

**Who Cares about Democracy? And Why?
European Citizens' and Parties' Attitudes towards
Democracy**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Today in our Republic democracy is not respected, they impose on us reforms that the majority of the people do not want, and the leaders of all political parties think they are above the law and fill their pockets with them. [...]”

— Anonymous survey respondent from France

“We believe that direct democracy is an indispensable tool to curb the authoritarian and sometimes totalitarian behaviour of government politicians.”

— Alternative für Deutschland, Election Manifesto to the 2021 Bundestag election

When I first started working on this dissertation in mid-2017, most people were still convinced that the liberal democratic institutions in Europe were widely supported by Europeans and that no meaningful political party or movement could emerge that would manage to undermine, let alone destroy, the institutions of liberal democracy in Europe in the near future. However, recent events in France, in the United States of America, in Poland and in Hungary have challenged these deep rooted believes in the stability of European liberal democracies. Since then, many have published innovative research on democratic backsliding, focusing more and more on the role of citizens (Carey et al., 2020; Claassen, 2019; Graham and Svobik, 2020) and political elites (Gessler, 2019) for

destabilising democracy through incremental changes in institutions rather than focusing on complete breakdowns through military coups or external influences (Bermeo, 2016).

Certainly, the role of citizens and political elites for the emergence and stability of democracies has always been widely debated in political science (see for example Almond and Verba (1963), Easton (1975) and Norris (2011) for the role of citizens in democratic systems and Peffley and Rohrschneider (2007) and Weßels (2017) for extensive reviews of the literature on elite support for democracy). Empirical research in this tradition has mainly focused on investigating to what extent citizens (Ferrin et al., 2014; Inglehart, 2003) and political elites (Higley and Burton, 2006; McCall Rosenbluth and Shapiro, 2018; McClosky, 1964) support democracy, which socio-demographic factors shape citizens' and politicians' democratic attitudes (Alonso, 2016; Ceka and Magalhães, 2016; Gorman, Naqvi, and Kurzman, 2019; Pickel, 2017) and whether political elites are more supportive of democracy, more tolerant and more likely to uphold democratic decision-making procedures than citizens (McAllister, 1991).

Altogether, this research has provided puzzling and inconclusive results. Overall, a large majority of Europeans support democracy (Dalton, Shin, and Jou, 2007; Inglehart, 2003; Lagos, 2003). Many of them also think that elements of liberal democracy are important (Ferrin et al., 2014). However, Carey et al. (2020), Graham and Svobik (2020), and McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay (2020) have recently shown that citizens tend to trade policy for democracy and demand more democratic behaviour from politicians of opposing parties than from politicians of their own party. While Foa and Mounk (2016) have famously argued that support for liberal democracy is declining considerably, Alexander and Welzel (2017) have responded that this conclusion ignores the increasingly positive attitudes towards liberal democracy in contrast to other forms of democracy and inter-generational shifts, making younger generations more supportive of democracy over time. Both Mounk and Welzel have recently renewed their arguments (Mounk, 2020; Welzel, 2021), not finding a consensus on whether liberal democracy is stable or not.

While the above cited research has mainly focused on assessing the degree to which liberal democracy is supported by citizens in different countries, other research has ex-

plained citizens' understandings of democracy and their support for liberal democracy with citizens' socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, culture, political socialisation, learning, political knowledge and political attitudes (Alonso, 2016; Ceka and Magalhães, 2016; Heinisch and Wegscheider, 2020; Pickel, 2017). However, most of these factors cannot explain why some citizens tolerate undemocratic behaviour of politicians although they grew up living in established liberal democracies with overperforming economies and outstanding educational systems. In addition, the research on citizens' attitudes towards democracy uses different definitions of democracy as a baseline and suffers from methodological uncertainties such as potential biases due to social desirability or unspecific questions about democracy that citizens might interpret in different ways (Ariely and Davidov, 2011; Inglehart, 2003; Kiewiet de Jonge, 2016; Osterberg-Kaufmann, Stark, and Mohamad-Klotzbach, 2020).

Contrasting the literature above, other researchers argue that it is the political elite that stabilises democracy rather than the citizenry (see for example Walker (1966) and Peffley and Rohrschneider (2007) for reviews of the Elitist Theory of Democracy, and Levitsky and Ziblatt (2019[2018]) and McCall Rosenbluth and Shapiro (2018) for recent updates of similar arguments), mainly assuming that the citizenry is not politically informed enough or does not care enough about democracy. However, many researchers have theorised about the potential threads to democracy from populist radical right parties (Abts and Rummens, 2007; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), and the Hungarian and Polish cases have been studied extensively as examples of how populist radical right parties can destabilise democracies from within while maintaining public support (Holesch and Kyriazi, 2021; Kornai, 2015; Sadurski, 2018).

Concluding, why citizens and political elites in established liberal democracies sometimes support and defend democracy, and sometimes do not care about democracy or even dismantle democratic institutions in place is still an unanswered question to political scientists. Political science needs to analyse factors beyond culture, political socialisation and learning to explain when and why citizens and political elites defend or undermine democracy in Western Europe. Hence, the aim of this dissertation is to further shed light

on *when and why citizens and political parties politicise, defend or undermine democratic institutions in place*. While doing so, it mainly focuses on Western European countries that are believed to be especially supportive of liberal democracy but also contrasts citizens' willingness to defend democratic institutions in place in established European liberal democracies (Germany) and deteriorating European liberal democracies (Poland). All studies included in the dissertation furthermore focus on the role of different conceptions of democracy for whether citizens and political elites defend or undermine liberal democracy.

The following section briefly defines the main theoretical concepts used in the studies included in this dissertation: 'concepts' and 'conceptions' of democracy, 'understandings of democracy', 'democracy' in itself and 'liberal democracy'. These are the concepts that are used in all three studies. The introduction then reviews the methodological approaches used to study citizens' and parties' attitudes towards democracy. It subsequently presents a brief overview of the studies in Chapters 2 to 4 and the studies' publication status. The introduction concludes with an outline of the contributions the studies included in this dissertation make to the scientific community.

1.1 Defining democracy

Democracy has been defined as an essentially contested concept (Collier, Hidalgo, and Maciuceanu, 2006; Gallie, 1955:pp. 134–137). Moreover, previous studies have shown that neither citizens nor experts have a uniform understanding of what democracy means (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016; Landwehr and Steiner, 2017; Ulbricht, 2018). The studies included in this dissertation therefore differentiate between 'understandings of democracy' on the one hand and 'conceptions' or 'concepts of democracy' on the other hand. While the terms 'conceptions of democracy' and 'concepts of democracy' refer to definitions of democracy that are in line with at least a minimal scientific definition of democracy, the term 'understandings of democracy' refers to citizens' beliefs of what democracy means, even though these beliefs are sometimes not in line with any definition of democracy

researchers and experts might have in mind (Ulbricht, 2018). These different approaches to the meaning of the term democracy allow the comparison of the understanding of democracy that citizens have and the framing of democracy that parties use with concepts of democracy that we as researchers and experts have.

The minimal definition of democracy used throughout all studies in this dissertation is based on procedural definitions of democracy by authors such as Dahl (1971), Schumpeter (2010[1943]) and Diamond (1999). Any concept of democracy used in this dissertation thus fulfils the following criteria: It guarantees free and fair elections, including the right to be elected as well as freedom of speech, press and opinion. The studies included in this dissertation refer to this minimal definition of democracy as electoral democracy.¹ All studies furthermore refer to liberal democracy. Liberal democracy shall be a democracy that in addition to the minimal elements of democracy guarantees the protection of minority rights, the rule of law and effective checks and balances (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Fish, A. Glynn, Hicken, Lührmann, Marquardt, McMann, Paxton, Pemstein, Seim, Sigman, Skaaning, Staton, Cornell, et al., 2020; Diamond, 1999).

1.2 Overview of the included studies

The first two studies in Chapters 2 and 3 focus on citizens. They both investigate factors that shape citizens' support for democracy more generally and for liberal democracy more specifically. While the first study investigates to what degree authoritarianism, populism and radicalism correlate with citizens' support for and understandings of democracy, the second study shows that citizens' understandings of democracy and their satisfaction with democracy affect their willingness to defend democracy when threatened by democratic backsliding. The third study in Chapter 4 focuses on political parties. By investigating when and why parties put different concepts of democracy on the electoral agenda, it

¹Keep in mind that citizens' understandings of democracy do not necessarily coincide with electoral democracy (Ulbricht, 2018). In addition, it might be that some parties frame democracy in a way that is incompatible with electoral democracy. However, whenever I refer to democracy, I mean a political system that at least guarantees electoral democracy.

shows for the first time that democracy can become a valence or positional issue (Sio and T. Weber, 2014) of electoral competition.

The dissertation thus addresses the reasons for which parties might initiate and citizens might tolerate democratic backsliding; Some citizens might not care about or even like some restrictions of (liberal) democracy because they either do not consider them to be restrictions on democracy or because they do not think it is important to live in a democracy, after all. Consequently, some parties might be incentivised to politicise and infringe on (liberal) democracy because of their own ideology and their electorate's satisfaction with, support for and understanding of democracy.

1.2.1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 investigates the linkage between authoritarian and populist attitudes as well as radical political positions on the one hand and support for and understandings of democracy on the other hand. Based on novel survey data from France, Germany, Italy and the UK, it shows that a lack of support for liberal or any other type of democracy is strongly driven by authoritarianism, but only slightly driven - if at all - by populism and radicalism. Moreover, authoritarianism and populism correlate with different understandings of democracy that citizens in Europe have. Authoritarians less often have an understanding of democracy that is compatible with liberal democracy. Populists do not seem to use liberal democracy as a benchmark for assessing the 'democraticness' of their country, but whether the political system reflects 'the government by the people'.

In addition, this Chapter answers two critical methodological questions: Are Europeans influenced by social desirability when they report their support for democracy in surveys? And what do they have in mind when they claim to support democracy? Most importantly, results from a list experiment show that citizens report their support for democracy truthfully, irrespective of whether they are authoritarian, populist, radical or neither of these. However, an exploratory analysis of the meaning citizens attribute to democracy shows that citizens only rarely think of liberal democracy when they state that they support democracy. Thus, measures of support for democracy are invalid measures

of support for liberal democracy. Since the understandings of democracy that citizens have diverge significantly, these measures should not be taken as evidence that citizens support the type of democracy that is currently implemented in their countries.

The survey conducted for this study has been part of a larger survey on ‘Rebels in Representative Democracies’. Without the generous project funding of the *Fritz Thyssen Foundation* and the support of my colleagues, the study presented in Chapter 2 could not have been conducted.

1.2.2 Chapter 3

The study in Chapter 3 is co-authored with Theresa Gessler and investigates the role of citizens’ understandings of and satisfaction with democracy for their willingness to punish governments that undermine democratic institutions in place. Based on novel data from a survey experiment conducted in Germany and Poland, it shows that citizens are much more likely to punish governments for infringements on democracy if they believe that these institutions are important for democracy. However, citizens’ perceptions of what is important for democracy varies significantly within countries, and to a lesser extent also across countries. In addition and in contrast to the assumptions underlying large parts of the literature on satisfaction with how democracy works (see for example Aarts and Thomassen (2008), Blais and Gélinau (2007), Easton (1975), Hobolt (2012), and Norris (2011:pp. 22, 245)), dissatisfaction with democracy does not drive support for incumbents who infringe on democracy. In contrast, it is dissatisfied Polish citizens who are most willing to punish governments for democratic backsliding, while dissatisfied and satisfied German citizens do not differ substantially in their willingness to do so.

These findings have important implications for the research on citizens’ tolerance for democratic backsliding. First of all, they highlight that citizens have different preferences for institutions and that these preferences also affect to what degree they support incumbents. Thus, differences in the perception of democratic backsliding by experts and citizens are, *inter alia*, driven by differences in experts’ and citizens’ preferences for political institutions. Second, these findings also underline the relevance of ‘critical

citizens' (Norris, 2011)² who notice infringements on democracy and are willing to punish governments for these infringements on democracy. Contrasting the literature that stresses about the extent to which citizens are dissatisfied with how democracy works, it might actually be these citizens who are most attentive of governments' infringements on democracy, at least in countries that have been affected by democratic backsliding in the recent past.

The survey conducted for this study has been generously funded by the *Cologne Graduate School of the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne*. Both researchers have contributed equally to all parts of this study.

1.2.3 Chapter 4

The third study in Chapter 4 then focuses on parties and their usage of democracy per se, as well as different conceptions of democracy in election campaigns. Based on data from Germany and the concept of valence and positional issues (Sio and T. Weber, 2014; Stokes, 1963), it shows that the salience of democracy per se in German election manifestos correlates with parties' family, the satisfaction with democracy among their voters and the strength of challenger parties. Furthermore, the emphasis on different conceptions of democracy is related to parties' family, but neither to their voters' satisfaction with democracy nor to the strength of challenger parties.

Based on these findings, the article does not only conclude that the usage of democracy in German elections can be explained by valence and - to a lesser degree - positional considerations and that the reference to conceptions of democracy in German election manifestos is mainly driven by positional considerations. It also shows that democracy in general and conceptions of democracy can be an important issue in election campaigns, even in established liberal democracies.

This is not only of relevance to those researchers studying parties' democracy dis-

²Although Norris has coined this term, she is also pointing towards the negative effects of dissatisfaction with how democracy works, stating for example that dissatisfied citizens are less likely to participate in politics and more likely to state that tax evasion is tolerable (Norris, 2011).

courses. The way parties – the most important groups in which political elites organise themselves in contemporary democracies – speak about democracy most likely affects citizens (Anderson and Just, 2013; Farrell and Schmitt-Beck, 2002). The salience of democracy and the emphasis on specific concepts of democracy in parties’ election manifestos is therefore not only an indicator for the concept of democracy that parties support, but also affects how citizens view democracy (Anderson and Just, 2013).

To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to conceptualise democracy as an electoral issue. Doing so, it might lay the ground for future studies that investigate how parties refer to democracy in election campaigns, why they do so and how this affects voters as well as other parties.

1.2.4 Publication status of the studies

‘Lip-Service to Liberal Democracy in Western Europe’, the study presented in Chapter 2, has been presented at the *Elections and Public Opinion Conference* in Glasgow in September 2019 and has received three reviews from the *American Journal of Political Science* in May 2021, one suggesting minor revisions, one major revisions and one rejection. The version included in the dissertation is based on the version submitted to the *American Journal of Political Science* but clarifies the most pressing issues the reviewers have mentioned.

Theresa Gessler and I presented an earlier version of ‘The Democracy I Like’, the study presented in Chapter 3, at the *ECPR Joint Sessions* in May 2021. The version included in the dissertation takes the feedback from the participants of the Joint Session’s workshop into account. We presented this version at the *EPSA Conference* in June 2021 and plan to submit the manuscript to a special issue in *Democratization* in the near future.

‘Party Competition over Democracy’, the study presented in Chapter 4, has received reviews and the offer to resubmit a revised version to *German Politics* in June 2021. It has previously received two reviews from *Democratization* and *Party Politics*, each. The issues raised by these earlier reviews have been addressed whenever possible before

submitting the manuscript to *German Politics*. The study presented in Chapter 4 only deviates from the version submitted to *German Politics* in terms of style, but has not yet been revised for re-submission.

1.3 Contributions to the scientific community

To what extent do the three studies contribute to the research on when and why citizens and political elites politicise, defend or undermine democratic institutions in place? In terms of theory, the results provide novel insights into citizens' and parties' preferences for different types of democracy. In sum, the findings presented in this dissertation suggest that citizens have different preferences for democratic intuitions that are strongly linked to the degree to which they hold authoritarian or populist attitudes (see Chapter 2). Not all citizens equate democracy with liberal democracy (see Chapters 2 and 3), and whether they do so significantly affects whether they support restrictions on liberal democracy (see Chapter 3). These findings are corroborated by the finding that different conceptions of democracy are positional issues at least in German election campaigns (see Chapter 4). While previous research has argued that citizens make trade-offs when they support illiberal or undemocratic politicians (see for example Graham and Svobik (2020)), these findings suggest that at least in some cases, citizens support illiberal and undemocratic politicians knowingly and on purpose because they share their preferences for system reforms.

Taking into consideration that some citizens actually do not like liberal democracy or democracy in general, and that these citizens support restrictions of (liberal) democracy allows the unravelling of the most urgent puzzle of research on citizens' support for democracy and their willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding. Although most citizens 'truthfully' declare to support democracy, only few of these citizens have a liberal understanding of democracy, some of them have understandings of democracy that are not compatible with liberal democracy or even democracy in general, and few even think that they are not living in a democracy, after all, although they live in countries such as

France, Germany, Italy or the United Kingdom. Since their perception of what democracy means significantly differs from experts' perception of what democracy means, it is not surprising to find that they support what experts' perceive to be democratic backsliding.

In terms of methodology, the findings most importantly show that standard questions about democracy do not measure respondents' attitudes towards liberal democracy, but their attitudes towards a diverse set of understandings of democracy. In addition, the dissertation shows that recent developments in quantitative text analysis can make fruitful contributions to the study of citizens' understandings and parties' frames of democracy, either by using more exploratory approaches such as Structural Topic Models or more deductive approaches such as dictionaries. These approaches to quantitative text analysis will allow future research to study how democracy is framed in public debates much more broadly, what citizens' think about democracy and how this affects the stability of democratic systems. Last but not least, the dissertation also contributes to an increasing number of studies that elicit citizens' preferences for democratic institutions by using survey experiments. The list experiment implemented in Chapter 2 shows that citizens' support for democracy is not biased by social desirability. In addition, the vignette experiment implemented in Chapter 3 can reveal how differences in the democratic institutions under threat affect citizens' tolerance for democratic backsliding. Thus, this dissertation also contributes to the research on the usefulness of different survey methodologies.

CHAPTER 2

LIP SERVICE TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN WESTERN EUROPE?

DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES OF AUTHORITARIAN, POPULIST AND RADICAL
WESTERN EUROPEANS

Abstract. Political science has discussed the potential threats of populism and authoritarianism as well as populist or non-populist radical right attitudes to democracy more generally and liberal democracy more specifically. While theoretical work has clearly differentiated between authoritarianism, populism and radicalism, empirical work has not yet disentangled the effect of these three political attitudes. Building on novel survey data from France, Germany, Italy and the UK, this study shows that authoritarianism is a much stronger threat to democracy than populism or radicalism and that democracy is poorly supported in France and Italy. Furthermore, levels of self-reported support for democracy are not affected by social desirability, but Western Europeans only rarely think of liberal democracy when they hear the term democracy. These results help assessing the extent to which liberal democracy is under threat in Western Europe and better understanding why some Western Europeans support illiberal or authoritarian politicians.

2.1 Introduction

An abundance of political science literature has discussed the potential threats of populism and authoritarianism as well as populist or non-populist radical right attitudes to democracy more generally and liberal democracy more specifically. While theoretical work has clearly differentiated between authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1996; Duckitt et al., 2010), populism (Mudde, 2004) and radicalism, empirical work has often failed to disentangle their effect on democratic attitudes because of missing data.

To close this research gap, this study builds on novel survey data from four different Western European countries: France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. It investigates the extent to which authoritarianism, populism and radicalism explain Western Europeans' democratic attitudes, namely their support for and understandings of democracy. The study also assesses the current level of support for democracy among Western Europeans, and contributes to methodological debates by investigating to what extent levels of support for democracy are biased due to social desirability and in how far these levels reflect levels of support for liberal democracy (Kiewiet de Jonge, 2016; Osterberg-Kaufmann, Stark, and Mohamad-Klotzbach, 2020).

The study makes three main contributions: First, it shows that authoritarianism, populism and radicalism threaten democracy in different ways. While authoritarians claim that they do not support democracy which for them means freedom and the rule of an unoppressed majority, populists support democracy as much as non-populists but understand democracy to be the government by the people. In addition, populists are less likely to understand democracy in liberal *and* illiberal terms as non-populists. Thus, while authoritarians on average are much more likely to simply oppose democratic rule than non-authoritarians, populists value different elements of democratic rule as non-populists that are not necessarily connected with liberal or illiberal democracy. In addition, radicalism and populism do not explain variations in support for democracy well, and authoritarianism is a phenomenon that can also be found among moderates and non-populists.

Second, although reported levels of support for democracy are not biased due to

social desirability, they do not tell us much about levels of support for liberal democracy. Considerably large groups of Western Europeans understand democracy only in illiberal terms, and most Western Europeans have an understanding of democracy that does not contain elements of liberal democracy. Third, support for democracy in general is considerably lower in Western Europe than some might have expected. Especially French and Italians indicated high levels of support for undemocratic forms of government.

Overall, these results contribute to the study of the role of citizens' attitudes in stabilising democratic systems. Only if Western Europeans support liberal democracy by and large, Western European liberal democracies can be considered stable (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011). Investigating which political attitudes correlate most strongly with either support for illiberal forms of democracy or a lack of support for democracy more generally is therefore of utmost importance.

The study proceeds by defining the concepts used in this study: authoritarianism, populism, radicalism, democracy in general and liberal democracy. The study then presents previous research on the relationship between authoritarianism, populism and radicalism on the one hand and democratic attitudes, namely support for and understandings of democracy, on the other hand. Based on this research, hypotheses are formulated separately for authoritarianism, populism and radicalism. The study then explains the research design. The results section first presents the results for understandings of and support for democracy separately. These results are discussed by independent variable and scientific debate in the discussion section, where general conclusions with regard to the hypotheses are derived. The study closes with a short description of the results' implications for system support and democratic stability in Western Europe.

2.2 Definitions

Democratic attitudes comprise citizens' support for and understandings of democracy. This study focuses on understandings of democracy: democracy in general and liberal democracy. Whenever I refer to an understanding of democracy that is compatible with

democracy more generally, I refer to an understanding that is compatible with Dahl's definition of polyarchy: In every existent democracy, citizens must at least have the opportunity to formulate and signify preferences and to have their preferences weighted equally in conduct of government. His criteria focus on free and fair elections with universal suffrage and universal rights to be elected at least for all adult citizens, free access to information and free expression of opinions (Dahl, 1971:p. 3). Whenever I refer to an understanding of democracy that is compatible with *liberal democracy*, I refer to a democracy that guarantees the protection of minority rights, the rule of law and effective checks and balances (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Skaaning, et al., 2018:p. 14). An understanding of democracy that is incompatible with liberal democracy is not necessarily incompatible with democracy more generally.¹ However, the opposite is true: An understanding of democracy that is incompatible with democracy more generally cannot be compatible with liberal democracy.²

I focus on support for liberal democracy and democracy more generally for two reasons. First, this allows to compare the degree to which Western Europeans support democracy more generally versus liberal democracy. A lack of support for democracy in general would highly destabilise Western European democracies, while a lack of support for liberal democracy might 'only' endanger liberalism but not necessarily basic democratic rights (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011). A lack of support for other types of democracies such as direct or social democracy might not necessarily destabilise any of Western European democracies since this is only in very few cases a defining element. Second, this focus allows to assess in how far citizens' lack of support for democracy is correlated with their authoritarian and populist attitudes or their radical political positions. Disentangling these correlations will thus not only be of value for research on democratic support and democratic stability, but also for research that explains the support for undemocratic or illiberal parties, providing a piece of evidence

¹Some respondents claimed, for example, that in democracies, governments should do what a majority of the population wants - irrespective of minority positions. This understanding is incompatible with liberal democracy, but not necessarily with democracy more generally.

²Some respondents claimed that in democracies, only educated people should be allowed to vote. This understanding of democracy is incompatible with democracy more generally and liberal democracy.

for the causal mechanism that explains how liberal democracies get destabilised from the inside (Graham and Svobik, 2020; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2019[2018]).

Furthermore, I focus on authoritarianism, populism and radicalism as three different and separate concepts that are often named as the main threats to liberal democracy and democracy more generally. *Authoritarianism* shall be defined as a political attitude that is characterised by submission to perceived authorities, adherence to social conventions and aggression against those who question authorities or social conventions (Altemeyer, 1996; Duckitt et al., 2010:pp. 1–8). *Populism* shall be a political attitude 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* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2004:p. 543). *Radicalism* shall be defined as an ideological position on the outer points of ideological dimensions. In contrast to moderates, radicals have ideological positions that are either further to the right or further to the left than the general public of their country.

The following section reviews previous literature that has investigated factors which shape citizens’ support for and understandings of democracy. It then explains why the two political attitudes authoritarianism and populism as well as radical ideological positions should have different effects on citizens’ democratic attitudes.

2.3 Explaining Western Europeans’ democratic attitudes

Most studies have investigated differences in democratic attitudes across countries, focusing on differences in countries’ historical legacy and political culture (see for example Inglehart and Welzel (2005)). Only few studies have explained Western Europeans’ democratic attitudes on the individual level. Inter alia, Ceka and Magalhães (2016) have shown that Western Europeans with a low socio-economic status endorse understandings of democracy that contradict the type of democracy they live in more often than Western Europeans’ with a high socio-economic status. Pickel (2017) has shown that

this applies to citizens of many Western and Eastern European countries, although to a different extent. Alonso (2016) has furthermore found that Western Europeans' support for democracy as an unspecified concept is related to citizens' level of education, their political interest, their political participation, their political trust and their satisfaction with the government in place.

In the only study that links Western Europeans' political and democratic attitudes that I know of, Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) have shown that Austrian and German populists are more likely to support expert government and less likely to support representative democracy than non-populists. Populists and non-populists are equally likely to support majoritarian or deliberative forms of democracy. Support for these latter two forms of government is related to citizens' left-right position.

However, the role of authoritarianism, populism and radicalism *ceteris paribus* for citizens' democratic attitudes, most importantly their support for liberal democracy and democracy in general, remains understudied. The following subsections present hypotheses for the relationship between authoritarianism, populism as well as radicalism (independent variables) and the support for democracy more generally (dependent variable 1) as well as the compatibility of citizens' understandings of democracy with liberal democracy more specifically (dependent variable 2).

2.3.1 Authoritarianism and democratic attitudes

Authoritarians have been described as individuals who are highly submissive to those they perceive to be authorities, who adhere to social conventions of their group of reference and who are aggressive against those who either question authorities or social conventions (Altemeyer, 1996:pp. 1–8; Duckitt et al., 2010). Thus, they favour strong lines of command and principles that conflict with democracy in general, most importantly with freedom and tolerance of the opposition. In line with this theoretical argument, Regt, Mortelmans, and Smits (2011) have found that authoritarians in post-Soviet states are less supportive of democracy than non-authoritarians. However, there is no theoretical reason that they have a different understanding of what democracy means. Neither do

we have reasons to assume that they are more or less likely to understand democracy as liberal democracy than non-authoritarians. I therefore hypothesise:

Hypothesis 1 *Authoritarian and non-authoritarian Western Europeans have equally often an understanding of democracy that is compatible with liberal democracy.*

Hypothesis 2 *Authoritarian Western Europeans support democracy less than non-authoritarian Western Europeans.*

2.3.2 Populism and democratic attitudes

Populism - 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* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2004:p. 543) - is considered to be a threat to liberal democracy, but not necessarily democracy in general. Researchers have overall argued that populism threatens the separation of powers and the protection of minority rights, since its extreme form can only acknowledge one homogeneous ‘will of the people’ which should neither be restricted by institutions nor by minorities (Abts and Rummens, 2007; Mudde, 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Rummens, 2017).³

Indeed, there is some evidence that populists have a different understanding of what democracy means compared to non-populists. They tend to like direct democracy more than non-populists (Jacobs, Akkerman, and Zaslove, 2018), to be more in favour of technocratic rule (Heinisch and Wegscheider, 2020) and to be less in favour of representative government (Heinisch and Wegscheider, 2020). While the above cited researchers have argued that populists should also favour features of liberal democracy less than non-populists (Abts and Rummens, 2007; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Rummens, 2017), Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) have found no clear evidence for this. However, I follow the argument that an extreme populist understanding of democracy contradicts important aspects of liberal democracy and therefore hypothesise:

³See Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020:pp. 34–35) for a more detailed argumentation.

Hypothesis 3 *Compared to non-populist Western Europeans, populist Western Europeans have less often an understanding of democracy that is compatible with liberal democracy.*

Although populists might have a different understanding of what democracy means, there is no empirical evidence that they support democracy in general more or less often than non-populists (Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert, 2020). I therefore furthermore hypothesise:

Hypothesis 4 *Populist Western Europeans support democracy as much as non-populist Western Europeans.*

2.3.3 Radicalism and democratic attitudes

To my knowledge, no study has so far investigated the relationship between left- and right-wing radicalism and democratic attitudes, in detail.⁴ While Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) have found evidence for differences between left- and right-wing voters with regard to their preferred type of political decision-making, there is no theoretical reason to believe that radicals both on the left and on the right understand the term democracy differently than moderates.⁵ I therefore hypothesise:

Hypothesis 5 *Moderate and radical Western Europeans have equally often an understanding of democracy that is compatible with liberal democracy.*

Radical citizens both on the right and on the left end of the ideological spectrum have nevertheless been found to be more dissatisfied with democracy than other citizens (T. J. Allen, 2017a; T. J. Allen, 2017b; Arzheimer, 2009; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2020; Ramiro, 2016). This dissatisfaction with the democratic system can

⁴There is obviously an abundance of literature on the dangers of radical right-wing extremism for democracy, and also some literature on dangers of radical left-wing extremism. However, this study is interested in disentangling the effect of radicalism from the effect of authoritarianism, populism and ideology, not in replicating findings for radical right- and left-wing voters.

⁵Since some might argue that authoritarianism is part of a radical ideological position, Section 2.6 presents correlations between citizens' populist and authoritarian attitudes and their radical and left-right self-placement. There is no evidence that radicalism and authoritarianism correlate strongly and the analysis controls for authoritarianism, radicalism and left-right self-placement simultaneously.

translate into a lack of support for democracy (Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011). I therefore additionally hypothesise:

Hypothesis 6 *Radical Western Europeans support democracy less than moderate Western Europeans.*

2.3.4 The problem with social desirability

That responses to questions about citizens' support for democracy might be biased due to social desirability has been an ongoing concern of political science research (Blair, Coppock, and Moor, 2020; Inglehart, 2003; Kiewiet de Jonge, 2016; Osterberg-Kaufmann, Stark, and Mohamad-Klotzbach, 2020). In addition, it might be that some respondents are more prone to social desirability than others. If it were the case that social desirability affects the responses of authoritarians, populists and radicals to different degrees, results of this study could not reflect 'true' differences that are related to these political attitudes and positions.

Social desirability might affect those respondents more that have opinions that conflict with the majority position in their country. This is especially true for authoritarians and radicals. Authoritarians on the one hand are expected to oppose democracy more often than non-authoritarians. Open opposition to democratic rule in general is often attacked and sometimes even illegal, depending on the context in which the opposition to democracy is voiced. Radicals on the other hand have political positions that are far away from positions shared by others and thus should often face criticism in public debates. In contrast to authoritarians and radicals, populists are 'only' expected to have a different understanding of what democracy means that might conflict with liberal democracy but does not necessarily contradict democracy in general. Thus, I additionally hypothesise:

Hypothesis 7 *Authoritarian Western Europeans are more likely to over-report their support for democracy than non-authoritarian Western Europeans.*

Hypothesis 8 *Populist Western Europeans are equally likely to over-report their support for democracy as non-populist Western Europeans.*

Hypothesis 9 *Radical Western Europeans are more likely to over-report their support for democracy than moderate Western Europeans.*

2.4 Data and country selection

I use novel survey data from 3,500 respondents from France, Germany, Italy and the UK, each (total N=14,000). The survey has been conducted as part of a larger research project via YouGov between January 22, 2020 and February 5, 2020. Respondents represent their national population regarding their age and gender (cross-quotas applied), as well as their educational background and the size of the locality they live in. The survey that includes a list experiment has received ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne. The analysis has furthermore been pre-registered with the OSF.⁶

The selection of France, Germany, Italy and the UK increases the expected variance of authoritarian and populist attitudes, of radical political positions and democratic attitudes. While previous research has shown that support for liberal democracy is high in Germany and Italy, it is low in France and the UK (Kriesi, Saris, and Moncagatta, 2016). Additionally, France and Italy have seen high levels of electoral support for radical right-wing parties, whereas electoral support for these parties is still comparably low in Germany and only moderate in the UK. In addition, the Brexit and Scottish independence referenda might have motivated many citizens from the UK to generate an individual understanding of what democracy should look like. Thus, this country selection is useful to assess the diversity of democratic attitudes among Western Europeans and the relationship between authoritarianism, populism and radicalism on the one hand and democratic attitudes on the other hand.

⁶I made changes to the wording of the hypotheses. Their content and direction remain unaffected. I refer to radicalism instead of extremism, since the latter term implies authoritarian attitudes for some researchers.

2.5 Measurement and analysis

To measure respondents' understandings of democracy, the survey includes an open-ended question: 'Generally speaking, what does "democracy" mean to you? There are no right or wrong answers. If you want to, you can list multiple things.' I use an open-ended question since this question format influences respondents' understanding of what democracy means least. It is therefore well suited to grasp what respondents think of when they speak about democracy (Ariely and Davidov, 2011; Frankenberg and Buhr, 2020; Osterberg-Kaufmann, Stark, and Mohamad-Klotzbach, 2020).

I first translate non-English responses to English with DeepL.⁷ I then analyse responses using Structural Topic Models (STM), a method to quantitatively cluster words into topics based on their co-appearance in documents (Roberts, Stewart, Tingley, and Benoit, 2018; Roberts, Stewart, Tingley, Lucas, et al., 2014). This method has been designed for exploring texts such as survey responses (Roberts, Stewart, Tingley, Lucas, et al., 2014).

I furthermore categorise the derived topics into four different categories: (1) Topics are *liberal democratic* if they refer to parts of a liberal democratic understanding. (2) Topics are *democratic* as long as they do not contradict democracy more generally *or* a liberal democratic understanding. (3) Topics are *illiberal* if they do not contradict democracy in general but a liberal democracy. (4) Topics are *undemocratic* if they contradict democracy in general.

To measure respondents' direct (potentially biased) and 'true' support for democracy, the survey includes a list experiment. List experiments give respondents the possibility to hide their true preferences from the researchers by stating their agreement with several statements simultaneously. At the same time, researchers can measure levels of support for the sensitive statement - the statement for which they fear social desirability might bias the responses - across groups of respondents by comparing how many statements respondents agree with when they see the sensitive statement and when they do not see the sensitive statement. Researchers can compare this measurement of 'true' support

⁷Translations were checked and manually corrected in some instances by the author.

for the sensitive statement with responses to questions that directly ask for respondents' agreement with the sensitive item to assess the degree of social desirability biases in direct responses (Blair and Imai, 2012; A. N. Glynn, 2013). Respondents saw the list experiment before they saw the open-ended question about their understanding of what democracy means.

Table 2.1 shows the experimental design. Respondents were assigned randomly into one of three groups. (1) $\frac{1}{5}$ of respondents were asked directly whether they agree or disagree with four statements, one of which measures support for undemocratic political systems: 'It would be better if [country] would not be a democracy'. (2) About $\frac{2}{5}$ of respondents were asked to state how many out of three statements they agree with. These respondents were not asked about their agreement with the undemocratic statement. (3) The remaining $\frac{2}{5}$ of respondents were asked to state how many out of four statements they agree with. Since these respondents saw one statement more than the second group, the percentage of respondents who agree that it would be better if their country of residence would not be a democracy can be measured by subtracting the mean number of responses in group 2 from the mean number of responses in group 3 (A. N. Glynn, 2013).

This percentage of respondents reflects the 'true' percentage of respondents who agree with the undemocratic statement if certain conditions are met. First, random assignment of the respondents to the experimental groups must be guaranteed (Blair and Imai, 2012). Second, responses to three additional statements should be unaffected by whether respondents see the undemocratic statement (no design effects) (Blair and Imai, 2012). And third, statements should be chosen in a way that they avoid situations in which respondents fear to reveal their preferences because they either agree with all or with none of the statements (no ceiling or floor effects) (Blair and Imai, 2012; A. N. Glynn, 2013). Respondents in groups 2 and 3 were additionally asked how many of the statements they disagree with to decrease under-reporting in list experiments (Tsuchiya and Hirai, 2010). Furthermore, the sensitive statement was worded negatively since previous research has shown that list experiments tend to overstate social desirability for statements that are often affirmed (Kiewiet de Jonge and Nickerson, 2014).

Table 2.1: Design of list experiment

| Open questions | List experiment: control group | List experiment: treatment group |
|---|---|---|
| Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? | How many of the following statements do you agree with? And how many of the statements do you disagree with? Please <u>do not</u> tell us which statements you agree with but merely how many. | How many of the following statements do you agree with? And how many of the statements do you disagree with? Please <u>do not</u> tell us which statements you agree with but merely how many. |
| 1) Fighting climate change should be one of the priorities of [country] politics. | 1) Fighting climate change should be one of the priorities of [country] politics. | 1) Fighting climate change should be one of the priorities of [country] politics. |
| 2) U.S. president Trump’s decision to reduce cooperation between the U.S. and other countries was a good decision. | 2) U.S. president Trump’s decision to reduce cooperation between the U.S. and other countries was a good decision. | 2) U.S. president Trump’s decision to reduce cooperation between the U.S. and other countries was a good decision. |
| 3) Living in another country for a while should be mandatory for every [country] student to get to know different cultures. | 3) Living in another country for a while should be mandatory for every [country] student to get to know different cultures. | 3) Living in another country for a while should be mandatory for every [country] student to get to know different cultures. |
| 4) It would be better if [country] would not be a democracy. | | 4) It would be better if [country] would not be a democracy. |

To measure respondents authoritarian and populist attitudes and their radical political positions, the survey includes a set of standard questions. Authoritarianism is measured on a Likert scale that has previously been used in the British Electoral Study (Fieldhouse et al., 2016; Fieldhouse et al., 2018).⁸ Respondents were asked whether they agree with a set of questions on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). I measure the strength of respondents authoritarian attitudes as the mean agreement with

⁸This scale, which operationalises authoritarianism as attitudes, has outperformed the operationalisation of authoritarianism as child rearing preferences in our pre-test and has been validated by G. Evans, Heath, and Lalljee (1996) and Nour, L. Evans, and Carhart-Harris (2017). Question wordings and tests for both scales are shown Chapter SM2.1.

authoritarian statements.

To measure populism, I use a short version of the populism scale by (Castanho Silva, Andreadis, et al., 2019). It conceptualises populism as a three-dimensional attitude, including people-centrism, anti-elitism and Manichean outlook. For each of these dimensions, respondents were asked to which degree they agree or disagree with one statement.⁹ In terms of cross-national validation, conceptual breadth and external validity, this scale performs better than other scales (Castanho Silva, Jungkunz, et al., 2019). I measure the strength of respondents' populist attitudes as the mean agreement with populist statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To measure radicalism, I calculate the distance of respondents' self-placement on an 11-point left-right scale to the centre of the scale. Radicalism is thus measured on a 6-point scale from 0 to 5.

To analyse the relationship between political attitudes and positions and democratic attitudes, I use different types of regressions with population weights. For analysing respondents' understandings of democracy, I linearly regress the expected proportion of different STM topics on respondents' strength of authoritarian and populist attitudes and their radical positions. Here, I include country fixed effects in the regression analysis to assure that country differences do not affect the overall results of the analysis. For analysing respondents' support for democracy, I regress their 'true' support for democracy on their political attitudes as proposed by Blair and Imai (2012) and Imai (2011) across all countries (without country fixed effects) and within countries. This allows to assess the general relationship between authoritarianism, populism, radicalism and democratic support and the stability of this relationship across four different Western European countries. In all cases, I control for respondents' age, sex, education, left-right self-placement and political knowledge as well as for the size of the locality respondents live in.¹⁰ I furthermore control whether the results are robust for the exclusion of respondents' left-right self-placement.

⁹Statements are shown in Chapter SM2.1.

¹⁰A description of these control variables can be found in Chapter SM2.2.

2.6 Results

Before presenting the understandings of and support for democracy of Western European respondents, this section briefly discusses uni- and bi-variate distributions of the main independent variables, including respondents' left-right self-placement. This descriptive analysis shows that authoritarianism as well as populism correlate with respondents' left-right self-placement and radicalism, although in different manners. Controlling for these four different aspects simultaneously thus yields new insights into the political attitudes and positions that drive democratic attitudes that are incompatible with liberal democracy or even democracy in general.

Figure 2.1 shows uni-variate distributions for radicalism, authoritarianism and populism in each country compared to the overall distribution of these attitudes.¹¹ Overall, respondents position themselves close to the mean position on an 11-point scale for their left-right self-placement. Thus, 75 per cent of the respondents score 3 or lower on the radicalism scale. Only in rare cases do they position themselves more radically. Respondents tend to be slightly more populist than authoritarian. However, both political attitudes are widely distributed.¹²

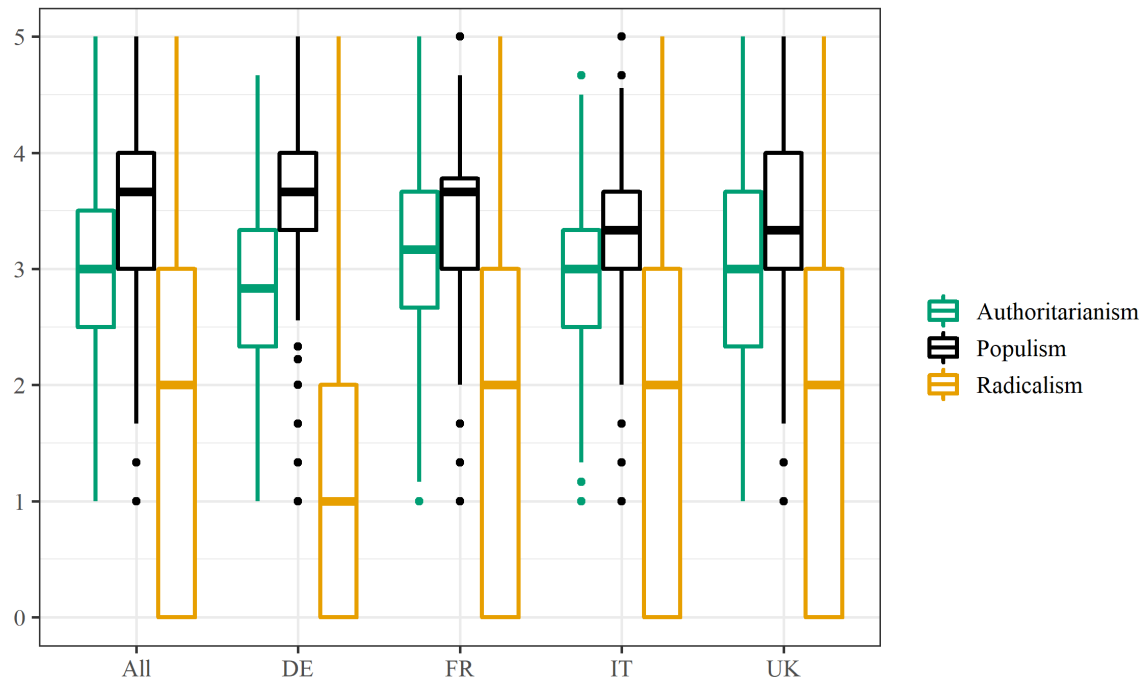
Authoritarian attitudes are most common among French respondents and least common among German respondents. German and French respondents show higher levels of populism than Italian and British respondents. With the exception of Germany, respondents from all countries show similar levels of radicalism. However, differences between German and other respondents should not be over-interpreted. While Germans show a mean value of 1.40 (median=1.00) on the radicalism scale from 0 to 5, all other respondents score a mean value of 1.90 (median=2.00) on the same scale.

Plots (a) through (f) in Figure 2.2 show the uni-variate distribution of respondents' left-right self-placement and bi-variate distributions of authoritarianism, populism, radicalism and left-right self-placements. (a) In each country, respondents' left-right self-placement spreads around the middle point of the 11-point scale. While German and

¹¹Please be aware that radicalism is measured on a 6-point interval scale, while authoritarianism and populism is measured on a 5-point metric scale.

¹²Authoritarianism: 2.95 (mean) and 3 (median). Populism: 3.48 (mean) and 3.67 (median).

Figure 2.1: Uni-variate distributions of authoritarianism, populism and radicalism in Western Europe

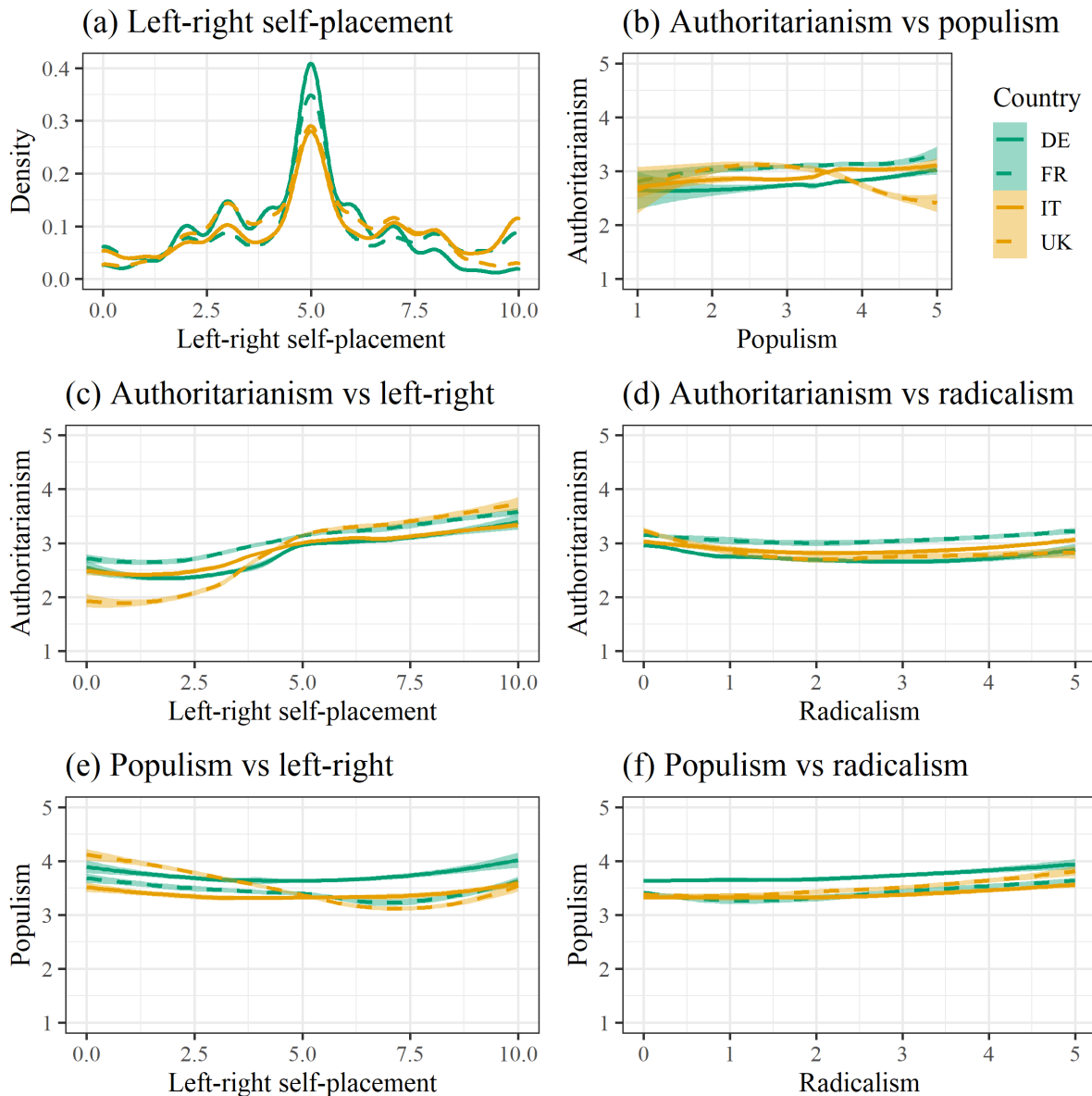


British respondents describe themselves more often as moderate left-wing than moderate right-wing, Italian respondents describe themselves more often as right-wing than left-wing. French respondents seem to place themselves equally often on both sides of the left-right scale. (b) Authoritarianism and populism are significantly correlated ($p < 0.001$) within all countries.¹³ With the exception of the UK, this correlation is positive and small. Although the coefficient for the UK is negative, the relationship between authoritarianism and populism seems to be parabolic rather than linear. Across countries, the correlation is not significant ($p > 0.05$) and very close to 0 ($r = 0.01$).

(c) Authoritarianism and left-right self-placement correlate significantly ($p < 0.001$) and positively with each other, meaning that right-wing respondents tend to be more authoritarian than left-wing respondents. However, the difference is most extreme for moderate left-wing respondents and moderate to radical right-wing respondents. This difference is furthermore strongest in the UK. In all countries, radical left-wing respon-

¹³All significance levels and correlation coefficients mentioned in this section are based on a Pearson's product-moment correlation.

Figure 2.2: Respondents left-right self-placement and bi-variate correlations between authoritarianism, populism, radicalism and left-right self-placements within countries



dents tend to be more authoritarian than moderate left-wing respondents. (d) The correlation between authoritarianism and radicalism is only significant in Germany and the UK. In these countries, this relationship is positive. However, the correlation coefficient is very small and the relationship seems to be parabolic and not linear.

(e and f) The relationship between populism and respondents' left-right self-placement stands in contrast to the one between authoritarianism and their left-right self-placement. While populism and left-right self-placement seem to be related parabolically (higher levels of populism for radical right- as well as radical left-wing respondents), populism and

radicalism seem to be related linearly. The latter relationship is significant for all countries ($p < 0.001$) but not very strong. In the case of France, respondents who score 0 on the radicalism scale show slightly higher levels of populism than respondents who score 1 or 2 on the radicalism scale.

Overall, this section shows that the relationship between authoritarianism, populism and radicalism differs slightly across countries. Although authoritarianism is more common among moderate and radical right-wing respondents, some radical left-wing respondents, too, show considerable levels of authoritarianism. Similarly, populism is an attitude that is most common among radical right- and radical left-wing respondents - and least common among moderates. Thus, conflating these attitudes with respondents self-placement on the left-right scale hides interesting variation. The following sections take this variation into account and control for authoritarianism, populism and radicalism simultaneously.

2.6.1 Understandings of democracy among authoritarians, populists and radicals

To measure respondents' understandings of democracy, I apply STM to open-ended responses on the meaning of democracy. Table 2.2 shows 12 out of 25 topics from the selected STM.¹⁴ For each topic, Table 2.2 shows the topic number, the seven most predictive words, the expected proportion of the topic¹⁵ in the corpus and the category I assigned them to. Most of these topics reflect an understanding of democracy that is at least compatible with democracy in general. Only two topics (4 Fundamental rights and 16 Respect) make reference to elements of liberal democracy. Open-ended responses with high expected proportions of Topic 4 mention for example civil and human rights,

¹⁴Text pre-processing and the model selection are described in Chapters SM2.3 and SM2.3. The remaining 13 models and exemplary responses for each topic are shown in Chapter SM2.3. The remaining topics are not interpretable, describe styles of languages (e.g. "democracy means to me ...") rather than understandings of democracy or are very infrequent.

¹⁵STM clusters words into topics based on their distribution in the documents. It then calculates probabilities (expected proportions) that a specific topic is mentioned in these documents based on the words that appear in the documents. The values shown in Table 2.2 are mean values for the expected topic proportions across all responses.

the separation of power and the protection of minority rights as well as having duties to fulfil in democracies, co-determination and having a choice. Open-ended responses with high expected proportions of Topic 16 mention the need to respect others, including their possibly opposing opinions and respect for election results. Additional two topics reflect understandings of democracy that are either clearly illiberal (23 Unoppressed majorities) or not compatible with democracy (11 Non-existent). Open-ended responses with high expected proportions of Topic 23 mention the need to do what the majority of the population wants, irrespective of what a minority might want or need. These responses have also often a negative connotation that suggests that respondents believe that there is no ‘real’ democracy in their country (e.g. references to “free speech....proper free speech”). Open-ended responses with high expected proportions of Topic 11 furthermore directly mention that the respondent’s country is not democratic. The overall distribution of these topics suggests that Western Europeans at least think of democracy in general when they speak of democracy, but only in rare cases of liberal democracy. Most importantly, they do not have the same thing in mind when they hear the term democracy.

Figure 2.3 shows the density of expected category proportions in responses from each country.¹⁶ Across all countries, most responses mention democracy in general but not liberal democracy. Many of these responses mention few other things than that. Consequently, most responses do not show high expected category proportions for liberal, illiberal or undemocratic topics. However, there is a considerably large group of responses in each country that mostly refer to illiberal democracy and mention few other things. These responses show up as peaks in the density function at an expected category proportion of 30 per cent. 30 per cent of each of these responses is expected to be about illiberal democracy. These responses are more common in France and Italy than in Germany and the UK.

The hypotheses derived in Section 2.3 postulate that within-country differences in Western Europeans’ understanding of what democracy means are related to their populist

¹⁶These are aggregated values for all topics of each category. Since topic proportions sum up to 100 for each document and for single topics across the whole corpus, this reflects the distribution of specific categories of topics in the corpus.

Table 2.2: Description of selected topics

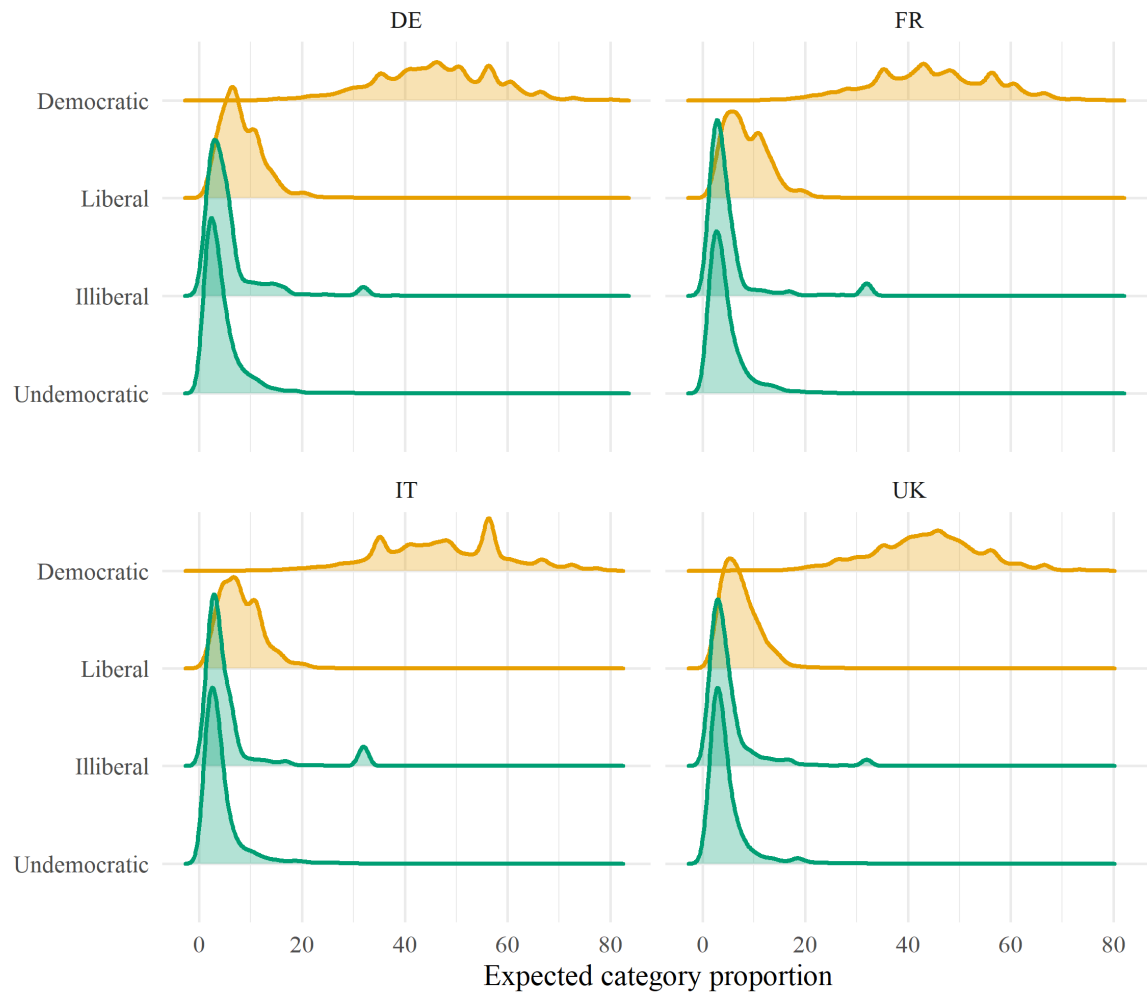
| # | Title | Most predictive word stems | Proportion | Category |
|----|-----------------------------|--|------------|--------------|
| 22 | Government by the people | peopl, govern, power, praticip form, state, exercis | 8.85 % | Democratic |
| 18 | Freedoms | freedom, speech, thought justic, press, peac, independ | 8.05 % | Democratic |
| 3 | Free expression | express, opinion, one, abl own, idea, freeli | 6.72 % | Democratic |
| 17 | Equality | for, all, equal, opport liberti, fratern, abov | 6.43 % | Democratic |
| 23 | Unoppressed majorities | free, major, dont, know win, agre, etc | 5.39 % | Illiberal |
| 2 | Having a say | everyon, say, can, has where, everi, his | 4.53 % | Democratic |
| 4 | Fundamental rights | right, choice, duti, co-determin protect, human, accept | 4.44 % | Liberal |
| 11 | Non-existent | not, are, there, onli, mani, always | 4.39 % | Undemocratic |
| 7 | Voting | vote, rule, fair, scocieti, leader, count, share | 3.81 % | Democratic |
| 10 | Representation | elect, repres, parti, through parliament, member, general | 3.76 % | Democratic |
| 16 | Respect | respect, other, noth, view, allow, each, themselv | 3.61 % | Liberal |
| 6 | Political system | countri, polit, which, system run, direct, abil | 3.21 % | Democratic |

Notes: Highest probability used for word weighting.

attitudes, but not to their authoritarian attitudes or radical political position. Table 2.3 shows the results for the regression of the eight selected topics that were classified as democratic topics on Western Europeans' authoritarianism, populism and radicalism. While these results overall suggest that radicals and moderates do not differ from each other with regard to their understanding of democracy, populist and authoritarians seem to differ considerably from non-populists and non-authoritarians, respectively.

The more radical respondents are, the less they refer to different types of freedom and to equality, but the coefficient is very small. In contrast to that, populism correlates significantly with a series of topics, and coefficients are considerably large when compared to the mean and standard deviation of each of these topics. For example, an increase from 1 (minimum populist attitude) to 5 (maximum populist attitude) increases the expected proportion of references to the government by the people by 1.65. The mean expected

Figure 2.3: Density of the expected proportions for categories in single open-ended responses by country



proportion of this topic in the corpus of responses is 8.85 with a standard deviation of 7.25. Overall, populists tend to think more often of the government by the people and less often about freedom, free expression and voting when they think of democracy. This mirrors previous findings by Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020).

Authoritarianism correlates strongly and significantly with most of the general democracy topics. While authoritarianism correlates negatively with references to the government by the people, to representation and to democracy as a political system, it correlates positively with references to different types of freedoms, free expression and the need of having a say in politics. Thus, with increasing authoritarian attitudes, people surprisingly think less of ‘the people’ and more of individual freedoms and their influence on politics.

Table 2.3: Regression results for expected topic distributions referencing democracy in general, but not liberal democracy, across countries

| Model | (1) Government by the people | (2) Freedoms | (3) Free expression | (4) Equality | (5) Having a say | (6) Voting | (7) Representation | (8) Political system |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Authoritarianism | -0.88*** | 0.70*** | 0.56*** | 0.05 | 0.21** | 0.03 | -0.55*** | -0.37*** |
| Populism | 0.33*** | -0.58*** | -0.25*** | -0.09 | -0.05 | -0.10*** | -0.02 | 0.05 |
| Radicalism | -0.03 | -0.10* | -0.05 | -0.06* | -0.03 | -0.01 | -0.02 | 0.01 |
| Age | -0.03*** | 0.04*** | 0.02*** | 0.01* | -0.01** | -0.01*** | -0.01*** | -0.01*** |
| Female (vs male) | 0.51*** | -0.15 | -0.53*** | -0.10 | -0.42*** | -0.02 | 0.20*** | 0.16*** |
| Education | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00* | 0.00* | 0.00 | 0.00** |
| Local | 0.19* | -0.17 | -0.03 | -0.01 | -0.13* | -0.01 | 0.02 | -0.03 |
| Left-right | 0.03 | -0.08* | -0.06* | -0.05** | -0.03 | 0.00 | 0.03* | 0.01 |
| Knowledge | 1.37*** | 0.82** | 0.45** | 0.02 | -0.16 | -0.04 | 0.95*** | 0.34*** |
| Intercept | 9.68*** | 7.50*** | 4.91*** | 6.61*** | 5.09*** | 4.49*** | -0.02 | 4.11*** |
| Country FE? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| N | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 |
| Multiple R ² | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.04 | 0.05 |
| p (F-test) | *** | *** | *** | *** | *** | *** | *** | *** |
| Category | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic | Democratic |
| LR robust | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Mean topic proportion | 8.85 | 8.05 | 6.72 | 6.42 | 4.53 | 3.81 | 3.76 | 3.21 |
| SD topic proportion | 7.25 | 9.33 | 5.95 | 4.45 | 4.66 | 1.26 | 3.66 | 2.30 |

Notes: OLS regression with country fixed effects and population weights by country. Significance levels: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05. Results for authoritarianism, populism and radicalism remain stable when excluding respondents' left-right self-placement unless otherwise stated under LR robust.

Table 2.4 additionally shows the results for regressions of the four remaining liberal, illiberal and undemocratic topics on authoritarianism, populism and radicalism. Again, Western Europeans with populist attitudes have different understandings of what democracy means than Western Europeans without populist attitudes. They tend to state more often that democracy does not exist in their country, and refer less often to respect, fundamental rights and unoppressed majorities. Populism therefore clearly shapes Western Europeans understanding of what democracy means and how democratic they think their country is. However, the results neither confirm nor contradict Hypothesis 3 that populists have more often an understanding of democracy that is incompatible with liberal democracy than non-populists. Although they do think less often of liberal democracy than non-populists, they also think less often of illiberal elements of democracy than non-populists. The fact that they state more often that the country they live in is not a democracy suggests that they do not use liberal democracy as a benchmark for assessing the ‘democraticness’ of political systems.

Results in Table 2.4 also suggest that radicals do not think less often of liberal democracy than moderates when they think of democracy. Nevertheless, radicals tend to think more often of illiberal elements of democracy than moderates and they are more likely to state that they do not live in a democracy. Since the coefficients are very small, these differences should not be over-interpreted. Therefore, I conclude that the results rather confirm than contradict Hypothesis 5 that radicals and moderates do not differ with regard to the extent to which they have a liberal understanding of democracy.¹⁷

Hypothesis 1 that authoritarians and non-authoritarians are similarly likely to have a liberal understanding of democracy is not confirmed by the results. Authoritarians tend to mention respect, fundamental rights *and* unoppressed majorities more often. Since the latter is contradictory to liberal democracy, authoritarians seem to have less often a

¹⁷When excluding respondents’ left-right self-placement from the regression of fundamental rights, the size of the coefficient for radicalism remains stable, but the coefficient becomes significantly different from 0. Additionally, the coefficient for the relationship between radicalism and the mention of unoppressed majorities remains stable in size but becomes statistically insignificant if I exclude respondents’ left-right self-placement from the analysis. This suggests that for these two topics, there might be an interaction of radicalism and left-right self-placement that might be interesting for future research. Since the coefficients remain very small, this has no substantial effect on the interpretation of the results in the context of this study.

Table 2.4: Regression results for expected topic proportions referencing liberal and illiberal understandings of democracy as well as undemocratic responses across countries

| Model | (9) Respect | (10) Fundamental rights | (11) Unoppressed majorities | (12) Non-existent |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Authoritarianism | 0.17*** | 0.15*** | 0.64*** | -0.20*** |
| Populism | -0.11*** | -0.25*** | -0.38*** | 0.42*** |
| Radicalism | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.04*** | 0.06** |
| Age | 0.01*** | 0.00 | -0.01* | 0.00 |
| Female (vs male) | -0.07 | -0.10 | -0.27* | 0.15* |
| Education | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00* |
| Local | 0.01 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 0.08 |
| Left-right | -0.02 | -0.04*** | 0.03 | 0.06*** |
| Knowledge | -0.24*** | 0.01 | -2.73*** | -0.38*** |
| Intercept | 3.10*** | 5.69*** | 7.29*** | 2.94*** |
| Country FE? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| N | 12,798 | N 12,798 | 12,798 | 12,798 |
| Multiple R ² | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.01 |
| p (F-test) | *** | *** | *** | *** |
| Category | Liberal | Liberal | Illiberal | Undem. |
| LR robust | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Mean topic proportion | 3.61 | 4.44 | 5.39 | 4.39 |
| SD topic proportion | 2.30 | 2.91 | 6.08 | 3.84 |

Notes: OLS regression with country fixed effects and population weights by country. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Results for authoritarianism, populism and radicalism remain stable when excluding respondents' left-right self-placement unless otherwise stated under LR robust.

liberal understanding of democracy than non-authoritarians. Authoritarians are also less likely to state that democracy is non-existent in their countries. In combination with the results above, this is a surprising and puzzling finding. Not only are authoritarians more likely to mention freedom, fundamental rights and respect, they also think more often of unoppressed majorities - thus an understanding of what democracy means that restricts the protection of minorities and their fundamental rights.

To solve this puzzle, I investigate more in detail how authoritarians and non-authoritarians speak about liberal democracy.¹⁸ To do so, I aggregate the expected topic proportions for each response for the two liberal democratic topics Fundamental rights (4) and Respect (16). I then select those responses with the highest expected proportion of these two topics (third quartile) and count the occurrence of words in these responses for authoritarian

¹⁸This part of the analysis goes beyond the pre-registered design.

and non-authoritarian respondents, separately.¹⁹ Based on a Chi² test, I retrieve those words that are distinctive for the way in which authoritarians and non-authoritarians speak about liberal democracy.

Table 2.5 shows the words which are distinctive for authoritarians' and non-authoritarians' liberal understanding of democracy. At the top of this list, readers find those terms that were significantly more often used by authoritarians than non-authoritarians (positive difference and $p \leq 0.05$). At the bottom, readers find those terms that were more often used by non-authoritarians than authoritarians (negative difference and $p \leq 0.05$). Overall, non-authoritarians use terms directly referencing elements of liberal democracy such as 'protection', 'minorities', 'diversity', 'human', 'tolerance', 'separation' and 'powers'. Authoritarians use words such as 'justice' and 'laws' and speak about freedom of speech and movement in the context of liberal democracy. They also often use the term 'nothing', which could indicate that in some cases, authoritarians make negative reference to liberal democracy.

Thus, although the results from the STM model suggest that authoritarians think more often of liberal democracy when they think of democracy, authoritarians and non-authoritarians focus on different aspects related to liberal democracy. While authoritarians focus on justice and the law, non-authoritarians explicitly mention the protection of minority rights and the separation of powers. The liberal democratic topics from the STM model furthermore conflate liberal democracy and freedom since many respondents do so, too. Thus, authoritarians think less often of liberal democracy - excluding the rule of law²⁰ - than non-authoritarians when they think of democracy; Hypothesis 1 cannot be confirmed.

Concluding, this section shows that only in rare cases Western Europeans think of liberal democracy when they hear the term democracy. What understanding of democracy respondents have in mind is strongly correlated with their authoritarian and populist attitudes, but not with the radicalism of their political positions. While populists think

¹⁹I excluded stop words, numbers, URLs, symbols and punctuation.

²⁰It is unfortunately out of the scope of this paper to analyse what authoritarians understand to be the 'rule of law' and whether this is distinct from what they think 'law and order' means.

Table 2.5: Authoritarian vs non-authoritarian ways of speaking about liberal democracy

| Words | Non-authoritarians | Authoritarians | p-value | Difference |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------|------------|
| freedom | 705 | 862 | 0.00 | 157 |
| speech | 59 | 98 | 0.00 | 39 |
| nothing | 92 | 127 | 0.02 | 35 |
| opinion | 103 | 137 | 0.03 | 34 |
| justice | 28 | 47 | 0.03 | 19 |
| say | 15 | 33 | 0.01 | 18 |
| choose | 14 | 32 | 0.01 | 18 |
| laws | 15 | 30 | 0.02 | 15 |
| speak | 14 | 27 | 0.04 | 13 |
| person | 9 | 21 | 0.03 | 12 |
| movement | 3 | 14 | 0.01 | 11 |
| life | 8 | 18 | 0.05 | 10 |
| beliefs | 12 | 3 | 0.02 | -9 |
| system | 13 | 3 | 0.01 | -10 |
| representation | 13 | 3 | 0.01 | -10 |
| basic | 14 | 3 | 0.01 | -11 |
| state | 16 | 5 | 0.02 | -11 |
| views | 24 | 12 | 0.05 | -12 |
| citizen | 24 | 12 | 0.05 | -12 |
| tolerance | 22 | 9 | 0.02 | -13 |
| diversity | 20 | 5 | 0.00 | -15 |
| responsibility | 17 | 2 | 0.00 | -15 |
| separation | 24 | 8 | 0.00 | -16 |
| powers | 24 | 8 | 0.00 | -16 |
| participation | 26 | 9 | 0.00 | -17 |
| minorities | 24 | 5 | 0.00 | -19 |
| majority | 53 | 31 | 0.02 | -22 |
| protection | 35 | 12 | 0.00 | -23 |
| human | 50 | 27 | 0.01 | -23 |
| people | 108 | 81 | 0.05 | -27 |
| elections | 49 | 18 | 0.00 | -31 |

Notes: Only including words that were used at least 10 times by either authoritarians or non-authoritarians. P-values are based on Chi² tests for the distribution of each word among responses of authoritarians and non-authoritarians. 3,354 responses included in the analysis.

more often of the government of the people and state more often that democracy does not exist than non-populists, authoritarians think of freedom, the rule of law, justice and the unrestricted rule of the majority when they think of democracy. Authoritarians are also less likely to mention that democracy does not exist. Non-authoritarians think more often of the protection of minority rights and the separation of powers than authoritarians.

The following section investigates in how far Western Europeans support what they think democracy means and in how far their support for democracy depends on their populist and authoritarian attitudes as well as their radical political positions. Taking together with the findings from this section, this allows to assess what type of democracy people (do not) like if they state that they (do not) support democracy.

2.6.2 Support for democracy among authoritarians, populists and radicals

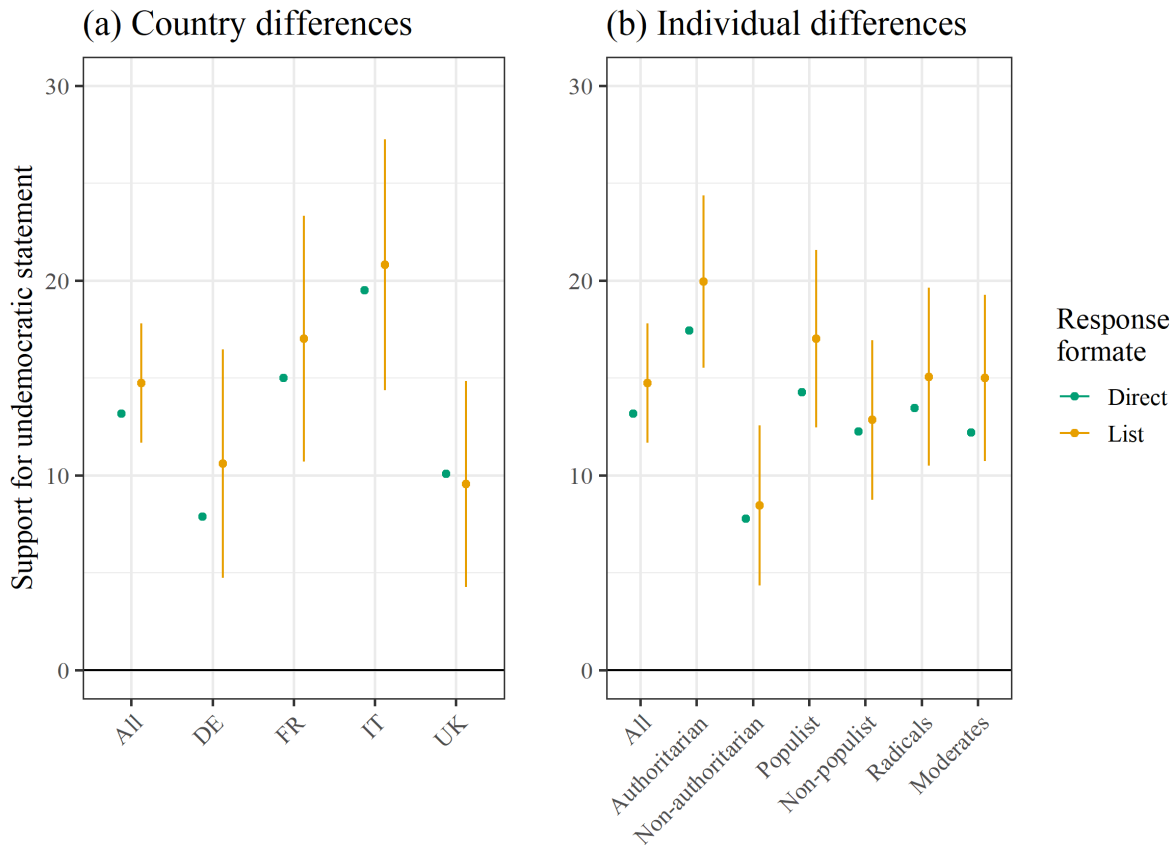
Figure 2.4 shows the agreement with the undemocratic statement that it would be better if the respondents' country of residence would not be a democracy (a) across countries and (b) across groups of respondents with specific attitudes. (a) Agreement with the undemocratic statement varies considerably across countries. While agreement with the undemocratic statement is low in Germany and the UK, it is a lot higher in France and Italy. When asked directly, about 7.87 per cent of German, 10.08 per cent of British, 15.01 per cent of French and 19.50 per cent of Italian respondents state that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy. When asked through a list experiment, the percentages were 10.60 (DE), 9.55 (UK), 17.01 (FR) and 20.81 (IT), respectively. These differences are not significant.²¹ Thus overall, respondents in each of the four countries do not feel socially pressured to state their support for democracy, at least in online surveys.

(b) Figure 2.4b shows levels of agreement with the undemocratic statements measured directly and with a list experiment for authoritarians, populists and radicals compared to non-authoritarians, non-populists and moderates. For purposes of visualisation, the respondents are grouped into authoritarians, populists, radicals and their respective counterparts using the mean response in each country as a threshold.²² The by far largest bi-variate variation in agreement with the undemocratic statement is driven by authoritarian attitudes. About 17.44 per cent of authoritarians openly declare that it would be

²¹I run a one-sample t-test to assess whether the mean direct support for the undemocratic statement is significantly lower than the mean 'true' support for the undemocratic statement from the list experiment.

²²The pre-registration foresaw a fixed threshold of 3.

Figure 2.4: Direct and ‘true’ (list) support for undemocratic statement



Notes: Confidence intervals for the list experiment are based on a Welch two-sample t-test of the difference in the mean number of statements agreed with in the control and treatment group. No confidence intervals provided for the direct measure since the standard error of dummy variables is a direct function of the proportion of ones and zeros and does not reflect certainty of the point estimate.

better if their country would not be a democracy.²³ Only about 7.76 of non-authoritarians do so.²⁴ This finding is in line with Hypothesis 2 that authoritarians show lower levels of support for democracy. However, the data does not support Hypothesis 7 that authoritarians are more affected by social desirability than non-authoritarians. Although the difference between direct and list support is larger for authoritarians than for non-authoritarians, these differences are not significant in any of these two groups.

The difference between populists and non-populists is smaller than the difference for authoritarians and non-authoritarians. On average, 14.26 per cent of populists agree that

²³19.95 per cent if they can hide their true preferences. The difference is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

²⁴8.44 per cent in the list experiment. The difference is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

it would be better if the country they live in would not be a democracy.²⁵ About 12.24 per cent of non-populists agree with the undemocratic statement.²⁶ This difference between populists and non-populists is significantly larger than 0.²⁷ Thus, contrary to Hypothesis 4, populists state more often than non-populists that they would prefer it if their country would not be a democracy. However, neither populists nor non-populists seem to be affected by social desirability since the differences between their direct and list support for democracy are not significantly different from 0. In contrast to Hypotheses 6 and 9, radicals and moderates do not differ with regard to their support for the undemocratic statement and are not affected by social desirability.

These results do not take into account that parts of these differences might be driven by third factors or co-linearity. Therefore, Table 2.6 shows results for regressions of the agreement with the undemocratic statement on authoritarianism, populism, radicalism and a set of control variables for all respondents from the two list experiment groups. For these analyses, authoritarianism, populism and radicalism are not dichotomised. Overall, authoritarianism, populism and radicalism correlate positively with support for the undemocratic statement. However, the coefficient for authoritarianism is by far larger than the ones for populism and radicalism.²⁸ Thus, respondents with authoritarian and populist attitudes as well as respondents with radical positions are more likely to state that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy. Additionally, education and political knowledge correlate negatively with agreement with the undemocratic statement, while living in a place with fewer inhabitants and respondents' left-right self-placement correlate positively with agreement with the undemocratic statement.

In contrast to the overall results, results for any of the four countries are not necessarily stable for the inclusion of respondents' left-right self-placement nor do they reflect the overall trend. In the case of Germany, authoritarianism is positively correlated with agreement with the undemocratic statement. Populism and radicalism are not. Addition-

²⁵17.02 per cent in the list experiment. This difference is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

²⁶12.84 per cent in the list experiment. The difference is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

²⁷The t-value from a two-sample t-test for populists' and non-populists' responses to the list experiment is larger than 1.96 ($p < 0.05$).

²⁸Authoritarianism and populism are both measured on a 5-point scale. Radicalism is measured on a 6-point scale.

Table 2.6: Item count technique regression results for support for the undemocratic statement by country

| Model | All | DE | FR | IT | UK | |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Authoritarianism | 0.63*** (0.13) | 0.91* (0.36) | 0.73* (0.30) | 0.74** (0.23) | 0.36 (0.27) | 0.62 (0.37) |
| Populism | 0.26* (0.11) | -0.32 (0.33) | 0.29 (0.22) | 0.34 (0.18) | 0.33 (0.18) | -0.39 (0.37) |
| Radicalism | 0.16*** (0.05) | 0.09 (0.14) | 0.18* (0.08) | 0.09 (0.07) | 0.00 (0.08) | 0.25 (0.17) |
| Age | 0.00 (0.01) | -0.02 (0.02) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.02) |
| Female (vs male) | -0.01 (0.19) | -1.40** (0.5) | -1.54** (0.39) | 0.23 (0.39) | -0.02 (0.30) | 0.55 (0.60) |
| Education | -0.19** (0.07) | 0.14 (0.20) | -0.11 (0.20) | -0.19 (0.17) | -0.22 (0.17) | -0.16 (0.20) |
| Local | 0.34** (0.11) | 0.13 (0.27) | 0.45* (0.22) | 0.45* (0.18) | 0.61** (0.19) | -0.39 (0.38) |
| Left-right | | 0.10** (0.03) | -0.26 (0.17) | 0.08 (0.06) | 0.18** (0.05) | 0.20 (0.15) |
| Knowledge | -1.04*** (0.24) | -0.58 (0.61) | -0.61 (0.54) | -0.57 (0.45) | -0.53 (0.47) | -3.29*** (0.80) |
| Intercept | -4.37*** (0.70) | -2.74 (1.70) | -5.76*** (1.38) | -5.05*** (1.22) | -4.81*** (1.27) | -0.57*** (2.28) |
| N | 10,696 | 2,692 | 2,623 | 2,673 | | 2,708 |

Notes: Item count technique regression results based on maximum likelihood estimators (Imai, 2011). Regressions were run using the R package 'list' (Blair, Chou, et al., 2020). All regressions include population weights. Significance levels: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

ally, there seem to be considerable differences between women and men in Germany. The results are stable for the inclusion of respondents' left-right self-placement. In France, authoritarianism and radicalism are only positively correlated with respondents' agreement with the undemocratic statement as long as their left-right self-placement is not included in the regression. Here, respondents from more rural areas are more likely to agree with the undemocratic statement. Similarly to France, authoritarianism correlates positively with respondents' agreement with the undemocratic statement in Italy, as long as the model does not include respondents' left-right self-placement. Living in places with fewer inhabitants, too, has a positive impact on the likelihood with which Italians agree with the undemocratic statement. Additionally, it seems as if right-wing Italians are more likely to agree with the undemocratic statement, even when controlling for radicalism, authoritarianism and populism. In the UK, only respondents' political knowledge correlates with respondents' agreement with the undemocratic statement. The more respondents know about politics in their country, the less likely they are to state that it would be better if the UK would not be a democracy. The results from the UK are stable for the inclusion of respondents' left-right self-placement.

These differences across models might be the result of at least two things. First, it might be that the analysis within each country is under-powered, since list experiments increase the variance in responses considerably compared to direct questions (Blair and Imai, 2012:p. 51). Second, it might be that within each country, political attitudes and positions indeed correlate differently with respondents' agreement that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy. It might than be that the relationship between political attitudes and positions on the one hand and democratic attitudes on the other hand is a spurious one that can only be causally explained when taking into account an unknown third variable. In either case, future research needs to investigate this further to assess the relationship between Western Europeans' political attitudes and their support for democracy.

Concluding, the results neither clearly confirm nor contradict Hypotheses 2, 4 and 6. While authoritarians are in most cases indeed less likely to support democracy, not

all models confirm this hypothesis. Additionally, the relationship between populism and agreement with the undemocratic statement is not significantly different from 0 in all country models. However, the overall model suggests that there is a slightly positive significant relationship between these two variables. Similarly, the relationship between radicalism and respondents' support for democracy is only significant in the overall model and in the French model as long as the French model ignores respondents' left-right self-placement. Taken together with the findings from above, authoritarianism correlates most likely positively with agreement with the undemocratic statement but not necessarily in all countries always. If there is any relationship between populism and radicalism on the one hand and support for democracy on the other hand, it is probably a weak one. Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 4 can be carefully confirmed, while Hypothesis 6 cannot be confirmed by the data. Authoritarianism, populism and radicalism do not seem to affect whether responses are biased due to social desirability. This confirms Hypothesis 8 but contradicts Hypotheses 7 and 9.

Chapter SM2.4 shows that responses to the list experiment fulfil the necessary assumptions: Randomisation across the three different groups of respondents worked sufficiently well. Respondents who saw the undemocratic statement have not responded differently to the three remaining statements than those respondents who did not see the undemocratic statement (no design effects). Furthermore, there is no evidence that respondents often had to hide their agreement with none or all of the presented statements (no ceiling or floor effects).

2.7 Discussion

The study aims at investigating in how far authoritarianism, populism and radicalism correlate with support for and specific understandings of democracy, while also presenting a coherent picture of Western Europeans' democratic attitudes and taking into account that responses might be biased due to social desirability. This section briefly discusses the results by scientific debates this study contributes to.

With regard to the potential of a social desirability bias, Section 2.6.2 resolves many doubts. The section shows that Western Europeans' responses are not biased due to social desirability, even if they show higher levels of authoritarianism, populism or radicalism than the mean citizen of their country. It remains however open whether this also applies to previously conducted surveys. It might be that Western Europeans became less afraid of showing their undemocratic attitudes in recent times since democracy got increasingly contested in the countries under study. It might additionally be that online surveys decrease social pressure on respondents in comparison to face-to-face interviews (Blair, Coppock, and Moor, 2020:p. 1299). Nevertheless, it replicates findings by Kiewiet de Jonge (2016) from other regions and thus overall suggests that responses to questions about democracy are not strongly biased due to social desirability.

Result Hyp. 7 *Neither authoritarian nor non-authoritarian Western Europeans over-report their support for democracy.*

Result Hyp. 8 *Neither populist nor non-populist Western Europeans over-report their support for democracy.*

Result Hyp. 9 *Neither radical nor moderate Western Europeans over-report their support for democracy.*

With regard to Western Europeans' understanding of what democracy means, Section 2.6.1 reveals novel and interesting findings, especially for authoritarian respondents. Authoritarian Western Europeans have an understanding of democracy that is closely linked to freedom, justice and the law, but they are also more likely to state that democracy means the rule by an unrestricted majority. The wording of their open-ended responses suggests that they often feel that minorities oppress the majority and that they often think that freedom and the rule of law is not sufficiently guaranteed in their countries. Their understanding of democracy is thus not fully compatible with liberal democracy, although it contains aspects of it, most importantly the rule of law.²⁹ In comparison to

²⁹Unfortunately, the design of this study does not allow to make assumptions about the meaning of the 'rule of law' in these contexts and whether this is conflated with 'law and order'.

non-authoritarians, they have more often an illiberal understanding of what democracy means.

Result Hyp. 1 *Authoritarian Western Europeans have less often an understanding of democracy that is compatible with liberal democracy than non-authoritarian Western Europeans.*

Section 2.6.1 furthermore confirmed previous findings by Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) as well as theoretical expectations by many others (Abts and Rummens, 2007; Mudde, 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Rummens, 2017). Western Europeans with high populist attitudes are more likely to state that democracy means the government by the people. Thus, they have an understanding of democracy that reflects their populist attitudes. They are additionally more likely to state that democracy does not exist in their countries, but less likely to think of liberal *and* illiberal democracy than non-populists. Since Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) have also found no clear relationship between populism and liberal democratic attitudes, this suggests that liberalism is not the category of reference for populists to assess the quality of democratic systems but whether ‘the people’ is properly represented. ‘The people’, however, should not be equated with the rule of an unrestricted majority, since these were found to be two distinct ways of understanding democracy and since populists were less likely to have this understanding of an unrestricted majority rule than non-populists. Thus, Hypothesis 3 can neither be confirmed nor rejected based on the open-ended responses.

Result Hyp. 3 *Compared to non-populists, populists are less likely to have a liberal and illiberal understanding of democracy. Thus, populists do not use liberalism as a benchmark for assessing the ‘democraticness’ of political systems.*

Section 2.6.1 additionally suggests that there are no stark differences between radicals and moderates with regard to their understandings of what democracy means. Radicals are slightly more likely to state that democracy means the rule of an unrestricted majority and that democracy does not exist, and slightly less likely to think of freedom and equality when they think of democracy. However, the coefficients are very small and significance

levels suggest comparably low levels of certainty for the results. Overall, these differences do not suggest that radicals are considerably more or less likely to have an illiberal understanding of what democracy means than moderates.

Result Hyp. 5 *Radicals and moderates are equally likely to have an understanding of what democracy means that is compatible with liberal democracy.*

Based on these clarifications of Western Europeans' understanding of democracy, Section 2.6.2 provides insights into the support for these understandings of democracy. Most importantly, Section 2.6.2 reveals that it is mainly authoritarianism that drives a lack of support for democracy. Populists and radicals state only - if at all - slightly more often than non-populists and moderates that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy. However, results are highly unstable across countries. Thus, more evidence is needed, before deriving final conclusions regarding the support for democracy among authoritarian, populist and radical Western Europeans.

Result Hyp. 2 *Authoritarians are much more likely to state that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy than non-authoritarians.*

Result Hyp. 4 *Compared to non-populists, populist are - if at all - only slightly more likely to state that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy.*

Result Hyp. 6 *Compared to moderates, radicals are - if at all - only slightly more likely to state that it would be better if their country would not be a democracy.*

Concluding, authoritarianism and populism affect respondents' understandings of what democracy means. However, it is mainly authoritarianism that affects whether respondents support what they think democracy is. Since authoritarianism explains well the usage of different topics in open-ended questions, authoritarians have a precise understanding of what democracy means. Thus, they knowingly oppose democratic rule. This also includes important elements of democracy more generally such as freedom. In contrast, populists do not oppose democratic rule considerably more often than non-populists but they think that democracy, the government by the people, is not implemented in

their countries. Radicalism does neither considerably affect respondents' understandings of what democracy means nor their support for democracy.

2.8 Conclusion

To what extent do authoritarianism, populism and radicalism affect democratic attitudes of Western Europeans and subsequently also the stability of Western European democracies? And what do the results of this study tell us about the stability of British, German, French and Italian liberal democracy?

The results suggests that a potential lack of system support among authoritarians and populists might be driven by different reasons. Authoritarians on average support democracy and liberal democracy less than non-authoritarians *although* they have an understanding of democracy that is compatible with democracy more generally and know that they live in a democracy. Populists seem to lack support for their political system *because* it is mainly a liberal democratic system. From their point of view, this system is not sufficiently democratic since it does not put high emphasis on the government by the people.³⁰ Thus, illiberal or undemocratic political actors might be able to mobilise authoritarians and populists against the political system, although the dissatisfaction with the political system in place has different sources for authoritarians and populists. While many authoritarians prefer an authoritarian system of government, populists prefer a democratic system that puts more emphasis on the government of the people, probably irrespective of the liberal aspects of this democratic system.

Moreover, the lack of support for democracy is considerably high in Italy and France, but less worrisome in Germany and the UK. About 20 per cent of Italians think that it would be better if Italy were not a democracy. Simultaneously, most Italians have a general understanding of democracy. Similarly, about 15 per cent of French respondents agree that it would be better if France would not be a democracy. Again, most French have a general understanding of democracy. Thus, many Italians and French reject what

³⁰Remember that populists were more likely to state that democracy does not exist in their country of residence than non-populists. Authoritarians and non-authoritarians did not differ in this regard.

they most likely know to be democracy in general. Taken together with recent political events in these countries, this is a worrisome finding since Italian and French citizens might refrain from defending democracy when it is attacked. In Germany and the UK, only about 8 and 10 per cent respectively reject democracy. Again, they most likely mean democracy in general when they do so. However, the percentage is considerably lower and recent political events in both countries suggest that many German and British citizens can be mobilised to defend democracy.

Concluding, support for democracy measured in surveys reflects most likely Western Europeans' 'true' support for democracy, but not necessarily their support for liberal democracy. To stabilised liberal democracy in Western Europe, researchers can contribute to the study of the relationship between political attitudes, dissatisfaction with how democracy works and democratic attitudes of Western Europeans. This research will be helpful for those who want to understand the source of lacking support for liberal democracy and increase support for liberal democracy among Western Europeans.

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CHAPTER 3

THE DEMOCRACY I LIKE

PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND OPPOSITION TO DEMOCRATIC

BACKSLIDING

Co-authored with Theresa Gessler (University of Zurich)¹

Abstract. Although research shows widespread support for democracy among citizens of democracies, citizens also often acquiesce to democratic backsliding by incumbent governments they support. We address this puzzle by investigating the role of citizens' understandings of and satisfaction with how democracy works in their country. More precisely, we ask whether understandings of and satisfaction with democracy can explain citizens' willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding. Based on novel survey data and vignette experiments from Germany and Poland, we find that citizens are much more likely to punish democratic backsliding if it affects aspects of democracy they deem to be important. In addition, our results suggest that dissatisfaction with democracy does not explain tolerance for democratic backsliding. On the contrary, it is Polish dissatisfied citizens who indicate significantly higher levels of opposition to democratic backsliding than Polish satisfied citizens. This article contributes to research on causal mechanisms that explain how citizens' democratic attitudes (de)stabilised democracies.

¹Both authors contributed equally to this study.

3.1 Introduction

Citizens of democracies around the world by and large state that they support democracy (Dalton, Shin, and Jou, 2007; Inglehart, 2003; Lagos, 2003). Yet, there are reasons to doubt this commitment as these citizens also often acquiesce to democratic backsliding by incumbent governments they support (Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020; McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, 2020). We argue that citizens’ understandings of democracy and their satisfaction with how democracy works in their countries plays an important role for citizens’ opposition to democratic backsliding, as they influence the degree to which citizens value democracy and are willing to protest against democratic backsliding. We also argue that the gap between many citizens’ understandings of democracy and theoretically grounded concepts of democracy explains parts of the puzzle why citizens support democracy but tolerate democratic backsliding.

To study the effect of citizens’ understandings of and satisfaction with democracy² on their opposition to democratic backsliding, we conduct a vignette experiment (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto, 2014; Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley, 2020) with two nationally representative samples of approximately 1,300 German and Polish citizens. We first show that on average, citizens are less likely to tolerate democratic backsliding if it affects institutions they deem to be important for democracy. This effect is of considerable strength, with about 1 to 1.5 points on a scale from 1 to 7. Second, we assess whether citizens’ understandings of democracy coincide with two different theoretically grounded concepts of democracy, liberal and majoritarian democracy. We find that only few citizens have a liberal understanding of democracy, while some other citizens are outright authoritarian. Depending on citizens’ democratic attitudes, citizens tolerance for democratic backsliding differs significantly.

Additionally, this article is the first to systematically evaluate the relationship of democratic satisfaction and opposition to democracy backsliding. Previous research has assumed that dissatisfaction with democracy among the citizenry can lead to the debil-

²To keep it short, we will refer to ‘satisfaction with democracy’ instead of ‘satisfaction with how democracy works’.

itation of democracy in the long run. A lack of satisfaction with democracy might lead to a lack of support for democracy more generally: when citizens become disillusioned, they may refrain from defending democratic institutions when under attack or support anti-democratic leaders (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011:p. 33). However, we actually find that in Poland it is the dissatisfied respondents who are most likely to punish governments for democratic backsliding. For German respondents, satisfaction with democracy does neither substantially increase nor decrease the likelihood to punish democratic backsliding. Thus, depending on the national context, satisfaction with democracy plays a different role in explaining citizens' tolerance of democratic backsliding. This suggests that in a context where democracy is politicised and democratic backsliding has taken place, dissatisfaction with democracy is actually a healthy response that mirrors citizens' willingness to defend debilitated democratic institutions.

Overall, this article contributes to the literature on democratic backsliding and democratic support. Most importantly, it shows that citizens' democratic attitudes strongly affect their tolerance for different types of democratic backsliding. In addition, it highlights that the assumption of a uniform and informed understanding of democracy on the part of citizens might lead researchers to overlook meaningful differences in the willingness to defend democracy among citizens and to overestimate citizens' support for liberal democracy. Not all citizens attribute high importance to liberal democratic institutions. Some of them clearly do not like them.

3.2 Perceptions of democratic backsliding

Democratic backsliding has been defined as 'the state-led debilitation or elimination of any of the political institutions that sustain an existing democracy' (Bermeo, 2016:p. 5). These institutions can be understood as 'stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour' (Huntington, 1986:p. 12). Thus, democratic backsliding can affect formal or informal existing democratic institutions, such as the right of the opposition to criticise a government, the institution of free, universal and secret elections or freedom from harassment

by government agencies (Bermeo, 2016:pp. 12–13). In contrast to sudden transitions from democracy to autocracy, the debilitation or elimination of institutions that sustain a democracy undermines the quality of the democratic system, but does not necessarily lead to its immediate collapse (Bermeo, 2016; Waldner and Lust, 2018).

Theoretically speaking, by affecting different institutions, democratic backsliding can also affect different types of democracy, such as direct democracy, social democracy or majoritarian democracy. The assessment of what democratic backsliding looks like thus depends on the concept of democracy that one uses as a baseline to decide whether the institutions that are debilitated or eliminated were important for democracy. For example, increasing the hurdles for referenda in a country such as Switzerland could be perceived as democratic backsliding, although it does not necessarily restrict any institutions that sustain the Swiss liberal democracy. In this case, democratic backsliding would only debilitate institutions of the Swiss direct democratic system. This shows that just like democracy itself, democratic backsliding is a vaguely defined concept (Bermeo, 2016; Collier, Hidalgo, and Maciuceanu, 2006:p. 4).

Citizens in democracies such as the US or Venezuela (Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020; McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, 2020) do not seem to care much about democratic backsliding when confronted with a choice between incumbents who either uphold democratic principles or represent their policy preferences. This is a puzzling finding because a large majority of citizens in liberal democracies, including the US, support democracy (Dalton, Shin, and Jou, 2007; Inglehart, 2003; Lagos, 2003).³ Previous research has focused on citizens' willingness to trade democracy for policy, suggesting that citizens' preferences for democratic institutions are weaker than their preferences for specific policies. Carey et al. (2020) have shown that although US Americans punish incumbents for undermining basic democratic principles, their voting behaviour is much more influenced by incumbents' party affiliation. Furthermore, Graham and Svobik (2020) and McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay (2020) have shown that US Americans tend to punish politicians more for infringements of democratic principles if the politicians are

³As shown in Chapter 2, this can most likely not be explained by social desirability biases in the response behaviour of citizens.

members of the opposing party. Similar results have been found in survey experiments with Venezuelan citizens (Svolik, 2020). Overall, these findings suggest that citizens do not care much about democracy as long as governments implement policies they like.

However, this research so far assumed that citizens have a uniform and informed understanding of what democracy means and that this understanding is in line with social scientific concepts of democracy that we as researchers have. Empirical evidence shows that this is not the case (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016; Landwehr and Steiner, 2017; Ulbricht, 2018). Moreover, democracy has long been identified as an essentially contested concept for which people will emphatically defend different meanings (Collier, Hidalgo, and Maciuceanu, 2006; Gallie, 1955:pp. 134–137). If citizens’ understandings of democracy diverge, their perception of democratic backsliding might also diverge. Thus, what some citizens perceive as democratic backsliding, others do not perceive as democratic backsliding. Section 3.2.1 therefore argues that citizens should be more likely to punish democratic backsliding if it infringes on institutions that they deem to be important for democracy.

In addition, Carey et al. (2020) and Collier and Levitsky (1997) have shown that not even experts have a uniform understanding of what democracy means. Many researchers have defined democracy in different ways both across different schools of thought and across time (see for example Chapter 1 in Dahl, Shapiro, and Cheibub (2003) or Stüwe and G. Weber (2004) for a comprehensive overview). In addition, Ulbricht (2018) has shown that citizens within the same countries aspire different concepts of democracy, not all of them consistent with scientific concepts of democracy. Based on this evidence, we argue that it is highly unlikely that citizens and experts perceive democratic backsliding in the same way, even if citizens have an informed understanding of what democracy means that is in line with a scientific concept of democracy. Thus, in Section 3.2.2, we define two different and opposed concepts of democracy – liberal and majoritarian democracy – and argue that depending on the concept of democracy that is chosen as a baseline, citizens’ willingness to punish democratic backsliding differs considerably.

Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 aim at investigating two slightly different research questions.

The theoretical argument in Section 3.2.1 aims at investigating more generally whether citizens differentiate between different forms of democratic backsliding, based on their assessment of the importance of different institutions for democracy but irrespective of whether this personal assessment is consistent with scientific concepts of democracy. This however does not yet tell us much about the reasons for why citizens assign different levels of importance to different institutions. Consequently, the theoretical argument presented in Section 3.2.2 aims at investigating whether citizens' understandings of democracy are consistent with either a liberal or majoritarian concept of democracy and whether citizens punish democratic backsliding more if it undermines the concept of democracy they prefer. If this were the case, it might well be that some citizens are drawn to democratic backsliding in a 'Downsian way' (Downs, 1957) because the democratic backsliding decreases the distance between citizens' preferred democratic institutions and the actual democratic institutions in place. In addition, part of the puzzle that citizens like democracy but tolerate democratic backsliding might then be explained by the different concepts of democracy that citizens and experts have in mind when asking and responding to the respective questions in surveys (Ulbricht, 2018).

Moreover, Section 3.2.3 theorises on the role of satisfaction with democracy for the relationship between citizens' understandings of democracy and their willingness to punish democratic backsliding. It is often argued that a lack of satisfaction with democracy within a citizenry is one of several factors that indicate a lack of support for the political system in place and that consequently, can destabilise democracies from within (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011). But the causal mechanism behind this assumption remains understudied. Section 3.2.3 theorises how satisfaction with democracy can lead to democratic backsliding, focusing on the effect that dissatisfaction with democracy might have on citizens' willingness to punish incumbents for their infringements on democracy.

Besides these novel theoretical arguments, this article also takes into account that citizens can protest against infringements of democratic principles in at least three different ways. While (1) voting an incumbent out of office whose policies you prefer might

be a high hurdle, citizens can also (2) demonstrate in public against the incumbents' infringements' of democracy or decide (3) not to defend the incumbents' infringements of democracy among their acquaintances. These different forms of protest might also have a moderating effect on democratic backsliding.

3.2.1 Citizens' expectations of democracy

Citizens value different things about democracy and have differing expectations of democracy (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016; Landwehr and Steiner, 2017; Ulbricht, 2018). For example, some have expectations centred on social democracy, while others have expectations that are strongly influenced by the idea that citizens should be directly involved in decision-making processes (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016). Although this is the exception to the rule in liberal democracies, some citizens even have expectations of democracy that are not in line or inconsistent with scientific definitions of democracy, but rather authoritarian or illiberal (Ulbricht, 2018). These citizens often still claim that they support democracy (Ulbricht, 2018). Thus, which institutions citizens believe to be important for democracy, should vary considerably.

Consequently, citizens might react to changes in institutions that they deem to be important for democracy – irrespective of whether their expectations of democracy are consistent with a scientific definitions of democracy. When citizens are faced with a government plan that infringes on institutions they deem to be important for democracy, they should be less likely to tolerate the government plan. In other words, only citizens who perceive the government plan as a threat to democracy should be willing to protest against it. Vice versa, there might also be instances in which citizens perceive institutional changes to be an infringement on democracy although experts deem the institutional changes unproblematic for the quality of democracy in a given country. For example, a government's plan to remove barriers that keep citizens from voting is usually not perceived as democratic backsliding by experts and the majority of citizens. But some citizens might believe that only the educated should be allowed to vote in democracies and thus perceive the government plan as a threat to the quality of the democratic system

in their country.

Hypothesis 1 therefore assumes that citizens are on average less likely to tolerate democratic backsliding if it affects institutions they deem to be important for democracy. This should hold irrespective of citizens' understandings of democracy, irrespective of whether these understandings are consistent with scientific concepts of democracy and irrespective of the type of institutions being debilitated or eliminated.

Hypothesis 1 *The more important citizens deem specific institutions for democracy, the more likely they are to oppose democratic backsliding that infringes on them.*⁴

3.2.2 Different concepts of democracy

In the previous section, we have argued that citizens have different expectations of democracy and thus evaluate different forms of democratic backsliding differently. But so far, we did not make any assumptions about citizens' understandings of democracy at large or about their consistency with scientific concepts of democracy. In this section, we now introduce two different concepts of democracy, liberal and majoritarian democracy, as two different and opposed 'extended subtypes' of democracy.⁵ We additionally take a 'Downsian view' (Downs, 1957) on politics and argue that citizens evaluate changes in the institutions that sustain an existent democracy based on whether these changes lead to a new institutional set-up that is closer to or further away from their understanding of democracy. For example, citizens with a majoritarian understanding of democracy might actually like backsliding of liberal democracy if this backsliding increases the power of majorities represented by strong governments.⁶

⁴We adapted this hypothesis slightly in comparison to the pre-analysis plan since we changed some of the wording in this article. The meaning and direction of the hypothesis are unaffected.

⁵In contrast to the widely known diminished subtypes of democracy (Collier and Levitsky, 1997), these subtypes are democracies with additional features. By 'extended', we do not want to imply that these two version are morally better or 'more democratic' than electoral democracy. 'Extended' shall only signal that these 'children' concepts need to fulfil more criteria than their 'parent' concept.

⁶Obviously, democratic backsliding that increases the power of the executive vis-à-vis the legislative or the judiciary in practice most likely also affects democracy more generally and can ultimately lead to a regime change from democracy to authoritarianism, if it remains unopposed. However, this might not be clear to citizens, most importantly not to those who have an understanding of democracy that is in line with the concept of majoritarian democracy. We additionally know from the literature based on Kaiser (1997) and Lijphart (2012[1999]) that more majoritarian democratic systems are not per se undemocratic, but have advantages as well as disadvantages in comparison to more consensus oriented

We define democracy based on previously established procedural definitions of democracy (Dahl, 1971; Schumpeter, 2010[1943]) as a political system that guarantees free and fair elections, freedom of speech and opinion as well as basic rights such as the right to demonstrate (Dahl, 1971:p. 3). Following Diamond (1999), we will refer to this procedural definition of democracy as electoral democracy. Thus, electoral democracy mainly focuses on vertical accountability through elections and the freedom to express opinions. Choosing this definition as the ‘parent’ concept of democracy that the ‘extended subtypes’ of democracy have to fulfil allows to set a boundary between understandings of democracy that are consistent or inconsistent with scientific definitions of democracy.

Accordingly, liberal democracy shall be an ‘extended subtype’ of electoral democracy that additionally guarantees the protection of minority rights, a strong separation of powers or strong horizontal accountability of the government and the rule of law (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Cornell, et al., 2021:p. 44). This definition of liberal democracy is close to Diamond’s (1999:pp. 1–19) definition of liberal democracy that contains 11 components. Since some of these components speak more to electoral democracy than liberal democracy, we only focus on minority rights, the separation of powers and the rule of law - the latter meaning that there is a constitution that is ‘supreme’ to common decisions by the executive, judiciary and legislative branches of government (Diamond, 1999:pp. 1–19). This narrower definition of liberal democracy also makes it easier to envision democracies that are functional electoral democracies, but not strictly speaking liberal democracies.

Majoritarian democracy shall be another ‘extended subtype’ of democracy that aims at representing the will of the majority rather than protecting minority rights. This subtype favours strong vertical accountability over horizontal accountability, since horizontal accountability, or the separation of powers, restricts the government’s possibility to implement the will of the majority. This concept of majoritarian democracy is based on previously developed majoritarian concepts of democracy, such as the ‘Majority Control vision’ by J. D. Huber and Powell Jr (1994), the ‘Westminster Model’ or ‘majoritarian democratic systems.’

model' by Lijphart (2012[1999]) or 'populist democracy' (Mair, 2002; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Steiner and Landwehr, 2018). In contrast to some of this literature, we want to emphasise that majoritarian concept of democracy as we define it is inherently illiberal, since by definition, it opposes the protection of minority rights and strong checks and balances for the executive with instruments like a strong judiciary or constitution. At the same time, it is still an 'extended subtype' of democracy, as long as it guarantees the institutions of electoral democracy.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that we do not claim that any of these subtypes of democracy exist in their purity in the 'real world'. 'Real' democratic systems contain elements of both concepts of democracy, and the correct balance of both of these elements is one of the most discussed issues of democratic theory (Mair, 2002). What we do however claim is that some citizens think that democracies should be liberal and not majoritarian in the sense outlined above, while others think that democracies should be majoritarian and not liberal. Other citizens might have an understanding of democracy that is inconsistent with both a majoritarian and a liberal concept of democracy. Whether citizens have an understanding of democracy that is either consistent with liberal or with majoritarian democracy should significantly affect their tolerance for specific types of democratic backsliding.⁷

Based on these theoretical considerations and on the assumption that citizens prefer changes in institutions that reduce the distance between the status quo institutions and their own understanding of democracy (Downs, 1957), we hypothesise that citizens with an understanding of democracy that is consistent with a liberal (or majoritarian) concept of democracy are most likely to acquiesce to democratic backsliding if it restricts institutions that do not form part of a liberal (or majoritarian) concept of democracy. Citizens with an understanding of democracy that is consistent with liberal democracy might even like restrictions of majoritarian democracy and vice versa, because these restrictions infringe on institutions that citizens might perceive to be a threat to democracy as they understand it. However, these citizens should be equally likely to oppose backsliding that

⁷It might also be that citizens attribute high importance to both institutions of majoritarian and liberal democracy, being unaware or irrespective of the conflicting goals of these democratic concepts.

affects electoral democracy since this is the basis for both concepts of democracy.

Hypothesis 2 *Citizens with a liberal understanding of democracy are more likely to acquiesce to restrictions of majoritarian democracy than to acquiesce to any other restrictions of democracy.*

Hypothesis 3 *Citizens with a majoritarian understanding of democracy are more likely to acquiesce to restrictions of liberal democracy than to acquiesce to any other restrictions of democracy.*

Hypothesis 4 *Citizens with a majoritarian understanding and citizens with a liberal understanding of democracy are equally likely to oppose restrictions of electoral democracy.*⁸

3.2.3 The mediating effect of satisfaction with democracy

Researchers have attributed high importance to citizens' satisfaction with democracy for the stabilisation and endurance of democracies, hypothesising that dissatisfied citizens will lose their faith in democratic institutions and stop defending them against undemocratic alternatives (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011:pp. 33, 245).⁹ Consequently, an extensive literature has been published on the origins of dissatisfaction with democracy and how to fix it (see for example Aarts and Thomassen (2008), Blais and Gélinau (2007) and Hobolt (2012)). However, it remains unclear whether satisfaction with democracy stabilises democracies empirically and, if it does, through which causal mechanism.

Based on the assumption that satisfaction with democracy stabilises democratic institutions (Norris, 2011:p. 33), we theorise that satisfaction with democracy mediates the effect of perceived importance of institutions for democracy and understandings of democracy on the tolerance for democratic backsliding. More specifically, we assume that citizens who are dissatisfied with democracy in their countries care less about maintaining

⁸We adapted these hypotheses slightly in comparison to the pre-analysis plan since we changed some of the wording in this article. The meaning and direction of the hypothesis are unaffected.

⁹Norris (2011:p. 245) herself claims in 'Democratic Deficit. Critical Citizens revisited' that "Critical citizens may [...] be a positive force for reform in the world [...]. Yet substantial and enduring democratic deficits are more commonly regarded with concern."

the status quo of their political system.¹⁰ Thus, they should be more likely to tolerate democratic backsliding in their countries, even if the backsliding affects institutions that they – theoretically speaking – deem to be important for democracy, because they do not attribute high importance to the institutions that are actually in place.

Hypothesis 5 *Citizens are more likely to tolerate infringements on institutions they deem to be important for democracy if they are dissatisfied with the status quo of democracy in their country.*¹¹

In addition, dissatisfaction with democracy should decrease the likelihood that citizens with a liberal or majoritarian understanding of democracy tolerate some infringements of democracy more than others. For example, citizens with a liberal understanding of democracy that are highly dissatisfied with democracy in their country might not care at all about democratic backsliding – irrespective of whether the backsliding affects institutions of liberal or majoritarian democracy – since they might be disillusioned about the implementation of democracy in their country in general.

Hypothesis 6 *Citizens are less likely to differentiate between restrictions of democracy if they are dissatisfied with the status quo of democracy in their country.*

3.3 Data and survey design

We collected novel data from 638 German and 651 Polish citizens who represent their national population based on age and gender. The data collection took place between November 27 and December 14, 2020. Access to the panel was granted by Lucid. The survey got ethical approval from the *Ethical Review Board of the Faculty of Management, Economics, and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne*. The study has been pre-registered with the OSF¹². The survey includes basic demographic and political ques-

¹⁰Norris (2011) for example shows that dissatisfied respondents tend to participate less in politics and think more often that tax evasion is tolerable.

¹¹We adapted this hypothesis slightly in comparison to the pre-analysis plan since we changed some of the wording in this article. The meaning and direction of the hypothesis are unaffected.

¹²The pre-registration is not yet publicly available. We are happy to share the pre-analysis plan with any interested reader.

tions as well as a vignette experiment that is described in detail beneath. We excluded respondents who failed the attention check from the analysis.

We conducted our survey experiment in Germany and Poland. Although we do not expect to find differences between respondents from Germany and Poland, this country selection allows us to compare responses from countries that are affected by democratic backsliding to different degrees. Although the AfD has emerged as a powerful populist radical right party in Germany in the past years, other parties so far refuse to cooperate with the AfD (Bräuninger et al., 2019) and support for the AfD has stagnated at about 10 per cent (pollofpolls.eu, last access: 4 May 2021). Government parties have overall refrained from destabilising the democratic system of Germany. Hence, the German democratic system has remained stable in the last years; There is no systematic evidence of democratic backsliding in Germany (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Cornell, et al., 2021; Pemstein, Marquardt, Tzelgov, Wang, Medzihorsky, Krusell, Miri, and Römer, 2021). In contrast, the Polish democratic system has been debilitated significantly in the past years by the PiS government (Sadurski, 2018) with the support of large parts of the population. According to Politico (pollofpolls.eu), PiS has maintained the support of about 35 per cent of the Polish citizenry (last access: 4 May 2021). Furthermore, data from V-Dem confirms that the quality of the Polish democratic system has significantly decreased in the past years (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Cornell, et al., 2021; Pemstein, Marquardt, Tzelgov, Wang, Medzihorsky, Krusell, Miri, and Römer, 2021).

3.3.1 Experimental design

We use a vignette experiment to elicit the causal effect of hearing about a specific type of democratic backsliding in comparison to other types of backsliding on citizens' tolerance for democratic backsliding (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto, 2014). Vignette experiments confront respondents with descriptions of different situations, whose features (attributes) are randomly shown to respondents. Thus, using a vignette experiment allows us to elicit whether respondents tolerate one type of democratic backsliding more

or less than other types of democratic backsliding, *because* of the differences in these types of democratic backsliding, averaging across all possible mediating effects. Because of this feature, vignette and conjoint experiments have been widely used in studying citizens’ opposition to democratic backsliding (Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020; McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, 2020).

In our vignette experiment, respondents were confronted with three different descriptions of government plans that each erode different institutions. Table 3.1 shows these different types of backsliding respondents saw.¹³ Banning demonstrations against government plans would strongly violate any form of democracy, even a purely electoral democracy. Limiting the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions would be a reform that violates the horizontal accountability or separation of powers in liberal democracies, but not necessarily a majoritarian democracy. In contrast, implementing reforms for which there is no majority support in the population would weaken majoritarian democracy, but not necessarily a liberal democracy.

Table 3.1: Attribute levels for different types of democratic backsliding

| Attribute | Attribute levels | Type |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Government plan | The government plans to ... - ban demonstrations against government plans - limit the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions - also implement reforms for which there is no majority support in the population | anti-electoral anti-liberal anti-majoritarian |

In addition, we introduce the government as the respondent’s preferred government that shares the respondent’s policy positions and for which the respondent voted in the last election to assure that on average, respondents perceive the government to be representing their policy preferences. To increase the external validity of the experiment, we also randomised whether different types of actors voiced different types of criticism against the government plan and how the government argued for the implementation of the plan that infringes on democracy. Government plans that infringe on democracy are often framed as necessary by the the government and criticised by different types of polit-

¹³Table SM3.11 in the supplementary material shows all attribute and attribute levels included in the vignette experiment.

ical actors such as journalists or politicians from the opposition. The vignette therefore mirrors situations in which citizens are faced both with arguments for the democratic backsliding as well as arguments against the democratic backsliding.

Box 1: Example text for the experiment^a

Imagine that a government has come to power in [COUNTRY] that you have voted for and whose policies you support. You will now receive information about a new project of this government. *Please keep in mind that future governments might also profit from this government's project.*

The government plans to **ban demonstrations against government plans** (proposal type) **to reduce the influence of foreign decision-makers on [COUNTRY]'s policy** (goal of plan). **The government's project has been described as undemocratic** (criticism). **The European Parliament has criticised the project.** (actor opposing plan).

^aThe German master version and the Polish translations are included in the supplementary material.

Box 1 shows a sample vignette that respondents could have seen in our experiment, with the names of the attributes in parentheses. The names of the attributes have not been shown to respondents. The text in bold has been randomised, but has not been shown in bold to the respondents. In addition, the text in italics has been used as a prime for half of the respondents, but has not been shown in italics to the respondent. As announced in the pre-registration, all attributes but the attribute for types of democratic backsliding and the priming experiment are analysed in a separate publication (Gessler and Kaftan, 2021).¹⁴ This article therefore only focuses on the effect of being confronted with different types democratic backsliding on citizens' willingness to punish democratic backsliding, even by their preferred governments.

Moreover, the order in which respondents saw each type of democratic backsliding

¹⁴We do not find any priming effect for the statement 'Please keep in mind that future governments might also profit from this government's project' but had pre-registered a positive effect on citizens' willingness to punish governments for democratic backsliding.

has been randomised and respondents were shown all three of them once. We decided to do so because we wanted to avoid the situation in which respondents see the same type of democratic backsliding twice. If respondents would have seen the same type of democratic backsliding twice, their responses to the second instance in which they see the type of democratic backsliding could have been influenced by the criticism of it in the first instance. This would have seriously violated the assumption of no carry-over effects, demanding that responses to one vignette are not influenced by the attribute levels shown in previous vignettes (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto, 2014:p. 8).

After each vignette, respondents were asked how likely it would be that they would (1) participate in a demonstration against the government’s plan, (2) defend the government’s plan in discussions with acquaintances and (3) vote again for the government. This selection of outcome measures mirrors different possible responses to democratic backsliding that have varying costs for the respondents and different effects on governments.

We use marginal means (MMs) to analyse the effect of seeing different types of backsliding on the outcome measures across different subgroups of respondents and Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs) to assess whether the differences in means for seeing one attribute level are significantly different from the means for seeing another attribute level of the same attribute (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley, 2020). We also use standard levels of significance ($\alpha \geq 0.05$). ‘Standard’ vignette experiments also assume homogeneous treatment effects across different types of respondents (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley, 2020). Since we argue that citizens with different understandings of democracy should react differently to different types of democratic backsliding, we also analyse vignette experiments for subgroups of respondents and only assume homogeneous treatment effects within these subgroups (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley, 2020).

3.3.2 Measuring respondents’ understandings of democracy

Before the experiment, we asked respondents how important for democracy different formal and informal institutions were in their opinion. Table 3.2 lists these institutions.

Some of these institutions are worded negatively for two reasons. First, we wanted to directly measure how important for democracy the reforms are to citizens, that governments propose in our experiment. Second, also analysing the responses to these opposing institutions allows to assess how reliable our results are. Thus, by also including institutions that are not opposing scientific concepts of democracy allows us to assess in how far the responses are reliable and valid. Furthermore, we measure the importance that citizens attribute to the institutions on a scale from 1 to 7.

For testing Hypotheses 1 and 5, we simply code whether a respondent has rated the institutions as more important than the median respondent, irrespective of how the respondent rated other institutions and irrespective of whether the institution forms part of any scientific concept of democracy. Using the median respondent as a threshold allows to compare two different groups with similar sizes within each country, those attributing high and those attributing low importance to an institution, even though the average levels of perceived importance vary across countries and across institutions of democracy.

Since we are also interested in the differences between respondents with different understandings of democracy (2-4 and 6), we include several institutions for each concept of democracy presented above in the list of institutions, some of them worded negatively. The assignment of institutions to concepts of democracy is also shown in Table 3.2. Since we defined electoral democracy as guaranteeing free and fair elections as well as the freedom to express opinions, we categorise the right to participate in demonstrations (both positively and negatively worded), a free media and a free opposition as institutions of electoral democracy (Dahl, 1971; Diamond, 1999). Institutions of liberal democracy are the right of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions (negatively worded), the right of courts to stop the government acting beyond its authority and the protection of minority rights. Majoritarian institutions are that the people have the last say and that governments implement the will of the majority (negatively worded).

Respondents who score higher than 4 on all electoral and liberal institutions of democracy *and* 4 or lower on all anti-electoral and anti-liberal institutions are categorised as respondents with a liberal understanding of democracy. Vice versa, respondents who

score higher than 4 on all electoral and majoritarian institutions *and* 4 or lower on all anti-electoral and anti-majoritarian institutions are categorised as majoritarian respondents. Those respondents that oppose all electoral institutions of democracy together are categorised as authoritarian. Thus, these citizens attribute an importance of 4 or lower to all electoral institutions *and* an importance off higher than 4 to the anti-electoral institutions. The remaining respondents will be treated as “others”. Since this part of the analysis focuses on whether citizens have an understanding of democracy that is in line with a liberal or majoritarian concept of democracy, we do not use the median respondent but a fixed value as threshold.

Table 3.2: List of institutions of democracy and the related concept of democracy

| # | Institution | Concept |
|----|--|-------------------|
| | How important do you think it is for democracy in general, ... | |
| 1 | ... that the people have the last say? | majoritarian |
| 2 | .. that the government also implements reforms for which there is no majority support in the population? | anti-majoritarian |
| 3 | ... that the courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority? | liberal |
| 4 | ... that the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions is limited? | anti-liberal |
| 5 | ... that citizens can participate in demonstrations if they do not support the government’s plans? | electoral |
| 6 | ... that the government prohibits demonstrations against government plans? | anti-electoral |
| 7 | ... that opposition parties are free to criticise the government? | electoral |
| 8 | ... that the media are free to criticise the government? | electoral |
| 9 | ... that the rights of minority groups are protected? | liberal |
| 10 | ... that the government protects all citizens against poverty? | (social) |

3.4 Results

First, we briefly present the results from the experiment across all respondents by country. These results do not take respondents understandings of democracy into account, but serve as a benchmark for assessing the additional information we receive once we do. Since the attribute levels were fully randomised, the experimental design complies with the assumption of full randomisation. In addition, we do not find evidence for systematic

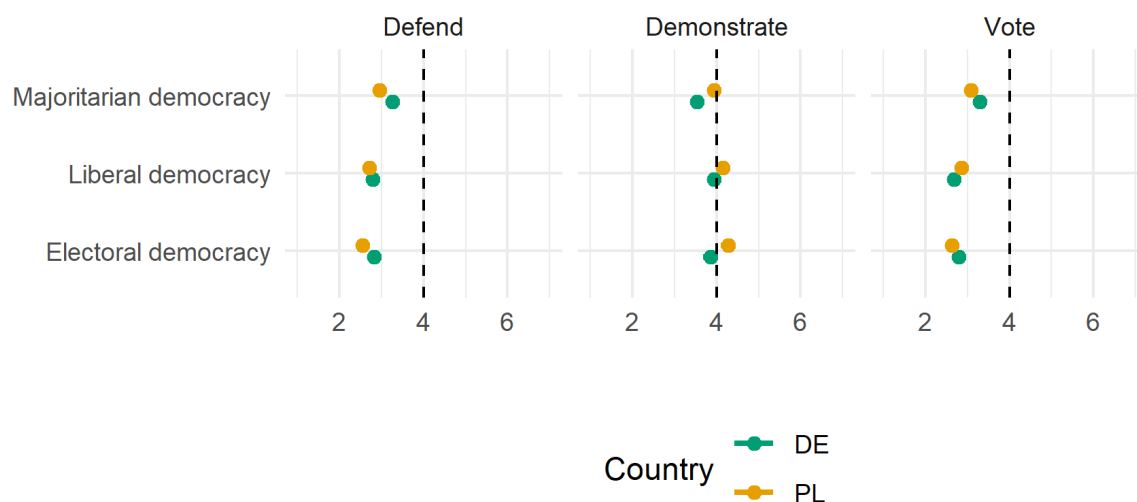
carry-over effects.¹⁵ Thus, we are confident that our experiment yields valid results.

Figure 3.1 shows MMs for responses to the questions whether respondents would demonstrate against the proposal, defend it in discussions or vote again for a government that infringes on one of the three different concepts of democracy (electoral, liberal and majoritarian democracy). On average, both German and Polish citizens are more likely to punish governments for infringements on electoral democracy (bans on demonstrations) than for infringements on majoritarian democracy (implementing reforms against the will of the majority). In addition, German citizens are more likely to demonstrate against infringements on liberal democracy (restrictions on courts) than against infringements on electoral democracy. In contrast, Polish citizens are more likely to vote again for governments who infringe on liberal democracy than for governments who infringe on electoral democracy. Thus, unexpectedly, German and Polish citizens seem to rate infringements on liberal democracy – in comparison to infringements on electoral democracy – differently.

Some of the differences between the outcome measures (AMCEs) for each of the types of democratic backsliding are considerably large. We find the largest difference between the assessment of different types of democratic backsliding for German citizens' vote intention for governments who infringe on liberal democracy compared to their vote intention for governments who infringe on majoritarian democracy. The absolute difference here is 0.61 on a scale from 1 to 7. For Polish citizens, the largest difference between the assessment of different types of democratic backsliding can be found for vote intentions for governments who infringe on electoral democracy and governments who infringe on majoritarian democracy, with a difference of 0.45 on the same scale.

¹⁵Figure SM3.3 and Figure SM3.4 in the supplementary material show MMs and AMCEs by vignette respectively for the attribute levels of interest to this study. In addition, Table SM3.14 in the supplementary material shows ANOVA results for differences in outcome measures between the three vignettes, averaging across all attributes and attribute levels included in the experiment. Since the results indicate that few differences in outcome measures across different vignettes are significantly different from zero, although very close to zero, we additionally test whether our results are robust for only including responses to the first vignette. Section SM3.8 shows that they are.

Figure 3.1: Marginal Means for seeing different types of democratic backsliding by country



Notes: Figure SM3.5 in the supplementary material shows MMs for all attributes and attribute levels included in the vignette experiment; Figure SM3.6 shows AMCEs; Figure SM3.11 shows that results are robust for only analysing the first vignette respondents saw. Figures created with the R packages *cregg* and *ggplot*.

3.4.1 Perceived importance of different institutions for democracy and tolerance for democratic backsliding

Figure 3.2 shows how important German and Polish respondents deem different institutions for democracy. In both countries, respondents deem the ability to demonstrate highly important and in only few cases do they think that it is important for democracy that governments can ban demonstrations. As expected, the importance that citizens attribute to these two institutions correlates negatively ($r = -0.21$, $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, respondents in both countries overall agree that it is important for democracy that the people have the last say, that minority rights are protected, that the government protects the people against poverty, that the opposition can criticise the government and that courts can restrict the government if it breaches its competences. Vice versa, citizens in both countries do not deem it important for democracy that governments enact reforms against the will of the majority and that courts are restricted in their ability to sanction governments if they behave unconstitutional. Respondents who deem the protection of

minority rights important are also more likely to state that it is important in democracies that governments implement reforms against the will of the majority ($r=0.13$, $p=0.000$). Unexpectedly, the importance of the two institutions regarding the role of courts do not correlate.¹⁶

Figure 3.2 also reveals substantial variance across respondents within countries with regard to the perceived importance of some of the institutions. The distribution of the responses for many of the different institutions is not as skewed as one would expect if there were no disagreement among citizens regarding the importance of different institutions to democracy. Nevertheless, the results show that respondents overall provided meaningful responses to the question and that – in most cases – respondents differentiate between undemocratic and democratic institutions in a way that is consistent with scientific concepts of democracy.

Moreover, Figure 3.3 shows that German and Polish respondents are less likely to tolerate democratic backsliding if it contradicts aspects of democracy they deem to be important. For example, respondents who state that it is important for democracy that courts can control the government are less likely to defend restrictions of courts, less likely to vote again for governments who plan to restrict courts and more likely to demonstrate against the government proposal. These results are robust to reversing the argument: If citizens are faced with a type of democratic backsliding that they actually thought would be important for democracy – e.g. if they have stated that courts should be restricted and are now faced with restrictions of courts – citizens are more likely to tolerate democratic backsliding.¹⁷ Furthermore, the results hold for all types of democratic backsliding,¹⁸ are robust to only analysing the first vignette¹⁹ and therefore, clearly support Hypothesis 1.

In addition, the effect is of considerable strength. On a scale from 1 to 7, respondents score approximately 1 to 1.5 points higher if they see infringements on institutions they perceive to be important compared to situations in which they see infringements on

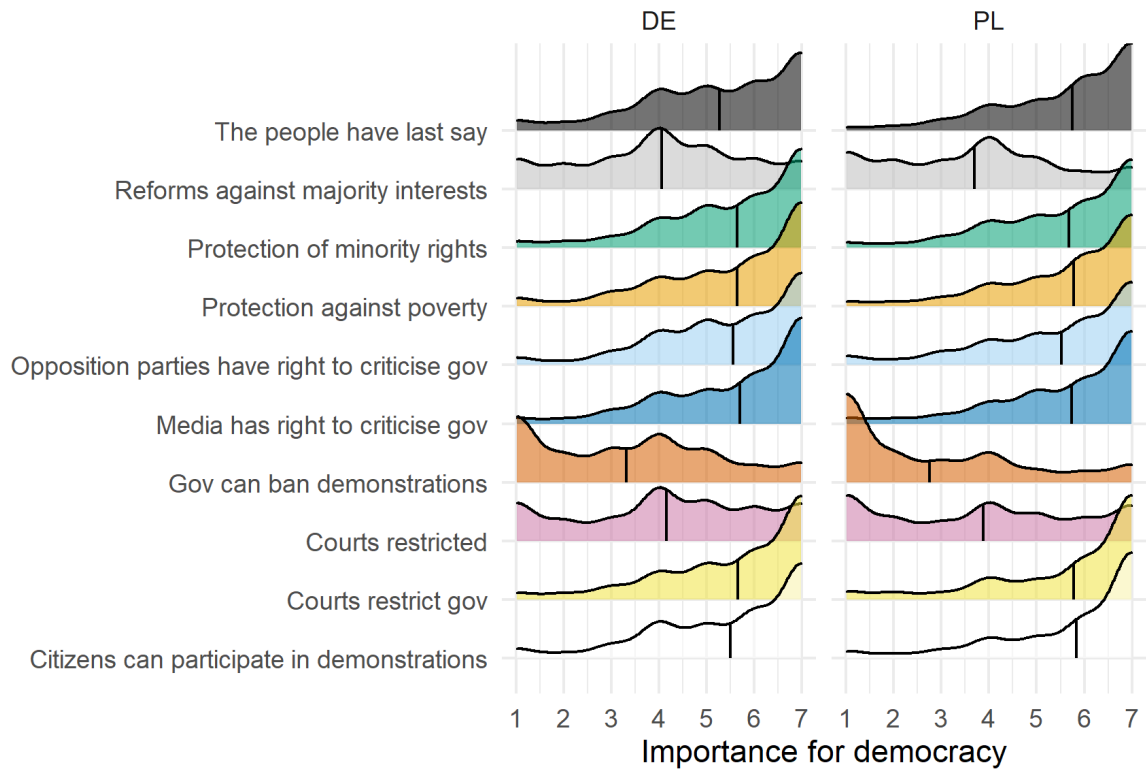
¹⁶Figure SM3.2 in the supplementary material shows all bi-variate correlations for these institutions. Section SM3.4 of the supplementary material additionally shows the wording in English, German and Polish.

¹⁷See Figure SM3.18 in the supplementary material.

¹⁸See Figure SM3.17 in the supplementary material.

¹⁹See Figure SM3.12 in the supplementary material.

Figure 3.2: Importance of different institutions for democracy by country

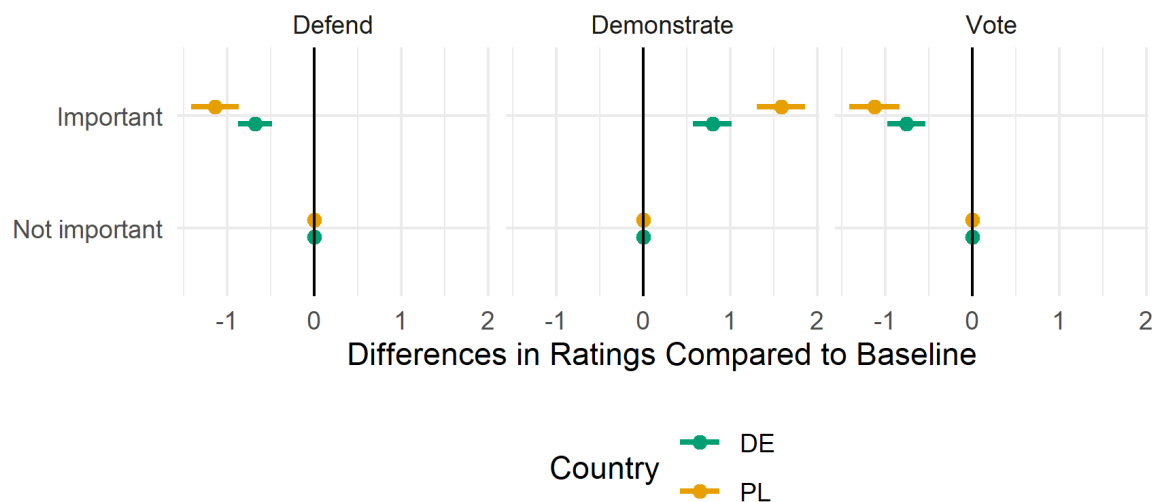


Notes: Based on 1,289 responses overall, 638 from Germany and 651 from Poland. Mean values marked vertically. Figure created with the R packages ggplot and ggridges.

institutions they do not deem to be important. Effects are weaker for German than for Polish respondents. AMCEs for seeing infringements on important institutions are also larger than AMCEs for different types of democratic backsliding more generally,²⁰ further supporting the argument that citizens assign different levels of importance to different institutions and that these differences strongly affect their willingness to punish governments for democratic backsliding.

²⁰See Figure 3.1 (MMs) above and Figure SM3.6 (AMCEs) in the supplementary material for a comparison with differences across types of democratic backsliding

Figure 3.3: Average Marginal Component Effects for seeing proposals that contradict what citizens perceive to be important for democracy



Notes: ‘Contradict’ means that, for example, respondents see restrictions on demonstrations, but have previously indicated that they thought that being able to demonstrate is important (or not important) for democracy. Figure created with the R packages cregg and ggplot.

3.4.2 Concepts of democracy and tolerance for different types of democratic backsliding

The section above clearly demonstrated that citizens tend to punish governments for democratic backsliding more if it affects institutions they deem to be important for democracy. But this so far ignores what exactly citizens think is important for democracy, to what extent this is consistent with electoral, liberal or majoritarian democracy and whether citizens with liberal and majoritarian understandings of democracy behave differently.

Figure 3.4 shows the number of respondents who have an understanding of democracy that is in line with liberal and majoritarian concepts of democracy (liberal and majoritarian democrats), the number of respondents who oppose all democratic and simultaneously support the anti-democratic institutions (authoritarians) and all others who do not fit any of these categories. The Notes to Figure 3.4 describe the categorisation of these respondents. Most importantly, most respondents do not fit in any category and many

respondents are both majoritarian and liberal democrats.

Furthermore, Figure 3.4 reveals some noteworthy differences across countries. While two thirds of German respondents' understandings of democracy are not in line with neither liberal nor majoritarian democracy, this applies 'only' to slightly more than half of the Polish respondents. Approximately 21 percent of Polish respondents have an understanding of democracy that puts high emphasis both on liberal and majoritarian democracy, this being the second largest category in Poland. The second largest category in Germany is however comprised by respondents who have a liberal understanding of democracy (13 percent). In Germany, only 11 per cent have an understanding of democracy that is consistent with both liberal and majoritarian democracy.²¹ In addition, majoritarian democrats are much more common among the Polish respondents. Authoritarians are equally distributed across these two countries.

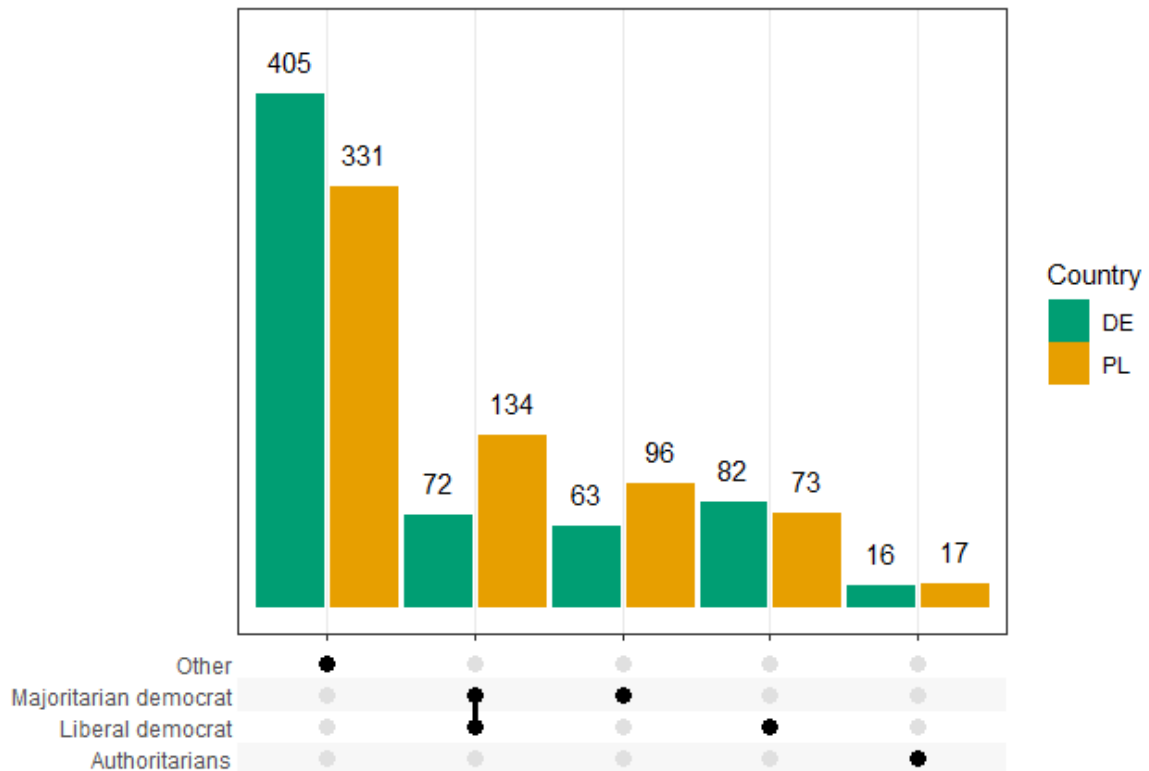
Figure 3.5 shows that liberal democrats tend to differentiate between different types of democratic backsliding slightly more than majoritarian democrats. In both countries, they clearly tolerate restrictions of majoritarian democracy more than restrictions of liberal democracy, while they do not make any difference between liberal and electoral democracy. This seems to support Hypothesis 2. However, the results presented in Figure 3.5 do not support Hypothesis 3 that majoritarians are more likely to tolerate restrictions on liberal democracy than restrictions on majoritarian democracy. In addition, those respondents categorised as neither authoritarians, nor liberal democrats or majoritarian democrats ("others") behave similar to liberal democrats when it comes to distinguishing between different types of democratic backsliding.²²

We furthermore only find weak evidence for the Hypothesis that liberal and majoritarian democrats are equally likely to punish governments for infringements on electoral democracy (4). Figure 3.6 shows AMCEs for the differences between the responses of liberal and majoritarian democrats (liberal democrats being the baseline) when seeing restrictions on electoral democracy. While German majoritarian democrats clearly do not

²¹We conceptualised these two concepts as mutually exclusive, but acknowledge already in the pre-registration that citizens might be unable or unwilling to do so.

²²See Figure SM3.7 in the supplementary material.

Figure 3.4: Consistency of citizens' understandings of democracy with scientific concepts of democracy by country

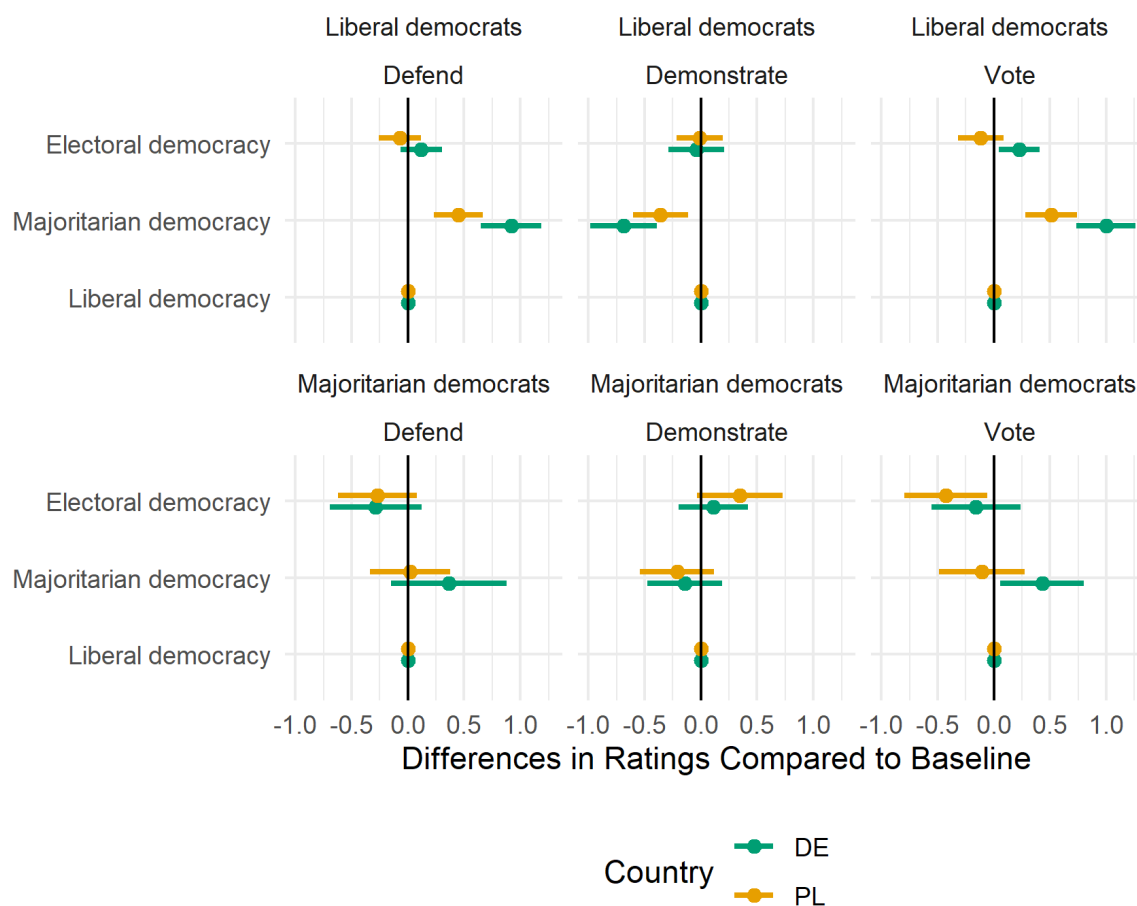


Notes: Both ‘*Liberal and majoritarian democrats*’ assign an importance higher than 4 to: citizens can participate in demonstrations, opposition is free to criticise the government, the media are free to criticise the government; and 4 or lower to: the government prohibits demonstrations. ‘*Liberal democrats*’ additionally assign an importance higher than 4 to: the courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority, the rights of minority groups are protected; and 4 or lower to: the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions is limited. ‘*Majoritarian democrats*’ additionally assign an importance of higher than 4 to: the people have the last say; and 4 or lower to: the government also implements reforms for which there is no majority, the rights of minority groups are protected. ‘*Authoritarians*’ are coded in reverse to the democrats. ‘*Others*’ are those respondents that do not fit in any of the above mentioned categories. Based on data from 638 German and 651 Polish respondents.

Figure created with the R packages ggplot and ggupset.

tolerate democratic backsliding more or less than German liberal democrats, the results for Polish majoritarian and liberal democracy might only be not significantly different from each other due to power issues. Moreover, all results presented in this section are robust to only analysing the first vignette, as Figures SM3.13 and SM3.14 in the supplementary material show, and overall do not support the theoretical assumptions made in

Figure 3.5: Average Marginal Component Effects for tolerance of different types of democratic backsliding among liberal and majoritarian democrats



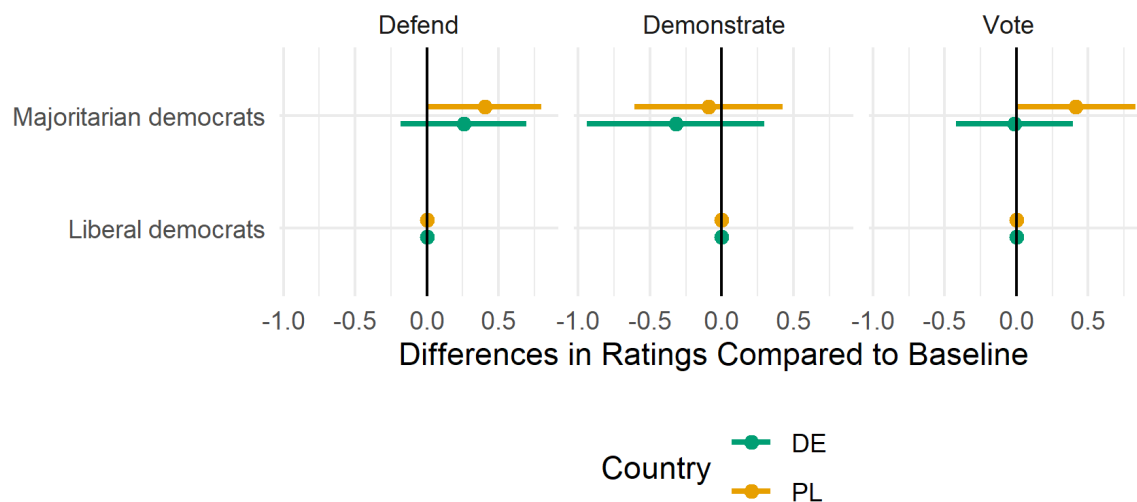
Notes: Figure SM3.7 in the supplementary material shows the results for all four groups. Figures created with the R packages ggplot and cregg.

Section 3.2.2.

In contrast, these findings indicate that most citizens do not clearly differentiating between these two different concepts of democracy, nor do they have an understanding of democracy that is clearly in line with any of these concepts. To explore more generally whether German and Polish citizens have understandings of democracy that can be clustered into concepts of democracy, we ran several factor analyses using weighted least squares.²³ Table 3.3 shows the results of the factor analyses for Germany and Poland. First of all, we do not find any differences among German and Polish respondents, here.

²³This part of the analysis is not pre-registered.

Figure 3.6: Average Marginal Component Effects for majoritarian democrats' reaction to restrictions on electoral democracy, baseline: liberal democrats



Notes: Figure created with the R packages ggplot and cregg.

Moreover, the first factor clearly describes liberal democrats. However, social democracy also loads on this factor, indicating that these are respondents who on average rate many different institutions as important for democracy, excluding majoritarian institutions and outright undemocratic institutions. In contrast to the first factor, the second factor is only positively loaded by ‘the government implements reforms for which there is no majority support in the population’. Thus, the importance that citizens attribute to this institution does not correlate with the importance citizens attribute to other institutions.²⁴ This could either indicate that we are tapping into a different understanding of democracy that is not compatible with electoral democracy – remember that it does not correlate with the importance attributed to electoral democratic institutions – or that respondents had difficulties rating this institution. Due to this uncertainty, we exclude this factor from the subsequent exploratory analysis. The third factor clearly describes authoritarian respondents. These respondents do not believe that courts should restrict the government and believe that governments should be able to ban demonstrations against government plans. Figure SM3.2 in the supplementary material additionally shows that especially importance attributed to the latter institution is negatively correlated with

²⁴See also Figure SM3.2 in the supplementary material.

importance attributed to many other democratic institutions.

Table 3.3: Factor loadings from a factor analysis using weighted least squares (WLS) on the perceived importance of different institutions for democracy

| CN | Institution | WLS1 | WLS2 | WLS3 |
|----|---|------|------|------|
| DE | The people have last the say. | 0.54 | | |
| DE | Government implements reforms for which there is no majority support in the population. | | 0.83 | |
| DE | The courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority. | 0.74 | | |
| DE | The power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions is limited. | | | 0.49 |
| DE | Citizens can participate in demonstrations against government plans. | 0.77 | | |
| DE | The government prohibits demonstrations against government plans. | | | 0.42 |
| DE | Opposition parties are free to criticise the government. | 0.77 | | |
| DE | The media is free to criticise the government. | 0.83 | | |
| DE | The rights of minority groups are protected. | 0.65 | | |
| DE | The government protects all citizens against poverty. | 0.58 | | |
| PL | The people have last the say. | 0.71 | | |
| PL | Government implements reforms for which there is no majority support in the population. | | 0.82 | |
| PL | The courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority. | 0.79 | | |
| PL | The power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions is limited. | | | 0.44 |
| PL | Citizens can participate in demonstrations against government plans. | 0.83 | | |
| PL | The government prohibits demonstrations against government plans. | | | 0.51 |
| PL | Opposition parties are free to criticise the government. | 0.80 | | |
| PL | The media is free to criticise the government. | 0.85 | | |
| PL | The rights of minority groups are protected. | 0.71 | | |
| PL | The government protects all citizens against poverty. | 0.45 | | |

Notes: Only showing the largest coefficients per row. Overall explained variance: 0.50 (DE) and 0.55 (PL). Figures SM3.19 and SM3.20 in the supplementary material describe why we selected three factors instead of more or less factors.

The results of the factor analyses thus overall suggest that respondents in our sample can be only meaningfully categorised as democrats or authoritarians. We therefore build an index for how much citizens value the democratic institutions in comparison to the ones that are not in line with scientific concepts of democracy. To do so, we calculate a weighted mean of the importance citizens have attributed to each institution that load on the first factor (democrats) and that load on the third factor (authoritarians)

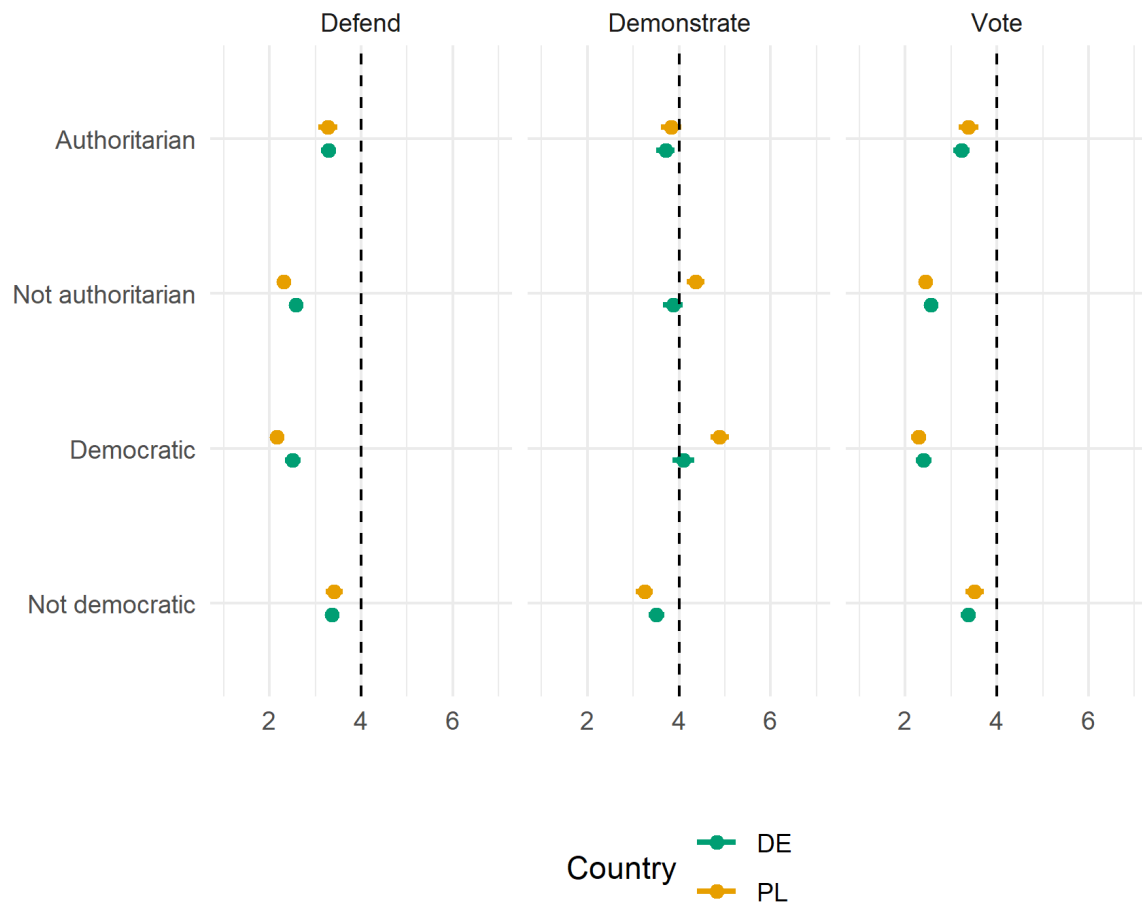
based on the respective factor loadings.²⁵ This index ranges from 1 to 7, just as the underlying response scales do. These two indices correlate significantly ($p \leq 0.001$) but only marginally ($r = -0.05$).²⁶ We therefore split citizens into two groups for each of the two indices, comparing the respondents that score higher than the median with those that score lower or equal to the median respondent on each scale.

Figure 3.7 shows MMs for the three different outcome measures irrespective of the type of democratic backsliding respondents see. Most importantly, the results for authoritarian vs not authoritarian and for democratic vs not democratic are not mutually exclusive, but they are both applied to the whole set of respondents. Thus, they measure the same latent concept (democratic vs authoritarian), but in two different ways (see description above), and provide extra robustness to our results. On average, authoritarian and / or undemocratic citizens tend to punish democratic backsliding considerably less than not authoritarian and / or democratic citizens, respectively, both in Germany as well as in Poland. The differences between these two groups are extremely large; in some instances, authoritarians / non-democrats indicate a higher willingness to punish democratic backsliding of about 2 points on a 7 points scale. This is by far the largest difference we find. As Figures SM3.21 and SM3.15 in the supplementary material show, this holds for all three different types of democratic backsliding and also for only analysing the first vignette. Concluding, citizens' democratic attitudes clearly affect their tolerance of democratic backsliding beyond their overall assessment of whether what governments restrict is important or not, although we did not find evidence for citizens having either majoritarian or liberal democratic attitudes. Rather, citizens can be clearly separated into authoritarians, objecting democratic rule and tolerating democratic backsliding, and democrats, supporting democratic rule and punishing democratic backsliding.

²⁵We use the following formula, w and i referencing the weight and institution respectively: $(w_1 * i_1 + w_2 * i_2 + \dots + w_n * i_n) / (w_1 + w_2 + \dots + w_n)$

²⁶However, respondents who score 7 on one of the indices never score 7 on the other index. We therefore still believe that these two indices are measuring meaningfully whether citizens are rather democratic or rather authoritarian.

Figure 3.7: Marginal Means for tolerance of democratic backsliding among democrats and authoritarians by country, irrespective of type of democratic backsliding



Notes: Figure created with the R packages ggplot and cregg.

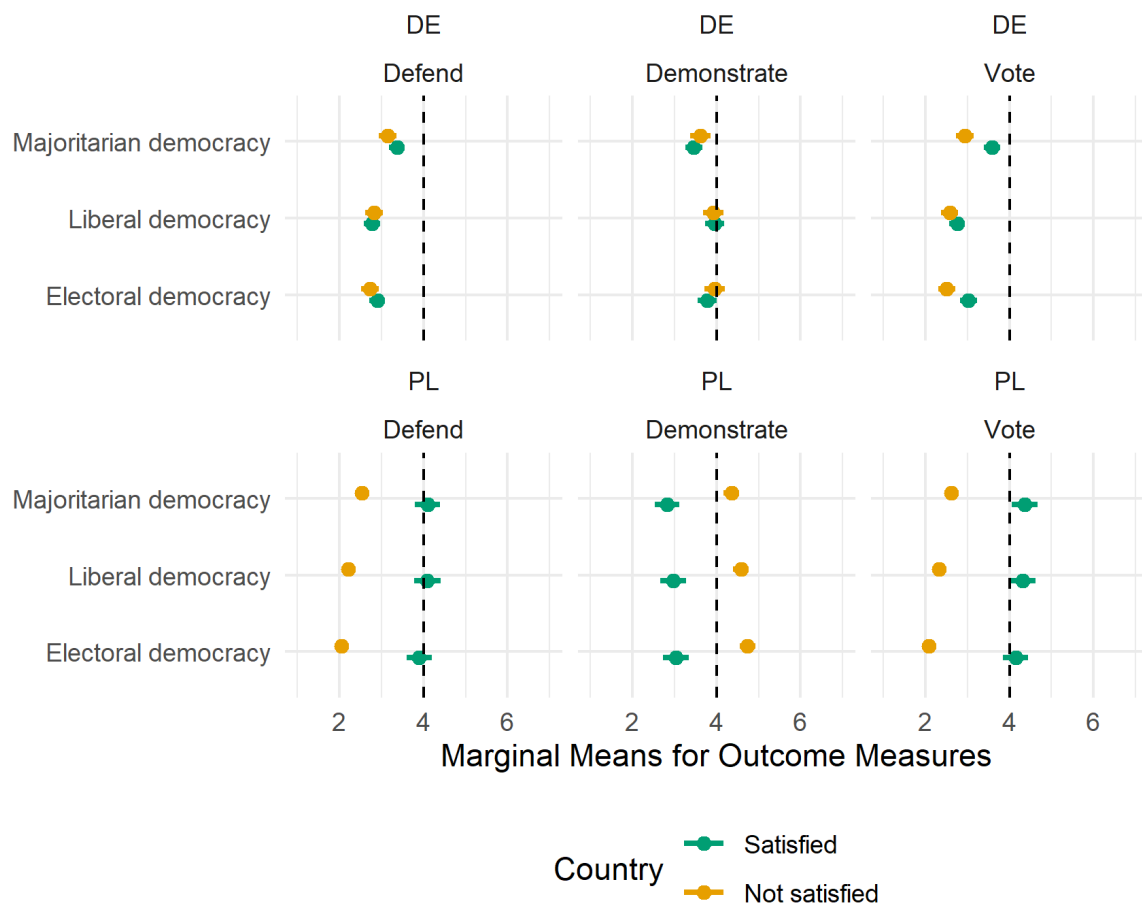
3.4.3 Satisfaction with democracy and tolerance for democratic backsliding

This section introduces satisfaction with how democracy works in citizens' countries as important moderator for the relationship between understandings of democracy and tolerance for democratic backsliding. Although the pre-registered Hypotheses 5 and 6 stated that dissatisfied citizens should be more likely to tolerate infringements on institutions they deem to be important for democracy and that dissatisfied citizens should be less likely to differentiate between restrictions of democracy, we do not find evidence that supports these Hypotheses.²⁷

²⁷See Figures SM3.9 and SM3.10 in the supplementary material. The only exception are satisfied German liberal democrats who differentiate more between different types of democratic backsliding than

We do however find unexpected but interesting results for the relationship between satisfaction with democracy and citizens' willingness to punish governments for democratic backsliding, more directly.²⁸ Figure 3.8 first of all shows that satisfaction with democracy plays a different role in Germany and Poland for citizens' tolerance for democratic backsliding. While satisfaction with democracy correlates strongly with Polish citizens' willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding, it only marginally correlates with German citizens' willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding. This finding is robust for only analysing the first vignette respondents saw.²⁹

Figure 3.8: Marginal Means for different types of democratic backsliding by satisfaction with democracy and country



Notes: Figure created with the R packages ggplot and cregg.

dissatisfied German liberal democrats.

²⁸This part of the analysis has not been pre-registered.

²⁹See Figure SM3.16 in the supplementary material.

In contrast to the literature that voices concerns about citizens' dissatisfaction with how democracy works and that we have cited above, these findings strongly point towards the positive effect of having a critical citizenry that is attentive of and that speaks out against governments' undemocratic behaviour. This positive effect is in line with findings by Geissel (2008) who has shown that countries with many critical citizens, citizens who believe that 'keeping watch of the government' is important, show also higher levels of governance performance. Although future research is needed to investigate the relationship between satisfaction with democracy and tolerance for democratic backsliding further, the findings presented here indicate that it is the dissatisfied – and not the satisfied – who tend to defend democratic institutions, most importantly in those countries that face significant levels of democratic backsliding such as Poland.

3.5 Discussion

In outlining our hypotheses, we suggested that the importance for democracy which citizens attribute to different formal and informal institutions affects significantly citizens' opposition to infringements on these institutions. The evidence presented in Section 3.4.1 strongly supports this Hypothesis 1. In addition, we find considerable variation in the perceived importance of institutions for democracy among German and Polish respondent (Figure 3.2) and citizens' reactions are much stronger for seeing infringements of important and unimportant institutions (Figure 3.3) than for seeing different types of democratic backsliding in general (Figure 3.1).

In Section 3.4.2, we then focused on the quality of citizens' understandings of democracy, on whether these understandings are consistent with different scientific concepts of democracy and to what degree different understandings affect citizens' tolerance for different types of democratic backsliding. Because of these unexpected variances in the data, we can only draw careful conclusions regarding the hypotheses that liberal democrats are most likely to tolerate restrictions on majoritarian democracy (H2), that majoritarian democrats are most likely to tolerate restrictions on liberal democracy (H3) and that

both liberal democrats and majoritarian democrats should be equally likely to oppose restrictions of electoral democracy (H4). Overall, we do not find evidence that convincingly supports these hypotheses, but face issues of low statistical power due to the unexpectedly high amount of citizens not having ‘purely’ liberal or ‘purely’ majoritarian understandings of democracy.

In contrast, we find that citizens’ understandings of democracy can best be described on a continuum between those that attribute high importance to a lot of different institutions of democracy, including liberal and social democracy, and those that do not attribute high importance to any of these institutions while simultaneously attributing high importance to undemocratic institutions. We clearly show that whether citizens are democrats or not strongly affects citizens’ willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding. Taken together with the findings from Section 3.4.1, this shows that citizens do not just trade democracy for policy. To the contrary: Some citizens, namely authoritarians, like democratic backsliding much more than other citizens.

In Section 3.4.3, we additionally introduce satisfaction with democracy as a mediator for the relationship between citizens’ understandings of democracy and their tolerance for democratic backsliding. While we hypothesised that dissatisfaction with democracy increases the tolerance for democratic backsliding and decreases the degree to which citizens differentiate between important and unimportant institutions (H5) as well as the degree to which liberal and majoritarian democrats differentiate between electoral, liberal and majoritarian democracy (H6), we only find evidence for Hypothesis 5. Again, this could be due to issues with statistical power, but is most likely related to the fact that the understandings of democracy of the respondents in our sample did not mirror differences between supporters of liberal and support of majoritarian democracy.

We do however find strong and unexpected differences between German and Polish respondents. For German respondents, satisfaction with democracy only plays a minor role. However, Polish dissatisfied respondents are much more likely to punish democratic backsliding and more likely to differentiate between different types of democratic backsliding than Polish satisfied respondents. These unexpected differences between Ger-

man and Polish respondents could be a manifestation of different levels of polarisation and politicisation of democracy in both countries.³⁰ Since Polish respondents have been more exposed to democratic backsliding and its discussion in the public, they might have formed stronger and more stable preferences for specific formal or informal institutions and concepts of democracy, especially those Polish respondents who are dissatisfied with how democracy nowadays works in Poland. Thus, dissatisfaction with how democracy works might lead to an increasing mobilisation against democratic backsliding, if the democratic system is seriously undermined.

3.6 Conclusion

Previous research has assumed that although citizens state that they support democracy (Dalton, Shin, and Jou, 2007; Inglehart, 2003; Lagos, 2003), citizens still prefer governments who fulfil their policy preferences over governments who uphold democratic principles when faced with a trade-off (Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020; McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, 2020). However, this research into citizens' willingness to punish governments for democratic backsliding so far builds on the assumption that citizens in theory support democracy and have uniform and informed understandings of what democracy means that are consistent with experts' understandings and scientific definitions of democracy and democratic backsliding.

This article shows that lifting these assumptions of 'homogeneous treatment effects' across all citizens within one country reveals important further insights into why citizens tolerate democratic backsliding. Most importantly, the research presented in this article suggests that citizens only sometimes tolerate backsliding. When citizens do care about the institutions under threat, they are much more likely to punish governments for democratic backsliding. Citizens who do not care are most likely authoritarian citizens who might even prefer governments that infringe on democracy over those that do not, all else equal.³¹ In addition, we find evidence that only few citizens have a 'purely'

³⁰In fact, many of the described effects are stronger for Polish than for German respondents.

³¹However, future research is needed to test whether this claim is supported empirically since our study was not designed to test for preferences between governments that infringe on democracy and

liberal understanding of democracy. Differences between citizens' and experts' understandings of democracy might therefore well explain parts of the puzzle that citizens support democracy but tolerate democratic backsliding.

Moreover, this article shows for the first time that satisfaction with democracy affects citizens' willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding, although in a different way than previously expected. We expected that satisfaction with democracy has a positive effect on citizens' willingness to punish democratic backsliding because widespread dissatisfaction is believed to increase the risk that democratic systems deteriorate in the long run (Almond and Verba, 1963; Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011:pp. 33–34). However, we find evidence for a reversed effect in one of the countries we study. In Poland, it is the dissatisfied that indicate much higher levels of willingness to punish governments for democratic backsliding. Thus, dissatisfaction with political systems that show decreasing levels of democratic quality might even stabilise democratic systems or at least decrease the velocity with which the country's democratic systems is dismantled. In contrast to that, German citizens' willingness to tolerate democratic backsliding is not strongly affected by their dissatisfaction with democracy, suggesting that in stable democracies with a low politicisation of democracy, satisfaction with democracy does not explain system stability well.

Concluding, the results of this article contribute to the literature on democratic support, democratic stability and democratic backsliding. They provide new insights into the causal mechanisms that link citizens' understandings of democracy with their willingness to defend democratic systems against democratic backsliding. These causal mechanisms have until today remained understudied, mostly due to a lack of data and methods. Vignette experiments such as the ones used in this study and in previous studies (Carey et al., 2020; Graham and Svobik, 2020; McCoy, Simonovits, and Littvay, 2020) are valuable tools to increase our knowledge about these causal mechanisms.

those that do not.

CHAPTER 4

PARTY COMPETITION OVER DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY PER SE AND CONCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY AS ELECTORAL

ISSUES IN GERMANY

Abstract. This article theorises to what degree democracy more generally and conceptions of democracy more specifically are valence or positional issues of multi-party competition in democratic systems. Using German regional and national elections as a case that maximises the variance on many important variables which potentially influence whether parties put democracy on the electoral agenda, this article shows that democracy per se and social, liberal and direct democracy more specifically have been issues in post-war German election campaigns. While the usage of democracy per se in election manifestos shows signs of being a mixture of valence and positional issues, social, liberal and direct democracy are positional issues of German party competition. This article contributes to the literature on party competition and democratic stability by providing evidence for party competition over democracy that can help political scientists explain how party competition can destabilise democracies from within.

4.1 Introduction

There is ample evidence that parties speak about democracy and different conceptions of democracy in election campaigns (N. Allen and Mirwaldt, 2010). Since campaigns affect voters (Farrell and Schmitt-Beck, 2002), how parties speak about democracy in their election campaigns should matter a lot for the stability of democratic systems. However, political science research has only recently started to investigate how, why and when parties refer to democracy in their election campaigns. Most importantly, Gessler (2019) has argued in her dissertation that parties politicise political systems under certain conditions, such as when the quality of the democracy is low or when citizens are dissatisfied with how democracy works. This article contributes to this growing research area by arguing that democracy and different conceptions of democracy can become issues in election campaigns similar to other issues such as the economy or immigration.

This article proposes to study references to democracy and the emphasis on different conceptions of democracy in election campaigns using the concept of valence and positional issues. Based on Sio and T. Weber (2014) and Stokes (1963:p. 373), valence issues are issues for which there is a general agreement in the electorate and for which parties signal competence rather than alternatives. Positional issues are issues for which there is disagreement in the electorate and for which parties signal alternatives rather than competence. Valence and positional issues are two ideal types and issues can be a mixture of both types (Sio and T. Weber, 2014:p. 872). The article, therefore, asks, “Can democracy per se and conceptions of democracy be valence or positional issues in election campaigns?”

The article uses four different democracy terms: Democracy per se, social, liberal and direct democracy. (1) ‘Democracy per se’ describes situations in which parties explicitly mention democracy, irrespective of parties’ understandings of what democracy means and irrespective of the reason for why they do so. By not pre-defining what parties must refer to when they reference democracy, I am able to explore when and why parties mention democracy in election campaigns more generally.

In contrast to that, the article also investigates how strongly three specific conceptions

of democracy are emphasised in election campaigns: Social, liberal and direct democracy. Therefore, these conceptions need to be defined. They shall refer to democratic systems which - in addition to basic democratic rights such as equal rights to participate in free and fair elections, free access to information and free expression of opinion (Dahl, 1971:p. 3) - have further characteristics: (2) 'Social democracy' aims at similar or equal socio-economic living conditions for all citizens by intervening actively in the economy (see E. Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens (1997:p. 324), Hinnfors (2011), and Miller (2005) for similar definitions). (3) 'Liberal democracy' additionally guarantees the rule of law, the protection of minority rights and effective checks and balances (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Fish, A. Glynn, Hicken, Lührmann, Marquardt, McMann, Paxton, Pemstein, Seim, Sigman, Skaaning, Staton, Wilson, et al., 2020:p. 43). (4) 'Direct democracy' gives citizens the right to directly vote on political decisions, irrespective of whether they can also vote for representatives (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Fish, A. Glynn, Hicken, Lührmann, Marquardt, McMann, Paxton, Pemstein, Seim, Sigman, Skaaning, Staton, Wilson, et al., 2020:p. 43). These three conceptions of democracy are not exclusive. Citizens and parties might prefer mixtures of them and political systems can incorporate parts of all three of these conceptions.

This article furthermore focuses on party competition in Germany. German regional and national elections are a good case for testing the theory that democracy and different conceptions of democracy can be issues of multi-party competition even in old and 'established' democracies, since Germany shows variance on most important variables that might influence if and how democracy is addressed in multi-party competition. Most importantly, it allows me to control for the effect of regime changes and government participation. The German party system has furthermore witnessed various changes of its party system, allowing me to investigate the effect of the rise of challengers on the politicisation of democracy in election campaigns.

The article uses dictionaries to reveal how much German parties speak about democracy per se and how much emphasis they put on social, liberal and direct democracy in

their national and regional election manifestos (Volkens et al., 2019; Benoit, Bräuninger, and Debus, 2009). It shows that democracy per se and more specific conceptions of democracy can and should be conceptualised as issues of multi-party competition. This has implications for how political scientists can study the role of parties in changing and defending their democratic systems.

4.2 Democracy issues in election campaigns

Only a few studies to date have investigated when and why parties put democracy on the agenda and take a specific position on it in election campaigns. Most of these studies focus on direct democracy and argue that parties implement direct democracy hoping for short-term electoral gains (Scarrow, 1997; Scarrow, 1999) and an increase in electoral participation (Scarrow, 1999). Furthermore, support for more direct participation by the citizenry is on average higher within parties that are in opposition and within more right-wing parties (Bowler et al., 2002).

Gessler (2019) investigates factors that shape the politicisation of political systems more generally. She finds that democracy is more salient in parties' press releases when the democratic quality of the country is low. She also finds that the tone parties use when speaking about democracy correlates with the parties' challenger status and ideology. Additionally, Engler et al. (2019) and N. Allen and Mirwaldt (2010) have found that parties within the same country differ in the way in which they speak about democracy. While radical right parties emphasise the participation of the people, left-wing parties emphasise individual freedoms (Engler et al., 2019).

In line with these findings, I argue that parties use democracy similarly to other policy issues in election campaigns. Parties can increase or decrease the salience of democracy issues as they increase or decrease the salience of economic or cultural issues. Parties can also position themselves on different issues related to democracy by speaking favourably or unfavourably about specific concepts of democracy as they can for example speak favourably or unfavourably about different types of welfare systems or immigration

schemes.

In this section, I develop this argument further and embed it more directly in the literature on multi-party electoral competition. More precisely, I use the theoretical framework of valence and positional issues to theorise when and why parties speak about democracy and related issues such as social, liberal and direct democracy in election campaigns. Based on this theoretical framework, this section derives visible empirical implications that describe when and why German parties should put democracy on the electoral agenda if democracy and its conceptions were indeed valence or positional issues of party competition in Germany.

4.2.1 Valence and positional issues

The most important differentiation between different types of issues is the one between positional and valence issues (Adams, Merrill, and Zur, 2020; Sio and T. Weber, 2014; Stokes, 1963). Positional issues ‘involve advocacy of government actions from a set of alternatives over which distribution of voter preferences is defined’ (Stokes, 1963:p. 373). These issues are studied extensively in political science and they have in common that parties present alternatives such as less or more government spending to their voters. Additionally, voters differ in their preferences for these issues. While some prefer more social spending, others prefer less social spending.

Valence issues ‘merely involve the linking of the parties with some condition that is positively or negatively valued by the electorate’ (Stokes, 1963:p. 373). Corruption, honesty and trustworthiness are among the most often analysed valence ‘issues’ (see for example Curini (2017) and Green (2007)). Although in these cases it is hard to believe that they could potentially be positional issues, Stokes (1963:p. 373) has explicitly stated that ‘the question whether a given problem poses a positional- or valence-issue is a matter to be settled empirically and not on a priori logical grounds’. Issues that are positional issues in one context could therefore well be valence issues in another context, namely when voters agree on the necessity of one policy issue and when parties do not present alternatives to this specific policy issue. In other words, issues are valence issues ‘due

solely to the fact that there is overwhelming consensus as to the goal of government action' (Stokes, 1963:p. 374).

Building on the premises that issues can be positional issues in one context and valence issues in another context, Sio and T. Weber (2014:p. 872) argue that valence and position should be considered the two 'ideal' endpoints of a dimension on which all policy issues can be arranged for a given polity and period. They furthermore state that 'issues can be classified as positional or valence issues, based on the distribution of policy preferences' (Sio and T. Weber, 2014:p. 872). Thus, issues can be mixed issues, depending on the degree to which there is a general agreement in the electorate about what government should do and on the degree to which parties provide alternative solutions concerning the issue.

Depending on the degree of agreement among the electorate, parties have different incentives. They can distance themselves from their competitors if the agreement among the electoral about what government should do is low. Alternatively, parties can highlight that they are more competent in solving issues than their competitors if the agreement among the electorate is high (Sio and T. Weber, 2014). This interconnection between voters' preferences and parties' behaviour in election campaigns can be used to assess to which degree issues are valence or positional issues.

In the following section, I theorise about the quality of German democracy issues. I derive empirical implications of the theoretical arguments that support the claim that democracy per se and social, liberal and direct democracy are valence or positional issues in German election campaigns. Keeping in mind that valence and positional issues are ideal types of issues, democracy per se as well as conceptions of democracy might also be mixed issues. Since the theoretical framework assess voters and parties simultaneously and equally, the following subsections will provide evidence of for voters and - based on this evidence - derive empirical implications for parties.

4.2.2 Democracy per se as electoral issue

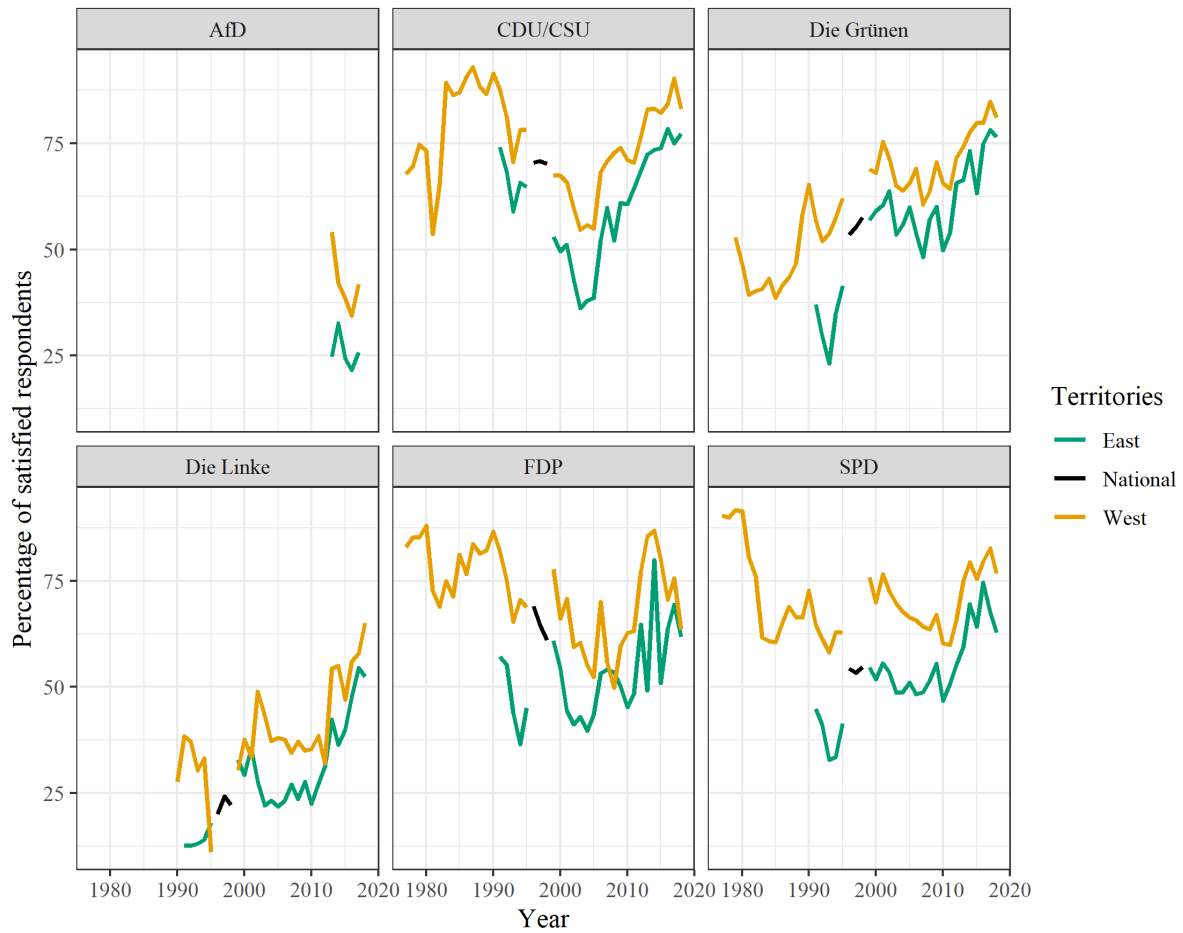
Parties speak about democracy in election campaigns. However, the salience of democracy varies across parties and across time. The concept of valence and positional issues can help us understand this variation. Parties could thus choose to refer to democracy, irrespective of its assigned meaning, because they either a) think that competitor parties are not trusted with fulfilling a general demand for more or less democracy, or b) want to position themselves against openly authoritarian competitors. I argue that in the case of Germany, democracy per se is not only an issue, but most likely a valence issue of party competitions.

If democracy per se is a valence issue, there should be a broad consensus among the German electorate that democracy is good or bad. Previous research has shown that by the 1960s, support for a new Nazi regime was low among West Germans (Weil, 1987) and nearly two-thirds of West Germans believed that the post-war democratic system was better than any other regime since the pre-1914 Wilhelmine era (Baker, Dalton, and Hildebrandt, 1981:p. 92). In the early 1990s and the early 2000s, 88 to 93 per cent of German respondents, respectively, have either agreed or strongly agreed that ‘democracy may have problems but it’s better than any other form of government’ (EVS, 2015:waves 2 and 4). Thus at least since the 1960s, Germans have overall agreed that living in a democracy is good.

However, Figure 4.1 shows that satisfaction with how democracy works has varied considerably among Germans both across time and party. Germans’ overall support for democracy combined with their dissatisfaction with how democracy works should incentivise parties to use democracy as a valence issue in their electoral campaigns. If agreement in the general electorate is high that living in a democracy is good, parties have the incentive to use references to democracy to discredit their competitors, especially if satisfaction with how democracy works is low among their voters and irrespective of their ideological position or the quality of the democratic system in place.

Empirical Implication 1 *The lower the satisfaction with how democracy works among*

Figure 4.1: Satisfaction with how democracy works among German party supports over time



Plot based on weighted data of the Politbarometer series (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, 2020) for the period between 1977 and 2018. I aggregate answers for rather satisfied (rather satisfied + very satisfied) and rather unsatisfied (rather unsatisfied + very unsatisfied). Between 1996 and 1998, the Politbarometer does not differentiate between East and West Germans.

parties' supporters, the more salient democracy becomes in parties' election manifesto, on average.

In addition, if democracy per se is a valence issue, challenger parties should be more likely to use democracy in election campaigns than established parties. This is because established parties are parties that have benefited from and survived in the political system in place for some time and therefore are perceived to be part of the establishment. Conversely, challenger parties can more credibly argue that they are more democratic than

their established competitors since they did not yet benefit from the political system to a similar extent than their established competitors. They can more credibly argue that they did not yet have the chance to change the political system.

This argument is supported by previous findings. Challenger parties have been found to use more often anti-establishment rhetoric in their campaigns, since their attack of the political establishment is more credible than an attack by established parties (De Vries and Hobolt, 2020:pp. 141–77). Additionally, Gessler (2019) and Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2019) have shown that smaller parties and parties with less access to political power are more likely to politicise and criticise the political system of their countries. Thus, challenger parties should be more likely to use democracy as a valence issue than established parties, since they can more credibly discredit opponents based on their critique of how democracy works in their country and since they have a greater interest in discussing the political system in place from which they did not yet benefit to great extents.

Empirical Implication 2 *Democracy is on average more salient in election manifestos of challenger parties than in election manifestos of established parties.*

Although in general, established parties might be more reluctant to politicise democracy, Scarrow (1997) and Scarrow (1999) has shown that German established parties became more likely to introduce direct democracy once the German traditional 2.5 party system was destabilised by the success of Die Grünen and Die Linke. With increasing competition from challenger parties, even established parties might therefore be more likely to put democracy on their electoral agenda. While Scarrow (1999) has argued that established parties were trying to win over the support of non-voters and potential voters of challenger parties, established parties might additionally use democracy as an argument against (supposedly) undemocratic challenger parties.¹ I, therefore, expect that established parties become more likely to mention democracy in their election campaigns when the strength of challenger parties increases.

¹For example, the SPD spoke a lot about social democracy as a measure against communism in their 1953 election manifesto (Vorstand der SPD Deutschland, 1953).

Empirical Implication 3 *The stronger challenger parties become, the higher on average the salience of democracy will be in election manifestos of established parties.*

Last but not least, if democracy per se is a valence issue, the salience of democracy in party manifestos should be unrelated to parties' family since ideology should not incentivise parties to speak about democracy. Since valence issues are defined as issues on which there is a general agreement, it is highly unlikely that parties would compete on these issues by taking another position than their competitors, e.g. by openly campaigning against democracy. Thus, whether parties use valence issues in their election campaign should be unrelated to their ideology, irrespective of how ideology is defined and measured.²

Empirical Implication 4 *Party families and the salience of democracy in election manifestos are unrelated.*

This article should control for some additional factors that could have an effect on the salience of democracy in election manifestos. First, Gessler (2019) has shown that parties are more likely to emphasise democracy when the democratic quality of the respective country decreases. Second, democracy might be a more salient issue in election campaigns shortly after regime changes. In the case of Germany, democracy should therefore be more salient overall in elections shortly after 1945 and 1990. Third, Przeworski and Limongi (1997) have shown that economic development affects the democratic quality of a state. Parties might have less room to manoeuvre to emphasise democracy in times of economic hardship. Since these factors might also mediate the aforementioned expected relationships, the analysis includes control variables for the quality of democracy, the distance from a regime change in years and the change in GDP for each year for states and the national level.

²For reasons of simplicity, this article ignores the possibility that some party families might 'own' the democracy issue more than other party families.

4.2.3 Conceptions of democracy as electoral issues

The previous section argued that democracy per se is most likely a valence issue in German elections. This section now argues that direct and social conceptions of democracy are most likely positional issues, while liberal democracy is most likely a valence issue in German elections. Positional issues are issues for which there is no general agreement among the electorate and for which parties provide alternative policies (Sio and T. Weber, 2014; Stokes, 1963). If direct and social democracy are positional issues, there should be disagreement among the electorate about the importance of each one of these conceptions. In contrast, if liberal democracy is a valence issue, there should be agreement among the electorate about the importance of liberal democracy.

Data on the attitudes of German citizens towards specific conceptions of democracy is rare. One of the exceptions is the Politbarometer series that asked West Germans in 1992 if important political decisions should be made in referenda or by elected politicians. About 44.3 per cent of respondents who indicated a vote intention for the CDU/CSU stated that they prefer direct democracy over representative democracy. In contrast to that, only 8.6 per cent of Die Grünen and 14.5 per cent of SPD supporters said so (Berger, Jung, and Roth, 1993)³.

Figure 4.2 additionally shows the degree to which German respondents to the ESS wave 6 (ERIC, 2012) deem social, liberal and direct elements of democracy important (4.2a) and the degree to which they think these elements are implemented in Germany (4.2b). There is substantial variation across party supporters concerning the importance and implementation of direct and social democracy in Germany. Overall, Die Linke and SPD supporters deem social democracy more important than other party supporters. In addition, it is mostly Die Linke supporters who believe that social democracy is poorly implemented in Germany. Supporters of Die Linke also deem direct democracy more important than other party supporters. They are also the least satisfied with how direct

³This is in line with findings by Grotz and Lewandowsky (2020). Questions used in the Politbarometer (1992): ‘Should the most important political questions be decided in a referendum, or should, as in the past, elected politicians alone decide these issues?’ (var270) and ‘Which party would you vote for’ (v11). Percentages are similar for party identification. More details provided in Section SM4.1 of the supplementary material.

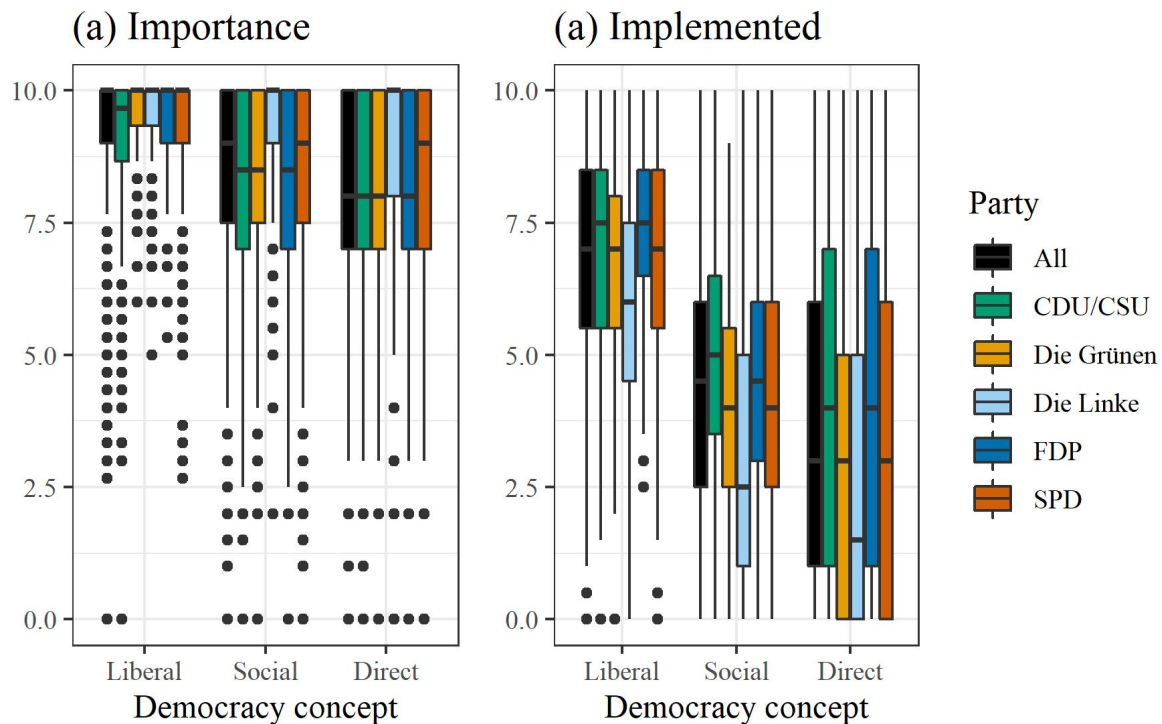
democracy is implemented in Germany.

Even if we use a narrow definition of liberal democracy as presented above, nearly all Germans think that liberal democratic elements such as the protection of minorities and the rule of law are important for democracy. Although CDU/CSU supporters attribute slightly less importance to liberal democratic elements than other party supporters, differences between CDU/CSU and other party supporters are not substantial. However, German respondents disagree whether liberal democracy is well implemented in Germany. While Die Linke supporters show relatively low levels of satisfaction with how liberal democracy is implemented in Germany, especially CDU/CSU and FDP supporters show high levels of satisfaction with German liberal democracy. This again opens the room for manoeuvre to politicise liberal democracy as a valence issue.

Concerning parties more generally, N. Allen and Mirwaldt (2010), Engler et al. (2019), and Gessler (2019) have shown that how parties speak about democracy is linked to their more general ideological position. While liberal-left parties speak favourably about liberal elements of democracy, radical right parties attack liberal elements of democracy (Engler et al., 2019). Gessler (2019:p. 81) has additionally shown that the position radical right parties take on democracy differs significantly from the position of other parties. Similarly, Bowler et al. (2002) and Heinisch and Wegscheider (2020) have shown that ideology affects the type of institutional change legislators and citizens prefer.

This evidence for parties suggests that conceptions of democracy can be issues of party competition and that party families explain more of the variance in parties' preferences for democratic institutions than a general left-right or GAL-TAN ideological dimension. Most importantly, there seem to be differences between parties of different party families that cannot be well explained by their position on a left-right or GAL-TAN scale, since they are generally believed to be located close to each other on both of these dimensions but differ significantly from each other concerning their democratic attitudes. For example, Engler et al. (2019:p. 11) have shown that left-libertarian parties but not liberal parties differ significantly from conservative parties with regard to how often they speak about individual liberties in their press releases. Left-wing parties and centre-left parties

Figure 4.2: Importance and perceived implementation of social, liberal and direct democracy among German party supporters



Notes: Figure based on data from the ESS wave 6 (ERIC, 2012). Social conception includes: The government protects all citizens against poverty; The government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels. Liberal conception includes: The right of minority groups are protected; The courts treat everyone the same; The courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority (the latter only available for respondents' conceptions, not for its implementation). Direct conception includes: Citizens have the final say on political issues by voting directly in referenda. Party support is here conceptualised as the party respondents voted for in the last general election (2nd ballot).

also often speak differently about the political system and democracy; right-wing parties and centre-left parties seem to differ only rarely (Gessler, 2019:pp. 81–82).

The question of whether German parties use specific conceptions of democracy in their election campaigns should thus be related to their party family, except for liberal democracy. Since there is low disagreement within the German electorate regarding the importance of liberal democracy, liberal democracy should be a valence than a positional issue. Parties from socialist or social democratic parties should be more likely to emphasise social democracy, and therefore social democracy should be a positional and not a valence issue in Germany. Similarly, since there is disagreement within the electorate

about the importance of direct democracy, direct democracy should be a positional issue rather than a valence issue. Consequently, I formulate the following empirical implications:

Empirical Implication 5 *There are significant differences between the emphasis on direct and social democracy in election manifestos of different party families.*

Empirical Implication 6 *There is no significant difference between the emphasis on liberal democracy in election manifestos of different party families.*

If social and direct democracy are positional issues in German election campaigns, their emphasis should be unrelated to the challenger status of parties and the strength of challenger parties, because challenger parties cannot benefit from a general agreement in the electorate on the importance of social and direct democracy. If only supporters of some parties deem social and direct democracy important, only their parties can benefit from putting social and direct democracy on the electoral agenda.

Empirical Implication 7 *Challenger and established parties are equally likely to emphasise direct or social democracy in their election manifestos.*

Empirical Implication 8 *The strength of challenger parties does not correlate with the emphasis on direct or social democracy in established parties' manifestos.*

Since liberal democracy should be a valence issue rather than a positional issue in German election campaigns, challenger parties should be more able to credibly attack the status quo of liberal democracy in Germany. However, established parties could react to the increasing strength of challenger parties by defending liberal democracy.

Empirical Implication 9 *Challenger parties are more likely to emphasise liberal democracy in their election manifestos than established parties.*

Empirical Implication 10 *The stronger challenger parties become, the higher on average the emphasis on liberal democracy in election manifestos of established parties.*

Although competition over social, liberal and direct democracy might be interconnected, this article focuses on theorising about why German parties emphasise any of these conceptions of democracy without considering possible interaction effects. I furthermore assume that parties who put more emphasis on one of these conceptions of democracy are also more in favour of this conception of democracy than other parties. In addition, I control for the same variables as in the case of studying the salience of democracy in election manifestos since they might equally influence the likelihood that parties emphasise social, liberal or direct democracy when they speak about democracy in their election manifestos.

4.3 Data and method

To investigate whether democracy per se and social, liberal and direct democracy are issues of German party competition, I split national and regional election manifestos provided by the Manifesto Project (Lewandowski et al., 2018; Volkens et al., 2019) and the Political Documents Archive (Benoit, Bräuninger, and Debus, 2009) into sentences.⁴ I then count all sentences that contain the term ‘*demokrat*’, excluding all instances in which this term is part of a party name.⁵ I measure the salience of democracy in election manifestos as the percentage of sentences per manifesto that mention the term ‘*demokrat*’.⁶

To explore how much emphasis parties put on either social, liberal or direct democracy, I use one dictionary for each of these conceptions of democracy. Table 4.1 shows translated versions of these dictionaries.⁷ I measure parties’ emphasis on social, liberal and direct democracy as the percentage of *democracy sentences* per manifesto that contain at least one of the dictionary terms listed in Table 4.1. Sentences that do not contain the term ‘*demokrat*’ are not taken into account for this measurement, since this article aims at

⁴Section SM4.2 of the supplementary material includes tables of parties by party family.

⁵For instance, a sentence containing ‘undemokratisch’ (undemocratic) is counted as a democracy sentence, but a sentence only containing the party name ‘Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands’ (German Social Democratic Party) is not.

⁶In a few instances, quasi-sentences provided by the Manifesto Project lack punctuation at the end of sentences. I use quasi-sentences in these instances.

⁷Section SM4.3 of the supplementary material shows the original dictionaries.

Table 4.1: Translated dictionaries for social, liberal and direct democracy

| Social democracy | Liberal democracy | Direct democracy |
|--|--|--|
| cooperative, corporate, co-determination, equality of chance, in solidarity, social*, strike, trade/labour union | Basic Law, basic order, court, constitution, diversity, equal opportunities/gender equality, human right, judiciary, liberal*, minorit*, open societ*, plural*, public control, respect, rule of law, separation of power, skin colour, toleran* | citizens' decision, direct democra*, grassroots democra*, plebiscite, popular vote, public petition, quorum, referend* |

Notes: Dictionaries are used to assess whether sentences that contain the term ‘*demokrat*’ refer to social, liberal or direct democracy.

investigating whether parties transmit a specific conception of democracy rather than whether they prefer referenda for specific decisions or stronger welfare systems more generally.⁸

To run regression analyses for the salience of democracy per se in German regional and national election manifestos and the emphasis on social, liberal and direct democracy in these manifestos, I furthermore use a set of independent and control variables. I categorise parties as challenger parties if they have not participated in any government at the national or state level, before. Once they have participated in any government at any level, they are categorised as established parties for all levels of government. To control for the strength of challenger parties in each election, I aggregate the percentage of votes gained by all challenger parties. The data on government participation and percentage of votes gained in elections is taken from the ParlGov dataset (Döring and Manow, 2019) and the RD—SED data set (Röth et al., 2019). Data for party families is taken from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2019). For parties with missing information, I completed the data myself.

The Politbarometer series provides information on the level of satisfaction with how democracy works among the electorate (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, 2020). For most years

⁸Thus, sentences such as ‘We need to have a referendum on whether Germany should be part of the European Union’ would not be included in the measurement of a parties emphasis on direct democracy, while ‘It is highly undemocratic that Germany does not allow national referenda’ would be taken into account.

since 1990, the sample is split for East and West Germans. I, therefore, use the overall percentage of respondents from East and West Germany who state that they are at least somewhat dissatisfied with how democracy works for each party for national elections in the respective year. For state elections in East Germany, I base the percentages only on data for East Germany. Respectively, I use only West German data for parties competing in West German elections. Since the data does not allow to reliably measure the percentage of dissatisfied respondents by party in each state, this serves as a proxy for parties' supporters in East and West German regional elections.⁹

I furthermore control for the quality of democracy in each year based on V-Dem's electoral democracy index (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, Fish, A. Glynn, Hicken, Lührmann, Marquardt, McMann, Paxton, Pemstein, Seim, Sigman, Skaaning, Staton, Wilson, et al., 2020; Pemstein, Marquardt, Tzelgov, Wang, Medzihorsky, Krusell, Miri, and Römer, 2020). Due to a lack of alternatives, I also use this data for regional elections. I measure democratic experience in years since 1949 for all national and West German elections and in years since 1990 for all East German elections. Finally, I include data on the change in GDP for each state and the national level to account for changes and differences in the economic circumstances across territories (states and the national level) and time. This data is taken from the statistical offices of Germany and the German states (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2006; Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2019). I do not additionally control for time or period, because democratic experience measured in years since the first democratic elections after 1945 already captures changes in each dependent variable due to changes in time.

Due to a lack of data for other periods, I restrict my analyses to the period between 1977 and 2017. I furthermore include clustered standard errors for parties in territories over time. Although parties share similar values and party platforms across German states and the national level, there are still significant differences between different party branches from different territories which lead to within-group serial correlation. I ad-

⁹Between 1996 and 1998, the Politbarometer samples are not split for East and West Germans. I split the sample myself based on the states in which the interviews were conducted.

ditionally account for heteroscedasticity across these groups.¹⁰ Section SM4.4 of the supplementary material shows robustness checks.

4.4 Democracy per se as an issue of German party competition

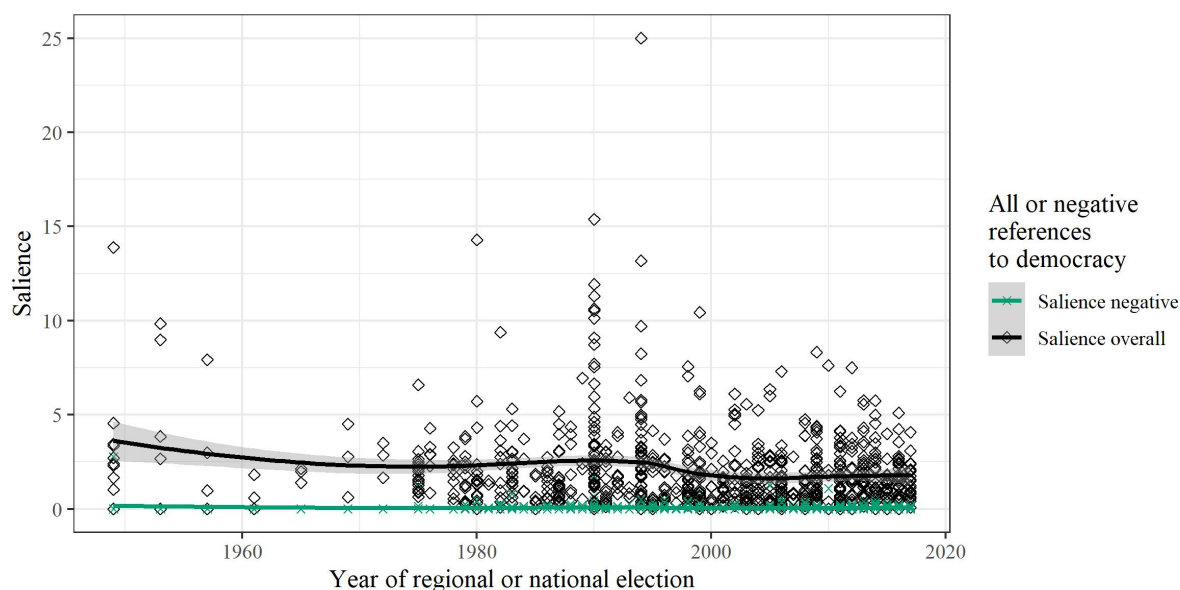
Figure 4.3 shows the salience of democracy and the salience of negative references to democracy in German regional and national elections manifestos over time. Although parties might just add a few sentences about democracy in their election manifestos at random, the substantial variation that exists across parties and times suggests otherwise. In some instances, parties mention democracy in approximately 15 per cent of all sentences, in others, they do not mention democracy at all. The Die Linke Manifesto for the 1994 Saxony-Anhalt election with 25 per cent of sentences mentioning democracy is however an artificial outlier. It contains four large lists of bullet points counted as four separate sentences, one of them mentioning democracy.

The variance of the salience of democracy overall is furthermore large across parties. CDU/CSU for example mentions democracy most often in their election manifesto for the 1990 election in Saxony-Anhalt. About 8.73 per cent of all sentences in this manifesto refer to democracy. In another 14 manifestos, CDU/CSU does not mention democracy at all. SPD mentions democracy most often in Bavaria in 1982, referring to democracy in about 9.38 per cent of all sentences. In contrast to that, SPD does not mention democracy in a single sentence in their manifestos for the 1985 Berlin election, the 2004 Hamburg election and the 2006 Saxony-Anhalt election.

Figure 4.3 also shows that only in rare cases do parties refer negatively to democracy, indicating that even parties such as the Republicans or the AfD do not speak negatively

¹⁰I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for the suggestion to use lagged dependent variables instead of an absolute measurement of salience. The panel data is highly unbalanced and includes many small parties that participated only in few elections. Models with lagged dependent variables would show how far the change in the salience of democracy between two elections differs across party families. I am however interested in how far party families differ concerning the absolute salience of democracy in their election manifestos. Thus, I decided not to do so.

Figure 4.3: The salience of democracy overall and negative references to democracy in German regional and national election manifestos



The figure shows the overall salience of democracy and of negative references to democracy in each manifesto as well as a smoothed loess function for each measurement across time. Before 1977, data points only refer to national election manifestos.

about democracy or use negations of the term democracy such as ‘undemocratic’.¹¹ For instance, AfD devoted whole chapters of their 2017 election manifestos to democracy, arguing for example that anti-discrimination laws and gender quotas restrict the freedom of individuals which should be guaranteed by democracies. The Zentrumspartei (Center party) Manifesto of 1949 is the manifesto with the most negative references to democracy (2.78 per cent of all sentences), using negatively connoted terms to underline the necessity to fight against the enemies of democracy. Thus, the negative references and negations should not bias the results presented in the following parts of this section.

Table 4.2 shows the results of linear regressions that seek to explain the variance shown in Figure 4.3, although restricting the data to the period between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the level of dissatisfaction with democracy in the German electorate. Dissatisfaction with how democracy works within the electorate of a party only shows the expected positive correlation with the salience of democracy in parties’ election manifestos

¹¹Negative references were coded as references that either negate democracy or use democracy derogatorily. In Section SM4.3 of the supplementary material, interested readers find the dictionary used to find negative references to democracy.

as long as I do not control for party family. This applies both to models that investigate all parties as well as to models that investigate only established parties. In addition, models that include party family as a control variable show about twice as high adjusted R^2 values. Ecological, social democratic and socialist parties refer more often to democracy in their manifestos than liberal parties.

These findings are not in line with Empirical Implications 1 and Empirical Implication 4; Dissatisfaction with how democracy works among a party's electorate has most likely no direct effect on the salience of democracy in the party's manifesto and there are - all else being equal - significant differences in the salience of democracy in manifestos of different party families. However, challenger parties are indeed significantly more likely to mention democracy in their election manifestos than established parties (Empirical Implication 2). In contrast to what I expected concerning Empirical Implication 3, established parties do not react to the increasing strength of challenger parties by speaking more often about democracy in their election manifestos.

These results suggest that democracy per se is an issue of party competition in Germany, although not a pure valence issue. The significant differences for challenger and established parties suggest that democracy per se is at least partially a valence issue - thus that agreement within the electorate that democracy is good is large enough that - all else being equal - challenger parties are incentivised to speak about democracy per se in their election manifestos. However, some difference in the salience of democracy in election manifestos is related to parties' family. Ecological, socialist and social democratic parties are more likely to speak about democracy in their election manifestos than liberal parties. Differences between challenger and established parties are larger than differences between liberal parties and other party families, except for the difference between liberal and socialist parties. Thus, democracy per se seems to be a mixed issue of German party competition, showing both features of positional and valence issues.

The results remain stable for the inclusion of territory fixed effects and clustered standard errors for parties over time and for the exclusion of the artificial outlier for Die Linke in Saxony-Anhalt in 1994 (see Section SM4.4 of the supplementary material).

Table 4.2: Linear regression results for the salience of democracy per se in German election manifestos

| | All parties | All parties | Established parties | Established parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | 0.04*** (0.01) | -0.01 (0.01) | 0.05*** (0.01) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Challenger | 0.66* (0.26) | 1.68** (0.50) | | |
| Challenger strength | | | 0.00 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | | 0.99*** (0.20) | | 1.2*** (0.12) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | | 3.95*** (0.39) | | 3.5*** (0.27) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | | 0.72*** (0.13) | | 0.70*** (0.13) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | | -0.20 (0.10) | | -0.19 (0.10) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | | 0.24 (0.80) | | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | | 0.11 (0.52) | | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | | 0.21 (0.53) | | NA |
| Prev. GDP change | 0.09 (0.05) | 0.08 (0.04) | -0.02 (0.03) | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Years since regime change | -0.02*** (0.01) | -0.03*** (0.00) | -0.01 (0.01) | -0.02*** (0.00) |
| National (vs East) | 1.72*** (0.36) | 1.38*** (0.30) | 1.07** (0.34) | 1.32*** (0.26) |
| West (vs East) | 0.73** (0.26) | 0.38 (0.26) | 0.31 (0.25) | 0.49* (0.21) |
| Dem. quality | -6.88* (3.42) | 0.65 (3.55) | -14.20*** (3.02) | -1.54 (2.65) |
| Intercept | 6.24* (3.04) | 1.10 (3.02) | 12.80*** (2.67) | 3.08 (2.30) |
| N | 677 | 677 | 566 | 566 |
| R ² | 0.28 | 0.51 | 0.23 | 0.52 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.27 | 0.50 | 0.22 | 0.51 |

Notes: Linear regressions results with clustered standard errors for parties in territories over time that are additionally corrected for heteroscedasticity across territorial party branches. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Significance levels: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

4.5 Conceptions of democracy as issues of German party competition

Models 1 and 2 in Table 4.3 show regression results for the emphasis on social democracy for all parties and established parties. In line with the argument that social democracy is most likely a positional issue in German election campaigns, socialist and social democratic parties are much more likely to emphasise social democracy than liberal parties when they speak about democracy. Ecological parties emphasise social democracy slightly more than liberal parties. Including party families in addition increases the adjusted R^2 substantially, indicating that these models explain more variance in the emphasis on social democracy than models without them. None of the coefficients from the other independent variables is significantly different from zero. Challenger and established parties do not differ concerning their emphasis on social democracy and established parties do not react to changes in the strength of challenger parties by adapting their emphasis on social democracy. This is in line with Empirical Implications 5, 7 and 8. Thus, social democracy is a positional issue in German elections.

Models 3 and 4 in Table 4.3 show regression results for the emphasis on liberal democracy for all parties and established parties. Contrary to the expectations formulated above, only the party family correlates significantly with parties' emphasis on liberal democracy. Ecological, socialist, social democratic, conservative, nationalist and special issue parties emphasise liberal democracy less than liberal parties when they speak about democracy.¹² Challenger parties do not emphasise liberal democracy more than established parties and established parties do not react to changes in the strength of challenger parties by adapting their emphasis on liberal democracy.

These findings contradict the implications derived from the expectation that liberal democracy is most likely a valence issue (Empirical Implications 6, 9 and 10). A liberal conception of democracy is mainly transmitted by liberal parties. Since the previous section has shown that German citizens seem to disagree only marginally on the impor-

¹²When excluding the outlier, differences between Conservative and nationalist parties on the one hand and liberal parties on the other hand are not significantly different from zero.

Table 4.3: Linear regression results for German parties' emphasis on social, liberal and direct democracy in election campaigns

| | 1) All parties | 2) Established parties | 3) All parties | 4) Established parties | 5) All parties | 6) Established parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Social democracy | Social democracy | Liberal democracy | Liberal democracy | Direct democracy | Direct democracy |
| Dissatisfied voters | -0.02 (0.07) | -0.03 (0.08) | -0.16 (0.09) | -0.11 (0.11) | 0.10* (0.05) | 0.04 (0.04) |
| Challenger | 4.53 (2.97) | | 0.73 (3.26) | | 2.33 (1.82) | |
| Challenger strength | | 0.14 (0.09) | | -0.20 (0.14) | | 0.06 (0.06) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | 4.49* (1.80) | 4.52** (1.68) | -19.40*** (2.8) | -17.40*** (2.77) | -1.61 (2.09) | -2.35 (2.16) |
| Socialist (vs liberals) | 21.60*** (3.00) | 20.80*** (2.99) | -16.10*** (4.10) | -19.10*** (4.20) | -6.48* (2.47) | -4.81* (2.37) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | 14.90*** (2.15) | 14.80*** (2.16) | -18.60*** (2.70) | -18.80*** (2.70) | -5.70*** (1.73) | -5.54*** (1.72) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | 1.53 (2.00) | 1.60 (2.01) | -5.06 (3.42) | -4.91 (3.44) | -6.54*** (1.68) | -6.66*** (1.68) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | -5.54 (3.34) | NA | -27.30*** (6.05) | NA | -3.32 (7.90) | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | -2.05 (3.82) | NA | -11.80* (5.68) | NA | 10.00 (5.91) | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | 1.82 (3.66) | NA | -17.00** (6.09) | NA | -2.48 (5.82) | NA |
| Intercept | 1.03 (34.30) | -4.19 (39.00) | 74.30 (48.10) | 103.00 (54.40) | 31.20 (25.00) | -11.60 (23.40) |
| N | 653 | 544 | 653 | 544 | 653 | 544 |
| R ² | 0.26 | 0.24 | 0.18 | 0.16 | 0.20 | 0.12 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.24 | 0.22 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.18 | 0.10 |

Notes: Linear regressions results with clustered standard errors for parties in territories over time that are additionally corrected for heteroscedasticity across territorial party branches. Standard errors shown in parentheses. Significance levels: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05. Models include the same control variables as models in Table 4.2. These are not shown due to space limits.

tance of liberal democracy and the quality of its implementation in Germany, this is a surprising finding. However, the provided data on citizens refers to only one point in time (2012) while the data analysed for parties covers a larger time frame. The emphasis on liberal democracy in election manifestos from that single point in time, the year 2012 (12.95 per cent), is much lower than the overall average emphasis on liberal democracy in manifestos from the entire period studied (21.47 per cent). Thus, liberal democracy can be conceptualised as a positional issue except for some points in time.

Models 5 and 6 in Table 4.3 show regression results for the emphasis on direct democracy for all and established parties. Socialist, social democratic and Christian democratic parties are less likely to emphasise direct democracy than liberal parties when they speak about democracy. There are no significant differences between other party families and liberal parties. Additionally, challenger status and the strength of challengers does not correlate with the parties' emphasis on direct democracy. Only Model 5 shows a significant and positive correlation between the dissatisfaction with how democracy works among party voters and parties' emphasis on direct democracy. Once including the information on parties' family, this effect is reduced considerably and not significantly different from zero, anymore. These results are therefore in line with Empirical Implications 5, 7 and 8. Direct democracy is a positional issue in German election campaigns.

All results remain stable for the inclusion of territory fixed effects and clustered standard errors for parties over time and for the exclusion of the artificial outlier for Die Linke in Saxony-Anhalt in 1994 unless otherwise stated in footnotes (see Section SM4.4 of the supplementary material).

4.6 Conclusion

Staying loyal to the argument that 'the question whether a given problem poses a positional- or valence-issue is a matter to be settled empirically and not on a priori grounds' (Stokes, 1963:p. 373), this article does not argue that democracy per se is a mixed issue in all polities or that conceptions of democracy are positional issues in all

polities. However, this article shows that democracy per se and conceptions of democracy can be issues of different types in democratic multi-party competition.

In fact, recent discussions about the legitimacy of the Brexit referendum in the UK and the alternatives to liberal democracy in Hungary and Poland, as well as many examples provided by N. Allen and Mirwaldt (2010) suggest that democracy and conceptions of democracy are issues of multi-party competition in many democracies. In the case of Germany, this article has shown that democracy per se has been a mixed issue of party competition, while social, liberal and direct democracy have been positional issues.

Conceptualising democracy and conceptions of democracy as issues of multi-party competition in democracies will allow political scientists to investigate interesting research questions from a new angle. Since the way that parties speak about democracy in election campaigns most likely affects citizens (Farrell and Schmitt-Beck, 2002), it might help us understand how much parties and election campaigns contribute to the stability of democracies, and to what degree the democracy discourse of parties affects citizens support for democracy.

CHAPTER 5

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

SM2 Lip Service to Liberal Democracy in Western Europe

SM2.1 Independent variables

Authoritarianism is measured on a scale from 1 to 5 based on the following items. The last two items refer to non-authoritarian attitudes.

- V1: Young people today don't have enough respect for [nationality] values.
- V2: For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence.
- V3: Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards.
- V4: People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.
- V5: People should be allowed to organise public meetings to protest against the government.
- V6: People in [country] should be more tolerant of those who lead unconventional lives.

Table SM2.1 shows the results of a confirmatory factor analysis for the political authoritarian attitudes. The variables load on the same factor and contribute to this factor in the predicted direction.

Table SM2.1: Confirmatory factor analysis for political authoritarian attitudes

| Indicator | B | SE | p-value | Beta |
|-----------|-------|------|---------|-------|
| V1 | 0.86 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.70 |
| V2 | 1.07 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.67 |
| V3 | 0.55 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.43 |
| V4 | 0.80 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 0.74 |
| V5 | -0.38 | 0.04 | 0.00 | -0.43 |
| V6 | -0.37 | 0.04 | 0.00 | -0.41 |

Based on Stenner (2005:pp. 13–36), we alternatively tested a measurement of authoritarian attitudes based on child rearing questions. Respondents were asked to select up to five out of 12 qualities, children should be encouraged to learn: “independence”, “hard work”*, “feeling of responsibility”, “imagination”, “tolerance and respect for other people”, “thrift, saving money and things”, “determination, perseverance”, “religious faith”*, “unselfishness”*, “obedience”*, “good manners”* and “self-expression”. Qualities marked with * were coded as authoritarian qualities.

Table 2 shows the results of a confirmatory factor analysis with authoritarian attitudes described by the support for the authoritarian child rearing qualities. Religious faith does not load on the same factor as hard work, unselfishness, obedience and good manners. Unselfishness is negatively correlated with the factor. Only good manners and hard work have considerable beta values.

Table SM2.2: Confirmatory factor analysis for authoritarian child rearing attitudes

| Indicator | B | SE | p-value | Beta |
|-----------------|-------|------|---------|-------|
| Hard work | 0.32 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.85 |
| Religious faith | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.62 | -0.02 |
| Unselfishness | -0.06 | 0.02 | 0.00 | -0.02 |
| Obedience | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.02 |
| Good manners | 0.38 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.83 |

Populism has been measured on a scale from 1 to 5 based on the following items for people centrism (ppl), anti-elite attitudes (ant) and Manichean outlook (man):

- Ppl: Politicians should always listen closely to the problems of the people.

- Ant: The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.
- Man: You can tell if a person is good or bad if you know their politics.

They are a shorter version of Castanho Silva, Andreadis, et al. (2019) and Castanho Silva, Jungkunz, et al. (2019).

SM2.2 Control variables

Age: Measured in years since birth

Sex: Measured dichotomously as female (1) or male (0)

Education: 7-point scale measurement based on ISCED categories, higher values indicate higher official level of education

Local (size of locality): Ordinal measurement of the number of inhabitants the respondents' place of residence has, from 1 (big locality) to 3 (small locality)

Left-right self-placement: Scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right)

Political knowledge: Index based on the number of correct answers to country specific questions about politics ranging from 0 (no question answered correctly) to 1 (all questions answered correctly)

SM2.3 Structural Topic Modelling

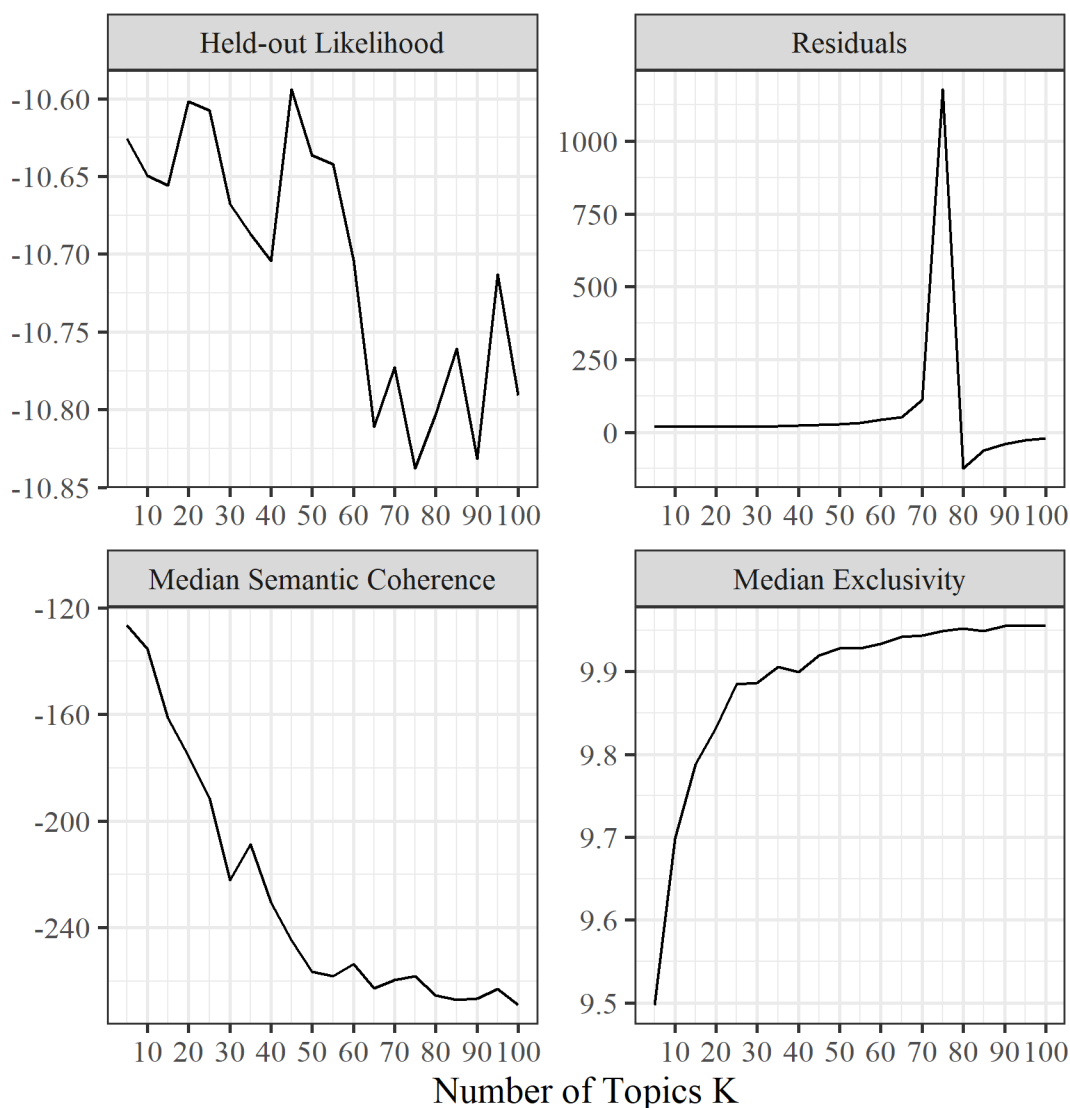
Model tuning

I performed the following pre-processing steps with all translated open-ended responses: lower casing, removal of stop words, removal of numbers, removal of punctuation, stemming, restrictions to words of at least 3 characters.

Model selection

I ran 25 different models with K between 5 and 100. Based on the held-out likelihood (should approximate 0), the residuals (should approximate 0) and the median semantic coherence (should approximate 0) and exclusivity (should be high) of each model, I chose the topic model with $K=25$. Figure SM2.1 shows the respective indicators of model performance for STM models.

Figure SM2.1: Model performance for different topic models



Example texts for selected topics

Table SM2.3: Sample texts for all topics, starting with the topics having the highest expected topic proportions

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|------------------------------|--|
| 22: Government by the people | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “Demos Cratia derives from Latin and is a form of government in which power is exercised by he people.” 2) “power to the people, decision to the people, government serves the people.” 3) “government of the people, power exercised by the people.” |
| 18: Freedoms | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “freedom of choice, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, tolerance, anti-racism” 2) “1. Human dignity is sacrosanct. Freedom of expression Freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, postal secrecy, protection of the home” 3) “freedom of speech, freedom of travel, freedom of demos,” |
| 3: Free expression | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “To be able to express one’s own opinions freely.” 2) “to be able to freely express one’s own ideas.” 3) “To be able to express one’s own ideas freely.” |
| 17: Equality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “Work for all, no preferential treatment for housing for all.” 2) “Equal treatment of all people, whether man, woman or disabled; Right to a say for all; Taxes for all” 3) “Liberty equality fraternity secularism. At present, freedom, equality, fraternity and secularism lack a bit of reality.” |
| 23: Unoppressed majority | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) “Free speech,whoever it ”upsets”.” 2) “upholding the vote/will of the majority” 3) “free speech....proper free speech” 4) “we don’t know yet, because we don’t live in a democracy – we are ruled by puppets of the robber-capitalist and man- and nature-despising, perverted industry...” |

Continued on next page

Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-----------------------|--|
| 2: Having a say | 1) “where everyone can have his say on a theme.” 2) “Everyone has a chance to make his or her point.” 3) “where everyone can speak his mind and everyone has equal chances” |
| 4: Fundamental rights | 1) through 4) “free and equal elections, the majority or consensus principle, protection of minorities, acceptance of a political opposition, separation of powers, constitutionality, and protection of basic, civil and human rights.” 5) “Protection of fundamental, civil and human rights.” 6) “The acceptance of a political opposition, free elections, protection of fundamental, civil and human rights.” |
| 11: Non-existent | 1) “”Sage is the traveller who knows how to pass his way and discover other destinations, when there are no more things to discover, nor anything good to taste at the table of his stage (Confucius). The experts predict, the facts prove them wrong, but they go on and the journalists follow them and report what they say, this is the worst. Europe was thought up by intelligent, long-sighted men, but built by dangerously short-sighted, profit-obsessed little men. It is now only a house of cards. After the moderate Islamists? The media are used to taking people for fools, negative growth, American democracy is linked to the power of money, which is called a plutocracy, here is another unspoken word from the media who are used to taking people for fools, authoritarian democracy? which is called dictatorship or at least autocracy.” 2) “A good formula in the absolute, largely circumvented. As the saying goes, Dictatorship is shut your mouth and democracy is always the cause! But still, democracy is better than nothing at all. ... |

Continued on next page

Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>19: “Democracy means ...”</p> | <p>... It is simply a matter of better constraining lobbying and banking influence, by separating investment banks and deposit banks, limiting the power of the United States of America with the king dollar, enforcing the rules, including by China, of the World Trade Organisation, and better distributing the products of capitalism, which must become less savage, among shareholders and workers, R&D and the major global causes. This would require a kind of binding world government in the fight against misery and conflicts, and against the dictatorships in place, as in Africa or elsewhere. Wishful thinking?”</p> <p>3) “imperfect, but we haven’t found better yet.”</p> <p>1) “Everything this racist, xenophobic, homophobic, antisemitic government doesn’t believe in!”</p> <p>2) “Democracy means that I have the free choice of how and whether I engage in political or other social activities, nothing is compulsory, everything is a ”can”. This means a more relaxed life for the citizen. Democracy also means that the state and its institutions monitor themselves and identify and, if necessary, remedy disparities....”</p> <p>3) “Democracy means that the elected majority governs and that it does not abuse its power by not acting for the benefit of its own people and by breaking, ignoring, bending and disregarding existing laws and lying and disinforming the people. Nor does democracy mean that the media see their task less in informing and more in manipulating. Nor does democracy mean that attacks on existing law are sanctioned differently, depending on the political corner from which the perpetrators come. Democracy is as much a theoretical illusion as equality and justice.”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|--------------------------|--|
| 7: Voting | <p>1) "People voting for parties who vote for bills and laws voting for votes, voting for confirming votes. voting for against union votes. If you disagree with vote get law to rule against vote and have another vote until you vote correctly."</p> <p>2) "every individual is entitled to their belief, being treated fairly, respecting the outcome of a vote, everyone is entitled to a vote"</p> <p>3) "every adult adult should have the right to vote and every one of these votes should count."</p> |
| 10: Representa- tives | <p>1) "government of the people through its freely elected representatives in parliament.obligation of the elected to be consistent with the pre-election promises of the party with which they were elected."</p> <p>2) "a clarified system of election by proportional representation which allows all voters to be represented. This would remove paradox of government elected from first past post constituency members where the overall majority was cast in favour of candidates representing parties opposing the party with most elected constituency candidates of Uk today."</p> <p>3) "It's literally called the rule of the people. We have elected the members of parliament who represent the party whose political views we represent."</p> |
| 1: Whatever you want | <p>1) "let everyone think what they want and do what they want..."</p> <p>2) "You are free to think and act as you please, but you must bear the consequences"</p> <p>3) "you can say write show what you want"</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 16: Respect | <p>1) “to respect the results of elections and not to allow alliances that contradict the election results (AFD)”</p> <p>2) “Respect for others doesn’t crush the middle class.”</p> <p>3) “to respect other opinions, cultures, whatever beliefs and attitudes, but also not to allow injustice and help the weaker ones.”</p> |
| 14: ??? | <p>1) “Democracy...democracy...democracy, we no longer have the right to give our opinion...I’ve worked for 42 years for 900â¬ of pension and that money is gone or, since we only get 40 per cent of it back...I’m fed up with feeding FEIGNANTS.”</p> <p>2) “Democracy means I could even fly an NPD flag on my property and my fellow citizens would simply accept this. Democracy means that anyone can have dinner with Mr Meuthen without fear of being dismissed!”</p> <p>3) “People have a voice and that voice is heard and listened to. People have a right to vote.”</p> |
| 6: Democratic political system | <p>1) “It is a model of political regime in which the citizens elect their representatives, either directly (presidential) or indirectly (senatorial).”</p> <p>2) “The political system in which a publicly-mandated government (through the people’s right to vote) is put in place to legislate the will of the people and run the country”</p> <p>3) “a political system in which all citizens participate in political decisions at least by voting. Today it refers to any political system in which the people are sovereign.”</p> |
| 20: Comparisons | <p>1) “Nothing just a word at the end of the day they can chat as much rubbish as they want but if nothing changes nothing changes”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------|--|
| | <p>... Selling weapons and raiding the middle east for resources is democracy or how it looks .. Giving palestine to Israel is that democracy or letting Israel bomb kids ect when they have no weapons and take 5km land a day??? killing wives and children for profit that is what democracy looks like to the ordinary person.. Media censorship and made up stories that is democracy !!!Democracy is basically a made up word to make it look like there is some sort of fairness but we all know the government don't control money or the flow of capital so they cannot do nothing!!!! punch and judy show at best politicians are essentially prostitutes for some higher forces .. sold out for cash drugs and sex”</p> <p>2) “According to the formula of Abraham Lincoln (16th President of the United States from 1860 to 1865) in the Gettysburg Address, democracy, from the ancient Greek ?????????????????? / d?mokratÃa, combination of ?????? / demos, 'territory' (from daiesthai, 'to share') then 'people' (as a whole of all the citizens of the city), and kratein ('to command')1 , is 'the government of the people, by the people, for the people'. This is one of the canonical definitions commonly used, notably in Article 2 of the 1958 Constitution of the Fifth French Republic (Title I: Of Sovereignty),2 or by Winston Churchill in his speech in the House of Commons in 1947: 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people: this remains the sovereign definition of democracy'.3 This definition is close to the etymological meaning of the word democracy. By extension, it can also qualify a form of company, the way in which a company is established.”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------|--|
| | <p>3) “We had 70 years of democracy in the Federal Republic. Now it is being massively dismantled, GDR sends its greetings.”</p> |
| | <p>4) “Historically the term derives from classical Greek. In modern times it describes a system of elected government in which voters may to a greater or lesser extent choose who represents them in political institutions. The classic division of power in such institutions is between the executive, the representative body that holds the executive to account, and the law. In most modern ”democracies” the distinctions and internal controls have to some extent broken down and even the touchstone of any real democracy, the rule of law is under attack, most strongly in the USA, the UK, and some Eastern European states, which may therefore be said no longer to be functioning democracies. ...</p> |
| | <p>... Democracy also implies universal suffrage and uniform human rights, and these traits too are under attack, in all of the cited countries and Italy. Theocracies (eg Iran and arguably Israel) are antithetical to democracy. Democracy, in modern constitutional law, is most definitely NOT mob rule, despite the Greek root”</p> |
| | <p>5) “We are supposedly ”governed by consent” of a General Election, and I happen to live in a ”Rock Hard” Labour Seat (which suits me, as I am a strong Labour Supporter). BUT, I have noticed down the years, that small ”Boundary Changes” sometimes suit the Government currently in power.”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|------------------------|--|
| 13: Will of the voters | <p>1) "The deputies must be the reflection of their voters the senator must disappear the state must listen to the French must respect the ideas and initiatives because democracy it is the people who must be at the origin of the changes and not the lobbies of all French and foreign sides etc etc etc etc."</p> <p>2) "A just and inclusive social society. Humanistic, ecological and neutral. No military operations, exclusively for defence. No lobbying, bribery or corruption. No economic control."</p> <p>3) "Every citizen should have a say in decisions - at every level. Decisions should be adopted by majorities. The old vox populi - today the swarm intelligence, should be one of the foundations of a democratic society."</p> <p>4) "Politicians must listen to people's complaints, however, if some of them are aberrant, they must not be listened to under any circumstances. Moreover, in "extreme" situations, referendums should be able to be set up to more easily gather the opinion of the entire population."</p> |
| 12: ??? | <p>1) "The will of the autochthonous German population should be respected. That means: Every year a referendum on many things that concern the population. And the referendum should be binding. No government has the right to conclude treaties that transfer parts of the sovereignty of Germany to other authorities. And existing contracts that have developed badly for the German people are to be dissolved.</p> <p>...</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------|--|
| | <p>... Z. B.: The UNO Treaty, the EU Treaty, the Maastricht Treaty, the Lisbon Treaty, the 1957 New York Human Rights Treaty, the NATO Treaty. The state may only raise taxes for the functioning and well-being of the German population. As a good example these Cologne scientists should read: <a data-bbox="480 595 1465 819" href="https://www.amazon.de/Europas-letzte-Herausforderung-Cornelis-Brouwer-ebook/dp/B06XRGJNQT/ref=sr_1_6?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1504476201&sr=1-6&keywords=cornelis+brouwer.">https://www.amazon.de/Europas-letzte-Herausforderung-Cornelis-Brouwer-ebook/dp/B06XRGJNQT/ref=sr_1_6?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1504476201&sr=1-6&keywords=cornelis+brouwer.”</p> <p>2) “more work and less taxes, blocking immigrants and favouring Italians. Faster processes and fairer laws.”</p> <p>3) “Democracy to a UK-ite.... two shitty parties fighting against political modernisation in the form of proportional representation much to the detriment of their constituents and the country. But it works for ”big tent” parties of ”broad coalitions”. Who knew....”</p> <p>4) “Democracy is excellent as long as an unrepresentative minority cannot block the overwhelming majority. The proof is that 9,000 full-time union representatives (i.e. NEVER working) manage to block millions of citizens from defending their personal interests by pretending that they are fighting for us. In other words, 60,000,000 citizens are subjected to the decisions of a few profiteers (departures at 52/57 years of age + reduced working hours - pensions two to five times higher than that of a majority (Craftsmen, Farmers etc.) who have worked two to three times as many hours as them!!! ...</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------------------------|---|
| 21: Taking into account | <p>... (Next door to my house I have a sheep farmer who works 6 1/2 days, including Sunday morning when he has to check that one of his sheep is not in trouble) Now he is the one who gives me good meat to eat but not the unrepresentative trade unionist who is always FOR what is against and AGAINST what is for...(if that...)"</p> <p>5) "The rule of the majority of the population, hopefully aided by reason. The acceptance of other opinions and the refusal to adopt cheap populist slogans."</p> <p>1) "The rule of the people through appropriate elected representative institutions - with a fair franchise (16+, ALL residents and NO non-residents) in elections controlled fairly (especially as to political and party political spending from solely domestic sources in all media) with a truly secret ballot (NO automated ballot systems) and NO role for unelected chambers - and with legislative entrenchment of the standing and rights of all levels of elected government underpinned by a proper written constitution. The 'U' K is not remotely like this."</p> <p>2) "to give everyone the opportunity to defend themselves, not as regards offences but as regards payments. (economic discourse)"</p> <p>3) "Parliamentary democracy should be a representative not a delegated democracy. What 'the people' want may not be what should be adopted, particularly on very complex issues about which the public may be very ill-informed or easily manipulated. More use of citizens groups (as in the Irish abortion referendum) might help to inform the electorate about such issues. ...</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|---------|---|
| | <p>... The people are not democratically sovereign, sovereignty should reside (in the UK) in the crown in parliament subject to the checks and balances of the judiciary and the revising chamber and the action of select committees to seek expert guidance and information and issue informed conclusions.”</p> |
| | <p>4) “It means equality ...no demands and poor but adequate levels of means of life not to survive but to live with dignity each one with his own abilities ...helping the weaker ones... with taxes paid according to income...and taxes used well for the common good ... so that there may be no differences ... and that we may live in peace ... and the rulers may think not of themselves but of service and I repeat, service to the people and working honestly for the common good ... and the nation.”</p> |
| | <p>5) “Too much let-go, too much freedom kills the freedom of the other. Democracy has no place in the current context of citizen violence. It must stop or start the rights of the other. I find it abnormal that the right to demonstrate is unrestricted. Non-compliance with law enforcement is inadmissible; it is normal for law enforcement officials to risk being confronted by fools who throw projectiles that can injure or kill. A demonstration must be free of physical violence. Yes, I’m in favour of a certain repression in such cases.”</p> |
| 15: ??? | <p>1) “Trust ,ClimateChange ,Doing something for kids and youth.Social services.Pensions USW.”</p> <p>2) “Hdhd dhdy dh dhdudjd hdhd djd djdhjd.”</p> <p>3) “Accepting everyone’s ideas.having equal salaries and pensions.bon bear the difference between employed and self-employed.”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------|---|
| | <p>4) “Your vote defines the government you prefer and influences those whom you have chosen to represent you. Politicians should be responsible for helping you make an informed vote; for listening themselves to experts so that they may do the same themselves; for listening to you should they have authority, even if you did not vote for them or their policies; and for acting in the best interests of everyone they represent, even if you disagree with them. I disapprove of First Past the Post government because it foments dissent instead of compromise between divided opinion; where there is extreme disagreement the margin of success for either argument should be much higher: for instance, the 4% difference in the 2016 vote for Brexit disenfranchised 48% of the country; it did not display a prevailing opinion, just a slight preference thereto, which in any sensible consideration should point policy-makers then towards a compromise response (soft Brexit or whatever) rather than the hard Brexit th”</p> <p>5) “Democracy is a political regime in which the people have the right to representatives, who manage complex affairs because they trust them, but must be able to sanction these same representatives when abuses occur. For example, if there is a suspicion of fraud, immunity is waived. If there is abuse of power, as the president and his government do, with the various affairs (benalla, electoral fraud, conflict of interest, etc.), suspend or transfer them, the people must be able to call referendums, or be consulted several times a month on important issues (war, supra-national contract, etc.) ...</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>... With total transparency in contracts and accounts, as well as simplification of laws so that they can be understood by anyone, and so that each law and paragraph is clear, unambiguous and fair. Finally, a democracy ensures, through national education and the media, that every citizen develops a spirit of tolerance and respect for human rights.”</p> |
| <p>9: Without negative things</p> | <p>1) “dfdf hssss asthssb gfyd fhsethay thssbf”</p> <p>2) “managing the government for the good of the people without getting dirty with the mafia, without bribing oneself with money, without receiving disproportionate sums at the expense of the people... without putting the noose around the neck of taxes... destroying the life of the people... but all this is pure chimera.”</p> <p>3) “democracy is to be able to oppose the decisions of one’s government without the risk of being killed or beaten up (thank you Macronesia) To have the right to strike without asking for the agreement of the city, to demonstrate.”</p> <p>4) “To be able to elect its president, mayor, deputy and express its discontent without fear of being arrested.”</p> <p>5) “Officially: Universal adult suffrage. Voting for a member of Parliament or Local Councillor. In reality to me it means a rotten mess conducted by liars and newspaper/media barons.”</p> |
| <p>24: Ambiguous meaning</p> | <p>1) “Tricky concept. Ideal in theory, hard to achieve in practice. V badly served by constituency system & FPTP system. PR would be better. Devolution of more decisions to local level in theory better, but still fraught with danger - vulnerable people probably won’t get involved, personalities likely to be more of a distorting factor, plenty of ways to abuse, eg dodgy consultations, biased information.”</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|-------|--|
| | <p>2) “Initially it meant one person one vote - if you were a man at least. That principle still theoretically applies but because of the first passed the post system around 50% of the electorate end up not being represented. Coalition government would at least prevent extremism in party policies and help the electorate feel represented, and not simple the victims of the men in grey suits inside the Westminster bubble most of whom have no clue as to the daily struggles of working people.”</p> <p>3) “Democracy, if lived properly, is the best invention of mankind. However, only direct democracy, the sovereign always has to be the people, never opportunists such as deputies, lobbyists, NGOs, trade unions or anyone else who holds offices and/or positions for the sole purpose of their own lives and/or personal enrichment. Democracy must not be a clientelistic policy, above all it must never discriminate, defame, disadvantage, persecute voters or citizens, destroy their existence, in order to enable weak, lazy, stupid, underdeveloped people to live a comfortable, work-free, sheltered life. Democracy can be learned, even by naive and stupid people like the Germans. But I consider this question to be purely hypothetical, because Germany has never been a direct democracy, has been a totalitarian, criminal regime for some years now, which promotes extremism from the left, persecutes dissenters and commits genocide.”</p> <p>4) “Does or should? Does sounds more descriptive of what it is rather than prescriptive, as I would like it to be. As it is, I think democracy is a mixed bag. It overcomes some of the excesses of monarchies/dictatorships by having more accountability but leads to short-termism and a lack of nuance on the ground. ...</p> |

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Table SM2.3 Continued from previous page

| Topic | Most associated responses |
|------------------|--|
| | <p>... I think I would be more in favour of a technocracy and I think democracy needs to be refreshed.”</p> <p>5) “REAL free and secret elections, REAL freedom of speech, NO radicalized ultra-left members of government and the Bundestag, NO culture of opinion, equal treatment of right and left crimes by the judiciary and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution. NO fake news dissemination by government, NO covering up governmental mistakes by artificially exaggerating new problem areas for distraction. No more milking of the tax cow, no more messing around with Merkel’s government media.”</p> |
| 25: Togetherness | <p>1) “The people decide. ’The people’ (the electorate) are/is qualified (only by maturity, sanity and non-criminality, i.e. they are *competent* to decide).There are many systems to implemnt this (e.g. delegation, representation) and many mechanisms (first-past-the-post, various proportional systems, etc....) all of which have dis-/advantages.”</p> <p>2) “Glad to live there, but a freedom granted to run the capitalist machine, to consume to enrich a minority by crushing the majority, and no matter how poor the rest of the world is and how poor their rights are in the end.”</p> <p>3) “The new imperialism, a great way to enrich the scum and confuse the poor.”</p> <p>4) “All pull together and decide together”</p> <p>5) “It means that the power belongs to the people, so we all decide together how to operate. That is the purpose of the vote.”</p> |
| | Concluded |

SM2.4 Conditions list experiment

Randomisation across treatment groups (Blair and Imai, 2012; A. N. Glynn, 2013). Table SM2.4 shows the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) that assesses whether control variables are correlated with the group assignment in the list experiment (direct, short list and long list). All of these factors are distributed equally. Table SM2.5-SM2.7 show the same values by country and political attitude of interest. Again, the factors are distributed equally across experimental groups.

Table SM2.4: ANOVA for distribution of main variables across different list experiment groups

| Factor | Df | Sum sq | Mean sq | F value | Pr(>F) |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Age | 1 | 0 | 0.25 | 0.46 | 0.50 |
| Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.15 | 0.27 | 0.61 |
| Education | 1 | 1 | 1.04 | 1.87 | 0.17 |
| Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.31 | 0.57 | 0.45 |
| Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.82 |
| Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.82 |
| Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.47 | 0.85 | 0.36 |
| Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.97 |
| Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.28 | 0.51 | 0.47 |
| Residuals | 13295 | 7372 | 0.56 | | |

Notes: * marks significant differences across groups of respondents for $p < 0.05$. Authoritarians/populists are respondents with an attitude higher than the mean attitude in their country.

Table SM2.5: ANOVA for distribution of main variables across different list experiment groups by country

| CN | Factor | Df | Sum sq | Mean sq | F value | Pr(>F) |
|----|---------------------------|------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| DE | Age | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.99 |
| DE | Sex | 1 | 0.6 | 0.57 | 1.02 | 0.31 |
| DE | Education | 1 | 0.6 | 0.56 | 1.01 | 0.32 |
| DE | Size of locality | 1 | 0.4 | 0.41 | 0.73 | 0.39 |
| DE | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.35 | 0.56 |
| DE | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 1.3 | 1.35 | 2.42 | 0.12 |
| DE | Authoritarianism | 1 | 1.1 | 1.11 | 1.98 | 0.16 |
| DE | Populism | 1 | 0.3 | 0.32 | 0.57 | 0.45 |
| DE | Radicalism | 1 | 2.5 | 2.54 | 4.56 | 0.03* |
| DE | Residuals | 3345 | 1863.3 | 0.56 | | |
| FR | Age | 1 | 0.3 | 0.26 | 0.47 | 0.49 |
| FR | Sex | 1 | 0.5 | 0.49 | 0.88 | 0.35 |
| FR | Education | 1 | 0.4 | 0.38 | 0.68 | 0.41 |
| FR | Size of locality | 1 | 0.3 | 0.33 | 0.59 | 0.44 |
| FR | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0.2 | 0.21 | 0.37 | 0.55 |
| FR | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0.1 | 0.13 | 0.24 | 0.63 |
| FR | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0.0 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.80 |
| FR | Populism | 1 | 0.4 | 0.37 | 0.66 | 0.42 |
| FR | Radicalism | 1 | 0.7 | 0.74 | 1.32 | 0.25 |
| FR | Residuals | 3279 | 1834.9 | 0.56 | | |
| IT | Age | 1 | 0.3 | 0.33 | 0.59 | 0.44 |
| IT | Sex | 1 | 0.2 | 0.16 | 0.28 | 0.60 |
| IT | Education | 1 | 0.1 | 0.14 | 0.26 | 0.61 |
| IT | Size of locality | 1 | 0.2 | 0.22 | 0.28 | 0.54 |
| IT | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0.5 | 0.50 | 0.90 | 0.34 |
| IT | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0.8 | 0.80 | 1.43 | 0.23 |
| IT | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0.0 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.87 |
| IT | Populism | 1 | 0.2 | 0.23 | 0.40 | 0.53 |
| IT | Radicalism | 1 | 1.4 | 1.40 | 2.50 | 0.11 |
| IT | Residuals | 3316 | 1856.8 | 0.56 | | |
| UK | Age | 1 | 0.0 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.88 |
| UK | Sex | 1 | 0.1 | 0.10 | 0.18 | 0.67 |
| UK | Education | 1 | 0.1 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.73 |
| UK | Size of locality | 1 | 0.4 | 0.37 | 0.67 | 0.41 |
| UK | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0.9 | 0.91 | 1.68 | 0.20 |
| UK | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 1.2 | 1.19 | 2.20 | 0.14 |
| UK | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0.2 | 0.23 | 0.43 | 0.51 |
| UK | Populism | 1 | 1.1 | 1.08 | 20.00 | 0.16 |
| UK | Radicalism | 1 | 0.0 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.83 |
| UK | Residuals | 3325 | 1801.1 | 0.54 | | |

Notes: * marks significant differences across groups of respondents for $p < 0.05$. Authoritarians/populists are respondents with an attitude higher than the mean attitude in their country.

Table SM2.6: ANOVA for distribution of main variables across different list experiment groups by authoritarian and populist attitudes

| PA | Factor | Df | Sum sq | Mean sq | F value | Pr(>F) |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Authoritarian | Age | 1 | 0 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.84 |
| Authoritarian | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.17 | 0.31 | 0.58 |
| Authoritarian | Education | 1 | 1 | 0.80 | 1.43 | 0.23 |
| Authoritarian | Size of locality | 1 | 1 | 0.67 | 1.19 | 0.28 |
| Authoritarian | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.87 |
| Authoritarian | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.96 |
| Authoritarian | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.82 |
| Authoritarian | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.23 | 0.40 | 0.53 |
| Authoritarian | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.38 | 0.67 | 0.41 |
| Authoritarian | Residuals | 7324 | 4124 | 0.56 | | |
| Non-authoritarian | Age | 1 | 1 | 0.68 | 1.25 | 0.26 |
| Non-authoritarian | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Non-authoritarian | Education | 1 | 1 | 0.56 | 1.02 | 0.31 |
| Non-authoritarian | Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.97 |
| Non-authoritarian | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.28 | 0.52 | 0.47 |
| Non-authoritarian | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0 | 0.10 | 0.18 | 0.67 |
| Non-authoritarian | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.50 | 0.92 | 0.34 |
| Non-authoritarian | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.31 | 0.57 | 0.45 |
| Non-authoritarian | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.93 |
| Non-authoritarian | Residuals | 5961 | 3245 | 0.54 | | |
| Populist | Age | 1 | 2 | 2.00 | 3.52 | 0.06 |
| Populist | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.91 |
| Populist | Education | 1 | 2 | 1.67 | 3.03 | 0.08 |
| Populist | Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.19 | 0.35 | 0.56 |
| Populist | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 1 | 0.58 | 1.06 | 0.30 |
| Populist | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 1 | 0.96 | 1.75 | 0.19 |
| Populist | Authoritarianism | 1 | 1 | 1.01 | 1.83 | 0.18 |
| Populist | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.12 | 0.22 | 0.64 |
| Populist | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.32 | 0.58 | 0.45 |
| Populist | Residuals | 6898 | 3768 | 0.55 | | |
| Non-populist | Age | 1 | 0 | 0.45 | 0.79 | 0.37 |
| Non-populist | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.22 | 0.39 | 0.53 |
| Non-populist | Education | 1 | 0 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.87 |
| Non-populist | Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.15 | 0.26 | 0.61 |
| Non-populist | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.41 | 0.73 | 0.39 |
| Non-populist | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 1 | 0.76 | 1.36 | 0.24 |
| Non-populist | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.83 |
| Non-populist | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.13 | 0.23 | 0.64 |
| Non-populist | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.13 | 0.23 | 0.63 |
| Non-populist | Residuals | 6387 | 3580 | 0.56 | | |

Notes: * marks significant differences across groups of respondents for $p < 0.05$. Authoritarians/populists are respondents with an attitude higher than the mean attitude in their country.

Table SM2.7: ANOVA for distribution of main variables across different list experiment groups by ideological radicalism

| PA | Factor | Df | Sum sq | Mean sq | F value | Pr(>F) |
|--------------|---------------------------|------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Radicals | Age | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.93 |
| Radicals | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.06 | 0.11 | 0.74 |
| Radicals | Education | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.90 |
| Radicals | Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.91 |
| Radicals | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.84 |
| Radicals | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.88 |
| Radicals | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.21 | 0.37 | 0.54 |
| Radicals | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.89 |
| Radicals | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.79 |
| Radicals | Residuals | 6852 | 3820 | 0.56 | | |
| Non-radicals | Age | 1 | 0 | 0.39 | 0.70 | 0.40 |
| Non-radicals | Sex | 1 | 0 | 0.14 | 0.25 | 0.62 |
| Non-radicals | Education | 1 | 2 | 1.80 | 3.26 | 0.07 |
| Non-radicals | Size of locality | 1 | 0 | 0.45 | 0.82 | 0.37 |
| Non-radicals | Trust in Parliament | 1 | 0 | 0.15 | 0.27 | 0.60 |
| Non-radicals | Left-right self-placement | 1 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.99 |
| Non-radicals | Authoritarianism | 1 | 0 | 0.37 | 0.67 | 0.41 |
| Non-radicals | Populism | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.92 |
| Non-radicals | Radicalism | 1 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.91 |
| Non-radicals | Residuals | 6433 | 3550 | 0.55 | | |

Notes: * marks significant differences across groups of respondents for $p < 0.05$. Radicals are respondents with a higher radical attitude than the mean respondent in their country.

No ceiling and floor effects (A. N. Glynn, 2013). Table SM2.8 shows the per cent of respondents who agree with 0 to 4 statements and the per cent of respondents who agree with at least 0 through at least 4 statements for each group. The per cent of respondents who agree with at least 0 through at least 4 statements in the treatment group is always larger than the per cent of respondents who agree with at least 9 through at least 4 statements in the control group (Joint). Thus, there is no evidence that ceiling and floor effects have significantly influenced respondents. Additionally, there is no large difference between the average amount of statements respondents agree with in the direct question and the treatment group.

Table SM2.8: Ceiling and floor effects for list experiment, excluding NAs

| Experimental group | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Direct question | 8.52 | 41.44 | 38.59 | 8.38 | 3.07 |
| Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 91.48 | 50.04 | 11.45 | 3.07 |
| Control | 11.75 | 46.08 | 36.16 | 6.01 | NA |
| Control, at least 0-3 | 100.00 | 88.25 | 42.17 | 6.01 | NA |
| Treatment | 11.04 | 40.05 | 37.98 | 8.57 | 2.36 |
| Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 88.96 | 48.92 | 10.93 | 2.36 |
| Joint | 0.00 | 0.71 | 6.75 | 4.29 | 2.36 |

Notes: All numbers in percentage points. Joint=Treatment, at least 0-4 – Control, at least 0-3.

Table SM2.9 shows the same values for each country separately. With the exception for one value for the UK, all of these values are also positive for each country. The one exception for the UK is very close to 0. Additionally, the average amount of statements respondents agree with in the list and when they are asked directly is very similar. Thus, I again conclude that there are no ceiling or floor effects for the list experiment in each country.

Table SM2.9: Ceiling and floor effects for list experiment by country, excluding NAs

| CN | Experimental group | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| DE | Direct question | 11.82 | 45.11 | 35.47 | 5.84 | 1.75 |
| DE | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 88.18 | 43.07 | 7.59 | 1.75 |
| DE | Control | 15.87 | 49.18 | 30.88 | 4.07 | NA |
| DE | Control, at least 0-3 | 100.00 | 84.13 | 34.59 | 4.07 | NA |
| DE | Treatment | 14.37 | 44.73 | 34.96 | 4.67 | 1.27 |
| DE | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 85.63 | 40.91 | 5.94 | 1.27 |
| DE | Joint | 0.00 | 1.50 | 6.32 | 1.87 | 1.27 |
| FR | Direct question | 6.87 | 40.25 | 39.55 | 9.40 | 3.93 |
| FR | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 93.13 | 52.88 | 13.32 | 3.93 |
| FR | Control | 12.63 | 40.90 | 39.69 | 6.78 | NA |
| FR | Control, at least 0-3 | 100.00 | 87.37 | 46.47 | 6.78 | NA |
| FR | Treatment | 11.21 | 34.27 | 43.02 | 8.68 | 2.82 |
| FR | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 88.79 | 54.52 | 11.50 | 2.82 |
| FR | Joint | 0.00 | 1.42 | 8.05 | 4.72 | 2.82 |
| IT | Direct question | 5.73 | 25.11 | 50.22 | 13.36 | 5.58 |
| IT | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 94.27 | 69.16 | 18.94 | 5.58 |
| IT | Control | 8.60 | 34.78 | 46.20 | 10.41 | NA |
| IT | Control, at least 0-3 | 100.00 | 91.40 | 56.62 | 10.41 | NA |
| IT | Treatment | 8.60 | 27.20 | 45.10 | 14.55 | 4.55 |
| IT | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 91.40 | 64.20 | 19.09 | 4.55 |
| IT | Joint | 0.00 | 0.00 | 7.58 | 8.68 | 4.55 |
| UK | Direct question | 9.77 | 55.88 | 28.70 | 4.73 | 0.92 |
| UK | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.23 | 34.35 | 5.65 | 0.92 |
| UK | Control | 9.90 | 58.93 | 28.25 | 2.91 | NA |
| UK | Control, at least 0-3 | 100.00 | 90.01 | 31.16 | 2.91 | NA |
| UK | Treatment | 10.00 | 54.14 | 28.79 | 6.29 | 0.79 |
| UK | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.00 | 35.86 | 7.07 | 0.79 |
| UK | Joint | 0.00 | -0.23 | 4.70 | 4.16 | 0.79 |

Notes: All numbers in percentage points. Joint=Treatment, at least 0-4 – Control, at least 0-3.

Table SM2.10: Ceiling and floor effects by political attitudes, excluding NAs

| PA | Experimental group | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Authoritarian | Direct question | 9.59 | 38.35 | 37.03 | 10.77 | 4.27 |
| Authoritarian | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.41 | 52.07 | 15.04 | 10.77 |
| Authoritarian | Control | 14.35 | 44.73 | 33.50 | 7.42 | NA |
| Authoritarian | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 85.65 | 40.92 | 7.42 | NA |
| Authoritarian | Treatment | 13.23 | 36.56 | 36.43 | 10.60 | 3.18 |
| Authoritarian | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 86.77 | 50.21 | 13.78 | 3.18 |
| Authoritarian | Joint | 0.00 | 1.12 | 9.29 | 6.36 | 3.18 |
| Non-authoritarian | Direct question | 7.18 | 45.33 | 40.55 | 5.37 | 1.57 |
| Non-authoritarian | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 92.82 | 47.48 | 6.94 | 1.57 |
| Non-authoritarian | Control | 8.68 | 47.68 | 39.31 | 4.34 | NA |
| Non-authoritarian | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 91.32 | 43.65 | 4.34 | NA |
| Non-authoritarian | Treatment | 8.32 | 44.37 | 39.91 | 6.05 | 1.35 |
| Non-authoritarian | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 91.68 | 47.31 | 7.40 | 1.35 |
| Non-authoritarian | Joint | 0.00 | 0.36 | 3.66 | 3.06 | 1.35 |
| Populist | Direct question | 6.29 | 41.18 | 39.48 | 9.67 | 3.38 |
| Populist | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 93.71 | 52.54 | 13.05 | 3.38 |
| Populist | Control | 9.97 | 45.07 | 37.70 | 7.26 | NA |
| Populist | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.03 | 44.96 | 7.26 | NA |
| Populist | Treatment | 9.81 | 37.19 | 39.96 | 10.00 | 3.04 |
| Populist | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.19 | 53.00 | 13.04 | 3.04 |
| Populist | Joint | 0.00 | 0.16 | 8.04 | 5.78 | 3.04 |
| Non-populist | Direct question | 10.38 | 41.66 | 37.84 | 7.30 | 2.81 |
| Non-populist | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 89.62 | 47.96 | 10.11 | 2.81 |
| Non-populist | Control | 13.29 | 46.96 | 34.83 | 4.92 | NA |
| Non-populist | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 86.71 | 39.75 | 4.92 | NA |
| Non-populist | Treatment | 12.10 | 42.50 | 36.29 | 7.34 | 1.78 |
| Non-populist | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 87.90 | 45.41 | 9.12 | 1.78 |
| Non-populist | Joint | 0.00 | 1.19 | 5.66 | 4.20 | 1.78 |
| Radicals | Direct question | 7.50 | 42.41 | 38.25 | 8.73 | 3.10 |
| Radicals | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 92.50 | 50.08 | 11.83 | 3.10 |
| Radicals | Control | 10.14 | 47.54 | 36.33 | 5.98 | NA |
| Radicals | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 89.86 | 42.31 | 5.98 | NA |
| Radicals | Treatment | 10.32 | 40.37 | 37.73 | 8.94 | 2.64 |
| Radicals | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 89.68 | 49.31 | 11.58 | 2.64 |
| Radicals | Joint | 0.00 | -0.18 | 6.82 | 5.60 | 2.64 |
| Non-radicals | Direct question | 9.53 | 40.58 | 39.21 | 7.80 | 2.89 |
| Non-radicals | Direct, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 90.47 | 49.89 | 10.69 | 2.89 |
| Non-radicals | Control | 12.62 | 45.14 | 36.36 | 5.87 | NA |
| Non-radicals | Control, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 87.38 | 42.24 | 5.87 | NA |
| Non-radicals | Treatment | 10.80 | 40.29 | 38.71 | 8.03 | 2.17 |
| Non-radicals | Treatment, at least 0-4 | 100.00 | 89.20 | 48.91 | 10.20 | 2.17 |
| Non-radicals | Joint | 0.00 | 1.82 | 6.67 | 4.33 | 2.17 |

Notes: All numbers in percentage points. Joint=Treatment, at least 0-4 – Control, at least 0-3. Authoritarians/populists/radicals are those respondents with an attitude higher than the respective mean attitude in their country.

Table SM2.10 shows again the per cent of respondents who agree with 0 to 4 state-

ments and the per cent of respondents who agree with at least 0 through at least 4 statements by respondents with specific attitudes. The difference between the per cent respondents who agree with at least 0 through 4 statements in the treatment and in the control group is again always positive, with the exception for at least 1 statement for radicals. This difference is however very close to 0 and therefore negligible.

No design effects (Blair and Imai, 2012). The test for design effects by Blair and Imai (2012), (see also Blair, Chou, et al. (2020)) fails to reject the null hypothesis that there are no design effects, overall, by country and for political attitudes and radicalism. The respective Bonferroni-corrected p-value is always at least larger than 0.84.

SM3 The Democracy I Like

SM3.1 Complete experimental design

Table SM3.11: Vignette experiment

| Attribute | Attribute levels |
|---------------------|---|
| Government plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ban demonstrations against government plans- limit the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional government decisions- also implement reforms for which there is no majority support in the population |
| Goal of plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- to implement its laws more efficiently- to maintain public order in [COUNTRY]- to reduce the influence of foreign decision-makers on [COUNTRY]'s policy |
| Criticism | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- undemocratic- a restriction of civil rights- a restriction of freedom- <i>No critique mentioned</i> |
| Actor opposing plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the European Parliament- some members of the government itself- [COUNTRY] opposition parties- the [COUNTRY] constitutional court- the [COUNTRY] press- <i>No actor mentioned</i> |

SM3.2 German experimental design

Example text for the experiment, German master

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass in Deutschland eine Regierung an die Macht gekommen ist, für die Sie gestimmt haben und deren Politik Sie unterstützen. Sie erhalten nun Informationen über ein neues Projekt dieser Regierung. *Bitte bedenken Sie, dass auch zukünftige Regierungen von dem Projekt dieser Regierung profitieren könnten.*

Die Regierung hat vor, **Demonstrationen gegen die Regierung zu verbieten** (type of proposal), **um die Einflussnahme ausländischer Entscheidungsträger auf die deutsche Politik zu verringern** (goal of proposal). **Das Projekt der Regierung wurde als undemokratisch bezeichnet** (critique). **Das Europäische Parlament hat das Projekt kritisiert** (actor).

Table SM3.12: Vignette experiment, German master

| Attribute | Attribute levels |
|------------------|---|
| Type of proposal | <i>anti-democratic</i> : Demonstrationen gegen die Regierung zu verbieten <i>anti-liberal</i> : die Macht von Gerichten einzuschränken, verfassungswidrige Entscheidungen der Regierung aufzuheben <i>anti-majoritarian</i> : auch Reformen umzusetzen, für die es keine Mehrheit in der Bevölkerung gibt |
| Goal of proposal | um die effiziente Umsetzung ihrer Gesetze nicht zu gefährden um die öffentliche Ordnung in Deutschland aufrecht zu erhalten um die Einflussnahme ausländischer Entscheidungsträger auf die deutsche Politik zu verringern |
| Critique | undemokratisch Bürgerrechtseinschränkung Freiheitseinschränkung <i>No critique mentioned</i> |
| Actor | Das Europäische Parlament hat Einige Mitglieder der Regierung selbst haben Die deutschen Oppositionsparteien haben Das deutsche Verfassungsgericht hat Die deutsche Presse hat <i>No actor mentioned</i> |

SM3.3 Polish experimental design

Example text for the experiment, Polish translation

Proszę sobie wyobrazić, że w Polsce do władzy doszedł rząd, na którego Pan(i) głosował(a) i którego politykę Pan(i) popiera. Otrzyma teraz Pan(i) informacje o nowym projekcie tego rządu. *Proszę pamiętać, że przyszłe rządy również mogłyby skorzystać z projektu tego rządu.*

Rząd planuje **zabronić demonstracji przeciwko projektom rządowym**, (type of proposal), **żeby zmniejszyć wpływ zagranicznych decydentów na polską politykę** (goal of proposal). **Projekt rządu był opisany jako niedemokratyczny** (critique). **Parlament Europejski skrytykował ten projekt** (actor).

Table SM3.13: Vignette experiment, Polish translation

| Attribute | Attribute levels |
|------------------|---|
| Type of proposal | <i>anti-democratic</i> : zabronić demonstracji przeciwko projektom rządowym <i>anti-liberal</i> : ograniczyć uprawnienia sądów do uchylania niekonstytucyjnych decyzji rządu <i>anti-majoritarian</i> : wdrożyć także reformy, dla których nie ma poparcia większości społeczeństwa |
| Goal of proposal | żeby zapobiec zagrożeniom skutecznej realizacji ich reform żeby nie zagrażać porządkowi publicznemu w Polsce żeby zmniejszyć wpływ zagranicznych decydentów na polską politykę |
| Critique | niedemokratyczny ograniczenie praw obywatelskich ograniczenie wolności <i>No critique mentioned</i> |
| Actor | Parlament Europejski Niektórzy członkowie rządu Polskie partie opozycyjne Polski Trybunał Konstytucyjny Polska prasa <i>No actor mentioned</i> |

SM3.4 Perceived importance of different institutions for democracy

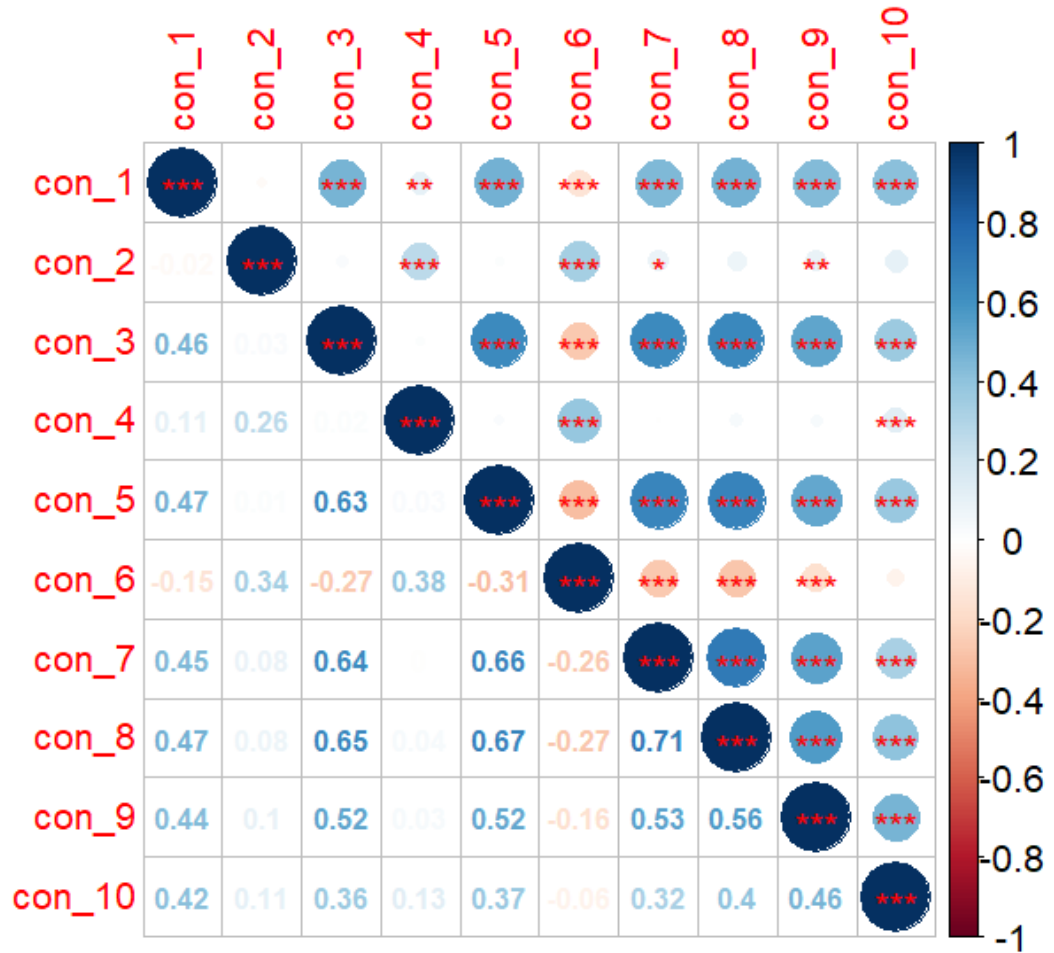
How important do you think it is for democracy in general, ... | Wie wichtig ist es aus Ihrer Sicht für die Demokratie im Allgemeinen, dass... | Na ile, Pani/Pana zdaniem, dla demokracji generalnie ważne jest to,...¹

- Concept 1: ... that the people have the final say on the most important political issues? | ... dass das Volk bei den wichtigsten politischen Sachfragen das letzte Wort hat? | ... żeby ludzie mieli ostatnie słowo na temat najważniejszych kwestii politycznych
- Concept 2: ... that the government also implements reforms for which there is no majority support in the population? | ... dass die Regierung auch Reformen umsetzt, für die es keine Mehrheit in der Bevölkerung gibt? | ... żeby rząd wdrażał również reformy, dla których nie ma poparcia większości społeczeństwa?
- Concept 3: ... that the courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority? | ... dass die Gerichte die Regierung daran hindern können, ihre Befugnisse zu überschreiten? | ... żeby sady mogły powstrzymać rząd od działań wykraczających poza jego kompetencje.
- Concept 4: ... that the power of courts to overturn unconstitutional governments decisions is limited? | ... dass die Macht von Gerichten, verfassungswidrige Entscheidungen der Regierung aufzuheben, eingeschränkt ist? | ... żeby uprawnienia sądów do uchylania niekonstytucyjnych decyzji rządu były ograniczone?
- Concept 5: ... that citizens can participate in demonstrations if they do not support the government's plans? | ... dass Bürger an Demonstrationen teilnehmen können, wenn sie die Pläne der Regierung nicht unterstützen? | ... żeby obywatele mogli uczestniczyć w demonstracjach, jeśli nie popierają projektów rządu?

¹The order of the response categories was randomised.

- Concept 6: ... that the government prohibits demonstrations against government plans? | ... dass die Regierung Demonstrationen gegen Regierungsvorhaben verbietet? | ... żeby rząd zabraniał demonstracji przeciwko rządowym projektom?
- Concept 7: ... that opposition parties are free to criticise the government? | ... dass Oppositionsparteien das Recht haben, Kritik an der Regierung zu üben? | ... żeby partie opozycyjne miały możliwość krytykowania rządu?
- Concept 8: ... that the media are free to criticise the government? | ... dass die Medien das Recht haben, Kritik an der Regierung zu üben? | ... żeby media miały możliwość krytykowania rządu?
- Concept 9: ... that the rights of minority groups are protected? | ... dass die Rechte von Minderheiten geschützt werden? | ... żeby chronione były prawa mniejszości?
- Concept 10: ... that the government protects all citizens against poverty? | ... dass die Regierung alle Bürger vor Armut schützt? | ... żeby rząd chronił wszystkich obywateli przed ubóstwem?

Figure SM3.2: Bi-variate correlations for the perceived importance of different institutions for democracy



Notes: Figure created with the R package corrplot. Strength of correlation depicted in circles (upper half) and in numbers (lower half). Significance levels: *** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$.

SM3.5 Experimental design assumptions

Table SM3.14: ANOVA for outcome measures between the three different vignettes, averaging across all attributes and attribute levels

| CN | Outcome | | Df | Sum Sq | Mean Sq | F value | Pr(>F) |
|----|-------------|-----------|------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| DE | Vote | Vignette | 2 | 28.39 | 14.20 | 4.19 | 0.02 |
| DE | Vote | Residuals | 1870 | 6333.27 | 3.39 | NA | NA |
| DE | Defend | Vignette | 2 | 18.18 | 9.09 | 2.81 | 0.06 |
| DE | Defend | Residuals | 1870 | 6060.13 | 3.24 | NA | NA |
| DE | Demonstrate | Vignette | 2 | 2.34 | 1.17 | 0.27 | 0.77 |
| DE | Demonstrate | Residuals | 1870 | 8166.38 | 4.37 | NA | NA |
| PL | Vote | Vignette | 2 | 38.69 | 19.35 | 4.92 | 0.01 |
| PL | Vote | Residuals | 1931 | 7598.77 | 3.94 | NA | NA |
| PL | Defend | Vignette | 2 | 31.21 | 15.60 | 4.34 | 0.01 |
| PL | Defend | Residuals | 1931 | 6951.93 | 3.60 | NA | NA |
| PL | Demonstrate | Vignette | 2 | 2.33 | 1.16 | 0.24 | 0.79 |
| PL | Demonstrate | Residuals | 1931 | 9250.64 | 4.79 | NA | NA |

Figure SM3.3: Marginal Means across vignettes by outcome type, outcome measure and country

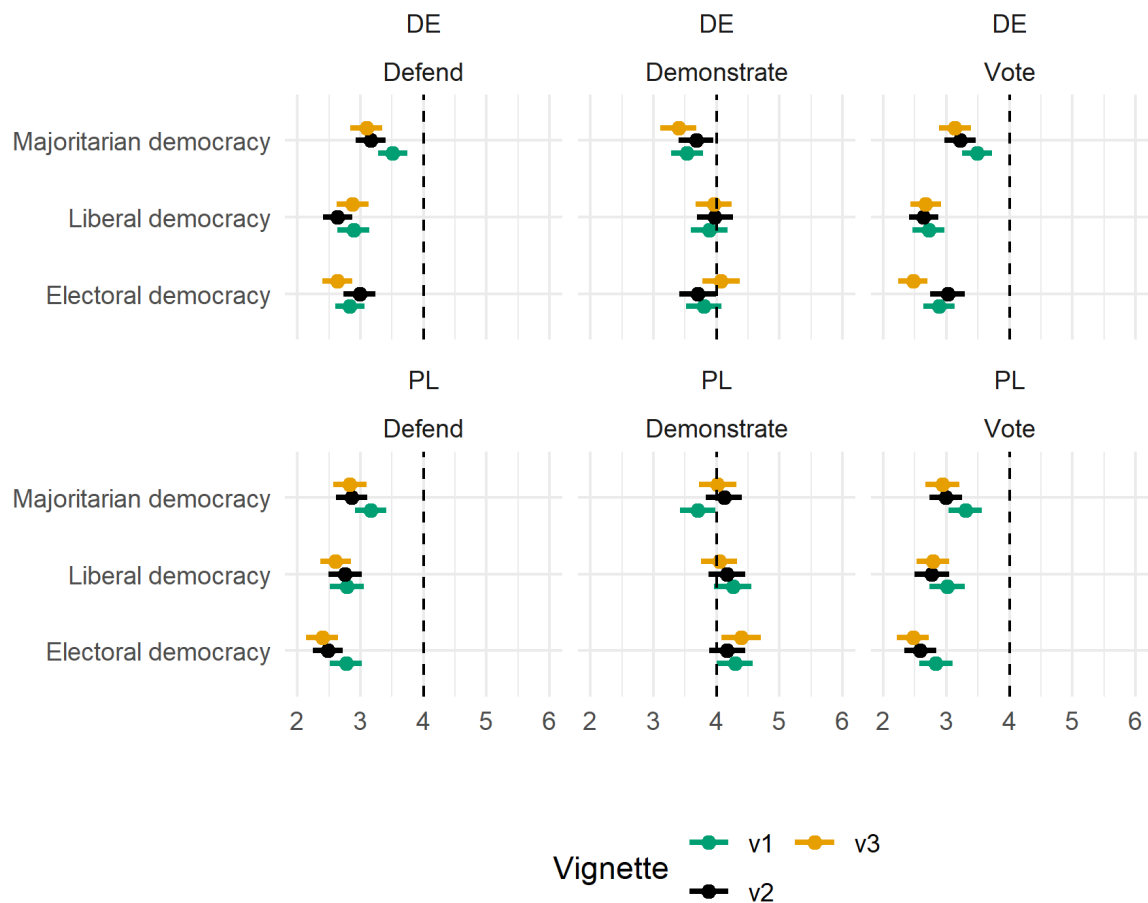
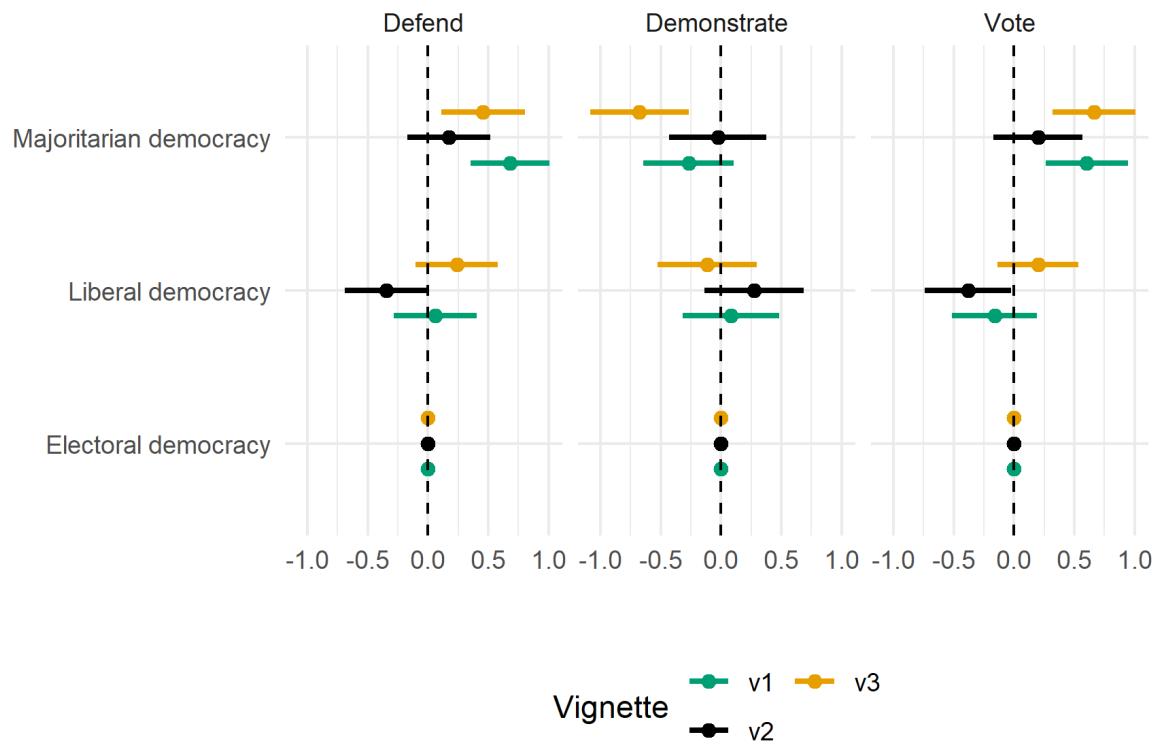
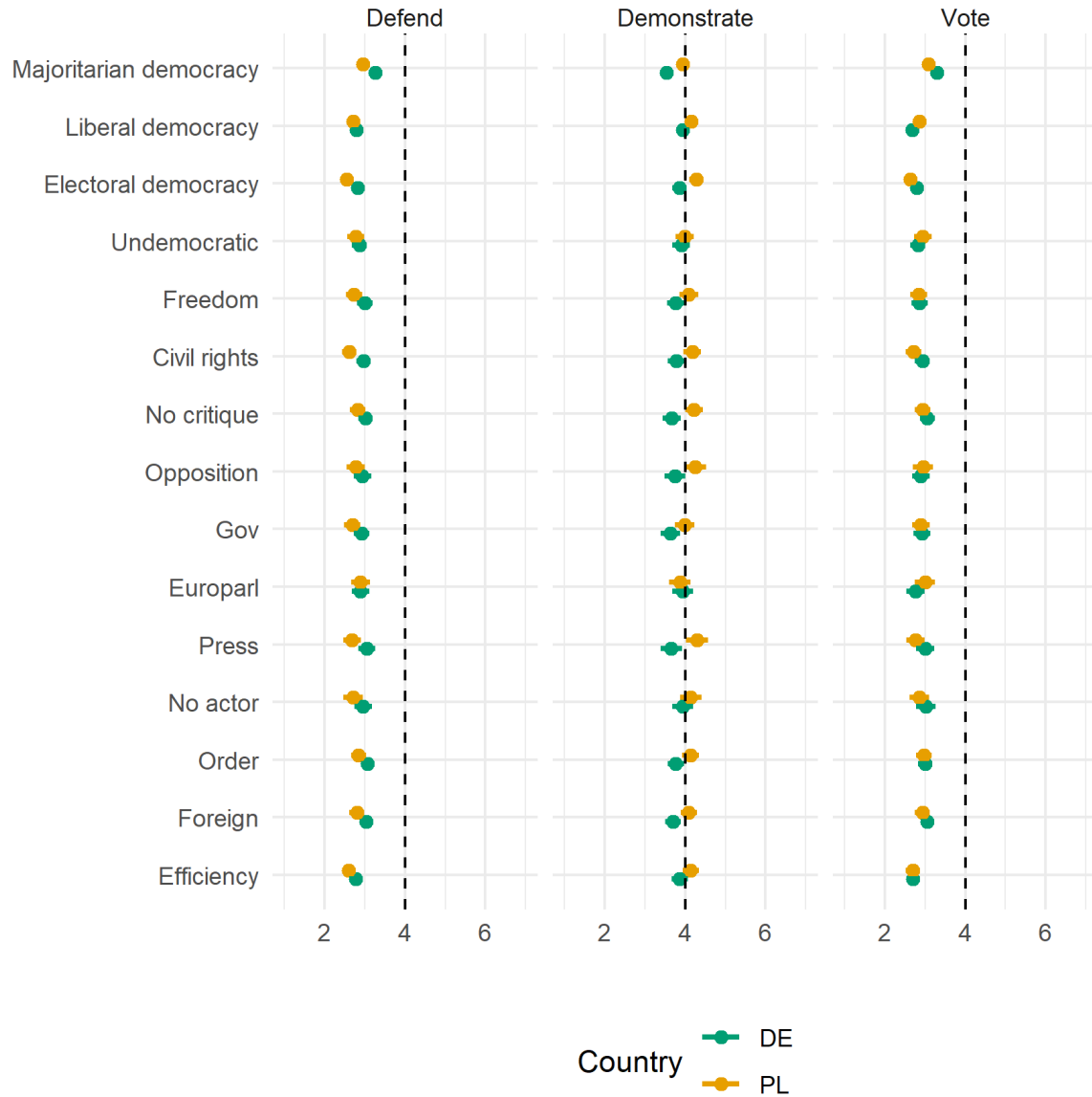


Figure SM3.4: AMCEs across vignettes by outcome type, outcome measure and country



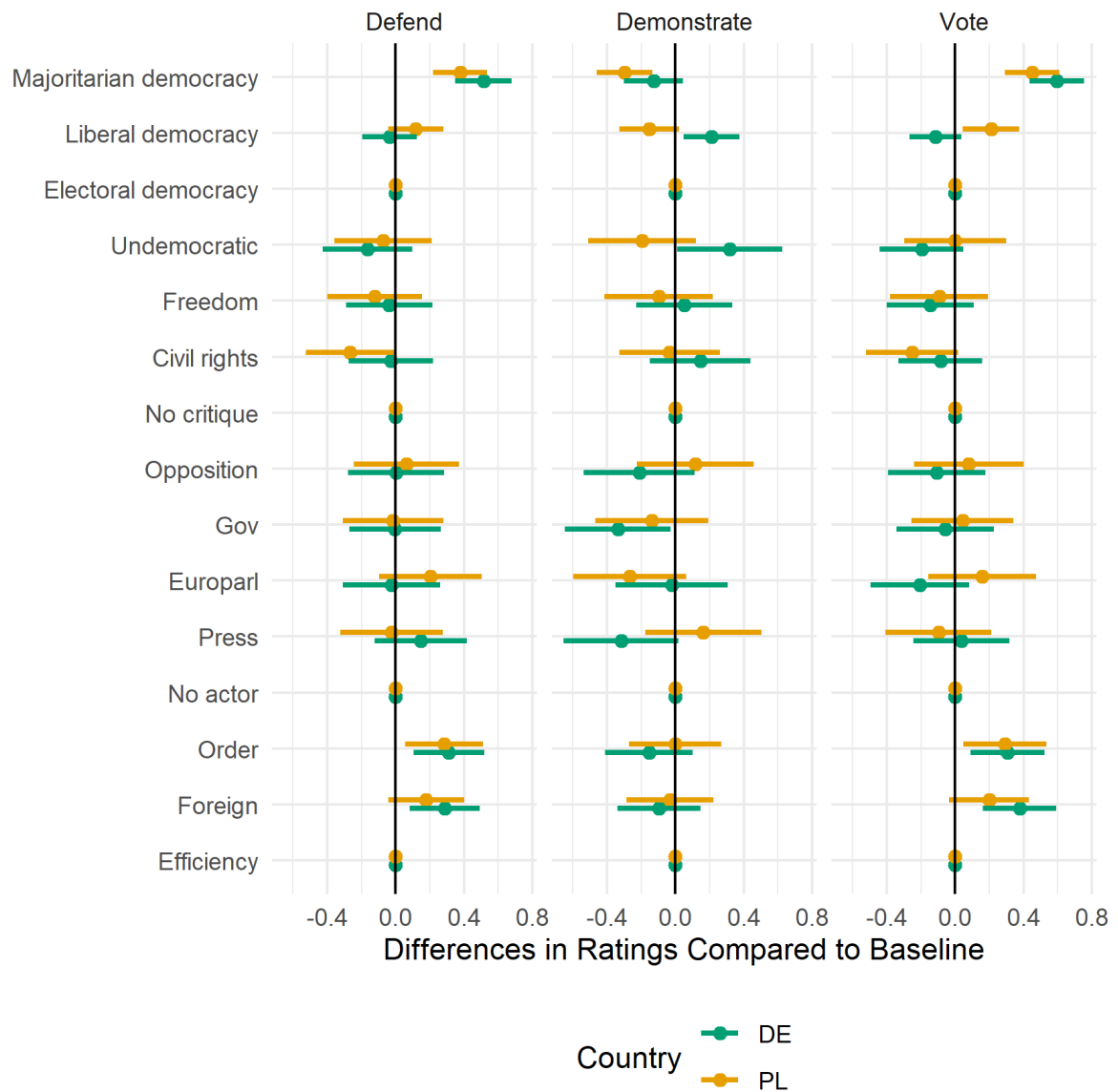
SM3.6 Full results of the experiment

Figure SM3.5: MMs for all attributes and attribute levels of the experimental design by country, full results



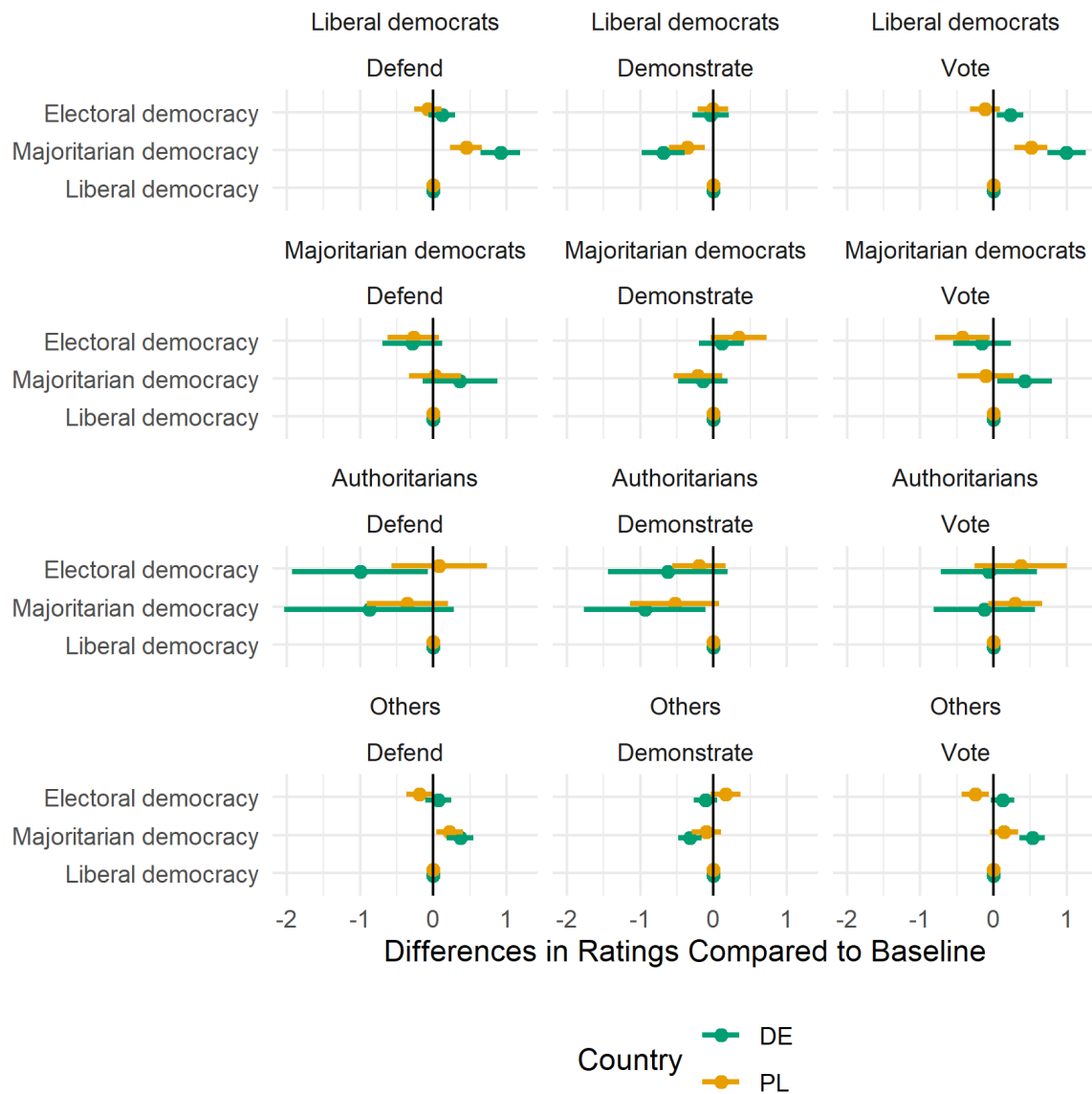
Notes: Figure created with the R packages cregg and ggplot.

Figure SM3.6: AMCEs for all attributes and attribute levels of the experimental design by country, full results



Notes: Figure created with the R packages cregg and ggplot.

Figure SM3.7: AMCEs for tolerance of different types of democratic backsliding among liberal and majoritarian democrats, full results



Notes: Figure created with the R packages cregg and ggplot.

SM3.7 Results for Section 3.4.3, pre-registered hypotheses

Figure SM3.8: H5: AMCEs for seeing infringements on institutions perceived to be important by satisfied and dissatisfied citizens

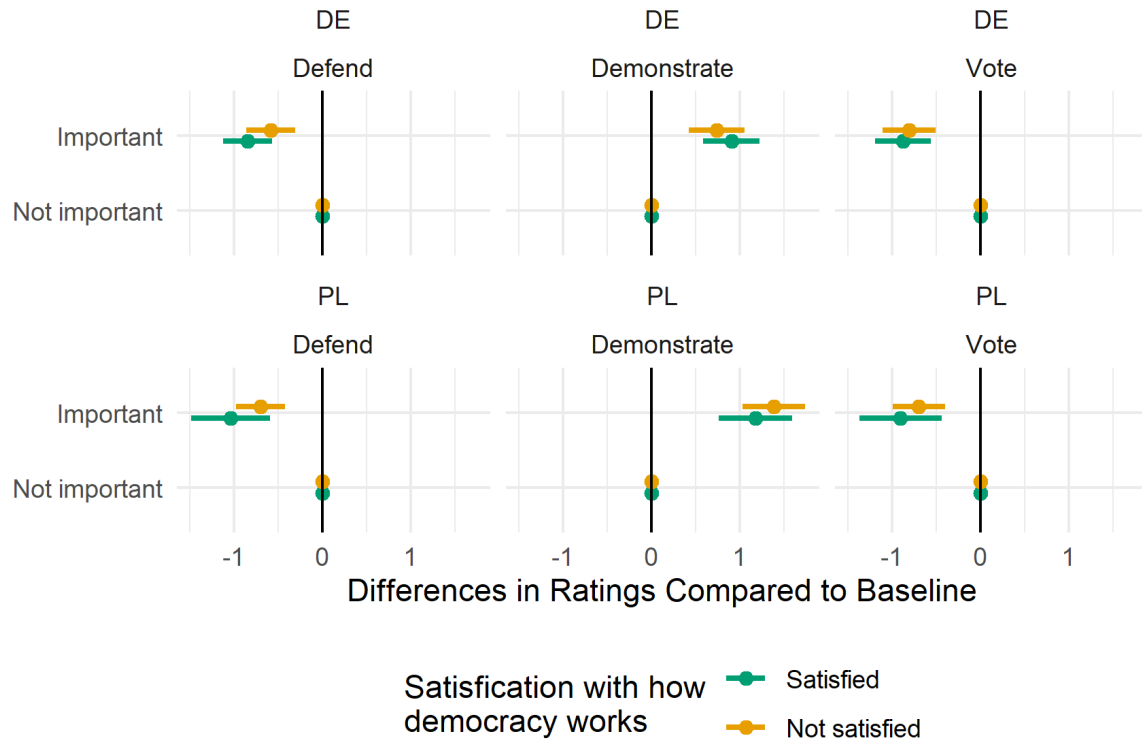


Figure SM3.9: H6: AMCEs for seeing different types of democratic backsliding by citizens' understandings of democracy, Germany

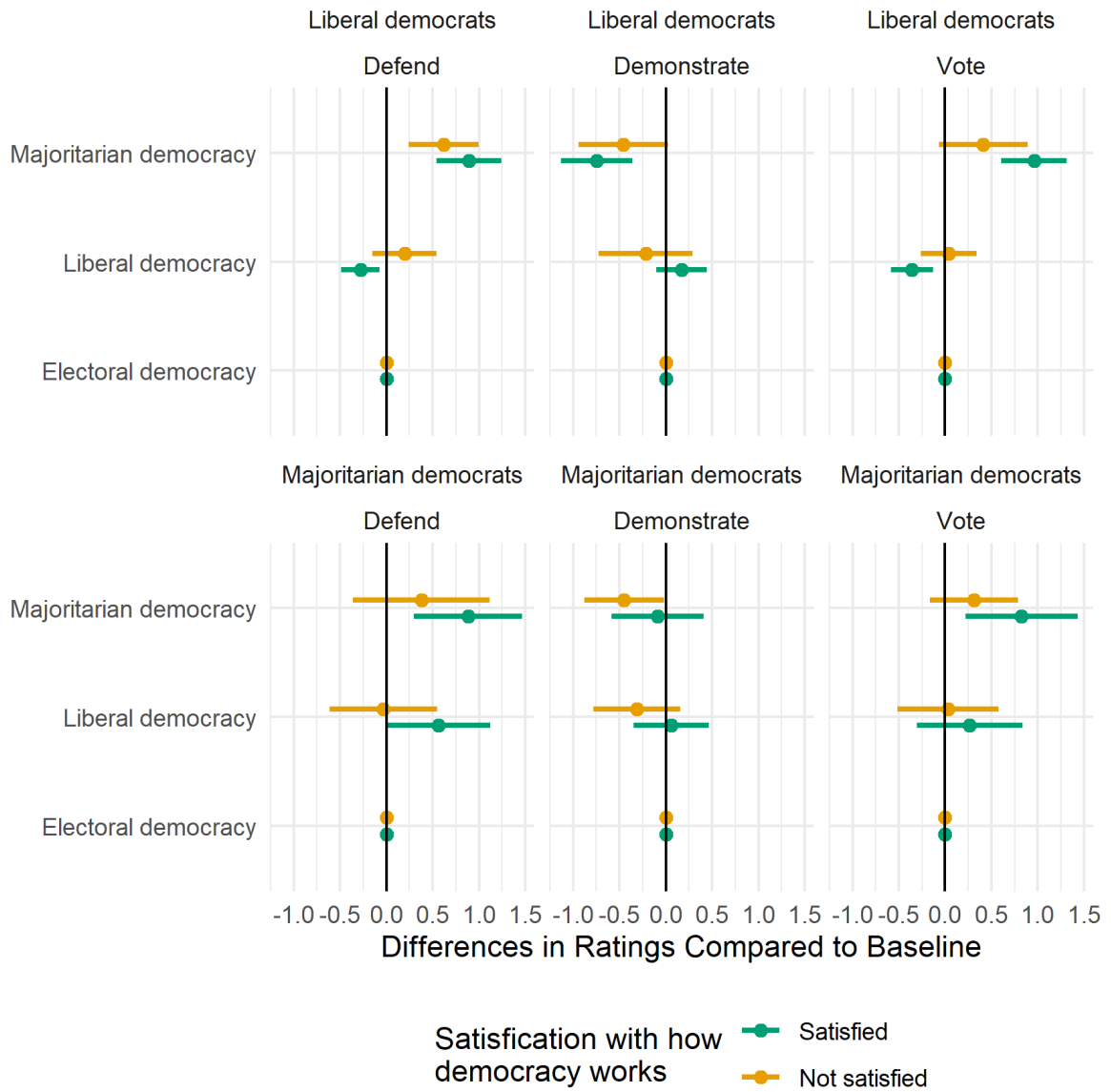
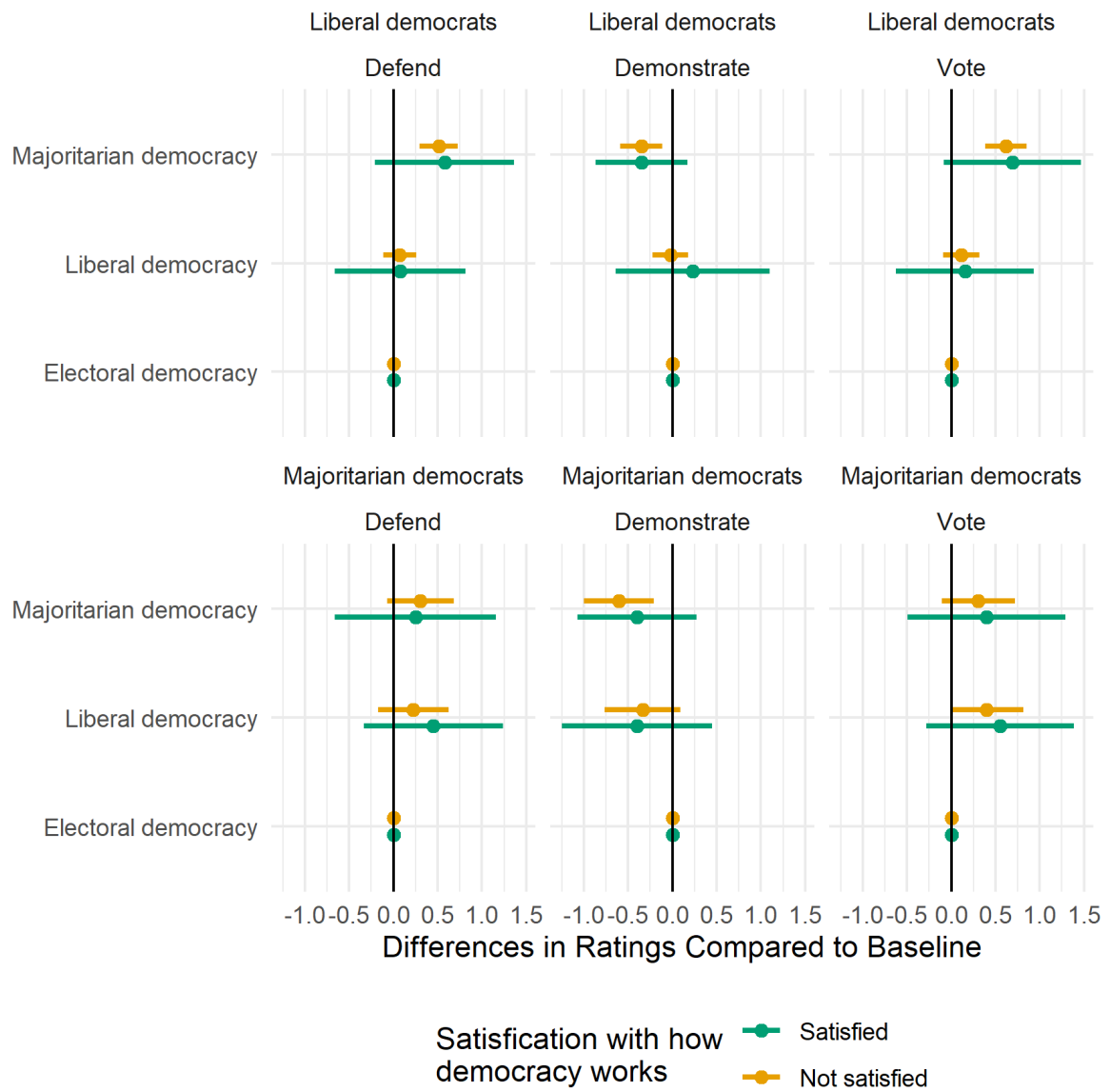


Figure SM3.10: H6: AMCEs for seeing different types of democratic backsliding by citizens' understandings of democracy, Poland



SM3.8 Robustness test: Analysing only first vignette

Figure SM3.11: Replication of Figure 3.1; MMs for seeing different types of democratic backsliding by country, only vignette 1

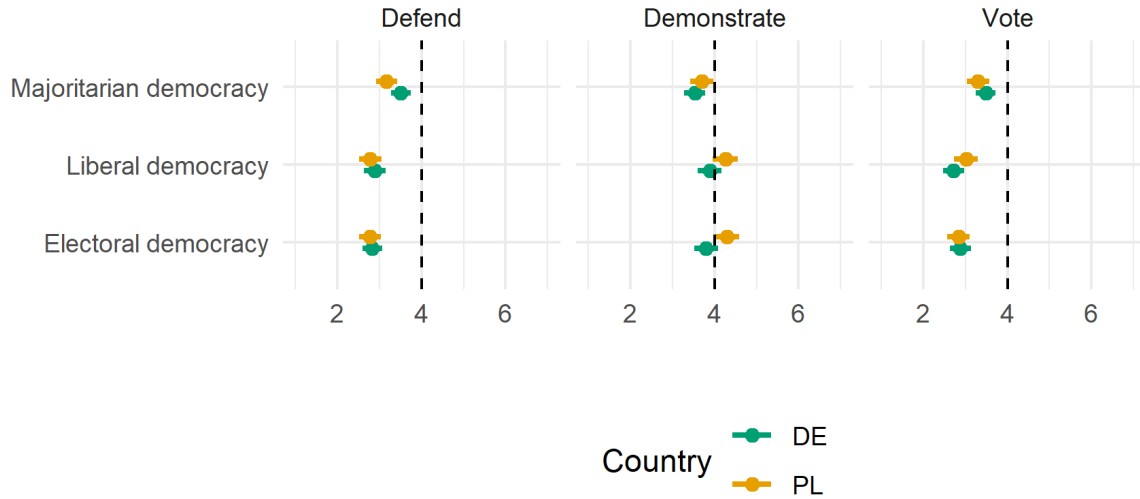


Figure SM3.12: Replication of Figure 3.3; AMCEs for seeing proposals that contradict what citizens perceive to be important for democracy, only vignette 1

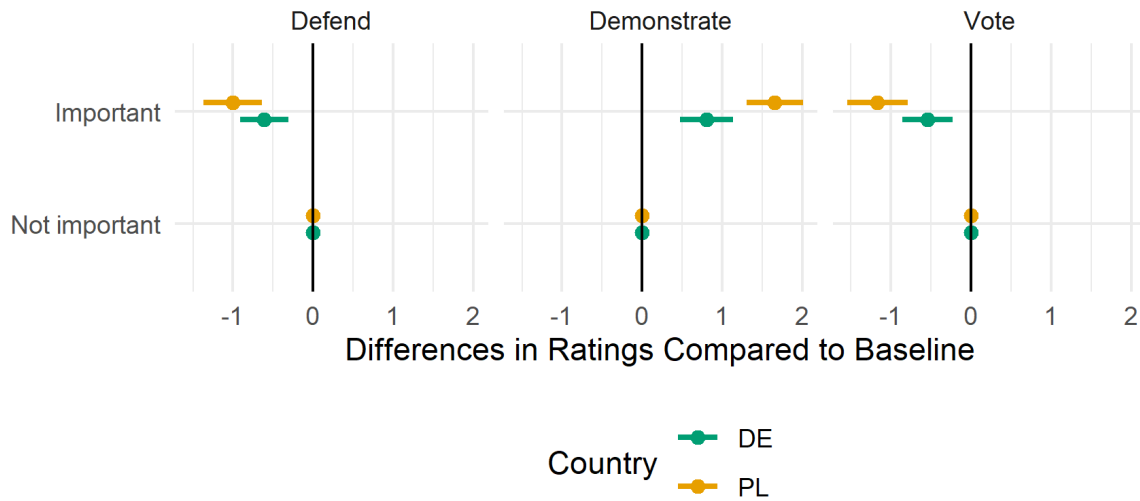


Figure SM3.13: Replication of Figure 3.5; AMCEs for tolerance of different types of democratic backsliding among liberal and majoritarian democrats, only vignette 1

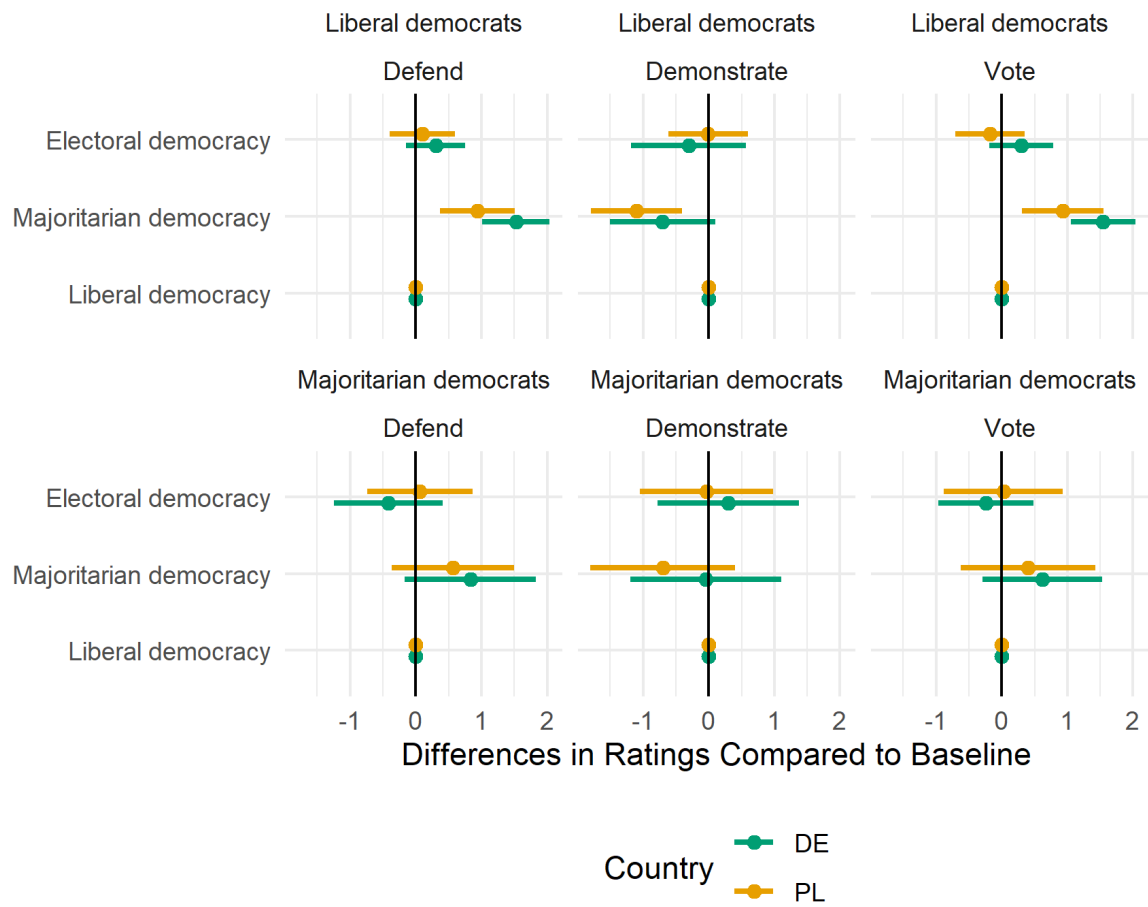


Figure SM3.14: Replication of Figure 3.6; AMCEs for majoritarian democrats' reaction to restrictions on electoral democracy, baseline: liberal democrats

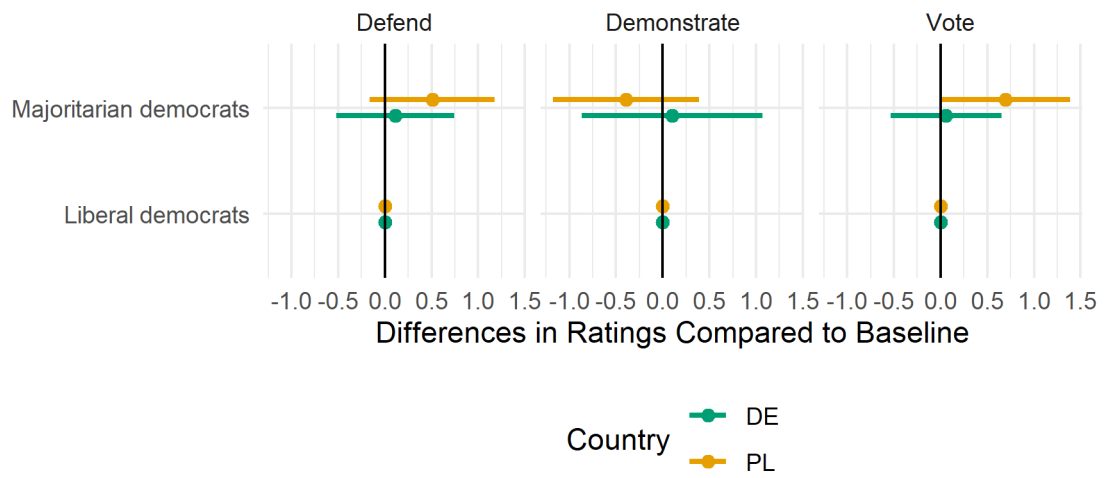


Figure SM3.15: Replication of Figure 3.7; MMs for tolerance of democratic backsliding among democrats and authoritarians by country, irrespective of type of democratic backsliding, only vignette 1

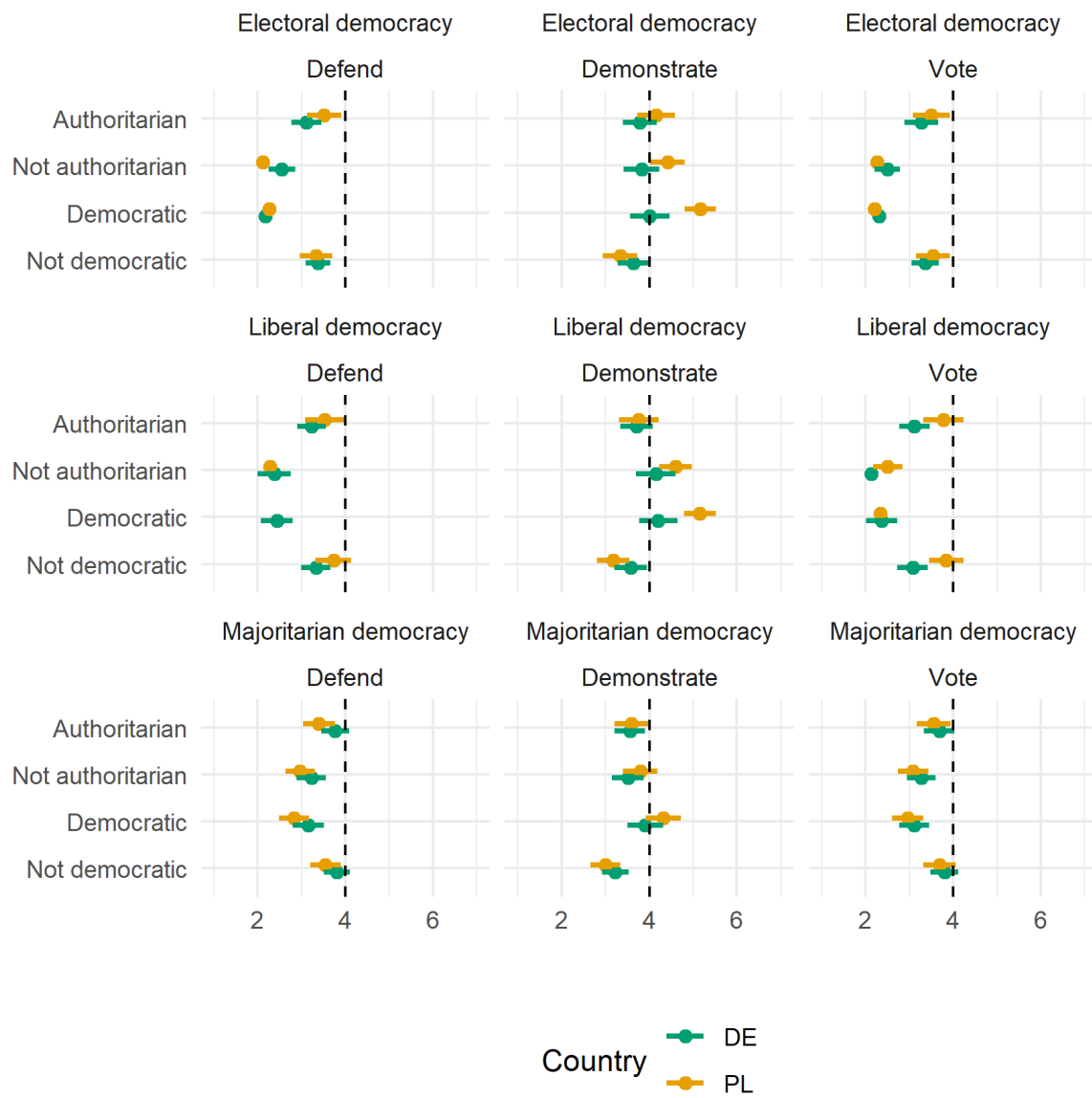
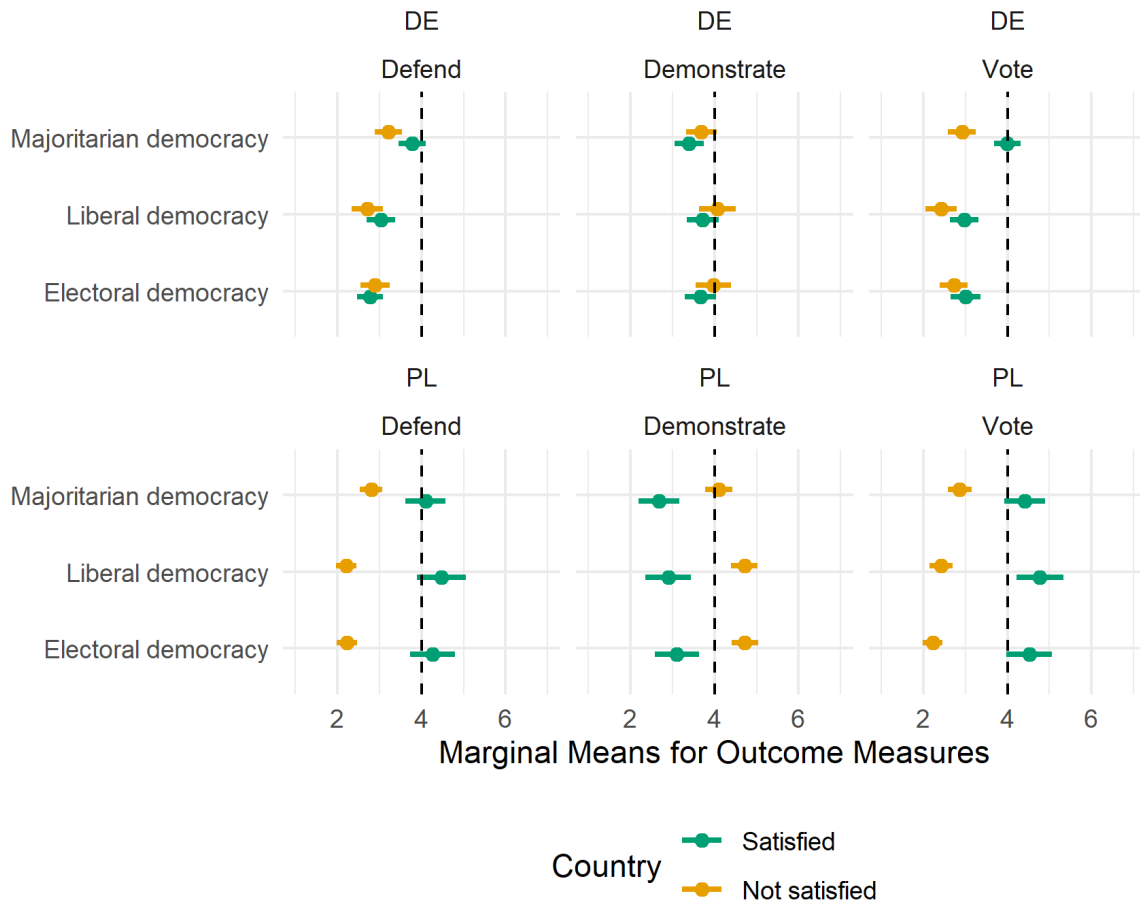


Figure SM3.16: Replication of Figure 3.8; MMs for different types of democratic backsliding by satisfaction with democracy and country, only vignette 1



SM3.9 Further robustness tests

Figure SM3.17: Replication of Figure 3.3; AMCEs for seeing proposals that contradict what citizens perceive to be important for democracy by type of democratic backsliding

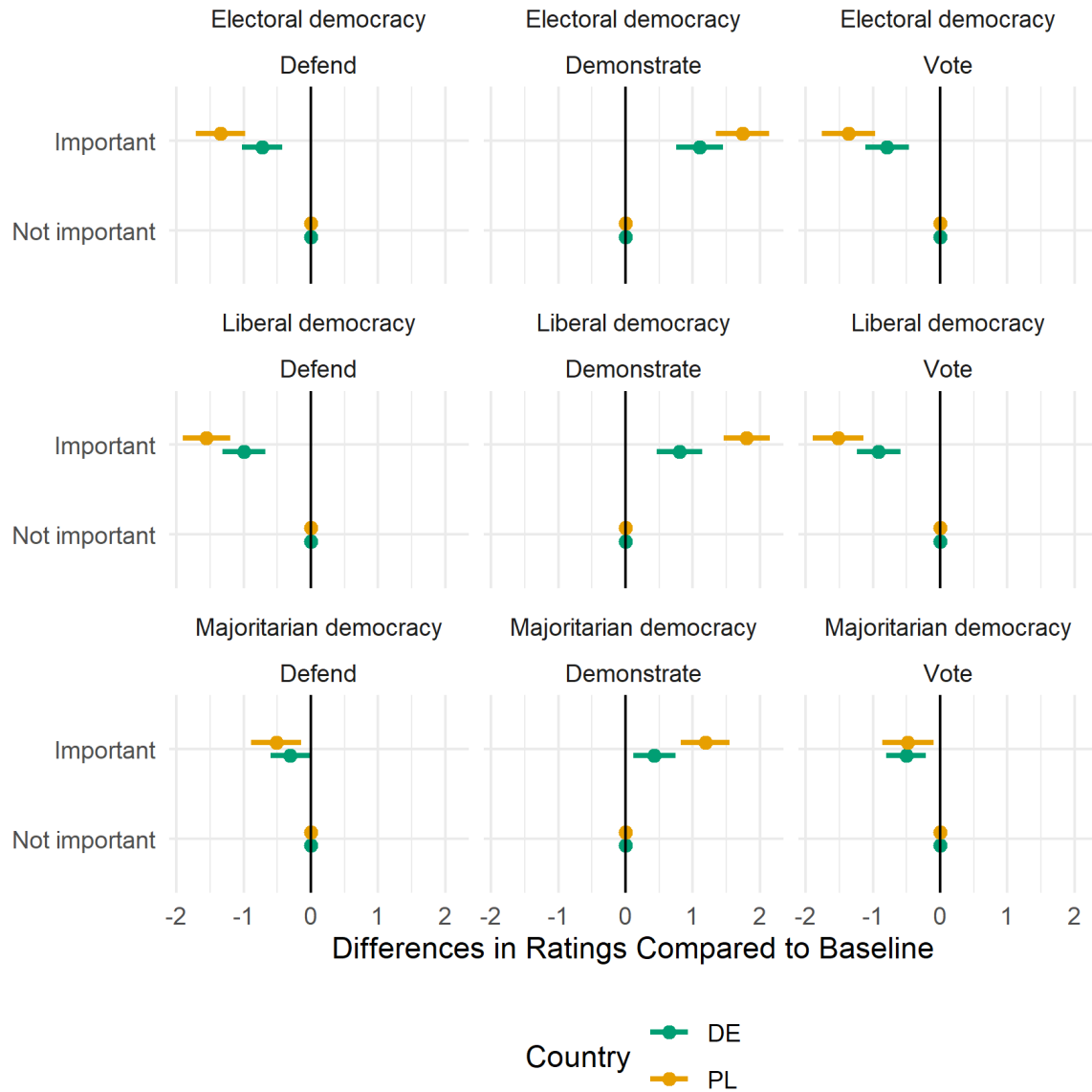
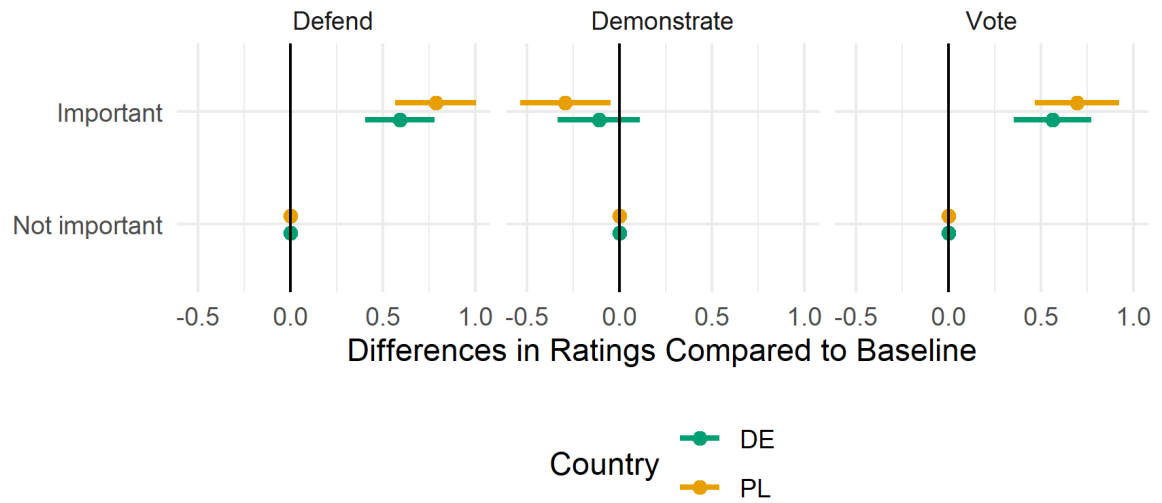


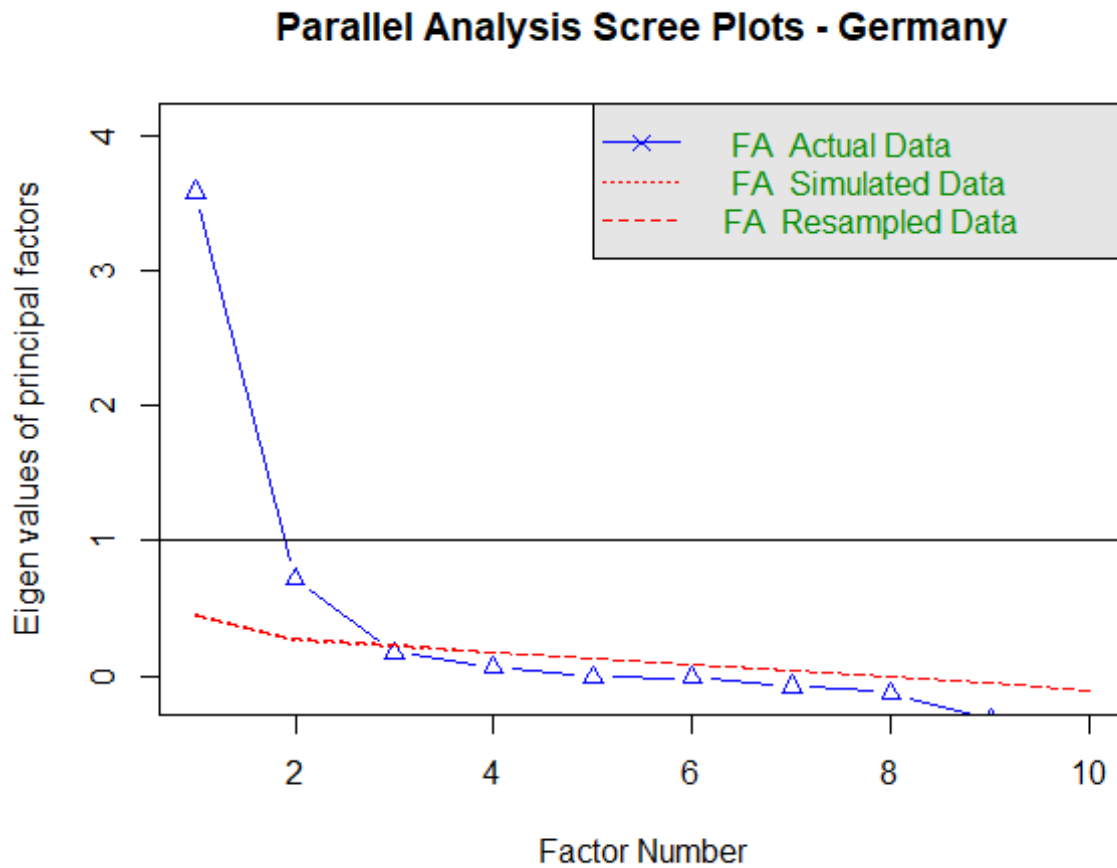
Figure SM3.18: Robustness test for Figure 3.3; AMCEs for seeing proposals that *coincide* with what citizens perceive to be important for democracy



Notes: E.g. if respondents indicate before the experiment that it is important for democracy that governments ban demonstrations against government plans, they are more likely to support governments who plan to ban demonstrations, all else equal.

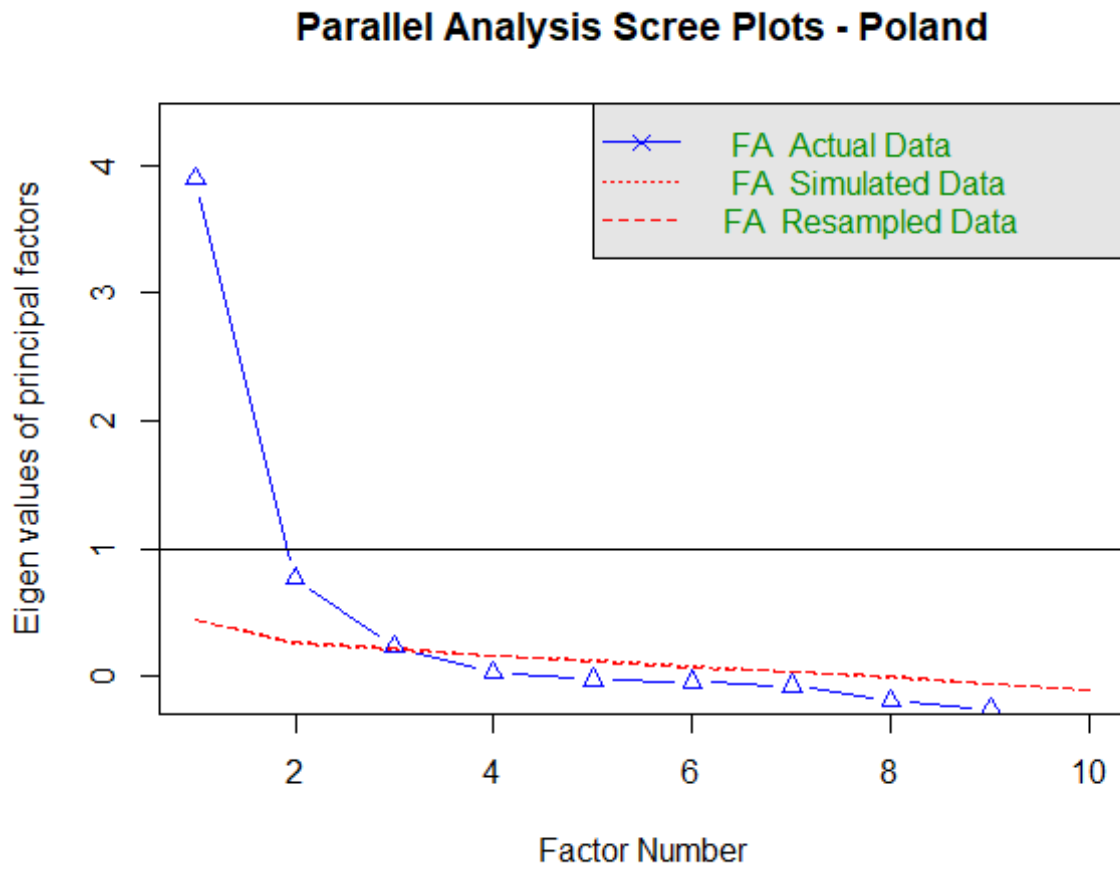
SM3.10 Factor analysis supplementary material

Figure SM3.19: Eigen values for different numbers off factors included in the factor analysis - Germany



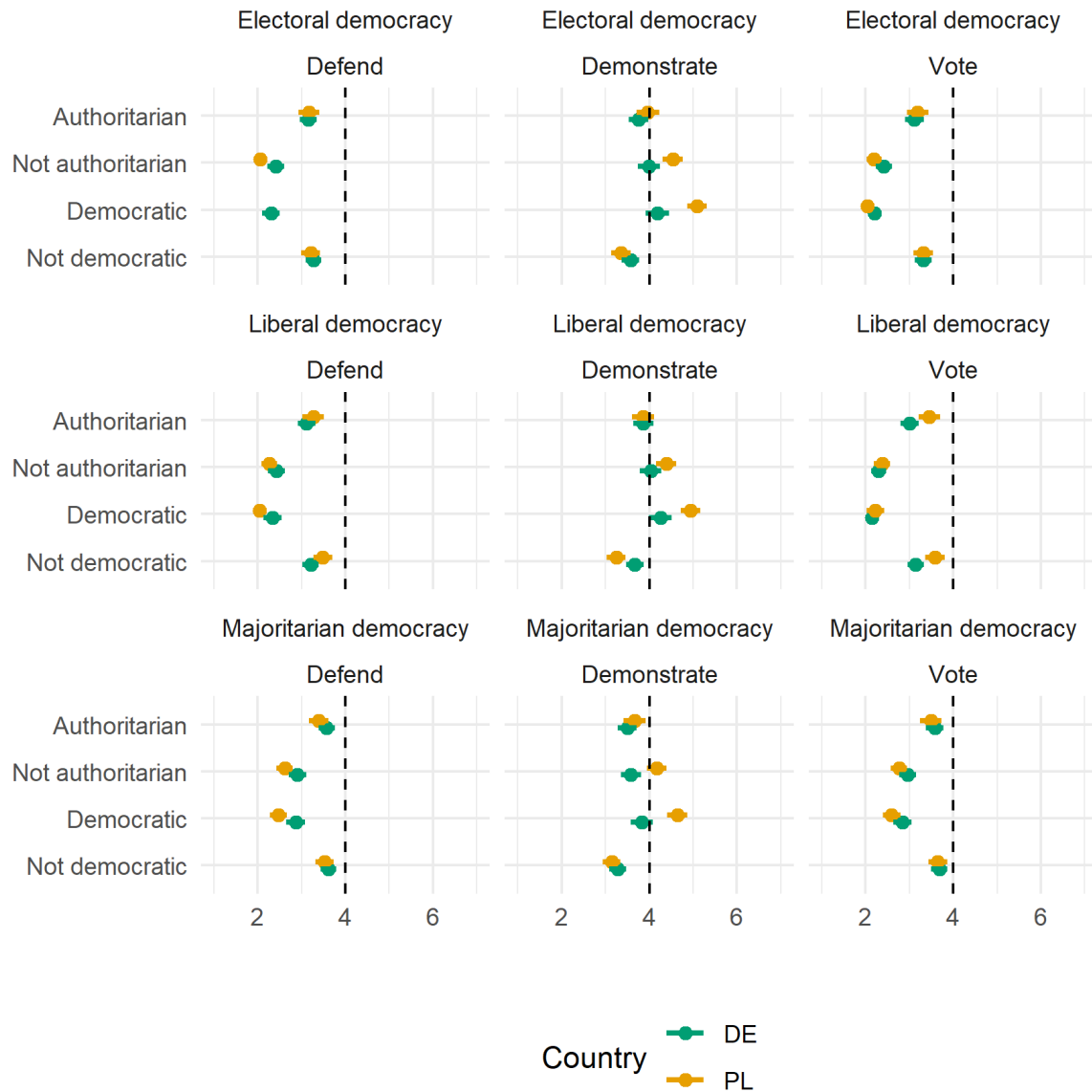
Notes: Factor analysis based on weighted least squares. Figure created with the R packages psych and GPArotation. Selection of the most appropriate model based on recommendations by Preetish Panda on PromptCloud, <https://www.promptcloud.com/blog/exploratory-factor-analysis-in-r/> (last access: June 13, 2021).

Figure SM3.20: Eigen values for different numbers off factors included in the factor analysis - Poland



Notes: Factor analysis based on weighted least squares. Figure created with the R packages psych and GPArotation. Selection of the most appropriate model based on recommendations by Preetish Panda on PromptCloud, <https://www.promptcloud.com/blog/exploratory-factor-analysis-in-r/> (last access: June 13, 2021).

Figure SM3.21: MMs for tolerance of different types of democratic backsliding among democrats and authoritarians, by country



Notes: Figures created with the R packages ggplot and cregg.

SM4 Party Competition over Democracy

SM4.1 Support for direct democracy among German party supporters

Table SM4.15: Preferences for direct democracy among German party voters, Politbarometer, West-Germans in 1992

| Vote intention | Referendum | By politicians | N |
|----------------|------------|----------------|-----|
| CDU | 44.3 | 55.7 | 219 |
| SPD | 14.5 | 85.5 | 289 |
| FDP | 32.7 | 67.3 | 49 |
| GRÜNEN | 8.6 | 91.4 | 81 |
| Republicans | 32.8 | 67.2 | 64 |
| PDS/Linke | | | 0 |
| ÖDP | 100.0 | 0 | 1 |
| NPD | 0 | 100.0 | 1 |
| DVU | | | 0 |
| Grey panthers | 50.0 | 50.0 | 4 |
| Other party | 27.3 | 72.7 | 11 |
| Total | 26.3 | 73.7 | 719 |

Table SM4.16: Preferences for direct democracy by party identification, Politbarometer, West Germans in 1992

| Party identification | Referendum | By politicians | N |
|------------------------------|------------|----------------|-----|
| SPD | 14.0 | 86.0 | 279 |
| CDU | 41.7 | 58.3 | 187 |
| CDU/CSU | 45.0 | 55.0 | 20 |
| CSU | 43.2 | 56.8 | 44 |
| FDP | 43.9 | 56.1 | 41 |
| GRÜNEN | 12.2 | 87.8 | 41 |
| Republicans | 36.4 | 63.6 | 11 |
| others | 0 | 100.0 | 5 |
| Not identifying with a party | 20.2 | 79.8 | 297 |
| Total | 25.1 | 74.9 | 925 |

Source: Politbarometer West Germany 1992, <https://zacat.gesis.org/webview/index.jsp>.

Differences in categories across tables due to differences in the original data.

Question regarding vote intention (Politbarometer), in case the respondents indicated he or she would participate in a Bundestag election taking place on the following Sunday (v10, Politbarometer): ‘Which party would you vote for?’ (v11)

Question regarding party identification (Politbarometer): In the Federal Republic, many

people tend to lean toward a particular political party for a long time, although they also vote for another party from time to time. What about you? Do you - generally speaking - lean toward a particular party? If so, which one?' (v345)

Question regarding referendum vs politicians (Politbarometer): 'Should the most important political questions be decided in a referendum, or should, as in the past, elected politicians alone decide these issues?' (v270)

SM4.2 Parties by party family included in the analysis

Table SM4.17: Parties by party family included in Figure 4.3

| Party family | Parties | N |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 10 Ecological parties | Die Grünen | 140 |
| | · Bündnis 90/Die Grünen | 95 |
| | · Bündnis 90 | 5 |
| | · Die Grünen | 29 |
| | · Others ¹ | 11 |
| 20 Socialist or other left parties | Die Linke | 78 |
| | · Die Linke | 43 |
| | · PDS | 29 |
| | · Die Linke.PDS | 1 |
| | · Die Wahlalternative (WASG) | 5 |
| | KPD | 1 |
| 30 Social democratic parties | SPD | 166 |
| 40 Liberal parties | FDP | 155 |
| | Neue Liberale | 2 |
| 50 Christian democratic parties | CDU/CSU | 22 |
| | CDU | 135 |
| | CSU | 9 |
| | Zentrumspartei | 2 |
| 60 Conservative parties | ALFA | 2 |
| | Brandenburger Vereinigte Bürgerbewegung/Freie Wähler | 1 |
| | Deutsche Partei | 3 |
| | Freie Wähler | 8 |
| | 70 Nationalist parties | AfD |
| Bürger in Wut | | 3 |
| Deutsche Soziale Union | | 1 |
| Deutsche Volksunion | | 2 |
| Deutsche Reichspartei | | 1 |
| NPD | | 9 |
| Republikaner | | 4 |
| Schill-Partei | | 1 |
| Wirtschaftliche Aufbau-Vereinigung | | 1 |
| 90 Ethnic and regionalist parties | | Arbeit für Bremen und Bremerhaven |
| | Bayernpartei | 1 |
| | Südschleswigscher Wählerverband | 10 |
| 95 Special issue parties | Piratenpartei | 13 |
| | Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten | 1 |
| 98 Electoral alliances | | 1 |
| | | 789 |

¹ Including Alternative Liste (3), Bremer Grüne Liste (1), Grün-Alternative Liste (5), Grüne Liste – Neues Forum (1), Bündnis 90 GAL Die Grünen (1)

Table SM4.18: Parties by party family included in the main regression analyses, 1977-2018

| | Party family | Parties | N |
|----|---------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 10 | Ecological parties | Die Grünen | 140 |
| | | · Bündnis 90/Die Grünen | 95 |
| | | · Bündnis 90 | 5 |
| | | · Die Grünen | 29 |
| | | · Others ¹ | 11 |
| 20 | Socialist or other left parties | Die Linke | 78 |
| | | · Die Linke | 43 |
| | | · PDS | 29 |
| | | · Die Linke.PDS | 1 |
| | | · Die Wahlalternative (WASG) | 5 |
| 30 | Social democratic parties | SPD | 151 |
| 40 | Liberal parties | FDP | 140 |
| | | Neue Liberale | 2 |
| 50 | Christian democratic parties | CDU/CSU | 11 |
| | | CDU | 128 |
| | | CSU | 9 |
| | | Zentrumspartei | 2 |
| 60 | Conservative parties | ALFA | 2 |
| | | Brandenburger Vereinigte Bürger- bewegung/Freie Wähler | 1 |
| | | Freie Wähler | 8 |
| 70 | Nationalist parties | AfD | 16 |
| | | Bürger in Wut | 3 |
| | | Deutsche Soziale Union | 1 |
| | | Deutsche Volksunion | 2 |
| | | NPD | 9 |
| | | Republikaner | 4 |
| | | Schill-Partei | 1 |
| 90 | Ethnic and regionalist parties | Arbeit für Bremen und Bremerhaven | 1 |
| | | Südschleswigscher Wählerverband | 10 |
| 95 | Special issue parties | Piratenpartei | 13 ² |
| | | | 729 |

¹ Including Alternative Liste (3), Bremer Grüne Liste (1), Grün-Alternative Liste (5), Grüne Liste – Neues Forum (1), Bündnis 90 GAL Die Grünen (1)

² The number of cases for the regression analyses is lower due to missing data for the change in GDP for first East German state elections.

SM4.3 Original dictionaries

Social democracy

Betrieblich* Mitbestimmung, Chancengleichheit, Gewerkschaft, Genossenschaft, solidarisch, Solidargemeinschaft, sozial, Streik

Liberal democracy

Gericht, Gleichstellung, Grundgesetz, Grundordnung, Hautfarbe, Justiz, liberal, Menschenrecht, Minderheit, offen* Gesellschaft, öffentlich* Kontrolle, Gewaltenteilung, plural*, Rechtsstaat, Respekt, Toleranz, tolerant, Verfassung, Vielfalt

Direct democracy

Basisdemokrat*, Beteiligungsquorum, Bürgerbegehren, Bürgerinnenbegehren, Bürgerentscheid, Bürgerinnenentscheid, direkt* Demokratie, Plebiszit, direktdemokrat*, Volksbegehren, Volksabstimmung, Volksentscheid, Referend*

Negative references to democracy

Antidemokrat*, undemokrat*, Demokratieabbau, Demokratiedefizit, demokratiefeind*, demokratiefrei*, Demokratiekrise, entdemokrat*, Zuschauerdemokrat*, Vordemokrat*, nicht demokrat*, gegen demokrat*'

SM4.4 Robustness checks for regression analyses

Table SM4.19: Replication of Models in Table 4.2, state fixed effects and clustered standard errors

| | All parties | Established parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | -0.01 (0.01) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Challenger | 1.72** (0.51) | |
| Challenger strength | | -0.01 (0.01) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | 0.98*** (0.20) | 1.21*** (0.12) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | 4.00*** (0.40) | 3.52*** (0.26) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | 0.72*** (0.13) | 0.70*** (0.12) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | -0.20 (0.10) | -0.18 (0.10) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | 0.15 (0.70) | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | 0.16 (0.49) | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | 0.21 (0.55) | NA |
| Prev. GDP change | 0.08 (0.04) | 0.01 (0.02) |
| Years since regime change | -0.03*** (0.00) | -0.02*** (0.00) |
| National (vs East) | 2.15*** (0.33) | 1.93*** (0.31) |
| West (vs East) | 1.42*** (0.49) | 1.16*** (0.36) |
| Dem. quality | 1.58 (4.01) | -1.08 (2.60) |
| Intercept | -0.46 (3.53) | 2.48*** (2.30) |
| N | 677 | 566 |
| R ² | 0.5315 | 0.5634 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.5113 | 0.5431 |

Linear regression results with territory fixed effects (not shown) and clustered standard errors for parties in time. Standard errors in parenthesis are additionally corrected for heteroskedasticity across parties. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Percentage of sentences in election manifestos containing the term ‘*demokrat*’. The analysis is restricted to elections between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the elections before 1977.

Table SM4.20: Replication of Models 1 and 2 in Table 4.3, state fixed effects and clustered standard errors for the emphasis on social democracy

| | 1 - All parties | 2 - Established parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | -0.04 (0.07) | -0.04 (0.08) |
| Challenger | 4.92 (2.92) | |
| Challenger strength | | 0.15 (0.09) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | 4.28* (1.85) | 4.31* (1.74) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | 21.80*** (3.00) | 20.98*** (2.97) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | 14.70*** (2.14) | 14.76*** (2.16) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | 1.33 (2.04) | 1.44 (2.05) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | -4.33 (3.61) | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | -1.44 (3.83) | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | 2.12 (4.98) | NA |
| Prev. GDP change | 0.14 (0.26) | -0.21 (0.28) |
| Years since regime change | -0.42*** (0.06) | -0.40*** (0.06) |
| National (vs East) | 23.46*** (4.06) | 22.36*** (5.30) |
| West (vs East) | 25.48*** (4.98) | 23.23*** (5.30) |
| Dem. quality | 29.81 (40.28) | 19.59 (44.31) |
| Intercept | -14.80 (36.08) | -17.74 (39.87) |
| N | 653 | 544 |
| R ² | 0.29 | 0.26 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.25 | 0.23 |

Linear regression results with territory fixed effects (not shown) and clustered standard errors for parties in time. Standard errors in parenthesis are additionally corrected for heteroskedasticity across parties. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Percentage of democracy sentences in election manifestos containing terms from the social democracy dictionary. The analysis is restricted to elections between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the elections before 1977. Only including manifestos with democracy sentences.

Table SM4.21: Replication of Models 3 and 4 in Table 4.3, state fixed effects and clustered standard errors for the emphasis on liberal democracy

| | 1 - All parties | 2 - Established parties |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | -0.16 (0.09) | -0.11 (0.11) |
| Challenger | 1.24 (3.33) | |
| Challenger strength | | -0.20 (0.14) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | -19.52*** (2.85) | -17.45*** (2.85) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | -15.87*** (4.27) | -18.93*** (4.40) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | -18.54*** (2.72) | -18.69*** (2.74) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | -5.09 (3.46) | -4.29 (3.50) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | -28.64*** (6.08) | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | -11.70* (5.60) | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | -17.14** (5.98) | NA |
| Prev. GDP change | 0.30 (0.33) | -0.05 (0.37) |
| Years since regime change | 0.03 (0.09) | -0.02 (0.09) |
| National (vs East) | 0.70 (7.04) | 2.59 (8.11) |
| West (vs East) | -9.79 (7.22) | -5.59 (8.35) |
| Dem. quality | -41.29 (58.13) | -55.14 (67.02) |
| Intercept | 77.82 (51.88) | 106.91 (58.59) |
| N | 653 | 544 |
| R ² | 0.20 | 0.18 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.16 | 0.14 |

Linear regression results with territory fixed effects (not shown) and clustered standard errors for parties in time. Standard errors in parenthesis are additionally corrected for heteroskedasticity across parties. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Percentage of democracy sentences in election manifestos containing terms from the liberal democracy dictionary. The analysis is restricted to elections between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the elections before 1977. Only including manifestos with democracy sentences.

Table SM4.22: Replication of Models 5 and 6 in Table 4.3, state fixed effects and clustered standard errors for the emphasis on direct democracy

| | 1 - All parties | 2 - Established parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | 0.11* (0.05) | 0.05 (0.05) |
| Challenger | 1.96 (1.81) | |
| Challenger strength | | 0.10 (0.08) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | -1.52 (2.07) | -2.34 (2.14) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | -6.87** (2.55) | -5.42* (2.50) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | -5.67** (1.75) | -5.53** (1.74) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | -6.28*** (1.66) | -6.45*** (1.66) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | -4.07 (9.07) | NA |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | 9.58 (6.01) | NA |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | -2.25 (5.93) | NA |
| Prev. GDP change | -0.34* (0.16) | -0.20 (0.16) |
| Years since regime change | 0.18*** (0.05) | 0.23*** (0.05) |
| National (vs East) | -16.12** (5.23) | -18.12** (6.04) |
| West (vs East) | -11.52* (5.78) | -14.34* (6.34) |
| Dem. quality | -44.94 (30.49) | -6.54 (30.37) |
| Intercept | 49.36 (26.13) | 6.74 (26.51) |
| N | 650 | 544 |
| R ² | 0.23 | 0.17 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.19 | 0.12 |

Linear regression results with territory fixed effects (not shown) and clustered standard errors for parties in time. Standard errors in parenthesis are additionally corrected for heteroskedasticity across parties. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Percentage of democracy sentences in election manifestos containing terms from the direct democracy dictionary. The analysis is restricted to elections between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the elections before 1977. Only including manifestos with democracy sentences. Not showing results for states.

Table SM4.23: Replication of Model ‘All parties’ in Table 4.2, excluding outlier

| | All parties |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | 0.00 (0.01) |
| Challenger | 1.28*** (0.31) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | -1.13*** (0.15) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | 3.69*** (0.29) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | 0.71*** (0.13) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | -0.19 (0.10) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | 0.62 (0.73) |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | 0.39 (0.44) |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | 0.50 (0.45) |
| Prev. GDP change | 0.05 (0.03) |
| Years since regime change | -0.03*** (0.01) |
| National (vs East) | 1.52*** (0.27) |
| West (vs East) | 0.52* (0.22) |
| Dem. quality | -1.00 (3.13) |
| Intercept | 2.48 (2.67) |
| N | 676 |
| R ² | 0.54 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.53 |

Linear regression results with clustered standard errors for parties in territories (state and national level) over time that are additionally corrected for heteroscedasticity across territorial party branches. Outlier excluded. No robustness check for established parties shown since the outlier is not an established party. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Percentage of sentences in election manifestos containing the term ‘*demokrat*’. The analysis is restricted to elections between 1977 and 2018 due to missing data for the elections before 1977. Not showing results for states.

Table SM4.24: Replication of Models 1, 3 and 5 in Table 4.3, excluding outlier

| | All parties Social democracy | All parties Liberal democracy | All parties Direct democracy |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Dissatisfied voters | -0.01 (0.07) | -0.14 (0.09) | 0.10* (0.05) |
| Challenger | 3.07 (2.63) | -1.20 (2.67) | 2.43 (1.85) |
| Ecological (vs liberals) | 5.01** (1.73) | -18.70*** (2.73) | -1.65 (2.10) |
| Socialists (vs liberals) | 20.57*** (2.84) | -17.44*** (3.88) | -6.41* (2.47) |
| Social dem. (vs liberals) | 14.80*** (2.15) | -18.66*** (2.70) | -5.70** (1.73) |
| Christian dem. (vs liberals) | 1.59 (2.00) | -4.99 (3.42) | -6.45*** (1.68) |
| Conservatives (vs liberals) | -4.14 (3.05) | -25.49 (5.53) | -3.42 (7.90) |
| Nationalists (vs liberals) | -1.04 (3.70) | -10.48 (5.53) | 9.94 (5.92) |
| Special issue (vs liberals) | 2.88 (3.53) | -15.62* (5.91) | -2.56 (5.82) |
| Prev. GDP change | -0.04 (0.22) | 0.12 (0.27) | -0.32* (0.15) |
| Years since regime change | -0.41*** (0.06) | 0.01 (0.09) | 0.18*** (0.04) |
| National (vs East) | 22.75*** (3.49) | 2.30 (4.35) | -10.02*** (2.51) |
| West (vs East) | 16.23*** (2.55) | -3.38 (3.77) | -6.46** (2.36) |
| Dem. quality | 6.05 (38.17) | -45.72 (54.24) | -30.14 (28.94) |
| Intercept | 6.19 (22.95) | 81.05 (47.64) | 30.80 (24.95) |
| N | 652 | 652 | 652 |
| R ² | 0.25 | 0.18 | 0.20 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.24 | 0.17 | 0.18 |

Linear regression results with clustered standard errors for parties in territories (state and national level) over time that are additionally corrected for heteroscedasticity across territorial party branches. Outlier excluded. No robustness check for established parties shown since the outlier is not an established party. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Significance levels: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

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Eidesstattliche Erklärung

nach § 8 Abs. 3 der Promotionsordnung vom 17.02.2015

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorgelegte Arbeit selbstständig und ohne die Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus anderen Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Aussagen, Daten und Konzepte sind unter Angabe der Quelle gekennzeichnet. Bei der Auswahl und Auswertung folgenden Materials haben mir die nachstehend aufgeführten Personen in der jeweils beschriebenen Weise entgeltlich/unentgeltlich (zutreffendes unterstreichen) geholfen:

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Köln, den 30.06.2021

Ort, Datum

Unterschrift