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Populism and Polarization: A Dual Threat to Europe's Liberal Democracies?

Editors

Jonas Linde, Marlene Mauk and Heidi Schulze

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Table of Contents

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Editorial

How Populism and Polarization Affect Europe's Liberal Democracies

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Abstract
In recent years, two phenomena have put Europe's liberal democracies under strain: populism and polarization. The rise of populist parties, the increasing radicalization of publics and political discourse, as well as the expansion of hyperpartisan media have caused concern among observers and citizens alike. While lively academic discussions have revolved around the causes of these phenomena, research regarding their real-world consequences has been sparse. This thematic issue wants to address this gap in the literature and contribute to developing strategies for mitigating potential threats populism and polarization may pose to liberal democracies. To this end, it examines how populism and polarization affect citizens across Europe. It links research on audiences of hyperpartisan media with work on elite-induced polarization, populist conceptions of democracy, election results and support for the democratic system, and policy-making by populist governments.

Keywords
democracy; hyperpartisan media; polarization; political support; populism

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Populism and Polarization: A Dual Threat to Europe's Liberal Democracies?" edited by Jonas Linde (University of Bergen, Norway), Marlene Mauk (GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany) and Heidi Schulze (GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany).

In recent years, European liberal democracies have increasingly come under strain. In particular, the rise of populist and sometimes radical parties, increasing political polarization and radicalization of publics and political discourse, and the expansion of alternative, hyperpartisan news media fostering antagonism and propagating ideas incompatible with liberal democracy have been cause for concern. With countries such as Poland and Hungary already exhibiting manifest democratic recessions (Lührmann, Grahn, Morgan, Pillai, & Lindberg, 2019; Lührmann et al., 2018), scientific and public discourse alike have mainly revolved around two worrying phenomena that may endanger the stability of democracy: *populism* and *polarization* (see Inglehart & Norris, 2017).

Across Europe, predominantly right-wing populist parties have not only entered national and regional parliaments but also begun exercising executive power in various governments, often dominating the political discourse in their respective countries (Mudde, 2016; Rooduijn, 2015). With radical-right and, to a lesser extent, radical-left populist parties advocating extreme policy positions and, at the same time, nourishing distrust toward traditional parties and media, both parties and voters have become increasingly polarized, and divisions between political camps appear to be growing deeper (Galston, 2018; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). These trends seem to be fueled, in part, by digital communication: Populist actors use online media very efficiently to spread their messages (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017; Gerbaudo, 2017; Stier, Posch, Bleier, & Strohmaier, 2017), and (hyper-)partisan media reinforce populist, radical, and anti-democratic ideas through repetition across various online networks and social media

platforms (Prior, 2013; Starbird, 2017). These developments beg the question, how are these changes affecting societies and the liberal democratic order? In particular, are populism and polarization serious threats to liberal democracy?

Populism, on the one hand, can be defined as:

> An ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people. (Mudde, 2004, p. 543)

Thus, in itself, it may not necessarily be seen as a threat to democracy (Canovan, 1999). However, populist parties typically adopt either a radical-right or radical-left host ideology, criticizing liberal democratic procedures and furthering the political polarization of both the party system and the public. Even more importantly, by stylizing 'the people' as a homogeneous group, populism not only rejects the idea of counter-majoritarian institutions, such as minority rights, but is in itself inherently antipluralistic, challenging the very core of liberal democracy (Galston, 2018; Müller, 2016; Pappas, 2019).

Polarization, on the other hand, is defined as either the state or the process of opinions being or becoming more opposed (DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996, p. 693). Given this definition, polarization might not necessarily be seen as a threat to democracy. After all, a plurality of political views is one of the hallmarks of liberal democracy (cf. Dahl, 1989). However, if polarization becomes too extreme, it is likely to result in social and political conflict, making political compromise, let alone consensus, almost impossible, thereby hindering the smooth functioning of the democratic political system (DiMaggio et al., 1996; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019). Both populism and polarization can thus be considered serious threats to the liberal democratic order established in Europe after World War II.

From a normative liberal democratic point of view, then, the electoral success of (right-wing) populist parties critical of liberal democracy, and the political division and radicalization of elites and publics are clearly undesirable and alarming. Yet, while lively academic discussions as well as public debates have revolved around the causes of these phenomena (see, e.g., Doyle, 2011; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002; March & Rommerskirchen, 2014; Rooduijn, 2018; Van Hauwaert & van Kessel, 2018; Visser, Lubbers, Kraaykamp, & Jaspers, 2014), research regarding their real-world consequences has been sparse. This thematic issue addresses these potential threats by examining how populism and polarization affect citizens across Europe. Ordinary citizens and their attitudes toward the political system are central ingredients of a stable and well-functioning democracy (e.g., Easton, 1965; Hetherington, 1998). As long as citizens' support for the present political system—liberal democracy—remains high even in light of increasing populism and polarization, we have reason to be optimistic about the future: Populist and radical parties should not be able to dismantle democracy easily against the will of the public. The contributions in this thematic issue therefore focus on how ordinary citizens react to populism and polarization and aim to identify the conditions under which populism and polarization exert their least detrimental effects on citizens' attitudes.

To this end, Schulze (2020) focuses on the role of online news media as drivers of radical-right populist attitudes and explores the characteristics of the audiences of right-wing alternative online media, also referred to as hyperpartisan media. Drawing on the 2019 Reuters Digital News Survey, Schulze presents a cross-national analysis of right-wing alternative media use in Northern and Central Europe. The analysis shows that political interest and a critical stance toward immigration, accompanied by a skeptical assessment of news quality, in general, and distrust—especially in public service broadcasting media—as well as the use of social media as a primary news source, function as the strongest predictors of alternative online news consumption. Her findings suggest that right-wing alternative online media should not be dismissed as a peripheral phenomenon, but rather must be considered as relevant multipliers and distributors of populist narratives with high mobilizing and polarizing potential.

Berntzen (2020) adds to the theme of this thematic issue by studying the effects of political and normative conflicts initiated by populist radical-right parties. More precisely, he investigates whether and to what extent voters are affected by attacks of populist radical-right parties on their political opponents. To differentiate between authoritarian and non-authoritarian voters, the four-item child rearing values index measure of authoritarian predispositions is employed. Using a survey-based experimental design that relies on data from the Norwegian Citizen Panel, Berntzen shows that authoritarian and non-authoritarian voters simultaneously respond to high-intensity political conflict. From the analyses, he concludes that conflict initiated by populist radical-right parties functions as a driver of personality-based, affective sorting of citizens and thus contributes to polarization.

Making a novel contribution to the burgeoning research on how the continuous success of populist parties affects public notions of democracy, Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) deal with the tension between populism and democracy. Drawing on survey data from Austria and Germany, they provide an empirical analysis of how different types of populist attitudes and four types of democratic decision-making interact. Taking into account that populism is often attached to a radical-right or radical-left host ideology, their findings show that populism and radical host ideologies tap into dif-

ferent dimensions of democracy. Populist attitudes are associated with negative views toward representative democracy and pluralism, while support for majority rule and deliberative procedures are shaped by the radical-right and radical-left host ideologies. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat surprising, populists favor decision-making based on the general will of the people (anti-pluralism), while at the same time are not very attracted to strict majority rule and restriction of minority rights (which, on the other hand, are attractive to people with nativist and authoritarian attitudes).

Turning to the effects of the rise of populist parties on citizen attitudes, Mauk (2020) analyzes how the electoral success of populist parties affects European citizens' trust in core democratic institutions. Diverging from the individual-level literature, which shows a negative relationship between populist party support and political trust, she suggests that macro-level populist party success may increase political trust among the general public. She further proposes, as well as demonstrates empirically for 23 European democracies, that this corrective-force effect is particularly pronounced in democracies that do actually lend themselves to populist criticism: The electoral success of populist parties only leads to increased citizen trust in countries with deficient democratic quality, weak corruption control, and meagre economic performance. In countries with high democratic quality, effective corruption control, and high economic performance, in contrast, populist party success has no substantive effect on political trust.

Building on the well-established finding that citizens who voted for the winning camp express higher satisfaction with democracy than those who voted for the losing camp, Nemčok (2020) examines how big of a boost in satisfaction with democracy election winners experience, and whether the size of this boost is conditional on party characteristics. Utilizing 17 surveys from 13 European countries in which an election resulted in a change in government, Nemčok shows that differences in party vote shares and voters' feelings of closeness to a party have only negligible effects on the boost experienced by election winners. However, his results also demonstrate that voters who feel close to a particular party are generally more satisfied with democracy than those without a party affiliation, regardless of whether their party won the election or not. This latter finding relates to Mauk's contribution in that it points to the observation that citizens seeing their preferences as represented within the political system can increase their support for the democratic system. Both studies promote the idea that perceived or actual representation of citizens' preferences can help reconcile them with democracy, and thereby indicate a potential avenue for (re-)integrating populist and radical citizens into the political system.

Concluding the thematic issue, Bartha, Boda, and Szikra (2020) take a look at populists in government. An increasing number of studies have set out to investigate the policy effects of governments that include populist parties. In their article, "When Populist Leaders Govern: Conceptualising Populism in Policy Making," they provide an analysis of policy-making by the first populist radical-right majority government in Europe—the Fidesz government in Hungary. The authors construct an ideal type of populist policy-making and use congruence analysis to investigate to what extent social policy in post-2010 Hungary (2010–2018) conforms with the ideal type. Focusing on policy content, process, and discourse, they find a strong degree of congruence between the policy-making patterns of the Orbán government and the ideal type of populist policy-making.

Overall, the contributions paint a multifaceted picture of how populism and polarization affect European liberal democracies. On the one hand, fueled by digital media, European societies are in danger of becoming increasingly populist and polarized, and this development is accompanied by attitudes and conceptions challenging to liberal democracies. On the other hand, the representation of populist parties within the political system can help mitigate citizens' disenchantment with the liberal democratic system. In the end, populism and polarization come with numerous detrimental by-products: the brutalization of political debate, the spread of disinformation, and, not least, an increased propensity to violence against 'the other,' which are only the most obvious problems. More fundamental changes in citizen perceptions of and attitudes toward liberal democracy may additionally lead to a turning away from the hard-earned achievements of modern democracies: minority rights, rule of law, and separation of powers.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Who Uses Right-Wing Alternative Online Media? An Exploration of Audience Characteristics

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Abstract
Accompanying the success of the radical right and right-wing populist movements, right-wing alternative online media have recently gained prominence and, to some extent, influence on public discourse and elections. The existing scholarship so far focuses primarily on the role of content and social media distribution and pays little attention to the audiences of right-wing alternative media, especially at a cross-national level and in the European context. The present paper addresses this gap by exploring the characteristics of the audiences of right-wing alternative online media. Based on a secondary data analysis of the 2019 Reuters Digital News Survey, this article presents a cross-national analysis of right-wing alternative media use in Northern and Central Europe. The results indicate a comparatively high prevalence of right-wing alternative online media in Sweden, whereas in Germany, Austria, and Finland, these news websites seem to be far less popular. With regard to audience characteristics, the strongest predictors of right-wing alternative online media use are political interest and a critical stance towards immigration, accompanied by a skeptical assessment of news quality, in general, and distrust, especially in public service broadcasting media. Additionally, the use of social media as a primary news source increases the likelihood of right-wing alternative news consumption. This corroborates the high relevance of social media platforms as distributors and multipliers of right-wing alternative news content. The findings suggest that right-wing alternative online media should not be underestimated as a peripheral phenomenon, but rather have to be considered influential factors for center-right to radical right-leaning politics and audiences in public discourse, with a high mobilizing and polarizing potential.

Keywords
alternative online media; hyperpartisan media; immigration-critical; news distrust; populist communication; right-wing media; right-wing populist

Issue
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1. Introduction

The first right-wing alternative news websites appeared as early as the mid-1990s (Conway, Scrivens, & Macnair, 2019). Thus, the phenomenon of so-called *right-wing alternative online media*, also referred to as *hyperpartisan media*, is not new. However, in the past decade—accompanying, and possibly fueling—the rise of right-wing populists (Müller & Schulz, 2019), nationalism (Marwick & Lewis, 2017), islamophobia (Puschmann, Ausserhofer, Maan, & Hametner, 2016), political polarization (Tucker et al., 2018), and right-wing alternative online media started to gain prominence and, to some extent, influence on public discourse (Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018). By successfully tapping into the opportunity structures of the Internet, these media websites are believed to disseminate conspiracy theories and pseudoscience (Starbird, 2017), propagate authoritarian and anti-immigration attitudes (Haller, 2018; von Nordheim, Müller, & Scheppe, 2019), as well as foster distrust in elites, traditional media, and society (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2018; Schindler, Fortkord,

Posthumus, Obermaier, & Reinemann, 2018). The latest since the rise of Breitbart News during the 2016 US Elections, there is a burgeoning scholarship in the US context. However, in the European context, empirical—particularly quantitative—studies on these right-wing news sources are still scarce compared to the research concerned with right-wing populism and the radical right. Despite this, a quickly growing body of research indicates a high relevance of right-wing alternative online media in Central and Northern Europe. The overarching majority of the studies present country-specific analyses of the content, content production, or social media presence of right-wing alternative online media for countries such as Sweden (de La Brosse & Thinsz, 2019; Sandberg & Ihlebaek, 2019), Germany (Frischlich, Klapproth, & Brinkschulte, 2020; von Nordheim et al., 2019) and Finland (Noppari, Hiltunen, & Ahva, 2019; Ylä-Anttila, 2018). Studies focusing on the audiences of right-wing alternative media, as well as cross-national research design, however, are still rare. In one of these few studies, Heft, Mayerhöffer, Reinhardt, and Knüpfer (2019) presented one of the first cross-national analyses concerning the content of right-wing news websites across Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the UK, and the US. In another such study, Nygaard (2020) compared intermedia agenda setting in right-wing alternative and traditional online news in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Considering the societal relevance of the phenomenon, it is necessary to further improve our understanding of right-wing alternative online media, specifically, their audiences (Rauch, 2019).

This article contributes to the scholarship by looking into the audiences of right-wing alternative news media online in Northern and Central Europe. Specifically, this research seeks to understand the prevalence of right-wing alternative online news media use in Northern and Central Europe and the audience characteristics that predict the use of such media. Based on data from the 2019 Reuters Digital News survey (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, & Nielsen, 2019), this article examines these topics within the context of Austria, Finland, Germany, and Sweden. By following a cross-national approach, the study aims to provide a broader and more generalizable understanding of right-wing alternative online media. The results indicate a comparatively high prevalence of right-wing alternative news in Sweden; in contrast, in Germany, Austria, and Finland, these news websites seem to be far less popular. Additionally, the results indicate that the strongest predictors of right-wing alternative online news use are political interest, a critical stance towards immigration, the relevance of social media as a news source, as well as skeptical assessment of news in general and distrust, especially, in public service broadcasting media.

In the next section, the concepts forming the basis of the study are presented: First, the terminological difficulties in right-wing alternative online media are addressed; next, possible predictors of right-wing alternative media use are discussed on the grounds of previous research. Thereafter, in the section that follows, the methodological approach as well as the operationalization are described. Finally, the results are presented and discussed in the last two sections.

2. Right-Wing Alternative Online Media: Conceptualizations and Audiences

Overall, "little attention has been paid to right-wing media as alternative media" (Atton, 2006, p. 574). This quote is still valid today, and despite the seemingly increasing relevance of alternative media channels, further research on the changing role of these channels is necessary (Holt, Ustad Figenschou, & Frischlich, 2019). In addition, there is a terminological debate within the scholarship of the originary rather left-wing alternative media, about whether right-wing and, especially, far-right alternative media actually can be called alternative media (Rauch, 2019).

2.1. Conceptual and Terminological Obscurity

Currently, there is no generally agreed upon term or definition of right-wing alternative online media (Haller, Holt, & de La Brosse, 2019). Holt (2018, p. 2) argues "that some of this confusion, at least in terms of scholarly attempts to come to grips with it, has to do with a discrepancy between the dominant theories about alternative media and alternative media as they actually are." In other words, there is a gap between the traditional scholarship of alternative media and the newly relevant media channels, such as Breitbart and Co., that could potentially also be studied as alternative media.

Alternative media need always be discussed as a reflection of society, since they are a result of the cultural and, thus, temporal environment of society. This means the attribute 'alternative' might be subject to change over time. For example, the German newspaper *taz* evolved as an alternative medium in the 1970s and was still studied as such in the 1990s (Mathes & Pfetsch, 1991); in contrast, today, it is considered to be a part of the traditional news media sphere with a left-wing bias. Similarly, *The Huffington Post* could, in its initial phase, be studied as an alternative online medium, whereas today, it is an internationally relevant news website that employs professional journalists. This shows that it is vital to view the relationship between traditional news media and alternative online media as a continuous scale, on which each individual outlet may be positioned with respect to its current status.

As a further consequence of the conceptual debate, there are a plethora of terms employed to describe right-wing alternative online media, e.g., *far-right media* (Rauch, 2019), *anti-elitist alternative media* (Müller & Schulz, 2019), and *populist alternative media* (Holt & Haller, 2017). However, it is not always clear whether or not they refer to the same phenomenon. Some termino-

logical differences are rooted in minor conceptual differences. For instance, von Nordheim et al. (2019) differentiate between *reactive* and *autonomous media*, that is, between media that simply react and comment on traditional media content and those that genuinely operate on their own topical agenda. There are also country-specific differences: For example, in Sweden, the term *immigration-critical alternative media* (Nygaard, 2019) is preferred, whereas, in Finland, right-wing alternative news websites are referred to as *populist counter-media websites* (Noppari et al., 2019). It can be assumed that, to some extent, these terms were created to circumvent the term *right-wing alternative media* on account of the open terminological debate about its use. However, the applicability of these more specific terms remains under debate in the absence of further content-specific analyses.

After a broader discussion of different aspects of (right-wing) alternative online media, Holt et al. (2019, p. 3) proposed an overarching definition in favor of the concept of alternative media: "Alternative news media represent a proclaimed and/or (self) perceived corrective, opposing the overall tendency of public discourse emanating from what is perceived as the dominant mainstream media in a given system." In light of the conceptual difficulties concerning right-wing alternative online media, this paper has adopted this general conceptualization.

2.2. Audiences of Right-Wing Alternative Online Media

Right-wing alternative media are, compared to traditional news media, rather small with respect to their reach. Still, some audiences consider them relevant news sources because alternative media present niche topics, voices, and opinions that are not covered by traditional news media (Rauch, 2015). In particular, in the wake of recent societal crises, such as the financial crisis and the refugee crisis, the relevance of right-wing alternative media has been growing in Europe (Haller et al., 2019). Thus, alternative online media receive a certain share of audience. It is unclear, though, how many people (approximately) are aware of or follow right-wing alternative news websites, and how these numbers vary across countries in Europe. Consequently, Research Question 1 is:

> RQ 1: How prevalent are right-wing alternative online media in Northern and Central Europe?

To increase the understanding and discussion of the prevalence, it is necessary to study the audiences of right-wing alternative news websites and their characteristics. Most audience-related research so far either studied audiences of rather left-leaning, activist alternative media audiences (e.g., Downing, 2003; Rauch, 2007), audience engagement with social media accounts of right-wing media (e.g., Larsson, 2019; Sandberg & Ihlebaek, 2019), or characteristics of populist audiences (e.g., Fawzi, 2019; Schulz, 2019). A few, very recent publications study the audiences of right-wing alternative online media, however, only on the basis of single-country analyses (Müller & Schulz, 2019; Noppari et al., 2019; Rauch, 2019). The link and "the interactions between right-wing alternative media and their audiences require urgent examination" (Rauch, 2019, p. 34). Therefore, the main topic of interest of this study is the individual-level characteristics that predict right-wing alternative online media consumption across Northern and Central Europe. It has been shown that in these areas, specifically, the rise of right-wing populist parties was accompanied by an increase in right-wing alternative news websites and their contents (Bachl, 2018; Holt, 2019; Ylä-Anttila, 2018). Thus, the second research question is as follows:

> RQ2: Which recipient characteristics predict the use of right-wing alternative online media?

Below, potentially relevant characteristics are discussed on the basis of previous research concerning the audiences, as well as the conceptualizations of right-wing alternative news websites. The discussion of the audience characteristics is organized with regard to three dimensions: *political and populist*, *news use*, and *news assessment*.

2.2.1. Political and Populist

In general, political interest is a relevant predictor of news consumption (Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre, & Shehata, 2013). More precisely, Tsfati and Cappella (2003) showed that political interest is associated with both, traditional and nonmainstream, news use. Therefore, it is assumed that an interest in politics is a basic prerequisite for the use of alternative news media, since they predominantly present and discuss political news. This leads to the first hypothesis:

> H1a: Political interest is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

The hybrid media structure of the Internet offers an ideal foundation for the populist communication logic, and the scholarship of populist communication has considered alternative online media as relevant distribution channels for populist messages (Engesser, Fawzi, & Larsson, 2017). However, at present, there is relatively little evidence on how far right-wing populist politicians actively employ alternative media for their cause. Bachl (2018) analyzed media sources shared on the Facebook pages of Germany's right-wing populist party and found a high level of presence of channels linked to the right-wing alternative media sphere. Müller and Schulz (2019) differentiated between occasional and frequent alternative news use and found that populist attitudes linked to right-wing ideology increase the probability of reg-

ular right-wing alternative news use. Similarly, Stier, Kirkizh, Froio, and Schroeder (2020) showed that people with populist attitudes consume alternative news media more frequently. This is reflected in the next hypothesis.

> H1b: Support of right-wing populist topics and attitudes is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

Accordingly, based on the selective exposure theory, it can be assumed that proponents of right-wing populist ideas prefer media channels that support their beliefs (and provide attitude-consistent information) over those that challenge them and, thus, preferably follow right-wing alternative media that present familiar interpretive schemes (Hart et al., 2009). Based on news users' preference for attitude-consistent information, it is expected that the users of right-wing alternative news websites would also exhibit right-wing attitudes, as stated in the following hypothesis.

> H1c: Political right-wing orientation is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

2.2.2. News Use

An analysis of the news media repertoires of right-wing alternative news users indicated a comprehensive news diet, specifically with respect to online news sources (Schulze & Hölig, 2020). Therefore, considering that the content of right-wing alternative media is usually focused primarily on political news (Holt, 2017), it is assumed that a general interest in the news is an essential prerequisite for interest in alternative news media and their content. Thus, similar to the hypothesis on the role of political interest, the following hypothesis focuses on the role of news interest.

> H2a: News interest and, thus, news use frequency is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

Simultaneously, it can be assumed that right-wing alternative news users turn to alternative news, in order to avoid traditional news content that does not align with and represent their political beliefs or topics of interest. Intentional news avoidance as an assumption of selective exposure theory is empirically more complex and more contested than the assumption of attitude-consistent information-seeking (Garrett, 2009). However, several studies showed that right-wing audiences, in particular, prefer and build ideologically aligned media repertoires by intentionally avoiding opposing news sources (Benkler et al., 2018; Rauch, 2019). Thus, while highly interested in political news, audiences of right-wing alternative media employ right-wing alternative media as an alternative news source actively, which allows them to actively avoid traditional news sources. This forms our next hypothesis.

> H2b: News avoidance is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

Social media use, and especially Facebook and Twitter use, was found to increase the probability of right-wing alternative news consumption (Müller & Schulz, 2019). Further, a comparison of audience engagement among followers of alternative and traditional news on social media showed that alternative news audiences are more active with respect to their commenting and liking behaviors as well as the distribution of contents to their followers (Larsson, 2019; Sandberg & Ihlebaek, 2019). Alternative media efficiently use social media to distribute their content to audiences who, otherwise, would not come in contact with it. Consequently, people who use social media as a (primary) source of news might have a higher probability of being exposed to different online news sources, including alternative news, as explained in the next hypothesis.

> H2c: Use of social media as the main news source, as well as the use of social media channels to access news, is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

2.2.3. Skepticism and Distrust

One feature that all alternative media "have…in common: The people who are moved to produce and access such media tend to feel that their interests, perspectives, communities, and indeed their very selves are (at best) inadequately represented within most mainstream media" (Harcup, 2016, p. 20). Similarly, Holt et al. (2019) argue that the overarching characteristic of alternative online media is their (self-) perceived corrective. That is, alternative media are critical of the general public discourse, and this is reflected in their critical stance towards traditional media, which are perceived as the main driver of the general public discourse. This is frequently accompanied by skepticism towards, and may sometimes even result in distrust in, traditional media, depending on the specific news medium (Holt, 2018). Accordingly, Tsfati and Cappella (2003, p. 504) showed that "media skepticism is negatively associated with mainstream news exposure but positively associated with nonmainstream news exposure." This is summed up in the next hypothesis.

> H3a: The tendency to critically assess traditional news media is associated with a higher likelihood of right-wing alternative online media use.

With regard to the link between trust and media consumption, several studies show that trust in news media and alternative news consumption are negatively corre-

lated. Followers of alternative media, generally, show a lower level of trust in news and traditional media (Tsfati & Peri, 2006), and people with such low trust levels often prefer alternative news sources (Fletcher & Park, 2017). Distrust in media seems to be exceptionally high in politically extreme people; that is, it seems to be higher in people who expressively lean left or right (Otto & Köhler, 2016).

H3b: Trust in news media, in general, is negatively associated with right-wing alternative online media use.

However, contrary to previous research, Kalogeropoulos, Suiter, Udris, and Eisenegger (2019) found that alternative news use was positively correlated with trust in the news. Specifically, a low level of trust was only observed in respondents who also used social media as the primary news source. This means that the concept of distrust in right-wing alternative online media users needs to be understood at a finer level. In addition to their support of right-wing populist ideas, it is expected that alternative news users distrust not only legacy news media but also public service broadcasting news (PSB), of which they are highly critical, since they perceive these media as an extension of the general public discourse as well as a biased loudspeaker for elite opinions that they oppose (Noppari et al., 2019; Rauch, 2019). In contrast, it has been shown that populist audiences frequently consume tabloid news (Fawzi, 2019; Schulz, 2019) and that some right-wing alternative websites strategically mimic tabloid news styles (Farkas & Neumayer, 2020). Hence, we assume a positive association between trust in tabloid news and right-wing alternative news consumption.

H3c: Trust in PSB and legacy news is negatively associated, whereas trust in tabloid news is positively associated with right-wing alternative online media use.

3. Method

A secondary data analysis of the 2019 Reuters Digital News Survey was performed to explore the questions and hypotheses of the present study. The Reuters Digital News Survey (Newman et al., 2019) is a cross-sectional online survey, supervised by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, which aims at gathering data on media and news consumption behavior. Sampling is carried out at the country level by using representative quotas for the variables gender, age, education, and region. In addition, the data are weighted according to the census. Due to the method used for data collection, people who never or hardly ever use the Internet are underrepresented. The results are, therefore, representative of all Internet users of a country who use the Internet at least once a month.

In 2019, the survey was conducted in 38 countries in the period January to February 2019. This study follows a cross-national approach that provides a broader understanding of right-wing alternative news consumption. The questionnaire differs between countries: (1) In some countries, the alternative news websites chosen for the survey show certain country-specific peculiarities and thus, comparison across these countries is difficult. (2) In some other countries, for example, Denmark and Switzerland, the surveys do not include questions that are relevant for this study. As a result of these limitations and the conceptual difficulties discussed in Section 2, this study focuses on countries that are structurally similar and for which the surveyed alternative news media can be compared to ensure equivalence. Accordingly, the countries chosen for analysis are Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Finland. In all of these countries, right-wing alternative news websites seem to be of high relevance, accompanied by the electoral successes of right-wing populist parties (Fletcher, 2019). In addition, albeit minor structural differences, these four countries share many characteristics and belong to the same media system type, namely, the democratic corporatist model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Their similarities include, for example, strong public-service broadcasting systems, high numbers of newspaper circulation, as well as a high degree of professionalization of the newspaper markets. Furthermore, a recent empirical re-characterization of the media system typology has introduced a northern media type (represented by Sweden and Finland) and a central media type (represented by Germany and Austria; Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht, & Castro, 2014).

With regard to the Reuters data, the sample sizes are similarly large, and the samples for these four countries are rather similar in terms of the sociodemographic variables gender and age (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sample overview per country.

Country	N	Gender	Age
Austria	N = 2010	m = 48.5% f = 51.5%	M = 47.8 (SD = 15.9)
Germany	N = 2022	m = 48.6% f = 51.4%	M = 48.3 (SD = 15.8)
Finland	N = 2009	m = 48.8% f = 51.2%	M = 48.3 (SD = 16.6)
Sweden	N = 2007	m = 49.8% f = 50.2%	M = 48.8 (SD = 17.5)
Total	N = 8048	m = 48.9% f = 51.1%	M = 48.3 (SD = 16.5)

Notes: The numbers are weighted. Source: Newman et al. (2019).

3.1. Dependent Variable: Usage of Right-Wing Alternative Online Media

For data on the dependent variable, *usage of right-wing alternative online media*, respondents were asked for a list of news websites that they had (1) heard of and (2) had used to access news in the last week. Only alternative news websites to which a right-wing bias could be attributed were included in the analysis. The bias attribution was based on previous studies, such as for Germany (Bachl, 2018; Müller & Schulz, 2019; Puschmann et al., 2016), Austria (Heft et al., 2019; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2018), Sweden (Heft et al., 2019; Holt, 2019; Sandberg & Ihlebaek, 2019), and Finland (Noppari et al., 2019; Ylä-Anttila, 2018).

Table 2 presents a country-specific overview of all alternative news websites, including the number of respondents who stated they had used each medium. The dependent variable *right-wing alternative online media usage* was created by aggregating the responses to the media use question and recoding it into a binary variable. The variable thus derived indicates, for each respondent, whether the person had used at least one of the websites listed in Table 2 during the past week or not.

The subsequent sections describe the operationalization of the individual-level predictor variables.

3.2. Predictors: Political and Populist

For the evaluation of *political interest* as a predictor of right-wing alternative online media use, the respondents were asked to rate three variables as measures of the level of support for right-wing populist attitudes. They rated the following three variables on a five-point Likert scale (single item) ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree': (1) *immigration-critical* (the corresponding statement was 'Immigration threatens our national culture'), (2) *external efficacy* (the corresponding statement was 'Most elected officials don't care what people like me think'), and (3) *support of direct democracy*

Table 2. Overview of usage of right-wing alternative media websites.

Country	Medium	Website	Social Media Accounts	Number of Users (in %)
Austria				
	Unzensuriert	unzensuriert.at	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, VK	81 (4.0)
	Info Direkt	Info-direkt.eu	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VK	41 (2.0)
	Alles Roger?	www.allesroger.at	Facebook	32 (1.6)
	Contra Magazin	Contra-magazin.com	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, VK	31 (1.5)
Finland				
	MV-Lehti	mvlehti.net	Facebook, VK	80 (4.0)
	Nykysuomi	nykysuomi.com	Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, VK	47 (2.3)
	Kansalainen	kansalainen.fi	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	44 (2.2)
	Magneettimedia	magneettimedia.com	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram	30 (1.5)
	Oikea Media	oikeamedia.com	YouTube, Facebook,Twitter	30 (1.5)
Germany				
	Junge Freiheit	jungefreiheit.de	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest	63 (3.1)
	RT Deutsch	deutsch.rt.com	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VK	58 (2.9)
	Compact Online	compact-online.de	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VK	51 (2.6)
	Epoch Times	epochtimes.de	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VK	41 (2.0)
	Politically Incorrect	pi-news.net	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, VK	39 (1.93)
Sweden				
	Nyheter Idag	nyheteridag.se	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	216 (10.7)
	Fria Tider	www.friatider.se	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	205 (10.2)
	Samhällsnytt	samnytt.se	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, VK	175 (8.7)
	Ledarsidorna	ledarsidorna.se	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	146 (7.2)
	Samtiden	samtiden.nu	YouTube	120 (6.0)
	Nya tider	nyatider.nu	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	119 (5.9)
	Det goda samhället	detgodasamhallet.com	Facebook, Twitter	77 (3.8)

Notes: The numbers are weighted. Source: Newman et al. (2019).

(the corresponding statement was 'The people should be asked whenever important decisions are taken'). The third variable is based on the notion of the sovereignty of the will of the people (Fletcher, 2019).

The degree to which respondents can be considered to be *politically right-leaning* (slightly, fairly, or very right-wing) was based on their self-placement on a six-point scale ranging across 'very left-wing,' 'center,' and 'very right-wing.'

3.3. Predictors: News Consumption

The variable *news use frequency* was rated on a ten-point scale ranging from 'never' to 'more than ten times a day.' *News interest* was rated on a five-point scale from 'not at all interested' to 'extremely interested.' For the variable *news avoidance,* respondents were asked whether they were actively trying to avoid news (with the options being 'often, sometimes, occasionally, never'). The variable *social media for news* represents a count aggregate of all social media channels a respondent had claimed to use for news. The main news source was determined from a list of eleven different news sources, including the items 'social media' and 'blogs,' which were used to create the binary variable *social media as the main news source*.

3.4. Predictors: News Assessment

News skepticism comprised four different items that were rated on a five-point Likert scale ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') and aggregated (slightly different for each country, Cronbach's α ranged from 0.7 to 0.8). Of the four items, the first three items were reversed to match the direction of the variable: (1) 'news media monitor and scrutinize powerful people and businesses,' (2) 'news media keep me up to date about what's going on,' (3) 'news media help me understand the news of the day,' and (4) 'topics chosen by the news media do not feel relevant to me.'

The overall stance towards the traditional news media within a country, indicated by the variable *trust in news*, was based on the respondents' response to how much they trusted the news as a whole within their country (with the responses ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'). To discuss the (lack of) trust in greater detail, the variables *trust PSB*, *trust tabloid*, and *trust legacy* were included as predictors. These variables were recoded for each country individually, based on the respondents' ratings of the trustworthiness of a list of several news media on a ten-point scale ranging from 'not at all trustworthy' to 'completely trustworthy.'

4. Results

4.1. Prevalence of Right-Wing Alternative Online Media

Overall, there were a total of 8048 respondents from Germany, Austria, Sweden, and Finland. However, only 931 (11.6%) reported having accessed the websites listed in Table 2 to use news within the past seven days. Of these, the overarching majority (576/931, 61.9%) had accessed only one of the listed channels, and merely 355 (4.4%) respondents had visited two or more of these websites within the past week.

Figure 1 presents the country-specific prevalence of right-wing alternative online media use in terms of the percentage of respondents who had either heard of (*Awareness*) and/or accessed (*Usage*) these media. With regard to usage, Sweden stands out: While the share of users is relatively similar (8%) across Austria,

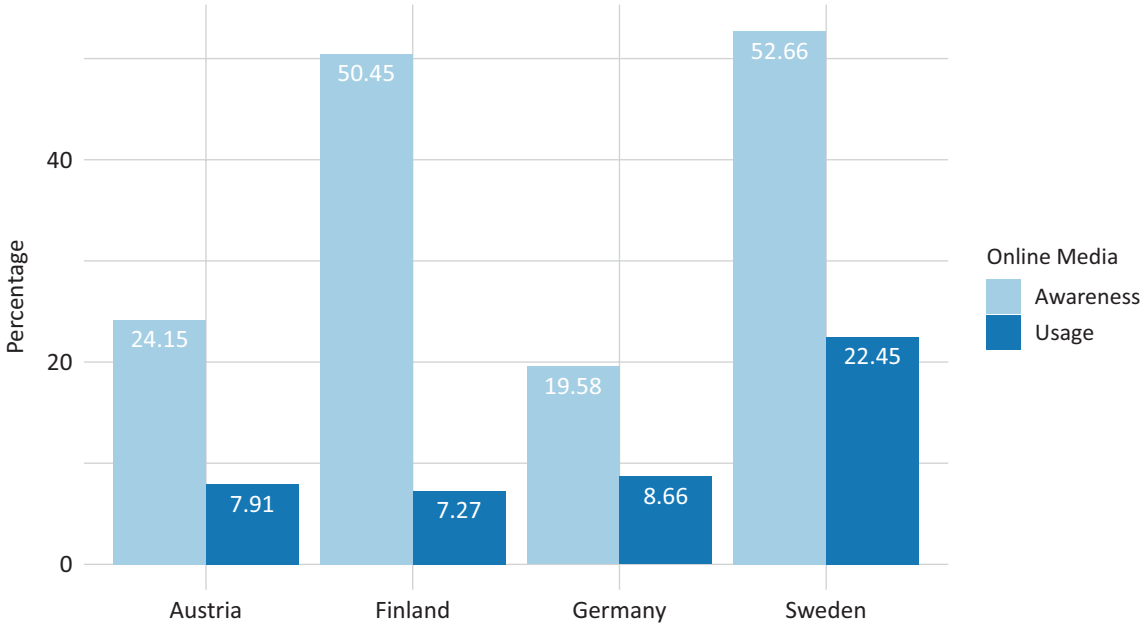

Figure 1. Prevalence of right-wing alternative online media usage.

Finland, and Germany, the Swedish websites have nearly as many users as Austria, Finland, and Germany combined (22.5%). With regard to awareness, two groups appear: In Austria and Germany, 20–25% stated that they had heard of such media, whereas in Finland and Sweden, far more than half of the respondents had heard of these websites. When awareness and usage are compared, a large gap can be observed in each country. Unsurprisingly, the number of people who are aware of the existence of such websites is far greater than the number of people actually using them. The difference is especially pronounced for Finland, where the number of people who have heard of right-wing alternative online media is seven times more than the number of people using such media.

4.2. Predictors of Right-Wing Alternative Media Consumption

For the subsequent analyses, the data from all countries were entered into one model. The predictors of alternative media consumption were modeled using a fixed-effects binomial logistic regression. The fixed-effect approach is suitable when there are country-level differences in hierarchical data, and multilevel modeling is not possible (Möhring, 2012).

The country-level differences are represented by N−1 dummy variables, with N being the number of countries in the model. Dummy variables were created for Germany, Austria, and Finland, while Sweden is represented by the Intercept. The null model included only these country-level dummy variables and, thus, represents the variance in the model stemming from country-level differences. The Pseudo R^2 values range from .01 to .08 and, thus, show that the share of variance at the country level is between 1% and 8%.

Prior to the regression analyses, the data were assessed for missing values via a missing map and cross-tabulations. The findings showed that only the variable *political right-leaning* might have been affected by a systematic nonresponse bias, since a few respondents (15.5%) preferred not to answer the question. Furthermore, no specific outliers or individual cases that would have to be deleted were identified.

The results of the binomial logistic regression are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of binomial logistic regression.

		95% CI for odds ratio		
	B (SE)	Lower	Odds ratio	Upper
Intercept	−1.24 (0.05)***	0.12	0.14	0.17
Political & Populist				
Political Interest	0.58 (0.07)***	1.56	1.79	2.05
Immigration-critical	0.57 (0.06)***	1.57	1.78	2.01
External Efficacy	−0.12 (0.05)**	0.80	0.89	0.99
Support of Direct Democracy	0.01 (0.05)	0.91	1.01	1.12
Political Right-leaning	−0.02 (0.05)	0.89	0.98	1.07
News Consumption				
News Use Frequency	0.18 (0.05)***	1.08	1.20	1.33
News Interest	0.15 (0.07)**	1.02	1.16	1.33
News Avoidance	0.18 (0.05)***	1.09	1.20	1.31
Social Media for News	0.42 (0.04)***	1.40	1.52	1.64
Social Media as Main News Source	0.46 (0.14)***	1.20	1.59	2.10
News Assessment				
News Skepticism	0.30 (0.05)***	1.21	1.35	1.49
General Trust News	−0.03 (0.05)	0.87	0.97	1.08
Trust PSB	−0.51 (0.07)***	0.52	0.60	0.69
Trust Tabloid	0.28 (0.06)***	1.18	1.33	1.49
Trust Legacy	−0.14 (0.07)*	0.76	0.87	1.01
Control Variables				
Age	−0.07 (0.05)	0.85	0.94	1.03
Gender	0.47 (0.10)***	1.32	1.60	1.94
DAustria	−1.38 (0.12)***	0.20	0.25	0.32
DFinland	−.161 (0.14)***	0.15	0.20	0.26
DGermany	−1.39 (0.13)***	0.19	0.25	0.32

Notes: $R^2 = 0.32$ (Cox & Snell), 0.52 (Nagelkerke), 0.45 (McKelvey & Zavoina). Model χ^2 (20) = 1481, $p < .001$.
*$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$.

In order to aid understanding, the variables were ordered according to the following underlying concepts: *Political and Populist, News Consumption, News Assessment,* and *Control Variables*. Continuous variables were z-standardized to ensure the comparability of the effect sizes and the odds ratio values. The test for multicollinearity of the variables via a calculation of the variance inflation factors presented satisfactory results (all VIF values < 3.5). Overall, a distinct improvement from model 0 to model 1 can be observed. After all the explanatory variables were included in the model, the share of variance, according to the Pseudo R^2 values, was between 32% and 52%.

Figure 2 presents a visualization of the effect sizes of all significant predictors of right-wing alternative online media usage in descending order of odds ratio values (Bates, 2020; Lüdecke, 2018; RStudio, 2020).

With regard to the individual-level characteristics that predict the probability of usage of right-wing alternative online media, interest in political topics (H1a), a critical stance towards immigration (H1b, partially), the relevance of social media as news a source (H2c), a skeptical assessment of news quality in general (H3a), and lack of trust in public service broadcasting media (H3c) emerged as the strongest predictors based on the effect sizes. In contrast, support for the sovereignty of the people (direct democracy; H1b), as well as right-wing political attitudes (H1c), were not predictors of the probability of usage of alternative online news sources. Further, while a critical reflection of news, in general, could be confirmed, we did not find evidence that a general distrust in the news was predictive of alternative news consumption (H3b). The factor *external efficacy* was found to be a significant predictor of the probability of right-wing alternative online media usage. However, contrary to our expectations, the direction was reversed; this indicates a low level of support for the statement 'Most elected officials don't care what people like me think.'

5. Discussion

The results of the analyses above present new insights concerning two aspects of right-wing alternative online media in Northern Europe (represented by Finland and Sweden) and Central Europe (represented by Germany and Austria): (1) the general prevalence of such media and (2) the audience characteristics that explain right-wing news consumption.

The results of the prevalence of right-wing alternative online media showed a large gap between the awareness and the actual usage of these websites. The fact that approximately 20% to 53% of the respondents stated that they had heard of these websites proves a consistent presence of right-wing online media in the public discourse, probably facilitated by either traditional news websites or social media platforms. Of course, far fewer people actually use right-wing websites to inform themselves about political issues. However, the fact that supposedly small niche, hyperpartisan media are able to reach approximately 8% to 23% of people who read the news indicates that right-wing alternative online media are fairly successful in distributing their content and reaching potential audiences. For Germany, a similar survey-based study found even higher numbers for occasional usage of right-wing websites (Müller & Schulz, 2019). The country-specific comparison of the reach points out a comparatively high popularity of right-wing online media in Sweden. In contrast, in Germany,

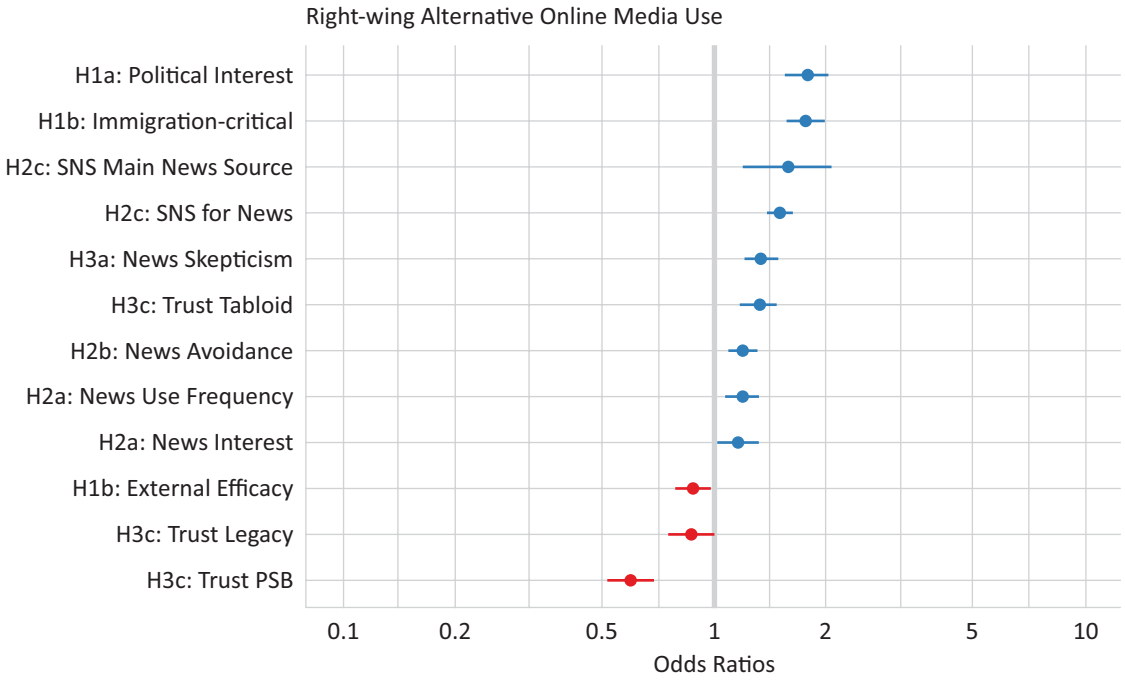

Figure 2. Odds ratio values for significant predictors.

Austria, and Finland, these news websites seem to be less prevalent. A possible explanation for this is related to the topic of immigration: In proportion to its population, Sweden accommodated the highest number of refugees in Europe in 2015. Simultaneously, the radical right successfully framed the topic in such a way that, despite high levels of trust in media, the majority of Sweden's citizens had the impression that traditional media presented biased reporting that was considered too immigrant-friendly and instead turned to right-wing media (de La Brosse & Thinsz, 2019). The above presented analysis of the audience characteristics corroborates the high relevance of an immigration-critical stance for right-wing alternative online media usage.

The analysis of the audience characteristics that predict the usage of right-wing alternative online media further emphasizes the significance of these websites. The results indicate that political interest, as well as a critical stance towards immigration, are the strongest predictors of right-wing alternative news use. This is supported by previous research that showed that criticism of immigrants and immigration-related policies were the central theme of right-wing media (Nygaard, 2019; von Nordheim et al., 2019). Concerning the other items that are linked to right-wing populist attitudes, the results are mixed. Neither the support for direct democracy nor right-wing political orientation seems to be relevant right-wing alternative news consumption. Müller and Schulz (2019) found that the significance of such right-wing political attitudes is directly related to the frequency of exposure to right-wing alternative news and can only be confirmed for frequent exposure, but not for occasional usage. Therefore, with regard to the present findings, it is possible that the operationalization of 'having visited a news medium within the past week' is rather representative of occasional alternative news users. With respect to the political orientation two explanations are possible: (1) The insignificance of 'right-wing attitudes' might be a result of nonresponse bias, as 15% of the respondents preferred not to answer the question concerning their political leaning; on the other hand, (2) it is plausible that alternative media are able to engage audiences also from the political center via social media platforms. It has been shown that right-wing alternative online media are very successful in distributing their content via social media (Larsson, 2019; Sandberg & Ihlebaek, 2019), and the results of the audience characteristics indicate that using social media for news increases the likelihood of alternative online media consumption.

In addition, the results of the audience characteristics imply that a certain discontent with the general discourse driven by traditional news sources increases the likelihood of alternative online news consumption. While the difference in the predictive value of a critical reflection of news, in general (which was confirmed as a predictor) and a general distrust in the news (which was rejected as a predictor), might be a consequence of the divergent exposure to alternative news media. Possibly, the level of (dis)trust varies with respect to the intensity or frequency of consumption of alternative news. However, the more specific hypotheses concerning distrust in legacy news as well as public service broadcasting could be proven, and the results indicate that people who intentionally engage in news avoidance behavior are more likely to follow right-wing alternative online media. Similarly, trust in tabloid news, which can be linked to populist attitudes (Fawzi, 2019; Schulz, 2019), can be confirmed as a positive predictor. In fact, the heterogeneous results for news assessment are corroborated by studies from Figenschou and Ihlebæk (2018, 2019), who have shown that right-wing alternative media employ several dimensions of media criticism.

This study has a few limitations which have to be addressed. While the hypotheses and analyses indicate causal relationships that, to some extent, should apply, cross-sectional data are, of course, only suited to a limited extent to uncover causal mechanisms. For example, a critical stance towards traditional news media can be both the origin but also a result of these media channels. It may be the origin because distrust is one of the central reasons for skeptical producers and recipients to engage with alternative media. It may also be a result, since these media channels frequently present reasons for and thus, may initiate or reinforce media skepticism, distrust, or possibly even cynicism.

Furthermore, each large-scale cross-national survey program, such as the Reuters Digital News Survey, has limited space for items in the questionnaire. Consequently, the researcher is bound to rely on the included items for their analyses. In this case, it certainly would have been useful to have included a more comprehensive selection of alternative news websites, a more diverse elicitation of the respective consumption intensity, as well as a more established scale for populist items. For example, the anti-elite dimension, as a central element of populism, is not included in the questionnaire. Concerning the dependent variable, right-wing alternative media use, it is unclear to what extent politically more extreme and active followers of right-wing alternative media would participate in a survey such as the Reuters Digital News Survey. It is conceivable that right-wing alternative news audiences who profoundly reject the general political discourse might refuse participation in such a survey. Thus, with regard to the politically extreme members of the audience, nonresponse bias is plausible.

6. Conclusions

Previous research of right-wing alternative online media focused primarily on the role of content and social media distribution and paid little attention to the audiences of right-wing alternative media, especially at a cross-national level. This paper addressed this gap by exploring the prevalence of right-wing alternative online

media, as well as the audience characteristics that explain the usage of such websites. Drawing on the 2019 Reuters Digital News Survey, this article presented a cross-national analysis of right-wing alternative online media use in Northern and Central Europe.

The results show that the prevalence of right-wing alternative online media is not alarmingly high, but high enough to conclude that they should not be underestimated or dismissed as a peripheral phenomenon. Moreover, they might have to be considered relevant actors with high mobilizing and polarizing potential (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012). The fact that right-wing alternative media that do not adhere to the ruleset of traditional journalism can gain such a vast reach is cause for concern. This is especially relevant when contemplating the strongest predictors of right-wing alternative news consumption. The low level of trust in public service broadcasting media, which are occasionally perceived as government media, hints at an elite-critical stance and needs to be further studied. The finding that politically interested audiences who perceive immigration as a threat to national cultures are turning to right-wing alternative media is not surprising. After all, this is a central theme for both radical right populist parties as well as right-wing alternative online media, as previously demonstrated, especially for Northern European countries . However, the strength of this predictor, in combination with a generally skeptical assessment of traditional news sources, as well as the once again confirmed high relevance of social media platforms, call for further research into the distribution mechanisms and the media effects of right-wing alternative news content. After all, the results suggest that right-wing alternative media might function as distributors and amplifiers of immigration-critical attitudes. Altogether, the results indicate that right-wing alternative online media have to be considered influential factors for center-right to radical right-leaning politics and audiences in public discourse.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Article

How Elite Politicization of Terror Impacts Sympathies for Partisans: Radical Right versus Social Democrats

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Abstract
The populist radical right is frequently engaged in intense political and normative conflict with their political opponents. Does this have a spillover effect on citizens' sympathies for populist radical right voters and the voters of their political antagonists, and if so, why? This is a study of citizens' affective evaluation of radical right and social democratic voters when exposed to intense conflict between the two parties at the elite level. It zooms in on the conflict between the Norwegian Progress Party and the Labour Party that revolves around the trauma of the 22 July 2011 terror attacks, in which a former Progress Party member committed two devastating attacks against the Labour government and Labour Youth summer camp. This is studied using a survey experimental approach, relying on panel data from the Norwegian Citizen Panel. Drawing on the authoritarian dynamics' literature, it incorporates the four-item child-rearing values index measure of authoritarian predispositions which offers a personality-based explanation for why people react differently to threat. In contrast to the authoritarian dynamics' literature, which has found that it is either authoritarians or non-authoritarians who react, this study finds that both authoritarians and non-authoritarians simultaneously respond to high-intensity political conflict. Whereas non-authoritarians rally in support of social democratic voters, authoritarians rally in support of radical right voters. Further differentiating between those with low and high authoritarianism scores, we see that low-authoritarians also become more hostile to social democratic voters. This indicates that conflict involving populist radical right parties is a driver of personality-based, affective sorting of citizens. Since personality is relatively stable, the resulting state of polarization is also likely to be quite durable.

Keywords
authoritarianism; partisanship; political conflict; political polarization; populism; radical right; social democrats; terrorism

Issue
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1. Introduction

We know that elite partisan polarization—where party elites from different parties grow increasingly ideologically distant from each other—impacts public opinion formation (Druckman, Peterson, & Slothuus, 2013). Partisan conflict can at times escalate far past such disagreement over policy matters and become existential in nature. Beyond issues of ideological polarization, this study therefore examines what happens when conflict at the elite level becomes so emotionally charged that the opposing sides depict each other as a dangerous threat. Does this also spill over onto the public's affective evaluation of the different partisan camps and impact on their sympathies and antipathies? If so, why?

These questions are investigated using a survey experimental approach, relying on panel data from the Norwegian Citizen Panel (NCP). It zooms in on the struggle between the social democratic Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet, Ap) and their rivals from the populist radical right Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP). The two parties have been locked in conflict since the Progress Party initially broke through in 1987, but the trauma of the July 22, 2011 terror attacks added fuel to

the fire. On that summer day, the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik carried out two consecutive attacks, killing 77 people, injuring hundreds more and laying part of the government complex in ruins.

The attacks were traumatic, not just because they were the first large-scale terrorist attacks in Norway, but also due to the perpetrator's background, ideological motivation, and whom he targeted. Breivik was a former member of the Progress Party and he attacked their main political antagonist, the Labour Party. Moreover, his attacks were ideologically motivated along the same line of thinking that the Progress Party and the broader anti-Islamic movement had espoused—that Labour were responsible for Muslim immigration and "sneak Islamization" of society (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014). While Labour initially responded by framing the terror as an attack on democracy itself rather than highlighting the terrorist's motivation to strike at them specifically, the attacks eventually began to bleed back into the ongoing partisan conflict between the Labour Party and Progress Party elites resulting in previously unseen levels of acrimony. In the experiments, respondents are exposed to perhaps the most intense exchange between the two parties over this trauma.

The authoritarian dynamics literature offers a plausible explanation as to precisely how and why such volatile elite conflicts might spill over depending on people's personality traits. Drawing on findings from that body of work, the overarching expectation is that people with authoritarian predispositions react differently to non-authoritarians. Therefore, variations in authoritarian predispositions should account for differing affective impacts of exposure to this partisan struggle at the elite level. To test this, the study incorporates the four-item child-rearing values (CRV) index measure of authoritarian predispositions.

This assumption seems to hold. Overall, authoritarians do respond differently to the conflict than non-authoritarians, but not in the straightforward manner originally theorized. Initially, the argument was that authoritarians are those who react to perceived threats (e.g., Stenner, 2005). In contrast, subsequent studies found that it was non-authoritarians who were reacting (e.g., Hetherington & Suhay, 2011). I find that both non-authoritarians and authoritarians react simultaneously to this elite level conflict and that their reaction patterns are opposite. Non-authoritarians rally around Labour voters, whereas authoritarians rally around Progress voters. Furthermore, low-authoritarians also react by becoming more hostile to Labour voters.

The remainder of the article is structured in the following manner: The subsequent section situates the study within the literature on polarization and authoritarian dynamics, followed by a section on the Norwegian case and conflict between the two political parties. This is followed by an overview of the data and research design, discussion of the results, and finally some concluding remarks.

2. Dynamics of Partisanship

In recent decades, radical right parties and movements have become a fixture of the political landscape in Western Europe (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Mudde, 2007; Weisskircher & Berntzen, 2019). The radical right faction is fundamentally nativist and increasingly mobilizes on an anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic platform (Berntzen, 2019). Defining themselves as the voice of the people, their main political antagonists are the "elites"—ranging from mainstream parties such as the social democrats to human rights organizations, journalists, and academics—whom they blame for fundamentally altering the characteristics of Western nations by letting them become Islamized.

A major concern is that the growth of such parties and movements is leading to an increased affective, partisan polarization of the citizenry (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018), mirroring that which happened between Republicans and Democrats in the United States (see e.g., Iyengar & Westwood 2015, p. 691). Affective polarization is understood as an increasing distance between adherents of different identity-based groups, such as parties and ideological factions. It is composed of two dimensions: positive and negative partisanship. Positive partisanship refers to an attachment to ones' own identity-group (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960, p. 143), in the form of sympathizing with, loving, and trusting them. Reversely, negative partisanship refers to feeling antipathy, hatred, and distrust toward members of another identity-based group.

Increased affective partisanship could have deleterious effects on the functioning of democratic institutions, trust, and social cohesion. This scenario is made more volatile by the spate of terror attacks committed by militant Islamists (Nesser, 2018) and right-wing extremists (Ravndal, 2018) during the same period that the radical right have become major players in party politics. It has been established that elite partisan polarization impacts public opinion (Druckman et al., 2013). What happens when radical right politicians and their opponents engage in elite partisan conflict surrounding such traumatic events? Conflicts, where they politicize terror attacks by laying blame and signaling distrust and dislike of each other, could very well spill over onto citizens' affective evaluation of their voters.

Affective partisanship and polarization has been measured using a wide-ranging assortment of survey items, such as feeling thermometers (Lelkes & Westwood, 2017, p. 489), trait stereotypes (Garrett et al., 2014; Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012), trust (Levendusky, 2013), and social-distance measures gauging how comfortable people are in having close friends, neighbours, and having their children marry someone from the other party (Bogardus, 1947; Iyengar et al., 2012; Knudsen, 2018; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). Of these, the feeling thermometer is the most common measure (Lelkes & Westwood, 2017, p. 489), where affective polariza-

tion is computed as the difference between the score given to the party of the respondent and the score given to the opposing party (Iyengar, Lelkes, Levendusky, Malhotra, & Westwood, 2019) or their voters (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019).

In instances where we wish to study the partisan impact of critical events and their politicization at the elite level, aggregate measures of polarization may render specific patterns of partisanship more obscure, particularly in the multi-party systems which characterize much of Western Europe. For this reason, looking at citizens' sympathies for the factions engaged in the conflict and their partisan supporters is more relevant.

Regardless of the context, the drivers of negative and positive affective evaluation of and by partisans are less well understood, although the social-psychological work on authoritarian dynamics offers a tantalizing answer. In this work, authoritarianism is defined as a personality trait, a pre-political need for conformity and resulting intolerance toward difference (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Stenner, 2005).

The work on authoritarian dynamics is informed by the broader literature on authoritarianism, but the insistence on understanding authoritarian dispositions as independent from other political orientations or attitudes sets them apart. The main critique levelled at the broader field is that they have constructed and utilized measures which conflate authoritarianism with conservatism and specific prejudices (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011), leading to the misidentification of authoritarianism as a uniquely right-wing phenomenon (Stenner, 2005; Stenner & Haidt, 2018). Child-rearing items contrasting personal autonomy and social conformity have become the most favoured measure (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Stenner, 2005) which arguably allows us to escape the tautological reasoning that has otherwise plagued the authoritarianism literature (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 550). The literature on authoritarian dynamics is also unified by their emphasis on threat as a key interaction term which allows us to explain many changes in attitudes and behaviour when combined with authoritarianism.

While united in these respects, the authoritarian dynamics field can be roughly divided into two camps, based on two disputes: First, is authoritarianism a latent trait that only becomes activated under certain circumstances, or is it a consistent disposition? Second, who is it that reacts to environmental stimuli in the form of threats—authoritarians or non-authoritarians?

The first camp, epitomized by the pioneering work of Stenner and Feldman, understand peoples' authoritarian dispositions as latent (e.g., Feldman, 2003; Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; Stenner & Haidt, 2018). That is, such dispositions have little to no bearing on their political views, attitudes, and choices until they are exposed to threatening messages. Stenner and Feldman argue that people with authoritarian dispositions are particularly susceptible to normative threats: Messages that instil a sense of perceived threat to the unity and uniformity of society. In this account, it is those with intermediate to high authoritarianism scores who become activated under situations of threat. Several studies building on the authoritarian dynamics theory have found similar results. While some studies find that threats increase prejudice and intolerance across the board, it does so especially for those with marked authoritarian dispositions (e.g., Lavine, Lodge, Polichak, & Taber, 2002; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). Threats have, therefore, been described as having a galvanizing effect on authoritarians (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004).

In contrast, the other camp, most clearly embodied by the work of Hetherington and colleagues (e.g., Hetherington & Suhay, 2011) argue that people with high levels of authoritarianism have relatively stable preferences when it comes to illiberal policies. This is taken as an indication that their dispositions are not latent but consistently and "chronically" activated (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 548). Instead of it being the highly authoritarian individuals who react to threat, they argue that threat exposure most clearly impacts those with no or lower levels of authoritarianism. It is this segment of the population that alter their preferences, thereby becoming more similar to the authoritarians. In other words, the non-authoritarians "catch up" with the authoritarians in what has been described as a mobilizing effect (Claassen & McLaren, 2019; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; Vasilopoulos, Marcus, & Foucault, 2018). Rather than utilizing normative threat, they contend that physical threat of terror provides a better gauge as it 'plausibly threatens those across the authoritarianism distribution' (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 549).

These two positions and the findings that underpin them have been presented as mutually exclusive (e.g., Claassen & McLaren, 2019). While the disagreement continues about whether or not those with high levels of authoritarianism are always activated (Feldman, 2020), more recent acknowledgement that non-authoritarians may respond when they believe the actions of some people can 'significantly reduce their freedom of or be a direct threat to their lives' (Feldman, 2020, p. 42), suggests that the two positions are not completely at odds. In other words, while authoritarians react when they perceive a challenge to traditional norms and values, non-authoritarians are most concerned with threats to personal and civil freedoms.

Therefore, the specific threats people are exposed to seem to produce different outcomes. Previous studies have found that one of the two groups react—either the authoritarians galvanize, or the non-authoritarians mobilize. It is important to note that none of these studies have zoomed in on specific partisan conflicts, but often look at more overarching issues such as opposition to immigration (e.g., Claassen & McLaren, 2019; Sniderman et al., 2004), support for increased security and surveil-

lance measures (e.g., Vasilopoulos et al., 2018), as well as support for specific political parties (e.g., Vasilopoulos & Lachat, 2018). When it comes to affective political conflict at the elite level, however, it is plausible that non-authoritarians rally in response to one party, whilst authoritarians rally in response to another.

3. The Terror Attacks and Political Conflict between the Radical Right and Social Democrats

The most prominent conflict that the radical right Progress Party is engaged in is with the social democratic Labour Party. This conflict has simmered ever since the Progress Party had their first electoral breakthrough in 1987 and has primarily revolved around issues of Muslim immigration and national security. The conflict escalated after the 22 July 2011 terror attacks, when the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people in two terrorist attacks directed at the government quarters and Labour Youth camp (see e.g., Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014). Breivik obsessed over the supposed "sneak Islamization" of Norway for which he primarily blamed the Labour Party. The term "sneak Islamization" was initially introduced to Norwegian political discourse by Progress Party leader Siv Jensen during the parliamentary election campaign 2009—in which she too blamed the Labor Party for this supposed development (Jupskås, 2015, p. 68).

Not long before the attacks, the Progress Party had campaigned on the issue of Norway becoming Islamized by stealth, the very same issue that Breivik claimed motivated his attacks against the Labour government and party (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014). Despite this, the primary political reaction in the immediate aftermath was one of unity and depoliticization of the attacks by deemphasizing the fact that the terrorist deliberately targeted the Labour government and the Labour Youth camp (Lödén, 2014). Instead, the then Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg of the Labour Party, described it as an 'attack on us all,' promising that the response would only be 'even more democracy' (Stoltenberg, 2011). Additionally, Stoltenberg made a public appeal to 'tone down anti-immigrant rhetoric' and to 'avoid assigning blame to a particular political party' (Wiggen, 2012)—meaning the Progress Party. While stating that 'the party accepted no responsibility for the heinous crimes committed by Breivik,' Progress Party leader Siv Jensen also proclaimed that they would stop using the same rhetoric as they had before (Wiggen, 2012). In other words, both the terror attack and issues of immigration and any supposed "sneak Islamization" were off the table—for a time.

In the local elections held not long after, the Labour Party surged while the Progress Party suffered a setback. The Progress Party's loss of support was in large part because immigration, their most important issue, had not been discussed (Bergh & Bjørklund, 2013). During the national elections in 2013, the Progress Party also suffered a substantial electoral setback, but nevertheless managed to enter government for the first time. They formed a minority coalition government with the Conservative Party (Høyre, H) by securing parliamentary backing from the Christian Democrats (Kristelig Folkeparti, KrF) and the Liberals (Venstre, V), thereby replacing the previous Labour-led government. The Progress Party and Conservatives secured a second term in government after the 2017 national elections, initially with continued parliamentary backing from the Christian Democrats and Liberals. This was followed by the Liberals and subsequently the Christian Democrats officially entering the government coalition as of January 2018 and January 2019, respectively.

As the years passed the initial depoliticization of the terror attacks met resistance from factions within the Labour Party. Meanwhile, the parliamentary wing of the Progress Party gradually returned to form and became more strident in their anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messaging (Jupskås, 2016, p. 179). This closely coincided with the rise of a faction within the Labour Party who wanted to hold the Progress Party responsible. It infused a new level of acrimony and vitriol into the conflict between the two factions. An early portent of the future hostilities came during the transition period after the national elections in 2013 and just before the Labour-led government tendered its resignation when Prime Minister Stoltenberg asked Progress Party leader Siv Jensen to apologize for using the term "sneak Islamization"—a request she promptly refused (Johnsen & Hvidsten, 2013).

The conflict reached its peak after Minister of Justice Sylvi Listhaug from the Progress Party shared a post on Facebook, March 9, 2018, writing that 'the Labor Party believes that the rights of terrorists are more important than the nation's security. LIKE AND SHARE!' accompanied by a picture of an Islamic State-soldier wielding a knife (Svaar, 2018). Labour party leader Jonas Gahr Støre retorted by saying that Sylvi Listhaug from the Progress Party 'deliberately, calculatedly, kindles the hatred that took so many lives on 22 July' (Sørsdahl, 2018).

Listhaug was subsequently forced to resign as Minister of Justice on March 20, 2018 but maintained her prominent position within the ranks of the Progress Party and was officially elected as 1st Deputy Leader on May 5, 2019 (Gilbrant & Suvatne, 2019). In a sign of renewed confidence by the coalition government, Listhaug was also appointed as Minister of Health and Care services, May 3, 2019.

The Progress Party withdrew from the coalition government on January 20, 2020, after having sat in government for six years, two months and twenty days. They chose to withdraw after the government extracted a female Islamic State member and her children from an internment camp in Syria (Jensen, 2020). The Conservative Prime Minister Erna Solberg had initially opposed retrieving female Islamic State members and their children with Norwegian citizenship, whereas the government coalition partners the Christian Democrats and Liberals and several opposition parties including Labour had gone out

in favour of 'bringing them home' (Johnsen, 2019). For the Progress Party, the issue of extracting these women and their children was directly related to the heated conflict between then Minister of Justice Listhaug and Labour leader Gahr Støre. Listhaug herself argued the conflict which played out in March 2018 was based on a misrepresentation of her desire to enact a law withdrawing Norwegian citizenship from Islamic State fighters (Sylvi Listhaug forsvarer, 2018).

4. Data and Research Design

Data for the study (N = 1370) were collected from a probability-based online national survey conducted by the NCP between May 21 and June 10, 2019. See the NCP methodology report for details (Skjervheim, Høgestøl, Bjørnebekk, & Eikrem, 2019). The data is available free of cost for scholars via the Norwegian Social Science Data Archive. The study includes measures for authoritarian pre-dispositions, experimental exposure to political conflict, and party voter likeability for Labour and Progress Party voters.

The main hypothesis of this study is that the effect of exposure to the 22 July-related political conflict between radical right Progress Party and the social democratic Labour Party on citizens' sympathies toward these two parties' voters vary according to peoples' authoritarian predispositions. To test this, I have chosen a between-subjects experimental design. The experimental design consists of exposure to statements by the then Minister of Justice, Sylvi Listhaug (Progress Party) and party leader Jonas Gahr Støre (Labour Party) in the form of vignettes. Whereas the Progress Party message describes Labour as a challenge to traditional norms and values by placing the rights of (Muslim) terrorists above national security, the Labour message is that the Progress Party induces right-wing extremism which poses a threat to peoples' personal safety and liberty. In the case of the Progress Party message, the physical threat of terror is present but more implicit. Respondents were randomly allocated to one of two treatments or control (no treatment), and subsequently asked to rate how much they like or dislike Labour and Progress Party voters, respectively, on a seven-point sympathy barometer scale established as standard in the NCP, ranging from "intensely dislike" (1) to "intensely like" (7).

Note that respondents were explicitly asked about their view of party voters and not the party itself. Sympathy measures that only use the party label in their question wording (for instance asking about "Republicans" and "Democrats" in the US) have been found to measure affect for party elites and not the masses (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019). The Like–Dislike sympathy barometer is itself an established measure to gauge affect and polarization (see e.g., Gidron, Adams, & Horne, 2019; Hansen & Kosiara-Pedersen, 2017; Lauka, McCoy, & Firat, 2018) and is an attempt to get at the same phenomenon as the more traditional feeling thermometer's answer scale that ranges between 0 and 100. The degree to which these are functionally equivalent or whether one is superior to the other has not yet been established.

The full wording of the survey experiments exposing respondents to the 22 July-related political conflict between the Progress Party and Labour Party were as follows:

> Progress Party message
>
> Please read the text below carefully. Norway has experienced various political conflicts in recent times. Whilst involved in one of these conflicts, Sylvi Listhaug from the Progress Party wrote that 'the Labour Party believes that the rights of terrorists are more important than the nation's security. LIKE AND SHARE!.'
>
> Labour Party message
>
> Please read the text below carefully. Norway has experienced various political conflicts in recent times. Whilst involved in one of these conflicts, Jonas Gahr Støre from the Labour Party said that Sylvi Listhaug from the Progress Party 'deliberately, calculatedly, kindles the hatred that took so many lives on the 22nd of July.'

Previous work on authoritarianism where threats are manipulated in an experimental setting (e.g., Lavine, Lodge, & Freitas, 2005; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009; Stenner, 2005) have been criticized on (at least) two counts. First, because they are only able to activate a threat response from those at one end of the authoritarianism scale but not the other (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 551). Second, because the relationship between the exogenous threats created by the experimenter and real-world threats often remain unclear due to the fictitious nature of the experiment (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 551), with there sometimes being a vague operationalization of threat or at other times more outlandish scenarios.

My experimental conditions address both points of criticism. First, the treatments are direct replications of a heated real conflict on a word for word basis. While a full year passed between the intense episode and its utilization in the survey, no other episodes arose in the interim to eclipse it nor did the two parties make any significant attempts at reconciliation. This has its own potential drawbacks but provides some assurance that the messages will be perceived as threatening. Second, both relate to the threat of terrorism, either by right-wing extremists or Islamist extremists. In addition, both messages single out their political opponents as the underlying cause of this threat. They thereby cover both dimensions—physical and normative threat—that have been stressed by both sides in the academic debate.

The measure for authoritarianism used in the analysis is constructed from four questions that contrast pairs of CRV in terms of personal autonomy versus social con-

formity. Respondents were asked to choose which is more important to them: independence or respect for parents; obedience or self-reliance; being considerate or well-behaved; and curiosity or good manners. Each question was coded so that the authoritarian option was equal to 1 and the non-authoritarian option was 0. A scale was created by averaging across the four questions. The scale was then collapsed, where choosing 3 to 4 of the authoritarian options is classified as high-authoritarian, 2 as low-authoritarian, and 0 to 1 as non-authoritarian (see Figure 1). The authoritarianism measure is crucial to discern whether, and why, exposure to partisan conflict at the elite level may have different effects on citizens' affective evaluation of voters.

My choice of collapsing the authoritarianism scale into three categories deviates from the more prevalent approaches of treating it either as a continuous or dichotomous variable. At the same time, the resulting analyses are consistently discussed using a similar tripartite distinction (e.g., Hetherington & Suhay, 2011, p. 553; Stenner & Haidt, 2018, p. 192). This indicates that there are meaningful qualitative differences between people with low, intermediate, and high scores that have implications for when and why someone's predispositions become activated. Considering this, treating authoritarianism as a categorical and not a continuous or simply dichotomous variable allows for a more straightforward reading of the potentially differentiated interaction effects between varying levels of authoritarianism and the two experimental treatments (threat messages).

5. Results

During the last decade, there has been an ongoing debate about the proper use, interpretation, and presentation of statistical inference. In my analysis, I try to steer clear of the standard pitfalls, such as using $p < 0.05$ as a clear line distinguishing between significance and non-significance (Wasserstein & Lazar, 2016). Instead, I embrace the ATOM principle—"Accept uncertainty. Be thoughtful, open, and modest" (Wasserstein, Schirm, & Lazar, 2019, p. 2). To do so, I differentiate between substantive and statistical significance while enumerating all results for transparency—providing effect sizes, standard deviations and significance values reported as continuous quantities. For p-values, I refer to Hug's (2019) designations ranging from decisive evidence for p-values ranging between 0.000–0.001, very strong for $p < 0.001$–0.004, strong for $p < 0.004$–0.012, substantial for $p < 0.012$–0.037, moderate for $p < 0.037$–0.132 and weak for $p < 0.132$–1.000.

I begin by looking at the aggregate effects on citizens' sympathies for Progress and Labour Party voters (see Figure 2). Here we see that exposure to the elite conflict does not substantively shift citizens' sympathies for radical right Progress Party voters, nor Labour Party voters. Concerning the affect for Labour voters, the effect of the Labour message is substantively negligible to non-existent ($b = 0.039$, $SD = 0.082$, $p = 0.587$). The same holds when it comes to the impact of the Progress message ($b = 0.044$, $SD = 0.081$, $p = 0.632$). For citizens' sympathies for Progress voters, we see that the Labour message may exert a very small substantive effect in favour of Progress voters ($b = 0.134$, $SD = 0.097$, $p = 0.169$), but the weak p-value makes any clear conclusions untenable. The Progress message has no discernible effect ($b = 0.021$, $SD = 0.099$, $p = 0.829$).

Having established that the elite conflict between the Progress Party and Labour has no notable effects on sympathies toward the respective parties' voters when looking at the population in aggregate, I now turn to citizens' sympathies sorted by their authoritarian predispositions. Authoritarianism is here treated as a categorical variable, ranging from non-authoritarian to low-authoritarian and finally high-authoritarian.

The main expectation was that citizens' response to exposure to elite conflict between the radical right Progress Party and social democratic Labour Party should

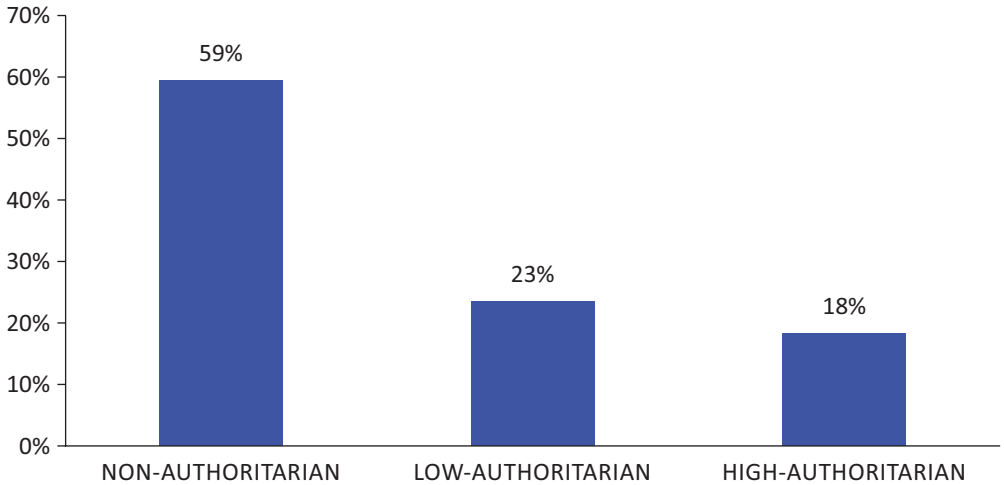

Figure 1. Distribution of authoritarian pre-dispositions. Notes: NCP, wave 15. N = 1370. Bars reflect % of the population falling into each category.

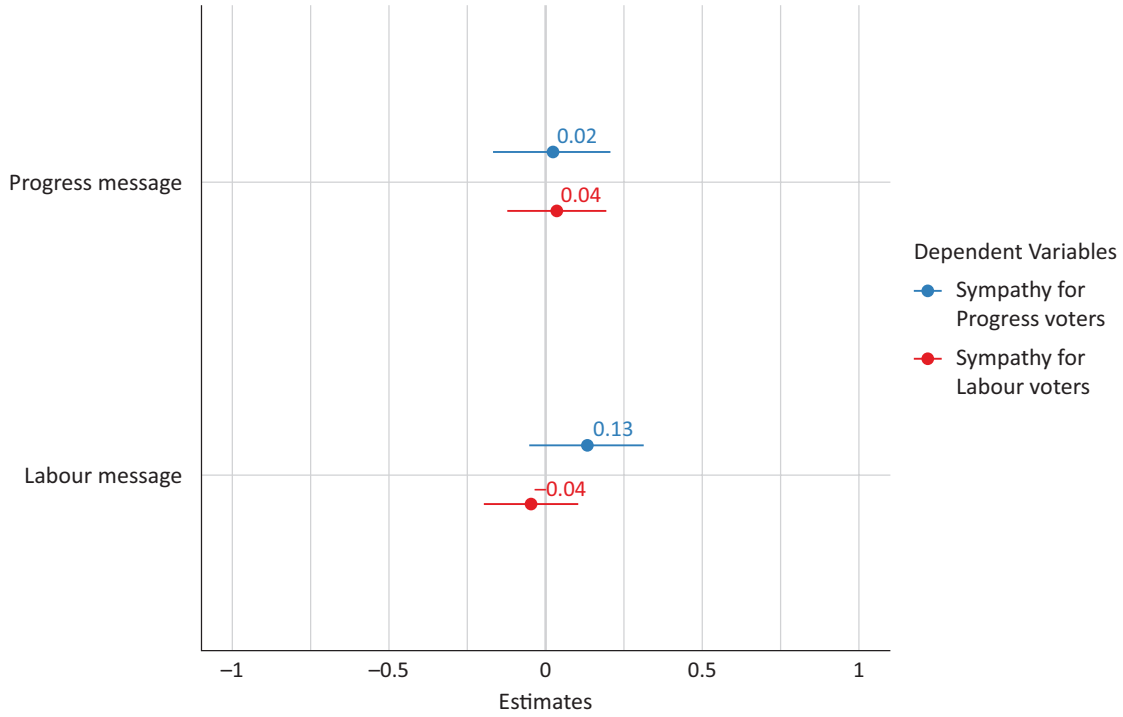

Figure 2. No aggregate effect of exposure to elite conflict between Progress Party and Labour Party on citizens' sympathies for their voters. Notes: NCP, wave 15. N = 1340. * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$.

vary depending on their levels of authoritarian predispositions. The formula below summarizes the OLS procedure for identifying the affective evaluation of Labour and Progress voters, respectively:

Sympathy for party voters =

$= \alpha + \beta 1$ (Low authoritarianism)
$+ \beta 2$ (High authoritarianism)
$+ \beta 3$ (Labour message) $+ \beta 4$ (Progress message)
$+ \beta 5$ (Low authoritarianism × Labour message)
$+ \beta 6$ (High authoritarianism × Labour message)
$+ \beta 7$ (Low authoritarianism × Progress message)
$+ \beta 8$ (High authoritarianism × Progress message) $+ \varepsilon$

I now turn to look at sympathy for Labour Party voters (see Figure 3). Non-authoritarians become slightly more sympathetic toward Labour Party voters when exposed to both the Labour message ($b = 0.204$, $SD = 0.117$, $p = 0.083$) and the Progress message ($b = 0.28$, $SD = 0.119$, $p = 0.021$). In other words, the conflict seems to have a rallying effect on non-authoritarians in favor of Labour. For low-authoritarians, the directionality is reversed for both exposure to the Labour message ($b = -0.49$, $SD = 0.221$, $p = 0.026$) and the Progress message ($b = -0.384$, $SD = 0.221$, $p = 0.084$). Substantively, the effects of exposure to the Labour message are relatively strong, making low-authoritarians more unsympathetic toward Labour voters. For high-authoritarians, exposure to the political conflict has no discernible impact on their sympathies for Labour voters, neither in the case of the Labour message ($b = 0.13$, $SD = 0.243$, $p = 0.594$) nor the Progress message ($b = -0.30$, $SD = 0.224$, $p = 0.223$).

Let us now look at citizens' sympathies for Progress Party voters, beginning with non-authoritarian citizens (see Figure 4). The Progress message has substantively small, but discernible impact ($b = -0.230$, $SD = 0.142$, $p = 0.105$), indicating that it makes non-authoritarians somewhat more unsympathetic toward Progress voters. In contrast, the Labour message condemning the Progress Party has no noticeable effect ($b = -0.139$, $SD = 0.140$, $p = 0.322$). For low-authoritarians, the Labour message has a, substantively speaking, moderate rallying effect on their sympathies for Progress voters ($b = 0.478$, $SD = 0.263$, $p = 0.070$). The same is not the case for the Progress message ($b = 0.307$, $SD = 0.265$, $p = 0.247$). Finally, for the high-authoritarians we see that whilst the Labour message has no discernible effect ($b = 0.352$, $SD = 0.289$, $p = 0.224$), the Progress message has a noticeable substantive rallying effect on their sympathies for Progress voters ($b = 0.758$, $SD = 0.292$, $p = 0.010$). That is, highly authoritarian individuals become more positive toward Progress voters.

The main expectation was that citizens' response to exposure to elite conflict between the radical right Progress Party and the social democratic Labour Party should vary depending on their levels of authoritarian predispositions. This is borne out; authoritarians do, by and large, respond differently to the conflict than non-authoritarians. Overall, low-authoritarians are the most susceptible to the conflict. Both Labour and Progress messages have a counter-mobilizational effect, decreasing their sympathy for Labour voters, whereas the Labour

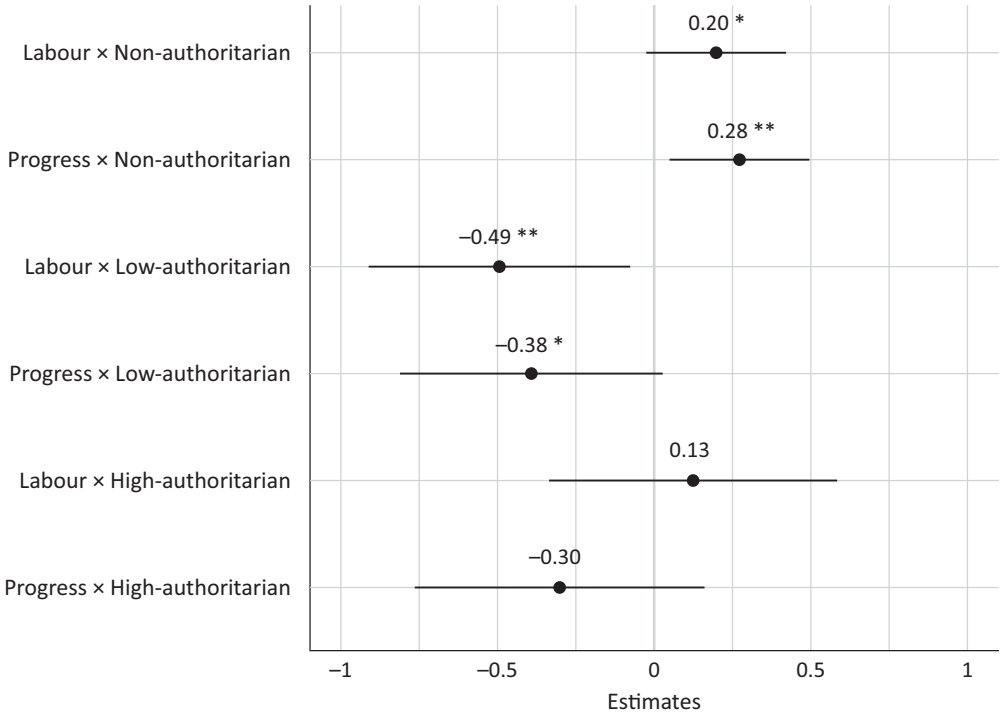

Figure 3. Exposure to elite conflict rallies non-authoritarians for and mobilizes low-authoritarians against Labour party voters, with no discernible impact on high-authoritarians. NCP, wave 15. N = 1045. * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$.

(but not the Progress message) has a rallying effect in favour of Progress voters. Substantively, the effect sizes are intermediate. In contrast, we see that exposure does not alter the affective evaluation of Labour voters by high-authoritarians, but when exposed to the Progress message they become markedly more sympathetic toward Progress voters. In comparison, non-authoritarians become somewhat more sympathetic toward Labour voters when exposed to the conflict. Concerning their sympathies for Progress voters, the Labour message has no impact while the Progress message seems to make them slightly less sympathetic. See Table 1 for a full overview.

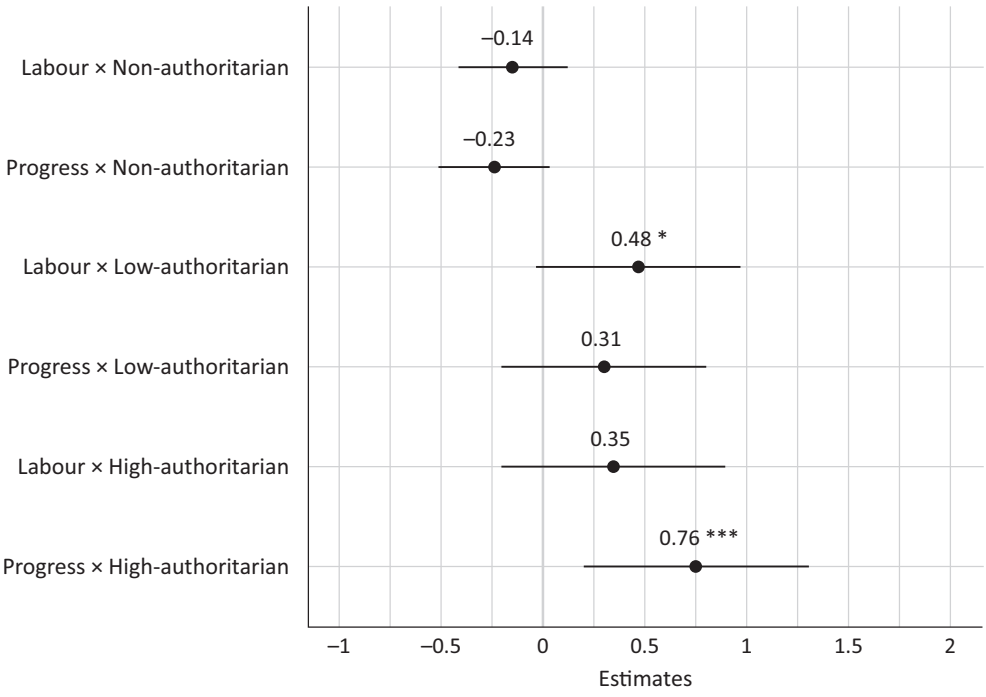

Figure 4. Exposure to elite conflict between Labour and Progress party mobilizes non-authoritarians against and rallies low- and high-authoritarians for Progress party voters. NCP, wave 15. N = 1046. * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 1. Citizens' sympathy for Labour and Progress Party voters (OLS).

	Labour voters (1)			Progress voters (1)			Labour voters (2)			Progress voters (2)		
Predictors	Estimates	*CI*	*P*	Estimates	*CI*	*P*	Estimates	*CI*	*P*	Estimates	*CI*	*P*
(Intercept)	4.32 ***	4.21–4.43	< **0.001**	3.14 ***	3.01–3.28	< **0.001**	4.35 ***	4.19–4.51	< **0.001**	3.01 ***	2.81–3.20	< **0.001**
Labour message	−0.04	−0.20–0.12	0.587	0.13	−0.06–0.33	0.169	0.20 *	−0.03–0.43	0.083	−0.14	−0.42–0.14	0.322
Progress message	0.04	−0.12–0.20	0.632	0.02	−0.17–0.22	0.829	0.28 **	0.04–0.51	**0.021**	−0.23	−0.51–0.05	0.105
Low authoritarianism							0.04	−0.25–0.34	0.795	0.21	−0.15–0.57	0.255
High authoritarianism							−0.48 ***	−0.81—0.15	**0.004**	0.41 **	0.02–0.80	**0.040**
Labour msg × Low auth							−0.49 **	−0.93—0.06	**0.026**	0.48 *	−0.04–1.00	0.070
Progress msg × Low auth							−0.38 *	−0.82–0.05	0.084	0.31	−0.21–0.83	0.247
Labour msg × High auth							0.13	−0.35–0.61	0.594	0.35	−0.22–0.92	0.224
Progress msg × High auth							−0.30	−0.78–0.18	0.223	0.76 ***	0.18–1.33	**0.010**
Observations		1340			1341			1045			1046	
R^2/R^2 adjusted		0.001/−0.001			0.002/0.000			0.039/0.032			0.053/0.045	

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

6. Conclusion

This is the first study of how affective polarization and terror-related conflict at the elite level impacts citizens' sympathy toward voters. It helps piece together precisely how threats may alter peoples' attitudes and preferences. It has done so by utilizing a concrete, real-world conflict and messages that are likely to be perceived as threatening in one way or another to large segments of the population. The study shows that terror-related conflict between the radical right and social democrats has a spill-over effect on citizens' sympathies for their voters.

The conflict affects citizens' according to their existing authoritarian predispositions. Non-authoritarians react by rallying around social democratic partisans, whilst low- and high-authoritarians rally around radical right partisans. The findings, therefore, speak directly to the ongoing debate within the authoritarianism field, providing support for a modified version of what has been labelled the authoritarian dynamics' theory. Initially, the argument was that people with authoritarian personality traits would react to exposure to threats (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). Later findings instead indicated that non-authoritarians were the ones who reacted strongly to threats. Some have posited these as competing explanations (e.g., Claassen & McLaren, 2019; Hetherington & Suhay, 2011). In my study, however, it becomes clear that both non-authoritarians and authoritarians can react simultaneously when exposed to high-intensity, partisan conflict at the elite level.

As to the dispute over whether authoritarians are "chronically" activated (Hetherington & Suhay, 2011) or only become activated under specific circumstances (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005), my findings provide some support for the latter position. The academic disagreement on this count may simply reflect the nature of the given scenarios investigated. For one, they have frequently looked at or experimentally utilized differing threats. Furthermore, they have not looked at episodes of actual partisan conflict. My findings demonstrate that both authoritarians and non-authoritarians can become simultaneously "activated" by political conflict within the same polity. Strictly speaking, this is therefore not just an authoritarian dynamic in the sense originally implied by Feldman, Stenner and others (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997), where only authoritarians react.

Now, why exactly is it that we see these different response patterns? While both messages contain a physical and normative threat element, the Labour Party message is more in line with what the literature indicates that non-authoritarians react to while the Progress Party message is more in line with what authoritarians react to. Yet, while this episode is among the most intense, it is not the first instance of conflict between the two parties along these normative lines. The response patterns are relatively uniform, with non-authoritarians becoming more sympathetic to Labour voters when exposed both to the Labour and the Progress message, indicating that their response is at least partially conditioned by the considerable length of time they have been exposed to the conflict between the radical right and their social democratic antagonists over the years. For instance, the Progress Party has consistently painted the Labour Party as a threat to the unity and cohesion of "traditional" Norwegian society through Muslim immigration and "sneak Islamization," whereas the Labour Party depicts the Progress Party as a threat to decency, political stability, and minority rights.

Owing to the nature of the experiments utilized in this study, it is difficult to truly disentangle whether these variations are due to the messages, the actors, or a combination of the two. Just as with this case, real-world conflicts often involve different themes and threat scenarios pushed by specific political actors. To build on the findings presented in this paper, a next step would be to design new experiments with hypothetical scenarios varying all the elements above. Another related aspect to investigate further is the more complex, longitudinal interaction-effects between direct party identification and authoritarianism within multi-party systems.

To reiterate, the key findings were that 1) both non-authoritarians and authoritarians (low to high) can react simultaneously to threats, and that 2) in the case of partisan conflict their reaction patterns may be diametrically opposite. While the terror attacks themselves and the subsequent conflict is specific to the Norwegian case, it is in my estimation very plausible that these findings are generalizable to other cases within the sphere of liberal democracies in Western Europe and elsewhere. The socio-political specificity of these cases, however, such as processes of partisan sorting over a long period and the comparative primacy of party-political identity over ethnicity and other identities (see e.g., Westwood et al., 2018), makes it less likely that the findings can be readily generalized to non-WEIRD populations (Western, educated, rich and democratic).

In any case, within the sphere of liberal democracies, the results indicate that a continued conflict at the elite level between the radical right and their social democratic adversaries may contribute to a growing affective, partisan divide among citizens based on their authoritarian pre-dispositions in terms of whom they sympathize with. Beyond the overarching similarities in culture and political development, this position is premised on the finding that personality is relatively stable over time (e.g., Stenner, 2005, on authoritarianism; for stability of broader personality traits, see e.g., Damian, Spengler, Sutu, & Roberts, 2019; Hampson & Goldberg, 2006). Non-authoritarians could drift closer to the "mainstream," pro-social democratic camp and the low- to high-authoritarians in the "populist," pro-radical right camp. If the pattern of conflict is maintained, it could cause a relatively even affective split of the population, as non-authoritarians make up around half the population and the combined tally of low- to

high-authoritarians the other half. The impact on negative affect is less clear-cut, but here we could also see an increasing gap as low-authoritarians move further away from the non-authoritarians and closer to the high-authoritarian baseline. The result may well be that the neutral ground—holding neither sympathies nor antipathies for either party camp—is whittled away. This would be in line with but not as far-ranging as the scenario Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser discuss, wherein politics is completely bifurcated into a struggle between "liberal democracy" and "populism" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2018, p. 1685).

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Disentangling How Populism and Radical Host Ideologies Shape Citizens' Conceptions of Democratic Decision-Making

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Abstract
In this article, we aim to disentangle the extent to which citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making are shaped by populist attitudes or rather by radical left and right host ideologies. Following recent work by Landwehr and Steiner (2017), we distinguish four modes of decision-making embedded in different conceptions of democracy: trusteeship democracy, anti-pluralism, deliberative proceduralism, and majoritarianism. Drawing on data from Austria and Germany, we show that populism and radical host ideologies tap into different dimensions of democracy. While populism is primarily directed against representative forms of democratic decision-making, preferences for deliberative procedures and majority decisions appear entirely shaped by radical left and right host ideologies. Populism thus views decision-making based on the general will of the people as the only legitimate democratic procedure, whereas radical left and right host ideologies aim at involving the relevant group(s) of citizens. Further analyses of the interactions between populist attitudes and radical host ideologies confirm that the effects of populism remain robust and thus independent of the specific manifestations of radical host ideologies. These findings help to disentangle the causes of democratic discontent and to develop possible responses through democratic reforms that specifically and separately aim to mitigate populism and radical host ideologies.

Keywords
Austria; democratic decision-making; democracy; Germany; host ideology; populism; populist attitudes

Issue
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1. Introduction

The conceptions of democracy underlying the ideology of radical populist parties arguably pose a threat to both liberal and representative democracy (Galston, 2018; Pappas, 2019; Plattner, 2010; Taggart, 2004; Urbinati, 1998). Yet, we know little about how the attitudes pertaining to the populist core on the one hand and those based on radical left or right host ideologies on the other relate to normative conceptions and expectations about democratic decision-making. Following an ideational approach (Hawkins, Carlin, Littvay, & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017), we view populism as directed against the liberal principles of democracy such as minority rights and the rule of law, while favoring direct popular participation rather than decision-making by elected representatives. Radical left and right host ideologies, by contrast, define manifestations of social grievances in society, assign blame to those they label responsible, and propose different solutions in the form of radical change in favor of those who ought to govern in the place of corrupt politicians.

The challenge is that populism rarely occurs alone, but often in tandem with a radical left or right host ide-

ology. This entanglement has given rise to a considerable debate on the precise locus of the effect. Specifically, whether effects can be independently ascribed and thus measured, or whether they are inherently intertwined, even to the point that populism per se is an empty shell. Proceeding from the idea that populism has a substantial core and is meaningfully distinct from the influence of host ideologies, our analysis will need to show that the effects are independently present in the dependent variables. In this article, we therefore aim to disentangle this relationship by examining the extent to which citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making are shaped by populist attitudes or rather by attitudes towards radical left and right host ideologies. Accordingly, we ask to what extent populist attitudes and attitudes based on radical left and right host ideologies affect citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making.

Drawing on recent research by Landwehr and Steiner (2017) on the gap between democratic aspirations and democratic practice, we distinguish four modes of democratic decision-making embedded in different conceptions of democracy: trusteeship democracy, anti-pluralism, deliberative proceduralism, and majoritarianism. Using data from the GESIS Panel (Bosnjak et al., 2018; GESIS, 2019) for Germany and the Austrian National Election Study (AUTNES) Online Panel (Wagner et al., 2018), we focus on the distinction between populism and radical host ideologies and their impact on citizens' understanding of the functional and procedural aspects of democracy.

Our article proceeds by first laying out our theoretical argument and discussing the relationship between populism and radical host ideologies as related to different conceptions of democratic decision-making. After stating our hypotheses, we present the research design and briefly introduce our two cases, Austria and Germany. This is followed by the empirical analysis and the discussion of our findings.

2. Theoretical Argument

2.1. Citizens' Conceptions of Democratic Decision-Making

In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on citizens' preferences for democracy and specific decision-making procedures (Bengtsson, 2012; Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007; Font, Wojcieszak, & Navarro, 2015; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2001). Overall, research has shown that certain attitudes towards the democratic decision-making process affect citizens' participation in politics (Bengtsson & Christensen, 2016; Gherghina & Geissel, 2017; Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010; Webb, 2013). Moreover, citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making constitute the individual yardstick for evaluating the functioning of democracy in practice (Landwehr & Steiner, 2017). Democratic discontent is thus also rooted in how citizens define democracy and their expectations of the way democratic decisions should be taken.

In turn, democratic discontent, alongside ideological attitudes and policy preferences, is an important explanation for the success of radical populist parties over time and across countries (Hernández, 2018; Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002; Rooduijn, 2018; Schumacher & Rooduijn, 2013). Apart from these presumed indirect effects, recent studies show that certain notions of democracy are also directly related to the support for populist (radical right) parties (Schmitt-Beck, van Deth, & Staudt, 2017; Steiner & Landwehr, 2018). In order to explain the success of radical populist parties, it is therefore essential to disentangle the relationships between populism, radical host ideologies and different conceptions of democratic decision-making.

Following previous research by Landwehr and Steiner (2017), we distinguish between a core concept of democracy as a first layer and conceptions of democratic decision-making as a second layer. While the first layer refers to the essential guidelines and regime principles of democracy, the second layer deals with the norms and procedures of how democratic decisions should be made (Dalton, 2004; Easton, 1965). Since populist citizens—those holding populist attitudes—support democracy over other forms of government, while being dissatisfied with the way democracy works in practice (Rovira Kaltwasser & Van Hauwaert, 2020; Vehrkamp & Wratil, 2017), we assume that this dissatisfaction is not per se the result of a general rejection of democratic principles but based on specific normative expectations of the democratic decision-making process.

In accordance with Landwehr and Steiner (2017), we distinguish four modes of democratic decision-making embedded in different conceptions of democracy: trusteeship democracy, anti-pluralism, deliberative proceduralism, and majoritarianism. These conceptions broadly represent four distinct ideas about how democracy should be constituted normatively and functionally, and which are crucial to the current debate about democratic development. *Trusteeship democracy* refers to the common type of representative democracy in which legislators act as trustees of their voters. While this mode of decision-making requires trust on the part of the voter that the representative has the best interest of the citizens in mind, it also entails searching for compromises away from the spotlight and public opinion. The *anti-pluralist* mode views conflict between different particularistic interests as detrimental to the general welfare of the people. Accordingly, important political decisions are rather to be left to experts. *Deliberative proceduralism* here refers to decision-making through procedures in which the concern for general welfare outweighs individual and particularistic interests. The mode of *majoritarianism* is based on the idea that the government should respond primarily to a common will of the (relevant) people. Incorporating minorities and diverse views is seen as tantamount to thwarting the will of the people.

2.2. How Populism Relates to Democratic Decision-Making

Following an ideational approach (Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017), we define populism as a thin-centered "ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). On the part of voters, populism exists as a set of widespread attitudes among ordinary citizens that lie dormant until activated by weak democratic governance and policy failure. These attitudes are centered on the three constituent ideational elements of anti-elitism, people-centrism, and a Manichean worldview (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Castanho Silva, Jungkunz, Helbling, & Littvay, 2019; Rooduijn, 2014).

The ambivalent nature of the relationship between populism and democracy remains essentially controversial and has been the subject of claims and counterclaims. Some scholars suggest that populists may force incumbent traditional parties to become more attentive, thereby mitigating a growing crisis of representation (Kriesi, 2014; Mair, 2002; Taggart, 2002), but have otherwise little measurable negative impact on the political system (Canovan, 1999; Heinisch, 2003; Mény & Surel, 2002; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). Others have pushed back against this perspective by arguing that while populism is not anti-democratic per se, its antagonism to the procedural aspects of liberal representative democracy is well-established (Galston, 2018; Heinisch & Wegscheider, 2019; Huber & Schimpf, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Pappas, 2019; Plattner, 2010; Taggart, 2004; Urbinati, 1998).

This is because the people are seen as the "ultimate source of legitimacy" (van Kessel, 2015, p. 15) for democracy and, thus, the *popular will* is above criticism and beyond institutional constraints. Accordingly, radical populists in advanced Western European democracies regard *the people* as betrayed not simply by the personal corruption of elites but by systematic programmatic misrepresentation (Mudde, 2004). As a consequence, populists frequently call for the direct implementation of the people's will through plebiscitary measures (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Barr, 2009; Canovan, 2002). Likewise, political divisions are not seen as legitimate differences of interest but rather the result of outsider meddling. As a result, compromises designed to resolve such differences are often regarded as less than fully legitimate (Schedler, 1996). By rejecting the idea of a plurality of positions and interests and by presenting political decision-making in the form of stark moral choices between good and evil (Mudde, 2004; Plattner, 2010), democratic decisions are framed as between those for and against the people. Such a binary moral framework may intensify already bifurcated attitudes towards how democratic procedures work.

Procedurally speaking, populism assigns a central role to the people in decision-making, thus supporting participatory approaches to democracy in the form of plebiscites (Mohrenberg, Huber, & Freyburg, 2019). Populists also prefer a passive role in politics (stealth democracy), assuming that the government is responsive and implements policies according to their interests (Stoker & Hay, 2017). This, in turn, makes deliberation in politics seemingly superfluous in populists' eyes as long as political outcomes are in line with the general will (Urbinati, 2019). On a more general level, populists are likely to oppose representative democracy, characterized by a plurality of preferences, mediation, and compromises and thus political decision-makers acting as trustees on behalf of diverse citizens interests (Taggart, 2000, 2004). Nonetheless, populists may prefer experts to policy-makers because the former are less likely to be regarded as self-serving (Mohrenberg et al., 2019).

Based on our discussion of the relationship between democracy and populism, we assume the following effects of populist attitudes on democratic decision-making: We expect to see attitudes that elites and representatives are untrustworthy and resented for making all the important decisions, while ordinary people are seen as being ignored and powerless. Decision-making processes are likely regarded as opaque and potentially corrupt so that the compromises achieved are not representative of the genuine popular will. In short, following the populist core framework, the procedural dimension of current liberal representative democracy is likely to be viewed negatively because the decision-makers are self-serving; the people for whom the decisions are to be made are not adequately represented; and the process of reaching a decision is tainted. In the following, we provide specific explanations for our hypotheses and show how the above discussion applies.

The first hypothesis posits that the very anti-elitism and people-centrism inherent in populism will cause such citizens to be skeptical towards elected politicians and, thus, evaluate the principles of representation negatively. As a result, we state it as follows:

> $H_{POP}1$: The higher citizens' populist attitudes, the less they support trusteeship democracy.

The next hypothesis concerns the populist notion of the people as being unified and homogeneous. This runs counter to pluralism, which implies diversity of opinion, thus bestowing legitimacy to non-majoritarian viewpoints. In consequence, populism perceives such decision-making modes as illegitimate or a threat. Therefore, we specify the following hypothesis:

> $H_{POP}2$: The higher citizens' populist attitudes, the more they support anti-pluralism.

When it comes to populist attitudes and support for deliberative democracy, we theorize that populists will see

little need for such a process if governments enact the popular will. Any mediation beyond that would, in their view, only invite illegitimate extraneous influences into the mix. However, if the original decision had not come about based on the popular will, then, accordingly, no deliberative mechanisms would restore legitimacy. Hence, we state the hypothesis as follows:

$H_{POP}3$: The higher citizens' populist attitudes, the less they support deliberative proceduralism.

Concerning the relationship between populism and majoritarianism, we note that the central idea in populism is that legitimate decisions derive from the unmediated majority opinion of the people as they are the source of political power. Thus, our hypothesis reads as follows:

$H_{POP}4$: The higher citizens' populist attitudes, the more they support majoritarianism.

2.3. How Radical Host Ideologies Relate to Democratic Decision-Making

In this section, we lay out our argument for how radical host ideologies affect the four conceptions of democratic decision-making and proceed from the assumption that populism is a thin ideology and thus attached to different radical host ideologies (Stanley, 2008; Taggart, 2000). In keeping with the ideational approach and mindful of arguments to the contrary, we conceive populism as having a substantive core of its own with distinct influences, independent of the radical right or left host ideology with which populism is associated. In trying to determine the extent to which the effect on attitudes towards democratic decision-making is based on the radical host ideology, we first need to establish its plausible connection with the respective procedural modes. Only then, in a further step, we will be able to see whether the interactions between host ideologies and populism manifest any combined effects. Thus, our subsequent discussion specifies the causal connection between the dependent variables and radical host ideologies independent of populism.

The radical right ideology is based on the characteristics of nativism and right-wing authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007). The ideological core of the radical right is a combination of an exclusive nationalism and xenophobia (Rydgren, 2007, 2018). This nativist worldview "holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state" (Mudde, 2007, p. 19). The second characteristic of the radical right ideology is right-wing authoritarianism and encompasses the characteristics of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1981). Right-wing authoritarianism is the belief in a strictly ordered hierarchical society demanding submission to authority and social conventions (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018) and is due to an "uncritical, respectful, obedient support for existing societal authorities and institutions" (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013, p. 843).

Drawing on these two components of the radical right ideology, we formulate our hypotheses regarding the relationship to the four conceptions of democratic decision-making, albeit following a *different* causal inference. In the case of the radical right, the cause is not anti-elitism and the general will but rather a specific concern about compromises with and the influence of (a) those who are ethnically not part of the autochthonous people (nativism) and (b) those subverting existing authority structures (right-wing authoritarianism). Although these hypotheses are pointing in the same direction as those stated above, we expect the relative effects to be different. The subsequent segment provides specific explanations for our hypotheses and shows how our above discussion applies.

The first hypothesis is based on the argument that as long as representation cannot be effectively restricted to the *acceptable* autochthonous populations, political trusteeship remains unacceptable to radical right citizens because it would potentially lead to outcomes that reflect the political input of socio-cultural *others*. Incidentally, this is different from populists whose insistence on anti-elitism and people-centeredness calls the principle of representation itself into question. Nativists, by contrast, should have no objection in principle to being represented by other nativists. Additionally, obedience and submission to societal authorities and conventions inherent in right-wing authoritarianism might lead to a positive evaluation of institutionalized hierarchies of representation. While this relationship is ambiguous and far from clear, given the aversion of the radical right towards politicians acting as trustees of socio-cultural *others*, we assume a negative relationship between radical right attitudes and representative decision-making. Thus, we state the hypothesis as follows:

$H_{RR}1$: The higher citizens' radical right attitudes, the less they support trusteeship democracy.

As in the previous case, any form of pluralism entails recognizing the legitimate interests of socio-cultural *others*, which nativists would have to reject if they wanted to see their own interests prevail. Given the ideological opposition between radical right positions and pluralism, we formulate our hypothesis as follows:

$H_{RR}2$: The higher citizens' radical right attitudes, the more they support anti-pluralism.

We also expect radical right attitudes to have a negative effect on supporting deliberative proceduralism because a feature of the radical right ideology is the belief in vertical authority. Once a legitimate and acceptable leader is selected, it is unlikely that there would be support for

a grassroots process designed to undermine or upend the authority of that leader. Hence, our hypothesis reads as follows:

$H_{RR}3$: The higher citizens' radical right attitudes, the less they support deliberative proceduralism.

Given that autochthonous populations form a majority in most democracies, majoritarian processes dilute the resented influence of socio-cultural or socio-political minorities. Thus, nativists are expected to support majoritarianism. Here it is less the principle of people-centeredness but rather the potential to preserve the substantive nativist agenda that matters. We state our hypothesis as follows:

$H_{RR}4$: The higher citizens' radical right attitudes, the more they support majoritarianism.

While the radical right focuses on an authoritarian and nativist stance, the radical left mobilizes mainly based on socio-economic grievances and offers leftist policy solutions (March, 2017). The radical left ideology is focused on the exploitation of societies due to the "socio-economic structure of contemporary capitalism" (March & Mudde, 2005, p. 25) and thus rejects its values and practices. Radical left parties promote alternative redistribution policies and a strong role of the state in the economy to combat social and economic inequalities (March, 2007, 2011). Alongside these economic positions, radical left parties often represent 'new left' issues such as gender equality, gay rights and other egalitarian policies (Rooduijn & Akkerman, 2017; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014). As such, we expect different effects on democratic decision-making modes. In particular, we assume it to be more favorably disposed towards pluralism and deliberative procedures, as these promise greater social inclusion. At the same time, we would expect greater skepticism towards trusteeship democracy, because it appears more open to behind-scenes lobbying, which tends to favor economic interests. In the following, we specify our hypotheses and provide brief explanations:

Trusteeship democracy allows for a selective and opaque access to political decision-makers. Accordingly, the asymmetrical resource distribution between economic interest groups places lobbies representing capital and business at an advantage causing radical left citizens to be skeptical. Hence, our hypothesis reads as follows:

$H_{RL}1$: The higher citizens' radical left attitudes, the less they support trusteeship democracy.

When it comes to anti-pluralism, we assume that radical left citizens not only represent diverse interests whose input matters to them but they are also conscious of the greater capacity of business interests to shape public opinion and thus, in their eyes, manufacture majorities. Pluralism provides for a way to mitigate this disadvantage and thus we hypothesize:

$H_{RL}2$: The higher citizens' radical left attitudes, the less they support anti-pluralism.

To the extent that leftist populists view major political decisions to reflect the interests of the economically powerful, a deliberative procedure is seen as another opportunity to increase citizen input and thus viewed favorably. Accordingly, we state our hypothesis as follows:

$H_{RL}3$: The higher citizens' radical left attitudes, the more they support deliberative proceduralism.

As the radical left tends to represent minority interests, we would expect such citizens to oppose procedures that preclude them from exercising influence. As also shown in the summary of hypotheses in Table 1, we state this hypothesis as follows:

$H_{RL}4$: The higher citizens' radical left attitudes, the less they support majoritarianism.

3. Research Design

3.1. Data and Case Selection

We test our hypotheses using survey data from the GESIS Panel (Bosnjak et al., 2018; GESIS, 2019) for Germany and the AUTNES Online Panel (Wagner et al., 2018). Both data are representative samples of the respective population and contain the same questions on citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making. Moreover, the panel structure of the data enables us to impute missing values of respondents for certain variables from other waves of the data. We normalize all variables within a range from 0 to 1.0 to allow for the comparison of coefficients and simplify the interpretation of our analyses. Tables A1 and A2 in the Supplementary File provide further information on all variables used in our analyses.

Table 1. Summary of hypotheses.

Variable	Trusteeship democracy	Anti-pluralism	Deliberative proceduralism	Majoritarianism
Populist attitudes	−	+	−	+
Radical right host ideology	−	+	−	+
Radical left host ideology	−	−	+	−

Notes: The minus sign (−) indicates an expected negative relationship and the plus sign (+) an expected positive relationship.

Austria and Germany are particularly well suited for comparison to test our hypotheses. A closely related historical legacy as well as similar economic, cultural, and political conditions allow us to keep many factors constant. Yet, based on the approach of institutional socialization, we expect varying perceptions of democracy among citizens from Austria and Germany. These two countries differ in the reappraisal of their National Socialist past and the constitutional definition of democracy. Germany has put in place an explicit commitment to liberal representative democracy as a reaction to its Fascist legacy and is thus a vigorous defender of constitutionalism. Austria, by contrast, has continued an old constitutional approach that separates the normative and political dimension from the procedural, which appears in the constitution as little more than rules of implementation.

Moreover, both countries differ in their post-war experience with radical populist parties in national parliaments. The fact that political parties have significant influence on the articulation and occupation of political issues for the public makes differences between Austria and Germany most likely. While the Austrian Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs/FPÖ), a highly successful and prototypical populist radical right party, has been in the Austrian parliament since 1956, the corresponding populist radical right party Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland/AfD) entered the German parliament only in 2017. Furthermore, these two populist radical right parties differ in their political positions. Recent work on the ideological differences has shown the AfD to be far more radical right (also in socio-economic terms) than the FPÖ, which has moderated somewhat and moved more to the left on social and economic issues (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016; Heinisch & Werner, 2019; Rovny, 2013). A distinctive feature of the German case is the presence of a relevant populist radical left party, The Left (Die Linke), which has been gradually branching out from its electoral strongholds in Eastern Germany to the rest of the country. As a result of these different experiences with radical populist parties, we also expect differences in the prevalence of populist attitudes and radical left and right host ideologies among Austrian and German citizens. Thus, this case selection and the largely parallel data provide us with confidence as to the robustness and context sensitivity of the findings.

3.2. Dependent Variables

Our dependent variables measure citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making. Following the analysis of Landwehr and Steiner (2017), we distinguish between the four normative conceptions of democratic decision-making outlined above. The original data of the GESIS Panel comprise 18 items on the procedures of democratic decision-making. In the AUTNES Online Panel Study, however, we included only the two variables of each conception of democratic decision-making with the highest factor loadings as analyzed by Landwehr and Steiner (2017, p. 792). Respondents were thus asked to rate eight normative statements on procedures of democratic decision-making on a Likert scale ranging from *completely disagree* (0) to *completely agree* (1.0). As shown in Tables B1 and B2 in the Supplementary File, we can confirm the conceptions of democratic decision-making identified by Landwehr and Steiner (2017) with principal-component factor analyses. Accordingly, we calculate an additive index for each of the four conceptions of democratic decision-making by adding the values of the two respective variables together. High values on the index of (1) *trusteeship democracy* mean high levels of trust and support in the mode of representative democracy, while high values on the index of (2) *anti-pluralism* indicate support for the idea of an anti-particularistic society and acceptance of technocratic ideas of democratic decision-making. High values on the index of (3) *deliberative proceduralism* mean a high acceptance of democratically made decisions and the prioritization of political decisions that follow the common good. Lastly, high values on the index of (4) *majoritarianism* indicate support for majority decisions even if they restrict minority rights.

3.3. Independent Variables

Our main independent variables are populist attitudes and attitudes towards the radical left and right host ideologies. We measure *populist attitudes* with an additive index by using a battery of six Likert items, which focus on anti-elitism and popular sovereignty as core concepts of populism (Hobolt, Anduiza, Carkoglu, Lutz, & Sauger, 2016). Castanho Silva et al. (2019) conclude in their empirical comparison of populist attitudes scales that this scale fails "to capture more than mere anti-elitism" (Castanho Silva et al., 2019, p. 10) and thus does not fully cover the dimensions of the ideational approach to populism (Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). While we acknowledge this criticism and the resulting limitations in the interpretation of our results, we argue that this scale also captures support for popular sovereignty (Wuttke, Schimpf, & Schoen, 2020), and we thus believe that, given the limited data available, this scale is at least a defensible approximation to the target concept. High values on this index indicate high populist attitudes (see Table B3 in the Supplementary File).

To measure attitudes towards the radical right host ideology, we use anti-immigration attitudes, as a proxy for nativism, and right-wing authoritarianism. To measure *right-wing authoritarianism*, we calculate an additive index of five Likert items in Austria (see Table B4 in the Supplementary File) and nine Likert items in Germany (see Table B5 in the Supplementary File), which refer to the three core characteristics of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression and conventionalism (Altemeyer, 1981; Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013). High values mean a high degree of right-wing authoritarian-

ism. We measure *anti-immigration attitudes* using an additive index of four Likert items, which capture the rejection of immigrants as a threat to national customs, culture, the economy, and crime (see Table B6 in the Supplementary File). High values indicate a high level of anti-immigration attitudes.

To measure attitudes towards the radical left host ideology, we use preferences for left-wing economic policies. Due to data limitations, we cannot include other important radical left economic attitudes, such as the rejection of capitalism and globalization, as well as cultural attitudes towards 'new left' issues such as gender equality, gay rights and other egalitarian positions. We measure *preferences for left-wing economic policies* by calculating an additive index using four Likert items (see Table B7 in the Supplementary File) representing support for redistribution, higher state expenditures, combating social and income inequalities, as well as increased state intervention in the economy and labor market. High values mean high support for left-wing economic policies.

3.4. Control Variables

As an additional control variable for political ideology, we use the (squared) *self-placement on the left-right scale*. We further control in all models for *political interest* as well as for the socio-demographic characteristics of *income*, *education*, *gender*, and *age*. Due to space constraints, we provide further details on the operationalization in the appendix (Tables A1 and A2 in the Supplementary File). After excluding observations with missing values, our final samples include 1,380 respondents from Austria and 1,807 respondents from Germany. We provide further information such as descriptive statistics (Table A3) and distributions of the dependent (Figures A1 and A2) and independent variables (Figures A3, A4, A5 and A6) in the Supplementary File.

3.5. Estimation Strategy

As explained in detail in our theoretical argument, we assume that populism and radical host ideologies exert independent effects and constitute separate concepts if the effects caused by populist attitudes remain robust and constant after introducing interactions. Therefore, we apply a two-step approach to investigate whether and to what extent the effects of populist attitudes on citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making are independent of the effects of radical left and right host ideologies. In a first step, we analyze the independent effects of populist attitudes and those associated with the radical left and right host ideology on the four conceptions of democratic decision-making. In a second step, we include interactions between populist attitudes and the two characteristics of the radical right host ideology (right-wing authoritarianism and anti-immigration attitudes) as well as preferences for left-wing economic policies as a proxy for the radical left host ideology. We thus use the second step of the analyses as an additional robustness test for the independence of the effects of populist attitudes.

4. Empirical Results

Figure 1 shows the independent effects of populist attitudes, right-wing authoritarianism, anti-immigration attitudes and preferences for left-wing economic policies on the four conceptions of democratic decision-making for Austria and Germany. Given that we normalize all variables within a range from 0 to 1.0, the unstandardized coefficients can be interpreted as the maximum shift in the dependent variable due to the change by the independent variable from its minimum to its maximum value. In other words, the unstandardized coefficients show the maximum effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The results of our regression analyses confirm that populist attitudes are negatively related with trusteeship democracy ($H_{POP}1$) in both Austria and Germany. The anti-elite orientation inherent in populism leads, as predicted, to a high degree of skepticism among respondents towards elected representatives acting as trustees of their citizens. Thus, our results show that populism's emphasis on the people as the only legitimate political power contradicts representative decision-making without considering the (relevant) public opinion. We also note that populist attitudes have by far the strongest effect compared to all other predictors. Thus, a person with high populist attitudes scores about 0.3 to 0.4 points lower in support for trusteeship democracy, which is a remarkably strong effect. Contrary to our expectations, neither attitudes of the radical right ($H_{RR}1$) nor the radical left host ideology ($H_{RL}1$) are systematically associated with higher opposition to representative modes of decision-making. Rather, we find partial evidence that right-wing authoritarianism is associated with higher trust in decision-making by representatives, arguably due to obedience to societal authorities and institutions.

The results also confirm our hypothesis that populist attitudes are positively related with anti-pluralism ($H_{POP}2$). Populism's understanding of the people as homogeneous and unified thus leads to the rejection of political debates with particularistic opinions. The populist division of society into good and evil and the exclusion of pluralistic diversity of opinion also refers to parliamentary decision-making by elected politicians, which is better left to independent experts. Again, populist attitudes exert the comparatively strongest effect also on this conception of democratic decision-making. A person with high populist attitudes thus supports anti-pluralism by about 0.4 points more than does a non-populist. In line with our expectations, we also find partial evidence that the radical right host ideology tends to favor anti-pluralistic decision-making ($H_{RR}2$). While the effects of anti-immigration attitudes are almost zero, higher right-

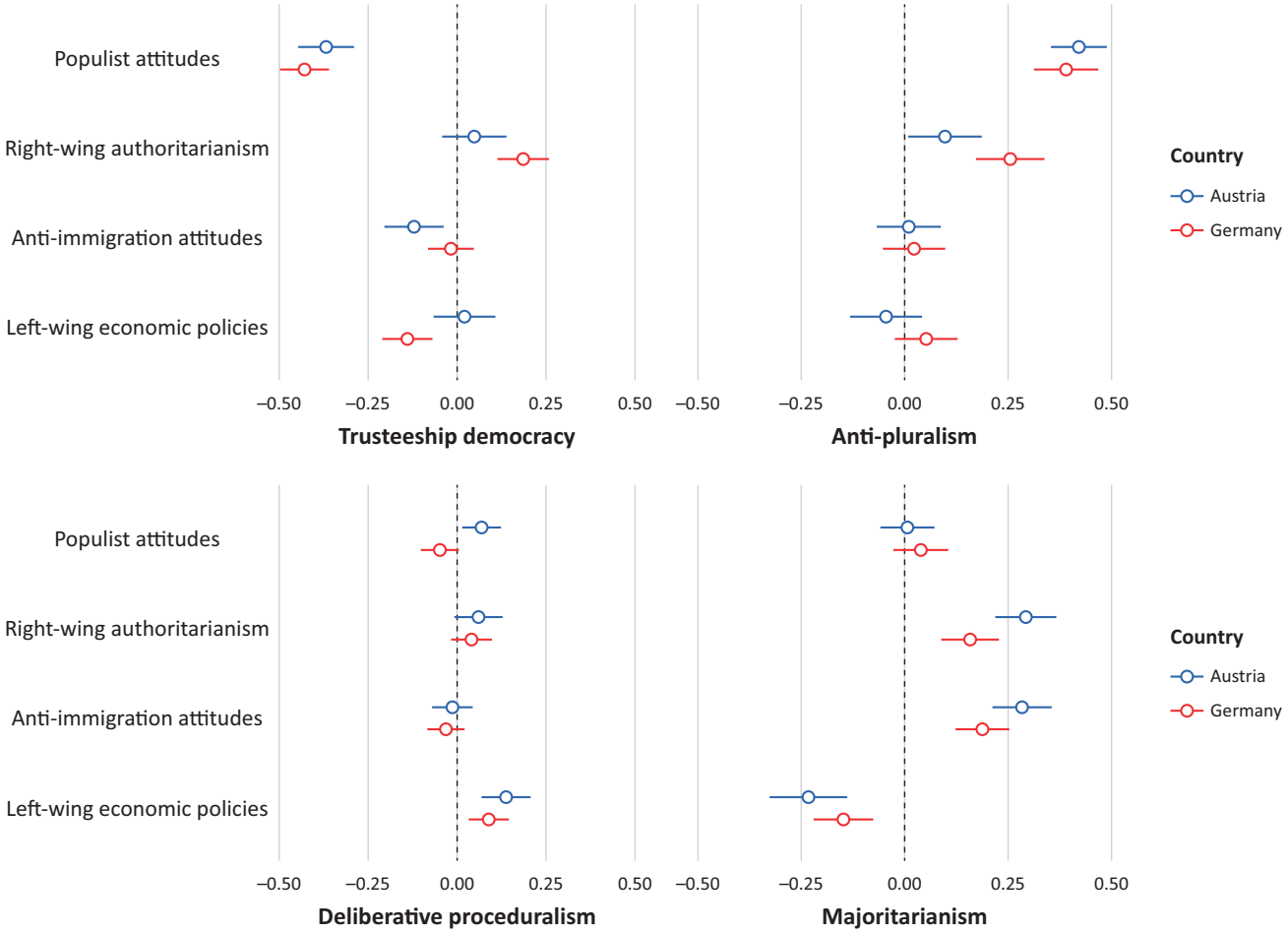

Figure 1. Explaining citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making. Notes: Plot shows unstandardized coefficients with 95% confidence intervals and robust standard errors from linear regression models. Full models are reported in Table C1 in the Supplementary File.

wing authoritarianism tends to be associated with higher anti-pluralism. Based on these results, however, we cannot draw any definitive conclusions regarding the association of the radical right host ideology with anti-pluralism. Regarding the radical left host ideology, we find no systematic negative relationship between the preferences for left-wing economic policies and anti-pluralism ($H_{RL}2$).

While populism is significantly linked to the rejection of representative modes of democratic decision-making, we find, against our expectations, no significant effects of populist attitudes on deliberative proceduralism ($H_{POP}3$) and majoritarianism ($H_{POP}4$). According to our findings, populism is associated neither with a systematic rejection of political decisions reached through deliberation, nor with support for the enforcement of majority decisions that curtail minority rights. Rather, the preferences for these conceptions of democratic decision-making appear entirely shaped by the radical left and radical right ideology.

While we find no significant effects regarding attitudes pertaining to the radical right host ideology ($H_{RR}3$), preferences for left-wing economic policies are systematically linked with higher support for democratic decision-making through deliberative procedures ($H_{RL}3$). This relationship can be explained by the fact that both left-wing economic policies and deliberative procedures aim to increase the inclusion and participation of underprivileged classes and citizens. However, we also have to note that the effect sizes of all independent variables explaining deliberative proceduralism are comparatively small. Thus, a person with strong preferences for left-wing economic policies supports deliberative proceduralism only between 0.05 and 0.1 points more.

In contrast, radical left and right host ideologies make a clear difference on whether someone is more willing to favor or reject majoritarianism and thus minority rights. While citizens who advocate left-wing economic policies are less inclined to support majoritarianism ($H_{RL}4$), those who perceive immigrants as a threat and have an authoritarian personality are more in favor of majority decisions that also curtail minority rights ($H_{RR}4$). Accordingly, the inclusion or exclusion of minorities is the most significant difference between the radical left and radical right host ideology. In fact, among all dependent variables, majoritarianism is the dimension of democratic decision-making most shaped by differences between radical host ideologies, which is also reflected in the ef-

fect sizes. While a person with strong radical right attitudes supports majoritarianism between 0.2 and 0.3 points more, persons with high radical left attitudes support majoritarianism by about 0.2 points less.

After analyzing the independent effects, we examine whether and to what extent the effects of populist attitudes remain robust when combined with a radical host ideology. We follow the idea that if populism does indeed have its own substantive core, the effects should remain constant regardless of the interaction with a radical host ideology. If, in turn, the effect of populist attitudes depends on the strength of nativist or authoritarian attitudes on the one hand, or preferences for left-wing economic policies on the other, populism is indeed highly dependent on its linkage with the radical host ideologies. We therefore use the interactions as a further robustness test to verify that the effects of populism are independent of the radical host ideology with which populism is connected, and that they thus constitute separate concepts.

Figure 2 shows the effects of populist attitudes as well as the interaction effects of populist attitudes depending on the attitudes belonging to radical host ideologies on the four conceptions of democratic decision-making. Overall, our findings do not indicate a clear and systematic pattern of interaction, suggesting primarily that populism and attitudes pertaining to the radical right and left host ideologies exert independent effects on the support for the different decision-making modes. Only five out of 24 interactions are (slightly) significant, none of them highly significant or systematic for both countries. The few significant interactions show no substantial changes in the effects of populist attitudes. Despite the inclusion of these additional interactions, most of the main effects of our independent variables remain robust under various model specifications. Most importantly, the effects of populist attitudes remain constant, which again suggests that populism follows its own logic regardless of its combination with a radical host ideology.

In order to check the robustness of our results, we have carried out further analyses. While we estimated all interactions in these models simultaneously, we also recalculated all interactions separately. The results for the separate interactions with right-wing authoritarianism (Table C3), anti-immigration attitudes

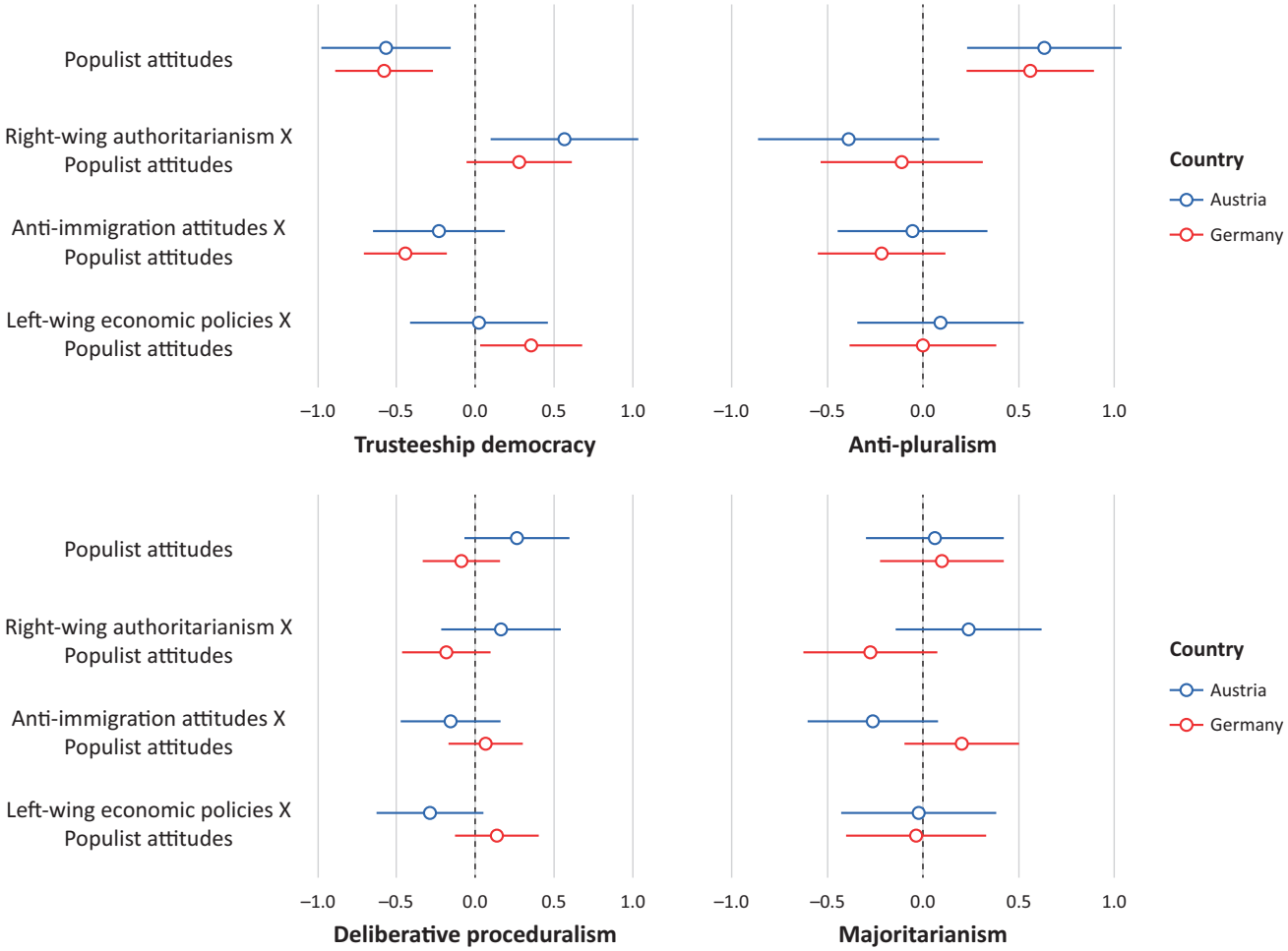

Figure 2. Explaining citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making (including all interactions simultaneously). Notes: Plot shows unstandardized coefficients with 95% confidence intervals and robust standard errors from linear regression models. Full models are reported in Table C2 in the Supplementary File.

(Table C4), and preferences for left-wing economic policies (Table C5) are shown in the Supplementary File. As a further robustness test, we also performed interactions between populist attitudes and the (squared) self-placement on the left right scale, as shown in Table C6 in the Supplementary File. Due to similarities between one of the populist attitudes items ("The people, not the politicians, should make the most important political decisions") and one of the items measuring the dependent variable of trusteeship democracy ("Sometimes it is better when complex political decisions are taken by politicians rather than citizens") for the Austrian data, we recalculated all models with the dependent variable of trusteeship democracy without the corresponding populism item. The analyses are presented in Table C7 in the Supplementary File. For all these additional robustness tests, results remain substantially the same. Together with the fact that the results for both countries are very similar despite the differences between Austria and Germany mentioned above, this underscores the robustness of our results.

5. Conclusion

In this article, we examined whether citizens' conceptions of democratic decision-making are shaped by populism or attitudes based on the radical right and left host ideologies. Our results show that populism is primarily directed against representative forms of democratic decision-making that supposedly disregard the general will of the people. This is accompanied by a preference for independent experts over elected politicians and the rejection of pluralistic political interests and positions in society and politics. In turn, we find no effect of populism on deliberative decision-making procedures and preferences for majority decisions that disregard minority rights. Rather, these conceptions of democratic decision-making appear entirely shaped by the radical left and right host ideologies. While citizens with radical left attitudes are less inclined to support majoritarianism, those with radical right attitudes are more in favor of majority decisions that restrict minority rights. This highlights that, from the perspective of radical host ideologies, democratic decision-making is primarily aimed at involving the relevant group(s) of citizens.

Furthermore, our results show evidence that the effect of populism on conceptions of democratic decision-making is independent of specific radical left and right manifestations of host ideologies. Given that the influence of populist attitudes and attitudes towards the radical host ideologies appear to be largely separate from each other, we find little in the way of interaction effects that are consistent for both countries. Furthermore, the selection of the somewhat dissimilar cases of Austria and Germany provides us with a certain robustness and generalizability of our results. While this illustrates that populism and host ideologies are independent and separate concepts, it also highlights the need to examine the effects of populism in light of the ideological attitudes to which populism is connected to avoid under- or overestimating any effects. More importantly, this study underlines the need to design democratic reforms and adopt measures that specifically and separately aim to mitigate populism and radical host ideologies.

Our findings thus have important implications for disentangling the relationship between populism, host ideologies and democracy, and, thus for our understanding of the threat populism poses to liberal and representative democracy. In doing so, we make a genuine contribution to the literature on the demand-side of electoral politics as well as on democratic reforms. Given some methodological limitations, however, we need to point out some potential weaknesses that further research should address. This primarily concerns improved measurements of populist attitudes and attitudes towards radical host ideologies as well as citizens' understanding and their expectations from democratic decision-making.

Further research should also focus more on how populism and attitudes based on radical host ideologies interact and consider possible consequences of these interactions. This refers in particular to possible effects on electoral behavior, and especially on the relevance of citizens' notions of democracy. Based on our findings, further research is needed on the notions of democracy among certain groups of people, e.g., those holding left-wing preferences on economic issues and authoritarian preferences on socio-cultural issues (Lefkofridi, Wagner, & Willmann, 2014), or those from lower socio-economic strata (Stark, Wegscheider, Brähler, & Decker, 2017). In addition to a better understanding of democratic discontent, this research can help to promote democratic reforms that ensure the integration and participation of citizens in the political process.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

Rebuilding Trust in Broken Systems? Populist Party Success and Citizens' Trust in Democratic Institutions

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Abstract
What effect does the recent rise of populist parties harnessing an anti-system rhetoric have on political trust? Will citizens become disenchanted with and lose trust in the political system, or could populist party success even stimulate a growth of political trust? Arguing that populist parties may well be conceived as a corrective force giving voice to and addressing citizen concerns about the established political system, this contribution hypothesizes that populist party success will increase political trust among the general public, especially in countries lacking democratic quality, with weak corruption control, and meagre government performance. Empirically, it combines ParlGov data with survey data from the European Social Survey (2002–2016) as well as aggregate data from the Varieties-of-Democracy project and the World Development Indicators to investigate how political trust has changed in relation to the growing success of populist parties and how democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance have moderated this relationship in 23 European democracies. Its main findings indicate that, at least in the short run, political trust increases rather than decreases following populist party success and that this increase in trust is most pronounced in political systems that lack democratic quality, struggle with corruption, and deliver only meager government performance.

Keywords
corruption control; democratic quality; economic performance; government performance; political trust; populism

Issue
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1. Introduction

Recent years have seen a new wave of populism across Europe. Both right-wing and left-wing populist parties have entered parliaments from Spain to Slovakia, and in some countries have even won ruling majorities. These developments have been unequivocally met with concerns, most importantly with regard to the consequences for the democratic political system (Galston, 2018; Puddington & Roylance, 2017). In light of countries like Hungary and Poland, where populists in power have begun to dismantle the very core of liberal democracy, these fears seem far from unwarranted. From a political-culture perspective, one of the main concerns is that citizens may lose trust in the established democratic political system and its institutions. With previous contributions already finding a negative relationship between populism and political trust—voters of populist parties tend to be less trusting of the political system (Dahlberg & Linde, 2017; Söderlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009) and low levels of political trust tend to further voting for populist parties (Doyle, 2011; Hooghe, Marien, & Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn, 2018; Werts, Scheepers, & Lubbers, 2012)—the recent rise of populism does not bode well for Europe's democracies. Yet, others have pointed out the potentially healing effect of populism: With new parties that challenge the establishment entering the political stage, citizens formerly disappointed

by and disenchanted with politics may reconcile with the democratic system (Haugsgjerd, 2019; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). This seems particularly likely in democracies which leave a lot to be desired in the eyes of citizens. In countries where democratic quality is deficient, corruption rampant, and government performance altogether meager, populist parties can easily stylize themselves—and indeed be conceived by citizens—as saviors come to mend a broken system.

Literature on the relationship between populist party success and political trust is scarce. While prior research has studied a myriad of sources of political trust (for an overview, see Martini & Quaranta, 2020), the rise of populist parties or the national party system more generally has not yet received much attention as a source of political trust. Likewise, while scholarship on populist parties has investigated a broad number of issues including the relationship between voting for a populist party and political trust (e.g., Hooghe et al., 2011; Söderlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009), it has yet to explore the consequences of the (system-level) rise of populist parties for political trust among the general public. Regarding the consequences of these macro-level developments, scholars have begun studying how populism affects liberal democracy (e.g., Biard, Bernhard, & Betz, 2019; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Müller, 2016). Yet the majority of them have focused on the impact populist parties have on actual policies and the quality of democracy, disregarding any effects on the attitudes of ordinary citizens. The only exception is a recent contribution by Haugsgjerd (2019), who demonstrates that supporters of the Norwegian radical-right populist Fremskrittspartiet have expressed increasing satisfaction with democracy after the party had gained executive power in 2013. Adding to both of these literatures, this article wants to contribute to our understanding of what the new realities of populism mean for Europe's democracies by examining how the electoral success of populist parties affects political trust in the general public and whether and how this effect varies across countries depending on democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance.

Empirically, this study combines ParlGov data (Döring & Manow, 2018) on the electoral success of populist parties with survey data from the European Social Survey (2002–2016) as well as aggregate data from the Varieties-of-Democracy project (Coppedge et al., 2019) and the World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2018). It models how populist parties winning electoral votes has affected changes in the level of political trust to investigate how political trust has changed in relation to the growing success of populist parties and how democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance have moderated this relationship in 23 European democracies. It finds that, despite them typically being characterized as a danger to democracy, populist parties celebrating electoral successes, at least in the short run, has no detrimental effect on political trust. On the contrary, levels of political trust appear to even increase after populist parties have gained electoral votes. The analysis finds this increase in political trust to be most pronounced in political systems that lack in democratic quality, struggle with corruption, and deliver only meager government performance, indicating that populist parties may be seen as more of a corrective force in these countries.

2. The Populist Message and Political Trust

Populism, as defined by Mudde (2004, p. 543), is "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people." Both left- and right-wing populist parties are thus united in their criticism of the established democratic procedures, institutions, and political elites (Galston, 2018).

Among other things, populists typically accuse established parties and politicians of not caring about the common people, not being responsive or accountable to ordinary people's demands, and of being incompetent (Mudde, 2004; Sheets, Bos, & Boomgaarden, 2016). As care, responsiveness, accountability, and competence are core components of what makes a political system—or anyone, for that matter—appear trustworthy (Kasperson, Golding, & Tuler, 1992; van der Meer, 2010), these populist messages are bound to undermine citizens' trust in the political system. In line with these expectations, prior research has demonstrated already that populist messages lead to more negative views of the political system among supporters of populist parties (Rooduijn, van der Brug, de Lange, & Parlevliet, 2017) and that populist voters are less trusting of the political system than voters of other parties (Dahlberg & Linde, 2017; Söderlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009). A number of results further indicate that the reception of anti-system messages can damage citizens' attitudes towards the political system (Hameleers, Bos, & de Vreese, 2018; Sheets et al., 2016). At the same time, disenchantment with and cynicism about the political system has been identified as a major driver of populist parties' electoral success (Cutts, Ford, & Goodwin, 2011; Hooghe et al., 2011; Rooduijn, 2018). The relationship between populist parties and citizens' attitudes towards the political system thus seems to be a mutually reinforcing, negative one: disenchantment with politics furthers populist parties' success and populist parties further disenchantment with politics.

3. How Populist Party Success May Help Citizens Regain Trust in Broken Systems

These individual-level correlations would suggest that the rise of populist parties leads to a decline in political trust among citizens in Europe. Yet, as recent studies

indicate that populist parties entering parliaments and governments may actually increase trust and satisfaction with democracy (Haugsgjerd, 2019), this article argues that there is another mechanism at play when it comes to the effects of populist party *success*.

Despite their anti-establishment and anti-system platform, populist parties gaining in strength could have a healing effect on political trust. For one, populist parties winning votes and parliamentary seats may make the political system appear more responsive to citizens' demands. With citizens being disaffected with the political system even before populist parties gained in popularity (Norris, 1999; Pharr & Putnam, 2000)—and potentially fueling populist parties' electoral successes in the first place (Cutts et al., 2011; Schumacher & Rooduijn, 2013)—, populist parties becoming represented in the political system may help attenuate this disaffection and reconcile citizens with the political system. Previous literature has already discussed the importance of representation for political trust. While the effects of descriptive representation are ambiguous (Cowley, 2014; Gay, 2002; Hinojosa, Fridkin, & Kittilson, 2017), actual as well as perceived representation of interests can play a crucial role in generating trust in democratic institutions (Cho, 2012; Dunn, 2015; van der Meer & Dekker, 2011). As the literature demonstrates, it is representation in parliament, not the sheer existence of (populist) parties that drives this effect. For people to feel their voices are being heard and their concerns are being taken seriously by the political system, the political actors actively voicing those concerns—i.e., the populist parties—cannot be seen as operating outside of this system but rather need to be represented in at least some of its core institutions, particularly in parliament. The political system consequently will only appear responsive to citizens' concerns when populist parties have become at least reasonably successful, gaining substantive electoral and parliamentary representation. Populist representation should of course have positive effects especially for outright supporters of populist parties and their ideologies. Nonetheless, even if a majority of citizens may not agree with other aspects, e.g., the radical-right or radical-left parts of their ideology, populist parties entering the political system can make citizens feel like their own concerns about the political system are finally being heard and taken seriously, thereby increasing perceptions of the political system as being caring and accountable, and, consequently, more trustworthy (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). Populist parties could then be perceived as a corrective force helping to right the wrongs of the existing political institutions.

Second, established political parties and politicians responding to the challenge raised by populist parties may also contribute to citizens regaining trust in the political system. In light of populist parties gaining in strength, political discourse in many countries was revitalized, with established parties and other civil society actors emphasizing the advantages of the existing political system and taking a decisively pro-democratic and pro-system stance (e.g., Stanley, 2015; Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015). Especially for citizens opposed to the radical-right and radical-left ideologies, suddenly being presented with the alternative to the existing political system propagated by right- and left-wing populist parties may help them gain renewed appreciation for the existing liberal democratic system and its institutions. With regard to political participation, Immerzeel and Pickup (2015) find that the emergence of successful right-wing populist parties mobilizes those citizens most opposed to a radical-right populist ideology. In spite of the anti-system message propelled by populist parties, them gaining votes and/or parliamentary seats may thus act as a corrective impulse and eventually increase political trust among the general public. Again, the sheer existence of populist parties is unlikely to spur these effects. For both established parties and citizens opposed to the populists' radical ideologies to rise to the challenge presented by populist parties, they must consider this challenge to be a serious one—which is likely only the case when populists are actually becoming successful. Correspondingly, prior research has shown established parties to react to the populist challenge only after the populists have started gaining traction in national or regional elections (Schumacher & van Kersbergen, 2016; van Kessel, 2011).

Another way in which populist party success may affect citizens' trust in the political system is through the classical 'winner' effect: Prior research on political trust has demonstrated numerous times that those citizens who voted for a party that ended up being in government or gained in vote shares compared to the previous election express more trust in their country's political institutions (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, & Listhaug, 2005; Anderson & LoTempio, 2002; Martini & Quaranta, 2019; van der Meer & Steenvoorden, 2018). Yet this winner effect should apply only to the supporters of populist parties, not to the general public. Instead, supporters of at least some of the non-populist parties should experience a decline in political trust following populist parties' electoral gains as these usually equal losses for the established parties. Overall, we would expect winner and loser effects to cancel out and consequently not to increase political trust in the general public.

While populist party success may also further the spread of the populist anti-system message and thus fuel distrust in the political system, this effect is probably negligible. With populists typically being exceptionally proficient at making use of social and other digital media to spread their message, we can safely assume that citizens have heard and bought into the populist anti-establishment and anti-system rhetoric long before these parties became successful in the electoral arena (Rooduijn, 2014). In fact, this is likely to be the reason for them winning a sizeable number of votes in the first place (Bos, van der Brug, & de Vreese, 2010). We would thus still expect populist party success to be followed by an increase in political trust rather than a decrease:

H_1: Populist party success increases political trust in the general public.

Yet this positive effect of populist parties' success on political trust depends on populist parties being perceived as or even actually acting as a corrective force in the political system. This implies that citizens have to perceive their political system to be in need of correction in the first place. While outright supporters of populist parties may have already fully bought into the populist message of the established political system being 'broken' regardless of how well the system actually works, this is unlikely to be the case for the general public. Despite prior research having shown some disgruntlement with the existing political institutions to be present in every country (Klingemann, 2014; Norris, 1999; Pharr & Putnam, 2000), the extent to which the political system is in need of repair depends on contextual factors like democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance. All three of these contextual factors have previously been identified as sources of political trust (e.g., Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; van Erkel & van der Meer, 2016; Wagner, Schneider, & Halla, 2009); yet, their conditioning effect has seldom been studied.

However, democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance may act as moderating factors on the effect populist parties' success can have on political trust as they determine the extent to which citizens see their democratic system to be in need of repair. If democratic quality is lacking, corruption is rampant, and government performance in the economic, administrative, or other realms is mediocre at best, citizens may long more strongly for an 'outsider' (i.e., a populist party) to enter the political system and tackle those problems. In addition, there is simply more room for improvement in faulty democracies. If democratic quality is already exceptional, corruption virtually eradicated, and government performance on an all-time high, there is little established parties can improve in reaction to the challenge raised by populist parties. In contrast, if democratic quality leaves a lot to be desired, corruption poses a serious problem, or government performance is deficient, established parties may be able to respond to the criticism from populist parties by launching reforms in these realms. We would thus expect the positive effect of populist success on political trust to be most pronounced in those countries where democratic quality is lacking, corruption control is weak, and government performance low:

H_2: Democratic quality mitigates the effect of populist party success on political trust.

H_3: Corruption control mitigates the effect of populist party success on political trust.

H_4: Government performance mitigates the effect of populist party success on political trust.

4. Data and Measurement

To examine how the rise of populist parties has affected political trust in European democracies, this study combines individual-level data from the European Social Survey (2002–2016; European Social Survey, 2016) with aggregate-level data from the ParlGov project (1997–2016; Döring & Manow, 2018), V-Dem (v9; 1997–2016; Coppedge et al., 2019), and the World Development Indicators (1997–2016; World Bank, 2018). It analyzes how changes in populist party vote share relate to changes in political trust.

The dependent variable *political trust* is measured as trust in three different political institutions: parliament, parties, and politicians. These three institutions are arguably the ones most in focus of populist parties' anti-establishment rhetoric, and the effects of populist party success should thus be most pronounced for trust in these institutions.

For the independent variable *populist party success*, I calculate the gain in popular vote shares for populist parties from one national parliamentary election to the next based on the ParlGov data. The identification of populist parties relies on the PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019). Table 1 lists those parties. Vote shares for all populist parties within a single country and election are added up to arrive at the total vote share for populist parties. Figure 1 gives an overview of the vote shares for populist parties per country over time.

Election results are matched to the ESS data according to the date of the election and the ESS fieldwork period. For example, for ESS round 1 in Austria (fielded between February and September 2003), the relevant election took place on November 24, 2002. If an election took place during the fieldwork period of the ESS, the respective country-round was excluded. This concerns the following countries: Cyprus (round 5), Estonia (round 3), Greece (round 4), Netherlands (rounds 1, 3, and 6), Slovenia (round 2), Sweden (round 7), United Kingdom (round 7). Gains in vote shares are always calculated from one ESS round to the next, so if no election took place in between two ESS rounds, gains in vote shares equals 0. Likewise, if more than one election took place between two ESS rounds (i.e., when a country skipped one or more ESS rounds or in the case of snap elections), the change in populist vote shares equals the difference between the election taking place closest to the respective ESS round and the election taking place before the previous ESS round.

For the moderating factors, *democratic quality* is measured using V-Dem's Index of Liberal Democracy, *corruption control* is measured using V-Dem's Index of Political Corruption (recoded so that high values indicate more corruption control), and *government performance* is measured in terms of a composite measure combining GDP growth, inflation (consumer prices), and unemployment. These aggregate-level data were allocated according to the year of the ESS round (e.g., 2002 for round 1) in-

Table 1. Populist parties in European Social Survey (ESS) countries.

	Right-wing populist parties	Left-wing populist parties
Austria	Alliance for the Future of Austria; Freedom Party of Austria	—
Belgium	Flemish Interest; National Front	—
Bulgaria	Attack; National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria; Order, Law and Justice	—
Cyprus	—	Citizens' Alliance
Czechia	Coalition for Republic; Dawn-National Coalition; Freedom and Direct Democracy	—
Denmark	Danish People's Party; Progress Party	—
Estonia	Conservative People's Party	—
Finland	Finns Party	—
France	Front National	France Unbowed
Germany	Alternative for Germany	The Left
Greece	Popular Orthodox Rally	Democratic Social Movement, Syriza
Hungary	Fidesz—Hungarian Civic Alliance[a]; Hungarian Justice and Life Party for a Better Hungary; Jobbik, the Movement	—
Iceland	—	—
Ireland	—	Sinn Féin
Italy	Brothers of Italy; Northern League	—
Latvia	—	—
Lithuania	—	—
Netherlands	Fortuyn List; Party for Freedom	Socialist Party
Norway	Progress Party	
Poland	Kukiz '15; Law and Justice[b]; League of Polish Families	—
Portugal	–	–
Slovakia	Real Slovak National Party; Slovak National Party	—
Slovenia	—	United Left
Spain	—	Podemos
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	—
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party	—
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party	—

Notes: Includes only countries that were surveyed in at least three ESS rounds. Identification of right-wing and left-wing populist parties based on PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019). [a] since 2002, [b] since 2005.

stead of the year(s) the actual fieldwork was done in each country. While this means that data may not be coming from the exact year that fieldwork was done, the offset is reasonably small (maximum 1 year before the fieldwork period). By using the ESS round year, which is typically up to one year ahead of actual fieldwork, the analysis avoids using data from years that have not yet passed when ESS fieldwork was conducted (when fieldwork was conducted in the beginning of the year), as well as having to use data from different years for respondents from the same country in the same ESS round (when fieldwork spanned the turn of the year).

In addition, the models control for competing explanatory variables of political trust. On the individual level, *control variables* are economic performance evaluations (e.g., Mishler & Rose, 2001), political interest

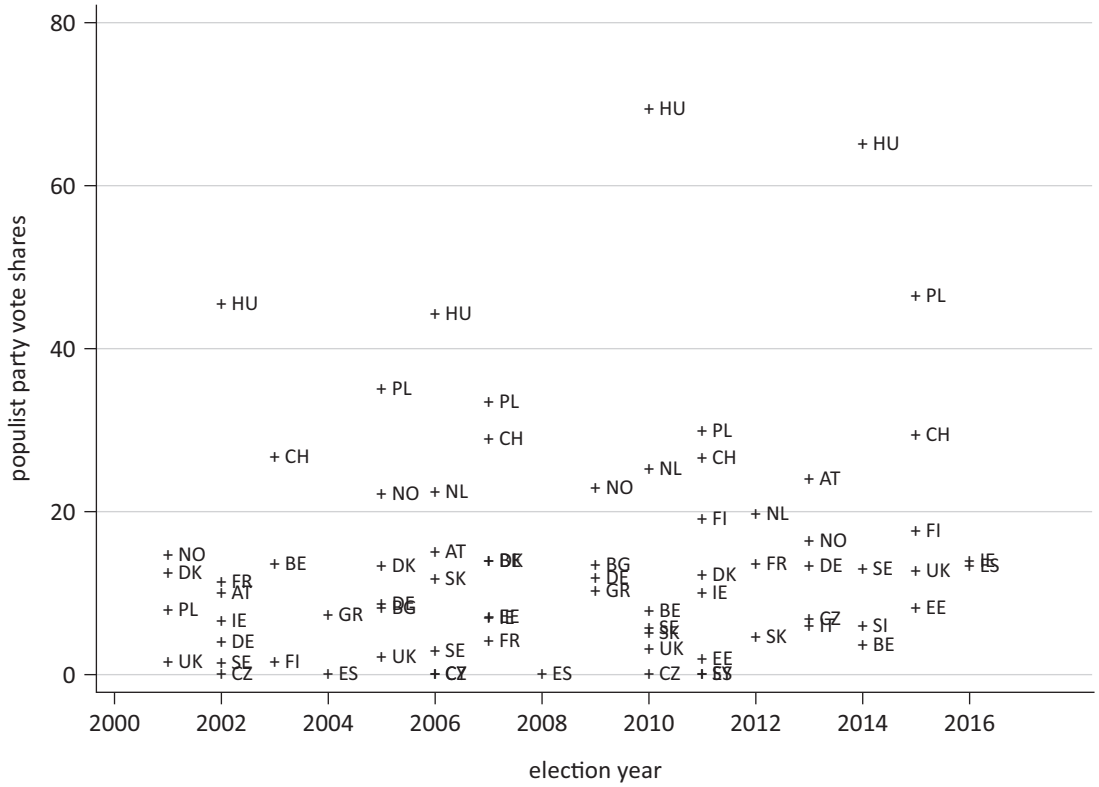

Figure 1. Populist party vote shares per country, 2001–2016. Source: ParlGov (1997–2016; Döring & Manow, 2018).

(e.g., Lü, 2014), and social trust (e.g., Zmerli & Newton, 2008). As the analysis aggregates data to the country-round level and uses weighted means for this purpose, standard sociodemographics are not included as control variables. On the macro level, the analysis controls for a country's level of socioeconomic development: logged GDP per capita (PPP; World Bank, 2018) and degree of urbanization (World Bank, 2018).

The analysis includes only countries that were sampled in at least three ESS rounds between 2002 and 2016 and that were rated as democratic (based on V-Dem's Regimes-in-the-World measure; Lührmann, Tannenberg, & Lindberg, 2018) throughout the entire period (1997–2016; ESS countries that do not match these criteria: Croatia, Luxemburg, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine). It excludes countries without a successful populist party, i.e., which did not have at least one populist party gain parliamentary seats in at least one election between 1997 and 2016. This applies to Iceland, Lithuania, and Portugal. Robustness checks including these three countries do not yield substantially different results. After excluding country-rounds in which national parliamentary elections took place during the ESS fieldwork period, the data cover 148 country-rounds (130 country-rounds for analyses of trust in political parties; 23 individual countries; Table 2).

For the empirical analysis, all data are aggregated to the country-round level. The models regress changes in political trust (trust in parliament, trust in parties, trust in politicians) from one ESS round to the next on populist party vote gain. Changes in political trust are calculated as the difference in aggregated levels of trust from one ESS round to the next. As there are no previous data for levels of political trust for the first ESS round fielded in each country, the number of country-rounds drops to 125 (trust in parliament, trust in politicians) and 107 (trust in parties), respectively.

All individual- and system-level control variables are also modeled in terms of changes as compared to the previous ESS round. For the moderating factors democratic quality, corruption, and government performance, on the other hand, I use absolute levels as the extent to which a political system lends itself to populist criticism depends more on its absolute levels of democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance than on changes in these contextual characteristics. In addition, democratic quality and corruption control are unlikely to change dramatically from one ESS round to the next, so for most European democracies there is little within-country variance in democratic quality and corruption control between 2002 and 2016.

5. Results

Starting with the main effect of populist party success on political trust, Figure 2 presents the results for trust in parliament, trust in political parties, and trust in politicians. Corroborating the expectations, electoral success of populist parties does not decrease political trust among the general public. In contrast, most empirical

Table 2. Country-rounds included in analysis.

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
Austria	•	•	•	n/a	n/a		•	•
Belgium	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bulgaria			•	•	•	•		
Cyprus			•	•	•	•		
Czechia	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
Denmark	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Estonia		•	ele	•	n/a	•	•	•
Finland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
France	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Germany	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Greece	•	•		ele	•			
Hungary	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ireland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Italy	•	n/a				•		•
Netherlands	ele	•	ele	•	•	ele	•	•
Norway	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Poland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Slovakia		•	•	•	•	•		
Slovenia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Spain	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sweden	•	•	•	•	•	•	ele	•
Switzerland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
United Kingdom	•	•	•	•	•	•	ele	•

Notes: • = country-round included, n/a = survey data is not included in cumulative ESS file or fieldwork dates were not recorded, ele = country-round was excluded from analysis because election took place during fieldwork period.

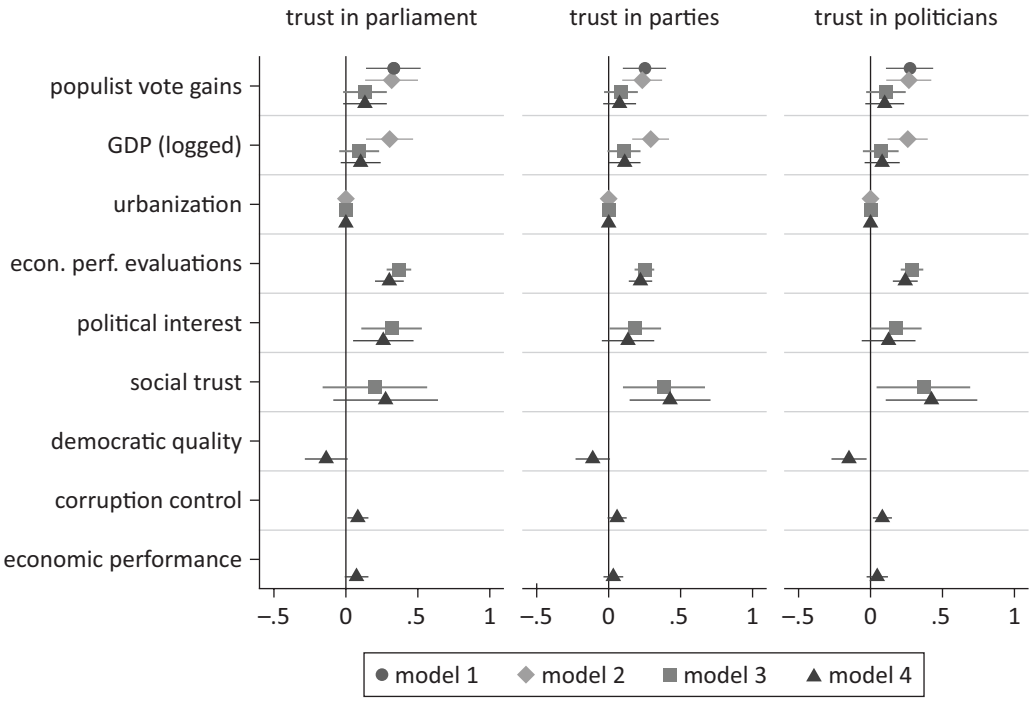

Figure 2. Main effects of populist party success on political trust. Notes: Coefficients and 95% confidence intervals. N = 125 (trust in parliament, trust in politicians)/N = 107 (trust in parties). Model 1: bivariate. Model 2: including macro controls. Model 3: including macro and micro controls. Model 4: including macro and micro controls plus democratic quality, corruption control, and economic performance. Sources: European Social Survey 2002–2016 (European Social Survey, 2016); ParlGov 1997–2016 (Döring & Manow, 2018); V-Dem v9 (Coppedge et al., 2019); World Development Indicators 2002–2016 (World Bank, 2018).

models yield a significant positive effect of populist party success on citizens' trust in both parliament, political parties, and politicians. The results thus support the hypothesis that populist parties' success may act as a corrective force to the existing political system (H_1). Whether this is due to citizens seeing populist parties themselves as being this corrective force and their sheer presence in political institutions as making the political system more caring and accountable or rather the consequence of established parties and citizens responding to the populist challenge with their own pro-system campaign cannot be determined based on the present data. We can, however, assert that levels of political trust tend to increase rather than decrease in the wake of populist party success. This is the case for both the populist electorate and the non-populist electorate, indicating that this is a general effect rather than a mere 'winner' effect driven by populist party supporters (re-)gaining trust in the political system (cf. Supplementary File).

Going beyond the main effect of populist party success on political trust, we expected this effect to be conditional on contextual characteristics like democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance. Figure 3 to Figure 5 graph these conditional effects. Beginning with the moderating effect of democratic quality, Figure 3 confirms that populist party success has different effects in countries with different levels of democratic quality. Corresponding to the theoretical conjecture (H_2), the effect of populist party success weakens for countries with a higher level of democratic quality. As we would have expected based on the corrective-force argument, for countries with a comparatively low level of democratic quality, populist parties becoming more successful in national parliamentary elections has a significant positive effect on political trust among the general public. Citizens in these countries seem to extend more trust to both parliament, political parties, and politicians following electoral successes of populist parties. For all

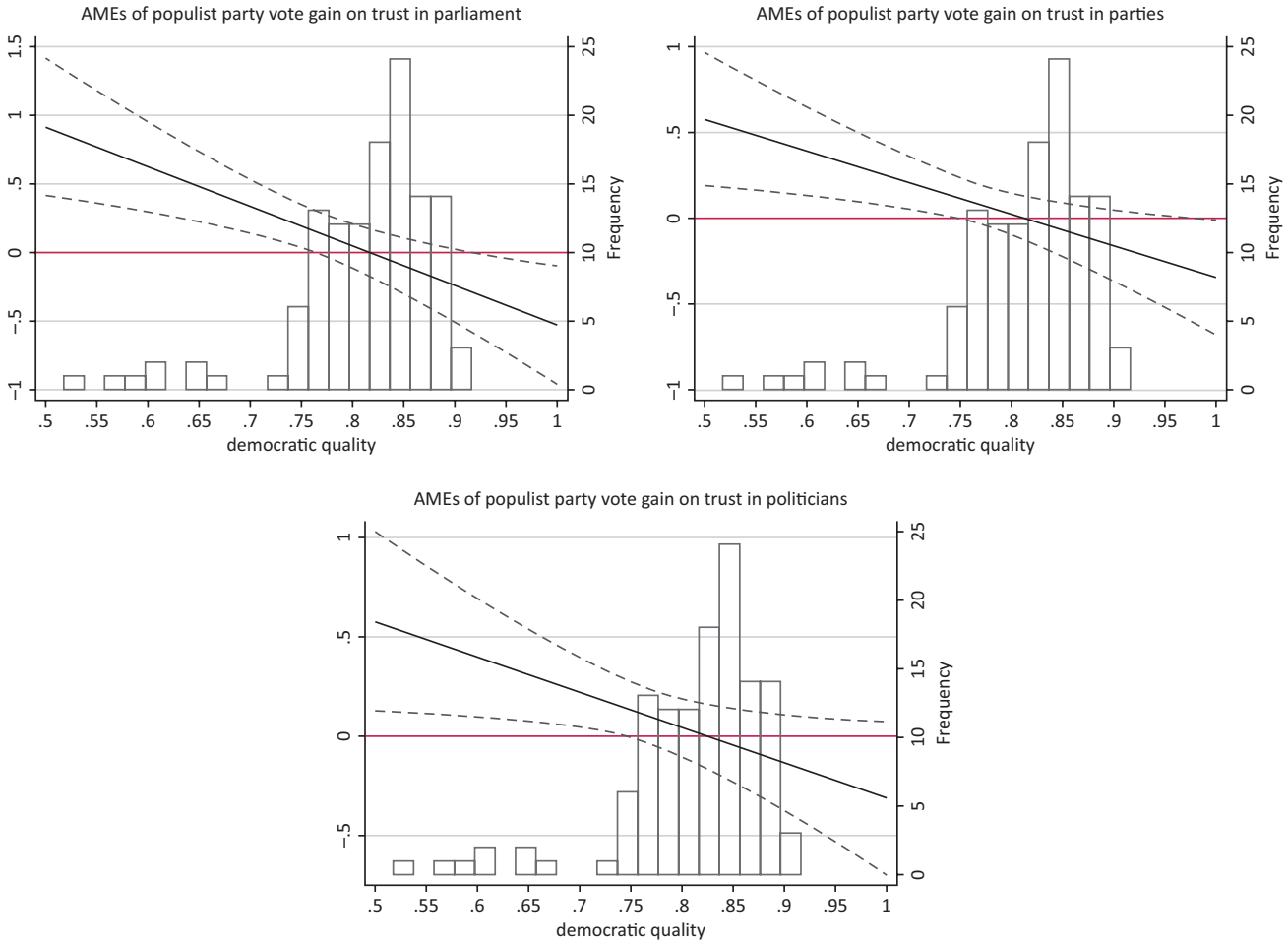

Figure 3. Conditional effects of populist success on political trust: democratic quality. Notes: Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect for varying degrees of democratic quality (0.05 scale points intervals). Control variables: (changes in) perceptions of economic performance, political interest, social trust, GPD/capita, urbanization; (levels of) corruption control, economic performance. N = 125 (trust in parliament, trust in politicians)/N = 107 (trust in parties). Sources: European Social Survey 2002–2016 (European Social Survey, 2016); ParlGov 1997–2016 (Döring & Manow, 2018); V-Dem v9 (Coppedge et al., 2019); World Development Indicators 2002–2016 (World Bank, 2018).

three institutions, this effect on citizen trust gradually decreases with increasing democratic quality and vanishes completely for high-quality liberal democracies, suggesting that citizens may not perceive there to be much room for improvement of the existing political system.

Turning to the moderating effect of corruption control, Figure 4 also shows results in line with the corrective-force argument. Instead of populist party success having a more detrimental effect on political trust in countries with high levels of corruption—i.e., countries that we would expect to lend themselves more easily to populist criticism—it is precisely these countries where populist success substantially increases political trust among the general public. This again points to citizens perceiving populist parties as a corrective force that can help tackle the problems—in this case corruption—of the existing political system. Like for democratic quality, populist party success has no effect on political trust at all in those countries where there is little room for improvement.

The picture looks virtually the same for the moderating effect of economic performance (Figure 5). Yet again, the effect of populist parties' vote gains on trust in parliament, trust in political parties, and trust in politicians alike are conditional on the level of economic performance in a given country, and the interaction effect points to populist parties being seen as more of a corrective force in countries with lacking government performance. Populist parties receiving more votes in national parliamentary elections has a significant positive effect on political trust in countries with a comparatively low level of economic performance. In countries with high levels of economic performance, in contrast, populist party success does not have any effect on political trust among the general public at all. All results remain robust to alternative model specifications (including country dummies, including countries without a successful populist party, including populists-in-government dummy, including new-democracies dummy) and operationaliza-

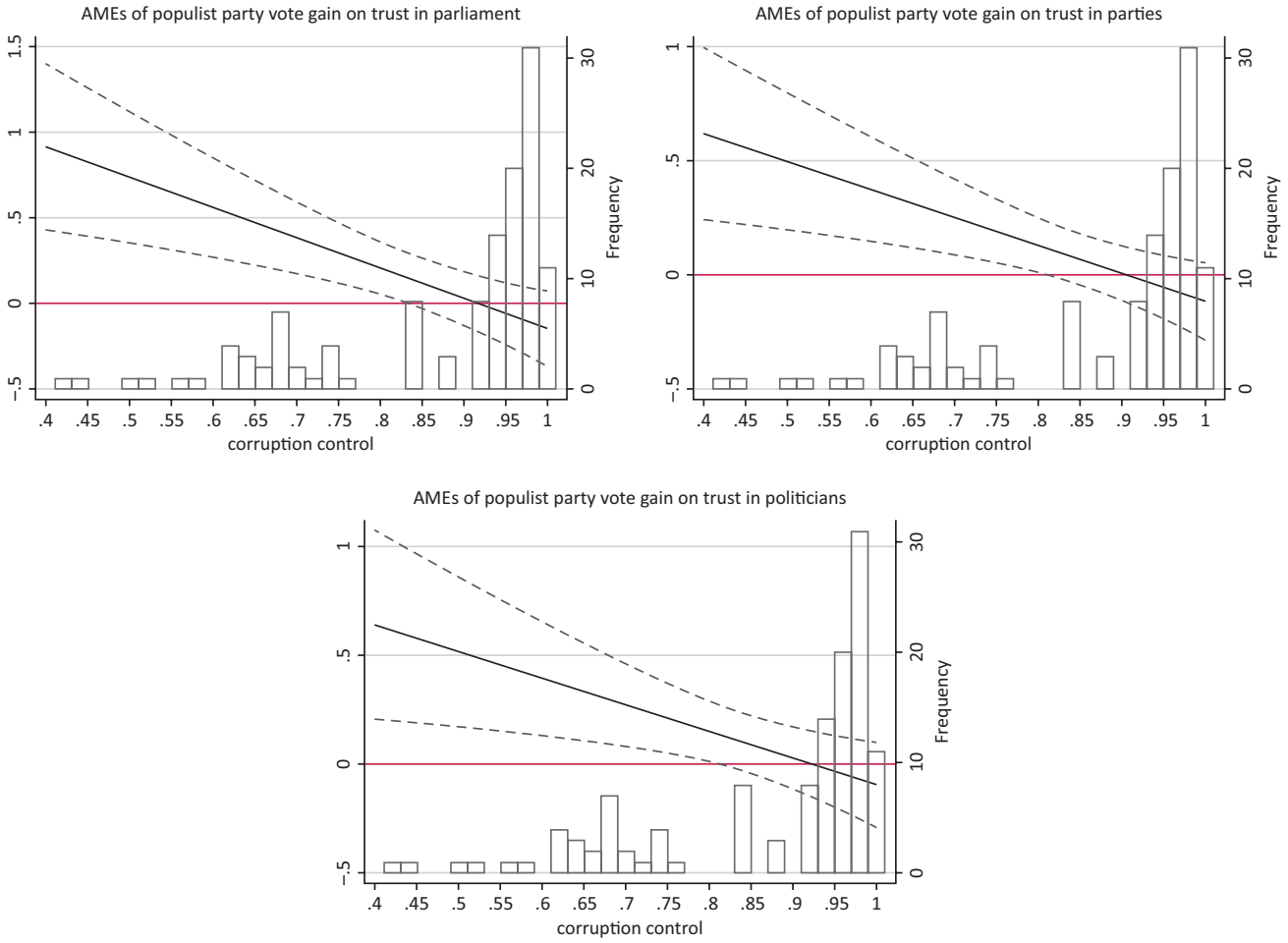

Figure 4. Conditional effects of populist success on political trust: corruption control. Notes: Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect for varying degrees of corruption (0.05 scale points intervals). Control variables: (changes in) perceptions of economic performance, political interest, social trust, GPD/capita, urbanization; (levels of) democratic quality, economic performance. N = 125 (trust in parliament, trust in politicians)/N = 107 (trust in parties). Sources: European Social Survey 2002–2016 (European Social Survey, 2016); ParlGov 1997–2016 (Döring & Manow, 2018); V-Dem v9 (Coppedge et al., 2019); World Development Indicators 2002–2016 (World Bank, 2018).

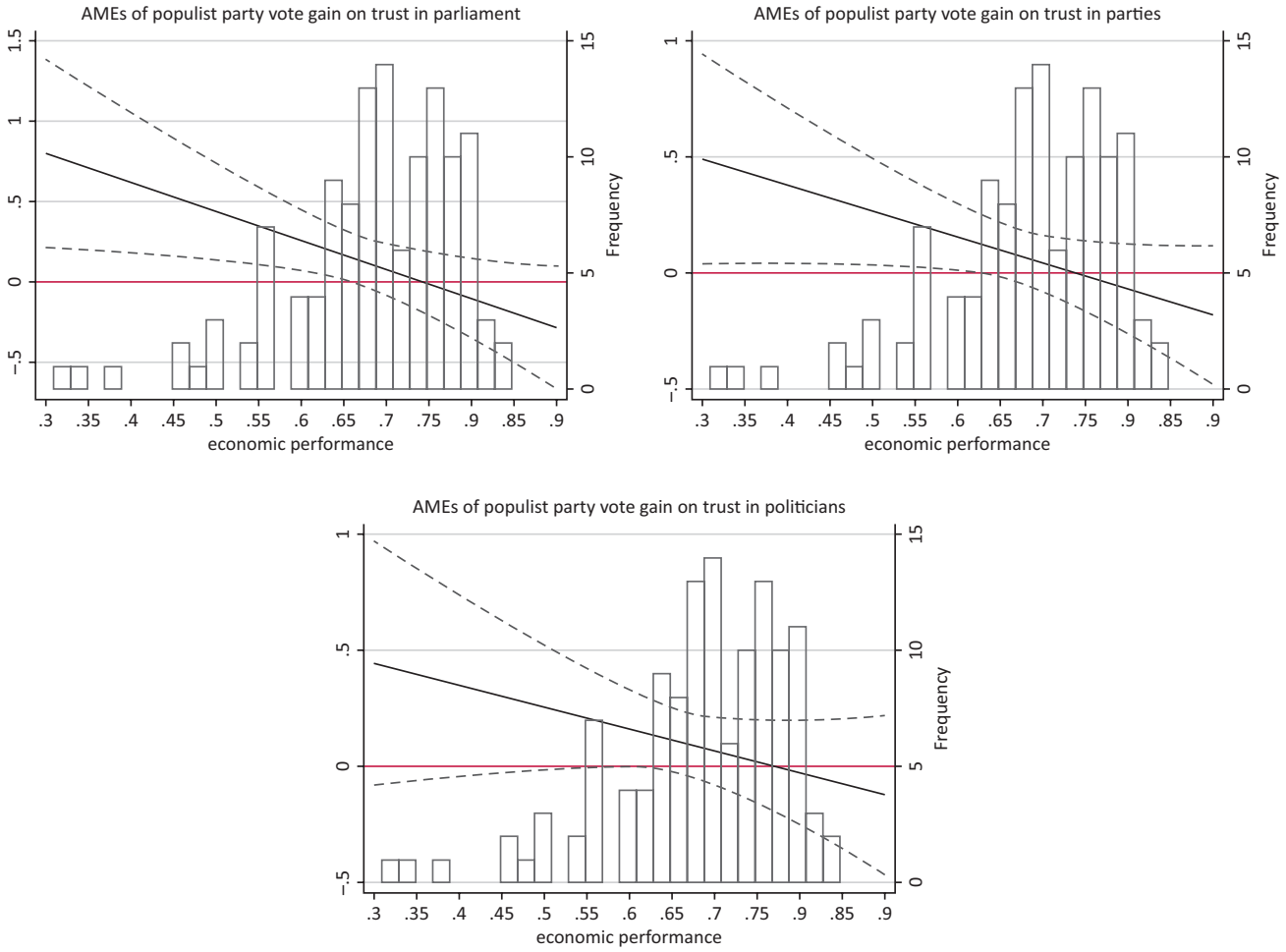

Figure 5. Conditional effects of populist success on political trust: economic performance. Notes: Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect for varying degrees of economic performance (0.05 scale points intervals). Control variables: (changes in) perceptions of economic performance, political interest, social trust, GPD/capita, urbanization; (levels of) democratic quality, corruption control. N = 125 (trust in parliament, trust in politicians)/N = 107 (trust in parties). Sources: European Social Survey 2002–2016 (European Social Survey, 2016); ParlGov 1997–2016 (Döring & Manow, 2018); V-Dem v9 (Coppedge et al., 2019); World Development Indicators 2002–2016 (World Bank, 2018).

tions of the dependent (as satisfaction with democracy) and independent (as gains in parliamentary seats) variables. While the results are clearly stronger for right-wing populist parties, they tend to point in the same direction when looking at the much smaller subset of left-wing populist parties only as well. The same is the case when comparing the populist to the non-populist electorates: while the effects are somewhat stronger for the populist electorate, they are still present in the non-populist electorate (cf. Supplementary File).

6. Conclusion

In light of the most recent wave of populism across Europe and the concerns voiced about this rise of populism, this contribution set out to explore how the electoral success of populist parties affects citizens' trust in the political system. Regarding this macro-level relationship, it suggested that, despite previous findings evidencing a negative relationship between populist party support and political trust on the individual level, the electoral *success* of populist parties may still increase political trust among the general public. It argued that populist parties may be perceived as a corrective force finally giving voice to and tackling concerns about the political system that had long been prevalent among citizens. Reasoning that there needs to be at least some room for improvement for this corrective-force effect to come into play, it further introduced democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance as contextual factors conditioning the relationship between populist party success and political trust.

Combining survey data from the European Social Survey (2002–2016) with election data from the ParlGov project (1997–2016) and aggregate data on the contextual characteristics from V-Dem and the World Development Indicators for 23 European democracies, it found that populist party success indeed has an overall positive effect on levels of political trust among the general public. As far as the contextual characteristics

were concerned, populist party success had the most pronounced positive effect on political trust in countries with comparatively low levels of democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance. For countries with very high levels of democratic quality, corruption control, and government performance, populist parties gaining votes or parliamentary seats did not affect political trust at all. These results corroborate the corrective-force perspective: apparently, the perceived and/or actual corrective effect of populist parties entering the political stage outweighs their anti-establishment and anti-system message in the eyes of citizens at least in the short run. Even though the present study cannot determine whether this effect will be a long-lasting one, its core findings add to and qualify both the theoretical and empirical assumptions of the bulk of the populism literature, which considers populism to have unequivocally negative consequences for democracy (e.g., Galston, 2018; Müller, 2016; Pappas, 2019; Puddington & Roylance, 2017), instead lending support to more balanced assessments (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). In particular, they contradict previous individual-level results that could be interpreted as suggesting a vicious circle of political distrust and support for populist parties (Cutts et al., 2011; Dahlberg & Linde, 2017; Hooghe et al., 2011; Rooduijn, 2018; Söderlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009) and underscore that we need to be careful not to commit individualistic fallacies when discussing the consequences of populism.

Based on the findings as well as limitations of this study, three main questions may warrant further investigation. For one, future research could make use of panel data to examine whether different groups of citizens—e.g., supporters of populist parties vs. non-supporters of populist parties—react differently to populist party success, and whether populist party success causes further polarization of the general public. The use of panel data would also present an opportunity to dig deeper into the dynamics of potential winner and loser effects among supporters of populist and supporters of non-populist parties, which could only be explored to a very limited extent here. It would, second, be fruitful to analyze how established parties' reactions to the populist challenge condition the effect populist party success has on political trust. For instance, does the inclusion of populists in the political process, e.g., through coalition governments, further gains in political trust by appeasing citizens committed to the populist narrative or does it rather serve to alienate citizens who oppose the populists and/or their radical-right or radical-left ideologies? Finally, and most importantly, we need to study the long-term effects of populist party success. Can the representation of populist parties within the political system contribute to stabilizing political trust or are the positive effects only short-term, with citizens quickly becoming disillusioned when populists start pushing their radical-right or radical-left agendas and/or disappointed by the newcomers not actually bringing about the desired changes to the political system? Given these limitations, the findings presented here can only be a first indication as to how the new realities of populist party success may affect political systems across Europe. At their present stage, they may warrant some cautious optimism. While there are many good reasons to be wary of the rise of populist parties, for political trust—and thereby for the stability of democracy—, these newcomers to the political stage, at least for now, seem to be less detrimental than we may have thought.

Acknowledgments

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

The Effect of Parties on Voters' Satisfaction with Democracy

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Abstract
Electoral 'winners' (i.e., voters casting a ballot for a party included in the post-electoral government) are acknowledged to be more satisfied with democracy than supporters of opposition parties. However, little is known about the influence of parties and their specifics on the boost in satisfaction with democracy experienced by their voters. To address this question, the research utilizes 17 surveys from 12 countries included in the European Social Survey rounds 1–8, for which a government replacement took place during the survey period. This allows this research to employ discontinuity design and examine the effect of two attributes related to parties—differences in party vote shares, and voters' feeling of closeness to a party. The findings suggest that these factors have a negligible influence on voters' satisfaction with democracy and only scant evidence is found that closeness to a party tends to increase their satisfaction. When voters' attitudes from before and after a government replacement are compared, changes in government do not seem to strike voters as a surprise and thus they do not cause any sudden and lasting changes in the general attitudes of electorates. Nevertheless, this indicates a novel contribution to the literature: the effect of losing needs some time to fully develop until it results in a decrease in satisfaction level. Based on these findings, the research concludes that when it comes to parties' characteristics, it is primarily the government/opposition status which determines voters' degree of satisfaction with democracy.

Keywords
democracy; democratic quality; electoral behaviour; European Social Survey; government; political parties

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Populism and Polarization: A Dual Threat to Europe's Liberal Democracies?" edited by Jonas Linde (University of Bergen, Norway), Marlene Mauk (GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany) and Heidi Schulze (GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany).

1. Introduction

Voters' political support for democratic systems and satisfaction with their performance constitute an essential element for the sustainability of democratic regimes (Claassen, 2019). Therefore, it can hardly be surprising that this topic has been extensively addressed in political science research. The results convincingly show that electoral winners—i.e., voters casting a ballot for a party included in the post-electoral government—tend to be more satisfied with democracy compared to the supporters of opposition parties (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, & Listhaug, 2005; Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Singh, 2014). The strong empirical evidence supporting winners' satisfaction is explained by their anticipation that the winning parties will deliver in line with their election pledges (Singh, Karakoç, & Blais, 2012; Thomson et al., 2017).

Even though political parties are facilitating the link between citizens and democratic institutions, we know surprisingly little about their moderating effect on the boost in satisfaction with democracy experienced by their voters. This gap in the literature stems from the unavailability of suitable data. Cross-sectional surveys conducted after elections enable researchers to study satisfaction among voters of specific parties (e.g., Anderson et al., 2005; Bernauer & Vatter, 2012; Dassonneville & McAllister, 2020). However, such surveys cannot study the size of the boost voters experienced due to the absence of pre-electoral attitudes which are essential to measure the changes over time. On the other hand, panel surveys conducted before and after elections can

capture the boost (e.g., Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Blais, Morin-Chassé, & Singh, 2017; Singh, 2014). However, they are expensive and only allow researchers to examine a single election or a few elections and subsequent government replacements. This does not offer enough variance in the characteristics of parties to generalize their impact on the size of the satisfaction boost among voters.

This research overcomes these methodological shortcomings thanks to an innovative approach to the European Social Survey (ESS). The study utilizes the fact that due to its extensive questionnaire, ESS data collection in participating countries takes several months. Moreover, ESS is a cross-sectional survey hence data are gathered simultaneously without any significant attention paid to the national political processes and context. Thanks to that, government replacements (following a national election) reshuffled the winner/loser status among voters during several data collection periods. This allows the research to split these samples and apply discontinuity research design to analyse the differences in people's satisfaction before and after government replacements. A sufficiently large number of responses before and after a government replacement was collected in 17 surveys conducted in 12 countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and Slovenia) which constitutes a sample large enough to examine the moderating effect of parties and party-related characteristics on the changes in voters' satisfaction with democracy.

The research examines two party-related factors which are expected to influence voters' satisfaction with democracy: differences in party election vote shares and voters' feeling of closeness to a party. Available empirical evidence suggests that a tighter bond between the voters and a party increases the voters' satisfaction among winners as well as among losers. However, when voters' satisfaction with democracy is compared before and after government replacements, neither a sudden boost nor a decay can be detected. On the one hand, this suggests that the replacement of parties in the government does not strike voters as a surprise and their attitudes change in a continuous nature. However, on the other hand, a steady level of satisfaction among voters who have become electoral losers (i.e., when one's party loses its position in the government) indicates that the effect of losing needs some time to fully develop until it results in a decrease in satisfaction levels among voters.

2. Satisfaction with Democracy: Review of Relevant Findings

Every democratic system thrives on popular support and withers in its absence (Claassen, 2019), and consequently people's attitudes towards democracy have gathered increasing attention among scholars. The rich body of research has examined the abundant amount of empirical evidence and has repeatedly arrived at two major factors which now stand at the centre of almost all attempts to explain voters' satisfaction with democracy. The first factor deals with electoral choice and stipulates that electoral winners—i.e., those who voted for a party which formed the post-electoral government—tend to express a higher level of satisfaction with the performance of democracy in their country when compared to voters of the opposition parties (e.g., Anderson et al., 2005; Bernauer & Vatter, 2012; Singh, 2014). This gap between winners and losers has been reported by the vast majority of studies.

Going one step further, the findings from panel studies comparing individuals' pre- and post-election attitudes suggest that this boost is driven by the expectation that the incoming government will implement policies that match the voters' interests (Singh, 2014; Singh et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2017). At the same time, losers' disappointment stems from the realization that the country will be run by a government which overlaps with their preferences to a very limited extent or not at all (Singh et al., 2012).

Despite this being the predominant definition of winning in political science (especially in research conducted in Anglo-Saxon world), it is also acknowledged that voters for parties that were not elected into government may still feel like winners in some respects. Such a situation may appear, e.g., if voters, regardless of their vote choice, are still ideologically close to the newly composed post-electoral government (Curini, Jou, & Memoli, 2012). Considering the size of representation, Blais et al. (2017, p. 85) "affirm that voting for parties that win more votes, more legislative seats, and more cabinet seats boosts satisfaction with democracy." This suggests that acquiring legislative seats may already cause a satisfaction boost among voters (Singh et al., 2012), especially if they support a new party without any prior incumbency experience. Even though these alternative measures of winning matter, Stiers, Daoust, and Blais (2018) convincingly demonstrate that in the voters' perception a comparatively much stronger indication of winning is voting for the party which becomes the largest party in the election and leads the government formation process. Given this direct evidence, the research follows the conventional definition of winning based on a party's inclusion in the government. Nevertheless, this research also tackles the influence of party vote (and seat) shares on winners' and losers' satisfaction with democracy. If different vote/seat shares are found to influence winners' or losers' satisfaction levels, it is a sign that alternative definitions of winning deserve closer attention among scholars.

The second factor builds on the assumption that winning and losing mean different things in majoritarian and consensual systems. This direction of research has been triggered by Anderson and Guillory (1997), who conclude:

> Losers in systems that are more consensual display higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy

> works than do losers in systems with majoritarian characteristics. Conversely, winners tend to be more satisfied with democracy the more a country's political institutions approximate pure majoritarian government. (Anderson & Guillory, 1997, p. 66)

Majoritarian systems are expected to generate big winners benefitting from the strong position of single party governments which can directly proceed to implement their election pledges (Lijphart, 2012, pp. 9–29). However, this necessarily means that only negligible attention is paid to losers' preferences. Consequently, the gap in satisfaction between winners and losers tends to get larger. Consensual systems, on the other hand, are expected to be governed by coalition formations that result from government negotiations; thus, electoral winners anticipate that part of their preferences will not be implemented (Lijphart, 2012, pp. 30–45). This limits the size of satisfaction boost they experience. At the same time, consensual systems offer more opportunities to influence the political decision-making process for the losing minorities, hence their satisfaction is not as low as the losers' satisfaction in majoritarian systems (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Bernauer & Vatter, 2012). In general, due to distinctive incentives which influence the form of governance in these systems, it is expected that the winner-loser gap will be larger in systems with majoritarian electoral rules compared to systems with proportional mechanisms (Gallagher & Mitchell, 2008).

This modifying effect of the electoral system on the satisfaction gap presented by Anderson and Guillory (1997) has found supportive (e.g., Farrell & McAllister, 2006; Klingemann, 1999), albeit mixed evidence (e.g., Aarts & Thomassen, 2008; Berggren, Fugate, Preuhs, & Still, 2004; McAllister, 2005). The latter studies pointed towards other factors possibly influencing the winner-loser gap, such as economic inequality (Han & Chang, 2016), voters' degree of control over the resulting political representation (Bosch & Orriols, 2014; Pellegata & Memoli, 2018), ideological proximity (Curini et al., 2012; Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011), the intertemporal dimension of winning (Chang, Chu, & Wu, 2014), strategic voting (Singh, 2014), the availability of direct political participation for losers (Bernauer & Vatter, 2012), and electoral margins (Howell & Justwan, 2013).

Considering the size of this literature and how consistently it attaches voters' satisfaction to the position of political parties within the governing structures, it is surprising how little attention has been paid to the characteristics of political parties. Moreover, political parties are perceived as a link between citizens and democratic systems, therefore, the contemporary decline of parties should raise concerns about citizens' support for democracy and the subsequent sustainability of democratic regimes (see Mair, 2013). Even though satisfaction with democracy fluctuates over time, the trends do not seem to correlate with any measures that aim to capture the so-called 'legitimacy crises' in Western Europe (van Ham, Thomassen, Aarts, & Andeweg, 2017).

As a response to this discrepancy, Andeweg and Farrell (2017) argue that political parties still contribute their support for the democratic systems. However, it does not happen via membership and "individually engaging citizens in party activities, but by collectively offering citizens a meaningful choice" (Andeweg & Farrell, 2017, p. 93), which could be seen in voters' continuously persisting (and sometimes even increased) feeling of closeness to one or several political parties. Hooghe and Kern (2015) have analysed political trust and arrived at essentially the same conclusion: Citizens who feel closeness to a political party are more likely to reveal higher levels of political trust.

The strong link between parties and citizens' political support led Dassonneville and McAllister (2020) to study people's satisfaction with democracy across different party systems. They examined the three main characteristics of party systems—the number of parties, the degree of polarization, and representativeness—however, weak evidence compelled them to conclude that the main effects of these indicators were not found to be associated with higher levels of satisfaction with democracy. However, when it comes to democratic stability, the institutionalization of political parties and the institutionalization of party systems can represent two distinctive processes (Casal Bértoa, 2017), and a comprehensive study of political parties on satisfaction with democracy has been missing. This article aims to fill this gap by presenting an analysis of how party election vote shares, and voters' feeling of closeness to a party influence satisfaction with democracy among voters.

2.1. Size of the Win: Party Vote Shares

Just as winning can mean different things in different systems, so winners embedded in the same institutional environment can have different experiences of winning. The reason is that despite the constant institutional setup, a party's electoral result determines its strength to implement policy priorities and it is the expectation that voters' priorities will be implemented that increases winners' satisfaction with democracy (Singh, 2014; Singh et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2017).

If big winners in majoritarian systems enjoy an additional degree of satisfaction thanks to the stronger position of their party in the post-electoral government (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Bernauer & Vatter, 2012), then the same should apply to those voters who experience a big win in other systems too. Consequently, voters for parties occupying a stronger representative position in a system also demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction with democracy (Blais et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2012).

This line of thinking is also supported by Stiers et al. (2018), who designed a survey to explore what makes people believe that their party won the election. Paying close attention to the individual level, their main dis-

covery is that "supporters of the largest party—the party with most votes and seats in both Parliament and government—almost unanimously believe that their party won the election" (Stiers et al., 2018, p. 21). This study supplies evidence suggesting that voters' perception of winning is influenced by the vote shares received by parties in elections.

Therefore, voters' satisfaction with democracy should grow together with the party vote share as a direct indicator of the party's strength in a system.

2.2. Closeness to a Party

The success of a party supported by an individual constitutes a strong predictor for their satisfaction with democracy (Anderson et al., 2005; Blais et al., 2017). In addition, being close to a party also has major importance for an individual's satisfaction with democracy (Andeweg & Farrell, 2017; Hooghe & Kern, 2015). Since both these tendencies deal with the influence of parties on individuals' satisfaction with democracy, it is reasonable to expect that these two factors operate together and influence each other.

This expectation finds support from political psychology, which confirmed "the role of enduring partisan commitments in shaping attitudes toward political object" (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960, p. 135). People's viewpoints regarding party achievements have been found to be distorted by a 'perceptual screen' which tends to bias perception of political facts depending on the strength of the attachment between a voter and a party (Brader & Tucker, 2012). This tendency has been demonstrated by Stiers and Dassonneville (2018) using exit polls from Belgium to conclude that voters with a strong party identification are more optimistic in evaluating their party's electoral performance. Singh (2014) also demonstrates that the effect of winning is especially pronounced for those voters who disclosed stronger psychological bonds to the parties they voted for. As their subjective perception might be biased upwards, they are likely to be especially delighted by a party's success, but also less affected by its defeat.

Therefore, considering the partisan bias, if voters feel close to a party who are election winners, they should reveal higher satisfaction with democracy compared to voters without partisan attachments. In the case of a party losing, positive partisan bias should contribute to a steady level of satisfaction among voters who identify with a party, whereas satisfaction among voters without partisan attachments should decrease.

3. Data and Methods

This research applies an innovative methodological approach to the survey analysis. It utilizes the fact that due to its extensive questionnaire, the data collection for ESS takes several months. Thanks to the cross-sectional nature of the ESS, which does not pay attention to the political development in participating countries, government replacements sometimes take place during the survey data collection period and reshuffle the status of winners and losers among voters. This offers an opportunity to use the date of an interview to position respondents in a specific point in time and compare the differences in people's satisfaction with democracy before and after a government replacement (Muñoz, Falcó-Gimeno, & Hernández, 2020; see Figure 1).

3.1. Data

The study utilizes the ESS cumulative data rounds 1 to 8 (2002–2016), which is a cleaned and harmonized compilation of the ESS rounds. For rounds 1 and 2, ESS indicates the exact date when an interview was conducted. For rounds 3 to 8, ESS includes the starting and ending date of the interview. Individuals were positioned on a timeline according to the starting date of their interviews, and those observations for which the difference between the starting and ending date was up to 10 days were included (to ensure that the final dataset includes reliably marked dates).

Analysis focuses on voters' attitudes revealed during the period of 30 days before and 30 days after elections or government replacement. This is an arbitrary cut-off point that is set with respect to the data specifics. In the shortest instances, interviews are available for the period preceding or following a government replacement (see Figure A1 in the Supplementary File). Hence, setting the cut-off point to thirty days allows one to compare similar pre- and post-government replacement periods across

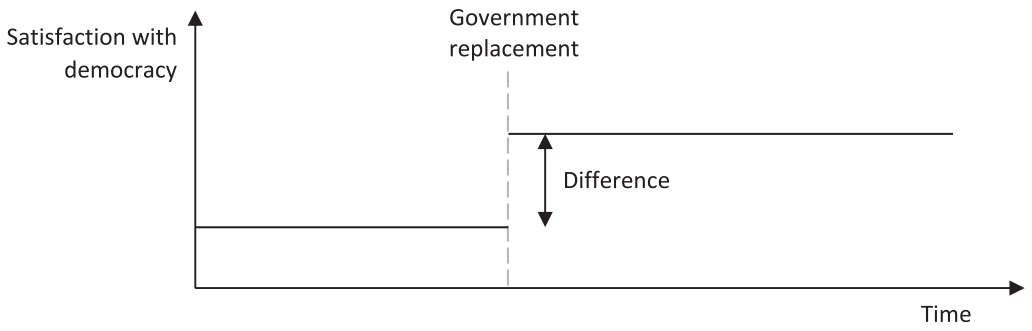

Figure 1. Methodological approach: Discontinuity during survey data collection.

all cases. A data summary with respect to interview timing is presented in Table A1 in the Supplementary File. For timing of the ESS data collection periods with respect to government replacement and preceding election dates, see Figure 2.

3.2. Variables

The main dependent variable is the *satisfaction with democracy* measured by the question: "And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?" Respondents were offered an 11-point scale with two anchors (0 = extremely dissatisfied; 10 = extremely satisfied). As has been demonstrated by Linde and Ekman (2003), this question taps voters' satisfaction with the performance of democratic institutions rather than support for the general principles of democracy. Some authors have demonstrated that this question conceptually overlaps with other indicators, such as party preference or executive approval (e.g., Canache, Mondak, & Seligson, 2001). However, as Anderson points out, "in the absence of a better item…the satisfaction with democracy measure is a reasonable (albeit imperfect) indicator that we can use to test our theories" (Anderson, 2002, p. 10).

An electoral winner has been consistently defined by the literature as casting a ballot for a party that is included in the government (Anderson et al., 2005; Blais et al., 2017; Singh, 2014; Singh et al., 2012). Since this research design uses the date of a government replacement as a cut-off point, the coding of winners and losers is straightforward—those who voted for a party included in the government during their interview were coded as winners. Opposition party voters were coded as losers. Abstainers were excluded from the sample. However, the primary focus of this analysis is towards the status change and its association with the change in the degree to which voters are satisfied with democracy. Therefore, the samples were split into four categories—became winner, became loser, stayed winner, and stayed loser—which are included in the regression models as dummies.

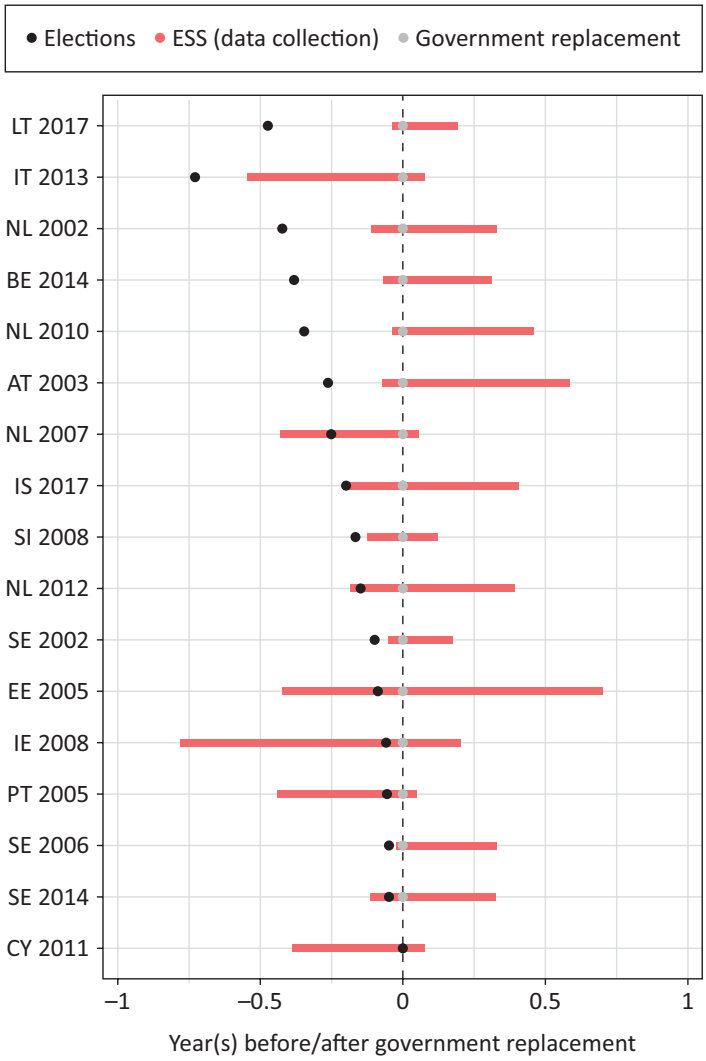

Figure 2. Overview of survey data collection periods, and dates of government replacements and preceding elections.

Closeness to a party was measured by a question included in the ESS: "Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?" (1 = yes; 0 = no).

Party election votes shares were taken from the ParlGov database (Döring & Manow, 2019). However, in order to take into account the previous position of the party, the analysis uses the party vote share differences between the two preceding elections.

Regarding individual-level controls, the ESS database permits controlling for *age* (in years), *gender* (1 = female; 0 = male), *education* (completed 1 = less than lower secondary education; 2 = lower secondary education; 3 = upper secondary education; 4 = post-secondary non-tertiary education; 5 = tertiary education), and *satisfaction with the state of the economy* (0 = extremely dissatisfied; 10 = extremely satisfied). In addition to these personal background characteristics, the analysis controls for the *time gap* (measured in days) between the individual interview and the government replacement date.

3.3. Method and Visualization Strategy

With respect to the method, the presented findings are the results of the OLS regression analysis. Due to data specifics, some models include survey fixed effects (executed as survey dummies) to control for the effect of inter-country variations. Due to the interactive nature of the research design and proposed hypotheses, some regression models implement three- or four-way interactions. Following the suggestions by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), interpretation of interaction terms always relies on the visualization of respective models, which are included in the Supplementary File. This seeks to increase the readability of this article.

To make visualizations easier to examine, they are always split into two parts. The first part compares satisfaction levels among those who became winners with those who remained losers. The logic is to use the steady degree of satisfaction with democracy among those whose status did not change (i.e., stayed electoral losers) as a baseline in order to expose the changes in the satisfaction among those who experience change in their status (i.e., became electoral winners). Both these groups consist of losers during the period preceding a government replacement and therefore should reveal comparable levels of satisfaction with democracy. However, their status starts to differ from the day of a government replacement, which is expected to introduce a satisfaction boost among the new electoral winners. This difference, if there is any, represents the effect of winning we aim to tackle.

The second part applies a similar logic. Steady satisfaction levels among those who remained electoral winners are used as a baseline in order to reveal changes in the satisfaction levels among those who became electoral losers. Both these groups consist of winners during the period preceding a government replacement and therefore the expected decrease in the satisfaction levels revealed by electoral losers represent the estimated effect of losing, if there is any effect, on one's satisfaction with democracy.

4. Results

The empirical analysis begins with a basic comparison of changes in satisfaction with democracy associated with winner/loser status change. Overall, the trends seem to follow the findings presented in the literature (e.g., Anderson et al., 2005; Singh, 2014; Singh et al., 2012)—winners tend to be more satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. Satisfaction with democracy among those who became winners, stayed winners, or became losers is higher compared to the voters whose parties were included in the opposition during the whole time (see Table A2 in the Supplementary File, and Figure 3 in this article). This suggests two things: First, the satisfaction of those who are about to become winners already increases during the period before a new government is officially appointed to office (see left panel in Figure 3). This is because the new government formation is often increasingly apparent as time goes by after elections (Loveless, 2020; van der Meer & Steenvoorden, 2018). Second, those who became losers do not reveal an immediate and rapid drop in their satisfaction with democracy (see right panel in Figure 3). Hence, it seems to take some time until the effect of losing representation in the government fully develops and results in a drop in satisfaction among supporters of these parties.

However, the degree of satisfaction with democracy across all four groups tends to be stable through the whole period under investigation (see Figure 3). When satisfaction levels are compared before and after a government replacement, the differences are not significant and therefore this democratic event does not seem to introduce rapid and sudden discontinuities into voters' attitudes.

4.1. Party Vote Shares

When it comes to the party vote shares, tested expectation is built on the proposition that big winners should demonstrate a higher degree of satisfaction with democracy. Before interpreting the findings, it is important to note that some specific situations—such as becoming a winner when one's party loses 10% votes or becoming a loser when one's party gains more than 10% of votes compared to the previous elections are rare. This is the reason why confidence intervals in the upper left and lower right panels in Figure 4 expand so much compared to other parts of the figure. This creates some concerns about the reliability of the trends. Unfortunately, the data used for this research cannot be expanded at the present time, hence it remains a task for future research to validate these findings.

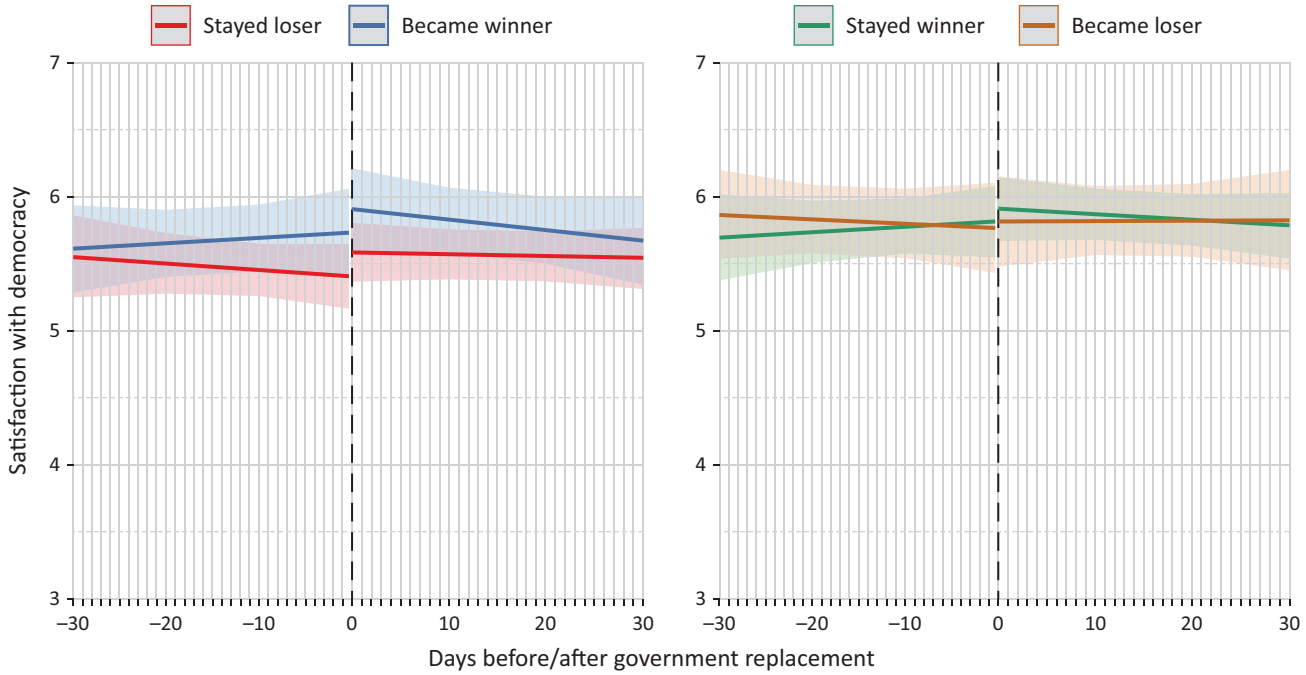

Figure 3. Comparison of pre- and post-government replacement satisfaction among four categories of winner/loser status change. Note: The marginal effects of the interaction terms from Model 4 in Table A2 of the Supplementary File are visualized.

The findings based on the full Model 4 (in Table A3 in the Supplementary File) controlling for all confounders including the survey fixed effects do not indicate that the differences in party vote share are associated with neither a higher nor a lower degree of satisfaction with democracy among voters. The upper half of Figure 4 suggests that the trends are contrary to initial expectations. The gap between those who became winners and stayed losers gets narrower as the party vote share difference increases. Nevertheless, the lower part of Figure 4 indicates that the difference in vote shares received by a party does matter among those who remained winners. Despite the lack of any discontinuity observable around the government replacement date, the satisfaction among continuous winners increases from roughly 5.5 points (on a 0–10 scale) to roughly 6 points. This indicates that the effect of party strength within a system may be more nuanced and applies only to those voters whose parties gain executive power to implement their election pledges. Among losers, it does not seem to have a systematic influence on their satisfaction levels.

The effect of government change does not introduce a sharp change to people's satisfaction with democracy and from this perspective it also seems to be negligible in this case. When satisfaction levels from before and after a government replacement are compared, the difference is not statistically significant and therefore a government's replacement does not seem to introduce major discontinuities into voters' attitudes.

One may argue, however, that the differences in vote shares do not have to be an accurate measure of winning. Due to various aspects of electoral systems, changes in vote shares do not have to reflect changes in the party seat shares, which better reflect the actual strength of the party in a political system. If voters' satisfaction with democracy increases with the power held by chosen parties (Blais et al., 2017; Singh, 2014; Singh et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2017), then it should rather be associated with the seat shares occupied by political parties. To mitigate this concern, a robustness check included in the Supplementary File replicates this part of the analysis with differences in seat shares rather than vote shares. The results are almost identical (see Table A4 and Figure A2 in the Supplementary File). Therefore, whether one examines differences in vote shares or differences in seat shares has no impact on the results presented in this section.

4.2. Closeness to a Party

When party identification is examined, the findings suggest that the satisfaction with democracy among those feeling close to a party tends to be higher (see Table A5 in the Supplementary File). The estimated marginal effects displayed in Figure 5 indicate that satisfaction with democracy tends to be higher (by a quarter to a half of a point on an 11-point scale) among those who stayed winners or became winners, especially if we focus on the period following a government replacement. Therefore, interaction between party closeness and winner status may be a relevant factor that contributes to the expansion of the winner-loser gap in democratic systems. However, the confidence intervals often overlap, hence

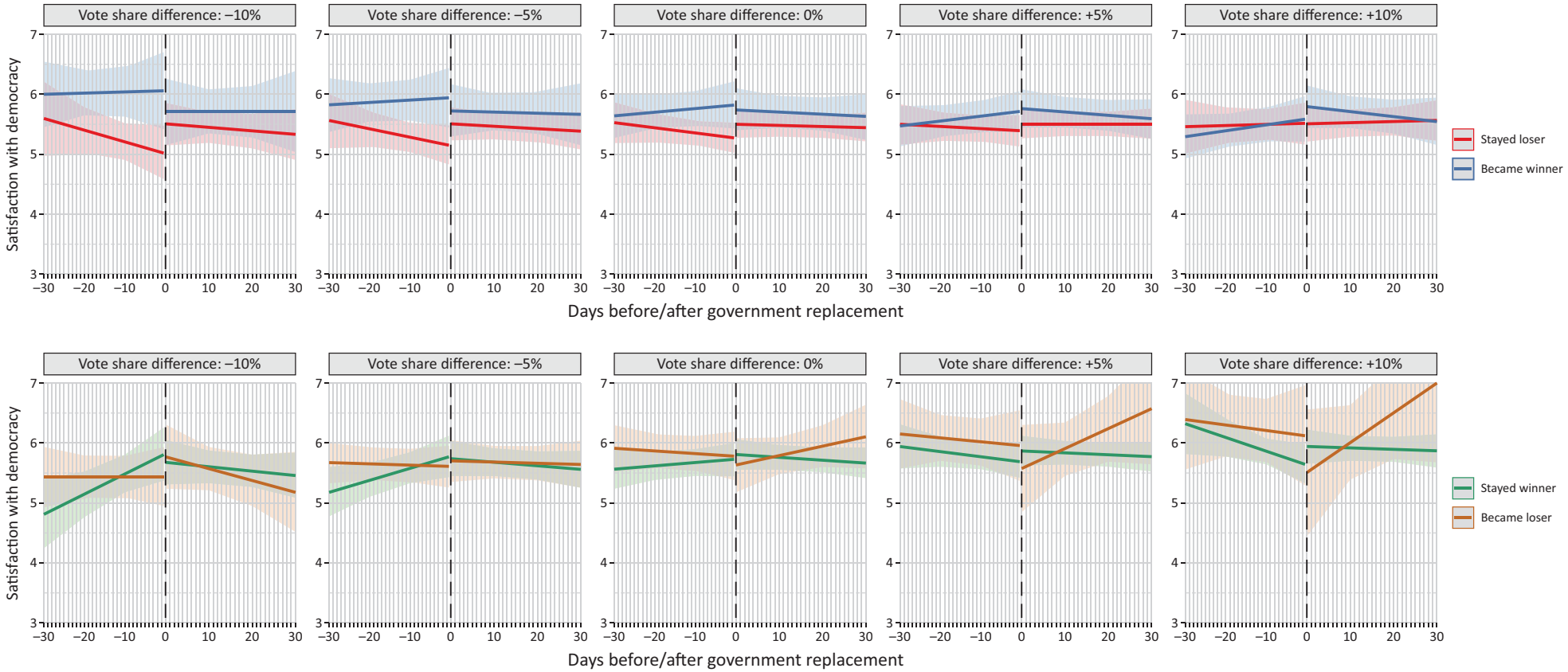

Figure 4. Comparison of estimated pre- and post-government replacement satisfaction among winners and losers depending on party vote shares. Note: The marginal effects of the interaction terms from Model 4 in Table A3 of the Supplementary File are visualized.

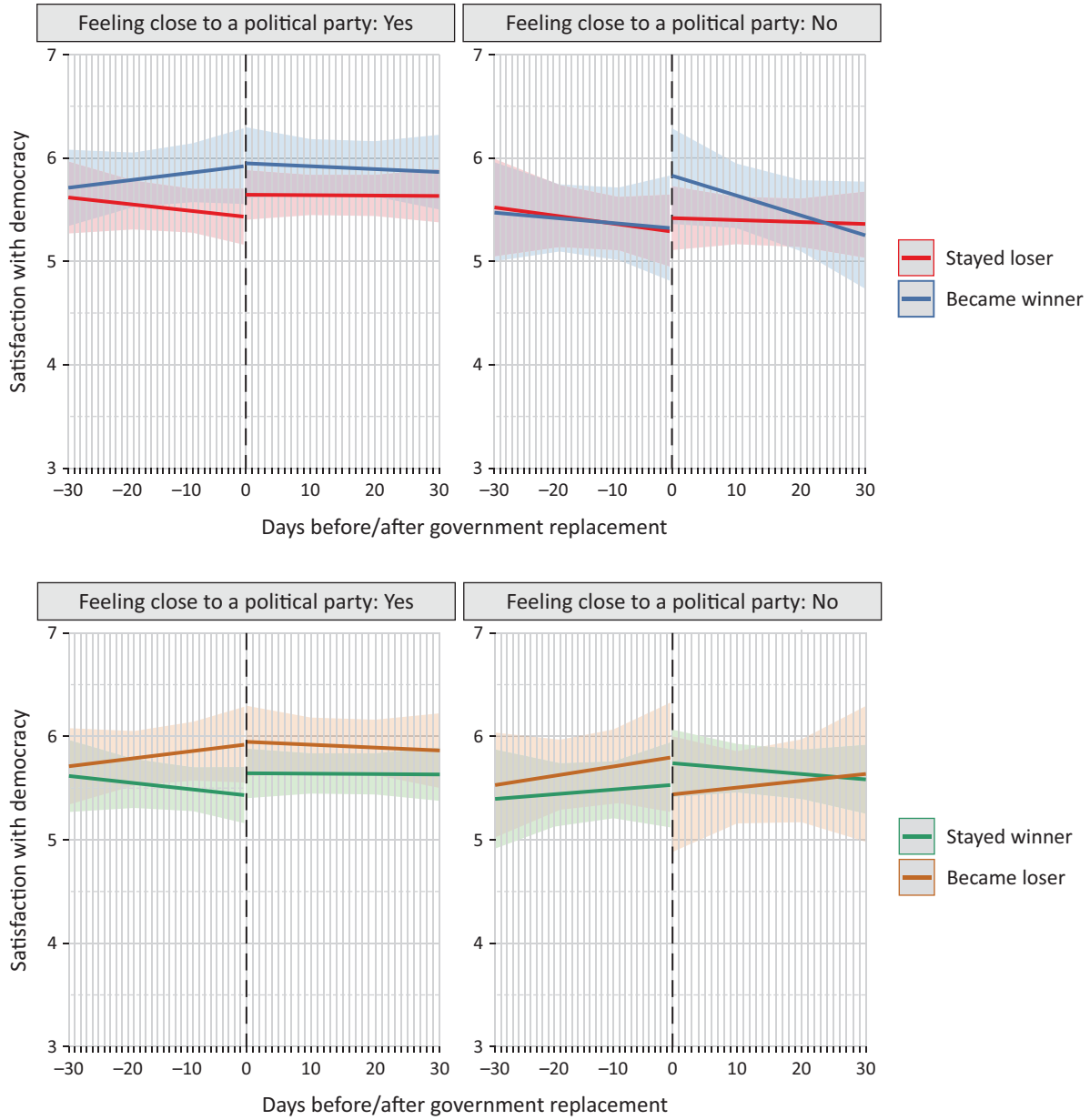

Figure 5. Comparison of estimated pre- and post-government replacement satisfaction among winners and losers between voters who do or do not feel close to a party. Note: The marginal effects of the interaction terms from Model 4 in Table A5 of the Supplementary File are visualized.

this finding has to be taken as indicative, rather than conclusive, for the future direction of research.

This part of the analysis also suggests that those whose party is excluded from government (i.e., those who became losers) do not reveal a sudden change in their satisfaction levels. Thus, it seems that the effect of becoming a loser requires some time until it develops and results in a decrease in satisfaction with democracy.

When pre- and post-government replacement satisfaction levels are compared, the only noteworthy discontinuity is a sudden boost in satisfaction among those who became winners and do not feel close to a party (see upper right panel in Figure 5). However, satisfaction among members of this group returns close to the levels among those who stayed losers during the 30 days following a government replacement. Therefore, the installation of a new government does not seem to interact with voters' partisan identification in a systematic pattern that would significantly alter the boost or decay in satisfaction levels of any of the groups.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The research applied an innovative methodological approach to the ESS data. Based on the interview date, individuals were positioned in a specific point in time before and after a government replacement in order to examine the effect of party-related attributes on the degree of sat-

isfaction with democracy among their supporters. The research examined two party-related factors—differences in election vote shares, and voters' feeling of closeness to a party—which were theorized to have an influence on voters' levels of satisfaction with democracy.

The presented evidence provides two additional contributions to this body of knowledge. First, when voters' self-declared closeness to a party is examined, the findings indicate that the satisfaction with democracy among those feeling close to a party tends to be higher. This applies to electoral winners as well as losers. Therefore, the party closeness status may constitute a relevant factor providing part of the explanation for the varying levels of satisfaction with democracy observed across contemporary democratic systems. However, given the low statistical power of these results, it has to be taken only as an indicative finding for future research to confirm or deny.

Second, the introduced methodological approach allowed a comparison of the levels of satisfaction among voters on an aggregated level before and after a government replacement. No major discontinuities were identified—i.e., neither a sudden boost nor a sharp drop is detectable in the voters' aggregated attitudes emerging shortly after a government change. The lack of any major discontinuity persists after inclusion of any party-related factors. Therefore, government changes do not seem to strike voters as a surprise (a condition especially emphasized by Muñoz et al., 2020), and they do not cause sudden overall changes in aggregated levels of satisfaction with democracy in electorates. This finding nevertheless provides a novel contribution. Steady levels of satisfaction with democracy among individuals who become electoral losers (i.e., their party lost its position in the government) indicates that the effect of losing needs some time to fully develop until it results in a decrease of voters' satisfaction levels.

The lack of discontinuities contrasts with the panel surveys analysing the micro-level changes by, e.g., Blais and Gélineau (2007), Blais et al. (2017), and Singh et al. (2012), which all identified relevant individual-level processes in the development of pre- and post-election attitudes. Hence, this study suggests that these micro-level effects only translate into the macro-level functioning of systems to a limited degree.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

When Populist Leaders Govern: Conceptualising Populism in Policy Making

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Abstract
The rise of populist governance throughout the world offers a novel opportunity to study the way in which populist leaders and parties rule. This article conceptualises populist policy making by theoretically addressing the substantive and discursive components of populist policies and the decision-making processes of populist governments. It first reconstructs the implicit ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies based on the mainstream governance and policy making scholarship. Then, taking stock of the recent populism literature, the article elaborates an ideal type of populist policy making along the dimensions of content, procedures and discourses. As an empirical illustration we apply a qualitative congruence analysis to assess the conformity of a genuine case of populist governance, social policy in post-2010 Hungary with the populist policy making ideal type. Concerning the policy content, the article argues that policy heterodoxy, strong willingness to adopt paradigmatic reforms and an excessive responsiveness to majoritarian preferences are distinguishing features of any type of populist policies. Regarding the procedural features populist leaders tend to downplay the role of technocratic expertise, sideline veto-players and implement fast and unpredictable policy changes. Discursively, populist leaders tend to extensively use crisis frames and discursive governance instruments in a Manichean language and a saliently emotional manner that reinforces polarisation in policy positions. Finally, the article suggests that policy making patterns in Hungarian social policy between 2010 and 2018 have been largely congruent with the ideal type of populist policy making.

Keywords
congruence; Hungary; policy making; political parties; populism; social policy

Issue
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1. Introduction

The policy aspects of populism and their relation to polarising policy practices have largely been neglected in populism studies. Since the seminal article of Mudde (2004) on to the emergence of a populist Zeitgeist in Western Europe, the scholarship of populism research has focused on political actors and discourses of populism and particular attention was devoted to the ambiguous relationship between populism and liberal democracy (Canovan, 1999; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). The lack of attention to the real-world consequences of populist governance is all the more striking in that in the past decade, populist parties have come into governing positions in several European countries and in the Americas (Hawkins & Littvay, 2019). Policy reforms that were adopted by populist governments may have tangible impact on social and political polarisation although this effect is yet to be explored. The fact that populist parties and leaders are in power

thus offers a novel opportunity to study the practice of their governance and policy making. In this respect, the case of Central and Eastern Europe seems particularly relevant as "in these countries, populism, if anything, is even more widespread" (Kriesi, 2014, p. 372) than in Western Europe.

Accordingly, our research has the ambition to conceptualise the specific features of populist policy making and to suggest a way in which to study this phenomenon. To this aim we theoretically address three core elements of policy making: the substantive (the content), the procedural and the discursive patterns of populist policies. The article is structured as follows: After presenting the analytical framework and the methodology of the research (Section 2) we reconstruct the implicit ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies (Section 3). Then we elaborate an ideal type of populist policy making (Section 4). Finally, we apply a congruence analysis to qualitatively assess the conformity of our ideal type of populist policy making with a typical case of populist governance, that of Hungarian social policy between 2010 and 2018 (Section 5). Here, we do not make a solid, step-by-step case study analysis in a particular social policy area, but we adopt empirical findings of earlier studies exemplifying the use of our ideal type in empirical research. In the concluding part we discuss the implications of populist policy making on the polarisation of societies and the future of liberal democracies.

2. Analytical Framework and Methodology

As our theoretical aspiration is to conceptualise the relevant features of populism in policy making, we use the Weberian ideal type framework. Recent theoretical and methodological discussions (Rosenberg, 2016) have provided new inspirations to apply the ideal type framework in empirical policy studies (Peters & Pierre, 2016). Following this agenda, we construct sociological ideal types (we refer to them henceforward simply as ideal types). In our case this means that both the substantive and the discursive components are constitutive elements of the policy making ideal types, while the context of social relationships is reflected through the procedural components.

We use the method of congruence analysis (Blatter & Haverland, 2012) to investigate the empirical relevance of our ideal type of populist policy making. Accordingly, we qualitatively assess the congruence of an assumed typical case, Hungarian social policy between 2010 and 2018 with theoretical expectations deduced from the ideal type. Post-2010 Hungary is a genuine case of populist governance (Batory, 2016; Jenne & Mudde, 2012) and social policy is a particularly suitable area to study populist policy making as populist leaders tend to reframe social policy measures to build their power regime (Ketola & Nordensvard, 2018). Welfare policy outcomes directly affect the majority of people, thus playing a crucial role in boosting majoritarian support of the electorate. In addition, welfare reforms may have a profound effect on social and political polarisation that in turn enhances citizens' propensity to populism.

Welfare state reforms, including pensions, taxation, unemployment and family policies reflect government ideas about national solidarity and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. At the same time, they have a central importance in communicating the position of the ruling elite about gender and families (Béland, 2009; Morgan, 2013). Besides utilising earlier research on Hungarian welfare state reforms after 2010, we also used the legislative and policy documents (bills, laws, and the Prime Minister's assertions) available in the database of the Hungarian Comparative Agendas Project (Boda & Sebők, 2019). Having identified major welfare state changes between 2010 and 2018 we qualitatively assess the dominant substantive, procedural and discursive elements of social policy making in Hungary. This way we combine the positivist institutional analysis perspective of policy decisions with a post-positivist discursive approach (Schmidt, 2008). It is important to note that methodologically the qualitative assessment of the major policy changes does not have an aspiration that we expect from classical explorative case studies; the applied logic of case selection and the empirical reconstruction of the typical policy patterns supported by area specific policy expertise of the researchers, however, fits the qualitative congruence analysis research design and the conceptual ambitions of the study.

3. Conceptual Departure: The Liberal Democratic Model of Policy Making

Governance and policy making varies between countries and across time: A variety of actors and institutions participates in the delivery of governance functions and their configurations delineate different governance models (Peters & Pierre, 2016). However, we argue that beyond the variations of governance types the ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies is implicitly applied.

One tacit assumption of policy making models in liberal democracies is that a relatively coherent system of ideas shapes policy positions: Ideas play a key role in the policy content and "can explain crucial aspects of policy development" (Béland, 2009, p. 704). At the same time, although majoritarian preferences have a pivotal role, they are substantively constrained by the protection of minority rights. In addition, policy content is heavily influenced by area-specific technocratic expertise (Weible, 2008) and mainstream policy paradigms that tend to create policy monopolies (Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Leech, & Kimball, 2009). As a result, the content of policies is mostly stable and policy changes are mainly incremental.

A main procedural feature of policy making in liberal democracies is institutionalism: The policy process is constrained and channelled by formal and informal institutions, thus political leaders have a low level of discretion

(Przeworski, Stokes, Stokes, & Manin, 1999). The constitutional embeddedness of pluralism limits the majoritarian logic as pluralism acknowledges the role of different social and political actors throughout the policy cycle (Baumgartner et al., 2009). This implies that public discussions inform the electorate on proposed policy alternatives. In discursive terms rival policies in this policy making model are interpreted through competing discourses and policy frames by manifold stakeholders. Policy discourses with high and positive valence (Cox & Béland, 2013) are generally applied. At the same time, the role of discursive governance (Korkut, Mahendran, Bucken-Knapp, & Cox, 2015) is limited: Although strategic metaphors are typically used in government discourses, public policy problems are usually conceptualised with specific policy language terms.

We use the ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies (see Table 1) as an anchor, a potential antithesis of the populist policy making ideal type. Populist policy making, however, is not necessarily a fully divergent, alternative model leaning towards illiberal governance (Pappas, 2014). Indeed, populist policy making might appear within liberal democracies; similar to the 'étatiste' model of governance that can operate either in authoritarian or in democratic political regime contexts (Peters & Pierre, 2016, pp. 91–92).

4. Populist Policy Making: Constructing an Ideal Type

Populism is a particularly precarious conceptual edifice in contemporary political science (Aslanidis, 2016) and encompasses three competing understandings. One approach interprets populism as a political logic "through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland, 2001, p. 14). Another group of scholars considers populism as a political communication style (Knight, 1998) characterised by a Manichean logic ('elite' vs. 'people') and adversarial narratives as well as the depiction of crises that imply the need for immediate government intervention. The third main perspective, the ideational approach conceptualises populism as a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of 'the volonté générale of the people' (Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). Accordingly, populism fundamentally opposes both elitism and pluralism (Mudde, 2004).

The umbrella term of populism suggested by Pappas (2014) provides an appropriate theoretical framework for our research. He focuses on majoritarian political logic and polarising narratives, encompassing thus the discursive framing as well as the procedural features of populism in policy making. We enrich this perspective with Weyland's idea (2001) on personalistic leadership and the unmediated contact between the political leaders and the electorate.

4.1. Populist Policies: A Substantive View

Although left-wing and right-wing populists have divergent visions about 'good society,' they also have some policy preferences in common. In foreign policy, they take a critical stance towards supranational institutions, advocate the primacy of nation states and reject liberal globalisation. In economic policy, populists tend to blame, and when in power, punish the unpopular banking elite (O'Malley & FitzGibbon, 2015) and transnational companies (Bartha, 2017). Some typically assumed populist policy positions, however, derive from intermingling populism with nationalism (De Cleen, 2017). Law-and-order punitive measures in criminal justice policy, negation of extending LGBTQ rights (Pappas, Mendez, & Herrick, 2009) or perceiving gender equality as jeopardising the idea of the traditional family (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2011; Szikra, 2019) can be deduced from right-wing nationalism of the respective political parties and not from their populism.

As populism travels across ideologies, the assumed common substantive components of populist policies are malleable and transient. While part of the European scholarship conflates the thin ideology of populism with thick right-wing nativism (Wodak, 2015), in Latin America as well as in Mediterranean Europe a left-wing, inclusionary type of populism has developed (Stavrakakis &

Table 1. Ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies.

Policy content	Policy embedded into a relatively coherent system of ideas Central role of mainstream policy paradigms supported by area-specific policy expertise Majoritarian policy preferences constrained by the protection of minority rights Incremental policy changes dominate
Policy process	Constrained by formal and informal institutions Plurality of participating actors in each stage of the policy process Public discussion on proposed policy alternatives
Policy discourse	Limited use of discursive governance Competing discourses and policy frames Dominant policy discourses with high and mainly positive valence

Katsambekis, 2014). Empirical observations confirm that the marriage of populism with nativism and the subsequent ethnic polarisation is not necessary, but contingent. Taggart denotes "the empty heart of populism" as a reflection of the lack of core values that implies its essentially 'chameleonic' nature (Taggart, 2004, p. 275). The Muddean thin ideology approach also admits the substantive flexibility of populism implying a wide array of populist policy measures (Mudde, 2004).

Though policy contents advocated by right-wing and left-wing populists may differ fundamentally, certain common features of populist policies can be theoretically detected. Populist leaders are particularly responsive to the majoritarian preferences of their electorate (Urbinati, 2017). Accordingly, populist policy measures tend to harm minority interests, and they are hostile towards unpopular minorities (Pappas et al., 2009). Populist majoritarianism is potentially incompatible with policy expertise: in the case of a marked gap between popular beliefs and area-specific policy evidence, the populist stance is by definition against expert positions shaped by mainstream policy paradigms. Striking examples include the anti-vaccination stance of Italian 5 Stars Movement leaders; the anti-green attitudes of Donald Trump or the economic unorthodoxy of the Greek Syriza. The reservation of populists towards mainstream policy paradigms and traditional epistemic communities often implies unconventional policy innovations and radical, paradigmatic policy reforms.

4.2. Procedural Features of Populist Policy Making

The procedural dimension of our ideal type is informed by the possible incompatibility between populism and liberal democracy and its preference to the majoritarian rule—a thesis widely shared in the scholarship (Albertazzi & Mueller, 2013; Pappas, 2014). The 'populism as political logic' approach stresses the importance of personalistic leaders and their use of "direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support" (Weyland, 2001, p. 14).

Populist governments tend to undermine the edifice of liberal democracy through eroding the rule of law, neutralising checks and balances and marginalising political opposition (Batory, 2016; Taggart & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016). Discriminatory legalism is a general pattern of left-wing and right-wing populists (Weyland, 2013), although especially valid for exclusionary populism (Müller, 2016). However, the inclusionary populist Syriza government was also heavily criticised for its legal procedural practices (governing by decrees, appointing loyal judges). The inclusionary type of populism does not necessarily undermine the institutions of liberal democracy, but tends to circumvent them: For instance, the 5 Stars Movement is strongly in favour of direct democracy. That is, although to different degrees and by different means, populists have a willingness to directly communicate with the electorate.

Populist policy making means a different relation between governing politicians and other policy actors compared to the implicit policy making ideal type of liberal democracies. While usual policy process modelling frameworks such as the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993) consider subsystem-specific policy experts as main contributors to the policy process, populist political leaders tend to be hostile towards technocratic expertise, downplaying the advisory role of epistemic communities in general, and the related supranational institutions in particular. The adversarial stance of populists against technocrats who created policy monopolies is inherent; indeed, populist and technocratic forms of political representations are two different alterations of party-based governments of liberal democracies (Caramani, 2017). An important consequence of sidelining veto-players and neglecting expert consultation is that the decision making process under populist rule fundamentally differs from that in liberal democracies along each of the temporal dimensions specified by Grzymala-Busse (2011). Thus, policy making under populist governance tends to have a significantly faster tempo and a shorter duration with frequent episodes of accelerations and an unpredictable timing.

4.3. Populist Policy Discourses

Discourses can play a formative role in policy change (Schmidt, 2008) and they have a particular status in populist policy making. Approaches that understand populism as a communication style (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) or as a discourse (Aslanidis, 2016) pinpoint that populist policy making exhibits strong discursive features. Indeed, while populism is at odds with the institutionalised process of policy making, it is particularly susceptible to apply instruments of discursive governance (Korkut et al., 2015), and uses strategic metaphors extensively to ground and legitimise policy measures.

Scholarship also suggests that populist governments use a tabloid and emotional communication style with moralising adversarial narratives and crisis frames (Moffitt, 2015) reinforcing polarisation in policy positions. While the chameleonic flexibility of populist governments can imply policy choices in line with expert policy evidences, discursively populists often have a clear anti-expertise stance (Thirkell-White, 2009).

Populist government leaders tend to use Manichean language and adversarial frames in legitimising policy decisions: The menace of dangerous immigrants was frequently invoked by both Salvini and Trump in order to promote increased securitisation and law-and-order measures. Populist discourses may portray both transnationally embedded liberal groups and socially marginalised unpopular minorities as enemies of the 'real people' (Müller, 2016) thus forging social polarisation. Arguments against liberalism are discursively linked to attacks against liberal 'censorship' and reveal the potentially subversive character of populism: popular be-

liefs have a higher moral stance than the values promulgated by elites.

Table 2 summarises the main features of the populist policy making ideal type. In the next section we qualitatively assess the conformity of an assumed typical case of populist policy making, post-2010 Hungarian social policy, with this ideal type.

5. Applying the Ideal Type: Social Policy Reforms in Post-2010 Hungary

Ruling since 2010, the government of Hungary under the leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has been the first clear populist administration of an EU member state that has, at the same time, moved away from liberal democracy. The governing party Fidesz has already spent a decade in power that allowed its policies to crystallise. These features make the Hungarian case especially suitable for illustrating the ideal type of populist policy making. As an attempt to apply our theoretical framework in empirical research we qualitatively assess the conformity of major social policy changes in Hungary between 2010 and 2018 to the populist policy making ideal type. Four policy areas of welfare reforms are scrutinised: pensions, taxation, unemployment programmes and family policies. We follow the logic of our ideal type construct and disentangle the content, the procedures and the discourses of social policy making.

5.1. Policy Content

Post-2010 Hungarian social policy reforms mainly constituted paradigmatic changes in substantive terms. Most reforms promoted 'working families' as the radical decrease of the highest personal income tax rate from 28% to 16% and the adoption of generous, family-based tax-allowance system in 2011 illustrates. These changes especially benefited high-income large families, Fidesz's core electorate at the time (Szikra, 2018). Adopting a flat personal income tax system was a major shift away from the progressive taxation of the previous decades.

Paradigmatic pension reforms between 2010 and 2012 included the nationalisation of the assets of private pension funds, comprising approximately 10% of the GDP. Disability pensioners were, at the same time, excluded from the public pension system and early retirement opportunities were stopped (Szikra & Kiss, 2017). Women, however, were allowed to retire earlier if they had 40 years of service to care for grandchildren. This change innovatively linked pension reform to pro-natalist aims in the hope to foster childbearing with the help of grandmothers' care. Judges and public employees were, at the same time, forced to retire earlier thus older civil servants and judges were replaced by younger, loyal state employees—a measure later copied by the Polish Law and Justice party. Overall, pension reforms under Orbán exhibited radical and paradigmatic changes accompanied by innovative policy elements that often-served political aims beyond those strictly pertaining to pension policy.

Similarly, radical reforms featured employment policies under Orbán as the maximum length of unemployment benefit was decreased from nine to three months in 2011, resulting in the shortest unemployment benefit period within the EU (Scharle & Szikra, 2015). The amount of social assistance benefit was nominally cut in the harshest years of the global crisis. The cabinet replaced labour market policies with a compulsory public works programme (Vidra, 2018) the administration of which was moved to the Ministry of Interior, signalling the aim to control the poor. The magnitude of the new Hungarian public works programme was "unrivalled in Europe" (Kálmán, 2015, p. 58).

These radical reforms ran against mainstream expertise. Policy experts have warned that the generous family allowances to upper-middle class families would unlikely to have any profound demographic effect but would further increase social inequalities and the adopted public works programme form was unfit to help labour market reintegration (Molnár, Bazsalya, Bódis, & Kálmán, 2019). The forced early retirement of judges was finally overruled by the European Court of Human Rights. However, some of these policies met general public support and even the most controversial social policy measure, the public works programme, became widely accepted among the lower classes as it provided somewhat better living conditions and a new form of local integration to the unemployed, especially after 2014 (Keller,

Table 2. Ideal type of populist policy making.

Policy content	Ideologically multifaceted and diverse Heterodox policy elements with frequent policy innovations challenging mainstream policy paradigms Reflecting majoritarian preferences, hostility against unpopular minorities Radical and paradigmatic policy reforms
Policy process	Circumventing established institutions, downplaying veto players Limiting participation of technocratic policy experts, opposition parties and civil society actors Direct communication with the electorate
Policy discourse	Extensive use of discursive governance Tabloid, highly emotional communication style, recurrent crisis framing Dominance of Manichean discourses

Kovács, Rácz, Swain, & Váradi, 2016). The economic recovery after 2010 also helped the government through raising incomes and creating new jobs that counterbalanced and mitigated the effects of the shrinking social allowances. At the same time social policy changes had a polarising effect as they reinforced the sharp division between the working and non-working population. This increasing social divide seems to have resonated with the majoritarian prejudices against the sizeable Roma minority in Hungary (Tremlett, Messing, & Kóczé, 2017).

Despite its seemingly uniform work- and family-orientation, the social policy reforms after 2010 were ideologically diverse: they entailed neo-liberal, (neo)conservative and étatist elements alike (Szikra, 2014). The abolition of progressive personal income taxation and the adoption of a flat tax was a typical neo-liberal measure that spread around Eastern Europe earlier (Appel & Orenstein, 2013). The same can be said about the ceased early retirement possibilities. The nationalisation of private pension funds and the Women 40 programme, however, were strikingly étatist reforms. (Neo)conservativism can be traced especially in the pre-occupation of Fidesz with the traditional family ideal and the vision of a 'Christian-national' culture that was fostered by handing over an increasing number of schools and kindergartens to the church. Our findings about the heterodox policy content welfare reforms confirm the understanding of Körösényi and Patkós (2017) who, borrowing the term of Carstensen (2011), labelled Orbán a bricoleur innovatively blending ideas from different paradigms.

Overall, the content of Hungarian social policy reforms after 2010 shows a high degree of conformity with the populist ideal type. First, it is impossible to identify one specific underlying ideology of its measures as they represent a blend of neo-liberal, conservative and étatist approaches. Second, most measures imply radical and paradigmatic policy reforms, in stark contrast with the general wisdom of incremental policy change. Third, measures are often policy innovations challenging mainstream policy paradigms and expert consensus.

5.2. Policy Making Procedures

All the way through its social policy reforms, the Orbán cabinets negated institutionalised consultation and consensus-seeking. The supermajority of Fidesz in Parliament created an appropriate environment for the unilateral adoption of legislation in various policy fields and it provided the opportunity to substantially redesign the institutional context of policy making. The main institution of social dialogue, the tripartite consultation body involving trade unions and employers' organisations was replaced by a new consultative forum that has no veto power in the policy process and acts only as an advisory board to the government. Another important veto player, the formerly influential Constitutional Court was sidelined by abolishing its right to overrule economic and social-policy-related legislation. As a means to by-pass normal parliamentary procedures, such as debates in parliamentary committees and thus speed up the legislative process the method of individual motion to present bills was frequently used, including the case of the enactment of the new Constitution. The legislative style of Fidesz effectively limited the possibility of the opposition to influence the decision making. Between 2010 and 2014 not one bill or legislative amendment proposed by the opposition parties was upheld by the parliamentary majority, which is unprecedented in the history of Hungarian democracy since 1990 (Boda & Patkós, 2018).

The above procedural features clearly exhibit anti-institutional attitudes and voluntarist style of decision making limiting the participation of policy actors. Still, the outcomes of policy changes were institutionalised into legislation with the help of the governmental majority in the parliament and the disciplined Fidesz parliamentary group that upholds all governmental initiatives. That is, the social policy making procedures of the Orbán governments represent a somewhat paradoxical anti-institutionalism.

Meanwhile, intermediary consultative institutions were replaced by direct communication with the people via so-called 'national consultation.' Questionnaires were repeatedly sent to all Hungarian households enquiring, among others, about social policy issues, like social assistance for the non-working or the demographic problems of the country. The government justified its position on policy issues with a reference to the majoritarian opinion expressed through the national consultations. As Batory and Svensson (2019, p. 239) argue national consultations "come to replace 'ordinary' policy-making and accountability mechanisms" under Orbán. Between 2010 and 2018 eight national consultations were organised, out of which five included questions about social policy issues. The last one focused exclusively on family policy. Each national consultation was accompanied by extensive communication campaigns in the media and on billboards portraying the government as listening to the voice of people.

As an important procedural feature, the peculiar timing and tempo of reforms (Grzymala-Busse, 2011) also fits the predictions of the populist ideal type. The government issued major changes simultaneously especially at the beginning of its terms and carried changes out at extreme speed. For instance, the nationalisation of private pension fund assets and the adoption of the new Fundamental Law were adopted within just a few months. As reform plans were not revealed in the electoral programme of Fidesz (apart from a flat rate personal income tax), stakeholders were unable to organise and react. The emergency character of Central and Eastern European welfare states is a historical feature (Inglot, 2008) but the global economic downturn and the internal political situation provided a context where such emergency decisions were more easily legitimised.

Summarising the above points: The procedural features of Hungarian policy making after 2010 correspond

to most elements of the populist ideal type. It is characterised by a marked anti-institutionalism concerning the role of veto players, pluralism and participation. These features in turn resulted in an accelerated pace of legislation. Fidesz has made extensive use of 'national consultations' as means of direct communication with the people in order to legitimise its decisions. However, we pointed out a paradoxical anti-institutionalism that refers only to the process of policy making, not to the outcomes that were formalised in legislation.

5.3. Policy Discourses

Since Fidesz has had a comfortable majority in the parliament it could easily legislate, which also means that the Orbán governments did not have to rely on discursive governance in the sense of initiating policy change without institutional/legislative change (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2016). Still, major social policy reforms were often accompanied by campaigns using a highly emotional crisis communication depicting varying 'enemies' of Hungarians. The government and the prime minister personally were repeatedly positioned as the saviours of the nation. During the renationalisation of private pension funds in 2010–2012, multinational banks and insurance companies were accused for 'gambling' with people's money and thus the prime minister appointed a Commissioner for the Protection of Pensions to 'save' the pensions of Hungarians (Aczél, Szelewa, & Szikra, 2014). That is, while the government was nationalising people's private pension savings, the discursive frame was about 'protecting' the pensions against the gambling of private funds; and this frame was used even in the denomination of a formal governmental position.

Fidesz framed social policy changes in a European context and pictured Hungary as being the leader (as opposed to a follower or even latecomer) of the transformation of the European social agenda. In this narrative Western welfare states were portrayed as being in decline and 'work-based society' (*munka alapú társadalom*) was offered as a counter-narrative. Viktor Orbán declared that the goal of the government was to achieve full employment and people were expected to work, and that no benefits would be handed out to the non-working. Those who do not find employment on the labour market have to enrol in the public works programme. The frame of 'work-based society' has not only been a recurrent theme in the speeches of the Prime Minister but has been also offered as a legitimising idea in several policy fields where benefits were linked to being employed. For instance, while the amount of the universal child allowance has not been increased for a decade resulting in a serious loss of its purchasing power, the government introduced generous income tax cuts for parents with several children—a benefit targeting those who work and have legal revenue. According to the wording of the 2011 Cardinal Act on the Protection of Families, the support of families was defined as being "distinct from the system of social provision for the needy" (Szikra, 2019, p. 234). In the Hungarian context, this terminology suggested that the unemployed, the poor and among them many of the Roma families were excluded from the focus of family policies that aimed to "boost the fertility of the middle class" (Szikra, 2019, p. 234)—an objective that a policy article of the government explicitly set (Raț & Szikra, 2018; Szikra, 2019).

Since the spring of 2015, however, the rhetoric of Fidesz shifted from the 'hard working' to 'migration crises.' In its sweeping media campaigns, the government portrayed migrants and refugees as posing a direct threat to the security and well-being of all Hungarians (Messing & Bernáth, 2017). In this context, family policy with a focus on fertility rates was put in a sharp opposition with immigration from Islamic countries. Accordingly, related questions were posed to the public in the 2015 national consultation on 'immigration and terrorism' and in 2018 on the 'protection of families' (Batory & Svensson, 2019). National consultations, as well as repeated speeches of the Prime Minister, explicitly linked the issue of immigration to the problem of low fertility: "Do you agree with the government that instead of allocating funds to immigration we should support Hungarian families and those children yet to be born?" and "Brussels wants to force Hungary to let in illegal immigrants" (Batory & Svensson, 2019, p. 4). This powerful frame related 'Brussels' to 'immigration'; and 'immigration' was contrasted with 'the support to families.' This way Hungarian families were put into opposition with both 'Brussels' and 'immigration.'

Since 2016, the campaign against György Soros and the Central European University was linked to a narrative about another new enemy, that of 'gender ideology.' Similarly to conservative right-wing movements in Europe and the US, high-ranking Fidesz-politicians used a tabloid and highly emotional communication style about 'gender craziness' that ran against the 'natural' instincts of men and women (Kováts & Põim, 2015). The protection of the traditional family through novel family policy programmes in the frame of 'demographic governance' was offered as a solution against such horrors.

To sum up, since 2010 extensive communication campaigns accompanied government decisions, including several social policy reforms. The government's communication exhibits features of populist style using highly emotional frames, adversarial narratives, depiction of crises and enemies, and expressing a Manichean logic opposing the Hungarian society to external enemies, and creating a sharp distinction between the 'worthy' and the 'unworthy' parts of the society.

5.4. Congruence Analysis

As put forth in Section 2 of the article, our aim with the empirical overview of post-2010 Hungarian social policy is to provide insights into how populist policies could be analysed by disentangling the three constitutive dimen-

Table 3. Assessing the conformity of post-2010 Hungarian social policy with the ideal type of populist policy making.

Policy content	Ideologically multifaceted and diverse	++
	Heterodox policy elements with frequent policy innovations challenging mainstream policy paradigms	++
	Reflecting majoritarian preferences, hostility against unpopular minorities	++
	Radical and paradigmatic policy reforms	++
Policy process	Circumventing established institutions, downplaying veto players	–/+
	Limiting participation of technocratic policy experts, opposition parties and civil society actors	++
	Direct communication with the electorate	++
Policy discourse	Extensive use of discursive governance	+
	Tabloid, highly emotional communication style, recurrent crisis framing	++
	Dominance of Manichean discourses	++

Notes: '++': high conformity; '+': moderate conformity; '–': disconformity; '–/+': inconclusive findings.

sions of the populist policy making ideal type. Table 3 offers the result of the congruence analysis we performed, assessing the conformity of post-2010 Hungarian social policy with the ideal type of populist policy making. The congruence analysis was made in qualitative terms: We weighed whether, and if so, how much, are the typical features of the major policy reforms in conformity with the elements of the model.

Table 3 shows that Hungarian social policy under Fidesz government strongly conformed to the populist ideal type in all three dimensions (content, procedure and discourse). Some features are less accentuated: for instance, Fidesz has not relied extensively on discursive governance as it has had the legislative power to enact policies. An ambiguous point is institutionalisation because Orbán's social policy, while largely circumventing institutional consultation mechanisms, led to a strong institutionalisation by 2018, with various social policy fields enacted in the constitution or in cardinal acts.

6. Conclusions

Populist parties have increasingly gained power in Europe and beyond offering a novel opportunity to study the way they govern. The main aim of this article was to conceptualise policy making features of populist governments. As a point of theoretical departure, we reconstructed the implicit ideal type of policy making in liberal democracies where a plurality of actors participates in the policy process that is constrained by formal and informal institutions and competing policy discourses shape policy alternatives. This policy making ideal type generally applies in liberal democracies independently from the functionalist model of governance in a broader sense.

Then, reviewing the populism scholarship, we constructed an ideal type of populist policy making. The content of populist policies is partly shaped by the underlying core ideologies; still, policy heterodoxy, strong willingness to adopt paradigmatic reforms and an excessive responsiveness to majoritarian preferences are probably distinguishing features of any type of populist policies. Discursively, populist political leaders tend to use crisis frames and discursive governance instruments such as strategic metaphors in a Manichean language to legitimise policy decisions. Direct communication with the electorate and circumvention of existing institutions is a general pattern of populist policy making, but more inclusionary variants of populist governance tend to respect the established democratic procedures more.

In addition to the primarily theoretical ambitions of this research we attempted to use our ideal type in empirical investigation. We selected an assumed typical case of populist policy making, social policy in post-2010 Hungary for the congruence analysis. Our qualitative assessment suggests a high degree of conformity between the ideal type of populist policy making and the selected case. Orbán's social policy reforms were paradigmatic but featured diverse ideological directions. The process of policy making circumvented conventional institutionalised policy mechanisms and was extraordinarily speedy. Unmediated consultations with the people and adversarial, polarising narratives accompanied social policy reforms; features that are rarely present in policy making in liberal democracies.

Understanding populist policy making has important theoretical and practical policy implications. First and foremost, it helps us explain how and why populists survive in power even in the longer run. Reasons for success of populist governance might include the ideological flexibility that closely follows majoritarian preferences of the electorate. Our findings also confirm the ambiguous relationship between populist governance and liberal democracy. While majoritarian preferences may legitimise populist policy reforms, abrupt and radical policy changes downplay institutional and policy expertise control mechanisms and are routinely supported by adversarial narratives. On the one hand, these features tend to undermine the institutions of liberal democracy; on the other hand, they inevitably foster social and political polarisation. This is particularly harmful for unpopular minorities, including the poor, the Roma, migrants and LGBTQ communities, who can easily become the scapegoats and the losers of policy changes. Given the proce-

dural features of populism, social groups with weak lobbying power might easily become excluded from decision making and their voices remain unheard. This process leads to the decline of participatory democracy and decreases the quality of policy making.

Our study has its limitations. First, our empirical exercise serves illustrative purposes and it does not provide a rigorous case study in adopting the theoretical construct. Second, while we had the theoretical ambition of constructing a general ideal type of populist policy making, we assessed the congruence of it only with a right-wing populist case. Further research may justify the relevance of populist policy making in empirical analysis and clarify the extent to which this ideal type needs adjustment to capture the main features of populist policy making in varying ideational contexts.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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