption of redistributive policies. Additionally, another recent academic study (Radcliff & Shufeldt, 2016) claims to offer evidence that greater use of ballot initiatives enhances the subjective well-being of lower income citizens. The authors contend this is likely *because* of redistributive policies under the initiative process.

Accordingly, it is worth considering whether use of state ballot initiatives is associated with income redistribution. We address the topic using three different methods and a variety of data. First, we examine the substance and voting results of ballot measures in the entire post-World War II era for California, a state which especially uses ballot initiatives. We consider how frequently people face redistributive ballot measures, their explicit aims, and how often they pass. Second, we examine data on income distribution across the American states, focusing on whether use of the ballot initiative affects such distribution controlling for a variety of other factors. Third, we reassess survey data reported to show that greater use of initiatives leads to more life satisfaction among low income individuals, potentially traceable to redistributive policy.

For reasons explained in the following section, we began this study skeptical of the idea that the initiative process encourages redistribution. We found our skepticism justified. None of the empirical approaches we undertook supported the idea that direct democracy in the American states promotes redistribution and/or works to effectively reduce income inequality.

2. Theory and Expectations

The logic behind an argument that ballot initiatives may promote redistribution centers on how they might move policy closer to the median income voter, with the presumption that representative institutions may be tilted toward the preferences of higher status, more organized citizens. Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016) make this explicit:

> [S]ince direct democracy is a majoritarian institution, the outcomes may be relatively more responsive to the preferences of low SES [socioeconomic status] individuals than representative institutions. Put differently, direct democracy might have the strongest impact on those of lower SES precisely because their voices are so feebly and inconsistently heard in representative institutions…such that initiatives may offer a more level playing field. (2016, pp. 1411–1412)

This argument implies that extending the ability of ordinary citizens to make democratic choices will allow low and middle income voters to unite to promote redistribution against the interests of a wealthy minority; Shapiro (2002) refers to this as the "redistributive thesis."

A more subtle argument suggests that direct democracy promotes redistribution only during periods when the median voter expresses greater concern about income inequality, such as has occurred in the United States in recent decades. Franko and Witko (2018) make this case in their recent study of responses to economic inequality in the American states: "As government fails to address inequality, the initiative is being used to craft policy intended to slow or roll back growing inequality" (p. 102). Their argument (2018, pp. 141–142, 168) is explicitly grounded in the presumption that the academic literature establishes that direct democracy, as a majoritarian institution, moves policy closer to the desires of the median voter, per research such as that conducted by Matsusaka (2004). Yet this claim is controversial, and more recent studies have cast doubt on the conclusion that the American ballot initiative process operates in the manner suggested by Matsusaka (Lax & Phillips, 2009; Monogan, Gray, & Lowery, 2009).

Moreover, based on reconsideration of their own data, we find reasons to be skeptical about the claims about redistribution made by Franko and Witko (2018). Their strongest evidence pertains to enactment of minimum wage increases; they provide compelling findings that initiatives are associated with state increases in the minimum wage in recent years, controlling for other variables. Yet they acknowledge that the minimum wage is a very simple policy and uncommonly easy to explain to voters. We would add that it also does not require voters to commit government resources or raise tax revenues. When Franko and Witko examine state adoption of an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a more complex policy that does require commitment of government revenues, they fail to find support for a connection between initiative use and redistribution in their multivariate analysis. Indeed, we note that of the 15 early adopters of the EITC which established such a policy between 1986 and 2000 (see Franko & Witko, 2018, p. 158), eleven were non-initiative states.[1] There is also the question of whether minimum wage increases have lasting effects that would meaningfully decrease inequality. In 2006, for instance, six states passed initiatives to increase their minimum wage. Yet, in the same election, the Democrats took control of the US Congress and between 2008 and 2010 raised the federal minimum wage from $5.15 an hour to $7.25.[2]

There are several broader problems with the line of argument that the state initiative process encourages redistribution. First, there is a lack of general evidence in a wide variety of contexts for the redistributive thesis. Indeed, Shapiro writes:

> This is one thesis that history has soundly refuted. Although there have been redistributive eras in capitalist democracies since the advent of a universal franchise, there has been no systematic relationship

[1] The non-initiative state early EITC adopters, in order of adoption, included Rhode Island (1986), Maryland (1987), Vermont (1988), Iowa (1989), Wisconsin (1989), Minnesota (1991), New York (1994), Kansas (1998), Indiana (1999), Illinois (2000), and New Jersey (2000). The initiative state early adopters included Massachusetts (1997), Oregon (1997), Colorado (1999), and Maine (2000). We count Illinois as a non-initiative state in the present context since that state's highly restrictive process only allows initiatives for structural changes in state government.

[2] In 2010, the first year of the $7.25 minimum wage implementation, only two of the six states that passed minimum wage increases in 2006 had minimum wages greater than the new federal minimum: Ohio at $7.30 an hour and Nevada at $7.55 an hour. Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, and Montana were all at or below the federal rate upon implementation in 2010.

> between democracy and downward redistribution. (2002, p. 118)

Second, the idea that self-interest will necessarily push middle- and low-income initiative voters to unite is theoretically suspect, as suggested in the "median voter" literature applied to direct democracy. On strictly self-interested economic grounds, middle class voters may be better off uniting with the wealthy, especially if the ballot measure is framed in such a way as to provide middle class voters some net benefits, even if providing upper class voters a much larger share (see Feld, Fischer, & Kirchgässner, 2010; Harms & Zink, 2003). This tendency is exacerbated if, as is commonly the case, low income voters are known to participate less frequently (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady,1995). The widely cited Sears and Citrin (1982) study of the battle over the influential Proposition 13 property tax reduction measure in California argues for precisely this self-interested alignment of middle- and upper-class voters. Indeed, one study suggested that towns in Sweden with direct democracy spent 40–60% *less* on public welfare; the authors hypothesized that this is because direct democracy governments are more prone to elite capture (Hinnerich & Pettersson-Lidbom, 2014). Another suggests that low-income citizens often bear the brunt of the service decreases that result from high-income citizens voting for tax decreases (Sances, 2018).

Third, as a matter of political psychology it is questionable whether lower- and middle-class voters necessarily want to redistribute income in the manner suggested by the redistributive thesis (see especially Shapiro, 2002). Much literature suggests that a great many Americans, even those with lower incomes, believe a market distribution of income is fair and may be reluctant to try to tamper with that distribution. Moreover, people even at the low end of the income spectrum may embrace the "American dream" and believe that they will someday join the upper ranks. They will therefore be reluctant to support imposing higher taxes on the wealthy to support enhanced social programs that reach the middle class and poor. Similar sentiments are among the factors that drive widespread opposition to estate taxes, even though they are paid by relatively few wealthy individuals (Graetz & Shapiro, 2011). Middle- and upper-class citizens may also look down on lower class citizens for "poor choices," and be disinclined to support measures mainly targeted at helping them (e.g., Gilens, 1999). Additionally, policy making elites insulated from electoral pressure may be *more* sympathetic to redistribution than average voters, suggesting that a move toward direct democracy could reduce inclination to pursue redistributive policy (Sances, 2016).

Finally, some of the very factors scholars have found associated with the failure of Congress and other national institutions to address rising income inequality also characterize the ballot initiative process in the United States. In an exhaustive review, Bonica, McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal (2013) identify a number of such factors, including low voting rates among the poor as well as sharply rising costs of campaigns that are increasingly financed by high income voters. Yet these factors are not just characteristic of candidate races for federal offices; they are also true of state ballot initiative contests. As far back as 1984, Magleby produced systematic evidence that low income voters were significantly underrepresented in voting on California ballot measures, and this was even more the case than in voting on candidate races. Additionally, simply getting an initiative measure on the ballot requires substantial resources, and usually the backing of wealthy donors to bankroll signature gathering campaigns, which recently have averaged between $1 and $10 per signature depending on the state and continue to rise (Dyck & Lascher, 2019). It is common for initiative contests to generate more than $1 million in spending, with most of the monies coming from wealthy individuals and organizations.

In short, prior literature suggests that we should not expect state ballot initiatives to reduce income inequality. Nevertheless, some have argued otherwise, and one important recent study (Franko & Witko, 2018) contends that direct democracy is a tool for addressing high and rising inequality in the contemporary era. Additional systematic empirical study is therefore needed.

3. Data, Methods, and Results

We seek to test whether *ballot initiatives reduce income inequality in the American states* and subject that hypothesis to rigorous empirical testing. We use three distinct approaches. First, we offer a qualitative of study of which initiatives do and do not pass. If ballot initiates lower inequality, we would expect to find the passage of a significant number of economically substantial measures that could be expected to decrease inequality. Second, we analyze aggregate economic outcomes from 1976–2014 in the American states and consider whether ballot initiative usage appears to reduce inequality. Not only does this enable us to look beyond a single state, but it allows us to consider the possible indirect policy effects of the initiative process that are sometimes claimed. We also consider the effect of the minimum wage on income inequality, and in particular, of minimum wage ballot initiatives on income inequality. Finally, we test whether the frequency of ballot initiatives leads to an increase in life satisfaction among individuals with the lowest incomes, those with the most to gain from economic redistribution.

3.1. Redistributive Ballot Measures in California

California has been a leader in the use of direct democracy and is second behind Oregon with the number of total initiatives appearing on the statewide ballot since their introduction to the state in 1911 (Ballotpedia: The encyclopedia of American politics, n.d.-a). The "initiative industry" that coordinates signature gathering and orga-

nizes campaigns came to prominence in the Golden State. Academic and non-academic books have been written about initiative contests in California (e.g., Broder, 2001; Chávez, 1998; Sears & Citrin, 1982). If we are going to see if direct democracy has any direct effect on economic redistribution, California is a good place to start.

We use two main sources of data. The main one is the California Ballot Measures Database at UC Hastings Law Library (UC Hastings, CA Ballot Measures). This online archive includes the full text of individual ballot propositions and mailed ballot pamphlets. The second is the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) online Statewide Ballot Measures Database. We use the Hastings archive to determine the content and intent of ballot measures and the NCSL archive to determine voting results. Starting in 2012, NCSL's Statewide Ballot Measures Database only includes preliminary vote totals. To get the official, final certified voting results, we switched to Ballotpedia, which gathers their data from the California Secretary of State (Ballotpedia: The encyclopedia of American politics. (n.d.-b).

California voters considered 838[3] propositions from November 1946 through November 2018, the period we focus upon for this article.[4] While almost all of these measures appeared on the primary or general election ballots in even numbered years, some occurred at more unusual times due to special statewide elections. Of the total 838, we concentrated on 279 that can be classified as originating with citizens rather than the state legislature, i.e., initiative constitutional amendments, initiative statutes, and popular/veto referendums to overturn acts of the legislature. The vast majority of such citizen-sponsored measures were initiative statutes and initiative constitutional amendments.

We developed our own scheme for determining if citizen measures were redistributive and classified them as either "liberal" (i.e., pro-redistribution) or "conservative" (i.e., anti-redistributive). We looked at two main criteria: whether the measure would expand the role and size of government or the amount of government revenue, and whether the measure generally aimed at strengthening the power of workers, worker organizations or consumers in direct economic terms vis-à-vis employers. If a measure increased taxes, increased other sorts of revenue, significantly expanded government programs, expanded employee rights, strengthened labor unions, or imposed price caps or mandatory price rollbacks on consumers, we labeled it as liberal. If instead it cut taxes, eliminated or shrank government programs, restricted governmental revenue, strengthened the hand of employers, weakened labor unions, or removed price ceilings, we labeled it as conservative.

Our coding scheme implies that many measures commonly labeled by others as "conservative" or "liberal" would not meet our definitions for purposes of this project, because they were not primarily economically redistributive. Thus, we would not classify an initiative to legalize marijuana as liberal or a measure to strengthen criminal penalties as conservative.

We also ignored a number of measures that were minor or technical in impact. Voters commonly were asked to decide issues such as whether adding earthquake retrofits could avoid property tax reassessment and consequently a somewhat higher tax bill. Such measures did not make it on our redistribution list. In contrast, we classify as conservative a 1984 initiative statute that would have drastically cut public welfare payments; the measure failed, garnering only 37% of the vote in the general election.

Table 1 provides a summary of the aggregate results for citizen-sponsored measures (initiative constitutional amendments, initiative statutes, initiative bonds, and referenda) we classified as either conservative or liberal in economic redistributionist terms from 1946 onward. We discern several key points. First, less than half of all petition measures (46%, or 129 out of 279) can be classified as economically redistributionist. Looking at just liberal measures, that number falls below 20%. So, compared to citizen originated measures in general, liberal economic measures rarely qualify for the ballot. Second, most of these redistributive measures fail, with voters rejecting 69% of liberal measures and 67% of conservative measures. Non-economic measures only failed 54% of the time. Finally, liberal measures collectively did worse with voters than conservative measures, averaging a smaller percentage of the vote. Both groups received on average fewer yes votes than non-redistributive measures.

While there were almost twice as many liberal measures on the ballot than conservative measures, a striking feature of most successful liberal measures is their limited redistributionist scope. Before 1992 there are no measures establishing or even expanding broad taxes, making existing taxes more progressive, establishing or expanding broad social programs, increasing the minimum wage, or strengthening collective bargaining. The only tax increase passed was on smoking, and that reflected more so an emerging social consensus about reducing the harmful health effects of tobacco use than citizens engaging in redistribution activity (Cummings & Proctor, 2014).

Moreover, many of the more substantially liberal measures were defeated and not subsequently enacted, at the ballot or through the legislature. For example, Democratic Governor Jerry Brown and other prominent liberals backed Proposition 11 on the 1980 primary ballot that would have established a 10% oil surtax, using the campaign slogan, "tax big oil." The funds would have been used for increased bus and transportation

[3] Six propositions were removed by the courts after they were already placed on the ballot. These are not included.

[4] Note that some of the ballot pamphlets in the pre-War era had minimal information compared to more modern pamphlets, making analysis of measures difficult. For example, the 1920 general election pamphlet contained for each measure a short, legalistic summary followed by the proposed statutory language without any explanation of implications. These were in turn followed by arguments for and against the measures, sometimes without identifying the affiliation of the person writing the argument.

Table 1. Results for citizen-sponsored measures, 1946–present.

	Conservative	Liberal	Non-Redistributive
Passed	16 (33%)	25 (31%)	71 (46%)
Failed	32 (67%)	56 (69%)	82 (54%)
Total	48 (100%)	81 (100%)	153 (100%)
Average Yes (unweighted)	46.8%	42.8%	49.1%

services and to develop alternative transportation fuels. Only 44% of the electorate voted in favor of the measure. Voters rejected an oil severance tax again in 2006 by a similar margin, and California remains the only major oil-producing state without a statewide severance tax.

It was not until the mid-1990s that substantially liberal measures started doing better at the polls. Californians passed a small increase in the minimum wage, expanded after-school programs, and passed several citizen-initiated bonds. They also lowered the legislative requirement to pass the annual budget, while also approving several tax increases. Nevertheless, only a third of all liberal initiatives have passed since 1992, compared to a 29% passage rate from 1946 to 1990.

For every successful tax increase or liberal ballot measure passed since the 1990s, many more liberal measures failed. Voters killed an increase in the gas tax, the aforementioned oil severance tax, a statewide parcel tax for schools, higher taxes for universal preschools, cigarette taxes, and a 1996 initiative that would have increased taxes on the wealthy. Californians voted against the public financing of campaigns in 2000 and 2006, and in 2018 they voted down a measure that would have allowed strong rent control at the local level. California might have become a more liberal state, but its voters are still quite cautious when it comes to liberal economic ballot measures.

By contrast, conservative measures passed by voters have sustained far greater impact. The clearest example is Proposition 13, passed in 1978, which drastically lowered property taxes, restricted the ability of representative institutions to raise other types of taxes, restructured the relationship between state and local governments, and launched the populist tax revolt movement worldwide. Other major conservative measures enacted include: a 1950 initiative requiring approval of the local electorate before any public funded low-income housing project can be built; a cap on total state government spending passed in 1979; and two similar measures in 1986 and 1996 requiring voter approval for any tax increase at the local level.

In short, it is difficult to look at the overall results from 1946 through 2018 and fail to conclude that conservatives collectively scored more successes than liberals on redistribution issues decided at the ballot box. Conservative measures not only succeed slightly more often, but the successful scope of conservative initiatives seems far greater as well. Even in contemporary liberal California, during the period in which Franko and Witko (2018) claim states have been responding to perceived increased economic inequality, conservatives still find some avenues to restrict redistribution, and most liberal measures still fail.

3.2. Aggregate Analysis of Income Inequality in the States

Based on analysis of the substance and success of California ballot measures, there is little reason to think the ballot initiative process in the Golden State directly reduced income inequality. Nevertheless, it is possible that California is an outlier in this respect and/or that the impact of the ballot initiative is mostly indirect. That is, perhaps the threat of a ballot initiative encourages lawmakers to pass redistributive legislation aimed at reducing inequality to head off more extreme versions that might be approved by votes. In other contexts, some scholars have argued that the threat of the initiative constrains legislative behavior in such a manner (e.g., Gerber, 1996), albeit without systematic empirical evidence of how frequently this occurs (see Dyck & Lascher, 2019). We are skeptical that the threat of the initiative would necessarily push lawmakers toward enacting redistributive legislation favoring the less well-off (e.g., passage of an income tax surcharge to fund programs targeted at low income voters) rather than the opposite (e.g., passage of property tax relief tilted toward high income citizens). Yet more empirical evidence is needed.

Fortunately, we can build on a recent study to test the claim that cross-state differences in use of the initiative process are associated with differences in income inequality. Bucci (2018a) developed a data set allowing her to compare income inequality across all 50 states for the period 1976 to 2014, giving her a 39 year cross-sectional time-series dataset. This allowed for a contrast of the commonly used Gini index of household income for each state in each year. Her primary purpose was to assess the impact of labor unionization on income inequality across states, controlling for a wide variety of other variables. She did not consider direct democracy mechanisms; we

added such information to the data set. If the ballot initiative process indeed helped to reduce income inequality, we would expect to see that the Gini index would be lower in states making greater use of the initiative process (controlling for other variables).

Here, we model both market inequality and post-transfer inequality as a function of the ballot initiative process. We follow the modeling approach suggested by Kelly and Witko (2012), who use an error correction model. Put in simple terms, we operationalize the dependent variable at time period t as the change from $t - 1$ to t. Each independent variable then includes a change variable and a lag variable when appropriate; if either of these is significant, we can say that the variable exerts a significant effect on income inequality.

The model includes controls for union density[5], policy liberalism, gross state product, the percentage of the state economy that is based in manufacturing, the percentage of the population that is nonwhite, and the unemployment rate.[6]

We also introduce two simple measures of the initiative process. One is the dummy variable of whether or not the state has the ballot initiative. This should give us the average effect comparing initiative to non-initiative states and has been frequently used in aggregate studies of the initiative (e.g., Boehmke, 2005; Matsusaka, 2004). Additionally, we include a measure for initiative density, using the average number of initiatives on the ballot in the state from 1900 to the present year, lagged one year. This captures the large state level variance in initiative use. Finally, we introduce two ways to capture the effect of the minimum wage on income inequality. First, we include a variable that measures the value of the state minimum wage in excess of the federal minimum wage. This measure is used to capture the independent effect of state minimum wage laws insofar as they exceed the minimum wage standards set by the federal government. This is included as a control in all the models that use a general measure of the ballot initiative to predict income inequality. Second, we explicitly model in Table 2 the effect of state minimum wage ballot initiatives passage on income inequality.[7] The models are all estimated using generalized least squares with random effects and clustered state standard errors.

The results conform mostly to expectations. Market inequality, as measured by the Gini index, is lower in states with higher union density, less policy liberalism, a minimum wage that is higher than the federal standard, and those that experience lower levels of unemployment. Post-transfer inequality, also measured by the Gini index, is lower in states with higher union density, lower unemployment, a lower gross state product, and when there is a smaller non-white population. Notably, in all four models in Table 2, for both income inequality in the labor market (market inequality) and income inequality that is calculated after accounting for redistributive government programs (post-transfer inequality), both measures of the ballot initiative (a simple dummy (0,1) for the existence of the initiative and a measure of initiative density) have no effect on *either form of income inequality*. Also, of particular interest is that minimum wage policies appear to reduce income inequality in the labor market, as we might expect, but when we account for income inequality after redistribution has taken place, there is no effect for minimum wage policies on income inequality (Models 2–3 and 2–4).

In Table 3, we take the test of the effect of minimum wage policies on income inequality further, considering the effect of minimum wage ballot initiatives on both market inequality and post-transfer inequality. Between 1976 and 2014, 11 states raised their minimum wages via ballot initiatives, with the majority of these increases coming in 2006.[8] Using this measure in lieu of both the minimum wage measure and the ballot initiative measure in Table 3 produces null effects in predicting both market inequality and post-transfer inequality. Therefore, while the literature may have firmly established a connection between ballot initiatives and minimum wage policies (Franko & Witko, 2018), the empirical connection between the minimum wage and income inequality remains tenuous. As we would expect, minimum wage increases in states that are above the federal minimum reduce inequality in the labor market. However, the effects of the reductions are subsumed by the social safety net when we measure inequality after accounting for government redistribution. Furthermore, we cannot attribute this reduction to policies passed via the ballot initiative. And this is the case even though there is reason to think that minimum wages are *easier* to enact by the initiative process than other redistributive measures, as we indicated previously.

Overall, we see no evidence in either model that the presence or usage of direct democracy has any impact on income inequality. Consistent with our observation that redistribution in California is a rare ballot initiative event, we now see with a comprehensive quantitative aggregate analysis of all 50 states over nearly a 40-year period that direct democracy is not associated with lower levels of state level income inequality. This analysis accounts for both direct and indirect effects, and also considers the special case of whether the ballot initiative has reduced income inequality via the minimum wage.

[5] This was the main focus of Bucci's (2018a) study and despite the addition of additional variables and a different modeling approach, we found this variable very robust to additional variables and model choice.

[6] The data here come from Bucci (2018b). Exceptions to this are: unemployment data are from Klarner (2015); Minimum wage data are from the United States Department of Labor (n.d.); and ballot initiative data are from the authors' personal database.

[7] A state-year is coded 1 if a state passed a minimum wage initiative in the previous year and then is coded 1 for every subsequent year. All other state-years are coded as 0.

[8] The states are Arizona (2006), California (1996), Colorado (2006), Florida (2004), Missouri (2006), Montana (2006), Nevada (2004 & 2006), Ohio (2006), Oregon (1996 & 2002), South Dakota (2014), and Washington (1988 & 1998). Data collected from the NCSL (n.d.).

Table 2. Initiatives and income inequality, 1976–2014.

	Δ Market Gini Coefficient				Δ Post-Transfer Gini Coefficient			
	Model 2–1		Model 2–2		Model 2–3		Model 2–4	
Variables	*β*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*
Market Gini $_{(t-1)}$	−0.1643	0.0193***	−0.1645	0.0198***	—	—	—	—
Post-transfer Gini $_{(t-1)}$	—	—	—	—	−0.2195	0.0218***	−0.2190	0.0214***
Δ Union Density	−0.0534	0.0331	−0.0533	0.0329	−0.0592	0.0264*	−0.0598	0.0263*
Union Density $_{(t-1)}$	−0.0474	0.0130***	−0.0478	0.0123***	−0.0506	0.0129***	−0.0520	0.0125***
Δ Policy Liberalism	−0.0107	0.0227	−0.0093	0.0226	−0.0033	0.0212	−0.0025	0.0211
Policy Liberalism $_{(t-1)}$	0.0091	0.0044*	0.0096	0.0041*	0.0072	0.0045	0.0081	0.0041*
Δ Gross State Product	−0.0249	0.0214	−0.0272	0.0217	0.0019	0.0184	0.0027	0.0190
Gross State Product $_{(t-1)}$	0.0054	0.0028	0.0056	0.0027*	0.0093	0.0036**	0.0094	0.0033**
Δ % Manufacturing	0.0273	0.0326	0.0287	0.0328	0.0024	0.0294	0.0038	0.0294
% Manufacturing $_{(t-1)}$	0.0029	0.0072	0.0036	0.0065	−0.0072	0.0061	−0.0057	0.0057
Δ % Pop Nonwhite	0.0237	0.0307	0.0241	0.0306	0.0257	0.0253	0.0271	0.0250
% Pop Nonwhite $_{(t-1)}$	0.0056	0.0041	0.0060	0.0037	0.0099	0.0044*	0.0104	0.0042*
Δ State Min. Wage Above Fed.	−0.0038	0.0021	−0.0037	0.0021	0.0021	0.0017	0.0021	0.0017
State Min. Wage Above Fed. $_{(t-1)}$	−0.0029	0.0009**	−0.0029	0.0010**	0.0001	0.0008	0.0001	0.0009
Δ % Unemployment	0.0950	0.0371*	0.0950	0.0375*	0.0570	0.0314	0.0578	0.0317
Unemployment $_{(t-1)}$	0.1484	0.0218***	0.1477	0.0220***	0.0736	0.0192***	0.0737	0.0196***
Initiative (0,1) $_{(t-1)}$	−0.0004	0.0012	—	—	−0.0008	0.0012	—	—
Δ Initiative Density	—	—	−0.0272	0.0191	—	—	−0.0026	0.0192
Initiative Density $_{(t-1)}$	—	—	0.0001	0.0006	—	—	−0.0005	0.0006
Constant	0.0770	0.0099***	0.0768	0.0103***	0.0949	0.0098***	0.0942	0.0097***
R^2 (within)	.164		.163		.177		.176	
R^2 (between)	.030		.030		.003		.002	
R^2 (overall)	.110		.110		.111		.111	
N	1900		1900		1900		1900	

Notes: models are GLS error correction models calculated with random effects; standard errors have been clustered by state. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

3.3. Direct Democracy, Redistribution, and Life Satisfaction

Our final empirical investigation focuses on the individual level. Recently, Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016) advanced the argument that ballot initiatives might increase the subjective well-being of low-income individuals. They argue that this is because both the intrinsic and instrumental effects of ballot initiatives on citizens will especially be felt by low-income citizens. By intrinsic benefits, they refer to the oft-cited secondary effects of direct democracy (c.f. Smith & Tolbert, 2004), whereby citizens are thought to acquire the positive normative attributes of more engaged democratic citizens. By instrumental benefits, they refer to the policies passed at the ballot box. Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016, pp. 1417–1418) connect the idea directly to redistribution and ballot initiatives in concluding:

> While direct democracy involves little costs to anyone, it provides the bulk of its rewards to low- and middle- income individuals. Direct democracy, at least in the context of the American States, may then work in a logic consistent with the simple majoritarian interpretation of democracy…creating as it does an environment in which persons of modest means win politically.

Table 3. Minimum wage initiatives and income inequality, 1976–2014.

	Δ Market Gini Coefficient		Δ Post-Transfer Gini Coefficient	
	Model 3–1		Model 3–2	
Variables	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*SE*
Market Gini $_{(t-1)}$	−0.1684	0.0201***	—	—
Post-transfer Gini $_{(t-1)}$	—	—	−0.2163	0.0217***
Δ Union Density	−0.0556	0.0332	−0.0605	0.0265*
Union Density $_{(t-1)}$	−0.0455	0.0130***	−0.0511	0.0127***
Δ Policy Liberalism	−0.0124	0.0226	−0.0013	0.0211
Policy Liberalism $_{(t-1)}$	0.0061	0.0037	0.0081	0.0042
Δ Gross State Product	−0.0284	0.0202	0.0062	0.0169
Gross State Product $_{(t-1)}$	0.0054	0.0030	0.0087	0.0036*
Δ % Manufacturing	0.0180	0.0322	0.0064	0.0295
% Manufacturing $_{(t-1)}$	0.0057	0.0070	−0.0051	0.0053
Δ % Pop Nonwhite	0.0221	0.0316	0.0275	0.0252
% Pop Nonwhite $_{(t-1)}$	0.0059	0.0037	0.0108	0.0041**
Δ % Unemployment	0.0802	0.0356	0.0522	0.0301
Unemployment $_{(t-1)}$	0.1481	0.0233***	0.0677	0.0193***
Min. Wage Initiative (0,1) $_{(t-1)}$	−0.0008	0.0015	0.0004	0.0015
Constant	0.0775	0.0106***	0.0931	0.0098***
R^2 (within)	.165		.177	
R^2 (between)	.033		.002	
R^2 (overall)	.106		.110	
N	1900		1900	

Notes: models are GLS error correction models calculated with random effects; standard errors have been clustered by state. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

Thus far, the results of our aggregate analysis indicate that there is little reason to suspect that there would be any empirical support for the instrumental benefits argument. Furthermore, recent studies have largely undermined the evidence for the positive secondary effects of the state ballot initiative process and even supported a negative relationship between initiative use and trust in government (for a summary of recent studies and presentation of additional evidence see Dyck & Lascher, 2019). We therefore find no reason to hypothesize that more ballot initiatives lead to greater life satisfaction, and no reason to suspect that this effect is stronger among those at lower income levels. Yet we note that one widely cited study indicated that direct democracy led to greater life satisfaction in Switzerland (Frey & Stutzer, 2000), though this finding has been challenged on empirical grounds (Dorn, Fischer, Kirchgässner, & Sousa-Poza, 2008).

Nevertheless, we reexamine the data from the DDB Life Style Survey popularized by Putnam (2000) and used in Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016). This dataset includes over 45,000 cases from Americans in the 48 lower contiguous states surveyed from 1985 through 1998. We leave most of the details of our replication and extension of their results to a supplementary appendix. However, here we offer two broad points. First, we think that the models presented by Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016) can be significantly improved. Second, their results did not appropriately consider the substantive meaning of the interaction effects, which we demonstrate to be of negligible significance. We begin on this latter point by recovering the predicted values from Radcliff and Shufeldt's (2016) Table 1a, which we were able to replicate given the generosity of the authors in sharing their data and coding.

In Figures 1 and 2, we present the predicted values from this model at the minimum and maximum values of income. In Figure 1, we see that those at higher incomes enjoy a higher life satisfaction when living in non-initiative states, but as initiative usage increases, this gap appears to close. Yet this is .07 difference on a 6-point scale (4.00 to 4.07), or a maximum difference of 1%. In Figure 2, we see the full value of the life satisfaction measure plotted on the Y axis as a 6-point Likert scale. It is apparent that (1) there is no discernible substantive relationship between ballot initiative usage and life satis-

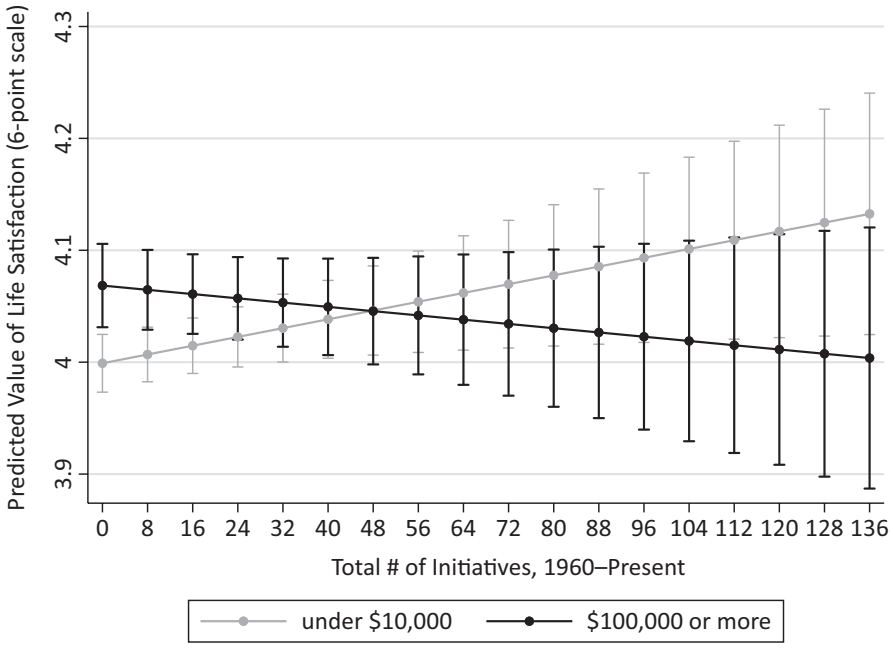

Figure 1. Interaction of initiative and income, from Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016), Table 1a.

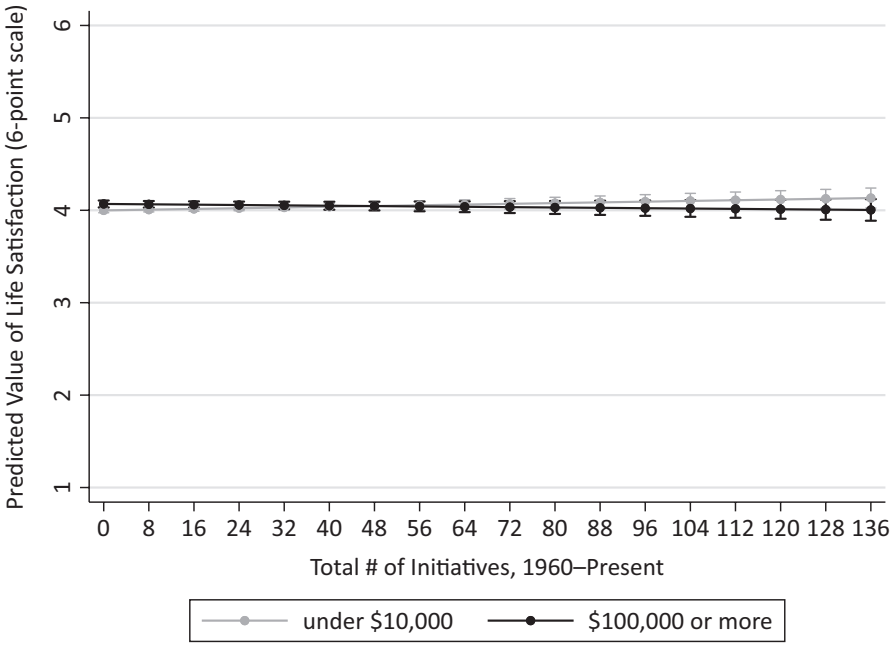

Figure 2. Figure 1, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

faction for those at high incomes or low incomes, and (2) this relationship is in no meaningful way mediated by income. In other words, these lines depict the same negligible effect. The dataset is large (45,000 cases) and so we are seeing statistically significant results on this interaction which are not substantively interesting.

Furthermore, as we detail in the supplementary appendix, there are two problems with the Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016) initiative measures. First, we uncovered a significant data coding error for the initiative measure in our replication. Second, the structure of the measure builds in an unnecessary time dimension by pivoting the measure of usage at 1960 and adding it up to the survey year (instead of using an average). As ballot initiative usage increases over time, this means this measure will always increase for initiative states and will build a time trend within states across years into the dataset. When we correct these and other problems, the statistically (but not substantively) significant interaction effect that Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016) reported between initiatives and income dissipates. In Table 4, we demonstrate what happens to the main models when the initiative variable is corrected. The interaction effect produces a null effect.

Table 4. Initiatives, income and life satisfaction, DDB life style survey, 1985–1998.

	Table 1, Model a Random State Effects (a)		Replication with initiative variable corrected (b)		Replication with initiative variable average (c)		Table 1, Model b State Clustered Std. Errors with year & region dummies (d)		Replication with initiative variable corrected (e)		Replication with initiative variable average (f)	
	Coef	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**
Total Initiatives	.109	.005**	0.104	0.043**			.060	.029**	0.001	0.043		
Avg Initiatives	—	—	—	—	0.030	0.014**	—	—	—	—	−0.001	0.013
Individual Income	.005	.002***	0.005	0.002**	0.005	0.002**	.005	.002***	0.005	0.002***	0.005	0.002***
Ins X Income	−.010	.005**	−0.006	0.005	−0.002	0.002	−.010	.000***	−0.005	0.003^{+}	−0.002	0.001
State Level Vars												
State Population	−.000	.000**	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***	−.000	.000**	0.000	0.000^{+}	0.000	0.000^{+}
State Income (PC)	.000	.000**	0.000	0.000**	0.000	0.000**	.000	.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Racial Diversity	.154	.076**	0.155	0.076**	0.160	0.076**	.178	.115**	0.172	0.117	0.171	0.118
Social Capital	.016	.015	0.008	0.016	0.010	0.016	.030	.024	0.029	0.024	0.029	0.024
Ind'l Level Vars												
Financial Satisfaction	.394	.004***	0.394	0.004***	0.394	0.004***	.394	.005***	0.394	0.005***	0.394	0.005***
Education	−.019	.005***	−0.019	0.005***	−0.019	0.005***	−.019	.005***	−0.019	0.005***	−0.019	0.005***
Unemployed (0,1)	−.313	.035***	−0.314	0.035***	−0.314	0.035***	−.311	.043***	−0.311	0.043***	−0.311	0.043***
Sex	.088	.012***	0.087	0.012***	0.087	0.012***	.088	.013***	0.088	0.013***	0.087	0.013***
Children	−.109	.013***	−0.108	0.013***	−0.108	0.013***	−.109	.015***	−0.109	0.015***	−0.109	0.015***
Black	−.200	.025***	−0.200	0.025***	−0.200	0.025***	−.198	.031***	−0.198	0.031***	−0.198	0.031***
Race-Other	.002	.028	−0.001	0.028	0.000	0.028	.003	.016	0.003	0.016	0.003	0.016
Age	−.042	.002***	−0.042	0.002***	−0.042	0.002***	−.042	.003***	−0.042	0.003***	−0.042	0.003***
Age^2	.000	.000***	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***	.000	.000***	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***
Widowed	.217	.031***	0.217	0.031***	0.217	0.031***	.215	.038***	0.215	0.038***	0.215	0.038***
Divorced	.051	.027***	0.050	0.027^{+}	0.050	0.027^{+}	.047	.040	0.047	0.040	0.047	0.040
Married	.293	.021***	0.293	0.021***	0.292	0.021***	.291	.029***	0.291	0.029***	0.291	0.029***
Church Attendance	.030	.002***	0.030	0.002***	0.030	0.002***	.030	.003***	0.030	0.003***	0.030	0.003***
Social Trust	.106	.005***	0.106	0.005***	0.106	0.005***	.105	.004***	0.105	0.004***	0.105	0.004***
Health of R	.148	.004***	0.148	0.004***	0.148	0.004***	.148	.005***	0.148	0.005***	0.148	0.005***
Year	−.001	.002***	−0.001	0.002	−0.001	0.002	—	—	—	—	—	—
Constant	3.420	3.209	4.148	3.228	3.376	3.188	2.250	.115	2.151	0.117***	2.151	0.117***
N	47636		47636		47636		47636		47636		47636	
Adjusted R^2	.2990		.2987		.2987		.2995		.2988		.2988	

Notes: Columns (a) and (d) are the coefficients, standard errors and significance tests reported by Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016). Models a/b/c are estimated as a linear regression model with random state effects; columns d/e/f are estimated as a linear regression model with fixed effects (not shown) for year and census region and clustered standard errors at the state level. $^{+}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$, $^{***}p < .01$.

4. Conclusion

Rising economic inequality within the United States and other advanced economies has generated much scholarly attention over the past two decades. For example, the American Political Science Association released a report (2010) from top scholars warning of serious consequences for American democracy from sharply rising inequality. Scholars also commonly acknowledge that public policy choices significantly influence the level of economic inequality, and often for the worse (see for example Bonica et al., 2013). Faced with concerns of this kind, scholars, advocates, and concerned citizens alike have considered possible political reforms or mechanisms that might reduce inequality.

Given that direct democracy still enjoys high levels of popularity in many quarters, it is perhaps unsurprising that some look to mechanisms such as the ballot initiative process as a partial solution to growing inequality. Yet based on a range of evidence, we see no reason to think that income inequality in the United States would be reduced if more states established an initiative process or states that had it made greater use of ballot measures. And for readers from other countries, our findings suggest caution in believing that adding American style direct democracy would help address their own economic inequality issues.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Benjamin Radcliff and Gregory Shufeldt for generously sharing their data and coding.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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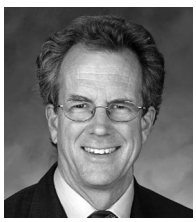

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Appendix

In this supplementary appendix, we explain in more detail our replication and extension of the Radcliff and Shufeld (2016, hereafter R&S) analysis of the DDB Life Style Survey. The survey contains yearly data from 1975 to 1998, including a question on life satisfaction, the focus of this study, from 1985 to 1998. In preparing this study, we contacted the authors and they generously shared their level-2 data file with us. This and the details from the original article led us to be able to replicate six of the seven statistical models presented in R&S.

In completing the replication, we noted both a technical coding error and also a conceptual error in the measurement of "density of ballot initiatives," which is measured as a cumulative number of initiatives from 1960 up to the year of the survey. It appears the authors have only assigned non-zero values to this variable in years where a state actually added values to the total. This means that for most states in odd years, states with long cumulative histories of initiative usage like California, Oregon, and Colorado were coded as zero. We illustrate the coding error in Figure A1. Rather than observing a steadily increasing relationship where each new initiative increases the total # of initiatives measurement (a measure of historical initiative usage/density), the patterns are zig-zags. The exception is Washington State, which regularly has odd-year statewide initiative elections. In two of the seven models that R&S present, they measure the initiative process using a simple dummy variable. We discovered a nearly identical error in this measure. In years that state did not have any initiatives, the variable is coded as zero instead of 1. When corrected, 45.7% of the respondents in the DDB Life Style survey from 1985–1998 live in initiative states, but according to this coding, fewer than 20% of the respondents are coded as living in initiatives states; almost none are coded as living in initiative states during odd years. We detail the error of this coding in Figure A2.

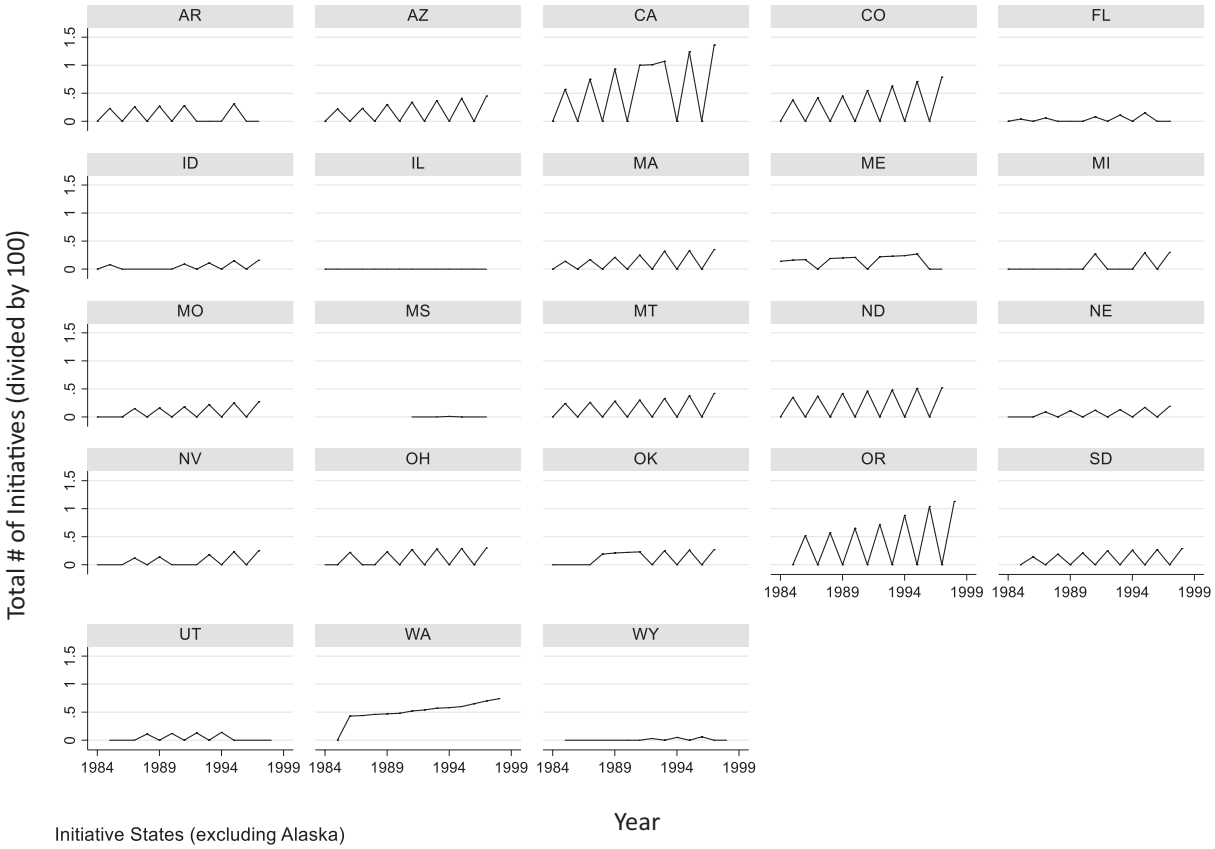

Figure A1. Visual depiction of coding problems of initiative variable in R&S. Note: Figure depicts the coding error in the key explanatory variable "Total # of Initiatives from 1960 to the current survey year." States that did not have initiatives in the survey year were coded as zero instead of having their previous year codes added forward. For states without odd year initiatives, this effectively made their codes zero in almost all odd years of the data.

Our first task is to correct both of these measures and to re-estimate the models. However, once corrected, the initiative density measure still suffers from a conceptual problem. Because it is anchored with the year 1960, the measure will always increase and never decrease, which builds an upward sloping time trend into the explanatory variable of interest. As R&S suggest by explicitly modeling time in their models, time is an important construct in the measurement of life satisfaction. Therefore, this introduction of a trend may be unintentionally biasing the results. There is an easy fix for this. To preserve

the measure of density, we can simply use the average number of initiatives from 1960 to the survey year; this allows the measure to vary and to either increase or decrease based on how frequently initiatives are used in ensuing years. We therefore first proceed by re-estimating the models from Table 1 in R&S in the main text of the article as Table 4 and from Tables 2 and 3 from R&S in Appendix Tables A1 and A2. For the five models that use initiative density as an explanatory variable, we present a variant of the model with the corrected measure, and also with an alternate measure of density using the average number of initiatives from 1960 to the survey year. For the initiative dummy models, we present the replication followed by the corrected model. We also present visual depictions of the interaction effects for the seven corrected models and the five initiative average models.

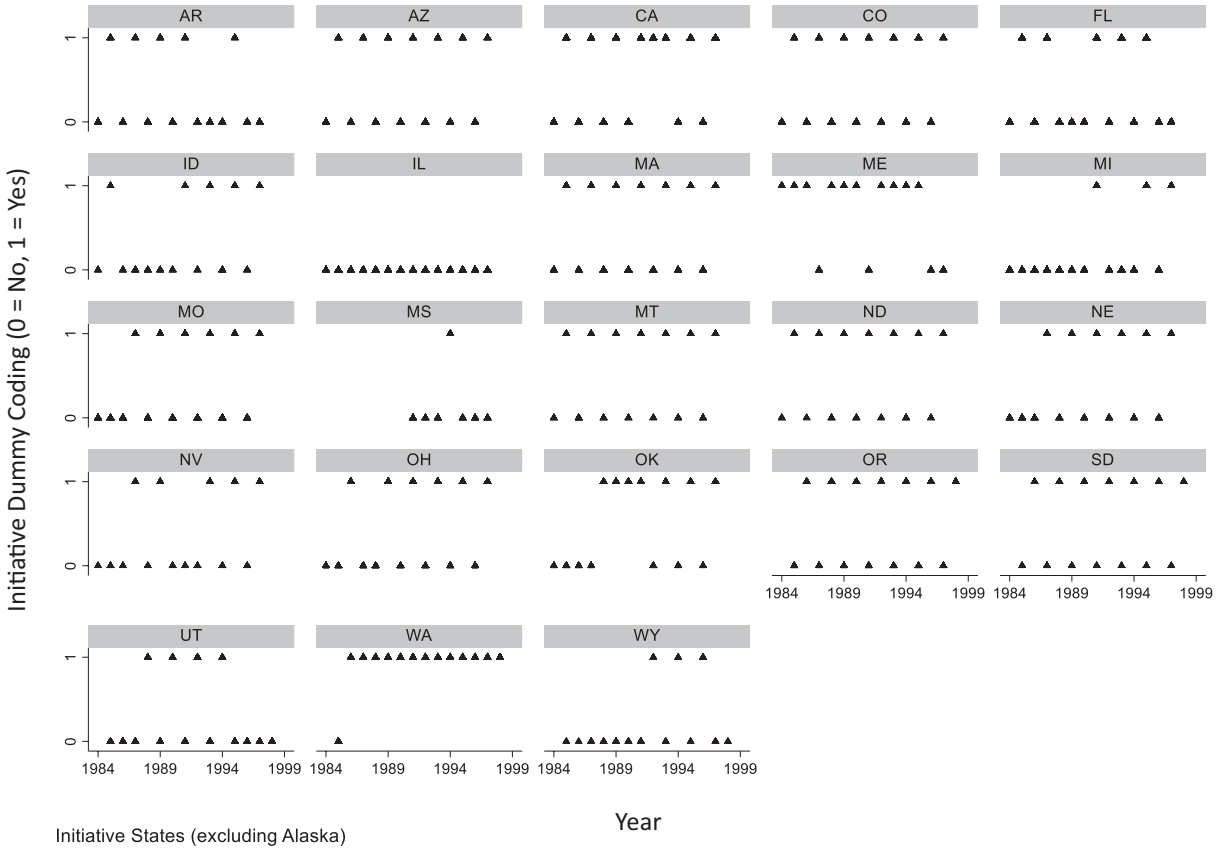

Figure A2. Visual depiction of coding problems of Initiative Dummy Variable in R&S. Note: Figure depicts the coding error in the key explanatory variable "Yes/No has initiative." States that did not have initiatives in the survey year were coded as zero instead of 1. For states without odd year initiatives, this effectively made their codes zero in almost all odd years of the data.

Table A1. Initiatives, income and life satisfaction (replication of Radcliff & Shufeldt, 2016, Table 2).

	R&S Table 2 Model a (a)		Replication with initiative variable corrected (b)		Replication with initiative average (c)		R&S Table 2, Model b Without CA & OR (d)		Replication with initiative variable corrected (e)		Replication with initiative average (f)		R&S Table 2, Model c Initiative (0,1) model (g)		Replication with initiative dummy variable corrected (h)	
	Coef	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**
Initiative Density	.110	.030***	.111	.043***	.032	.014**	.209	.101**	.119	.091	.018	.028	—	—	—	—
Initiative (0,1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.061	.029***	.044	.023^{+}
Individual Income	.020	.008***	.020	.008**	.020	.008**	.020	.008***	.019	.008**	.019	.008**	.020	.008***	.020	.008**
Initiative X Income	−.010	.005**	−.006	.005	−.002	.002	−.018	.012^{+}	−.004	.011	.001	.004	−.007	.004**	−.002	.003
State Level Vars																
State Population	−.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	−.000	.000***	.000	.000**	.000	.000**	−.000	.000**	.000	.000**
State Income (PC)	.000	.000^{+}	.000	.000^{+}	.000	.000^{+}	.000	.000^{+}	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000^{+}	.000	.000^{+}
Racial Diversity	.194	.088**	.213	.089**	.214	.089**	.208	.091**	.204	.091**	.213	.091**	.208	.088**	.184	.088**
Social Capital	.022	.017^{+}	.016	.017	.018	.017	.019	.017^{+}	.015	.018	.019	.018	.022	.017^{+}	.016	.017
Ind'l Level Vars																
Financial Satisfaction	.394	.004***	.394	.004***	.394	.004***	.390	.004***	.390	.004***	.390	.004***	.394	.004***	.394	.004***
Education	−.019	.005***	−.019	.005***	−.019	.005***	−.019	.006***	−.019	.006***	−.019	.006***	−.019	.005***	−.019	.005***
Unemployed (0,1)	−.314	.035***	−.314	.035***	−.314	.035***	−.293	.038***	−.293	.038***	−.293	.038***	−.313	.035***	−.313	.035***
Sex	.088	.012***	.087	.012***	.087	.012***	.085	.013***	.085	.013***	.085	.013***	.088	.012***	.087	.012***
Children	−.109	.013***	−.109	.013***	−.109	.013***	−.116	.014***	−.116	.014***	−.116	.014***	−.109	.013***	−.108	.013***
Black	−.200	.025***	−.200	.025***	−.200	.025***	−.183	.026***	−.182	.026***	−.183	.026***	−.200	.031***	−.199	.025***
Race-Other	.001	.028	−.002	.028	−.001	.028	.002	.033	−.002	.033	−.001	.033	.003	.028	.003	.028
Age	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***	−.042	.003***	−.042	.003***	−.042	.003***	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***
Age^2	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***
Widowed	.218	.031***	.218	.031***	.218	.031***	.224	.034***	.224	.034***	.224	.034***	.218	.031***	.217	.031***
Divorced	.052	.027**	.052	.027^{+}	.052	.027^{+}	.030	.029	.029	.029	.030	.029	.052	.027**	.051	.027^{+}
Married	.294	.021***	.294	.021***	.294	.021***	.291	.023***	.291	.023***	.291	.023***	.294	.021***	.294	.021***
Church Attendance	.030	.002***	.030	.002***	.030	.002***	.032	.003***	.032	.003***	.032	.003***	.030	.002***	.030	.002***
Social Trust	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***	.106	.005***
Health of R	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***
Transfer Payments	.070	.036**	.081	.036**	.079	.036	.080	.038**	.079	.038**	.079	.038**	.066	.036**	.067	.036^{+}
Transfer $ X Income	−.008	.004**	−.008	.004**	−.008	.004**	−.008	.004**	−.008	.004^{+}	−.008	.004^{+}	−.008	.004**	−.008	.004**
Year	−.001	.002	−.002	.002**	−.002	.002**	−.001	.002	−.001	.002	−.001	.002	−.001	.002	−.001	.002
Constant	3.420	3.209	6.679	3.770	5.637	3.694	3.420	3.209	4.847	3.947	4.154	3.929	4.405	3.643	4.271	3.627
N	47636		47636		47636		42053		42053		42053		47636		47636	
Adjusted R^2	.2991		.2988		.2987		.2960		.2956		.2955		.2997		.2987	

Notes: $^{+}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$, $^{***}p < .01$. All models in this table are estimated using linear regression with random state effects. Columns a, d, and g are the coefficients, standard errors and significance tests reported by Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016). Models b, c, e, f, and h are estimated as linear regression models with random state effects.

Table A2. Initiatives, income and life satisfaction (replication of Radcliff & Shufeldt 2016, Table 3).

	R&S Table 3, Model 1 (a)		Replication with initiative variable correction (b)		Replication with initiative average (c)		R&S Table 2, Model 2 (d)		Replication with initiative dummy variable corrected (e)	
	Coef	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**
Initiative Density	.100	.050**	.097	.045**	.027	.015+	—	—	—	—
Initiative (0,1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	.057	.028***	0.041	0.023+
Individual Income	.005	.002***	.005	.002**	.005	.002**	.005	.002**	0.005	0.002**
Initiative X Income	−.010	.005**	−.006	.005	−.002	.002	−.007	.003**	−0.002	0.003
State Level Vars										
State Population	−.000	.000	.000	.000**	.000	.000**	−.000	.000	0.000	0.000**
State Income (PC)	.000	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000+	.000	.000	0.000	0.000+
Racial Diversity	.129	.096	.144	.083**	.147	.084+	.130	.100	0.144	0.082+
Social Capital	.011	.018	.008	.017	.010	.017	.011	.019	0.011	0.017
Ind'l Level Vars										
Financial Satisfaction	.394	.004***	.394	.004***	.394	.004***	.394	.004***	0.394	0.004***
Education	−.019	.005***	−.019	.005***	−.019	.005***	−.018	.005***	−0.019	0.005***
Unemployed (0,1)	−.310	.035***	−.312	.035***	−.312	.035***	−.311	.035***	−0.312	0.035***
Sex	.087	.012***	.087	.012***	.087	.012***	.088	.011***	0.087	0.012***
Children	−.109	.013***	−.109	.013***	−.109	.013***	−.109	.013***	−0.109	0.013***
Black	−.197	.025***	−.197	.025***	−.197	.025***	−.196	.024***	−0.197	0.025***
Race-Other	.004	.028	.002	.028	.003	.028	.004	.028	0.005	0.028
Age	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***	−.042	.002***	−0.042	0.002***
Age^2	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	.000	.000***	0.000	0.000***
Widowed	.215	.031***	.216	.031***	.215	.031***	.215	.031***	0.215	0.031***
Divorced	.048	.027**	.048	.027+	.048	.027+	.047	.026+	0.048	0.027+
Married	.293	.021***	.292	.021***	.291	.021***	.291	.029***	0.291	0.021***
Church Attendance	.030	.002***	.030	.002***	.030	.002***	.030	.002***	0.030	0.002***
Social Trust	.105	.005***	.106	.005***	.105	.005***	.105	.005***	0.105	0.005***
Health of R	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	.148	.004***	0.148	0.004***
Constant	Not reported		2.131	.084***	2.133	.085***	Not reported		2.124	0.085***
Residual variance	1.22		1.511		1.511		1.22		1.511	
Intercept variance for state	.028		>.001		>.001		.028		>.001	
Intercept variance for state-years	.016		>.001		>.001		.104		>.001	
Log restricted-likelihood	−77594.2		−77432.1		−77432.6		−77586.1		−77432.4	
Wald Test	20296.80***		20328.46***		20324.84***		20296.19***		20329.32***	
N (stats)	48		48		48		48		48	
N (state years)	672		672		672		672		672	
N (individuals)	47636		47636		47636		47636		47636	

Notes: +p < .10; **p < .05, ***p < .01; Columns a and d are the coefficients, standard errors and significance tests reported by Radcliff and Shufeldt (2016). Models b, c, and e are estimated using a 3-level multilevel mixed linear model: individuals (level 1) in state-years (level 2) in states (level 3). Year dummies are included in all models, but not presented.

In all seven models where the measure of initiative is simply corrected, the sign on the interaction term, measuring the difference in the slope of the effect of the initiative on life satisfaction moves from statistically significant to not statistically significant. Therefore, it appears the findings presented in R&S are a function of a data coding error with regards to measurement of initiative context, both as a dummy variable and as density from 1960 to the year of the survey. None of the interaction terms are significant when we move to a model with the initiative average variable.

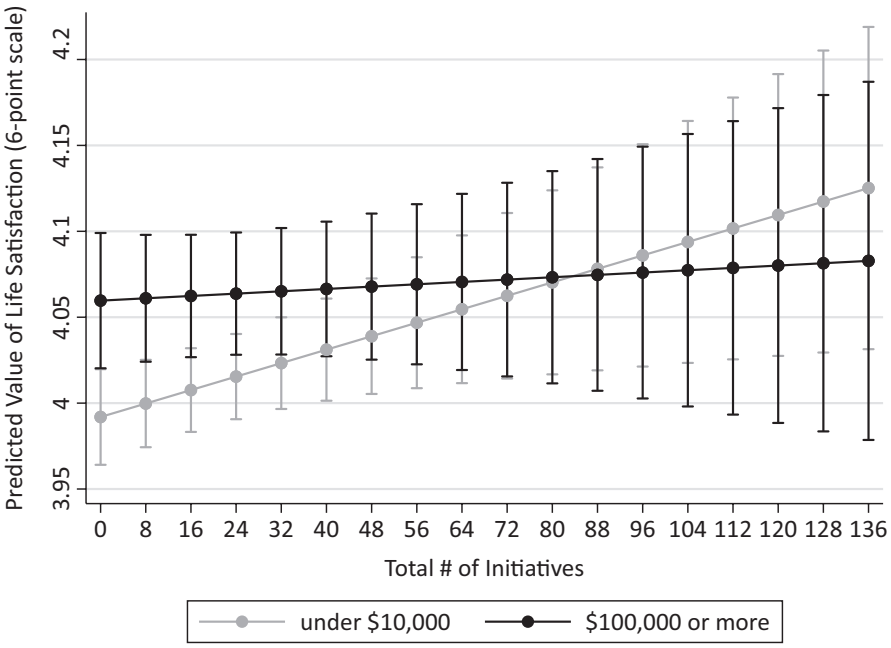

Figure A3a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table 5 (b).

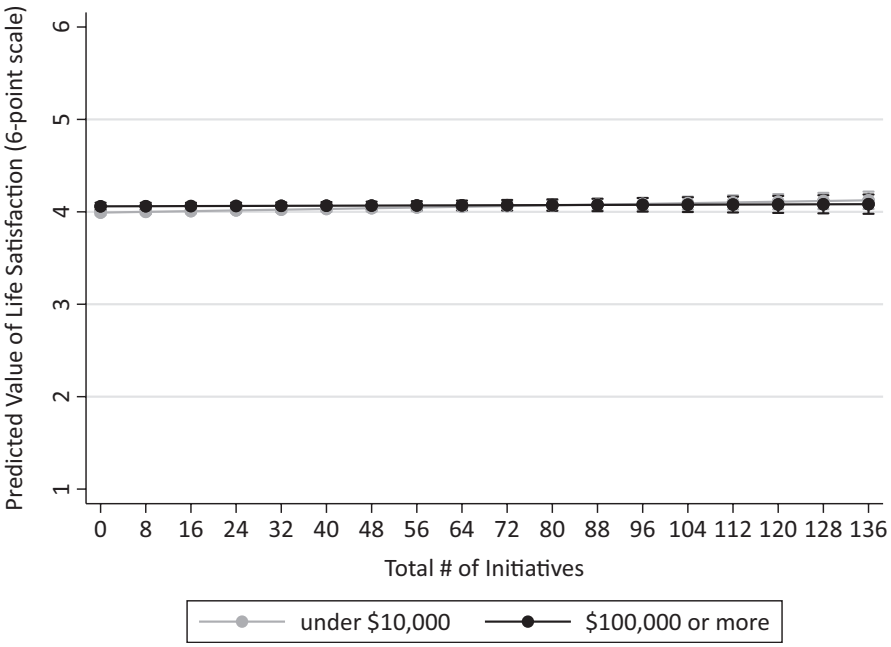

Figure A3b. Figure A3a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

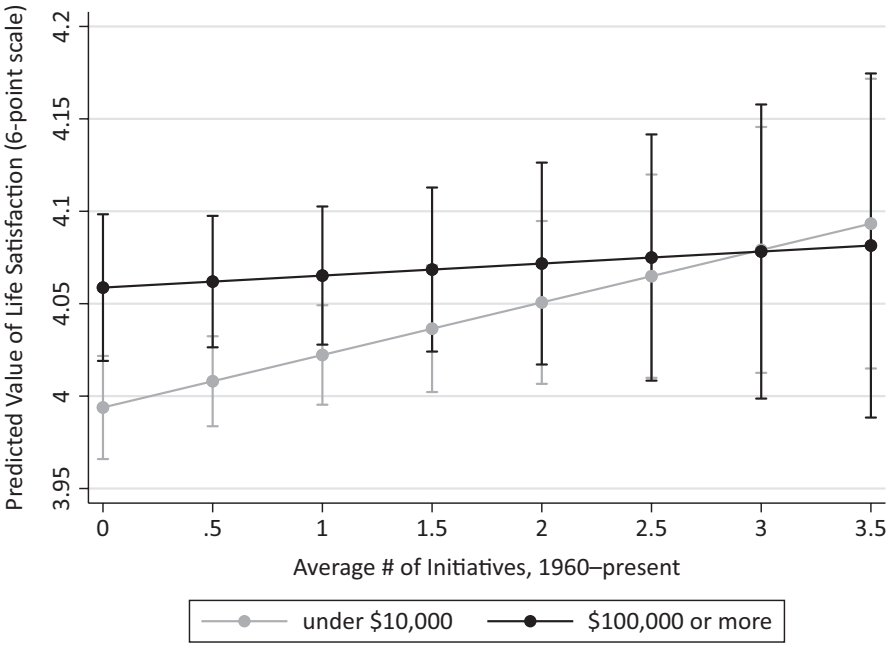

Figure A4a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table 4 (c).

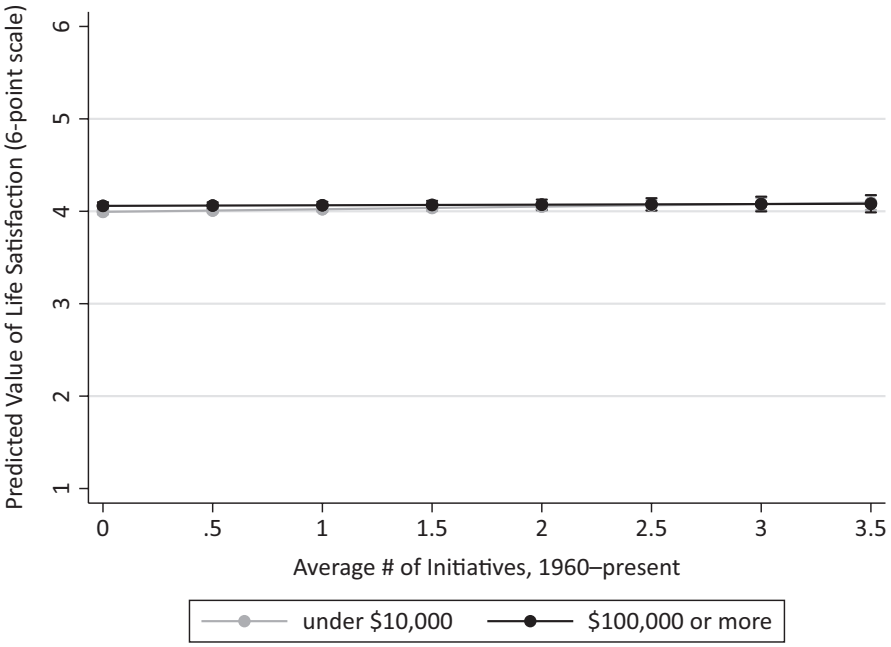

Figure A4b. Figure A4a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

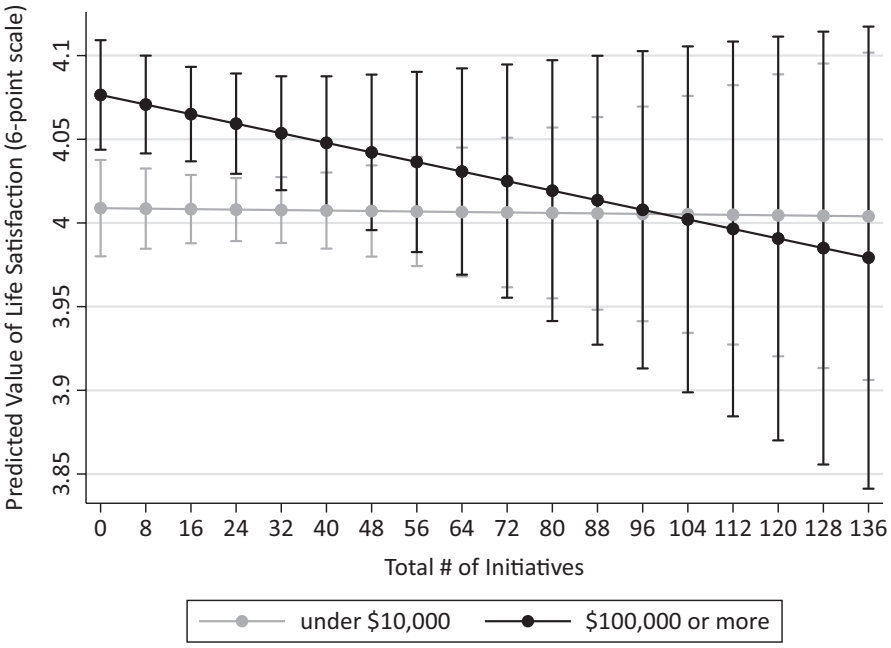

Figure A5a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table 4 (e).

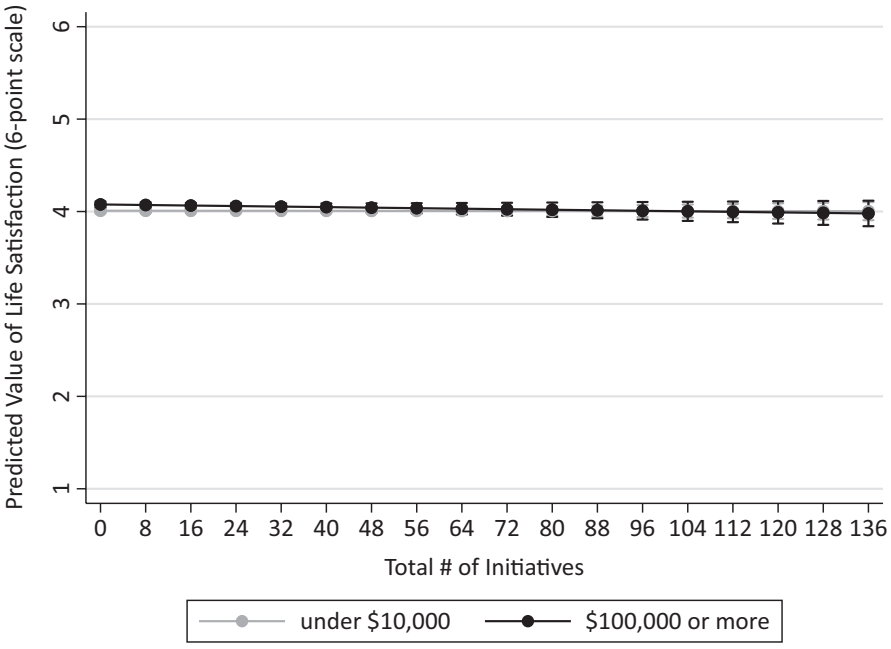

Figure A5b. Figure A5a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

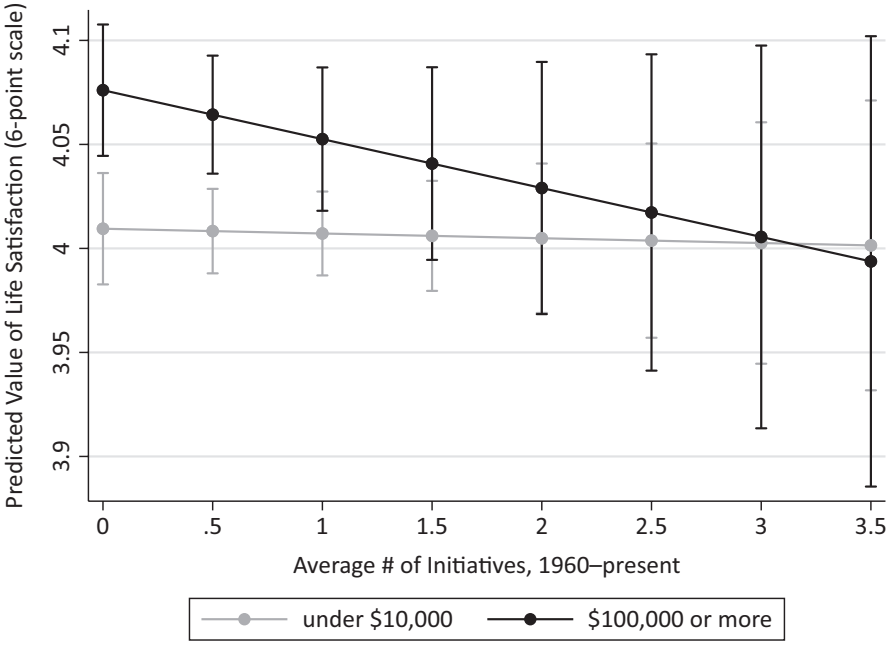

Figure A6a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table 4 (f).

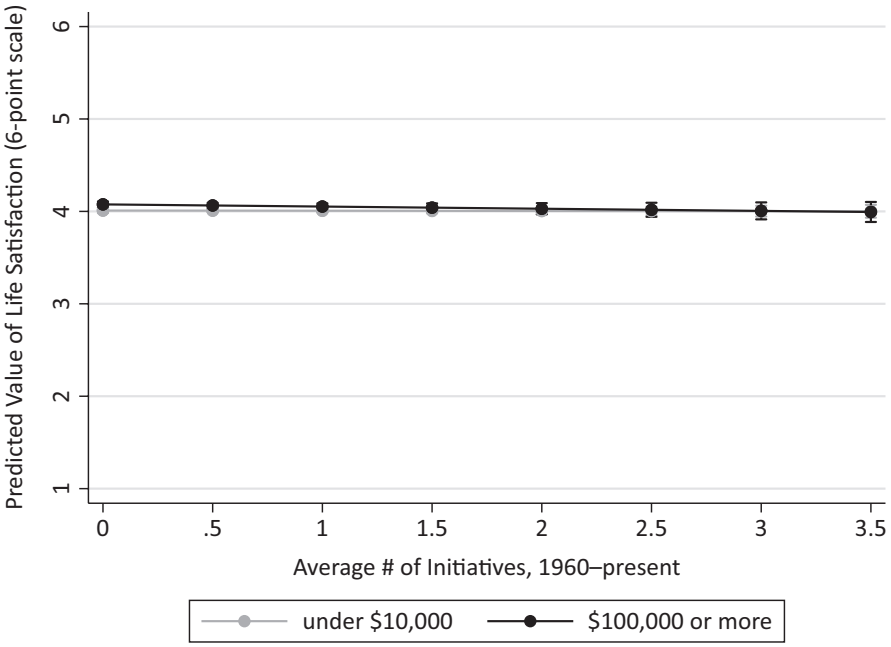

Figure A6b. Figure A6a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

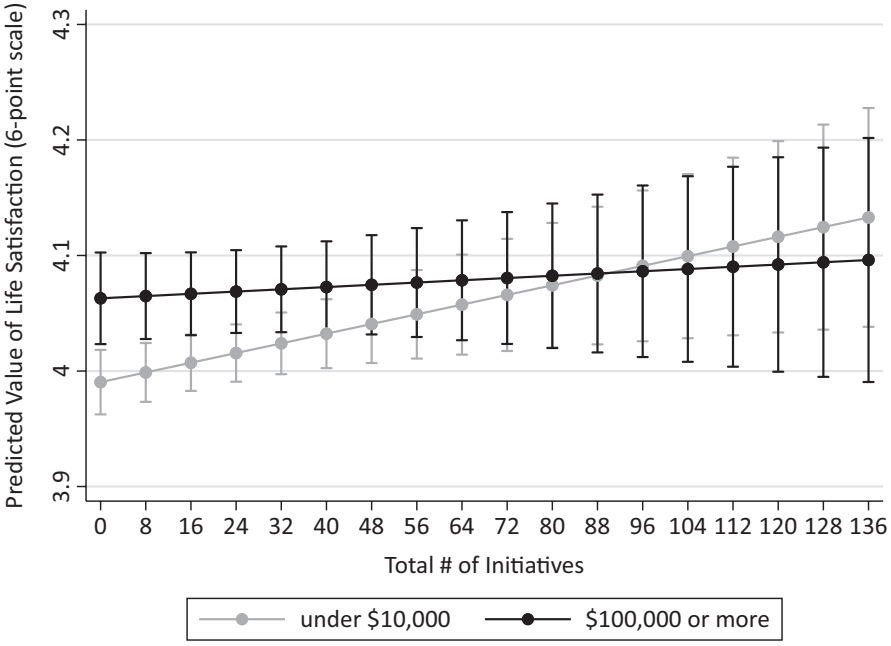

Figure A7a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A1 (b).

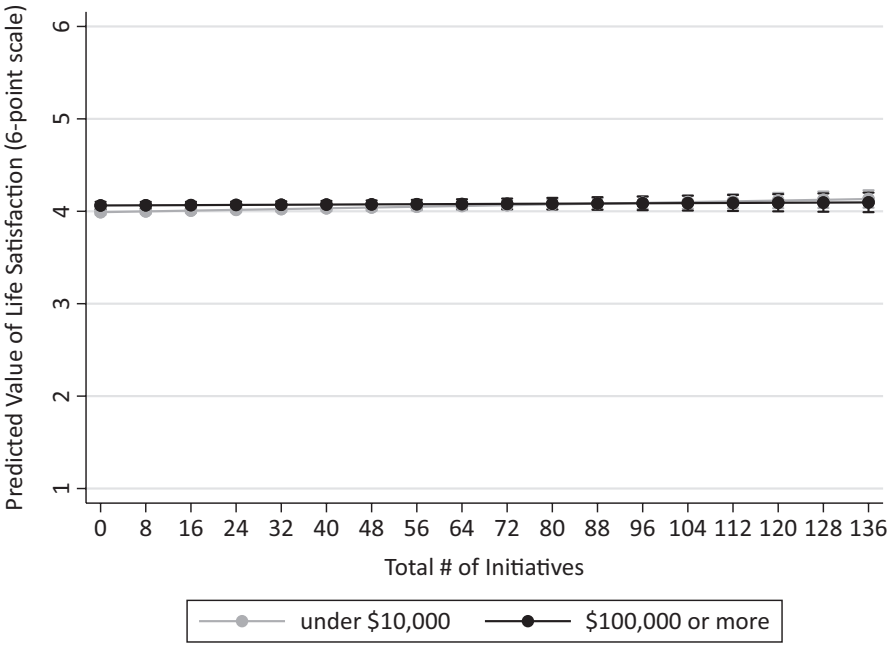

Figure A7b. Figure A7a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

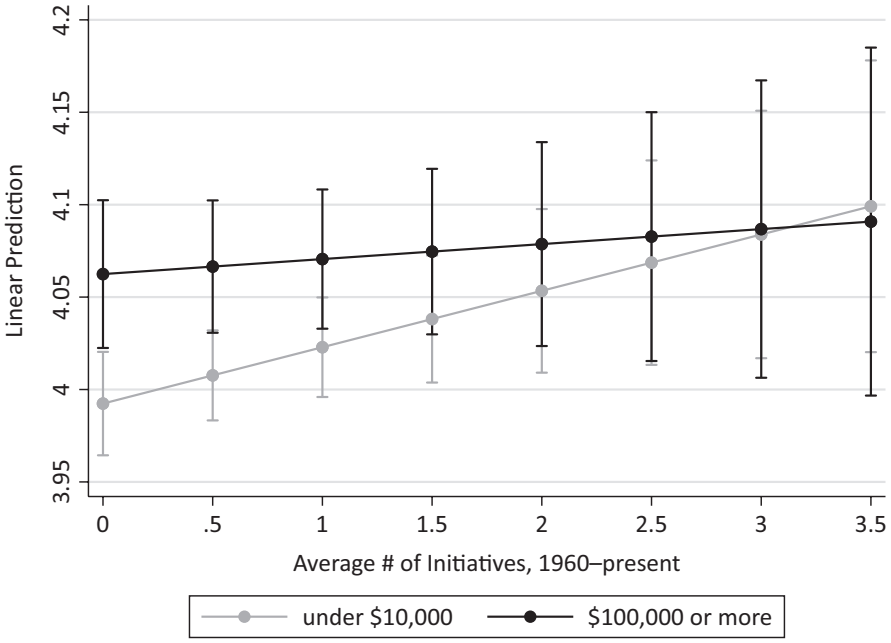

Figure A8a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A1 (c).

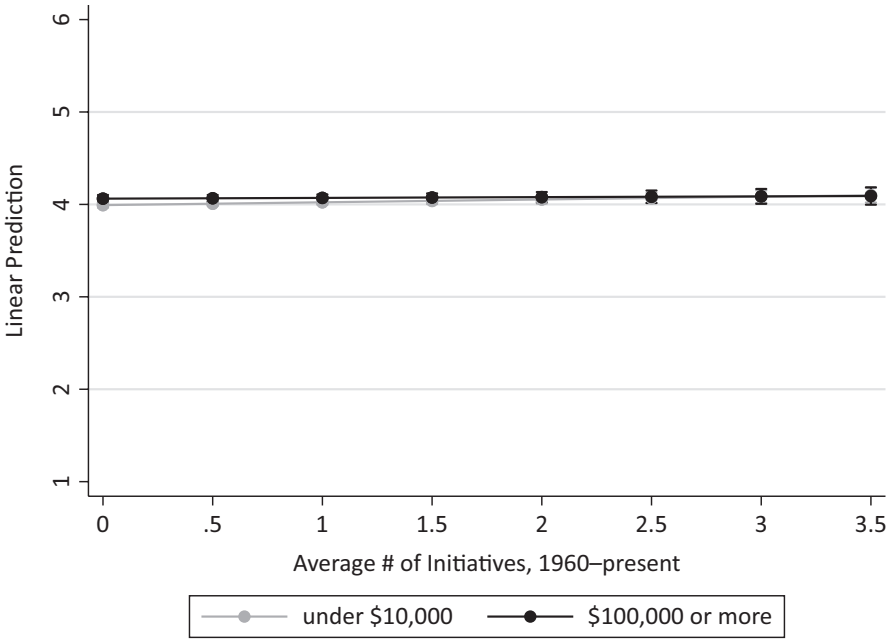

Figure A8b. Figure A8a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

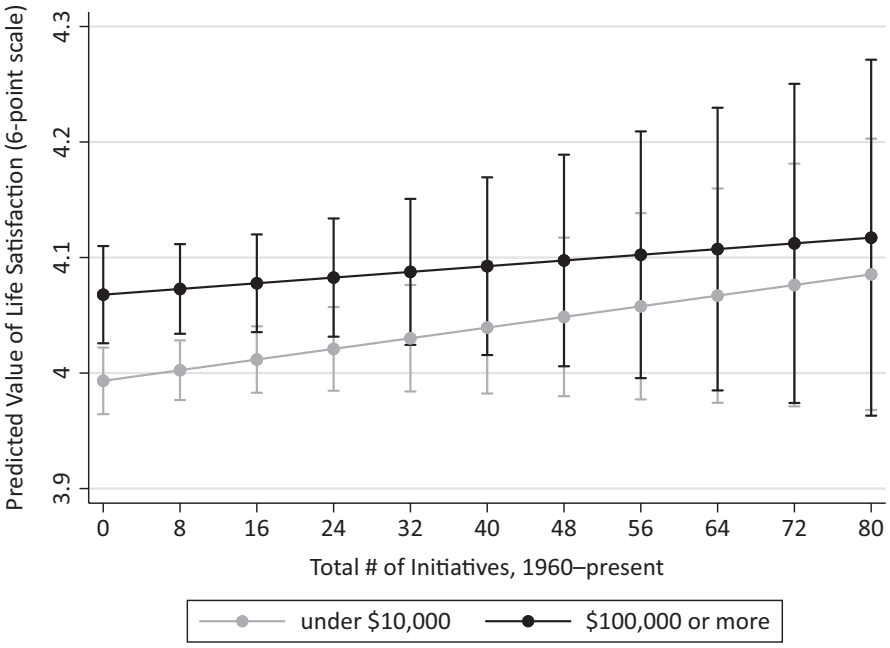

Figure A9a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A1 (e).

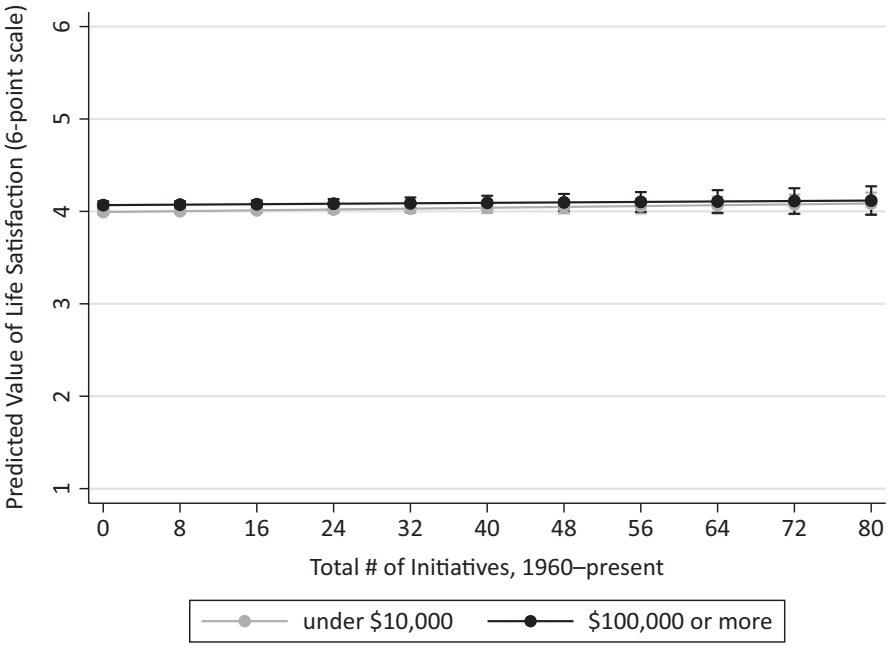

Figure A9b. Figure A9a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

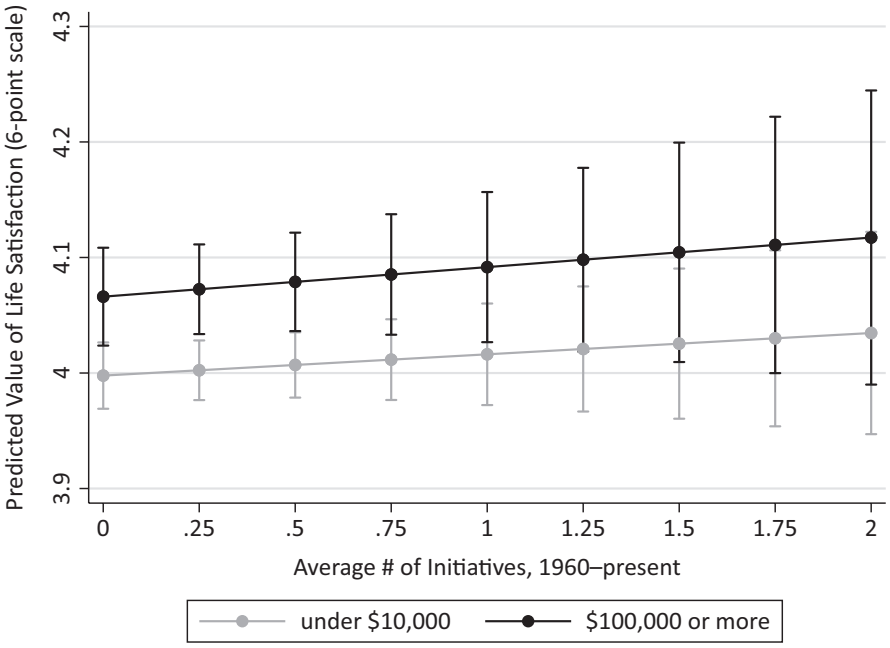

Figure A10a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A1 (f).

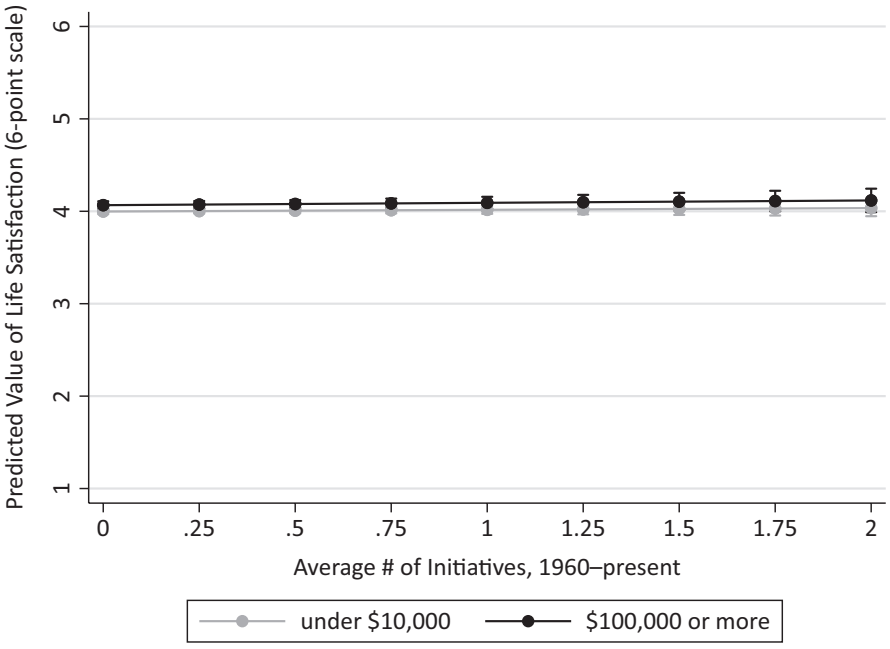

Figure A10b. Figure A10a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

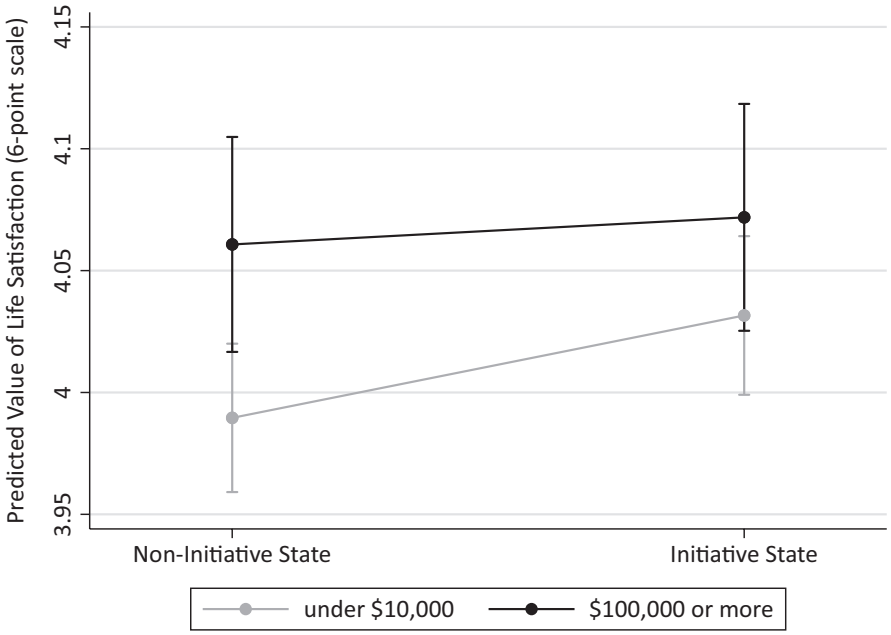

Figure A11a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A1 (h).

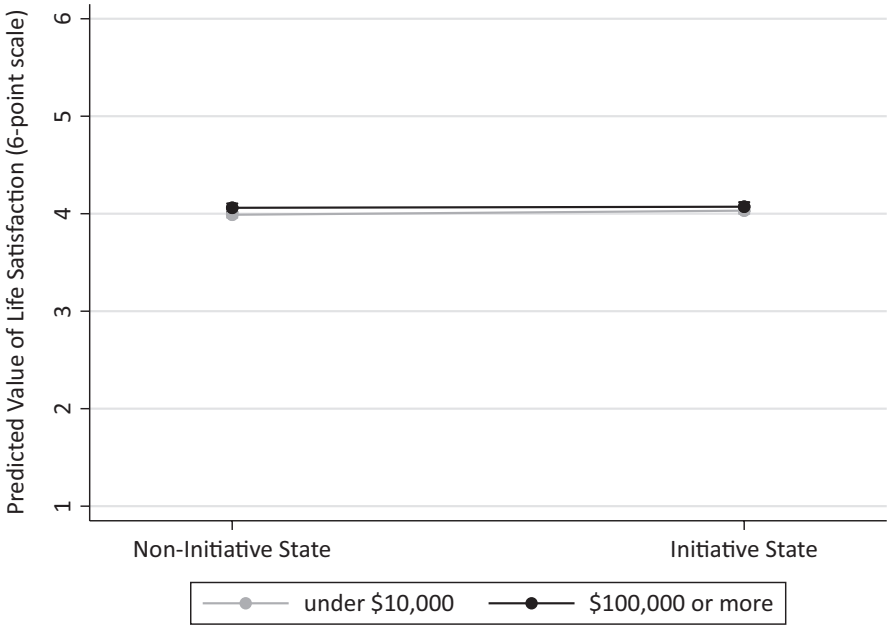

Figure A11b. Figure A11a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

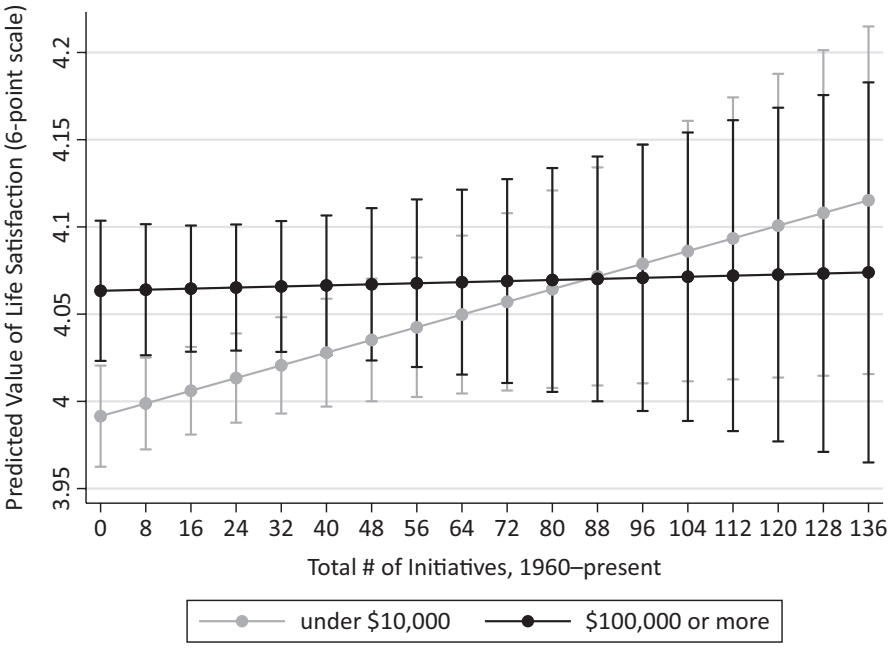

Figure A12a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A2 (b).

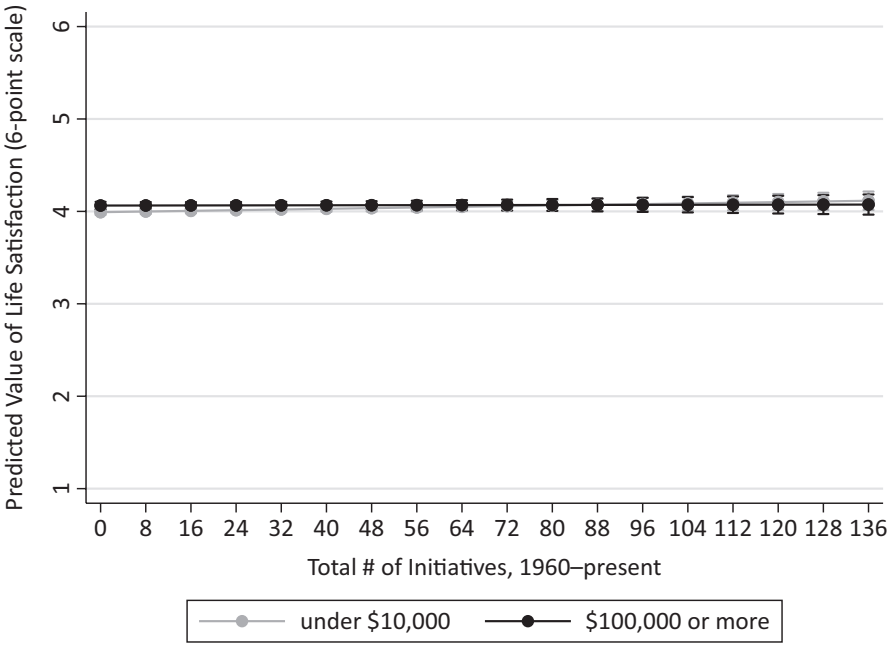

Figure A12b. Figure A12a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

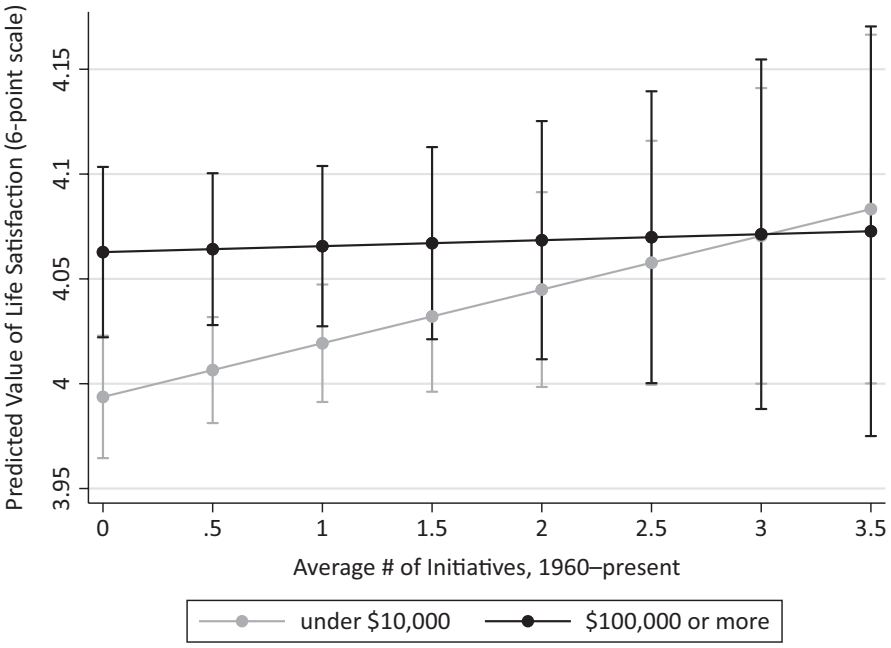

Figure A13a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A2 (c).

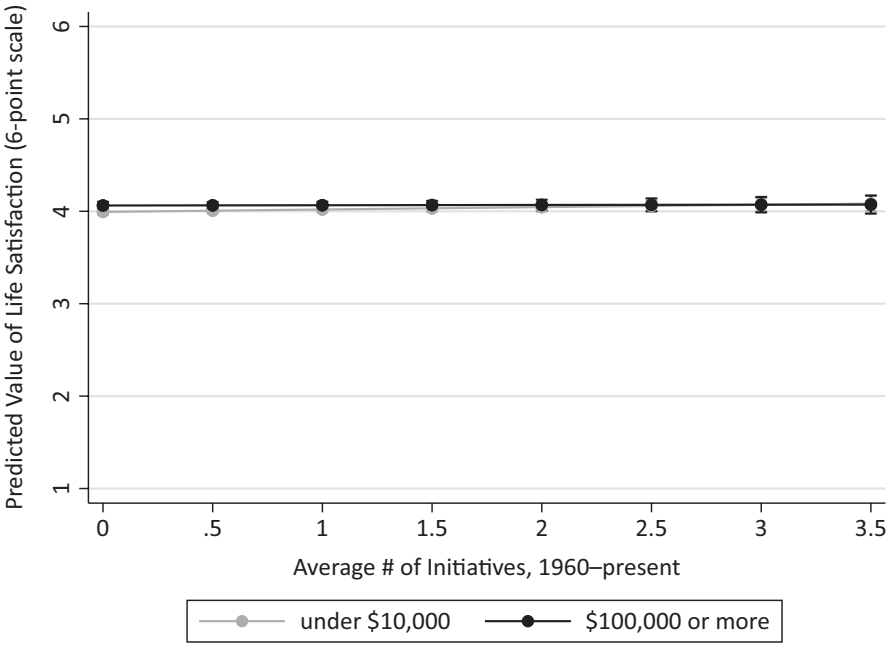

Figure A13b. Figure A13a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

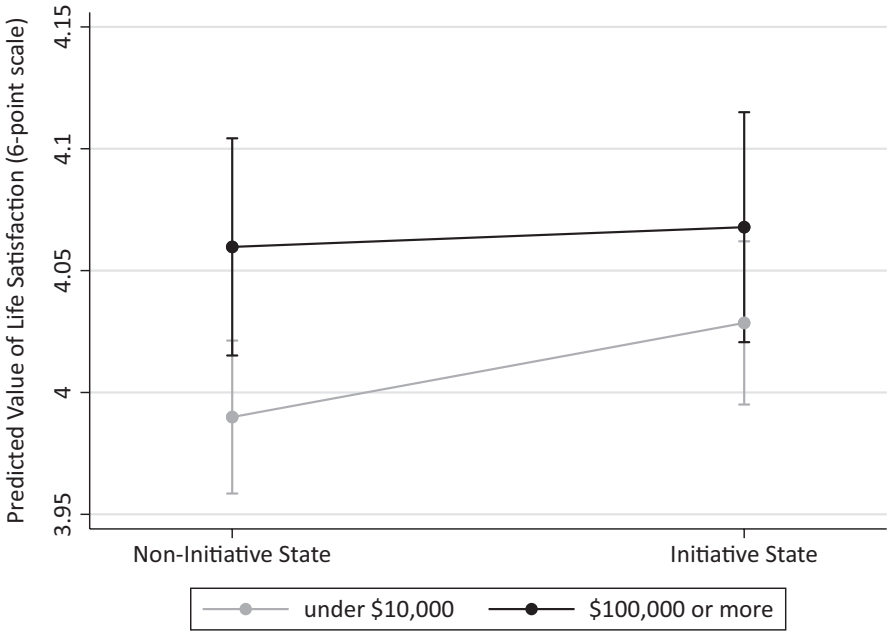

Figure A14a. Interaction of initiative and income, from Table A2 (e).

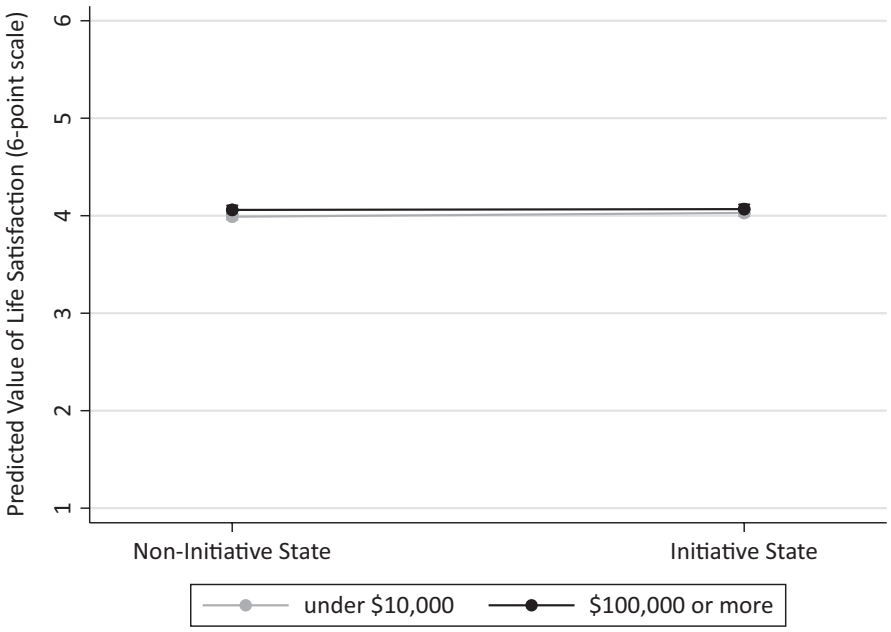

Figure A14b. Figure A14a, with the Y-axis rescaled to represent the full range of plausible values.

The figures also tell a relatively consistent story. Under some specifications, we observe a positive relationship between the ballot initiative and life satisfaction among those with the lowest incomes, but the substantive nature of this effect is small, the slope of this effect is never statistically different than the effect for other income categories, and under other specifications, the sign on the effect goes in the other direction. We do not think that anything about the nature of direct democracy, income, and life satisfaction can be concluded from the DDB Life Satisfaction data presented by R&S.

In an effort to be fully exhaustive, we also present a series of models in Table A3 that attempt to address some additional modeling issues in R&S. These include:

- Replacing the measure of diversity with a time-varying covariant. We use the Census State Intercensal Yearly Estimates for 1985–1989 and 1991–1998 and the actual Census data for racial diversity for 1990.
- Adding a control for the liberalism of the state government. The logic here is that a citizen's life satisfaction may be impacted by who controls the government. Here we use the Berry, Ringquist, Fording and Hanson (1998) measure of

state government ideology. Updated measures are available for download here: https://rcfording.wordpress.com/state-ideology-data

- We also include a measure of state legislative professionalism as computed by Squire (2007). States with more professionalized legislatures tend to produce better outcomes for their citizens, so it stands to reason that this could increase life satisfaction.

Table A3. Initiatives, income and life satisfaction, an extension.

	Regression with random effects (a)		Regression with year and region dummies (b)		3-level multilevel model, individuals in state-years in states (c)	
	Coef	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**	**Coef**	**SE**
Initiative Density	0.027	0.015^{+}	−0.007	0.014	0.025	0.015^{+}
Individual Income	0.005	0.002**	0.005	0.002***	0.004	0.002**
Initiative X Income	−0.002	0.002	−0.002	0.001	−0.002	0.002
State Level Vars						
State Population	0.000	0.000^{+}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Income (PC)	0.000	0.000^{+}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000^{+}
Racial Diversity	0.127	0.091	0.122	0.111	0.119	0.095
Social Capital	0.000	0.015	0.017	0.021	0.001	0.016
State Gov't Liberalism	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Leg Professionalism	−0.006	0.058	0.043	0.070	−0.003	0.060
Ind'l Level Vars						
Financial Satisfaction	0.394	0.004***	0.394	0.005***	0.395	0.004***
Education	−0.019	0.005***	−0.019	0.005***	−0.019	0.005***
Unemployed (0,1)	−0.314	0.035***	−0.312	0.043***	−0.314	0.035***
Sex	0.087	0.012***	0.087	0.013***	0.087	0.012***
Children	−0.108	0.013***	−0.109	0.015***	−0.108	0.013***
Black	−0.199	0.025***	−0.197	0.031***	−0.200	0.025***
Race-Other	−0.001	0.028	0.002	0.015	−0.002	0.028
Age	−0.042	0.002***	−0.042	0.003***	−0.042	0.002***
Age^2	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***	0.000	0.000***
Widowed	0.217	0.031***	0.215	0.038***	0.217	0.031***
Divorced	0.050	0.027^{+}	0.047	0.040	0.049	0.027^{+}
Married	0.292	0.021***	0.291	0.029***	0.293	0.021***
Church Attendance	0.030	0.002***	0.030	0.003***	0.030	0.002***
Social Trust	0.106	0.005***	0.105	0.004***	0.106	0.005***
Health of R	0.148	0.004***	0.148	0.005***	0.148	0.004***
Year	−0.001	0.002	—	—	—	—
Constant	4.402	3.528	2.125	0.115***	2.134	0.083***
	Adjusted $R^2 = .2987$		Adjusted $R^2 = .2988$		Residual variance = 1.511	
Intercept variance for state	—		—		.0003	
Intercept variance for state-years	—		—		.0006	
Log restricted-likelihood	—		—		−77439.7	
Wald Test	—		—		20297.2***	
N (states)	48		48		48	
N (state years)	672		672		672	
N (individuals)	47636		47636		47636	

Notes: + $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. Models (a) and (b) are regression models; model (a) includes random effects while model (b) includes fixed effects for state and region (not shown). Model (c) is estimated using a 3-level multilevel mixed linear model: individuals (level 1) in state-years (level 2) in states (level 3).

The addition of these variables does not change the underlying result that the interaction between ballot initiative context and income is not statistically or substantively significant.

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Article

Explaining Foreigners' Political Rights in the Context of Direct Democracy: A Fuzzy-Set QCA of Swiss Cantonal Popular Votes

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Abstract
In the direct democratic arena, the consensus of voters is required to deliberate policies; without that consent policies are blocked. When bills that support cultural diversity or foreigners' integration are put into referendums, voters may or may not exert their veto power over the proposed policies. In order to determine under which circumstances these types of bills are successful in referendum, I have undertaken a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis of 39 referendums about the extension of political rights to foreigners at the Swiss cantonal level. My analysis identified a total of five theoretically-informed conditions that explain citizenship liberalization and the success of popular votes. I then located these conditions within two configurational hypotheses which postulate how referendum proponents might overcome direct democratic hurdles. The analysis of the success of referendums reveals that the only sufficient path that leads to the popular vote's success is to insert the sensitive issues into a multi-faceted bill. As demonstrated by a more in-depth case analysis, the sensitive object is successful because it is hidden from voters during the referendum campaign or because other priority objects inside the bill reduce its salience.

Keywords
alien residents; citizenship light; direct democracy; foreigner; political rights; referendum; Switzerland

Issue
This article is part of the issue "The Politics, Promise and Peril of Direct Democracy", edited by Todd Donovan (Western Washington University, USA).

1. Introduction

Christian Joppke (2010) asserted that in Western democracies it is possible to witness a trend toward what he called "citizenship light" (CL) a form of citizenship characterized by the following attributes: easy access to formal citizenship status; more rights than obligations; the lack of a sharp distinction between citizens and certain aliens; and capped by thin identities. Joppke (2007, p. 38, 2010, pp. 19–29) suggested that citizenship is becoming less exclusive toward aliens, given that aliens and citizens have similar or identical rights, and more inclusive toward minorities, due to the attitude of promoting cultural pluralism.

However, while the literature on CL contributes to the understanding of the citizenship liberalization, it has two important shortcomings. First, CL literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of the CL trend in other democratic decision-making contexts than the representative parliamentary democracy. Second, it lacks a systematic comparative perspective which allows one to validate findings across a medium-large number of cases.

This article aims to close the resultant gap in CL literature regarding the CL phenomenon in the context of direct democracy and identify under which conditions or configuration of conditions CL is successful or unsuccessful in the direct democratic arena by using a systematic comparative analysis on a medium number of cases.

From Joppke's suggestions it is possible to ascertain that the representative democratic arena is particularly open to various forms of CL. Nevertheless, this may not be the same case for the direct democratic arena where

the characteristics of the political debate and political actors involved are different. The CL process differs from other democratic decision-making processes because in the direct democratic procedure, the consent of the population plays a central role in deliberating policies. Therefore, the population itself constitutes an additional veto player, which could make significant policy changes more difficult to achieve than in the representative democratic context.

An implication of this is that the direct democratic arena may be less prone to CL than the representative democratic arena is. This article individuates the most appropriate formulas that indicate which strategies are successful and which conditions lead to the CL failure. The results, other than stimulating the normative debate on the decision-making procedure of the direct democratic system, offer the opportunity to CL promoters to comprehend which strategies to adopt to achieve their political goals by popular vote.

I decided to focus the analysis on the most homogeneous subfield in terms of the extension of citizenship rights in the direct democratic context. Specifically, I analyzed Swiss popular votes related to the rights of foreigners to vote and/or be elected. The extension of political right to foreigners is a subfield of CL because when political rights are given to non-citizens, political participation shifts from an exclusive form to an inclusive one that is not based on nationhood but rather on a universal dimension of citizenship rights.

The Swiss context plays an important role from a theoretical perspective, given that these types of CL policies in Switzerland have always been subject to a popular vote and have never been implemented through the representative democratic process. In this respect, the Swiss context can be considered as an ideal-typical example of CL in the context of the direct democratic arena.

In order to address this context, I identified a total of five theoretically-informed causal conditions that explain citizenship liberalization and popular vote outcomes. I then located these five conditions in two configurational hypotheses. Finally, I used fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) in order to test conditions and hypotheses on 39 CL popular votes which involved the extension of political rights to non-citizens in the Swiss cantons.

2. Specific Cases that Will Be Analysed

The population of cases was built using information gathered from the database of the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy (http://www.c2d.ch). I have focused the study on both a specific homogeneous geographical area and jurisdiction level: Switzerland and the cantonal level, respectively (in Appendix A the referendums list).

The Swiss cantonal cases differ from the degree of political rights extension object. These differences are due to the specific Swiss socio-cultural context and to the legal characteristic of Swiss referendums.

The differences in the object's content are due to specific circumstantial elements which are intrinsic to the Swiss context, characterized by different types of cleavages that separate cantons. According to the cleavage approach (Bartolini & Mair, 1990, pp. 213–220), the population is separated by certain ascriptive socio-cultural elements. These ascriptive elements are sources of normative values that add a sense of collective identity and determine the attitudinal characteristics of a group. In Switzerland, scholars individuated empirical evidence of the existence of linguistic cleavage between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland (Kriesi, 1998a) and religious cleavage between Protestant and Catholic areas (Caramani, 2004, p. 273; Goldberg & Sciarini, 2014); cleavage was also found between rural and urban zones (Kriesi, 1998b), in class differences between blue- and white-collar workers (Kriesi, 1998b), and in new classes difference between the so called losers and winners of globalization (Giugni & Sciarini, 2008; Goldberg & Sciarini, 2014). These cleavages are sources of normative common values and beliefs that contribute to building identity within social groups and around which both the elite and the electorate organize their action. The difference in the object might be related to the diverse social sensibility of the referendums' promoters toward immigration and national identity topics (Eugster & Strijbis, 2011) and the diverse perception of the direct democratic instruments of popular votes. Such diversity is due to differences in democratic participatory models (Bühlmann, Vatter, Dlabac, & Schaub, 2014) and explains why the reforms are generally more radical in certain cantons, such as Neuchâtel or Geneva, than in others, such as Appenzell Ausserrhoden or Graubünden.

In addition to the cleavage perspective, differences in object content are also related to the typology of the referendum. The Swiss popular vote system includes four typologies of direct democratic instruments:

1) The mandatory referendum, which is a required, binding, and non-popular initiated vote; these referendums are usually held on important matters such as a constitutional amendment;
2) The facultative referendum, which is binding, popular initiated and not a required vote; these referendums aim to oppose a law proposed and voted on by the parliament;
3) The popular initiative, which is binding, popular initiated and not a required vote; these referendums aim to introduce a new constitutional amendment;
4) The counterproposal to the popular initiative, which is binding, non-popular initiated and a non-required referendum on a similar object of the popular initiative.

The popular votes under my investigation all refer to mandatory referendums, popular initiated referendums,

and counterproposals. The most radical forms of political rights extension are proposed during popular initiated referendums, as this type of referendum does not need the consensus of the majority of the political actors to be held but rather can be requested by a small group of citizens.

3. Research Question

This article seeks to answer the following question: "under which combinations of conditions are attempts to extend political rights to foreigners by popular vote successful or unsuccessful?"

The focus is of this study is to individuate the causal frames that lead to the referendums' success or failure. I presume that there is more than one path that leads to the outcome. This implies a complex reality in which causal conditions are not separate entities but often works in conjunction with set theoretic manner.

Essentially, the hypothetical framework to which I refer, presumes a non-linear causal ontology which relies on the concepts of sufficiency and necessity. This type of causal ontology has a holistic understanding of causation which implies the existence of a deterministic reality. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the meaning of deterministic reality here merely indicates the presence of necessary and sufficient conditions, and not to the presence of certainty or absence of error in the results.

4. Conditions Selection

The conditions selection process is linked to two specific elements strictly related to the type of study conducted in this article.

The first element refers to the nature of the object at stake which can be analysed by using conditions linked to the CL or direct democratic literature. In relation to this I have decided to consider both literatures in order to have a wider understanding of the phenomenon under analysis.

The second element refers to the typology of condition that should have a well-defined nature in order to answer the research question. This means that they must have a qualitative threshold below which the effect does not occur, and according to previous studies, they should be determinative in terms of sufficiency and necessity for the outcome. The implication of this second element is to exclude conditions which consider the probability of occurrence of an outcome to be dependent on the degree of the condition and conditions whose causal effect are already covered by other conditions.

4.1. Government Ideology

The literature has often claimed that the enfranchisement of resident aliens is affected by party ideology. Governments composed predominantly of leftist parties tend to provide more inclusive and generous citizenship policies than rightist governments (Bird, Saalfeld, & Wüst, 2010; Green, 2005; Janoski, 2010). Meanwhile, strong rightist governments tend to restrict citizenship rights (Joppke, 2003) in order to accommodate xenophobic movements (Joppke, 2008, p. 166). This condition implies that rightist governments alone are not sufficient for CL opposition.

4.2. Far-Right Populist Parties

According to Howard (2010), anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments pre-exist within the population, and populist parties are the catalyst which mobilize these sentiments. Strong right-wing populist parties are a necessary and sufficient condition that prevents citizenship liberalization (Howard, 2010, pp. 735–751). Howard describes a non-symmetrical relationship, in which the absence of the strong right-wing populism is a necessary but not sufficient condition for CL (Howard, 2010, p. 747).

4.3. Popular Initiated Referendums

The legal characteristics of a popular vote can influence the vote's outcome. As previously indicated, mandatory referendums are instruments that allow citizens to decide on particular policies adopted by the political authorities; meanwhile, popular initiatives are instruments that enable parts of the population to enforce popular votes that may go against the will of parliamentary majorities (Freitag & Vatter, 2006). In our specific context, the popular initiative usually proposed more radical policies on the extension of political rights to foreigners, transversal to the Swiss socio-cultural cleavages. This condition is a prerequisite for popular vote failure. Moreover, in Switzerland, the success rate of popular initiatives is under 10% (Setälä, 2009, p. 49), which is already a quasi-sufficient condition for the failure of popular votes. In addition, Kriesi (2006, pp. 605–606) observes that the government succeeds whenever it opposes a popular initiative. Therefore, in the context of popular initiatives, the opposition of the government is a sufficient and necessary factor for an initiative's failure.

4.4. Popular Votes with Single or Multiple Issues

Popular votes with multiple issues (those that gather together several policies into a single referendum question) and those with single issues (those that address only specific policies in the referendum question) can behave in different ways. Popular votes with multiple issues have a better chance of passing because the complexity of the vote can reduce the sensitive object's salience (Ginsburg, 2009, p. 3). In such cases, CL matters can be hidden inside a broad bill and the political elite can better control the propaganda related to the bill. In contrast, a single-issue popular vote on CL policy has a lower chance

of passing because the salience of the CL matters would be high (Cooter & Gilbert, 2010, p. 745). In the Swiss context, multiple-issue popular votes only refer to mandatory referendums, while single-issue popular votes can be proposed in mandatory referendums, popular initiatives, or counterproposals.

4.5. Political Elite: Split or Cohesive

The degree of polarization of the political elite influences the outcome of a popular vote: the more fragmented the political elite is on the issue put to popular vote, the less likely the citizens are to agree with the government (Kriesi, 2006, pp. 601–602). This hypothesis has a symmetrical nature; when all parties are unified in favor of a proposal, a one-sided information flow exists and the elites will be more persuasive (Ray, 1999, p. 298).

5. Expected Causal Configurations

The five conditions established above are divided into two groups:

i) The conditions *government ideology and presence/absence of strong far-right populist parties* belong to the group of CL literature's conditions that explains CL restriction or extension in the sole context of representative democracy;
ii) The conditions *popular initiatives opposed by the government*, *multiple-issue referendum*, and *elite cohesive or split* belong to the group of general direct democracy literature that explains the popular vote's success or failure.

These two groups of conditions are circumstantial to their specific contexts; none of them fully explain the specific context of CL extension or restriction in a direct democracy. Likewise, the outcome of interest can be explained by a configuration of those conditions related to the CL literature and those related to the direct democratic literature. Therefore, the potential explanations expressed in the conditions contain both elements that have been discovered in the context of representative democracy and those that are important only in the context of direct democracy. The presence of both elements highlights the fact that even when the final decision is made in a direct democratic fashion, the political process involves elements of both representative and direct democracy.

As a result, the nature of the phenomenon under our investigation is configurative; the use of such an approach allows us to obtain the set of potential configurations of conditions that can combine the two different groups of conditions outlined above. In relation to this approach, we believe that our outcome of interest would be best understood in terms of configurative causation rather than the average causal effects of variables across cases.

5.1. Expected Configurations in CL Success in the Context of Direct Democracy

In the direct democratic system, the consent of the population plays a central role because without it, policies can be blocked or delayed. Therefore, when trying to amend new policies during the popular voting process, both the government and the parliamentary majority must consider the population as a new veto player. CL policies may be easily subject to the voters' veto due to pre-existent negative attitudes toward aliens (Howard, 2010), the presence of difference socio-cultural cleavage or, as pointed out by Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007, pp. 105–106) and Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse and Wood (1995), because of the less-liberal attitude toward cultural diversity and policy change of the electorate compared to the more-liberal representative democratic actors. As result, in the representative democratic arena political outcomes can deviate from voters' preferences, which is not the case in the direct democratic arena given that voters themselves are called upon to express their preferences on the outcome.

The hurdles posed by the direct democratic arena and the explanations expressed in the conditions contain elements of both the representative and the direct democratic arenas; such elements are translated into a complex configurative combination of conditions that work together in order to achieve CL success. Therefore, in relation to the outcome "CL success" during referendum, we expect configurations of conditions with at least one element coming from the group of CL conditions and an element coming from the group of direct democratic conditions.

The configurational hypotheses consider the direct democratic hurdles as having a central role. CL promoters must adopt complex political strategies in order to pass a CL bill. I have identified two such strategies: 1) the open strategy, and 2) the hidden strategy.

In the open strategy, CL issues are openly debated during the referendum campaign. Considering the voters' veto role in the direct democratic arena, promoters of CL policies should provide a one-sided influx of information (without strong opposition) in order convince voters about the CL object. In these circumstances, the CL promoters will seek elite cohesion in order to create little to no opposition to CL and positively influence the voters' preferences on the issue; however, the absence of far-right populist parties is also necessary in order to avoid conflicts over the CL reform. In these circumstances, CL promoters can decide to pose the CL issue in the form of a referendum question with little fear that the CL policy will be considered unpopular by voters. Indeed, the strong elite's propaganda in favor of CL and the absence of mobilizing actors that could activate latent xenophobic and anti-immigration sentiments would lead voters to accept the bill.

The open strategy leads to the following configurational hypothesis:

Configurational Hypothesis 1 (CH1): absence of populist parties (∼POP) AND elite cohesion (ELITE) AND non-popular initiative (∼INI).[1]

This configurational hypothesis considers that CL can be achieved if a cohesive elite can introduce the issue without being afraid of resistance from a populist right-wing party.

CL promoters might also adopt a hidden strategy of communication in order to pass the bill. In this context, CL's promoters fear the possible mobilization of pre-existent xenophobic sentiments among the population. Basically, left-wing governments, as main promoters of CL policies, are aware that voters might stop the bill because of their conservative attitudes on this type of object. Therefore, these governments might decide to avoid informing voters about the bill's content in order to minimize the risk that the voters would focus on the sensitive issue in the campaign (Besley & Coate, 2008; Ginsburg, 2009). This strategy also reduces conflict among political actors during the referendum debate, given that the issue is not discussed. We define this possible strategy with the term hidden strategy, given that the CL issue is hidden inside a broad bill and people are not aware of the bill's content.

The hidden strategy leads to the following configurational hypothesis:

Configurational Hypothesis 2 (CH2): left-wing government (LEFT) AND multiple-issue referendum (MULT) AND non-popular initiated initiative (∼INI).[2]

This configurational hypothesis considers that CL can be achieved if a left-wing government includes the issue in a multiple-issue referendum. In this situation, unpopular policies would be kept hidden from the people. As a consequence, voters' preferences would not be determined by the CL object but by other objects included in the referendum's question.

The open strategy and the hidden strategy refer to an optimistic and a pessimistic view, respectively, of voters' attitudes toward aliens. Indeed, the open strategy considers voters' negative sentiments toward aliens as latent and thereby able to be activated only by an agency factor. Therefore, in order for the vote to be successful, it is sufficient to deactivate or avoid activating the action of the agency factor (i.e., populist parties). The hidden strategy considers that voters' negative sentiments toward aliens are already active because they are pre-existent. Therefore, in order for the vote to succeed, it is important to avoid activating this pre-existent sentiment by hiding the issue within a broad bill.

5.2. Expected Configurations in CL Failure in the Context of Direct Democracy

In relation to the failure of CL, it is assumed that the many hurdles facing the passage of a bill in a direct democracy are translated into many sufficient conditions which alone are enough to stop CL. The rejection of a CL bill in the context of a direct democracy would be relatively easy due to the hurdles of the direct democratic arena explained above. In these circumstances, conditions that explain referendum failure and CL failure in the context of a representative democratic system are alone sufficient to the failure of the referendum.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): CL bill will fail when it is opposed by a rightist government (∼LEFT)
Hypothesis 4 (H4): CL bill will fail when it is supported by a divided government (∼ELITE)
Hypothesis 5 (H5): CL bill will fail when it is opposed by a strong far-right populist party (POP)
Hypothesis 6 (H6): CL bill will fail when is proposed as popular initiative (INI)
Hypothesis 7 (H7): CL bill will fail when is put in a single-issue referendum (∼MULT)[3]

6. Research Design

In order to test these hypotheses, I decided to use the fsQCA (Ragin, 2000, 2008). The choice of this method is primarily linked to configurative ontology and the assumptions of causal asymmetry as set out by the hypothesis above. A configurative ontology presupposes that conditions can work together in a configurational or interactive way within a specific theoretical framework. Meanwhile, causal asymmetry implies that an explanation of the failure of CL reform proposals cannot draw on simple negations of the factors that explain the success of CL reform proposals. The alternative outcome of a social process therefore requires its own explanation.

7. Condition Operationalization

All variables are transformed into sets of values; this allows one to individuate sufficient and necessary relationships.

Conditions with a defined nature receive a crisp binary score of 0 or 1. In this study, these conditions refer to the outcome of the popular vote (Yes or No), the presence of a multiple or single object referendum and the presence of a popular initiated referendum.

Conditions with a non-defined nature receive a fuzzy set score which is a continuous score between 0 and 1 with a qualitative anchor point at 0.5. The 0.5 anchor defines the border between case membership and case non-membership to a condition. In this article, these con-

[1] In Boolean terms, it is expected to have this configuration: ∼POP*ELITE*∼INI→CL.
[2] In Boolean terms, it is expected to have this configuration: LEFT*MULT*∼INI→CL.
[3] In Boolean terms it is expected to have this configuration: ∼LEFT+∼ELITE+POP+INI+∼MULT→∼CL.

ditions refer to the presence of a leftist or rightist government, the presence of strong right populist parties, the degree of elite division or cohesion.

The Appendix B shows the details of conditions' calibration.

8. fsQCA in Relation to the Success of Political Rights Extension

8.1. Necessary Conditions

The analysis of necessity did not uncover any necessary conditions; therefore, promoters of CL policies cannot rely on possible crucial conditions in order to succeed in their purposes. In other words, a direct democratic system does not provide essential necessary conditions for CL success, a finding that is in line with our theoretical expectations. Indeed, the hurdles of the direct democratic system inevitably hinder possible necessary conditions that would allow CL to succeed in a representative democratic system. In such circumstances, promoters of CL policies must therefore not rely on direct democracy in order to pursue CL extension.

8.2. Sufficient Conditions

The analysis yielded three different solutions: Table 1 displays the parsimonious solution and Table 2 the intermediate solution. Scholars still debate which solution is causally interpretable.

Baumgartner (2015) and Thiem (Thiem & Baumgartner, 2016) consider the parsimonious solution to be the only causally interpretable solution because it eliminates causally irrelevant factors. Ragin (2008, p. 175) emphasized that the intermediate solution is the preferred one, as it balances parsimony and complexity based on the substantive and theoretical knowledge of the researcher. The differences between Baumgartner, Thiem, and Ragin is that the former understand the intermediate solution a solution with redundant factors, while the second understands the intermediate solution as a more specified solution.

Owing to the lack of agreement among QCA scholars on which solution term is preferable and causally interpretable, I decided to briefly discuss cases covered by the intermediate solution formula before producing a final statement of causal interpretation.

The outcome that explains the CL success by referendum has the following parsimonious solution:

(a) A popular vote with multiple issues (MULT) is successful;

and the following intermediate solutions:

(a) A popular vote with multiple policies issues (MULT) supported and triggered by a cohesive government (∼INI*ELITE) is successful;
(b) A popular vote with multiple issues (MULT) supported and triggered by a rightist government (∼LEFT*∼INI) is successful.

The condition *multiple-issue referendum* appears in every path of the parsimonious and intermediate solution formulas. *Multiple-issue referendum* is also the key factor that should confirm the hidden strategy hypothesis. The political elite seems to use multiple-issue referendums in order to avoid public discussion on CL during the referendum campaign.

Table 1. Parsimonious solution for referendums success.

Frequency cutoff: 1 / Consistency cutoff: 1			
	Raw consistency	Unique coverage	consistency
MULT	0.67	0.67	1
Solution coverage (Ragin): 0.67 Solution Coverage (Veri): 0.83 Solution consistency (Ragin and Veri): 1			

Table 2. Intermediate solutions for referendums success.

Frequency cutoff: 1 / Consistency cutoff: 1			
	Raw consistency	Unique coverage	consistency
(1) ∼INI*MULT*ELITE	(1) 0.44	0.13	(1) 1
(2) ∼LEFT*∼INI*MULT	(2) 0.42	(1) 0.11	(2) 1
Solution coverage (Ragin): 0.55 Solution Coverage (Veri): 0.71 Solution consistency (Ragin and Veri): 1			

8.3. Discussion on the Political Rights Extension Success

8.3.1. Sufficient Paths

In this section I briefly discuss cases covered by the intermediate solution formula. Table 3 displays cases covered by the intermediate solution formula.

Given the high number of cases covered by the solution paths, I decided to select a reduced number of cases. As suggested by QCA literature, I selected uniquely covered cases (Schneider & Rohlfing, 2014), because these types of cases can be explained by one unique conjunction of conditions, i.e., there cannot be other explanations for the case's outcome (Schneider & Rohlfing, 2014). In contrast, cases covered by more than one path can be explained from different angles or by a single dominant configuration. This is not an error in interpretation of the configurations but is instead linked to a specific QCA understanding of causal relationships built not on causal mechanisms, but on the counterfactual causal relationship of necessity and sufficiency. As the premise of the discussion, it is important to point out that all cases covered by the parsimonious and intermediate solution formulas refer to total cantonal constitutional revisions.

Path 1: in the case of Basel Stadt 2005 (CHBS05), a long process of elites meeting (*Verfassungsrat*—Constitutional Assembly) preceded the popular vote. The *Verfassungsrat* proposed a total constitutional revision that could meet the different political expectations of every political party involved. On March 2005, after six years of meetings, the elected Constitutional Assembly reached important inter-party agreements when the final constitutional draft was accepted by every party except the non-governmental right-wing populist parties of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and Swiss Democrats (SD). In this instance, the political elites accepted a constitutional reform which included an article on the possibility of extension of political rights to foreigners only in the towns of Riehen and Bettingen (but not in the city of Basel). The government-elites decided to unanimously campaign for the constitutional reform without revealing the sensitive CL content to the people. During the referendum campaign, the political elite kept the existence of a bill on political rights extension to foreigners hidden from the voters.

Path 2: in CHVD02, the Constitutional Assembly tried to meet some, but not all, opposing views on extending political rights to foreigners. On March 2001, the Constitutional Assembly voted for the first time on the extension of political rights at the cantonal and local level. Despite the proposition receiving the majority of consent (Bolliger, 2001), the assembly members decided to revote on a nuanced version of the same issue in September 2001. This proposal gained greater support with the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP), which eventually decided to support the agreement; only the Liberal Party (LPS) and the relatively weak SVP opposed the constitutional reforms. During the political campaign, the CL object played a secondary role. The campaign actively focused not only on the extension of political rights, but also on the extension of social rights (such as the right to maternity insurance), the union of Church and State, and the reduction of the cantonal districts from 19 to 10 (Rychen, 2002). In Fribourg 2004 (CHFR04), the primary issue discussed during the referendum campaign was the article on civil unions for homosexuals and not the reform of foreigners' political rights. In both CHVD02 and CHFR04, the CL object played only a secondary role and was subtly hidden by the presence of other priority objects.

From these three cases it is possible to identify two types of hidden strategies that differ in degree: i) a hard-hidden strategy, and ii) a soft-hidden strategy. The hard-hidden strategy refers to CHBS05, in which the unpopular CL object was never mentioned during the propaganda campaign. The soft-hidden strategy refers to CHVD02 and CHFR04, where the unpopular CL object played only a secondary role and was subtly hidden by the presence of other priority objects.

8.3.2. Causal Interpretation on Political Rights Extension Success

The hidden strategy has been determined to be the causally relevant strategy for CL promoters to reach success in CL policies; configurational Hypothesis 2 (CH2) is therefore confirmed even if some unexpected elements exist. In contrast to CH2, the solution formula does not display *left-wing government* as a causally relevant condition in the referendum's success, as constitutional revisions allow for great support on the issue from different political forces (including right-wing parties). The specific circumstance of a total constitutional revision is already sufficient to reduce the CL-related divergences of the actors participating in the direct democratic arena.

As previously observed, the hidden strategy hypothesis has a pessimistic understanding of the electorate's

Table 3. Causal configurations for referendums success.

Solution formula	Cases non-uniquely covered	Cases uniquely covered
(1) ~INI*MULT*ELITE	CHAR95, CHNE00, CHGR03	CHBS05
(2) ~LEFT*~INI*MULT	CHAR95, CHNE00, CHGR03	CHVD02; CHFR04
Cases not covered by the solution formula CHGE05.1; CHNE07.2; CHJU14		

behavior as a veto player. Indeed, this strategy suggests that the sole explicit reference to a CL issue in the referendum question is enough for the population to act as a veto player toward the CL reform. As suggested by the solution formula, in the hidden strategy voters' preferences would not be determined by the CL object. Essentially, in a multi-issue referendum, voters would not exert their veto power over the CL object because the salience of the unpopular object would have been reduced. In this strategy, voters would not be aware of the existence of the CL reform, or when they were aware, such as in CHVD02 and CHFR04, they would be required to prioritize their preferences across a range of different topics.

The causal core of the hidden strategy is condition MULT. The fact that the CL object was hidden during the referendum campaign supports the causal inference of the MULT condition on the outcome. In the specific context of a total constitutional revision, the elite cohesion (ELITE) and the presence of a *mandatory referendum* (∼INI) are definitional elements of the *multiple-issue referendum* (MULT) and have no causal inference on the outcome of referendum success. The cases' observations corroborate Thiem and Baumgartner's assumptions of the parsimonious solution: conditions ELITE and ∼INI are redundant. Essentially, *multiple-issue referendum* is the Boolean difference maker, and can be considered the only non-redundant and causal factor that explains the outcome of CL success in the context of extending political right to foreigners.

9. fsQCA Analysis for the Failure of Political Rights Extension in the Context of Direct Democracy

9.1. Necessary Conditions for Political Rights Extension Failure

Single-issue referendum (∼MULT) is the necessary condition for citizenship liberalization failure in a direct democracy; the failure of the extension of foreigners' voting rights would not occur without this crucial condition. This result corroborates the initial hypothesis: CL resistance finds fewer hurdles in the context of direct democracy than CL extension. Indeed, a sole explicit reference to a CL issue in the referendum question is necessary for the voters to activate their negative attitudes toward CL and therefore act as a veto player toward the referendum. Moreover, the necessary condition *single-issue referendum* also provides the ideal context for increasing conflict between the actors involved in the direct democratic debate. Whenever the explicit question on CL reform is put up for direct democratic debate, an ideological conflict over the issue at stake is difficult to avoid. Essentially, the context of the single-issue referendum question enables the actors involved to express their political views about CL during the referendum debate.

9.2. Sufficient Conditions for Political Rights Extension Failure

As displayed in Table 4, the parsimonious sufficient solution for the outcome "failure of political rights extension to foreigners" encompasses two different causal combinations of conditions; meanwhile, as displayed in Table 5 the intermediate sufficient solution encompasses three different causal combinations of conditions.

Ragin (2006) and Veri (2019) consistency is high, which means that nearly all the cases fit into the patterns identified by the analysis; Ragin's (2006) and Veri's (2018) coverages are also high, which makes the solution empirically relevant and not trivial.

The parsimonious solution suggests that a popular vote will fail whenever the following criteria exist:

(a) Strong populist parties (POP) that oppose a single-issue (∼MULT) popular vote promoted by a divided rightist government (∼ELITE*∼LEFT);
(b) A popular initiative (INI) referendum held on CL.

Meanwhile, the intermediate solution suggests that a popular vote will fail whenever the following criteria exist:

(a) Strong populist parties (POP) that oppose a single-issue (∼MULT) popular vote promoted by a divided rightist government (∼ELITE*∼LEFT);
(b) A rightist government (∼LEFT) in which unified elites (∼ELITE) oppose a single-issue (∼MULT) popular initiative (INI);
(c) A strong populist party (POP) which opposes a single-issue (∼MULT) popular initiative (INI).

Table 4. Parsimonious solution for political rights extension failure.

Frequency cutoff: 2 / Consistency cutoff: 0.819642			
	Raw consistency	Unique coverage	consistency
(1) ∼LEFT*POP*∼MULT*∼ELITE	(1) 0.33	(1) 0.13	(1) 0.92
(2) INI	(2) 0.62	(2) 0.42	(2) 1
Solution coverage (Ragin): 0.75 Solution Coverage (Veri): 0.83 Solution consistency (Ragin and Veri): 0.96			

Table 5. Intermediate solution for political rights extension failure.

Frequency cutoff: 2 / Consistency cutoff: 0.819642			
	Raw consistency	Unique coverage	consistency
(1) ∼LEFT*POP*∼MULT*∼ELITE	(1) 0.33	(1) 0.13	(1) 0.92
(2) ∼LEFT*INI*∼MULT	(2) 0.42	(2) 0.08	(2) 1
(3) POP*INI*∼MULT	(3) 0.42	(3) 0.1	(3) 1
Solution coverage (Ragin): 0.66 Solution Coverage (Veri): 0.83 Solution consistency (Ragin and Veri): 0.96			

The first path is identical in both the parsimonious and intermediate solutions, meaning that each insufficient but non-redundant part of a condition which is itself an unnecessary but sufficient component of the causal configuration is a Boolean difference maker.

9.3. Discussion on the Political Rights Extension Failure

In order to determine whether intermediate solution conditions are redundant, cases uniquely covered by the intermediate solution formula are briefly discussed. Table 6 displays cases covered by the intermediate solution formula.

Even before discussing the intermediate solution paths, the condition *single-issue referendum* (∼MULT) can be declared redundant in conjunction with *popular initiatives opposed by the government* (INI), given that in the specific context of Switzerland popular initiatives can be held only on single objects.

Path 1 does not present any causally redundant condition, given that it appears exactly how it is in both the intermediate and the parsimonious solution. In Path 1, voters opposed the proposition supported by the government. The case of Bern (CHBE94.2) refers to a government counterproposal to the popular initiative CHBE94.1, which was voted on the same day in Parliament and in the ballot. In the counterproposal, CL issues were actively debated during the referendum campaign. Evidence exists that the right-wing populist parties used anti-foreigner arguments, which indicates a causal role of condition POP. Indeed, during the campaign, the SVP highlighted the risk to Switzerland of losing cultural homogeneity in institutions due to foreigners' inability to properly speak the Swiss German dialect. In the middle of the campaign, the FDP suddenly decided to oppose the counterproposal (Kiefer, 1994; Van Liniger, 1994). The FDP's decision came only after they had already offered support for the counterproposal both in Parliament and at the beginning of the referendum campaign. The referendum held in Schaffhausen (CHSH01) was a variant of the total constitutional revision also voted on the same day by FDP. During the parliamentary debate, the FDP favored the extension of political rights to foreigners, but subsequently followed the SVP in the political campaign against the referendum (SDA/ATS, 2000).

Path 2: in the cases of Geneva 1993 (CHGE93.1 and CHGE93.2) and Uri (CHUR95), the cantonal governments ran a campaign primarily focused on small-step policies toward CL, and therefore opposed the popular initiatives only because they were considered too radical to have a chance to pass by popular vote. The government campaign was not focused on the CL matter.

Path 3: in Bern (CHBE10), populist party SVP's opinion on the initiative was moderate and not discernible from the government opinion on the popular initiative. The popular initiative campaign against the referendum was run by a single committee composed of the SVP, the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), the Federal Democratic Union (EDU), and the FDP, which proposed a unifying strategy of propaganda (Wyler, 2010). The SVP, together with the right-wing parties in the government, argued that extending voting rights to foreigners should not be a tool of integration but a consequence of the integration process (Guggisberg, 2010). Indeed, naturaliza-

Table 6. Cases covered by the intermediate solution.

Solution formula	**Cases non-uniquely covered**	**Cases uniquely covered**
(1) ∼∼LEFT*POP*∼MULT*ELITE		CHBE94.2; CHGE01; CHSH01
(2) ∼LEFT*∼INI*MULT	CHVD92, CHZH93, CHBE94.1, CHBS94, CHAG96, CHFR97, CHSO97, CHGL10, CHVD11, CHLU11, CHZH13, CHSH14	CHGE93.1, CHGE93.2, CHUR95
(3) POP*INI*∼MULT	CHVD92, CHZH93, CHBE94.1, CHBS94, CHAG96, CHFR97, CHSO97, CHGL10, CHVD11, CHLU11, CHZH13, CHSH14	CHNE07.1, CHBS10.1, CHBE10

tion was considered the only official tool to guarantee that a person will be integrated and that s/he can understand the society and the language where s/he lives. In Basel (CHBS10.1) and Neuchâtel (CHNE07.1), the populist party was an additional actor to the government action in opposing the popular initiative. For example, in the case of Basel, the SVP's arguments were based on strong xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments; the group used street posters with figures of a woman wearing burqa, a young black man with sunglasses, and a suspicious-looking Arabic man in front of the ballot box with the cantonal flag (Weber, 2010). The examination of these specific cases highlights the fact that the condition POP is not uniformly causally related to the outcome. The fact that in Basel and Neuchâtel the condition POP is causally relevant and in Bern it is causally redundant indicates that the solution formula does not provide a full satisfactory understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Essentially, from a set-theoretic perspective, this ambiguity is not acceptable because the condition POP appears to be an Insufficient but Necessary part of a condition which is itself Unnecessary but Sufficient (INUS condition) over certain cases, but not in other cases. Therefore, POP should be considered a redundant condition because statements of sufficiency are not fulfilled with the intermediate solution formula.

As has been discussed in this section, the conditions that only appear in the intermediate solutions are redundant either because they are not relevant (as in the case of right-wing governments in CHGE93.1 CHGE93.2) or because they provide ambiguous evidence (such as the presence of populist actors in CHBE10, CHBS10.1, and CHNE07.1.). As a result, the parsimonious solution path INI (presence of popular initiative) has been determined to be the only non-redundant solution formula.

9.4. Causal Interpretation of Political Rights Extension Failure

The sufficient and necessary conditions corroborate the principle behind our hypothesis on CL failure, which considers the non-acceptance of a CL bill to be relatively easy due to the presence of the hurdles of the direct democratic arena. Indeed, the presence of the necessary condition *single-issue referendum* and the sufficient conditions activates the negative attitude of the population toward the reform and increases conflict among political actors.

The solution formulas also suggest the same pessimistic view of voters on CL matters, given that the mere presence of a question on a CL issue plays a necessary role in the activation of the voters' veto power. In Path 1, the presence of strong populist actor and a divided government deprives the government of the necessary resources to influence voters' preferences on the issue through a strong one-sided influx of information. In Path 2, the popular initiative object itself, which is always a single issue, and as pointed out above is more radical and transversal to the various socio-cultural cleavages, is sufficient to trigger the veto power of the electorate toward the popular vote.

Parsimonious solution paths corroborate that CL reforms are opposed by the voters because of the high level of conflict inherent in the direct democratic arena. Indeed, in the first path, the conflict is inflated by the presence of populist parties and by a divided government. Populist parties raise the level of conflict inside the government during the referendum campaign, which is an interactive condition that triggers the elite split. Meanwhile, in the second Path, the conflict is high due to the absence of a deliberative arena (such as the parliament), which would allow compromises to be found between the popular vote promoters and other political actors; such deliberation could also increase support for the popular vote. The popular initiative condition INI is by itself sufficient for popular vote failure because popular initiatives are a more divisive vector of policy promotion than mandatory or counterproposal referendums. This divisiveness occurs because the promoters of popular initiatives decide to put the object as it is to a popular vote without engaging in consensus negotiations with the political elite. In a popular initiative, support for the object is usually limited to the popular initiative's promoters, which implies substantial opposition from the government and other political actors. Basically, popular initiatives provide little to no room for deliberation among the political actors involved. In contrast, counterproposal and mandatory referendums are usually subject to a legislative deliberation process in which the political actors' conflicts are reduced; in such circumstances, the majority of the parliament usually must agree on the object to be put into referendum.

10. Conclusion

This article demonstrates that a system with direct democratic instruments is open to introducing CL reform proposals; however, such a system also makes it almost impossible to gain the majority of the established electorate's support for such reforms. If the lightening of citizenship is to be approved by those who possess the status of a citizen (i.e., nationals), the CL object must be hidden from public scrutiny and embedded in a general constitutional reform. For supporters of CL, this study contains two further messages: introducing CL either through a popular initiative or in a situation in which a strong far-right populist party will stimulate a right-wing government party to oppose the initiative is a recipe for failure in the direct democratic context.

This research also suggests a pessimistic view of voters' behavior toward CL reforms. The visibility of the object plays a central role, while at the same time the level of conflict between political actors involved in the direct democratic arena contributes to the referendum outcome. When the object is not visible to the voters and the level of conflict is reduced, the voters will accept the

object; meanwhile, when the CL object is visible to the voters and the level of conflict is high, the voters will oppose the object and exert their veto power.

This conceptualization also indicates that conflicts and the nature of the object are mutually dependent in a direct democracy. Indeed, only the conjunction of these two axes produce the outcome of interest; condition(s) located along these two axes are not enough to produce the outcome of interest.

This research also contains certain limitations due to the fsQCA methodology and the research design used that have affected the interpretation of findings. Specifically, the fsQCA analysis usually produces solution formulas that rarely cover the whole population of cases analyzed; as a result, there are cases that are not covered by the solution formulas. The cases that remain uncovered can probably be explained by other conditions that have not been considered by our explanatory model. In order to identify such conditions, further specific case analysis should be conducted. Moreover, the fsQCA analysis only produces causal static statements on sufficiency and necessity; it does not add inferential value by tracing how the combination of necessary and sufficient conditions affects the outcomes. In other words, the fsQCA analysis identifies sufficient and necessary conditions but not how these conditions interact to produce the outcome of interest. The temporary succession of conditions and the causal mechanisms that link the conditions together and lead to the outcome remain unexplained. Finally, the fsQCA analysis reveals statements of sufficiency and necessity with only the conditions available in the explanatory model, implying that it might be possible to miss conditions that might not appear in the solution formula.

Despite the limitations represented by the employed method, this research provides a comprehensive picture of the fate of CL proposals in the context of direct democracy by bringing to the forefront the question of CL in the context of direct democracy and identifying non-trivial sufficient and necessary conditions for the success or failure of CL policy in the direct democratic context.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Referendum List

Table A1. Popular votes on extension of political rights to foreigners.

Popular votes	Date	Case ID	Result
Neuchatel RE at LOC (referendum)	1990	CHNE90	No
Vaud VR and RE at CANT and LOC (initiative)	1992	CHVD92	No
Geneva VR at LOC (initiative)	1993	CHGE93.1	No
Geneva VR and RE in Tribunals (counterproposal)	1993	CHGE93.2	No
Geneva VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	1993	CHGE93.3	No
Zurich VR at LOC (initiative)	1993	CHZH93	No
Bern VR and RE at CANT and LOC (initiative)	1994	CHBE94.1	No
Bern VR and RE at LOC (counterproposal)	1994	CHBE94.2	No
Basel Stadt VR at CANT and LOC (initiative)	1994	CHBS94	No
Uri VR at CANT (initiative)	1995	CHUR95	No
Appenzell AR VR/RE at LOC (referendum)	1995	CHAR95	Yes
Aargau VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	1996	CHAG96	No
Jura RE at LOC (referendum)	1996	CHJU96	No
Fribourg VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	1997	CHFR97	No
Solothurn VR and RE at CANT and LOC (initiative)	1997	CHSO97	No
Neuchâtel VR at CANT (referendum)	2000	CHNE00	Yes
Geneva VR and RE at LOC (referendum)	2001	CHGE01	No
Schaffhausen VR at LOC (referendum)	2001	CHSH01	No
Vaud VR and RE at LOC (referendum)	2002	CHVD02	Yes
Graubünden VR/RE at LOC (referendum)	2003	CHGR03	Yes
Fribourg VR/RE at LOC (referendum)	2004	CHFR04	Yes
Basel-Stadt VR/RE at LOC (referendum)	2005	CHBS05	Yes
Geneva VR at LOC (initiative)	2005	CHGE05.1	Yes
Geneva VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	2005	CHGE05.2	No
Solothurn VR and RE at LOC (referendum)	2005	CHSO05	No
Jura RE at LOC (referendum)	2007	CHJU07	No
Neuchâtel VR and RE at CANT (initiative)	2007	CHNE07.1	No
Neuchâtel RE at LOC (counterproposal)	2007	CHNE07.2	Yes
Glarus VR and RE at LOC and CANT (referendum)	2010	CHGL10	No
Basel Stadt VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	2010	CHBS10.1	No
Basel Stadt VR at LOC (counterproposal)	2010	CHBS10.2	No
Bern VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	2010	CHBE10	No
Vaud VR and RE at CANT (initiative)	2011	CHVD11	No
Lucerne VR at LOC (initiative)	2011	CHLU11	No
Zurich VR and RE at LOC (initiative)	2013	CHZH13	No
Jura VR and RE at LOC (referendum)	2014	CHJU14	Yes
Schaffhausen VR and RE at LOC and CANT (initiative)	2014	CHSH14	No
Neuchatel RE at CANT (referendum)	2016	CHNE16	No
Basel Land VR at LOC and CANT (initiative)	2018	CHBL18	No

Notes: VR: voting rights; RE: right to be elected; CANT: cantonal level; LOC: local level.

Appendix B. Calibration Procedure Details
(for raw data please request information to the author)

1. Outcome Calibration (OUT, ∼OUT)

Table B1. Coding scheme crisp set OUT and ∼OUT.

Crisp score	Outcome	Condition ID
1	Yes	OUT
0	No	∼OUT

2. Left Wing Government Calibration (LEFT, ∼LEFT)

The condition left-wing (LEFT) versus rightwing (∼LEFT) government has a fuzzy set membership.

The full membership of 1 means coincides with the ideal typical leftwing government; meanwhile the full non-membership 0 coincides with the ideal type of rightwing government.

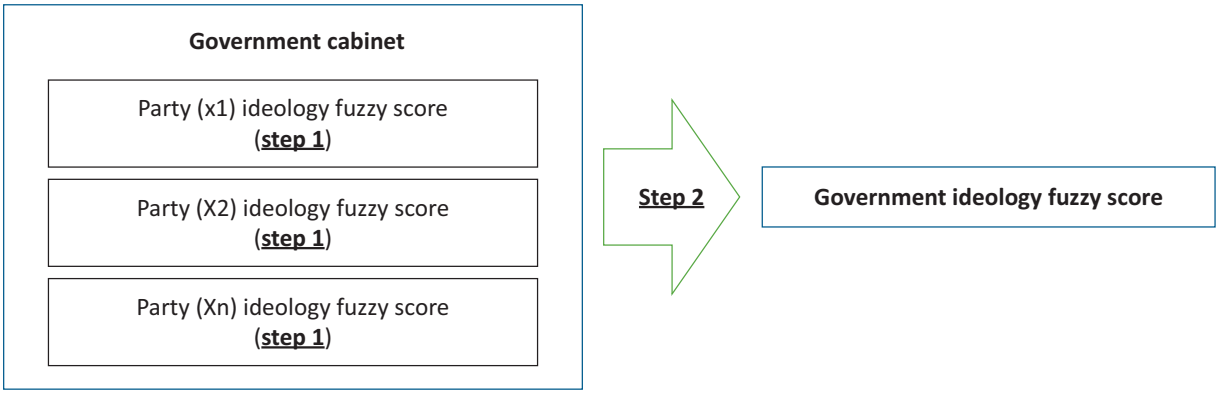

Figure B1. Government ideology final fuzzy score.

I decided to calibrate the ideology of the government in two steps. (i) Firstly I calibrated each government party's ideology fuzzy score (data used are from the Sotomo Institute of Zurich); (ii) then I aggregated these scores considering the party government composition by using the Arithmetic Mean Based on Compensatory Fuzzy Logic as suggested by Bouchet, Pastore, Andrade, Brun and Ballarin (2011) and Veri (2017).

Table B2. Sotomo Institute data scores coding.

fs score	Sotomo Score	Condition ID
1	−51 (−60)	LEFT
0,5	0	———————
0	51–60	∼LEFT

3. Strong Populist party calibration (POP, ∼POP)

The condition strong far right populist parties (POP) versus non-populist parties (∼POP) has a fuzzy set membership. I consider right wing populist parties the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (Swiss People Party—SVP), the *Eidgenossisch-Demokratische Union* (Federal Democratic Union—EDU), the *Freiheits-Partei der Schweiz* (Freedom Party of Switzerland—AP-FPS), the *Schweizer Demokraten* (Swiss Democrats—SD) and the *Mouvement Citoyens Genevois* (Geneva Citizens' Movement—MCR).

The full membership of 1 coincides with the ideal typical presence of strong far-right populist parties; meanwhile the full non-membership 0 coincides with the ideal type of absence of strong far-right populist parties.

This condition has a complex definition which has to be adapted to our scope. Therefore, in order to fuzzify this condition, I decided to use the Fuzzy Multiple Attribute Condition (FMAC) strategy (Veri 2017).

From the theory it is possible to extrapolate at least two attributes related to our FMAC: 1) the strength of the populist party inside the country and 2) the political agenda of the populist party, which must be far right and anti-immigration.

A third element of our FMAC is determined by the causal context itself, or the CL related referendum's context. In such context, despite that the theory only required strong far right populism I added the position of each populist party in respect of the referendums. This attribute also has the role of activating the whole condition POP in the context of direct democracy. Indeed, the outcome may change depending on whether a given populist party participates in the propaganda against CL or not.

In summary our FMAC is made by 3 distinctive attributes that are necessary and jointly sufficient in determining the final concept. These attributes are:

i) the electoral strength of the populist party,
The electoral strength has been measured by considering each populist party electoral performance during the election that precede the referendum. I have defined the qualitative breakpoints 0.5 at 4%.

Table B3. Coding scheme fuzzy set POP electoral strength.

fs score	Electoral strength (%)
1	> 20
0.5	4
0	< 2

ii) far-right political agenda:
The empirical information is collected from the Sotomo Institute of Zurich which refers to political parties' ideology at Swiss Cantonal level use above.
iii) the populist party campaigning for or against the referendum. In relation to the populist party attitude during the referendum campaign, I decided to use the following scale.

Table B4. Coding scheme fuzzy set POP populist party attitude.

FS score	Populist party attitude	Condition ID
1	Against the popular vote	POP
0.9	Single members in favor of the popular vote	POP
0.8	At least a local section in favor	POP
0.6	More than 2 local sections in favor	POP
0.5	No official position taken	—————
0.4	More than 2 local sections against	∼POP
0.2	At least a local section against	∼POP
0.1	Single members against the popular vote	∼POP
0	In favor of the popular vote	∼POP

If the populist party is against the referendum it is given a value of 1, if it is in favor it is given 0. The cut-off point of maximum ambiguity occurs when there is no position taken towards the referendum or if 50% of the political party is in favor of the referendum.

4. Popular Initiated Referendums (INI, ∼INI)

The *Popular initiated referendum* has a clear binary nature and therefore it will have a crisp value of 0 or 1.

Whenever the object is put into popular initiative and opposed by the government the score assigned will be 1 and whenever it is not a popular initiative, or it is supported by the government the score assigned will be 0.

Table B5. Coding scheme crisp set INI.

Crisp score	Popular vote	Government's official position	Condition ID
1	Popular initiative	Against popular initiative.	INI
0	Facultative referendum, mandatory referendum, counterproposal.	In favor or against the popular vote.	∼INI
0	Popular initiative	In favor of popular vote	∼INI

5. Popular Votes with Multiple Issue Calibration (MULT, ∼MULT)

Popular votes with *multiple or single issues* have a perfectly binary nature and are based on a perfect symmetrical concept. Whenever a popular vote is expressed in terms of two or more policies it is member of the set *multiple issue* and will receive a score 1. In contrast whenever a popular vote only engulfs a single policy issue it is a member of the set *single issue* and will received a score 0.

Table B6. Coding scheme crisp set MULT.

Crisp score	Multiple of single issue referendum	Condition ID
1	Multiple issues	MULT
0	Single issue	∼MULT

6. Political Elite Split/Cohesive Calibration (ELITE, ∼ELITE)

The *degree of elite cohesion/division* over a popular vote is a fuzzy concept. The degree of elite division refers to an ordinal scale in which the division is calculated as a percentage of the seats that are opposing or supporting a referendum. In relation to each cantonal coalition party government, the inter-party division plays an important role in the determination of elite division. Indeed, the government can have an official position, but one or more political party members of the government can dissent and campaign against the government's official position. As a consequence, the government members could campaign on different fronts and give divergent messages to the electorate.

Table B7 refers to the calibration of elite division in the case the elite support the referendum. The tables also consider whether the government is formed by a coalition or a single party.

Table B8 refers to the calibration of elite division in case the elite opposes the referendum.

Table B7. Coding scheme fuzzy set ELITE 1.

fs score	Elite split: coalition government is partisan of CL extension	Condition ID
1	Government parties internally split between right left and center coalition parties	ELITE,
0.8	Government internally split with only the right party opposing the government official position	ELITE,
0.6	Government internally split with only the part of the right party opposing the government official position	ELITE,
0.5	No official Government position (No campaign)	—————
0.4	Government unified with radical right campaign for the government position AND/OR radical right or right parties in the government intra-divided	∼ELITE
0.2	Government unified with radical left campaign for the government position AND/OR radical left party in the government intra-divided	∼ELITE
0	Government cohesive and opposition parties cohesive with the government official position	∼ELITE

Table B8. Coding scheme fuzzy set ELITE 2.

fs score	Elite split: government is against of CL extension	Condition ID
1	Government cohesive and opposition parties cohesive with the government official position	ELITE,
0.8	Government unified with radical left campaign the government position AND/OR radical left party in the government intra-divided	ELITE,
0.6	Government unified with radical right campaign the government position AND/OR radical right party in the government intra-divided	ELITE,
0.5	No official Government position (No campaign)	—————
0.4	Government internally split with only part of the right party opposing the government official position	∼ELITE
0.2	Government internally split with only the right party opposing the government official position	∼ELITE
0	Government internally split between right left and center coalition parties	∼ELITE

The two tables calibrate the condition ELITE considering the outcome of CL failure, meaning that a positive value of score > 0.5 should contribute to the failure of the outcome CL.

The degree of membership will be calculated considering ideological opposition. Indeed, the opposition from the radical left is less dangerous than opposition from the radical right (Papadopoulos, 1991): although electorally weak, the radical right is capable of determining some popular votes in its favor. Moreover, the greater the lack of cohesiveness in the right, the lower the level of support and the lower the passage rate of the government's proposals (Kriesi, 2006, p. 606).

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