Concatenated elections in a multi-level system and the rise of AfD

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Acknowledgment

Most people believe the intellectual journey of a Ph.D. degree starts in a university. For me, it has been rather different. My intellectual journey started in Yun Chi Hsien, a restaurant in New Asia College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). I still remember clearly that I did not have an appetite on that day because my life was at a crossroads. At that time, I had already received offers from a few renowned universities in the United Kingdom. Yet, the tuition fees in the UK made me reluctant to press the "acceptance" button. On the other hand, Prof. Dr. Klaus H. Goetz from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU) had offered me the opportunity to study under his chair, though he had concerns about the difficulties that I might encounter if I did not obtain any financial support. I was rather uncertain whether I should pursue this intellectual journey. That is why I talked with Prof. Chow Po Chung in Yun Chi Hsien and sought his advice, for he had been my great mentor throughout my studies in CUHK. His advice was astute—"your heart will tell you," he said. This sentence has since become my mantra, and it is only now, some years later, that I recognize the Confucian flavor. But right away, I chose to follow my heart and decided to pursue my academic journey. So, I must thank Prof. Chow, together with Prof. Kuan Hsin Chi, Prof. Ma Ngok, Prof. Ngo Tak Wing, and Prof. William Smith, who immensely supported my PhD application and gave me important advice.

But back then, a decision still had to be made. That is, whether I would choose the offers in the United Kingdom or the one at the LMU. Given that Hong Kong had inherited a strong legacy from the British Empire, it was rather tempting to opt for the

former. However, I decided very swiftly that I would study in LMU. Part of the reason is pragmatic: tuition in most German public universities is free. The other part of the reason stems from my love of German history. Since Form 5 in secondary school, I had been learning German and reading the contemporary history of this country. For these reasons, it was rather natural for me to choose LMU. So, I must thank Prof. Dr. Klaus H. Goetz and Prof. Dr. Edgar Grande, who co-supervised me over these four years and gave me a valuable opportunity to conduct my research in the Geschwister Scholl Institute of Political Science (GSI), which is beyond dispute one of the most excellent institutes in continental Europe. I am a better scholar because of the numerous opportunities they provided and their tremendously insightful comments on the project at various stages. I would also express thank to Prof. Dr. Carsten Reinemann from the Department of Media and Communication (IfKW), who is a member of my dissertation committee.

Although tertiary education in Bavaria is free, the living costs in Munich are not. As it is well known, Munich has some of the highest living costs in Germany. As a person who grew up in the working class, I was uncertain whether I could afford the living costs in the capital of Bavaria. My friend Melody Chan suggested to me that I could use crowdfunding to partially support my studies. I was rather hesitant to do so because crowdfunding in this way was uncommon. However, I listened to her advice and started this campaign. The result was an unexpected success: 124 people sponsored me. I must say thank you to all of them. Without their support, my first year would have been much tougher than it was. And it should be mentioned that I knew these people from civil society organizations, trade unions, student associations, the secondary school alumni association, and the CUHK. While our connection remains, these associations, except

the CUHK, have been almost destroyed by the authoritarian turn in Hong Kong in the past two years.

Studying in a foreign country is always a challenge, especially in the first year. My first year's challenge was not so much the cultural shock but rather the academic training that I had to undergo because I came from the field of political theory. Anyone who has read the Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* will be familiar with the expression "Granny Liu visits the Grand View Gardens," which has come to describe someone who is overwhelmed by novel experiences. During my first year, I was this character at the GSI. There are a lot of concepts and methods that I had never heard of when I studied in Hong Kong. Also, I had to find a direction for the prospectus of my dissertation. Fortunate enough, I encountered a variety of accomplished scholars and colleagues who provided helpful feedback on my dissertation project and helped me to orient myself in the GSI. They include Dr. Martin Gross, Dr. Stefan Jagdhuber, Prof. Dr. Matthias Kortmann, Dr. Ronny Patz, Dr. Bartek Pytlas, Prof. Dr. Berthold Rittberger, and Dr. Svanhildur Thorvaldsdottir.

The summer school of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) held in the Central European University in Budapest was where I ended my first year. I consider this training camp one critical landmark in my academic journey. I can recall my sense of lagging behind after I attended those training sessions. After attending the training in Budapest, I was determined to improve my methodological skills. That is why I attended different method training sessions in CenterStat, ECPR, GESIS, Hertie School of Governance, LMU, Mannheim Center for Data Science, TUM School of Governance and the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) throughout my doctoral studies. I have to

thank all teachers who instructed me in these trainings: Prof. Daniel Bauer, Prof. Patrick Curran, Dr. Thorsten Dresing, Dr. Florian Foos, Dr. Ferdinand Geißler, Dr. Jan Paul Heisig, Markus Konrad, Dr. Andrew Li Xiang, Prof. Levente Littvay, Dr. Ingrid Mauerer, Dr. Andreas Niekler, Dr. Jerome Schäfer, Dr. Markus Siewert, Dr. Gregor Wiedemann, and Dr. Hilde van Meegdenburg. I would also like to give special thanks to Glen Ng, with whom I discussed coding and econometric models from time to time. Without their teaching and advice, my dissertation could not have achieved this level of academic rigor.

The second year was certainly another turning point. At the beginning of that year, I knew that I had to conduct research related to surveys and voting behavior. For this reason, I participated in the colloquium "Applied Election Research" organized by Prof. Dr. Paul Thurner of GSI and the Statistic Department. All these years later, I can still recall the embarrassment that I had, for any undergraduate in this colloquium might have had more quantitative and programming skills than I had. But then, a postdoc in the Statistic Department took me under his wing. His name is Dr. André Klima. The way he pushed me to think about scaling, missing data, weightings, models is something I will not forget for the rest of my life. He could have spent the time he invested in tutoring me doing other things, but he chose to have discussions with me. I must express my gratitude to André. Also, I must thank Prof. Dr. Paul Thurner, who embedded me into the field of political behavior and electoral studies. His sophistication and precision still form my benchmark in doing research.

Two important things happened almost simultaneously during my third and fourth year. One is my stay in the WZB, and the other is the pandemic. For my stay in the WZB, I

Zusammenfassung auf Deutsch

Diese Dissertation soll erklären, wie verkettete Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem zum Aufstieg der Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) beitragen. Sie fragt, wenn kurzfristige Faktoren die Wahlpräferenz beeinflussen können und Nebenwahlen (d.h. „ Second-order elections", SOE) an Bedeutung gewinnen, ob der Erfolg von populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien in SOEs das Wahlkalkül der Wähler in der kommenden nationalen Parlamentswahl (d.h. „First-order election", FOE) beeinflusst. Auch erforscht diese Dissertation, ob die Stimmabgabe für populistische rechtsradikale Parteien in einer FOE die Einstellung, Wahrnehmung, Identität und Wahlpräferenz der Unterstützer beeinflusst, bevor die nächste SOE stattfindet. Das heißt, können wir frühere Wahlergebnisse und Stimmabgabe für populistische rechtsradikale Parteien in einer Arena als kurzfristige Faktoren behandeln, die das Wählerkalkül in einer anderen Arena prägen? Wenn ja, bedeutet dies, dass verkettete Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem relevant sein können, um den Erfolg (oder Misserfolg) von populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien auf nationaler Ebene zu erklären.

Diese These unterscheidet sich vom traditionellen SOE-Rahmen, da sie sich auf die Interaktionen von Wahlen in verschiedenen Arenen konzentriert. Anders als der traditionelle SOE-Rahmen beschäftigt sie sich nicht mit den Unterschieden in den Stimmenanteilen oder den unterschiedlichen Motivationen zwischen SOEs und FOEs. Diese These analysiert, wie sich das Wahlergebnis oder die Wahlentscheidung in einer vorherigen Wahl in einer Arena auf das Wahlkalkül der Wähler bei der nachfolgenden

Wahl in einer anderen Arena auswirkt. Durch die Untersuchung dieses Informationsaktualisierungsprozesses unterstreicht meine Dissertation die Tatsache, dass verkettete Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem als kurzfristige Faktoren dienen können, die zum Aufstieg von populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien beitragen. In dieser Dissertation werde ich die Bedeutung dieses Informationsaktualisierungsprozesses beleuchten und veranschaulichen.

Um das Rätsel zu lösen, warum die AfD innerhalb so kurzer Zeit in das nationale Parteiensystem eindringen konnte, behauptet diese Dissertation, dass der Schlüssel in den verketteten Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem liegt. Ich definiere verkettete Wahlen als Wahlen, die aus mindestens zwei Wahlen innerhalb eines nationalen Wahlzyklus bestehen. Die Kernannahme verketteter Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem ist, dass in verschiedenen Wahlarenen dieselben Parteien und Wähler teilnehmen. Wichtig ist, dass diese Dissertation darauf hindeutet, dass das Wahlergebnis der populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei und die Wahlentscheidung für sie bei früheren Wahlen in einer Arena wichtige Informationen für die Wähler sind. Diese Informationen wiederum ermöglichen es den Wählern, ihr Wählerkalkül zu aktualisieren, bevor eine Wahl in einer anderen Arena stattfindet. In dieser Dissertation argumentiere ich, dass frühere Wahlergebnisse und die Stimmabgabe für populistische rechtsradikale Parteien eine wichtige Rolle bei der Einstellung, Wahrnehmung, Identität und Wahlpräferenz der Wähler spielen. Aufgrund der Datenverfügbarkeit konzentriert sich diese Dissertation ausschließlich auf den Informationsaktualisierungsprozess der Wähler. Es sollte jedoch beachtet werden, dass ein solcher Informationsaktualisierungsprozess auch zwischen populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien und anderen Parteien stattfinden kann. Das bedeutet, dass sie auch aus

Signalen für Erfolg oder Misserfolg in einem Mehrebenensystem lernen.

Das Konzept der verketteten Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem ergibt mehrere Untersuchungsbereiche. Erstens: Beeinflusst die Wahlleistung einer populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei in einer früheren SOE ihren Stimmenanteil in der kommenden FOE? Zweitens: Wenn das Überschreiten der Wahlhürde in der SOE zu einer besseren Wahlleistung in der FOE führen kann, was sind dann die Mechanismen auf Mikroebene, die einen solchen Spillover-Effekt antreiben? Wie aktualisieren Wähler der populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei ihre Einstellung, Wahrnehmung, Identität und Wahlpräferenz in einem solchen Informationsaktualisierungsprozess? Drittens: Umgekehrt sind populistische rechtsradikale Parteien oft objektive Verlierer (d. h. Oppositionsparteien) in einer FOE. Wird die Wahlentscheidung der Wähler von populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien in einer FOE ihre Wahlpräferenz in einer nachfolgenden SOE stabilisieren oder destabilisieren? Wird ein solcher Informationsaktualisierungsprozess zu einer Rückkopplungsschleife der Stimmabgabe für populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei führen? Dies sind die Fragen, die diese Dissertation zu beantworten versucht.

Überblick über die drei Papiere

Diese Dissertation besteht aus drei Papiere. Das erste Papier „Der Aufstieg von der radikalen Rechte und Bottom-up-Spillover-Effekte in einem Mehrebenensystem" untersucht, ob die Wahlergebnisse einer populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei bei Regionalwahlen ihren Stimmenanteil in einer nachfolgenden FOE beeinflussen und wie die regionalen Wahlergebnisse die Wählerkalküle von Wähler einwirken. Dieses Papier argumentiert, dass das Überschreiten der regionalen

Wahlhürde die Leistung einer populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei in einer nachfolgenden FOE fördern kann. Mittels eines Regressionsdiskontinuitätsdesigns schätze ich, dass es auf aggregierter Ebene einen Bottom-up-Spillover-Effekt für die populistische rechtsradikale Partei gibt. Insbesondere finde ich, dass das Überschreiten der regionalen Hürde das Wahlergebnis einer populistischen rechtsradikalen Partei in einer nachfolgenden FOE im Durchschnitt um etwa 3% bis 4,3% erhöhen kann. Um dann den Mechanismus hinter einem solchen Bottom-up-Spillover-Effekt zu analysieren, verwende ich die Paneldaten von GLES (German Longitudinal Election Study) und schätze die Veränderung der interessierenden Parameter mithilfe von Differenz-in-Differenz-Modellen. Ich finde, dass AfD-Wähler in den „behandelten Bundesländern" (d.h. Staaten, in denen die AfD in subnationale Parlamente eingezogen war) die Partei und ihre Spitzenkandidatin positiver bewerten als diejenigen in den „Kontrollstaaten" (d.h. Staaten, in denen die AfD noch nicht in subnationale Parlamente eingezogen war). Daher argumentiere ich, dass der Legitimationsmechanismus eher der dominierende Mechanismus ist, der den Bottom-up-Spillover-Effekt antreibt.

Das zweite Papier „Wenn populistische Verlierer die Wahlpräferenz stabilisieren: Verkettete Wahlen, Heterogenität von Verlierern und Rückkopplungsschleife-Abstimmung" befasst sich mit einer kurzen Episode zwischen der Bundestagswahl 2013 und der Europawahl 2014. Dieser Papier entlehnt die Erkenntnisse aus der Literatur von „Winner-Loser-Gap" und der Literatur von Abstimmung für populistische Parteien, die sich beide mit der Demokratiezufriedenheit (d.h. „Satisfaction with democracy", SWD) befassen. Diese Arbeit besteht aus zwei Analysephasen. Zunächst untersuche ich, ob die Veränderung in SWD nach einer FOE heterogen ist zwischen populistischen Verlierern und nicht-populistischen Verlierern. Zweitens teste ich, ob ein

Rückgang der SWD die Unterstützung populistischer Oppositionsparteien in einer nachfolgenden SOE festigt. Meine Analyse benuzt die Paneldaten von MEDW (Making Electoral Democracy Work). Sie zeigt, dass der Rückgang der SWD nach einer nationalen Wahl bei populistischen Verlierern größer ist als bei nicht-populistischen Verlierern. Außerdem finde ich, dass ein Rückgang der SWD die Stimmabgabe für populistische Parteien bei einer nachfolgenden Europawahl stabilisieren kann, was bedeutet, dass ein Rückgang der SWD die Wählerbasis populistischer Oppositionsparteien erhärtet. Zusammenfassend zeigt dieses Papier, dass es eine Rückkopplungsschleife bei der Stimmabgabe für populistischen Parteien gibt: Populistische Verlierer werden eher einen Rückgang der SWD erleben, und dieser Rückgang der SWD kann die Unterstützung populistischer Parteien in die nächsten Wahlen stabilisieren. Mit anderen Worten, verkettete Wahlen in einem Mehrebenensystem ermöglichen es populistischen Parteien, eine Kerngruppe loyaler Wähler aufzubauen. Dieses Papier hilft uns zu verstehen, warum die AfD bei der Europawahl 2014 eine parlamentarische Vertretung gewinnen konnte.

Im Mittelpunkt des letzten Beitrags „Die Entstehung radikaler rechter Wähler: Überzeugungs- und Kontrasteffekte in einem dynamischen politischen Kontext" steht der politische Identitätswandel der AfD-Erstwähler im Wahlzyklus 2013-2017. Ich nutze die Paneldaten von GESIS – Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, um zu untersuchen, ob sich die Erstwähler der AfD stärker mit der rechten Ideologie identifizieren. Außerdem untersuche ich, ob sie die Mitte-rechts-Partei (d.h. Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU) als linksgerichteter wahrnehmen und negativer bewerten. Die Difference-in-Difference-Modelle zeigen, dass die AfD-Erstwähler in ihrer Selbstplatzierung rechtsextremer geworden sind. Zudem nehmen

sie die CDU als eher links wahr und beurteilen sie negativer. Zusammengenommen legen diese Ergebnisse nahe, dass verkettete Regionalwahlen neben einer politischen Krise die ideologische Identität potenzieller Wähler von populistischen rechtsradikalen Parteien prägen und diese Wähler motivieren können, die Mitte-rechts-Mainstream-Partei als Fremdgruppe anzusehen.

Introduction: Motivation of this dissertation

This dissertation explains how concatenated elections in a multi-level system have contributed to the rise of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). There are three major phenomena that motivate this research project. The first one concerns the growing relevance of short-term factors in electoral studies. As noted by different scholars, long-term social demographic variables, such as class and religion, have been supplanted by more short-term factors in recent decades (Dassonneville, 2016; Thomassen, 2005; Weßels et al., 2014). The decreasing importance of long-term determinants is accompanied by the decline in party identification with mainstream parties throughout Western Europe (Dalton & Flanagan, 2017). As a result, the number of unallied voters has been increasing and the electoral results become more volatile. That is why scholars nowadays also focus on how short-term factors shape party preference (Walczak et al., 2012). These short-term determinants, according to the metaphor of a 'funnel of causality', are those close to the tip of the funnel, which include issue positions, retrospective judgements, campaign activities and a candidate's image. This focus on short-term factors is certainly grounded on the idea that voters tend to decide at the final stage of elections and are thus more likely to be influenced by recent information and events.

The second phenomenon is about the prevalence and growing importance of second-order elections (SOEs). Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. First, regarding the regional arena, the jurisdictions of regional parliaments have expanded over time due to the trend towards decentralization (Hooghe & Marks, 2016). Second, talking about the supranational arena, the European Parliament (EP) has been

empowered in recent decades as well (Hix, 2002; Rittberger, 2012). Third, partly driven by the rise of populism, the referendum has become a common tool to handle political conflicts. Crucial is the fact that these SOEs are not isolated from the first-order election (FOE) because it is the same parties and voters that are embedded in a multi-level system. The interaction between SOEs and FOEs has certainly been documented in recent studies of SOEs, which have shown that the electoral result and vote choice in an SOE can shape voters' political attitudes, identity and voting habits (Devine, 2021; Dinas & Riera, 2018; Hobolt et al., 2020).

The last phenomenon that motivates this research concerns explaining the success and failure of populist radical right parties (PRRPs) in advanced Western European democracies. In the past few decades, most researchers have adopted a demand side approach, a supply side approach or a combination of both, in order to explain the development of PRRPs (Cohen, 2020; Rydgren, 2007). Put simply, the focus of the demand side approach is the profound transformation of the socioeconomic and sociocultural structure. Its parameters of interest include the anxious and resentful sentiments driven by this structural change (Betz, 1994), socio-demographic variables (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2001) or nativist attitudes (Van Der Brug et al., 2000, 2005). On the other hand, the supply approach analyzes party strategies in electoral competitions (Grande et al., 2019; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997) or party organization of PRRPs (Art, 2011). What seems to be missing is the role of previous elections in a multi-level system. This lacuna is surprising because the breakthrough of PRRPs into the national arena often comes after success in SOEs. One recent example is the Vox in Spain. Being a PRRP, Vox did not enter the national parliament all at once, but rather first via the 2018 Andalusian regional parliament. Another less

well-known but important example is the Danish People's Party, which had first obtained seats in municipal councils before it broke into the national parliament. Thus demonstrating that a PRRP's previous electoral results in one arena may have an impact on its electoral fortune in other arenas.

This dissertation argues that, to understand why AfD can break into the national party system within a national election cycle, one needs to understand these three phenomena jointly. If short-term factors can shape vote preference and SOEs are becoming more important, this leads to the question of whether the success of PRRPs in SOEs shapes citizens' calculus of voting in an upcoming FOE. Also, one can ask whether voting for PRRPs in an FOE affects supporters' attitudes, perception, identity and vote preference, before the next SOE takes place. In other words, can we treat previous electoral results and vote choice for PRRPs in one arena as short-term factors that shape voters' calculus of voting in another arena? If so, that means concatenated elections in a multi-level system can be relevant in explaining success (or failure) of PRRPs in the national arena.

This proposition differs from the traditional SOE framework as it focuses on the interactions of elections in different arenas, instead of the differences in vote shares or differences in motivations across SOEs and FOEs. It analyzes how the electoral result or vote choice in a previous election in one arena impacts on voters' calculus of voting in the subsequent election in another arena. By studying this information-updating process, this dissertation highlights the fact that concatenated elections in a multi-level system can serve as short-term factors that contribute to the rise of a PRRP. Throughout this dissertation, I am going to shed light on and illustrate

the importance of this information-updating process, which is hardly captured by the conventional demand side approach or the supply side approach.

The Puzzle

In order to investigate whether and how concatenated elections in a multi-level system contribute to the success of a PRRP, my dissertation will focus on the case of Germany. Previously, studies of PRRP considered Germany as an anomalous case until the rise of the AfD. As a matter of fact, AfD is not the first PRRP in the German political landscape since the Second World War. Yet, all previous PRRPs failed to set foot in the Bundestag. To name a few, during the 1960s, the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) gained 4.3 % of the electoral vote but failed to obtain representation in the Bundestag because of the 5% election threshold. Also, in the 1980s, the Republikaner (REP) failed to enter the Bundestag, despite gaining seats in some regional Landtag elections. In light of this political landscape, Berbuir et al. (2015) stated that the PRRP in Germany was "a history of failing". However, the juxtaposition of this history of failing with the success of AfD is something of a puzzle. How is it that AfD could become so popular across all regions of Germany in such a short period of time and ultimately be the first PRRP to enter the Bundestag in the post-war period?

In the past few years, a growing body of work has attempted to explain AfD's success. The existing explanations mainly fall into two categories: the demand side factors and the supply side factors. Regarding the demand side explanations, part of the scholarship analyzes how different socio-demographic variables or nativist attitudes

correlate with support or a vote choice for AfD (Goerres et al., 2018; Hansen & Olsen, 2019; Pesthy et al., 2021; Wurthmann et al., 2020). There are also studies that focus on how the legacy of previous far right parties and that of the Third Reich contribute to the rise of AfD (Hoerner et al., 2019; Homola et al.; Jäger, 2020; Schwander & Manow, 2017). Moreover, because AfD's rise occurred amidst the 2015 refugee crisis, there is literature that investigates whether local exposure to refugees affects AfD's vote share (Schaub et al., 2020).

Although the demand side explanations can help us understand the rise of AfD, there are some gaps that cannot be satisfactorily filled. Note that the socio-demographic variables, nativist attitude and historical legacy, that try to explain AfD's success have existed for a long period of time. So, one question is why would these variables lead to the rise of AfD in the 2013-2017 election cycle, but not in earlier election periods? Perhaps the demand side scholarship may supplement their explanations by arguing that the importance of these variables is increased by the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, it is unclear why these parameters of interest might lead to the success of AfD, for the 2015 refugee crisis was not the first time that Germany experienced a refugee crisis. Towards the end of the Cold War, there was a huge influx of asylum seekers coming from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, but this crisis did not foster the entry of REP into the Bundestag. This begs the question of why AfD could successfully break into the national party system particularly in the 2017 federal election.

Alternatively, the supply-side explanation focuses on how AfD adjusted its positioning during the refugee crisis. These studies emphasize how AfD transformed from a party that was rather Eurosceptical to a radical right party that politicized the

immigration issue (Franzmann, 2019; Grande et al., 2019). In consequence, it has raised the salience of the socio-cultural dimension in the electoral competition (Franzmann et al., 2020; Giebler et al., 2019). In the current supply-side scholarship, AfD's polarized position regarding the immigration issue can mobilize previous absentee voters (Hobolt & Hoerner, 2020), attract voters who have negative attitudes towards immigration (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019) and those who identify socio-cultural issues as the most important issues (Giebler et al., 2020).

Beyond dispute, the supply side approach is crucial in helping us to articulate why issue emphasis matters when a political opportunity structure exists (in AfD's case, the opportunity structure is the refugee crisis). It illustrates how AfD's programmatic appeals can shape the dividing lines of electoral competition and the electorates' vote choice. However, despite these important contributions, one question remains unresolved: why AfD, as a new PRRP, had the capacity to achieve such transformations within just one national election cycle? In fact, AfD is not the first PRRP to politicize immigration issues during a crisis. REP also attempted to mobilize the immigration concerns in the 1990s, when there was an influx of asylum seekers. This illustrates that mobilization of the immigration issue per se is not sufficient to explain the breakthrough of a PRRP into the national party system.

This dissertation suggests that the limitations of the above approaches stem from their neglect of the impacts of concatenated elections in a multi-level system. One crucial argument this dissertation puts forward is that the interactions of elections in different arenas contribute to AfD's success in entering the Bundestag. Simply put, one cannot fully understand how AfD could succeed if we treat elections in a multi-level system

as isolated from one another. Bear in mind that after AfD had barely managed to reach the 5% threshold in the 2013 national election, its vote share reached 7.4% in the subsequent 2014 EP election. Why did its voters still adhere to this new PRRP and not defect to other parties? One should also not overlook that, before AfD gained parliamentary seats in the 2017 federal election, it had broken into thirteen subnational parliaments. After observing the success in these concatenated subnational elections, observers predicted that these electoral performances in SOEs would presage the entry of AfD into the Bundestag. This logic presupposed that the success of a PRRP in SOEs should give it a boost in the upcoming federal election, or at least help the party stabilize its voter base. However, the precise mechanism of such a spillover effect in a multi-level system is unclear.

The argument and its building blocks

To answer the puzzle of why AfD could break into the national party system within such a short period, this dissertation contends that the key lies in the concatenated elections in a multi-level system. I define concatenated elections as constituting at least two elections within a national election cycle. The core assumption of concatenated elections in a multi-level system is that it is the same parties and voters who participate across different election arenas. Importantly, this dissertation suggests the electoral result of PRRPs and the vote choice for a PRRP in previous elections in one arena are important factors for voters. This information, in turn, allows voters to update their calculus of voting before an election in another arena takes place. Throughout this dissertation, it is argued that previous electoral results and vote choice of PRRPs play an important role in shaping voters' attitudes, perception,

identity and vote preference in a multi-level system. It should be noted that this dissertation focuses exclusively, due to data availability, on the voters' information-updating process. However, such an information-updating process may also occur among PRRPs and other parties, meaning that the supply side may learn from the signals of different parties' success or failure in a multi-level system.

My analysis of concatenated elections in a multi-level system draws on several important strands of literature in electoral studies, namely, information updating in concatenated elections, second-order elections, the impact of PRRPs' success, and the winner-loser gap. These four strands of literature form the building blocks of this dissertation. In most cases, they discuss different facets of concatenated elections in a multi-level system in isolation. Because of the lack of cross-fertilization between these studies, a unified framework is not yet available that helps with identifying the impacts of concatenated elections in a multi-level system; and thereby explains how these impacts contribute to the breakthrough of a PRRP in the national arena. In the following, I delineate the key themes and limitations of the main literature used by this dissertation, and demonstrate how my dissertation complements the shortcomings of different strands of literature:

1. *Information-updating in concatenated elections*. One core theme of this strand of literature is that electoral results in the first-stage election can serve as information that is absorbed by the electorate. This information can consequently shape subsequent voting behaviour in the second-stage election. This insight can date back to the seminal work of Piketty (2000), "voting as communicating", which argues a previous electoral result can influence voting behaviour in a subsequent

election. According to his model, voters obtain information about the preferences of their fellow voters after a first-stage election, which helps them to update the status of the parties/candidates. Crucially, this framework suggests that voters are not short-sighted and do not simply focus on a single election. Instead, elections are concatenated and the result in a previous election can enter citizens' calculus of voting in a subsequent election. In other words, the function of the first-stage election is not merely to select candidates, parties or policies, but also to aggregate information about the distribution of preferences for different parties. This information can then shape voters' choices in a second-stage election.

Different studies of information-updating in concatenated elections also tried to explain different phenomena within concatenated elections, including parties' policy platforms and voter turnout (Meirowitz, 2005; Shotts, 2006). Of particular interest to my dissertation are the works by Castanheira (2003) and McMurray (2017). They elucidate why some voters opt for a small extremist party, even though it is doomed not to be elected. In their concatenated election models, voters have incentives to choose a small extremist party in the first-stage election because the electoral performance of an extremist party "can nudge the policy outcome even further to the left or right by voting for an extreme party" (McMurray, 2017, p. 200). Although these studies emphasize how mainstream party/candidates (i.e. the supply side) incorporate the electoral result of an extremist party to identify their optimal policies, this dissertation suggests the information-updating process could plausibly occur on the demand side as well. That is, the vote share in a first-stage election can influence other voters' beliefs and vote choices in a second-stage election.

One crucial remark about the literature of information-updating in concatenated elections is that it is mostly restricted to studying concatenated elections at the same level. For instance, there are studies that analyze USA presidential primaries (Meirowitz, 2005; Shotts, 2006) or two-round runoff elections in France (Blais & Loewen, 2009) or Hungary (Kiss, 2015; Kiss & Simonovits, 2014). However, less is known about whether this information-updating exists in a multi-level system. That means, we still do not have much knowledge about whether and how previous election or vote choice in one arena affects voters' attitudes, perception and identity, which can in turn shape their vote preference in an upcoming election in another arena. So, my dissertation fills this intellectual gap by investigating whether and how citizens update PRRP's electoral performance in a multi-level system.

2. *Second-order elections.* Talking about voting behaviour in a multi-level system, it is hard to avoid the rich literature on SOEs. When Reif and Schmitt (1980) propose the framework of SOEs, they identify several characteristics within European Parliament elections, as a prototype of SOEs. First, since there is less "at stake" in SOEs, public interest in these elections is lower and parties invest fewer resources in campaign mobilization, and hence voter turnout is usually low. Second, these elections are regarded as test runs for national first-order elections, since voters can make use of this opportunity to express their dissatisfaction to the governing party/parties. Third, governing party/parties usually lose(s) votes whereas small parties gain votes in an SOE. Lastly, Reif and Schmitt argue these three characteristics are most salient around midterm and reduce in saliency at the

beginning and end of a national election cycle.

Later studies on SOEs try to verify and refine the framework. In terms of aggregate-level studies, scholars test whether later EP elections still adhere to the above characteristics (Ferrara & Weishaupt, 2004; Schmitt, 2005), or extend the framework to other countries like Central and Eastern European states (Koepke & Ringe, 2006; Schakel, 2015) and to regional and local elections (Heath et al., 1999; Lefevere & Van Aelst, 2014; Lutz Kern & Hainmueller, 2006; Schakel & Jeffery, 2013; Selb, 2006). However, one major shortcoming of these aggregate-level SOE studies is that they are analyzing whether the voting patterns of these elections correspond to the abovementioned characteristics of SOEs. As such, these studies are mostly focusing on the differences in the vote shares of a certain party between FOE and SOE and provide explanations of these differences. In this way, these works tend to treat elections at different levels as isolated from one another and assume that the precedent election hardly exerts an impact on the upcoming election in a multi-level system.

The individual-level SOE studies provide a more subtle account that discusses the motivations of voters who are embedded in a multi-level system. One crucial debate is whether voters vote sincerely or strategically in an SOE, and how their motivation interacts with the informational context. Basically, the sincere voting argument suggests that in SOEs voters choose a party most in line with their ideological or policy positions (Weber, 2007). On the other hand, the strategic voting argument argues that citizens vote strategically in SOEs and do not vote for their first preference. Their strategic aims can be to voice dissatisfaction with the

government's performance (Heath et al., 1999; Hobolt & Wittrock, 2011; Weber, 2011), raising the salience of a neglected issue (Lindstam, 2019) or balancing the policy-making process in a multi-level system (Golder et al., 2017, pp. 94-96). Though this debate is far from conclusive, one main limitation of these individual-level SOE studies is that they focus on voters' motivations in SOEs. Due to this focus on sincere vs. strategic motivation in a single SOE, they easily ignore how a previous electoral result in the first-stage election in one arena might impact on voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent election in another arena. This neglect is puzzling because, when partisanship is weak and short-term factors become increasingly important, voters' voting choices can certainly be shaped by a previous electoral result.

To the best of my knowledge, there are several recent studies that have recognized the concatenated nature of elections in a multi-level system, although they do not use this terminology. In terms of aggregate-level studies, Bechtel (2012) found that there is a bottom-up spillover effect from SOE to FOE. Using the case of Germany, he argues that previous SOE results can shape electoral volatility in a subsequent FOE, since subnational election campaigns can reduce the uncertainty of voters' electoral preferences in the national arena. Similarly, Dinas and Foos (2017) leverage the case of Germany to show that a small party's vote share increases in a subsequent FOE if it can pass the regional electoral threshold. Regarding the top-down effect, Prosser (2016) demonstrates that the permissive EP electoral system has increased the size of national party systems. Also, Schulte-Cloos (2018) finds that EP elections foster RRPs' vote share in national elections, as RRPs can take advantage of the opportunities during EP elections to

increase their visibility. Other than the bottom-up and top-down effect, there are also studies illustrating the interactions between different kinds of SOEs in terms of the impacts on voter turnout and party system fragmentation (Leininger et al., 2018; Rudolph & Leininger, 2021). On the other hand, individual-level analysis on spillover effects is rarer. Taking the example of the Liberal Democrats in the UK, Cutts (2014) argues that winning a local council election can serve as a "stepping stone" for a subsequent FOE, since the SOE success can improve the party's viability and visibility. In terms of cross-country studies, Dinas and Riera (2018) find that voting patterns in EP elections can spill over to FOEs by fostering habitual voting, as first-time small party voters in an EP election are more likely to vote for the same party in a subsequent FOE.

Overall, these recent studies highlight the idea that SOEs and FOEs are concatenated in a multi-level system and demonstrate the interaction across different electoral arenas. Still, these studies often focus on a single aspect of concatenated elections in a multi-level system, mostly the vote share of a party in aggregate-level studies or the vote preference for a party in individual-level studies. Hence, my dissertation builds on these studies by providing both aggregate-level and individual-level analysis. More importantly, I will trace comprehensively the evolvement of voters' attitude, perception, identity and vote preference over the course of concatenated elections in a multi-level system.

3. *Impact of PRRP's or PRR candidate's success*. My analysis of concatenated elections also relies on the burgeoning studies that analyze the impact of a PRRP's or PRR candidate's success (Bischof & Wagner, 2019; Bursztyn et al., 2017;

Crandall et al., 2018; Valentim, 2021). The core idea of these studies is that the electoral breakthrough of PRRPs or a PRR candidate can transmit information to electorates about social norms. When a radical right party or candidate obtains institutional recognition, it signals that the radical right viewpoint has garnered enough popular support and is less stigmatized.

The current literature identifies several effects that are triggered by PRRP's or PRR candidate's electoral breakthrough. In terms of observatinoal studies, Bischof and Wagner (2019) found a legitimation effect and a backlash effect after a PRRP entered parliament, meaning that both right-wing and left-wing supporters become more radicalized. This indicates that a PPRP's parliamentary representation can give rise to polarizing effects. Similarly, Valentim (2021) considers how a PRRP's entrance into parliament can destabilize previous social norms. He found that once a PRRP obtains parliamentary representation, the psychological hurdle of demonstrating support for the PRRP in public is reduced as the party has acquired legitimacy. Regarding experimental studies, there is also research that leverages the success of Trump in 2016 to investigate the impact of a PRR candidate's success. These studies show that the success of a PRR candidate can legitimize xenophobic views and boost the prejudice against targeted ethnic minorities (Bursztyn et al., 2017; Crandall et al., 2018). In short, these studies demonstrate that, once a PRRP or a PRR candidate crosses the electoral hurdle and obtains institutional recognition, supporters are more likely to perceive that their views are legitimized and less stigmatized. As such, the supporters are more likely to reveal their affinity with the PRRP or PRR candidate and display their xenophobic attitudes.

However, just like the literature that discusses information-updating in concatenated elections, the studies concerning the impact of PRRP's or PRR candidate's success mostly focuses on FOEs. In other words, it is still largely unknown how this impact is manifested in a multi-level system. Hence, this dissertation aims to extend this burgeoning literature to the multi-level system by studying the impact of PRRP's breakthroughs in SOEs. More specifically, it studies whether and how PRRP's success in an SOE impacts on voters' attitudes, perception, identity and vote preference before the upcoming FOE takes place.

4. *Winner-loser gap*. The last strand of literature that forms the building block of this dissertation is the studies related to the winner-loser gap. The basic idea of the winner-loser gap is that there are winners and losers in an election and voters will respond accordingly. The conventional wisdom claims that, in the post-election period, the satisfaction with democracy (SWD) of opposition party voters (i.e. losers) decreases, whereas the SWD of governing party voters (i.e. winners) is boosted (Anderson et al., 2005; Anderson & Guillory, 1997). Over the past two decades, scholars have already studied whether the gap is short-term or long-term (Dahlberg & Linde, 2016; van der Meer & Steenvoorden, 2018), and they have analyzed the magnitude of the winner-loser gap in different electoral contexts (Bol et al., 2018; Brunell & Buchler, 2009; Davis & Hitt, 2017; Han & Chang, 2016; Howell & Justwan, 2013; Singh & Thornton, 2016; Wells & Krieckhaus, 2006). This line of thought certainly echoes the fact that electoral results can provide citizens with information with which to update their voting decisions.

However, one important factor that is seldom regarded as affecting SWD is whether the party voters' choice belongs to the PRRP family. This gap is rather surprising because the interpretation of electoral results is highly affected by the use of media and party framings, which can shape the subjective perception of winner/loser (Gattermann et al., 2020; Plescia, 2019). In fact, some studies of the winner-loser gap notice the distinctive features of PRRP voters: they found that PRRP voters have a much lower SWD than mainstream party voters (Dahlberg & Linde, 2016, pp. 633-634) or are less supportive of the political system than other opposition parties' voters (Gärtner et al., 2020). Nonetheless, all these findings are subsidiary to their main analyses, as being a PRRP loser does not play any role in the theoretical frameworks. Only in recent years have scholars taken PRRPs into account when testing the hypothesis. Using the case of Germany, Reinl and Schäfer (2020) found that AfD voters experienced a boost in SWD after they won political representation in the 2017 federal election. In a cross-national study, Harteveld et al. (2021) discover that when a PRRP is included in government, SWD increases among the citizens with nativist attitudes. Taken together, the current scholarship is still inconclusive about whether the change in SWD among PRRP losers in the post-election period is positive or negative. More importantly, there is scant literature that analyzes whether a change in SWD affects PRRP losers' voting preferences in a subsequent election within a multi-level system.

Considering these gaps, this dissertation investigates the association between a PRRP's loser status and the change in PRRP voters' SWD. Specifically, it studies whether the drop in SWD among PRRP losers is larger than the drop among non-populist losers in the post-election period, ceteris paribus. In addition, it

analyzes how an increase or decrease in SWD driven by previous vote choice affects the voting preference in a subsequent election in another arena. It is because previous winner-loser gap studies have mostly used a change in SWD as a dependent variable. Largely missing is the behavioural implication of this change in SWD. Hence, this dissertation will supplement the rich literature on the winner-loser gap by studying whether a drop in SWD can consolidate a vote preference for PRRP in a subsequent election within a multi-level system.

My dissertation speaks to the above four related, but previously disconnected, areas of literature. Throughout this dissertation, I highlight that PRRPs' electoral results and a vote choice for a PRRP in previous elections in one arena is crucial to our understanding of PRRPs' success (or failure) in another arena. Stated simply, elections in a multi-level system should not be taken in isolation but are often concatenated, and they interact with one another. The electoral performance of a PRRP in one arena can serve to inform voters, helping them to update their voting considerations prior to the upcoming election in another arena. This information-updating process can occur because it is the same voters and PRRP that are embedded in a multi-level system. Without taking this information-updating process into account, it would be hard to provide a comprehensive explanation as to why a new PRRP (i.e. AfD) could break into the national party system in a national election cycle.

My argument of concatenated elections in a multi-level system is not intended to naively claim that the socio-demographic variables, nativist attitude and historical legacy serve no role in explaining the rise of AfD. Also, it is not intended to negate the fact that the 2015 refugee crisis and the politicization of immigration issues during

this crisis could contribute to the success of AfD. Quite the contrary, my analysis would certainly take these demand side and supply side factors into account. Yet, how my argument differs from previous studies is to draw on concatenated elections in a multi-level system. Once we import the concept of concatenated elections in a multi-level system, several areas of inquiry naturally arise. First, does the electoral performance of a PRRP in previous SOEs affect its vote share in the upcoming FOE? Second, if breaking through the electoral threshold in SOEs can give rise to a better electoral performance in a subsequent FOE, what are the micro-level mechanisms that drive such a spillover effect? Specifically, how do PRRP voters update their attitudes, perception, identity and vote preference in such an information environment? Third, conversely, as PRRPs are usually objective losers (i.e. being opposition parties) in FOEs, will PRRP voters' vote choice in an FOE stabilize or destabilize their vote preference in the next SOE? Will such an information-updating process give rise to a feedback loop of PRRP voting? These are the questions that this dissertation attempts to answer.

Case selection

In order to examine the impacts of concatenated elections in a multi-level system, my dissertation uses the case of PRRPs in Germany, with a specific focus on the success of AfD in the 2013-2017 election cycle. There are several reasons for choosing the PRRPs in Germany. The first reason concerns the German political culture that has shaped the political landscape of PRRPs during the past several decades. As mentioned before, PRRPs in Germany had a failed history before the rise of AfD. This failed history was largely related to what Art (2011) called the "culture of contrition"

engendered by its Nazi past. The taboo has been so strong that PRRPs would easily be labeled as fascist parties, and they were often inspected by the Office for the Protection of Constitution (Verfassungsschutz) (Decker, 2008). Apart from the surveillance by public agencies, all parliamentary parties have been imposing a cordon sanitaire against PRRPs that sought to downplay the significance of the Nazi past across all election levels (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997). As such, PRRPs' sympathizers would shy away from giving support to PRRPs, and these parties easily became marginalized (Backes & Mudde, 2000). Moreover, compared to voters in other Western European countries, voters in Germany are more hesitant to identify themselves with the extreme right label due to its association with xenophobia and Nazism (Bauer et al., 2017). Thus, the case of PRRPs in Germany provides us with a unique opportunity to investigate why a new PRRP could take advantage of concatenated elections in a multi-level system to break into the national party system, despite such a hostile political culture.

The second reason is the institutional setting of its national elections and regional elections. In terms of electoral systems, both the national elections and regional elections in Germany have a 5% electoral threshold, with the intention of limiting electoral fragmentation and coalition instability in the Weimar Republic era (Bawn, 1993; Capoccia, 2002; Scarrow, 2001). And compared to other European countries, the subnational parliaments in Germany have powerful jurisdictions and their governments are part of the federal council (Hooghe & Marks, 2016). That is why subnational elections and subnational parliamentary proceedings attract media reporting, and this logic applies across all regions. Due to the congruence of the electoral system and the importance of regional parliaments, it is highly probable that,

if a PRRP can cross a subnational electoral threshold, voters will incorporate this information into their calculus of voting. In other words, the information elicited by the electoral results in subnational elections is likely to impact on voters' attitudes, perception, identity and vote preference. Therefore, it is pertinent to use the case of Germany to trace the information-updating process among PRRP voters.

The third reason concerns the temporal distances between FOEs and SOEs. Both regional elections and EP elections occur at different points within the national election cycle in Germany. There are several advantages to the quasi-exogenous timing of SOEs. For one thing, there are some states in which PRRPs had entered the regional parliaments (i.e. treated states) while in some states they had not (i.e. control states). By leveraging such variation in national election cycles, I can trace how PRRP voters in the treated states update their attitudes, perception, identity and their vote preference, compared to those in the control states. For another, the information environment to which voters are exposed depends on the temporal distance between SOE and FOE. For example, should a previous FOE and a subsequent SOE fall close together, it is plausible that the PRRPs' electoral result and the vote choice in an FOE could enter voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent FOE. For these reasons, the quasi-exogenous timing of SOEs within a national election cycle allows me to analyze how PRRP voters update their consideration at different time points.

Data

This dissertation relies on both aggregate-level data and different individual-level panel datasets. Regarding the former, I compile an original set of vote share data that

is based on the resources from the Federal Returning Officer (Bundeswahlleiter). This dataset includes the vote share of different PRRPs from the mid-1960s to 2018 in different states. Regarding the latter, I use three panel datasets in the 2013-2017 election cycle. The first dataset is the one retrieved from Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) (Zittlau et al., 2017). This dataset covers a short episode between the 2013 federal election and the 2014 EP election. The second one is the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) panel (Debus et al., 2021). Here, I use all seven pre-federal election waves that were collected between October 2016 and September 2017, during which time AfD had broken into some regional parliaments but not others. The third is the GESIS panel that covers the 2013-2017 election cycle (GESIS, 2019): AfD successfully entered several regional parliaments across different waves, and the refugee crisis took place in between these waves. By leveraging these panel datasets that consist of diverse measurements, I can trace voters' information-updating process during different episodes of AfD's success in a multi-level system.

Note that the strengths of using aggregate-level data offset the weaknesses of the individual-level panel dataset, and vice versa. Using the aggregate-level vote share data allows us to have a glimpse at the general pattern of PRRP's support at different levels and to ascertain whether a spillover effect exists within a multi-level system. On the other hand, different individual-level panel datasets can trace voters' attitudes, perception, identity and their vote preference over the course of a national election cycle. In short, the different data sources and types of analyses included in this dissertation should be treated as complements rather than substitutes.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that it is a challenge to conduct research to

analyze how concatenated elections in a multi-level system have contributed to the rise of AfD. Part of the reason stems from data availability and data consistency. In an ideal setting, I would have had panel data that has been collected from the 1960s onwards, in order to trace voters' attitudes, perception, identity and their vote preference since then. Also, I would have been able to have data that can measure the positioning of different parties across the regional, national and supranational level, so as to see if parties at different levels adjust their positions in light of PRRP's success and failure. However, since these kinds of data are unavailable, this dissertation made a compromise by focusing mostly on the success of AfD and the information-updating process of the demand side.

Brief overview of the three papers

Figure 1 presents a simple model of concatenated elections in a multi-level system and the organization of my dissertation. The model underscores the interactions between SOEs and FOEs and lays out the core ideas of the voters' information-updating processes in a multi-level system. In this model, the explanandum is the rise of AfD and the key explanation is concatenated elections in a multi-level system. The two causal paths denote that voters will update their attitude, perception, identity after an SOE (upper path) or an FOE (lower path). Consequently, such information-updating processes can shape their vote preference in the subsequent election in another arena. The three papers that constitute this dissertation tap into different aspects of voters' information-updating processes.

The first paper "The rise of radical right and bottom-up spillover effect in a

multi-level system" focuses on the upper path of the model. I study whether a PRRP's electoral results in regional elections affect its vote share in a subsequent FOE and how the regional electoral results shape voters' calculus of voting. This paper argues that crossing the regional electoral hurdle can foster an RRP's performance in a subsequent FOE. By means of a regression discontinuity design, I estimate that there is a bottom-up spillover effect for RRP at the aggregate level. Specifically, I find that crossing the regional threshold can substantially boost an RRP's electoral result in a subsequent FOE by around 3%-4.3% on average. Then, to analyze the mechanism behind such bottom-up spillover effect, I employ the GLES panel and estimate the change in parameters of interest using difference-in-difference models. I find that AfD voters in the treated states (i.e. states where AfD had entered subnational parliaments) rate the party and its leader more positively than those in the control states (i.e. states where AfD had not yet entered subnational parliaments). Hence, I argue that the legitimation mechanism is more likely to be the dominant mechanism that drives the bottom-up spillover effect.
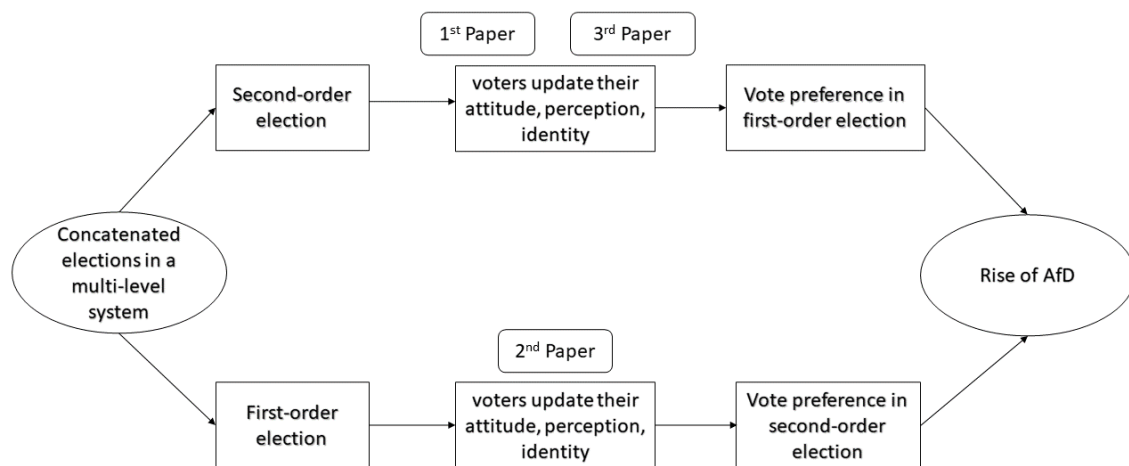
Figure 1. A simple model of concatenated elections in a multi-level system and the structure of the dissertation

The second paper "When populist, losers stabilize voting preference: concatenated elections, heterogeneity of losers, and feedback loop voting" considers the lower path of the model. It looks at a short episode between the 2013 federal election and the 2014 EP election and leverages the MEDW panel. This paper borrows the insights from the winner-loser gap literature and the populist party voting literature, which are both concerned with satisfaction with democracy (SWD). This paper consists of two stages of analysis. First, I investigate whether the change in SWD is heterogeneous between populist losers and non-populist losers after an FOE. Second, I test whether a decrease in SWD consolidates populist opposition party support in a subsequent SOE. My analysis shows that after a national election, the drop in SWD is greater among populist losers than among non-populist losers. Also, I find that a drop in SWD can stabilize populist party voting in a subsequent EP election, meaning a decrease in SWD hardens the electoral base of populist opposition parties. Taken together, this paper shows that there is a feedback loop of populist party voting: populist losers are more likely to experience a decline in SWD, and this decline in SWD can feed into the next election by stabilizing populist party voting. In other words, concatenated elections in a multi-level system enable populist parties to develop a core group of loyal voters. As such, this paper helps us to understand why AfD managed to achieve parliamentary representation in the 2014 EP election.

Regarding the last paper "The making of radical right voters: persuasion and contrast effects in a dynamic political context", I return to the upper path of the model. This paper focuses on the change in political identity of first-time AfD voters during the 2013-2017 election cycle. I use the GESIS panel to investigate whether first-time AfD voters become more identified with the right-wing label. Also, I study whether they

perceive the center-right party (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) as more left-wing and evaluate it more negatively. The difference-in-difference models demonstrate that AfD's first-time voters became more right-wing in their ideological self-placement. In addition, they came to perceive the CDU as more left-wing and judged it in a more negative light. Taken together, these findings suggest that concatenated regional elections, alongside a political crisis, can shape the ideological identity of potential PRRP voters and motivate these voters to see the mainstream center-right party as an outgroup.

This dissertation's contributions

This dissertation contributes on three fronts. Talking about the conceptual contribution, this research brings the notion of concatenated elections in a multi-level system to the forefront. The literature of electoral studies has long recognized that, when elections are concatenated, an electoral result and a vote choice can shape the calculus of voting in a subsequent election. This dissertation builds on this insight by importing the perspective of a multi-level system. Although this dissertation borrows the insights from the recent SOE literature, it should be remembered that the concept of concatenated elections in a multi-level system moves beyond the traditional SOE framework. Unlike the traditional SOE framework, the concern of concatenated elections in a multi-level system is not the differences in vote shares between FOE and SOE at the aggregate-level, or the sincere vs. strategic motivation in a single SOE at the individual-level. Instead, this concept claims that an electoral result and a vote choice in a previous election in one arena can shape voters' attitudes, perception and identity. Such an information-updating process can, in turn, impact their calculus of

voting in a subsequent election in another arena. This proposition regarding voters' information-updating process is seldom made explicit in previous SOE studies.

Additionally, regarding the theoretical contribution, this dissertation highlights the idea that concatenated elections in a multi-level system play an important role in explaining the success of PRRPs. In the current PRRP literature, the analysis of a PRRP's electoral fortune still tends to fall into the categories of demand side or supply side approach, or a combination of both. Certainly, the intention of this dissertation is not to refute the role of demand side factors and that of supply side factors. This dissertation does recognize the importance of these factors. However, it suggests that, alongside these factors, we should draw into the notion of concatenated elections in a multi-level system to understand the success of PRRPs. The analyses of the three papers all emphasize that previous elections and subsequent elections in a multi-level system do not stand alone but are concatenated. Because of such concatenated settings, a PRRP's electoral result and a vote for it in a previous election in one arena can affect voters' attitudes, perception, identity and vote preference, before an election in another arena takes place. By tracing the evolvement of these parameters of interest, the analysis of this dissertation helps us better to understand the information-updating process of PRRP voters and how this process contributes to the success of PRRP.

Lastly, concerning the empirical contribution, this research demonstrates how the notion of concatenated elections in a multi-level system can help explain AfD's success in stepping into the national party system. There are several findings in this dissertation that are novel. First, it finds that when a PRRP can get over regional electoral hurdles, there is going to be an improvement in its electoral performance in

the subsequent general elections. That means RRPs can take advantage of regional electoral success to enter the national party system. This finding certainly challenges the traditional SOE framework, since the conventional wisdom suggests that a small ideologically extreme party tends to lose votes in a subsequent FOE (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020). Second, my dissertation discovers that voting for a PRRP in an FOE can result in a decline in SWD. This decrease in SWD, in turn, consolidates the PRRP's electoral support in a subsequent SOE. This finding not only highlights that there is heterogeneity of losers, which qualifies the winner-loser gap literature, but also there is a feedback loop of PRRP voting. Third, this dissertation uncovers that first-time PRRP voters became more ideologically right-wing, considering the mainstream right-wing party as more left-wing and seeing it more negatively. This finding indicates that a PRRP's success in concatenated SOE elections, alongside the immigration crisis, can foster a shift in ideological identification and perception of a neighbouring mainstream center-right party.

This dissertation merely uses the case of PRRPs in Germany to demonstrate how the notion of concatenated elections in a multi-level system can explain the rise of AfD. Nevertheless, this dissertation opens avenues to several research agendas. In the first place, more effort is necessary to study how concatenated elections in a multi-level system contribute to the success or failure in other multi-level systems. The case of Germany has a multi-level system, where the regional electoral system and national electoral system is largely congruent at 5% and the EP electoral threshold is rather low. This kind of multi-level setting helps voters to update in a more consistent way. Voters' information-updating process may exhibit very differently in other multi-level systems, where the electoral threshold in one arena is much higher than that in another

arena, such as the case of Great Britain. Moreover, future studies can investigate how concatenated elections in a multi-level system explain the electoral fortunes of other party families, including radical left parties, ethnoterritorial parties, liberal parties, mainstream center-left and center-right parties. One recent example would be the co-occurrence of the rise of the Greens and the decline of the SPD in Germany. During the 2017-2021 election cycle, the Green party surpassed the SPD in the EP election and several regional elections. Once we explore the notion of concatenated elections in a multi-level system, we can ask: do previous SPD voters in the 2017 national election switch to support the Greens after these SOE elections? How do voters update the government formation potential of these two parties respectively? Finally, this dissertation mostly focuses on the information-updating process among voters because of data availability. As such, it assumes that the positions of a party across different levels are largely similar. However, this need not be true, and the supply side story is worth studying. That is, how different parties within a multi-level system update their strategies and positioning in light of PRRPs' success in different arenas.

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The rise of radical right and bottom-up spillover effect in a multi-level system: Evidence from Germany

Abstract: Previous literature suggests that a party's electoral result can shape its vote share and calculus of voting in a subsequent election. Less is known about whether this information-updating process helps explain the success of radical right party (RRP) in a multi-level system. To answer this question, I argue that crossing regional electoral hurdles can improve RRP performance in subsequent general elections. Leveraging the case of Germany, I first use a regression discontinuity design to estimate whether a bottom-up spillover effect exists for RRP at the aggregate level. After finding this effect exits, I use a panel to ascertain which mechanisms drive this effect. The analysis suggests the legitimation mechanism is more dominant than the viability mechanism and exposure mechanism. These findings enrich our understanding of both the second-order election framework and radical right studies, as they indicate that RRP can use regional electoral success to enter national party systems.

Introduction

Parties seldom break into a national party system overnight. Rather, they mostly rely on regional success as a steppingstone. There are several recent examples illustrating this logic: Vox's breakthrough in the 2018 Andalusian regional election before entering the national parliament in April 2019, the Five Star Movement success in the 2012 Sicilian regional elections prior to its entrance into the national parliament, and the AfD's breakthrough in thirteen subnational elections before gaining parliamentary seats in the 2017 federal election. These examples suggest that a bottom-up spillover effect may help parties break into national party systems, since second-order election (SOE) and first-order election (FOE) are concatenated within a multi-level system.

The electoral studies literature sheds light on this bottom-up spillover effect. Since the seminal works of Duverger (1959) and Cox (1997), we know that an electoral result provides information about party performance. Admittedly, the magnitude of information-updating is not always the same, and it is well known that a threshold can affect voters' calculus (Grofman & Lijphart, 2003; Shugart & Taagepera, 2017). When a party passes an electoral threshold, it may be perceived as more viable (Aldrich, Blais, et al., 2018, p. 18). Likewise, obtaining parliamentary representation can bring along more media exposure (Gattermann et al., 2020; Mazzoleni, 2008) and can signal a change in social norm (Valentim, 2021). Although most works on information-updating merely focus on FOEs, this framework can certainly be extended to SOEs because the parties and voters in a multi-level system are the same. As such, when a party passes the threshold in an SOE, these different

information-updating processes can affect the party's vote share and voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent FOE.

In this article, I test whether a radical right party (RRP) benefits from such bottom-up spillover effects. Specifically, I propose that crossing the regional electoral threshold improves RRP performance in a subsequent FOE. This improvement in the national vote share is the bottom-up spillover effect. Importantly, this article disentangles the mechanisms driving this bottom-up spillover effect at the micro-level. Three mechanisms can be identified. The first one relates to the notion of viability. It argues that voters rely on previous electoral results to establish expectations about the viability of a RRP (Golder et al., 2017, pp. 89-91). If a RRP crosses an electoral hurdle in a a SOE, this can demonstrate to voters that the RRP is more viable in the upcoming FOE. The second mechanism concerns the increased exposure driven by the RRP's breakthrough in a SOE. For one thing, subnational parliamentary representation helps the RRP to recruit party members and gain public campaign funding for a subsequent FOE (Dinas & Foos, 2017; Dinas et al., 2015). For another, subnational parliamentary success implies media access that helps RRPs to clarify their policy position (Katz & Mair, 2018). The third mechanism—the legitimation mechanism—understands crossing the electoral threshold in SOEs as a signal about a change in social norms. The RRP's breakthrough in a SOE signals that it has obtained institutional recognition and legitimation of radical right support (Bischof & Wagner, 2019; Valentim, 2021). This decrease in RRP stigmatization implies that voters evaluate it more positively once it crosses the regional electoral hurdle. Note that these three information-updating mechanisms can be complementary and happen simultaneously. However, previous studies have not yet clearly disentangled them.

This paper uses the case of Germany to test whether such bottom-up spillover effects exist among RRPs and identify the mechanism behind this effect. First, to examine whether a bottom-up spillover effect exists, I collect official vote shares of RRPs in subnational elections and federal elections at the state level. Through a regression discontinuity design (RDD), I find that passing the regional threshold can substantially boost a RRP's electoral result in a subsequent FOE. The RDD analysis provides aggregate-level evidence that a bottom-up spillover effect exists. To analyze the micro-level mechanisms, I use the recent German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) panel from 2016–2017 that traces the evolvement of political attitudes, perceptions, and vote preferences among the electorate. During this short period of time, the AfD had entered subnational parliaments in two states (treated states), while there were several states where the AfD had not yet done so (control states). The panel analysis does not provide solid evidence for both the viability mechanism and exposure mechanism. It merely finds that AfD voters in the treated states rate AfD and its leader more positively than those in the control states. Taken together, these results suggest that the legitimation mechanism is more likely the dominant mechanism driving the bottom-up spillover effect.

The contribution of the article is in threefold. First, it enriches the SOE literature by confirming that precedent subnational electoral results affect a party's vote share and voters' calculus of voting in an upcoming national election. Though the previous SOE literature already confirmed the information-updating function of regional electoral results, this research is one of the few that combines aggregate-level and individual-level data to verify such processes. In addition, the bottom-up spillover

effect for RRPs challenges the conventional SOE framework that suggests a small ideologically extreme party usually loses votes in a subsequent FOE (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020). Second, by studying whether a bottom-up spillover effect exists, this research helps us understand why a RRP can succeed in establishing itself in the national party system through SOEs. In the current RRP literature, there are some studies that analyze RRP success in subnational arenas using the demand side or supply side approach (Kestilä & Söderlund, 2007; Patana, 2020). Yet, previous RRP studies has not yet found that RRPs can take advantage of a bottom-up spillover effect (but see Schulte-Cloos, 2018 for top-down spillover effect). Hence, this research is the first to find such effects for RRPs in a multi-level system. Third, this paper disentangles the mechanisms behind the bottom-up spillover effect. Although previous electoral studies of the information-updating process have identified the above mechanisms, they did not clearly disentangle them. So, this paper contributes to the field by analyzing whether RRP breakthroughs in regional parliaments leads to an increase in viability, improved visibility, or a change in social norms.

The article is structured as follows. First, I provide a review of the literature that enables us to understand the bottom-up spillover effect. Next, I examine the mechanisms that can drive this effect. Third, I briefly describe why Germany is a good case to test for this effect and its mechanisms. The fourth section introduces the datasets and models used for the aggregate-level and individual-level analysis; this is followed by the presentation of the results. Lastly, I discuss the theoretical implications of the findings.

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Literature related to the bottom-up spillover effect

This paper uses two main strands of literature to understand bottom-up spillover effects, namely studies pertaining to information-updating in concatenated elections and studies related to SOEs. These two strands of literature are usually kept separate despite the potential for fruitful cross-fertilization. Blending them helps us to understand how previous SOE results can shape RRP's success and voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent FOE.

The fact that electoral results can reveal information and shape subsequent behavior is hardly novel. When Piketty (2000) proposes the idea of "voting as communicating," he argues that a previous electoral result can influence voting behavior in a subsequent election. Explicit in his model is the idea that voters do update the result after an election and obtain information about the preferences of their fellow voters. Crucially, this framework suggests that voters are not short-sighted and do not simply focus on one single election. Instead, elections are concatenated, and the result of a previous election can enter voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent election. In other words, the function of the first stage election is not merely to select candidates, parties, or policies, but also to aggregate information about the distribution of different parties' preferences. This information can then shape voters' choices in a second stage election.

Different scholars have used this idea of information-updating by explaining different phenomena of concatenated elections, such as parties' policy platforms and voter turnout (Meirowitz, 2005; Shotts, 2006). Of particular interest is the work by

Castanheira (2003) and McMurray (2017) that elucidates why some voters opt for a small extremist party, even though it is doomed to not be elected. In their concatenated election models, voters have incentives to choose a small extremist party in the first-stage election because the electoral performance of an extremist party "can nudge the policy outcome even further to the left or right by voting for an extreme party" (McMurray, 2017, p. 200). Although these studies emphasize how mainstream party/candidates (i.e. the supply side) incorporate the electoral result of an extremist party to identify their optimal policies, this information-updating process could plausibly occur on the demand side as well. That is, the vote share in a first-stage election can influence other voters' beliefs and vote choices in a future election.

One important remark about the concatenated elections literature is that it is largely applied to USA presidential primaries (Abramson et al., 1992; Hirano et al., 2015) or two-round runoff elections (Blais & Loewen, 2009; Kiss & Simonovits, 2014), but is less commonly employed in analyzing a multi-level system. However, this notion of information-updating processes in concatenated elections has parallels in the SOE literature. In fact, the seminal work by van der Eijk et al. (1996) notes that parties can gain viability and exposure in SOEs, which can help parties in future electoral competition in other political arenas (p. 159).

Several recent studies pick up this thought in examining how previous SOE results impact a party's vote share or voters' preferences in a subsequent FOE. There is evidence showing that previous SOE results can shape electoral volatility in a subsequent national election (Bechtel, 2012) and increase the size of national party system (Prosser, 2016). Along this line of thought, Schulte-Cloos (2018) also finds

that European Parliament (EP) elections foster RRPs' vote share in national elections, as RRPs can leverage the opportunities in this SOE to increase their visibilities. Similarly, Dinas and Foos (2017) find that a small party's vote share increases in subsequent FOE if it can pass the regional electoral threshold, and they argue breakthrough in SOE matters because subnational parliamentary representation can provide organizational resources. On the other hand, individual-level evidence on spillover effects is rarer. Taking the example of the Liberal Democrats in the UK, Cutts (2014) argues that winning local council election can serve as a "stepping stone" for a subsequent FOE, since the SOE success can improve the party's viability and visibility. In terms of cross-country studies, Dinas and Riera (2018) demonstrate that voting patterns in EP elections spill over to national elections via habitual voting, as first-time small party voters in an EP election are more likely to vote for the same party in a subsequent FOE. Overall, these studies support the idea that SOEs and FOEs are concatenated in a multi-level setting, and previous SOEs can influence a party's vote share and voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent FOE.

Based on these theoretical resources, this paper suggests that a regional election, as a kind of SOE, does more than just choosing candidates, parties, or policies for regional parliaments. On top of these functions, regional election results can reveal information, in the sense that the result of a RRP in a previous regional election can be taken as an information source for voters. The information-updating process is especially salient when a RRP crosses a regional electoral threshold. Thus, I expect a bottom-up spillover effect to occur when a RRP can pass an electoral hurdle in a SOE. Regarding the aggregate-level evidence, this effect is reflected through an increase in a RRP's vote share in a subsequent FOE within that region. And it is important to note

that the bottom-up spillover effect for RRPs conflicts with the conventional SOE framework, which suggests that a small ideologically extreme party will lose votes in a subsequent FOE (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020):

> Bottom-up spillover effect (H1): If a RRP crosses the subnational electoral threshold, its vote share in the upcoming FOE increases.

The viability mechanism, exposure mechanism, and legitimation mechanism

In this section, I elaborate three possible mechanisms that can explain the bottom-up spillover effect. The first is the viability mechanism, which centers on how previous electoral results influence a party's perceived viability. This mechanism suggests that the first stage SOE result of a RRP can change voters' expectations of its viability. Once the first stage SOE result is known, voters learn about the RRP's level of support, which allows them to better coordinate their future votes in the second stage FOE. In other words, electorates have prior expectations concerning the RRP's viability, and these prior beliefs can be updated when new information is acquired, yielding revised posterior beliefs (Alvarez, 1998; Blais & Bodet, 2006). In this research, the new information is whether the RRP can surpass the electoral threshold in a SOE. Concretely, when a RRP fails to pass the electoral threshold in a SOE, its supporters receive hardly any new information that would update a RRP's viability. But conversely, when it enters a subnational parliament, the electoral result can lead voters to change their expectations regarding a RRP's viability in the upcoming FOE.

Thus, the viability mechanism expects that RRP supporters to update the RRP's viability once the party crosses the electoral threshold in a subnational election. This implies, first, that RRP's breakthrough in a subnational election should increase its perceived probability of entering the national parliament in the upcoming FOE among its voters. Moreover, due to this increase in perceived viability, the RRP's entry into subnational parliament should increase voters' likelihood to choose the RRP as the first vote preference: Previous RRP voters would be more likely to stick to the party in subsequent FOE and potential supporters from other parties and previous non-voters would be less likely to think voting for the RRP is a wasted vote (Golder et al., 2017, pp. 89-91). On this basis, I formulate the following hypotheses about the viability mechanism:

(H2a): After a RRP has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE are more likely to perceive the party as capable of entering the national parliament.

(H2b): After a RRP crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE are more likely to choose the RRP as their first vote preference.

The second mechanism is the exposure mechanism, which concerns the visibility advantage that a RRP obtains when it breaks into subnational parliament. If a RRP fails to obtain subnational parliamentary representation, it will find it difficult to maintain party organization. Contrarily, entering subnational parliaments brings public funding and helps enroll new party members (Dinas & Foos, 2017; Dinas et al., 2015). These resources are crucial for a subsequent FOE, as they can improve the RRP's visibility. Moreover, subnational parliamentary representation can increase

media exposure. Whereas failure to enter a subnational parliament means limited access to the public media, subnational parliamentary success implies more public media reporting (Gattermann et al., 2020; Katz & Mair, 2018; Mazzoleni, 2008). This media exposure can raise the salience of the RRP's policy position (Dinas et al., 2015), especially its position on immigration, which is thought to be owned by RRPs (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019; Grande et al., 2019). These theoretical expectations lead to the following hypothesis:

(H3a): After a RRP has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE are more likely to receive campaign information from the RRP.

(H3b): After a RRP has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE are more likely to know the immigration position of the RRP.

The last mechanism is the legitimation mechanism. Unlike the previous two mechanisms, this mechanism is more specific to RRPs. The legitimation mechanism speaks to the recent research on the impact of institutional recognition of a radical right party or candidate (Bischof & Wagner, 2019; Bursztyn et al., 2017; Crandall et al., 2018; Valentim, 2021). The core idea of the legitimation mechanism is that an electoral result can transmit information to electorates about social norms. When a radical right party or candidate obtains representation, it signals that the radical right viewpoint has enough popular support and is less stigmatized. As a result, radical right supporters are more likely to perceive that their views have been legitimized and more likely to reveal their affinity with the RRP or its candidate.

Although previous studies have mostly focused on FOEs, the legitimation mechanism can certainly be applied to SOEs. That is, a RRP's entry into a subnational parliament can provide information to its voters that there is a change in social norms and the RRP is already a socially acceptable option. As a result of a decrease in stigmatization, RRP voters are more likely to evaluate the RRP and its candidate in a more positive light. This leads to the hypothesis of legitimation mechanism:

(H4a): After a RRP has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE evaluate the party more positively.

(H4b): After a RRP has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, its voters in the upcoming FOE evaluate its candidate more positively.

The case of RRPs in Germany

To test these theoretical propositions, I use the case of RRPs in Germany for two main reasons. The first line of reasoning concerns its multi-level political system. For one thing, the electoral system used for SOEs and FOEs in Germany are largely congruent in the sense that there is a 5% electoral threshold in both electoral arenas.[1] The congruent electoral systems, alongside the nationally integrated party system, should contribute to the expectation that once a party has crossed the subnational electoral threshold, it is more likely to cross the 5% threshold in an upcoming federal election (in that state). For another, because subnational parliaments have powerful

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[1] There are some nuances between the federal electoral system and the subnational electoral system regarding the vote-seat distribution formulae and the setting of list vote (i.e., open list vs. close list). Despite these subtle differences, the electoral systems of the two levels are largely congruent in terms of the 5% hurdle and being mixed member proportional systems.

jurisdictions and their governments are part of the federal council (Hooghe & Marks, 2016), subnational elections and subnational parliamentary proceedings attract media attention, and this logic even applies to small states. Due to these multi-level institutional settings, it is highly probable that voters would update their perception of a RRP's status if it can cross a subnational electoral threshold. That is to say, the information elicited by a RRP's entry into subnational parliament will likely improve the party's viability and visibility.

Another reason relates to the German political culture, which renders this case pertinent to the legitimation mechanism. Since the Second World War, political elites and citizens have been very sensitive to any political party that seeks to downplay the significance of the Nazi past (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997). The taboo has been so strong that most RRPs have been surveilled by the Office for the Protection of Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz*) (Decker, 2008), and nearly all major parties have maintain a cordon sanitaire around RRPs. Because of this social desirability pressure, voters shy away from giving overt support for a RRP (Backes & Mudde, 2000). This political culture had given rise to a high barrier for RRP to compete even in SOEs. So, if a RRP can surpass the threshold in a regional election, it should attract huge reaction in the public sphere and the institutional recognition will likely change voters' perception of the social norm very swiftly. For these two reasons, Germany can be regarded as the most likely case to study the bottom-up spillover effect and the three information-updating mechanisms.

Research design, data, and model

The analysis involves two stages, which leverage both aggregate-level and individual-level data. The first analysis tests whether a bottom-up spillover effect exists. I use the vote share data at state level provided by the Federal Returning Officer (Bundeswahlleiter). Here, I create an original dataset that includes a RRP's vote share in a regional election within a state and its vote share in subsequent federal election within that state. Based on CHES and previous reserach, the parties that are classified as a member of RRP family includes AfD (Alternative für Deutschland)[2], DVU (Die Deutsche Volksunion), NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands), REP (Die Republikaner), Schill Partei (Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive) & Offensive D (Partei Rechtsstaatlicher Offensive)[3]. The timeframe for these electoral results is from the 1965 national electoral cycle onwards up to the Thuringia subnational election in 2019. In the period before unification, the results apply to the 10 states that constituted the former Federal Republic of Germany, whereas from 1990–2019, the results of 5 new East German states and Berlin are also included.

In estimating the bottom-up spillover effect, I follow the standard RDD approach by allowing a pooled regression on both sides of threshold and estimate the treatment effect using the rdrobust package. In the models reported in the main text, the estimation suggests using just one polynomial for both sides of the threshold at all

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[2] Some may argue that AfD was not a radical right party before the 2015 factional struggle (Arzheimer, 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2017), and only after this intra-party split has its party program been nativist and anti-immigrant (Franzmann, 2019). However, this programmatic change of AfD should not concern this research design too much, for this research investigates the impact of crossing subnational electoral hurdle upon AfD's vote share in 2017 federal election. At that point, AfD was already clearly a radical right party.

[3] Because Offensive D is basically the continuation of Schill Partei after Ronald Schill was ousted, the dataset groups together the electoral performance of these two parties.

bandwidths. In other words, my RDD model is a local linear regression model, and it can be written formally as follows:

$$Y_{i,s,t} = \alpha + \tau D_{i,s,t} + \beta_1(X_{i,s,t} - c) + \beta_2 D_{i,s,t}(X_{i,s,t} - c) + \varepsilon_{i,s,t}$$

where $i = 1…n$ signifies the parties within the radical right party family; $s = 1…16$ denotes the states in Germany; t indicates timing of regional election; $D_{i,s,t}$ is a dummy that switches on if party i passed the 5% electoral threshold of subnational election in state s at time t; $X_{i,s,t}$ denotes party i's vote share in subnational election in state s at time t; and c is the 5% electoral threshold that exists in all subnational parliamentary election.[4] The dependent variable $Y_{i,s,t}$ is party i's vote share in subsequent federal election in state s at time t.[5] The coefficient of the dummy $D_{i,s,t}$ (i.e. τ) concerns this research most, as it indicates the change in vote share in a subsequent FOE if party i can cross the regional electoral threshold in state s. Regarding the selection of bandwidths, I test the robustness of the results using various bandwidth size (i.e. full sample, ±5%, ±4%, ±3%, and the optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico et al. (2020), which is ±2.692% in this case). In the estimation, a triangular kernel is used, which gives more weight to the data points that are closer to the threshold, and errors are clustered at each subnational election.

In the second stage analysis, I use the GLES Panel (Debus et al., 2021) to analyze

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[4] When party i does not file a party list in subsequent federal election in a particular state, those observations are excluded from estimation, since electorates in that state are unable to vote for that party in federal election.

[5] In case subnational election is held concurrently with federal election, then vote share in next federal election in state s is used as outcome. The rationale behind is that information-updating process initiated by the electoral result of SOE shall not affect concurrent FOE, but rather FOE in the next election cycle.

which micro-level mechanism is more dominant in driving the bottom-up spillover effect. In this dataset, respondents were recruited from an online access panel using socio-demographic quotas (gender, age, education), and the mode of interview was computer-assisted web-based interviews. My analysis draws on all seven pre-federal election waves that were collected between October 2016 and September 2017. The refreshment sample is not included, as they were recruited after AfD had already entered the subnational parliaments in the treated states. In total, there are 10291 respondents in the dataset (See Table A.1 for the data collection period and Table A.2 for the panel retention rate).

The panel structure of the data has several advantages. First, most measurements of the constructs concerning the three mechanisms were collected repeatedly in different waves. These consistent measurements allow me to trace the evolution of political attitude, perception, and vote preference among AfD voters and other voters in this short episode. Second, over the course of the data collection period, AfD had broken into subnational parliaments in some states (i.e. Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia) in-between survey waves, but not yet in others (i.e. Lower Saxony, Hesse and Bavaria). This quasi-experimental setting enables me to use a Difference-in-Differences (DID) model to estimate the change in parameters of interest in the former states (treated states) relative to that in the latter states (control states). Note that the terminology is merely for convenience because citizens in the control states could also receive information when AfD broke into the subnational parliament in the treated states. In the robustness check, I will address this issue of contamination of control units. Nonetheless, I assume the effect of AfD's entry into subnational parliament should be stronger in the treated states than that in the control

states.

The DID model can be formalized as follows:

$$DV_{it} = \alpha + \sum \beta_{1t} \, wave_t + \sum \beta_{2t} tr_i \times wave_t + \sum \beta_{3t} AfD_i \times wave_t$$

$$+ \sum \beta_{4t} tr_i \times AfD_i \times wave_t + X'_{it}\beta + v_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where $i = 1...N$ respondents in the dataset; $t = 1...7$ indicates the wave number, where in-between wave 2 and wave 3, AfD had broken into the subnational parliaments in those treated states. tr_i is a dummy that switches on if respondent i lives in a treated state and 0 otherwise. AfD_i is a dummy that switches on if respondent i is a AfD voters in the 2017 federal election and switches off if he/she chose other parties or abstain. v_i is the unobserved time-invariant individual effect. X_{it} is a vector of individual-level covariates at wave t, which include AfD partisanship, economic attitude, immigration attitude, political interest. DV_{it} is the dependent variable of respondent i in wave t that are used for testing the three mechanisms, which is delineated below. β_{4t} are the parameter of interest, as they estimate the differences in effect between AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states across different waves. Regarding the regression sample, respondents who live in the ten states where AfD had already entered the subnational parliament before the panel survey began (i.e. Oct 2016) are excluded from the main analysis. Yet, in the robustness check, I will use these samples in these ten "already treated states" as placebo test in handling the issue of contamination of units. In total, the baseline dataset consists of 587 respondents who voted AfD in the 2017 federal election and 4315 respondents who chose other options.

Talking about the dependent variables, the analysis relies on two measurements for the viability mechanism. The first one concerns the perceived probability of AfD entering the federal parliament. The survey asks respondents how likely AfD would be represented in the Bundestag (w5-w7). The answers range from 1 (definitely not) to 5 (definitely) and I recoded them to a scale of 0 to 1. The second dependent variable is about whether respondents intend to choose AfD as their first vote preference in the 2017 federal election (w1, w3-w7). For those who answer they intend to vote in the federal election, they are asked to choose a party they intended to vote for in their first and second votes. For those who answer they are not likely to vote or certain not to vote, the survey asks them "Let's assume you would take part in the election. Which party would you consider for your second vote?". This dependent variable is a dummy that is coded as 1 if respondents answer they intend to vote for AfD in their second vote and coded as 0 if respondents answer (a) other parties or (b) not intend to vote and not provide any party preference. If the viability mechanism is valid, the AfD voters in the 2017 federal election in the treated states would perceive AfD as more likely to enter the federal parliament than those in the control states. Also, AfD voters in the treated states are more likely to consider AfD as the first vote preference than those in the control states.

Regarding the exposure mechanism, I employ two dependent variables. One dependent variable is having contact with AfD during the campaign period (w4-w7). It is a binary variable that is coded as 1 if respondent encountered one of the following seven scenarios: (i) visited websites of a party or a candidate, (ii) saw campaign posters, (iii) saw party political broadcasts on TV, (iv) listened to party

political broadcasts on the radio, (v) had conversations at an election campaign booth, (vi) received campaign flyers, e-mails, text messages, (vii) received information material via a social network like for example Facebook or others. Another dependent variable is the ability to know the immigration position of AfD (w2, w4, w7). Here, I follow the strategy of Aldrich, Schober, et al. (2018) in creating a dummy that is coded as 1 if respondent provided the immigration position of AfD and 0 if the answer is "don't know". If the exposure mechanism is valid, AfD voters in the treated states shall have more contact with AfD and are more likely to know AfD's immigration position than those in the control states.

Lastly, talking about the legitimation mechanism, I use two dependent variables. One is the feeling-thermometer question that asks respondents to rate AfD (w1-w7), and the scale ranges from -5 (I do not think much of the party at all) to +5 (I think a great deal of the party). Another is the rating of the then AfD's leader, Frauke Petry (w2-w7), and the scale also ranges from -5 (I do not think much of the politician at all) to +5 (I think a great deal of the politician). If the legitimation mechanism is valid, the AfD voters in the treated states would evaluate AfD and its leader more positively than those in the control states (See Table A.3 for the descriptive statistics of all key variables and Table A.4 for the details about the survey wordings and the coding of the variables).

A caveat shall be made here: some dependent variables were not measured before the treatment (i.e. before AfD had entered subnational parliaments in those treated states). Thus, my analysis can only assume that the quantities of interest in the treated units and those in the control units are at similar level in the pre-treatment waves. If there

are significant differences in marginal effect between the two units, I would infer AfD's breakthrough in subnational parliaments exerts impact on these quantities of interest.

Results

Aggregate-level RD estimation

To begin with analyzing the bottom-up spillover effect, Figure 1 shows the vote shares of RRPs in a subnational election and their vote shares in a subsequent federal election. Here, the full sample is shown and each datapoint represents the vote share in a state election and the vote share in a subsequent election within that state. There are several noticeable patterns. First, one can see that the number of datapoints on the left-hand side of the 5% electoral threshold is much larger than that on the right-hand side, meaning RRPs' entry into subnational parliament is uncommon. Second, DVU, NPD and REP could not cross over the threshold in subnational elections most of the time, with many data points cluster around 0%-2%, which indicates the marginalization of RRPs in Germany. And even though these parties could break into the subnational parliament occasionally, their vote shares in a subnational election are not necessarily higher than those in a subsequent federal election within the same state. Third, the bottom-up spillover effect is most evident upon AfD. In eight out of thirteen states, there is an increase in its vote share in 2017 federal election after it crossed the subnational threshold. The increase is especially abrupt in those East German states, like Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia.
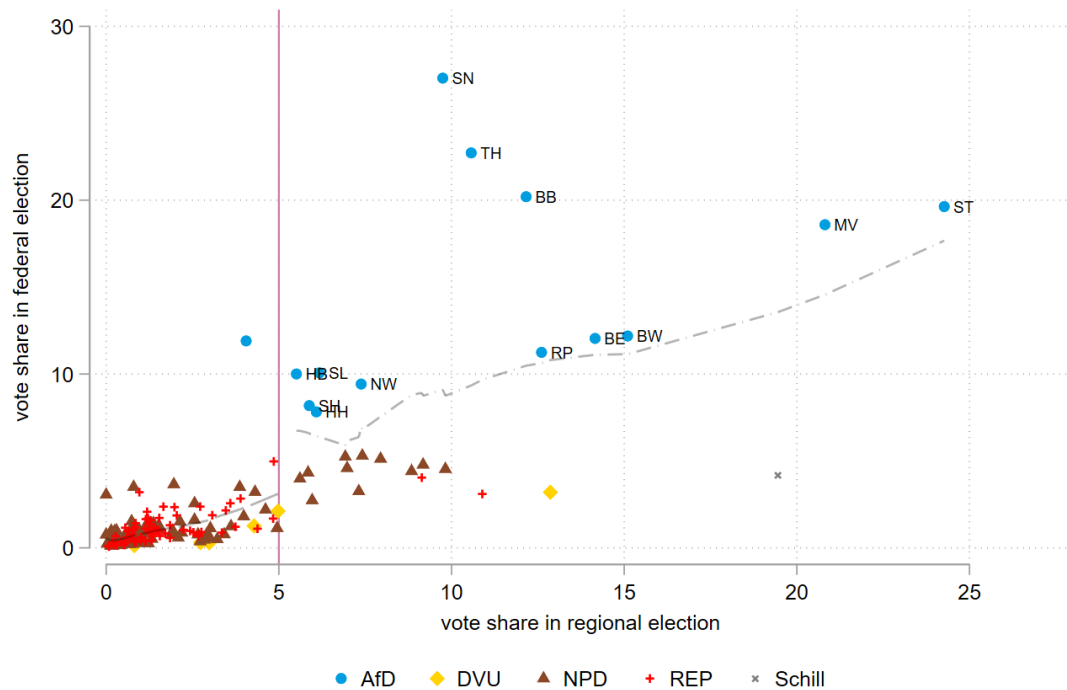
Figure 1. Vote shares of different radical right parties in state elections and their vote shares in subsequent federal election (N=194)

Note: The solid line represents the 5% threshold in a subnational election; the dotted lines are the lowess curves below and above the threshold respectively. Abbreviations denote the following states: BW=Baden-Württemberg; BE=Berlin; BB=Brandenburg; HB=Bremen; HH=Hamburg; MV=Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; NW= North Rhine-Westphalia; RP=Rhineland-Palatinate; SL=Saarland; SN=Saxony; ST= Saxony-Anhalt; SH=Schleswig-Holstein; TH= Thuringia

Regarding the estimation of bottom-up spillover effect, we turn to Figure 2 that illustrates the average treatment effect (τ) of the RDD model at different bandwidths using the conventional estimate (See Table B.1 for regression result). Overall, one can see that the sign of τ is positive in all models, which indicates there is an increase in vote share in subsequent federal election if a RRP can cross a subnational electoral threshold. Putting the effect in substantive terms, if a RRP can pass through a subnational electoral threshold, its electoral performance in subsequent federal election would be enhanced by around 3.0%-4.3% on average. Importantly, even when narrowing the bandwidth further to the optimal one ($\pm2.69\%$) that widens the confidence intervals, the point estimate is still marginally significant and stays very much the same in magnitude. In sum, the RD estimations demonstrate that there is a bottom-up spillover effect among RRPs. To reiterate, this effect conflicts with the SOE framework because the conventional wisdom suggests that a small ideologically extreme party tends to lose votes in a subsequent FOE (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020).
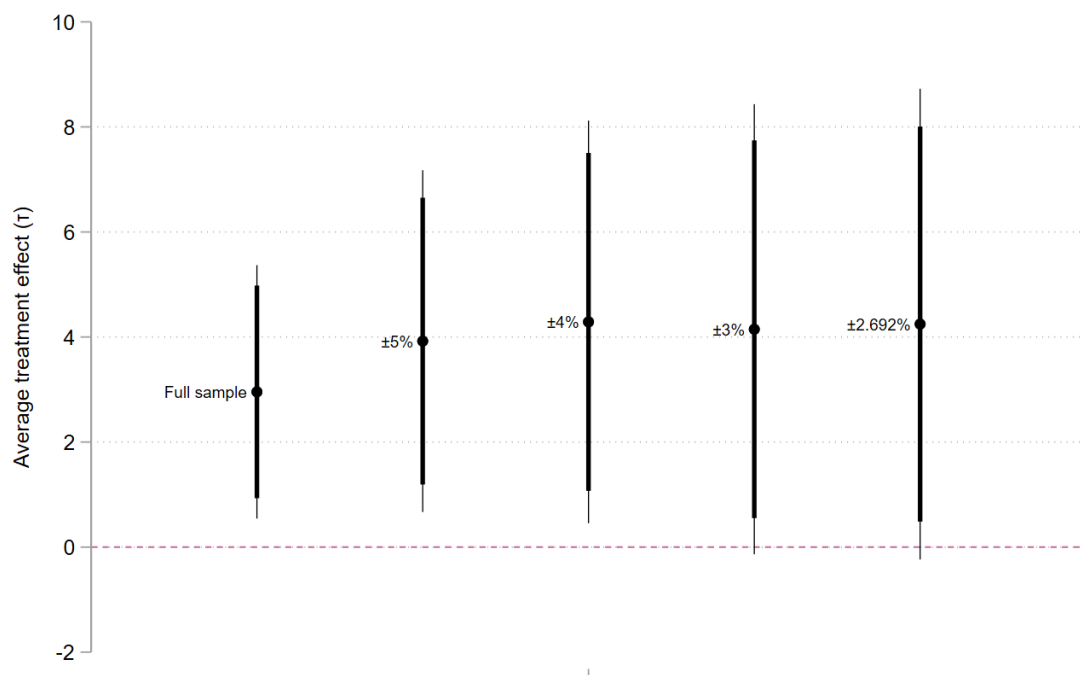
Figure 2. Regression discontinuity estimates of the bottom-up spillover effect (Conventional Estimate). Note: Thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals.

Regarding robustness checks, I conduct several tests for the bottom-up spillover effect. First, I use the bias-corrected estimate to check whether the bottom-up spillover effect remains robust. Except the full sample regression, the bias-corrected estimates are all statistically significant at 0.05 level and they are even slightly stronger than the conventional estimates in magnitude (4.5%-5.8%) (see Table B.2 & Figure B.1). Next, to check whether this effect is driven by a particular radical right party alone, I rerun the model again using the full sample and pull out a single RRP in each estimation. The results are robust across all models: the magnitudes of bottom-up spillover effect revolve between 2%-3% in four out of five models and maximize at around 6% when NPD is dropped (see Table B.3 & Figure B.2). Importantly, even when AfD is dropped from the estimation, there is still a statistically significant effect ($p < 0.001$), which signifies that the bottom-up spillover effect is not driven by AfD alone.

In terms of placebo tests, I first use a RRP's vote share in *previous federal election* as outcome. Passing through the 5% threshold in regional election should not affect its vote share in previous federal election. In the second placebo test, the threshold is shifted to 3%: the bottom-up spillover effect should not be triggered by this pseudo-threshold. Third, the forcing variable is changed to a RRP's vote share in federal election, and vote share in *subsequent subnational election* is used as outcome. The rationale of this test is to respond to the question concerning whether there is also a top-down spillover effect. According to information-updating process proposed in this article, passing through the 5% hurdle in FOE within a particular state shall not induce much change in radical right party's viability. As expected, all placebo tests are safely passed (See Tables B.4-B.6).

In terms of covariate balance test, I create dummy variables for pre/post-1989 and all 16 states, and then rerun all analysis using these dummies as outcomes. The motivation is to ensure that these covariates are not factors that confound RD estimates (Caughey & Sekhon, 2011). These covariates shall not be over- or under-represented on each side of the threshold, and one shall not expect to see a significant gap at the threshold in these seemingly irrelevant outcomes. The covariate balance test is reported in Figure B.3 and Table B.7-B.11, showing that almost all estimates of the dummies are indistinguishable from zero. The null results of the East German states dummies are noteworthy, since the current literature always mentions that radical right parties have a stronghold in East Germany (Olsen, 2018). However, the bottom-up spillover effect of RRPs does not merely apply in East Germany. Lastly, because RRP can deliberately decide not to run in some regional elections that they

anticipate would barely fall below the threshold, I use the manipulation testing to check if there is any sorting of datapoints at different bandwidths (Cattaneo et al., 2018). Yet, none of the tests indicates the issue of sorting (Table B.12).

Individual-level mechanism

Having established that the bottom-up spillover effect exists among RRPs at the aggregate level, I turn to the question of which micro-level mechanism is the main driver of this effect. Since the models involve a lot of interaction terms and this paper is primarily interested in the evolvement of RRP voters' political attitude, perception, and vote preference, I plot the marginal effects of AfD voters in the 2017 federal election in the treated units and those of control units over waves. Alongside these marginal plots, I also show the coefficient plots to facilitate interpretation. Regarding the marginal effects of non-AfD voters in the treated units and those in the control units, they are reported only when there is significant difference between the two units (See Table C.1 for full regression results).[6]

To recap, the viability mechanism suggests that AfD voters would update its viability once the party crossed the electoral threshold in a subnational election. As such, AfD voters in the treated states would perceive AfD as more likely to enter federal parliament than those in the control states. However, Figure 3 shows this is not the case: although the perceived probability of AfD entering federal parliament increases in subsequent waves for both AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states, the difference in probability between the two units is not distinguishable from

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[6] Since the regression model is a fixed effect model, there is no coefficient for the first wave being estimated. Thus, the marginal effects of the first wave being estimated are imputed using the residuals of the treated units and the control units respectively.

one another. On the other hand, I find that non-AfD voters in the treated states perceive AfD as more likely to break into federal parliament than those in the control states (see Figure C.1). In short, this implies that non-AfD voters would incorporate the information about AfD's entry into subnational parliament and then update its viability, but this information-updating process does not seem to occur among AfD voters.

Also, the viability mechanism expects that, after it had entered subnational parliament, RRP voters in the upcoming FOE are more likely to choose the party as their first vote preference due to an increase in perceived viability. Thus, AfD voters in the treated states should be more likely to prefer AfD than those in the control states. Yet, the result cannot provide solid support for this expectation as well, since AfD's entry into subnational parliaments does not seem to have a stable positive effect on the probability of choosing AfD as the first vote preference. Specifically, AfD voters in the treated states are only significantly more likely to choose AfD as preference than those in the control states in wave 6 only ($p < 0.01$). Taken together, the viability mechanism is unlikely to be the main mechanism for the bottom-up spillover effect.
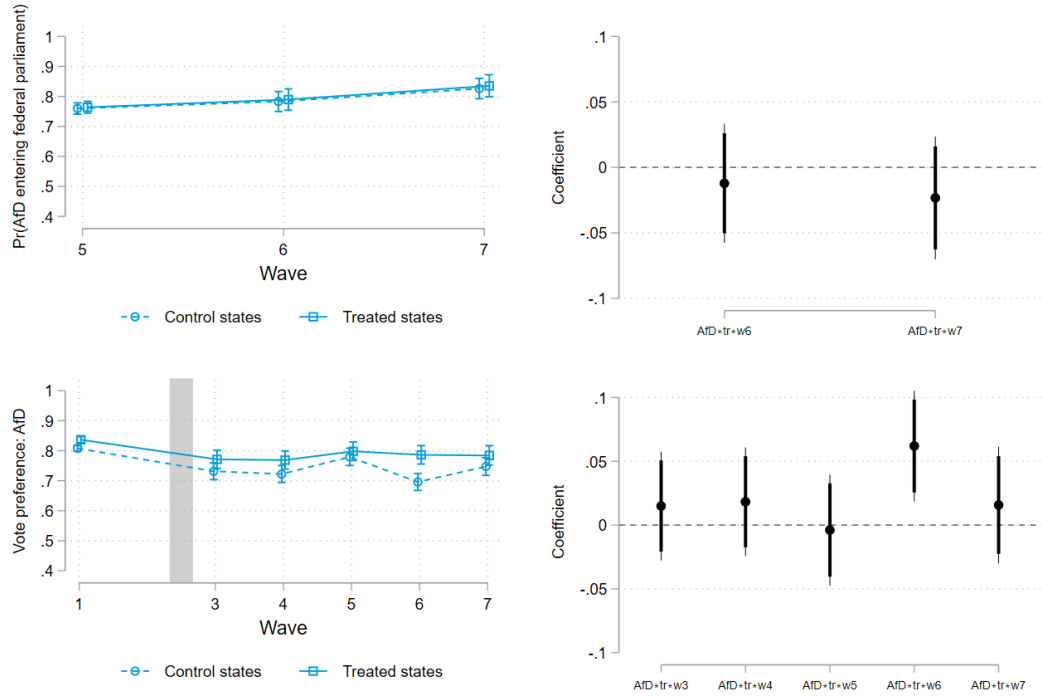
Figure 3. Viability mechanism

Note: Upper-left panel: the perceived probability of AfD entering federal parliament among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; Lower-left panel: the probability of choosing AfD as the first vote preference among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; 95% confidence intervals are shown. Right panels plot the coefficients of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states.

Next, moving on to the exposure mechanism, we look at the outcome concerning exposure to AfD's campaign and knowledge of AfD's immigration position, as shown in Figure 4. One can notice that AfD voters in the treated units and those in the control units are more likely to receive AfD's campaign information across waves, which can be attributed to the campaign effect. However, AfD voters in the treated states are not significantly more likely to receive campaign information from the party than those in the control states. Also, regarding the knowledge of AfD's immigration position, one can see that the knowledge of AfD voters in the treated states is indistinguishable

from that of AfD voters in the control states. Overall, these findings cannot lend support to the exposure mechanism because AfD voters in the two units are similar in terms of campaign information reception and the knowledge of AfD's immigration position.
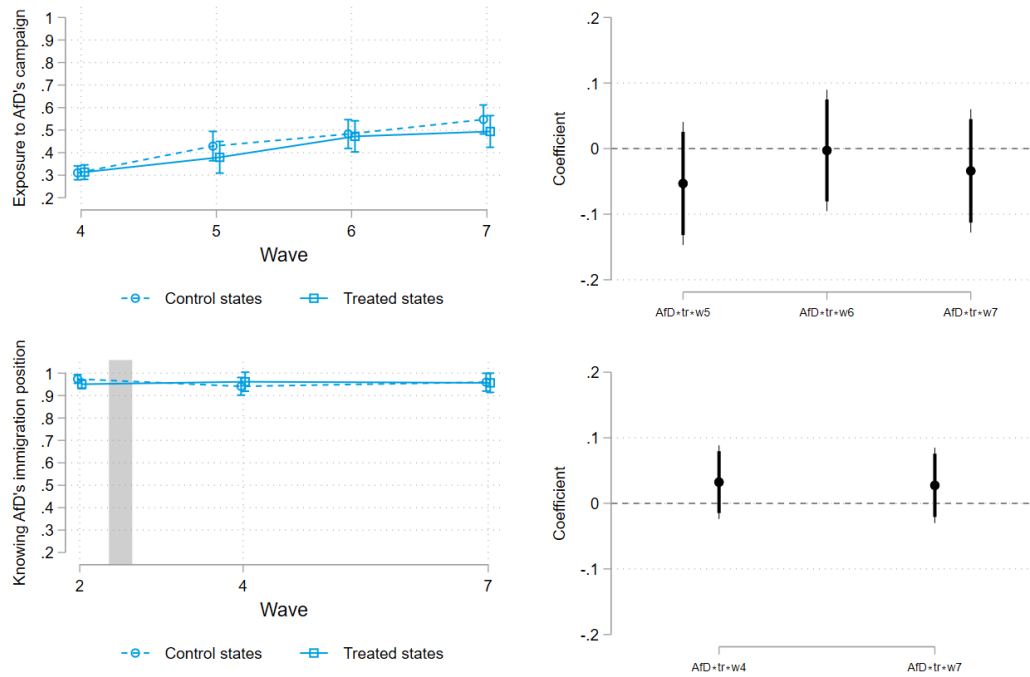
Figure 4. Exposure mechanism

Note: Upper-left panel: the level of exposure to AfD's campaign among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; Lower-left panel: the knowledge of AfD's immigration position among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; 95% confidence intervals are shown. Right panels plot the coefficients of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states.

Lastly, I turn to whether the bottom-up spillover effect is driven by the legitimation mechanism. The results are shown in Figure 5. Regarding the rating of AfD, one can see that, before the party broke into subnational parliaments in the treated states, AfD voters in the treated states and control states shared similar rating of AfD. However,

from wave 4 onwards, the rating of AfD increases significantly among the AfD voters in the treated states, but not among those AfD voters in the control states. In the post-treatment waves (i.e. wave 4-7), the differences in rating between the two units ranges from 0.32 to 0.51 within a 11-point scale. In other words, AfD's entry into subnational parliament significantly improves AfD voters' affinity with the party.

Moving on to the rating of the party leader, one can note that AfD's entry into subnational parliament can also foster AfD voters' affinity with the party leader. Again, before the party had entered subnational parliaments in the treated states, the ratings of the party leader were similar among AfD voters in the treated states and control states. But after AfD's entry into subnational parliaments, the ratings of Frauke Petry among the AfD voters in the treated states diverge from that of those in the control states. In the post-treatment waves, the differences in rating between the two units ranges from 0.43 to 0.55 within a 11-point scale. In sum, the result supports the hypothesis that AfD voters evaluate the party and its candidate more positively once the party crossed the subnational electoral threshold.
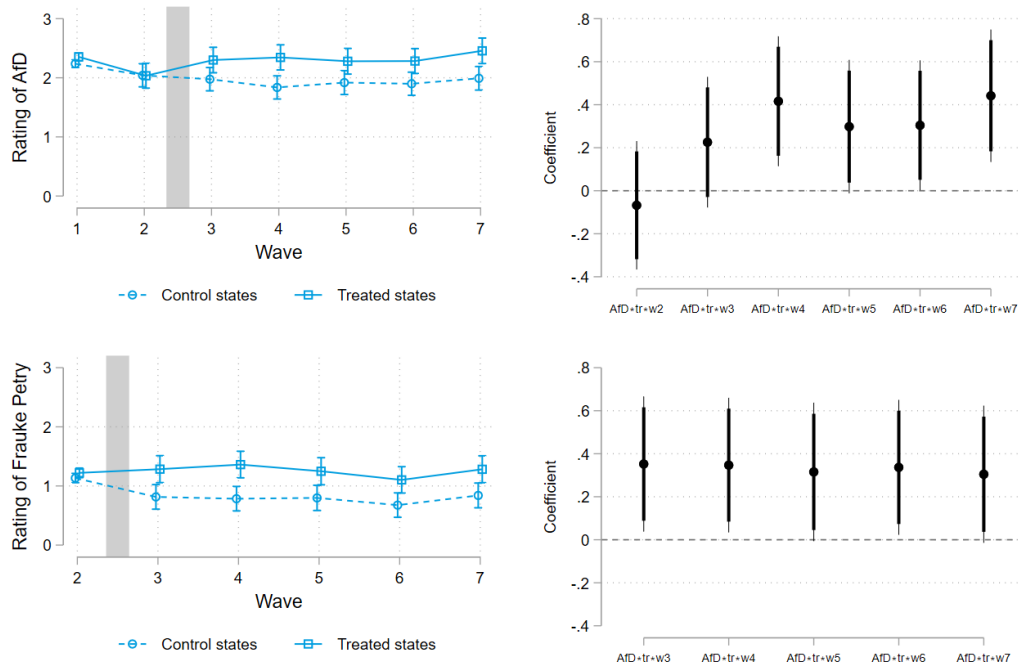
Figure 5. Legitimation mechanism

Note: Upper-left panel: the rating of AfD among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control state; Lower-left panel: the rating of Frauke Petry among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; 95% confidence intervals are shown. Right panel plots the coefficient of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states

Appendix C presents several robustness checks for the legitimation mechanism. First, one can suspect that the improved rating of AfD and that of its leader in the treated states is not driven by AfD's breakthrough into the subnational parliament, but by the campaign effect during subnational elections. To eliminate this possibility, I substitute the dependent variable with the rating of all other five parties (i.e. CDU, SPD, FDP, Green, and Left Party) and replace the dummy variable AfD_i with a dummy variable of these five parties, one at a time (See Figure C.2 and Figure C.3). The same procedure is repeated using the rating of all other five parties' leading candidates as dependent variables (See Figure C.4 and Figure C.5). In total, ten models are

generated. Out of these ten models, only two models are the rating in the treated unit significantly differ from that in the control unit in two waves (i.e. when the dependent variable is the rating of FDP and the rating of its leading candidate). Taken together, the improved rating of AfD in the treated states cannot be attributed to the campaign effect during subnational elections.

Next, some may challenge that, after AfD had broken into subnational parliaments in those treated states, voters in the control states could also incorporate this information as well, thus leading to the contamination of control units. To check whether such contamination is serious, I drop those respondents in the control units and incorporate those respondents who live in the "already treated states" back to analysis as placebo test samples and rerun the panel regression. Here, the dummy tr_i is now coded as 1 if respondent i lives in an already treated state and 0 if he/she lives in a treated state. If there is contamination of units, there should still be a gap in the rating of AfD and the rating of party leader between AfD voters in the treated states and those in the "already treated states" after wave 2. However, none of the coefficients is positive and statistically significant, and so the contamination of units should not be a critical concern (see Figure C.6 and Table C.2).

Conclusion

By bringing together the literature on information-updating in concatenated elections and that of SOE, this paper analyzes whether and how a RRP's electoral result in a subnational election affects its vote share and voters' calculus of voting in a subsequent national election. It argues that a RRP's electoral result in a SOE can

reveal the distribution of voters' preferences, which can enter voters' calculus of voting and foster its performance in a subsequent FOE. Through the case of Germany, I first find that, at the aggregate level, there is a bottom-up spillover effect for RRPs: if a RRP crosses the regional electoral hurdle, its vote share in a subsequent FOE increases substantially.

Next, to analyze the micro-level information-updating process, I use a panel dataset to ascertain whether it is the viability mechanism, exposure mechanism, or legitimation mechanism that drives this effect. Specifically, I trace how AfD voters' political attitudes, perceptions, and vote preferences evolved when the AfD broke into subnational parliaments in some states but not in others. My analysis could not find solid evidence for the viability mechanism. The reason for this is that the perceived likelihood of entering the national parliament is similar between AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; the same applies to the probability of choosing the AfD as the first preference. The findings likewise do not support the exposure mechanism, because AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states have similar levels of campaign information and knowledge of AfD's immigration position. What the analysis suggests is that the legitimation mechanism is the dominant mechanism—AfD voters in the treated states saw the party and its leading candidate in a more positive light after it had entered subnational parliaments.

For sure, there are some limitations that can only be addressed by future studies. First, one should bear in mind that the data that traces the evolvement of AfD voters' political attitude and perception is an online panel. This online sample may not be fully representative of the German electorate and the respondents who stay in the

panel usually have higher political interest than average. Hence, these respondents may be more likely to follow political news, receive campaign information, and know the policy positions of different parties (Gärtner et al., 2020). This nonrandom probability online sample may partially explain the null findings for the viability mechanism and the exposure mechanism. Also, the panel did not measure some parameters of interest before the treatment. As such, part of the analysis relies on the assumption that the outcomes in the treated units and those in the control units are similar in the pre-treatment waves. Lastly, although this paper attempts to address the issue of contamination of units, it cannot completely rule out this possibility. So, theoretically speaking, the viability mechanism and the exposure mechanism may still exist alongside the legitimation mechanism. Nevertheless, this paper still demonstrates that the legitimation mechanism is the dominant mechanism that drives the bottom-up spillover effect for RRPs, since the issue of contamination should merely attenuate the effect of the AfD's breakthrough in the subnational elections.

The findings of this paper can contribute to the field by, first, speaking to the rich literature that explains RRP success. In recent decades, there had been seminal studies of RRPs that rely on either demand side or supply side explanation to analyze their rise in the national arena (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997; Mudde, 2007). Also, there are some works that adopt a demand side or supply side approach to study RRP's success in subnational arenas (Kestilä & Söderlund, 2007; Patana, 2020). Yet, this paper is the first one to analyze how a RRP's subnational success helps it to break into the national parliament. Although this paper only uses the case of RRPs in Germany to study the bottom-up spillover effect and its mechanisms, the findings surely suggests that future works on RRPs should pay more attention to how SOEs

and FOEs interact in a multi-level system. For instance, Vox's success in Andalusia in 2018 is another possible example of the bottom-up spillover effect that could be tested. Also, it is worthwhile to study those cases in which a bottom-up spillover effect fails to materialize, even though the RRP already received representation at the regional level. In that regard, the National Front under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen may be an important example.

In addition, the results of this paper can enrich our understanding of the SOE framework. The conventional SOE framework often suggests that a small ideologically extreme party will lose vote in a FOE (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020). However, this paper suggests that, once we consider how the electoral result of previous SOEs can impact on subsequent FOEs, this need not be the case. As a starting point, this paper uses RRPs in Germany as the most likely case to test for a bottom-up spillover effect. The bottom-up spillover effect for RRPs raises the questions of whether a bottom-up spillover effect exists in other party families, such as radical left parties, ethnoterritorial parties, and liberal parties. Moreover, the spillover effect analyzed in this paper only concerns the impact of subnational election, which is a subset of SOEs. Hence, this research should open avenues for other research that study the spillover effects of local elections or referenda in a multi-level system.

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Appendix

Table A.1 Data collection period of the GLES panel

Wave	Date of Collection
1	2016-10-06 to 2016-11-10
2	2017-02-16 to 2017-03-03
3	2017-05-11 to 2017-05-23
4	2017-07-06 to 2017-07-17
5	2017-08-17 to 2017-08-28
6	2017-09-04 to 2017-09-13
7	2017-09-18 to 2017-09-23

Table A.2 No. of waves in which respondents participated in the GLES panel

	Freq.	Percent
0	27	0.26
1	2180	21.18
2	1018	9.89
3	625	6.07
4	585	5.68
5	569	5.53
6	1067	10.37
7	4220	41.01
Total	10291	100.00

Table A.3 Descriptive overview

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Pr(AfD entering Bundestag)	0.59	0.31	0.00	1.00
Vote preference: AfD	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00
Knowing AfD's immigration position	0.87	0.34	0.00	1.00
Rating of AfD	2.90	3.02	1.00	11.00
Rating of Frauke Petry	3.04	2.80	1.00	11.00
AfD partisan	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Socio-econ (ego)	4.11	1.45	1.00	7.00
Immigration (ego)	5.05	1.73	1.00	7.00
Political interest	2.58	1.05	1.00	5.00

Note: Descriptive statistics of the variables are calculated using the full dataset of the baseline analysis

Table A.4 Variable Description

Variable	Question Wording and Coding	GLES Variables
Probability of AfD entering Bundestag (pr_AfD_)	Question: How likely do you think it is for the following parties to be represented in the Bundestag after the federal election? (I) AfD Original Coding: (1) definitely not (2) probably not (3) maybe (4) probably (5) definitely ----------------------------------- (-93) not asked, terminated (-95) not participated (-99) no answer The variable is recoded as 1 for definitely and 0 for definitely not. Not asked, Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.	kp5_3010i kp6_3010i kp7_3010i
Vote preference for AfD (AfD_votepref_)	Question: You have two votes in the federal election. The first vote is for a candidate in your local constituency, the second vote is for a party. How will you mark your ballot? (B) Second vote: - CDU/CSU (Christlich Demokratische Union / Christlich-Soziale Union) - SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)	kp1_190b kp2_190b kp3_190b kp4_190b kp5_190b kp6_190b kp7_190b

- FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei)
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
- Die Linke
- AfD (Alternative für Deutschland)
- Other party
- Don't know yet

Original Coding:
(1) CDU/CSU
(4) SPD
(5) FDP
(6) GRÜNE
(7) DIE LINKE
(322) AfD
(801) other party
(-98) don't know

(-93) not asked, terminated
(-95) not participated
(-97) not applicable
(-99) no answer

The variable is recoded as 1 if respondents choose AfD as their preference and 0 if they choose other parties or answered not likely to vote / certain not to vote in the "intention to vote" filter. Don't know, Not asked (terminated), Not participated, Not applicable, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

Exposure to AfD's campaign (campaign_AfD_)	Question: During the election campaign, there are different ways of acquiring information about politics in Germany. From which parties did you receive information during the past week? I…	kp4_421ki kp4_421gi kp4_421di kp4_421ei kp4_421hi kp4_421bi

	(K) visited websites of a party or a candidate	kp4_421ii
	(G) saw campaign posters	
	(D) saw party political broadcasts on TV	kp5_421ki
	(E) listened to party political broadcasts on the radio	kp5_421gi
	(H) had conversations at an election campaign booth	kp5_421di
	(B) received campaign flyers, e-mails, text messages	kp5_421ei
	(I) received information material via a social network like for example Facebook or others.	kp5_421hi
		kp5_421bi
		kp5_421ii
	(Y) none of the above applies	
		kp6_421ki
	Coding parties:	kp6_421gi
	(I) AfD	kp6_421di
		kp6_421ei
	Original Coding checkboxes wave:	kp6_421hi
	(0) not mentioned	kp6_421bi
	(1) mentioned	kp6_421ii

	(-93) not asked, terminated	kp7_421ki
	(-95) not participated	kp7_421gi
	(-99) no answer	kp7_421di
		kp7_421ei
	The variable is coded as 1 if respondents mention any one of the items and 0 if they mentioned none of them. Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.	kp7_421hi
		kp7_421bi
		kp7_421ii
Knowing AfD's immigration position (know_AfD_immig_)	Question: Let's turn to the issue of immigration. Should it be easier or more difficult for foreigners to immigrate? What do you think are the positions of the political parties on this issue? (I) AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) Original Coding: (1) 1 immigration for foreigners should be easier	kp2_1110i kp4_1110i kp7_1110i

(2) 2

(3) 3

(4) 4

(5) 5

(6) 6

(7) 7 immigration for foreigners should be more difficult

(-98) don't know

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

The variable is coded as 1 if respondents answer AfD's immigration position and 0 if they answer "don't know". Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

| Party rating (rate_CDU_, rate_SPD_, rate_FDP_, rate_Gr_, rate_LP_, rate_AfD_) | Question: What do you think of the different parties in general?
(A) CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union)
(C) SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
(D) FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei)
(E) Bündnis 90/Die Grünen [labelled in dataset as "GRÜNE"]
(F) Die Linke [labelled in dataset as "DIE LINKE"]
(I) AfD (Alternative für Deutschland)

Coding:
(1) -5 I do not think much of the party at all
(2) -4
(3) -3
(4) -2
(5) -1
(6) 0
(7) +1 | kp1_430a,c-f,i
kp2_430a,c-f,i
kp3_430a, c-f,i
kp4_430a,c-f,i
kp5_430a,c-f,i
kp6_430a,c-f,i
kp7_430a,c-f,i |

(8) +2

(9) +3

(10) +4

(11) +5 I think a great deal of the party

(-71) haven't heard of [labelled in dataset as "subject unknown"]

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

Haven't heard of, Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

Candidate rating (CDU_cand_ SPD_cand_ FDP_cand_ Gr_cand_ LP_cand_ AfD_cand_)	Please state what you think of some leading politicians Wave 2-7: (A) Angela Merkel (Z1) Martin Schulz (S) Christian Lindner (W) Katrin Göring-Eckardt (Y) Sahra Wagenknecht (P) Frauke Petry	kp2_650a,z1,s,w,y,p kp3_650a,z1,s,w,y,p kp4_650a,z1,s,w,y,p kp5_650a,z1,s,w,y,p kp6_650a,z1,s,w,y,p kp7_650a,z1,s,w,y,p

Coding:

(1) -5 I do not think much of the politician at all

(2) -4

(3) -3

(4) -2

(5) -1

(6) 0

(7) +1

(8) +2

(9) +3

(10) +4

(11) +5 I think a great deal of the politician

(-71) haven't heard of [labelled in dataset as "subject unknown"]

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

Haven't heard of, Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

AfD partisanship (AfD_pi_)	Question: In Germany, many people lean towards a particular party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you, do you in general lean towards a particular party? If so, which one?	kp1_2090 kp2_2090 kp3_2090 kp4_2090 kp5_2090 kp6_2090 kp7_2090

Coding:

(1) CDU/CSU

(2) CDU

(3) CSU

(4) SPD

(5) FDP

(6) GRÜNE

(7) DIE LINKE

(322) AfD

(801) other party

(808) no party

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

The variable is coded as 1 if respondents lean towards

	AfD and 0 if they lean towards other parties or answer "no party". Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.	
Economic attitude (tax_ego_)	Question: Some people prefer lower taxes, although this results in less social services. Others prefer more social services, although this results in raising taxes. What is your personal view on this issue? Coding: (1) 1 lower taxes, although this results in less social services (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 more social services, although this results in raising taxes ----------------------------------- (-93) not asked, terminated (-95) not participated (-99) no answer The value of this variable at wave 5 is imputed by using the variable's average of wave 4 and wave 6. Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.	kp1_1090 kp2_1090 kp3_1090 kp4_1090 kp6_1090 kp7_1090
Immigration attitude (mig_ego_)	Question: Should it be easier or more difficult for foreigners to immigrate? What is your personal view on immigration of foreigners?	kp1_1130 kp2_1130 kp3_1130 kp4_1130

| | Coding: | kp6_1130 |
| | (1) 1 immigration for foreigners should be easier | kp7_1130 |

(2) 2

(3) 3

(4) 4

(5) 5

(6) 6

(7) 7 immigration for foreigners should be more difficult

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

The value of this variable at wave 5 is imputed by using the variable's average of wave 4 and wave 6. Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

Political interest (polint_)	Question: Quite generally, how interested are you in politics?	kp1_010 kp2_010 kp3_010
	Coding:	kp4_010
	(1) very interested	kp5_010
	(2) somewhat interested	kp6_010
	(3) in between	kp7_010
	(4) not very interested	
	(5) not at all interested	

(-93) not asked, terminated

(-95) not participated

(-99) no answer

Not asked (terminated), Not participated, No answer, and Item nonresponse, were treated as missing.

Table B.1. Bottom-up spillover effect.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$D_{i,s,t}$	2.96[*]	3.92[*]	4.29[*]	4.15[+]	4.25[+]
	(1.23)	(1.66)	(1.96)	(2.19)	(2.29)
Bandwidth	Full sample	±5%	±4%	±3%	±2.69%
Left of c (N)	166	166	87	41	36
Right of c (N)	28	18	14	13	12

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. [+] $p < 0.10$, [*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

Table B.2. Bottom-up spillover effect (Biased-corrected estimate).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$D_{i,s,t}$	1.83	5.33**	4.51*	5.59*	5.75*
	(1.23)	(1.66)	(1.96)	(2.19)	(2.29)
Bandwidth	Full sample	±5%	±4%	±3%	±2.69%
Left of c (N)	166	166	87	41	36
Right of c (N)	28	18	14	13	12

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. $^{+} p < 0.10$, $^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Figure B.1. Regression discontinuity estimates of the bottom-up spillover effect (Bias-corrected Estimate).

Table B.3. Bottom-up spillover effect that exclude one radical right party in each model.

	(1) without AfD	(2) without DVU	(3) without NPD	(4) without REP	(5) without Schill and Offensive D
$D_{i,s,t}$	2.08***	2.62*	6.72***	3.07*	2.96*
	(0.49)	(1.30)	(1.99)	(1.44)	(1.23)
Bandwidth	Full sample	Full sample	Full sample	Full sample	Full sample
left of c (N)	165	161	71	101	166
right of c (N)	15	27	17	26	28

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. $^+ p < 0.10$, $^* p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$
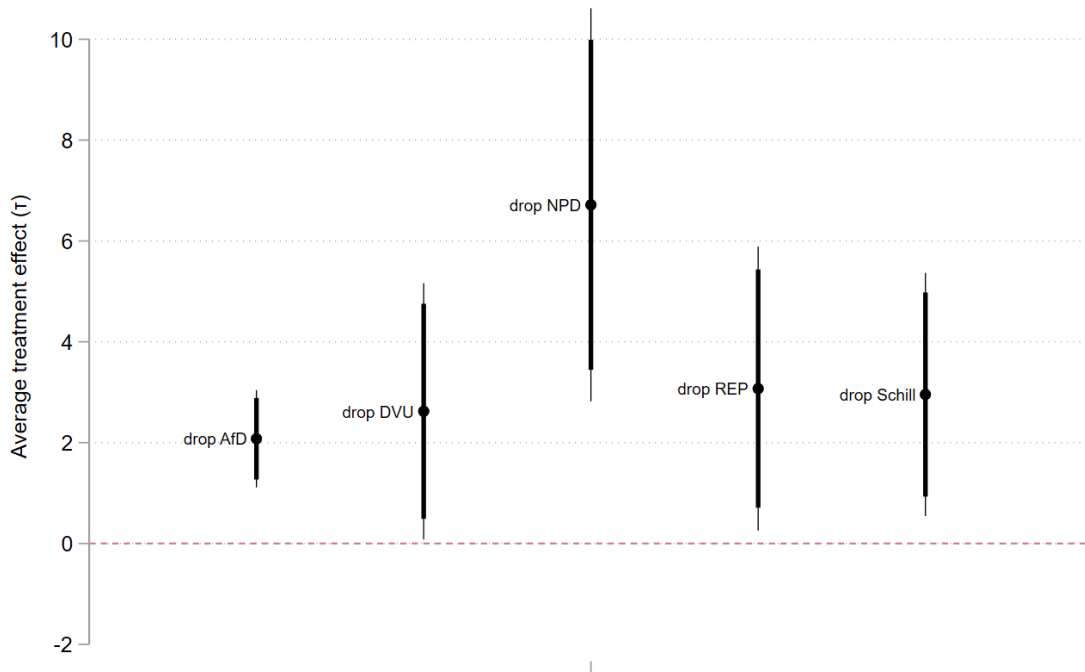
Figure B.2. Regression discontinuity estimates of the bottom-up spillover effect (dropping one radical right party at a time).

Note: Thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals.

Table B.4. Placebo test: vote share in previous federal election as outcome.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.10	1.14	1.35	1.44	1.25
	(0.82)	(1.02)	(1.10)	(1.06)	(1.04)
Bandwidth	Full sample	±5%	±4%	±3%	±2.69%
left of c (N)	160	160	82	38	33
right of c (N)	32	21	17	16	15

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in previous federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. $^+ p < 0.10$, $^* p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Table B.5. Placebo test: pseudo-threshold at 3%.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$D_{i,s,t}$	0.57	-0.20	-0.33	-0.11	-0.00
	(0.64)	(0.53)	(0.49)	(0.41)	(0.38)
Bandwidth	Full sample	±5%	±4%	±3%	±2.69%
left of c (N)	146	146	146	144	117
right of c (N)	49	35	31	27	24

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. $^+ p < 0.10$, $^* p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Table B.6. Placebo test: top-down concatenated election effect.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$D_{i,s,t}$	0.01	-0.40	-1.94	-1.95	-2.11
	(2.31)	(2.82)	(3.11)	(3.24)	(3.28)
Bandwidth	Full sample	±5%	±4%	±3%	±2.69%
left of c (N)	201	201	110	52	45
right of c (N)	16	12	11	11	11

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent regional election; treatment is passing through the 5% threshold in a federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level. $^+ p < 0.10$, $^* p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$
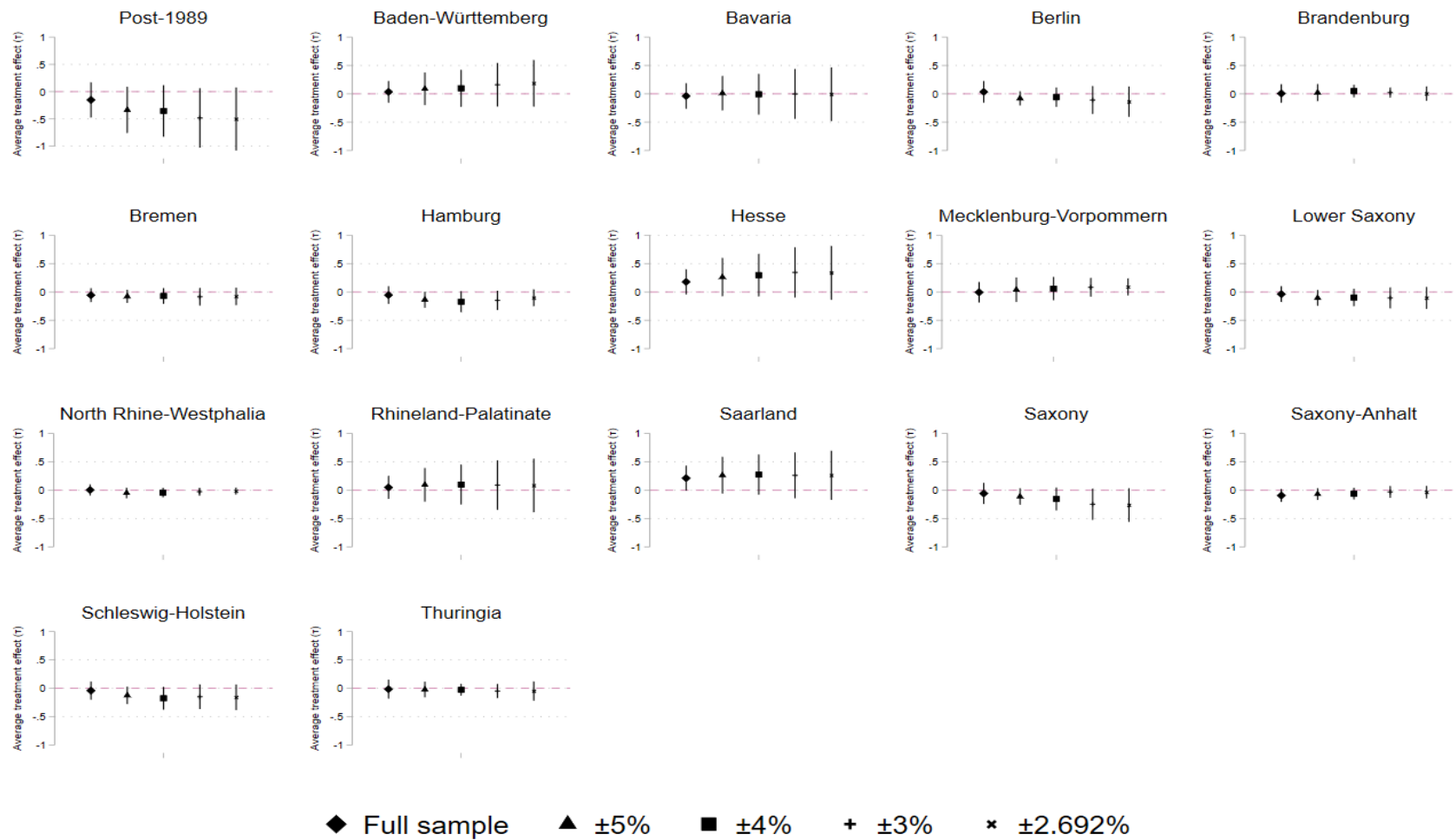
Figure B.3. Coefficient plot of covariate balance tests

Note: Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Table B.7. Covariate balance test (Full Sample).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
	Post-1989	Baden-Württemberg	Bavaria	Berlin	Brandenburg	Bremen	Hamburg	Hesse	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Lower Saxony	North Rhine-Westphalia	Rhineland-Palatinate	Saarland	Saxony	Saxony-Anhalt	Schleswig-Holstein	Thuringia
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.15	0.03	-0.04	-0.08	0.01	-0.06	-0.05	0.18	-0.01	-0.04	0.00	0.05	-0.25	-0.15	0.03	-0.04	-0.08
	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.06)
left of c (N)	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315
right of c (N)	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table B.8. Covariate balance test (5% bandwidth).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
	Post-1989	Baden-Württemberg	Bavaria	Berlin	Brandenburg	Bremen	Hamburg	Hesse	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Lower Saxony	North Rhine-Westphalia	Rhineland-Palatinate	Saarland	Saxony	Saxony-Anhalt	Schleswig-Holstein	Thuringia
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.34	0.09	0.01	-0.08	0.02	-0.08	-0.14	0.26	0.04	-0.10	-0.05	0.09	0.26	-0.11	-0.07	-0.12	-0.02
	(0.22)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.17)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.07)
left of c (N)	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315
right of c (N)	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table B.9. Covariate balance test (4% bandwidth).

	(1) Post-1989	(2) Baden-Württemberg	(3) Bavaria	(4) Berlin	(5) Brandenburg	(6) Bremen	(7) Hamburg	(8) Hesse	(9) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	(10) Lower Saxony	(11) North Rhine-Westphalia	(12) Rhineland-Palatinate	(13) Saarland	(14) Saxony	(15) Saxony-Anhalt	(16) Schleswig-Holstein	(17) Thuringia
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.35	0.10	-0.01	-0.06	0.05	-0.07	-0.17	0.30	0.06	-0.10	-0.04	0.10	0.27	-0.16	-0.06	-0.18	-0.03
	(0.24)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.19)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.10)	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.05)
left of c (N)	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126	126
right of c (N)	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level.

$^{*}\, p < 0.05,\ ^{**}\, p < 0.01,\ ^{***}\, p < 0.001$

Table B.10. Covariate balance test (3% bandwidth).

	(1) Post-1989	(2) Baden-Württemberg	(3) Bavaria	(4) Berlin	(5) Brandenburg	(6) Bremen	(7) Hamburg	(8) Hesse	(9) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	(10) Lower Saxony	(11) North Rhine-Westphalia	(12) Rhineland-Palatinate	(13) Saarland	(14) Saxony	(15) Saxony-Anhalt	(16) Schleswig-Holstein	(17) Thuringia
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.48	0.16	-0.00	-0.11	0.02	-0.08	-0.15	0.34	0.08	-0.10	-0.03	0.09	0.26	-0.25	-0.03	-0.15	-0.05
	(0.28)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.13)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.23)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.04)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.14)	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.06)
left of c (N)	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
right of c (N)	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level.

$^{*}\, p < 0.05,\ ^{**}\, p < 0.01,\ ^{***}\, p < 0.001$

Table B.11. Covariate balance test (Optimal bandwidth = 2.69%).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
	Post-1989	Baden-Württemberg	Bavaria	Berlin	Brandenburg	Bremen	Hamburg	Hesse	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Lower Saxony	North Rhine-Westphalia	Rhineland-Palatinate	Saarland	Saxony	Saxony-Anhalt	Schleswig-Holstein	Thuringia
$D_{i,s,t}$	-0.50	0.19	-0.01	-0.14	0.00	-0.08	-0.10	0.34	0.09	-0.10	-0.02	0.08	0.26	-0.26	-0.04	-0.16	-0.05
	(0.29)	(0.21)	(0.24)	(0.14)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.24)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.15)	(0.06)	(0.12)	(0.09)
left of c (N)	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
right of c (N)	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

Note: Outcome is party's vote share in subsequent federal election within a particular state. Robust standard errors are in parentheses and they are clustered at state-election level.

[*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

Table B.12. Manipulation Testing using Local Polynomial Density Estimation.

	±5%	±4%	±3%	±1.11%
Effective Number of observations (left of c)	207	100	50	44
Effective Number of observations (right of c)	24	20	19	18
p-value	0.0924	0.5113	0.5255	0.1132

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The kerel being used is triangular. Local polynomial density estimators are estimated using jackknife standard errors. A *p*-value below the significance threshold (0.05) indicates that one can reject the null hypothesis of no sorting.

Table C.1. Viability mechanism, exposure mechanism and legitimation mechanism: fixed effect models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
wave 2					-0.09**	
					(0.04)	
wave 3		-0.04***			-0.19***	-0.20***
		(0.01)			(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 4		-0.04***	-0.04***		-0.15***	-0.16***
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 5		-0.03***		0.13***	-0.15***	-0.33***
		(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 6	0.07***	-0.04***		0.26***	-0.14***	-0.23***
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 7	0.15***	-0.04***	-0.01	0.35***	-0.14***	-0.30***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.04)
tr * wave 2					-0.05	
					(0.05)	
tr * wave 3		-0.00			-0.02	0.03
		(0.01)			(0.05)	(0.06)
tr * wave 4		-0.00	0.01		-0.02	0.14*
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.05)	(0.06)
tr * wave 5		-0.01		0.00	-0.05	0.05
		(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.06)
tr * wave 6	0.01+	-0.00		-0.01	-0.04	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.06)
tr * wave 7	0.03***	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.09+	0.05
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.06)
AfD * wave 2					-0.10	
					(0.10)	
AfD * wave 3		-0.04**			-0.07	-0.12
		(0.01)			(0.10)	(0.11)
AfD * wave 4		-0.04**	0.01		-0.26*	-0.19+
		(0.01)	(0.02)		(0.10)	(0.11)
AfD * wave 5		0.00		-0.02	-0.17	-0.00
		(0.02)		(0.03)	(0.11)	(0.11)
AfD * wave 6	-0.05**	-0.07***		-0.09**	-0.20+	-0.23*
	(0.02)	(0.02)		(0.03)	(0.11)	(0.11)
AfD * wave 7	-0.08***	-0.02	-0.01	-0.11***	-0.10	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.11)	(0.11)
tr * AfD * wave 2					-0.07	
					(0.15)	
tr * AfD * wave 3		0.01			0.23	0.35*
		(0.02)			(0.15)	(0.16)
tr * AfD * wave 4		0.02	0.03		0.42**	0.35*
		(0.02)	(0.03)		(0.15)	(0.16)
tr * AfD * wave 5		-0.00		-0.05	0.30+	0.32+
		(0.02)		(0.05)	(0.16)	(0.16)
tr * AfD * wave 6	-0.01	0.06**		-0.00	0.30*	0.34*
	(0.02)	(0.02)		(0.05)	(0.15)	(0.16)
tr * AfD * wave 7	-0.02	0.02	0.03	-0.03	0.44**	0.30+
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.16)	(0.16)
AfD partisan	0.03+	0.26***	0.03+	0.04	1.43***	0.66***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Socio-econ (ego)	-0.00+	-0.00	0.01**	0.00	-0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Immigration (ego)	-0.00	0.00	-0.02***	0.01+	0.01	-0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Political interest	-0.01+	0.00	-0.02***	-0.02+	-0.00	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.61***	0.14***	1.02***	0.08*	2.80***	3.09***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Observations	12581	25608	13173	17028	30603	25194
Number of respondents	4655	4900	4836	4787	4897	4828
Individual FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Note: DV of Model 1: Perceived probability of AfD entering federal parliament; DV of Model 2: Intend to vote for AfD (dummy); DV of Model 3: Knowing AfD's immigration position (dummy); DV of Model 4: Receiving campaign information from AfD (dummy). DV of Model 5: Rating of AfD; DV of Model 6: Rating of Frauke Petry. Entries are coefficients of fixed effect model. + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$
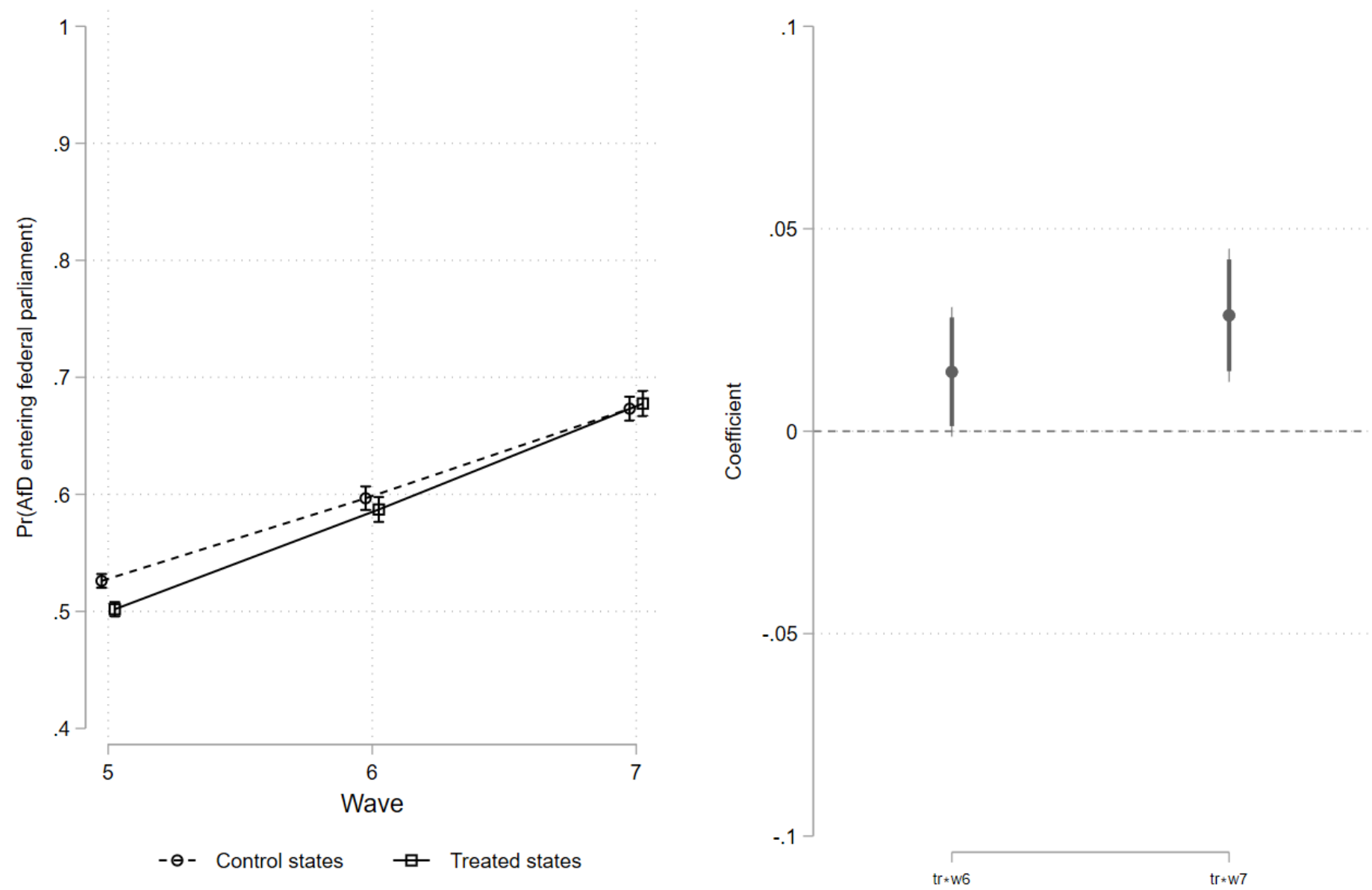
Figure C.1. Viability mechanism among non-AfD voters

Note: Left panel: the perceived probability of AfD entering federal parliament among non-AfD voters in the treated states and those in the control states; 95% confidence intervals are shown. The right panel plots the coefficients of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals.
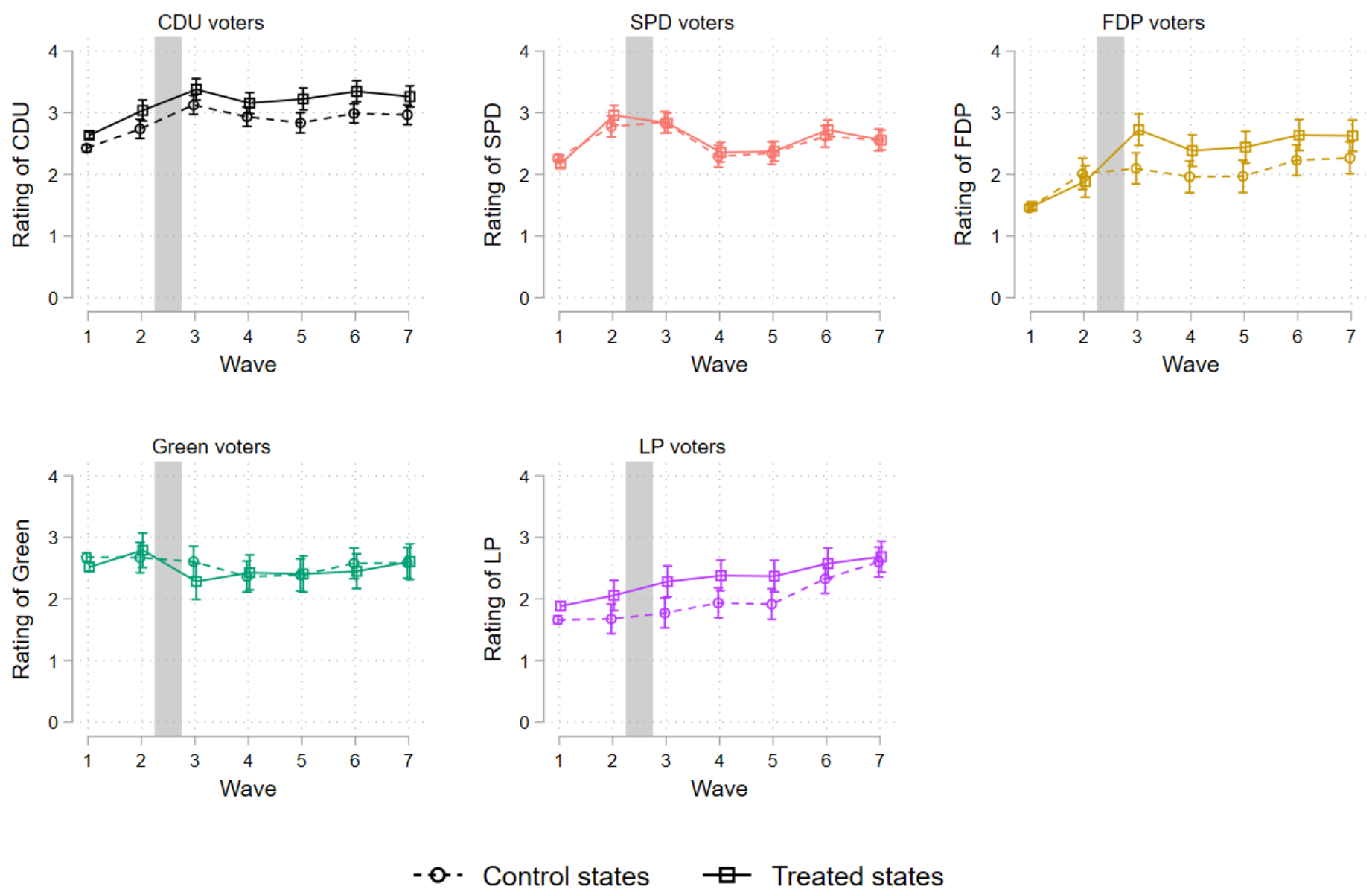
Figure C.2. Placebo test: Rating of other parties

Note: The dependent variable is respondent's rating of different parties. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states; 95% confidence intervals are shown.
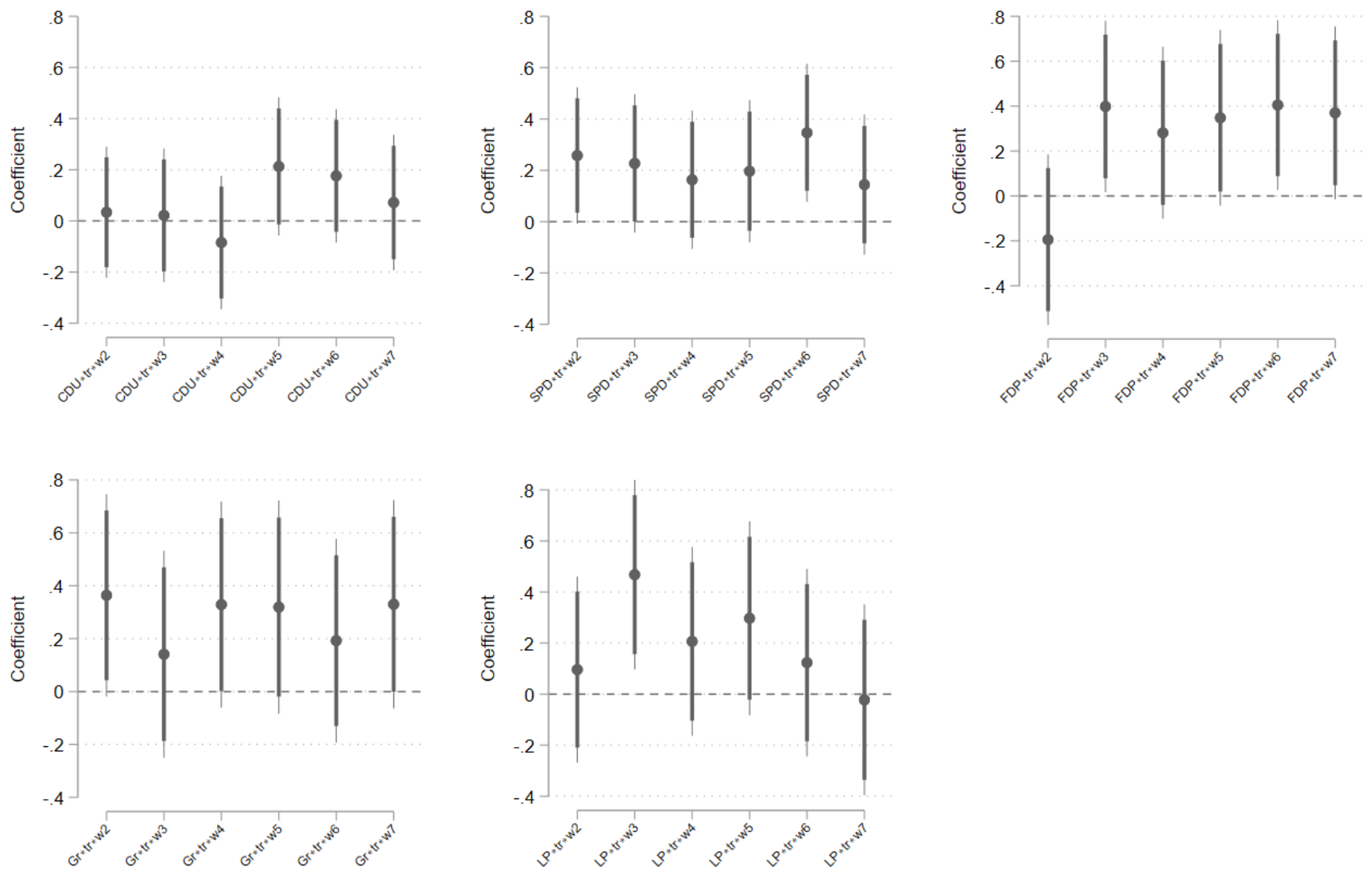
Figure C.3 Coefficient plots of placebo test: Rating of other parties

Note: The dependent variable is respondent's rating of different parties. The panels plot the coefficient of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals.
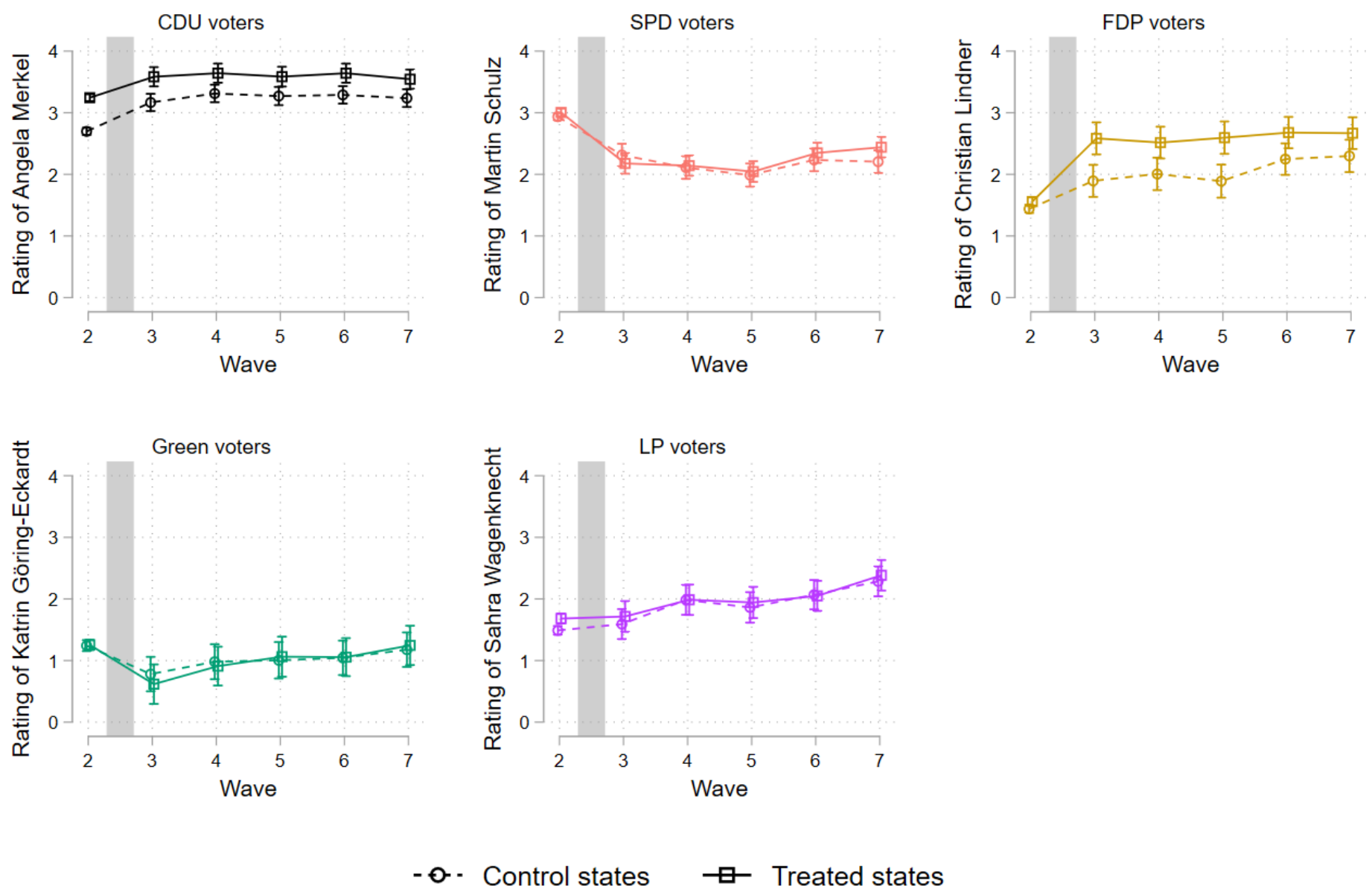
Figure C.4 Placebo test: Rating of different parties' leading candidates

Note: The dependent variable is respondent's rating of different parties' leading candidates. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states; 95% confidence intervals are shown.
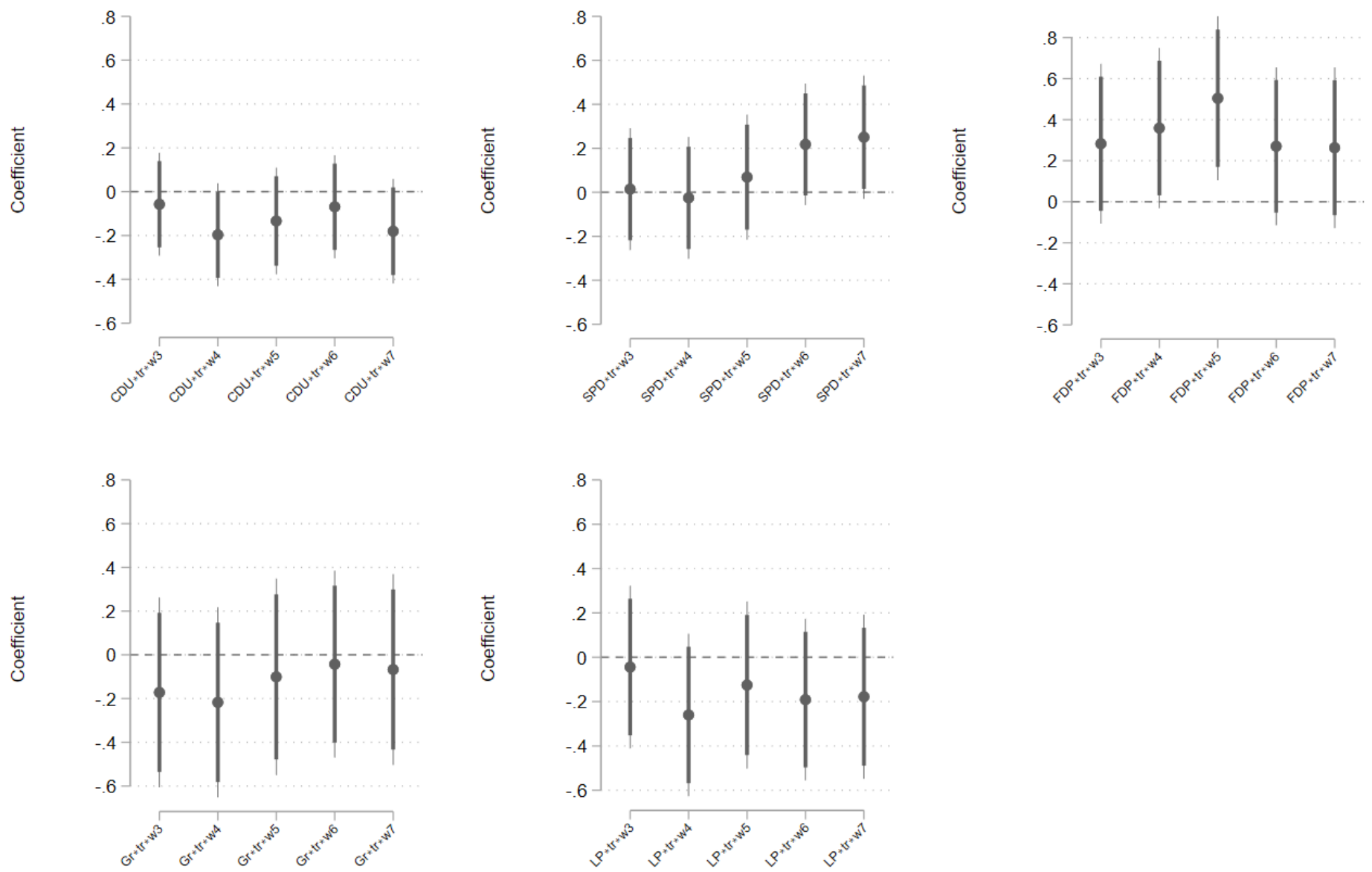
Figure C.5 Coefficient plots of placebo test: Rating of different parties' leading candidates.

Note: The dependent variable is respondent's rating of different parties' leading candidates. The panels plot the coefficient of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals.
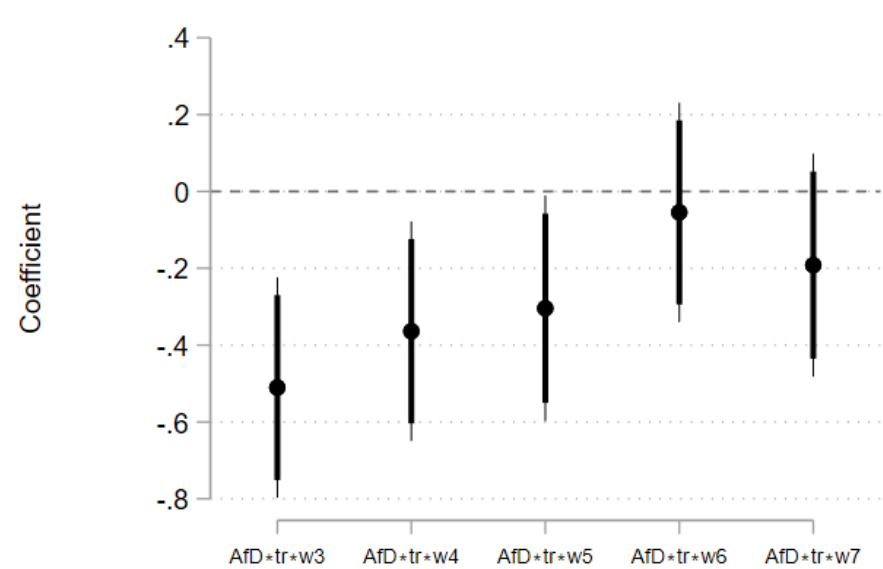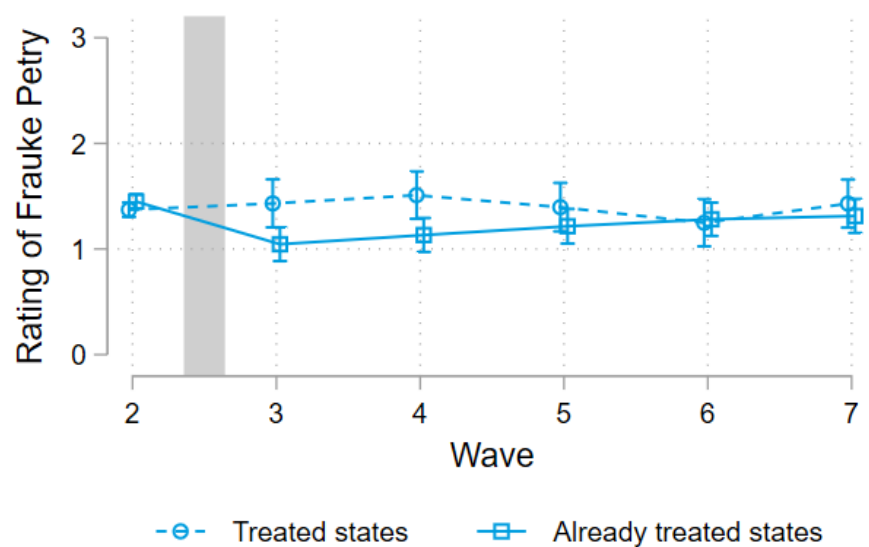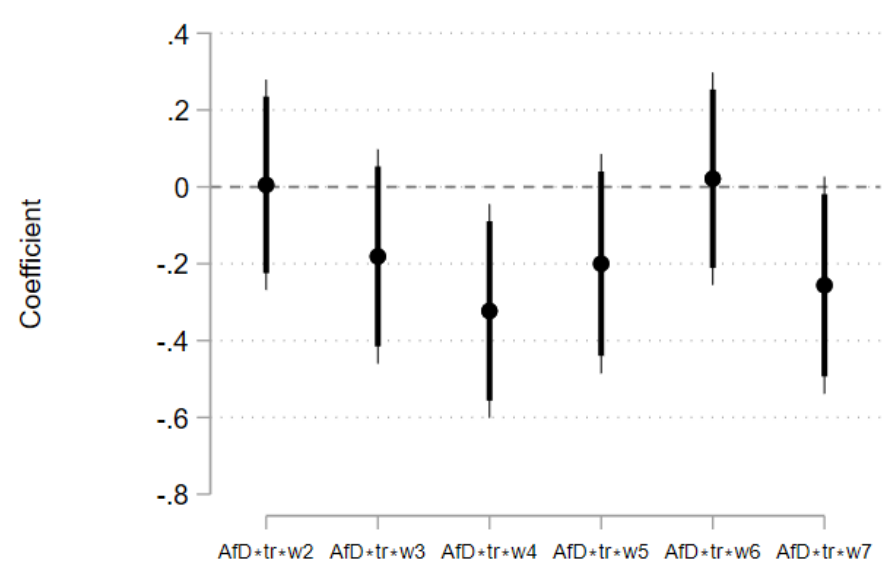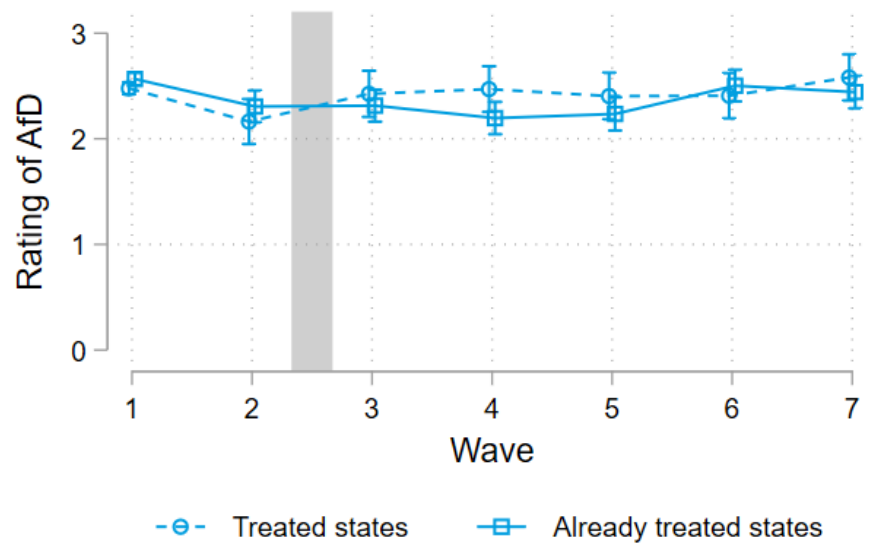
Figure C.6. Check for contamination: using respondents in already treated states and treated states as regression sample

Note: The upper-left panel show the rating of AfD among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the already treated state; the lower-left panel shows the rating of Frauke Petry among AfD voters in the treated states and those in the already treated state; 95% confidence intervals are shown. The right panel plots the coefficient of the parameters; thick and thin error bars represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The gray bar represents the period when AfD had broken into subnational parliament in the treated states

Table C.2. Check for contamination: using respondents in already treated states and treated states as regression sample

	Model 1	Model 2
wave 2	-0.15***	
	(0.04)	
wave 3	-0.21***	-0.17***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 4	-0.17***	-0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 5	-0.20***	-0.29***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 6	-0.18***	-0.23***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
wave 7	-0.23***	-0.25***
	(0.04)	(0.04)
tr * wave 2	0.05	
	(0.05)	
tr * wave 3	-0.02	0.05
	(0.05)	(0.05)
tr * wave 4	-0.04	-0.09
	(0.05)	(0.05)
tr * wave 5	-0.06	0.05
	(0.05)	(0.05)
tr * wave 6	-0.01	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)
tr * wave 7	0.03	-0.00
	(0.05)	(0.05)
AfD * wave 2	-0.17	
	(0.11)	
AfD * wave 3	0.15	0.23
	(0.12)	(0.12)
AfD * wave 4	0.16	0.15
	(0.12)	(0.12)
AfD * wave 5	0.13	0.32**
	(0.12)	(0.12)
AfD * wave 6	0.11	0.11
	(0.12)	(0.12)
AfD * wave 7	0.33**	0.31*
	(0.12)	(0.12)
tr * AfD * wave 2	0.01	
	(0.14)	
tr * AfD * wave 3	-0.18	-0.51***
	(0.14)	(0.15)
tr * AfD * wave 4	-0.32*	-0.36*
	(0.14)	(0.15)
tr * AfD * wave 5	-0.20	-0.30*
	(0.15)	(0.15)
tr * AfD * wave 6	0.02	-0.05
	(0.14)	(0.15)
tr * AfD * wave 7	-0.26	-0.19
	(0.14)	(0.15)
AfD partisan	1.45***	0.71***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Socio-econ (ego)	-0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)

Immigration (ego)	0.02[*]	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Political interest	0.02	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	2.91[***]	3.07[***]
	(0.07)	(0.08)
Observations	38204	31384
Number of respondents	6141	6034
Individual FE	YES	YES

Note: DV of Model 1: Rating of AfD; DV of Model 2: Rating of Frauke Petry. Entries are coefficients of fixed effect model. $^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

# When being populist losers stabilize voting preference: concatenated elections, heterogeneity of losers, and feedback loop voting

Abstract: Although both the winner-loser gap literature and the populist party voting literature are concerned with satisfaction with democracy (SWD), they develop almost in parallel until recently. This research brings them together by investigating whether the change in SWD is heterogeneous between populist losers and non-populist losers. Also, it tests whether a decrease in SWD consolidates populist opposition party support in a subsequent election. Using a unique panel that covers two multi-level concatenated elections in Germany, it shows, first, that after a national election, the drop in SWD is greater among populist losers than among non-populist losers. Second, a drop in SWD can stabilize populist party voting in a subsequent European Parliament election. This research enriches both strands of literature by clearly identifying that populist parties react differently to their losers status. It also suggests that a feedback loop of populist party voting exists.

Introduction

Since the turn of the century, increasing effort has been made to study the winner-loser gap. The basic idea of the winner-loser gap is that the satisfaction with democracy (SWD) of opposition party voters (losers) decreases, whereas the SWD of governing party voters (winners) is boosted in the post-election period (Anderson et al., 2005; Anderson & Guillory, 1997). Scholars have already studied whether the gap is short-term or long-term (Dahlberg & Linde, 2016; van der Meer & Steenvoorden, 2018), and they have analyzed the magnitude of the winner-loser gap in different electoral contexts (Bol et al., 2018; Brunell & Buchler, 2009; Davis & Hitt, 2017; Han & Chang, 2016; Howell & Justwan, 2013; Singh & Thornton, 2016; Wells & Krieckhaus, 2006). The fact that so much scholarly attention has been devoted to studying the winner-loser gap is understandable, since losers' SWD is crucial for the resilience of democracy. On the other hand, the vast literature on populism has long suggested that, apart from ideological or policy considerations, dissatisfaction with the existing democratic system plays an important role in populist party voting. According to this line of thought, dissatisfaction with democracy is associated with inadequate representation by mainstream parties; voting for a populist party is a means of expressing this kind of discontent (Akkerman et al., 2017; Bélanger & Aarts, 2006; Bergh, 2004; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018; Kriesi & Schulte-Cloos, 2020; Rooduijn et al., 2016). But even though both strands of literature concern satisfaction with democracy, they do not speak to each other very often.

This lack of cross-fertilization of the winner-loser gap literature and the populist party voting literature is surprising and leaves at least two very important and intertwined

questions unanswered. For one thing, scholars suggest that losers, usually operationalized as those voting for an opposition party[1], are likely to experience a drop in SWD. But do we expect the declines in SWD to be similar between populist losers and non-populist losers, ceteris paribus? If the drop in SWD among populist losers is larger than that of non-populist losers, then lumping the two groups of losers into a single category is problematic because this approach risks ignoring the heterogeneity of losers. Another issue is that the winner-loser gap literature very often treats SWD or a change in SWD as a dependent variable. Yet, from the insights of the populism literature, it is worth asking about the behavioral implications of a drop in SWD. If losers in a previous election become more dissatisfied with how democracy works, what can we deduce from this about the voting preferences of populist losers in a subsequent election? This second question certainly has profound importance for understanding the rise of populism. If the more dissatisfied populist losers choose the same populist party again in a subsequent election, that means a drop in SWD consolidates the electoral base of populist opposition parties. Exploring this feedback loop of populist party voting is crucial because it helps us understand why populist opposition parties have maintained or even increased their electoral support in recent years. The aim of this article is to bring the winner-loser gap literature and the populist party voting literature together by investigating these two intertwined but understudied questions.

To answer them, this paper leverages a unique panel, which covers two multi-level concatenated elections in Germany, namely the 2013 federal elections and the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections. The analysis shows that, first, there is

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[1] Throughout this article, I follow most winner-loser gap literature in understanding "winner" as voters of a governing party and "losers" as voters of an opposition party. Unless stated otherwise, those terms are used interchangeably.

heterogeneity among losers: populist losers become more dissatisfied with how democracy works than non-populist losers, all else being equal. When studies of the winner-loser gap lump together the two groups of losers into one category, they may neglect the possibility that the drop in SWD among populist losers is larger than that among non-populist losers. Second, this paper finds that populist losers who become more dissatisfied with how democracy works are more likely to be loyal voters in subsequent EP elections. This finding vindicates there is a feedback loop of populist party voting among losers. The feedback loop of populist party voting is hardly something trivial since it implies that a populist opposition party can keep mobilizing its voters' dissatisfaction with the existing democratic system.

This research makes a contribution on three fronts. First, it advances the winner-loser gap literature by explicitly bridging it with the study of populism. Although some previous works of winner-loser gap note that populist losers differ from non-populist losers in terms of SWD, they simply present this discovery as a side remark to their main findings. By blending these two strands of literature, this paper yields theoretical expectations that allow us to investigate the abovementioned unexplored questions. Second, this research fills a gap in the studies of populism, since the literature rarely tests for a feedback loop of populist party voting. As concatenated elections are common in a multi-level system, scholars of electoral studies will have to put more effort into collecting panel data to study whether this kind of feedback loop applies to other countries. Third, the findings concerning the feedback loop of populist party voting join a limited body of research on habitual voting. Early studies of habitual voting mostly analyzed how voting in a previous election strengthens partisan ties, which in turn stabilize subsequent voting behavior (Dinas, 2012; Gerber et al., 2003;

Meredith, 2009; Shachar, 2003). But unlike these studies on partisan disposition, this paper stresses that a change in SWD can serve as a "motivational substitute" for partisanship in driving habitual voting. That is, voting for a populist opposition party can result in a decline in SWD that consolidates its electoral base in a subsequent election.

This paper is organized as follows: it starts with an overview of the winner-loser gap literature, placing a strong focus on the heterogeneity of winners/losers, and delineates how the literature can be blended with studies of populist party voting. Based on the literature review, I develop hypotheses concerning the heterogeneity of losers and the feedback loop of populist party voting. Then, I introduce the case of Germany as well as the data and methods used. Next, I present the results. The paper ends with a discussion on the implications of the findings and limitations of this study.

The heterogeneity of winners/losers

The winner-loser gap describes the phenomenon that those who vote for a governing party are regarded as winners and become more satisfied with the way democracy works after an election. On the other hand, those who vote for an opposition party are regarded as losers and are supposed to become less satisfied (Anderson et al., 2005). Though this sounds intuitive, subsequent studies of the winner-loser gap qualify this conventional wisdom by investigating what constitutes winners/losers, for winners/losers can be heterogeneous.

Even in majoritarian systems, the meaning of a winner/loser may not be immediately

clear. For instance, in the USA, citizens can vote for a presidential candidate and a congressional candidate simultaneously. In light of this multi-level setting, Anderson and LoTempio (2002) suggest that there are different combinations of winners and losers. Similarly, by studying the Canadian parliamentary system, Blais and Gélineau (2007) argue that voters can be winners at the constituency level but losers at the national level, resulting in different combinations of winners and losers as well. Undoubtedly, the definition of winners and losers in consensual systems is even more ambiguous than in majoritarian systems. In recent years, scholars argue that it is problematic to equate winners with governing party voters, for there can be other kinds of winners. For example, in consensual systems, where multiple parties compete and coalition governments are common, winning can mean obtaining a high vote share/seat share, having cabinet seats, increasing vote share/seats relative to the previous election, or gaining representation in the legislature for the first time (Blais et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2012). Nonetheless, one should note that the above studies operationalize winners/losers through respondents' vote choice.

Some other studies explain the gap in SWD by directly measuring voters' ideological/policy positions and their psychological perceptions. These approaches are different from simply defining winners/losers based on respondents' vote choice, as they tap into respondents' political attitudes and subjective perceptions. As such, they provide a more nuanced understanding of what being a winner/loser means.

Regarding the ideological dimension, the literature is often subsumed under the study of political representation and tests how SWD is affected by the ideological distance between voters and governing party/coalitions (Brunell & Buchler, 2009; Campbell,

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Regarding the ideological dimension, the literature is often subsumed under the study of political representation and tests how SWD is affected by the ideological distance between voters and governing party/coalitions (Brunell & Buchler, 2009; Campbell,

2013; Howell & Justwan, 2013). Assuming that the ideological position of voters and that of the governing party/coalition is congruent, voters' SWD would be higher than that of ideologically incongruent voters, all else being equal (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011; Han & Chang, 2016; Kim, 2009; Mayne & Hakhverdian, 2017). That means, despite voting for a loser (i.e. opposition party), voters' SWD can be enhanced because of the ideological proximity to the governing party/coalition. The logic is similar when it comes to proximity in policy positions (Citrin et al., 2014; Curini et al., 2012; Gärtner et al., 2020; Reher, 2015). Overall, the effect of ideological proximity and that of policy proximity on SWD is argued to be long-lived because voters expect their ideological or policy preferences to be implemented in the coming years.

On the other hand, psychological thrill and distress in the post-election period are suggested to affect SWD, but their effect is often thought to be short-lived. The literature typically draws on the analogy between sport and elections to identify the psychological impact. As Holmberg (1999) suggests, there is a "home team" effect among voters after an election (pp. 117–119), which is analogous to the experience of sports fans after a game. Accordingly, governing party voters feel more positive about the democratic system after an election, a feeling that is driven by psychological gratification and joyful experiences. In contrast, opposition party voters are likely to feel gloomy, angry, and disillusioned about the election outcome and will thus have a lower SWD (Anderson et al., 2005, p. 25).[2] To date, there are only a small number of studies that directly look at whether psychological thrill and distress affects SWD. To

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[2] Recent works by Plescia (2019) and Stiers et al. (2018) delink the subjective perception of winning/losing from voting for governing party/opposition party. Both studies indicate that a substantive portion of small opposition party voters do perceive their party as winner, whereas governing party voters also perceive their party as losers. Nonetheless, one should note that the change in SWD among governing party voters and that among opposition party voters are not the focus of both studies. Instead, they analyze under what circumstances would voters perceive their chosen party is a winner or loser.

capture the psychological parameters, these studies rely on respondents' subjective perception concerning whether their chosen party is a winner or loser. Yet, the findings are inconclusive, with both null results (Gärtner et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2012) and positive results (Kostelka & Blais, 2018). Hence, it is still unclear whether the perception of being a winner/loser can increase/decrease voters' SWD.

The role of populist parties in the winner-loser gap literature

The above review on the winner-loser gap literature illustrates that winners and losers are heterogeneous. But interestingly, one important factor that is seldom regarded as affecting SWD is whether the party chosen by respondents belongs to the populist family or not. In fact, some studies of the winner-loser gap do notice the distinctive features of populist party voters. For instance, when Dahlberg, S., & Linde, J. (2017) study the gap in Sweden, they mention that voters for a populist party (Sweden Democrats) have a much lower SWD than mainstream party voters (pp. 633-634). Similarly, in their case study of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, Singh et al. (2012) found that the voters for the populist left-wing party (LP) perceive that their party to be a winner but their SWD at the regional arena does not increase. Likewise, Gärtner et al. (2020) discovered that voters for the populist right-wing party (AfD) who perceive their party as a winner were less supportive of the political system than voters for opposition parties who perceived their chosen party as the loser. Given this result, they claim the results "offer some indication that winner-loser effects might work differently for voters of anti-systemic parties" (p. 11). Nonetheless, all these unexpected findings are subsidiary to their main analyses, as being a populist loser does not play any role in

their theoretical frameworks.

Only until recent years have scholars taken populist parties into account when testing the hypothesis. Using the case of Germany, Reinl and Schäfer (2020) found that AfD voters experienced a boost in SWD after they won political representation in the 2017 federal election. In a cross-national study, Hobolt et al. (2020) found that challenger party voters' SWD is not higher than that of ideologically incongruent voters, even though the former can find an ideologically congruent party in an electoral market.[3] They attribute this null finding to the fact that the challenger parties, which have overlap in membership with populist parties, do not have the chance to implement policies. Likewise, Harteveld et al. (2021) discovered that when a populist right-wing party is included in government, SWD increases among the citizens with nativist attitudes.

This paper continues the above intellectual endeavor by bringing together the winner-loser gap literature and the populist party voting literature further in two ways. First, it argues that the very fact of being a populist opposition party voter, regardless of whether the party is affiliated with right-wing or left-wing ideologies, has important implications for their change in SWD. Specifically, it investigates whether the drop in SWD among populist losers is larger than the drop among non-populist losers in the post-election period, all other things being equal.

As we learn from the extant literature on populism, populist actors always emphasize that the elites from mainstream parties are not representing the people (Canovan, 1999;

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[3] A caveat shall be made here: Hobolt et al. (2020) operationalize ideological congruence as the distance between the respondent and the party closest to him/her. As such, they are interested in the effect of ideological congruence with *the nearest party in the electoral market*, instead of effect of ideological congruence *with the governing party/coalition*.

Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). More importantly, they not only condemn the mainstream party elites, but also the existing democratic system in which the "corrupt" elites dominate governing positions (de Vreese et al., 2018). As such, the existing democratic system is portrayed as serving the interests of mainstream party elites instead of those of ordinary citizens. The anti-establishment rhetoric is expected to exert impact on populist party voters' view of the national democratic system, especially when a populist party is in opposition and can present themselves as outsiders. Moreover, there are some studies showing that populist party opposition voters are more likely to be exposed to anti-establishment messages than non-populist opposition party voters – they hence adopt the position of their chosen party as their own position (Rooduijn et al., 2016; van der Brug, 2003). Based on these theoretical underpinnings, I expect that there is heterogeneity among losers:

> H1 (Heterogenous Loser Hypothesis): Populist losers experience a greater
>
> decline in SWD than non-populist losers.

Second, this paper analyzes a process that has not been explored by the winner-loser gap literature: how an increase or decrease in SWD driven by previous vote choice affects the voting preference in a subsequent election. As mentioned above, previous winner-loser gap studies have mostly used a change in SWD as the dependent variable, and these studies rarely explore the behavioral implication of this change in SWD. Although there is some evidence that suggests being a loser heightens voters' protest potential in civil society (Anderson & Silvia, 2006), the feedback loop in the electoral arena is still an open question. One potential reason for this neglect might be that these studies of the winner-loser gap mainly rely on pre-and post-election surveys, which do

not look at how a change in SWD shapes the voting preference in a subsequent election. Hence, this paper fills this knowledge gap by testing whether a drop in SWD can consolidate populist opposition party's vote share in a subsequent election.

The insights from the studies of populist party voting can help us resolve this puzzle, even though present-day empirical findings are still inconclusive (Voogd & Dassonneville, 2020, p. 4). In terms of the relationship between voter transitions and democratic dissatisfaction, the current study points to three possibilities. First, voters who become more dissatisfied with how democracy works may abstain from voting in subsequent elections (Gabriel, 2015; Kemmers, 2017). As citizens become more dissatisfied with the operation of the democratic system, they become cynical and choose to exit the unresponsive electoral arena. Second, the more dissatisfied voters may still cast their votes in a subsequent election but switch to other parties. That is, the more dissatisfied voters may become volatile voters (Dejaeghere & Dassonneville, 2017; Söderlund, 2008). This party-switching logic is particularly applicable to non-populist party voters (Voogd & Dassonneville, 2020).

Third, the more dissatisfied voters choose the same party in a subsequent election, and this stable party voting logic is pertinent to populist opposition party voters. Several studies already suggest that citizens who are more dissatisfied with the existing democratic system have a higher likelihood of choosing a populist opposition party. (Akkerman et al., 2017; Bélanger & Aarts, 2006; Bergh, 2004; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018; Kriesi & Schulte-Cloos, 2020). The rationale is seen as a protest against the established party elites and the unresponsive democratic system (Alvarez et al., 2018, pp. 137-141; Birch & Dennison, 2017; Ford et al., 2012), and the populist

attitude can serve as a "motivational substitute" to vote for populist parties (Van Hauwaert, 2015)[4]. In short, a drop in SWD is expected to strengthen the loyalty of populist opposition party voters in a subsequent election.

This research borrows the insights from this third possibility in arguing that a decrease in SWD hardens the electoral base of populist opposition parties. But unlike previous studies, I suggest there is a feedback loop of populist party voting. That is, populist losers are more likely to experience a decline in SWD, and this decline in SWD can feed into the next election by stabilizing populist party voting. In other words, concatenated elections in a multi-level system enable populist parties to develop a core group of loyal voters. To the best of my knowledge, this feedback loop of populist party voting has not yet been investigated in the studies of populist party voting.

Actually, the feedback loop of populist party voting can find support from the research on habitual voting (Dinas, 2012; Gerber et al., 2003; Meredith, 2009; Shachar, 2003). These studies of habitual voting have already illustrated that previous vote decisions can strengthen voters' partisan ties, which can shape their subsequent voting behavior. And there is evidence showing that this habitual voting can spillover from the first-order arena to the second-order arena and vice versa within a multi-level system(Dinas & Riera, 2018; Schulte-Cloos, 2018). Building on these studies of habitual voting, this paper suggests that, besides strengthening partisan disposition, a drop in SWD can also drive habitual voting as well. These theoretical expectations lead to the hypotheses concerning a feedback loop of populist party voting:

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[4] As Akkerman et al. (2013) astutely point out, even though a low level of SWD may constitute a breeding ground for populism, SWD is not direct measures of populist attitudes. This paper is not to argue that SWD and populist values are the same measures. Instead, it suggests that a decline in SWD can act as a "motivational substitute" that consolidates populist party voting.

H2 (Feedback Loop Hypotheses): A decrease in SWD among populist losers increases their likelihood of voting for the same party in the subsequent EP election

Fig. 1 summarizes the key arguments of the two hypotheses. Compared to voters of non-populist opposition parties, voters for populist opposition parties in a national election are hypothesized to experience a greater drop in SWD (Heterogenous Loser Hypothesis). On top of that, I expect that a decline in SWD increases the likelihood of a stable party vote among populist losers (Feedback Loop Hypotheses).
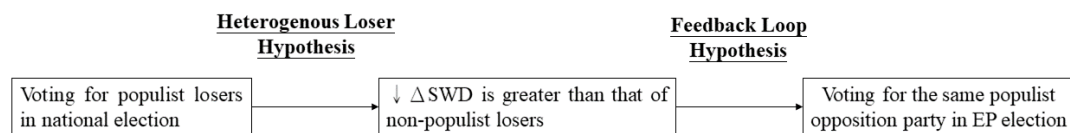
Fig. 1. The Heterogenous Loser Hypothesis and Feedback Loop Hypothesis

The case of Germany

To test these hypotheses, this research analyzes two concatenated elections in Germany, namely the 2013 federal election and the 2014 EP election, for two major reasons. The first reason concerns the political landscape. In the 2013 federal election, the CDU/CSU benefited from the economic recovery from the Eurocrisis and achieved a remarkable 41.5% of the popular vote. It subsequently formed a grand coalition with the SPD, which obtained 25.7% of the vote share. There were only two opposition parties represented in the federal parliament, namely Green and LP, and both parties received

similar vote shares (Green: 8.4%; LP: 8.6%). Yet, the representational deficit was serious: the wasted list vote reached a record high of 15.8%. This was largely attributed to the electoral performance of the FDP and AfD parties. Both parties got similar vote shares (FDP: 4.8%; AfD: 4.7%) and just failed to meet the 5% electoral threshold.

This political landscape provides a golden opportunity to analyze the heterogeneity of losers. For one thing, political parties, both populist (AfD) and non-populist (FDP and other small parties), failed to enter parliament. The same applied to opposition parties within parliament—these included populists (LP) and non-populists (Green).[5] If the heterogenous loser hypothesis is valid, one would observe a larger decrease in SWD among LP voters than among Green voters. Contrarily, according to conventional wisdom, the drop in SWD should be similar among the two parties, for they are both parliamentary opposition parties. Similarly, the heterogenous loser hypothesis predicts that the decline in SWD among AfD voters would be larger than that among FDP voters and other small party voters. But if the conventional wisdom is correct, one would observe indistinguishable drops in SWD among these extra-parliamentary opposition parties.

Another reason concerns how we should understand the rise of populist right-wing parties in Germany. Germany was long regarded as an exceptional case in not having a populist right-wing party in the national parliament, up to the rise of the AfD. In the past few years, a lot of attention has been paid to AfD in terms of how it has contributed to the growing salience of immigration as an issue (Franzmann, 2019; Grande et al.,

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[5] The coding of populist parties and non-populist parties is based on the project *PopuList* (Rooduijn et al., 2019). Moreover, there are a number of studies classify LP as populist radical left party (e.g. Hough & Keith, 2019; Olsen, 2018).

2019), and its impact on voters' attitudes and voting behavior (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019; Franzmann et al., 2020; Giebler et al., 2019; Hobolt & Hoerner, 2020). Nonetheless, the focus of these studies is mostly on the party's development in the post-refugee crisis period. But as different studies point out, the AfD was largely a Eurosceptic populist party before the refugee crisis and intra-party struggle, and it only acquired a nativist character after these events (Franzmann, 2016; Schulte-Cloos & Rüttenauer, 2018). Thus, there is still an unresolved question about why the AfD could succeed in the 2014 EP election, which occurred before the refugee crisis. The AfD's success in this EP election should not be taken for granted. Instead, as this paper argues, the feedback loop of populist party voting among losers was crucial in enabling it to enter the EP.

Data and methods

This research uses the 2013-2014 Bavaria Panel Study conducted by the Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) project (Zittlau et al., 2017). This panel covers the 2013 federal election and the 2014 EP election, as shown in Table 1. The surveys were conducted using computer-assisted web interviewing. A stratified, quota-based sampling approach was used so that the sample was representative of the population under study in terms of age, gender, and education. In handling item non-response, this research uses listwise deletion when a variable is missing in the estimation to ensure a consistent sample. To alleviate the concern of panel attrition, the analysis uses the post-stratification demographic weight provided by the MEDW team to weigh the data. Though this approach is far from perfect, this panel is one of the few datasets that allows us to analyze the problem at stake, for it keeps track of the same individual throughout

these two concatenated elections and can reduce the measurement error in vote recall

question (Dassonneville & Hooghe, 2016).

Table 1. The data structure of the MEDW Bavaria Panel Study.

	Collection period	N (retention rate)	Variables used
Wave 1	30/08-14/09/2013	5910 (1.00)	pre-election satisfaction with democracy; personal economic evaluations; income; political interest; demographic variables
Wave 2 (Pre-2013 federal election)	16/09-21/09/2013	4701 (0.80)	ideological self-placement; ideological perception of different parties; sociotropic assessments of the economy; evaluation of the federal government
Wave 3 (Post-2013 federal election)	23/09-28/09/2013	3958 (0.67)	vote choice in national election; winner/loser perception
Wave 4 (Pre-2014 EP election)	12/05-20/05/2014	2925 (0.49)	post-election satisfaction with democracy; position on European integration; voting preference in the 2014 EP election

The analysis involves two stages. The focus of the first stage is the heterogenous loser

hypothesis. In that regard, I test whether voting for a populist opposition party in the

2013 federal election affects the change in SWD. The regression model that I use is

commonly found in the winner-loser gap literature (Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Blais et

al., 2016; Kostelka & Blais, 2018; Singh et al., 2012). Here, the dependent variable is

the change in SWD before and after the 2013 federal election (ΔSWD). In the pre- and

post-federal election surveys, respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they

were with democracy in Germany on a 10-point scale. So, the dependent variable

ΔSWD ranges from –10 to +10.[6] The key parameter is the party chosen by respondent in the 2013 national election (base category: CSU). Abstainers are excluded from the first stage analysis as they do not support any party in this election.[7]

Since the literature suggests that the ideological distance between respondent and the governing coalition affects ΔSWD, I add the variable of ideological distance into the model. It is operationalized as the absolute distance between the ideological position of the grand coalition (i.e., the mean of the perceived position of CDU/CSU and SPD) and the ideological self-placement of the respondent, which is a continuous variable ranging from 0 to 10. To control for the effect of subjective perceptions of winning/losing on ΔSWD, I employ a question that asks respondent how he/she perceives his/her chosen party in the 2013 national election. The answer items include "loser" (i.e., base category), "winner", "can't say" and "don't know". To neutralize floor and ceiling effects, I control for the level of SWD measured in the pre-federal election survey. I also include those confounding factors that are suggested to affect changes in SWD, namely respondent's personal and sociotropic assessments of the economy (Daoust & Nadeau, 2020; Quaranta & Martini, 2016). Lastly, political interest and demographic variables, such as income, political interest, gender, age, and education level, are added to the model (see Appendix A for question wording, coding, and descriptive statistics).

The second stage analysis focuses on the feedback loop hypothesis. I test whether a change in SWD affects the pattern of voting preference in the subsequent 2014 EP

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[6] Although there were some debates about what SWD is measuring (Canache et al., 2001; Linde & Ekman, 2003), this measurement is commonly used in the winner-loser gap literature. This research conceptualizes SWD as capturing an expression of (dis)approval of the democratic process.

[7] Another reason that abstainers are dropped from analysis is that the survey filters them out in the subjective perception of winning/losing question. As such, this item is structurally missing for all abstainers.

election. The dependent variable involves two outcomes: (1) loyal voters who remain voting for the same party (N=1038, 62.49%), (2) vote switchers who switch between parties or abstain (N=623, 37.51%; base category).[8] The key parameters are the party chosen by respondent in the 2013 national election, ΔSWD and their interaction terms. The rationale is to see if the effect of ΔSWD on the two outcomes differs across voters for different parties. Regarding the control variables, I include respondents' position on European integration, which ranges from 0 (European integration has already gone too far) to 10 (European integration should go further), political interest and the demographic variables mentioned above. Since the model involves several interaction terms and scholars have already warned about looking at statistical significance blindly in categorical models (Ai & Norton, 2003; Mize, 2019), I therefore simply use linear probability model in my analysis. In the cross-validation check, I rerun the analysis using binomial logit model.

Results

Heterogenous loser hypotheses

We first look at the statistics of the parameters of interest. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of ΔSWD for each vote choice in the 2013 federal election. The mean ΔSWD is around 0.22 units on a -10 to +10 scale ($p < 0.001$), which denotes the overall level of SWD increases slightly after the national election. Yet, there is, however, a good amount of variation across parties. There is a slight but statistically significant

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[8] Since wave 4 was conducted around two weeks before the 2014 EP election, some respondents had already sent a postal vote. So, the vote choice of the postal vote is combined with voting preferences among those who had not voted yet. Moreover, the answer items did not have the option "I would not vote" but only had "invalid note", which is coded as "abstainer". Due to the small proportion of abstainers in the dataset (N=18, 1.06%), vote switchers who switch between parties and abstainers are combined into one outcome.

increase in SWD among SPD voters ($p < 0.001$), Green voters ($p < 0.05$), and voters for other small parties ($p < 0.001$). On the other hand, there is a small decrease in SWD among FDP voters ($p < 0.05$). And among CSU voters, LP voters, and AfD voters, their changes in SWD are indistinguishable from zero.
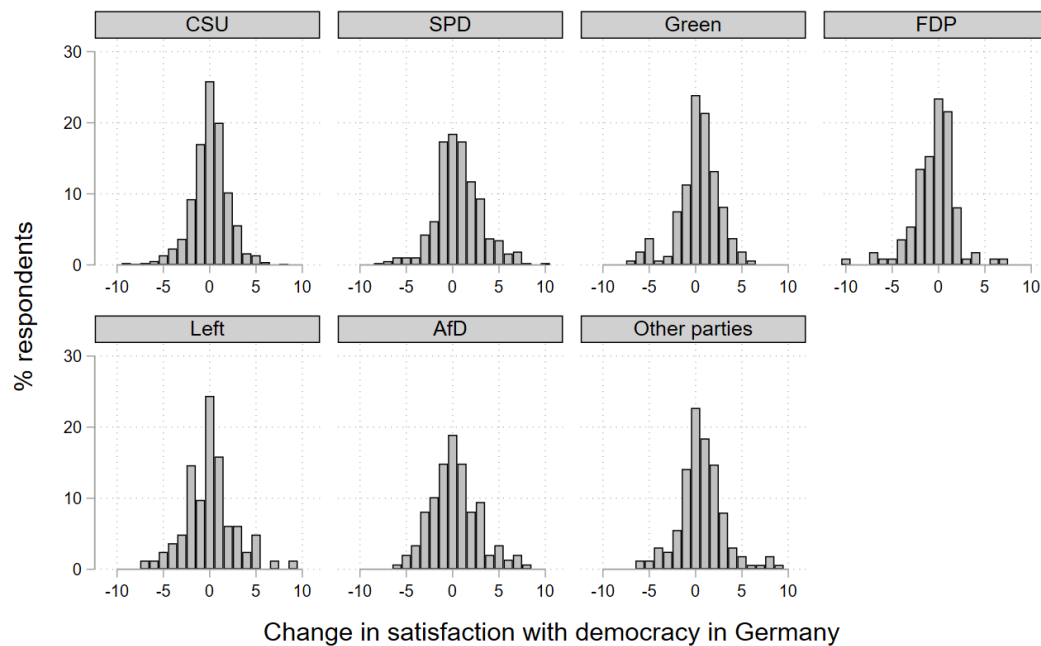
Figure 1. Changes in SWD across seven vote choices in the 2013 federal election

I now turn to the regression result in Table 2. I start with interpreting the effect of political interest and demographic variables. The results suggest that female respondents are less likely to show increases in SWD; political interest, income, education, and age do not have a statistically significant impact on changes in SWD. As for the effect of individuals' perception of their personal economic situation, it does not reach conventional level of statistical significance. Contrarily, the effect of perceptions of the national economic is statistically significant: compared to those who think the economy in Germany has gotten worse over the last year, those who think the economy has gotten better are more likely to show an increase in SWD, all else being

equal. Talking about the effect of the winner/loser perception variable, it does not reach a conventional level of statistical significance. This null finding is in line with previous works done by Gärtner et al. (2020) and Singh et al. (2012). On the other hand, the effect of ideological distance is in line with expectations: the more proximate the ideological distance is between the respondent and the coalition government, the more likely the respondent is to express an increase in SWD, ceteris paribus.

Table 2. Change in SWD in Germany and vote choice in the 2013 federal election.

	Model 1
2013 federal election vote choice (Ref: CSU)	
SPD	0.23
	(0.16)
Green	0.13
	(0.23)
FDP	-0.47
	(0.26)
Left	-0.76**
	(0.25)
AfD	-1.28***
	(0.20)
Other parties	-0.30
	(0.22)
Pre-election Satisfaction	-0.63***
	(0.02)
Ideological distance with grand coalition	-0.15***
	(0.03)
Winner/Loser Perception (Ref: Loser)	
Winner	0.01
	(0.16)
Can't Say/Don't Know'	0.25
	(0.20)
Personal economic situation (Ref: Worse off)	
About the same	-0.01
	(0.12)

Better off	0.15
	(0.15)
Economic situation in Germany (Ref: Gotten worse)	
Stayed about the same	0.69[***]
	(0.14)
Gotten better	0.73[***]
	(0.16)
Political Interest	0.00
	(0.02)
Income	0.03
	(0.03)
Female	-0.24[*]
	(0.10)
Age	0.01
	(0.00)
Education	-0.10
	(0.07)
Constant	4.07[***]
	(0.42)
Observations	1772
R^2	0.32

Entries are coefficients of the linear regression models. DV of Model 1: Change in SWD in Germany. Errors are shown in parentheses. Data source: MEDW Bavaria Panel Study and it is adjusted with post-stratification demographic weight. [*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

Moving on to the heterogenous loser hypothesis, I create Figure 2 to facilitate interpretation. The figure shows the predicted levels of the change in SWD across different federal election vote choices. The first noticeable finding is that those who voted for the two governing parties (CSU and SPD) become more satisfied with how democracy works in Germany after the election, which confirms previous winner-loser gap findings. Specifically, voting CSU is predicted to increase SWD by 0.35 [95% CI: 0.16, 0.53], while voting SPD is predicted to increase SWD by 0.57 [95% CI: 0.35, 0.78]. Taken together, the results confirm that voters' increase in SWD depends on

whether a party forms the government.

Next, we focus on ΔSWD among the voters of non-populist losers. One can see that voting for the Greens is predicted to increase SWD by 0.48 [95% CI: 0.12, 0.84]. Although the difference in change in SWD between Green voters and voters for governing parties is not statistically significant, this finding certainly contradicts previous studies because being a loser is supposed to lead to a decrease in SWD. On the other hand, voting for the FDP and voting for other small parties do not seem to decrease SWD, as both predicted values are indistinguishable from zero. The null finding among FDP voters is rather surprising, as the FDP was ousted from federal parliament for the first time since World War II in the 2014 federal election.

Regarding ΔSWD among populist losers, one can see that voting LP is predicted to decrease SWD by 0.42 [95% CI: -0.86, 0.02]. Crucially, the difference between LP voters and Green voters is significant ($p < 0.01$), which provides support for the heterogenous loser hypothesis. Lastly, voting for the AfD is predicted to decrease SWD most by 0.94 [95% CI: -1.28, -0.59]. Moreover, the difference in ΔSWD between AfD voters and FDP voters is significant ($p < 0.01$), and so is the difference between AfD voters and other small party voters ($p < 0.001$). These findings concerning LP voters and AfD voters are noteworthy, for both parties' vote shares increased in 2014 compared to previous election (LP: +6.5%; AfD: +4.7%). According to Singh et al. (2012), small party voters' SWD may increase in a multi-party system when the party's electoral performance become better. However, it seems that this is not applicable to populist losers: even though the LP and AfD gained vote shares, their voters' SWD on average does not increase but decreases.

In the robustness check, I rerun the model using ordinal logit regression (See Table B1 and Table B2). Also, I weigh the ideological distance between the grand coalition and respondents by the vote shares of CDU/CSU and SPD (Table B3), since voters can take the relative strength of the coalition parties into account when forming an overall evaluation of the government (Gärtner et al., 2020). The results remain substantively the same. Overall, these findings provide support for the heterogenous loser hypotheses and they show two problems if one lumps together populist losers and non-populist losers into one category, like some winner-loser studies did. First, the estimation can ignore the increase in SWD among non-populist opposition party voters (Green), and this increase in SWD can be comparable to that among governing party voters. Second, lumping the two kinds of losers together can easily hide the fact that ΔSWD among populist losers is not similar to that of non-populist losers. These implications highlight the importance of heterogenous loser hypothesis.
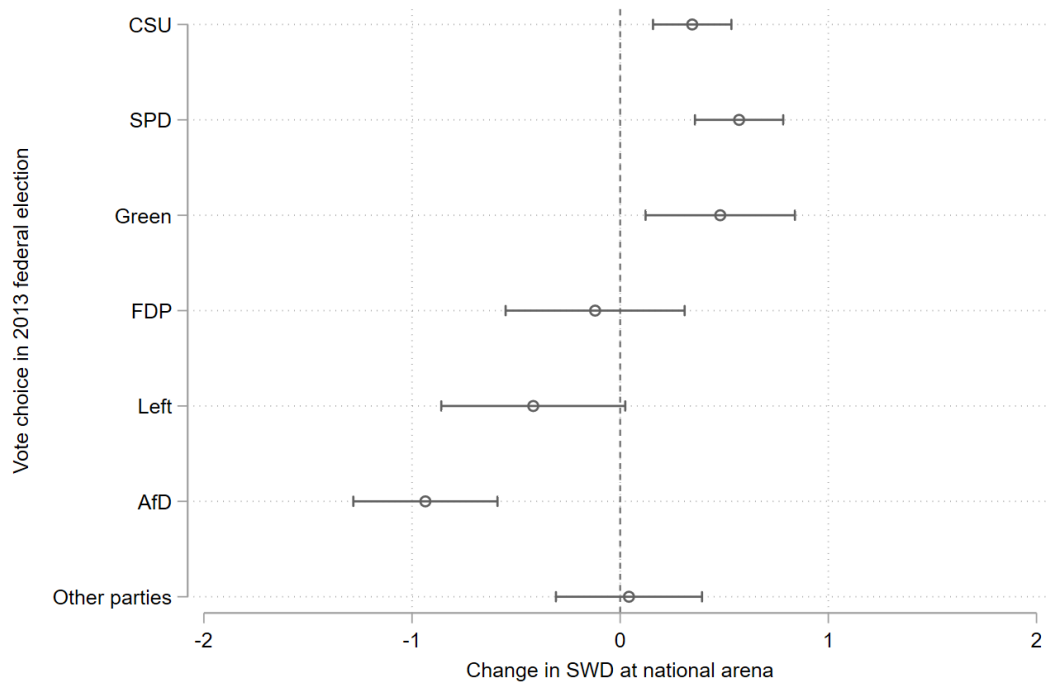
Fig. 2. The effects of different vote choices in the 2013 federal election on the change in SWD. Note: all other variables are kept at observed values and the 95% confidence intervals are shown (N = 1772).

Feedback loop hypothesis

The second stage analysis concerns whether populist losers who become less satisfied with how democracy works are more likely to be loyal voters in the 2014 EP election. Given that the linear probability model involves several interaction terms, I plot the average predicted probabilities of voting for the same party against the change in SWD (i.e. from -2SD to +2SD). The full results of the regression are included in Appendix Table B4.

Fig. 3 presents how ΔSWD affects voting for the same party in the 2014 EP election for each vote choice in the 2013 federal election. We first focus on the effect of ΔSWD on stable party voting among winners. When CSU voters and SPD voters become more satisfied with how democracy works, they are more likely to vote for the same party—

both are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.[9] In other words, an increase in SWD stabilizes the vote among governing party voters. This suggests that there is a feedback loop of governing party voting, since we see a slight but significant increase in SWD among both CSU voters and SPD voters in the first stage analysis. This finding certainly qualifies previous second-order election studies that suggest the government party usually loses votes in EP election (Schmitt et al., 2020): governing party voters are more prone to vote-switching if they become more dissatisfied with how democracy works.

Moving on to opposition party voters, we see that ΔSWD does not exert significant impact on non-populist losers. That means the voting preferences of Green voters, FDP voters, and other small party voters are not significantly affected by ΔSWD. In contrast, the impact of ΔSWD on stable party voting is statistically significant among populist losers—LP voters ($p < 0.001$) and AfD voters ($p < 0.05$). The magnitude is particularly strong among LP voters: Suppose ΔSWD decreases from +2SD to -2SD, the predicted probability of choosing the same party increases from 0.07 to 0.82. On the other hand, for the same change of ΔSWD among AfD voters, the predicted probability of voting for the same party increases from 0.54 to 0.96. In other words, when populist losers become more dissatisfied with how democracy works after the 2013 national election, they are significantly more likely to be loyal voters in the subsequent EP election. This finding is in line with the feedback loop hypotheses: a decrease in SWD consolidates the electoral base of populist opposition parties.

In the robustness check, I add respondents' evaluation of the federal government and

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[9] Here, I test whether the coefficient of the interaction term between ΔSWD and a party is statistically different from zero.

the ideological distance between respondents and the party they chose in the national election to the baseline model. I also rerun the whole analysis using binary logit regression and plot the predicted probabilities (Table B5 and Figure B1). The results remain substantively the same. Overall, the second stage analysis demonstrates that there is, unexpectedly, feedback loop of governing party voting. More importantly, it shows that there is also a feedback loop of populist party voting, which is a finding hardly pointed out by previous research on populism.
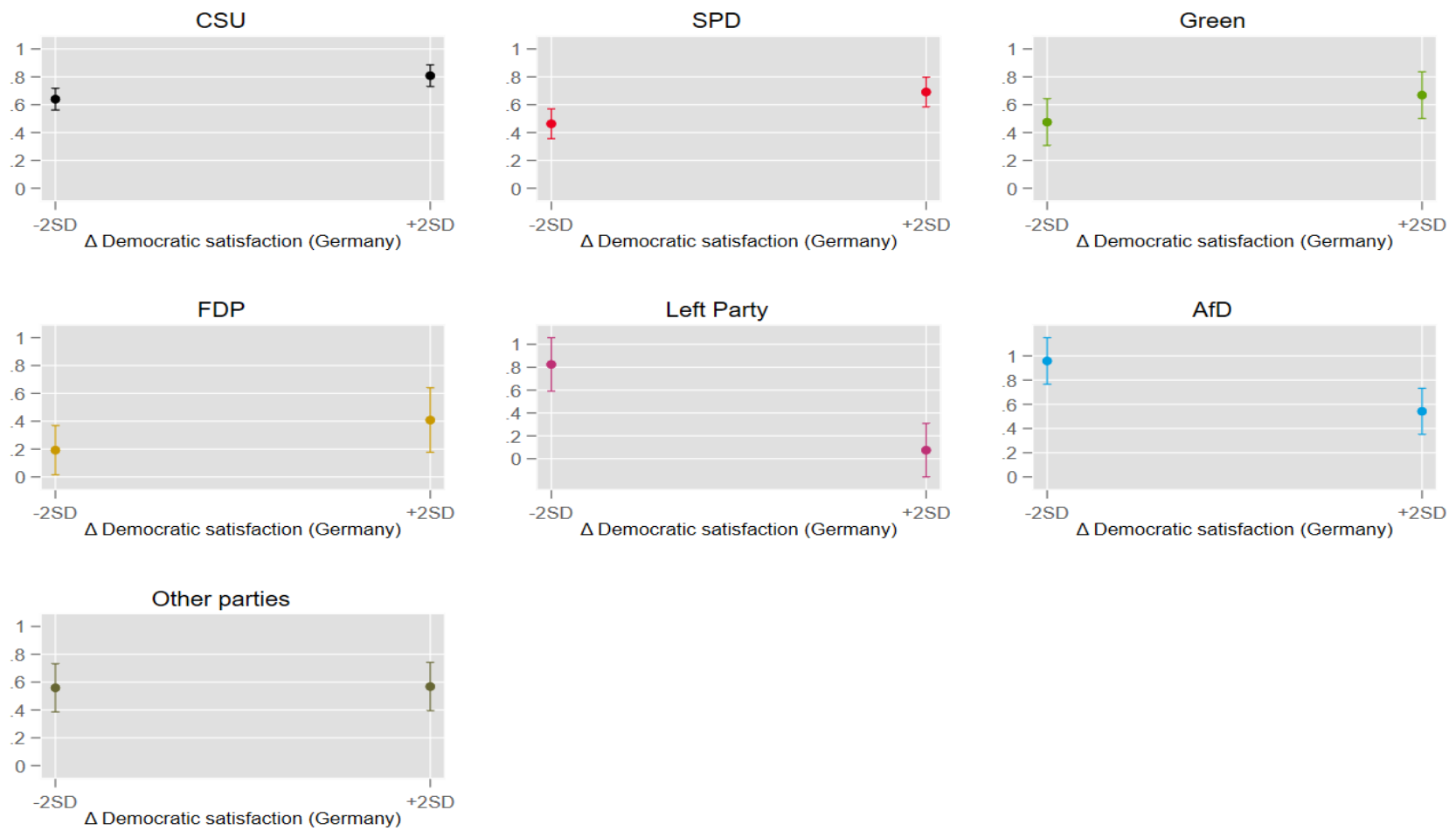
Fig. 3. Predicted probabilities of voting the same party by a change in SWD for each vote choice in the previous national election. Note: all other variables are kept at observed values and the 95% confidence intervals are shown (N = 1661)

Discussion

This paper aims at bridging the winner-loser gap literature with the studies of populist party voting, as both strands of literature concern citizens' satisfaction with democracy. By leveraging the two multi-level concatenated elections in Germany during 2013-2014, it clearly illustrates how cross-fertilizing both strands of literature can yield new insights. First of all, this paper finds that there is heterogeneity among opposition party voters in how they react to their party status as a loser. If researchers lump together populist losers and non-populist losers, they can ignore the fact that there can be an increase in SWD among non-populist losers that is comparable to that of governing party voters. On top of that, researchers run the risk of not noticing that the change in SWD can differ significantly between the two groups of losers. This finding indicates that future studies of the winner-loser gap should avoid conflating populist losers and non-populist losers.

Second, this paper investigates an unexplored topic in the literature of winner-loser gap and the studies of populism: the behavioral implication of a change in SWD. By treating a change in SWD as an independent variable, this paper shows that there are feedback loops of populist party voting among losers. Specifically, when LP voters and AfD voters become more dissatisfied with how democracy works after the 2013 national election, they are more likely to vote for the same party in the subsequent EP election. This finding concerning the feedback loop hypothesis not only sheds light on why the AfD could succeed in the pre-refugee crisis EP election, but also on the impact of SWD in consolidating populist opposition party support. For sure, this research merely studies the feedback loop of populist party voting in Germany, but it shall open avenues

for studying whether the same feedback loop exists among other prominent populist parties. Hence, scholars of electoral studies need to put more effort into collecting panel data, so that they can study whether such feedback loop of populist party voting applies to other countries that have a multi-level system. In addition, this paper unexpectedly finds that there is a feedback loop of governing party voting. That is, when grand coalition voters became more satisfied after the 2013 national election, they were more likely to become loyal voters in subsequent EP election. This unexpected finding certainly qualifies the claim that a government party's vote share is often reduced in a second-order election. So, future studies can further investigate whether this feedback loop of governing party voting exists in other electoral settings.

Third, the feedback loop of populist party voting identified in this paper complements a limited body of research on habitual voting. Most studies of habitual voting have already shown how previous voting behavior consolidates partisan ties, which in turn stabilize loyal voting in a subsequent election (Dinas, 2012; Gerber et al., 2003; Meredith, 2009; Shachar, 2003). Yet, this paper argues that, rather than strengthening partisanship, previous populist opposition party voting is likely to result in a decline in SWD, which stabilizes its electoral base in subsequent elections. This feedback loop can hint that a drop in SWD may serve as a "motivation substitute" of partisanship for populist opposition parties.

For sure, this research has limitations that subsequent studies can deal with. First, it leverages a unique panel conducted in Bavaria during 2013–2014 to analyze the questions at stake. Like all other single case studies that hold contextual matters constant, this research cannot examine how the contextual and institutional factors

condition the effect of heterogenous losers and the feedback loop of populist party voting. Also, the panel is not long enough to cover other subsequent elections, such as the thirteen subnational elections and the 2017 federal election. As such, this research can only infer that the feedback loop of populist party voting helped AfD to break into the European Parliament. To show how the feedback loop of populist party voting enabled the AfD to break into the national party system, researchers would have to make use of a panel that covers the whole 2013–2017 election cycle. Finally, the German political landscape being studied only allows us to test the heterogenous loser hypothesis. Yet, it is possible that there can be heterogenous winners as well. So, future research can explore whether SWD differs between populist governing party voters and non-populist governing party voters, and whether a feedback loop of populist voting among winners exists.

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    https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/YAHN5S

Appendix

Appendix A: Question Wording, Coding and Descriptive Statistics

Table A1: Question wording and coding

Variable (Name in dataset)	Question Wording	Coding
Satisfaction with Democracy in Germany (demo_DE_1, demo_DE_4)	On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not satisfied at all and 10 means very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Germany? (Waves 1, 4)	(0) 0 Not satisfied at all (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8 (9) 9 (10) 10 Very satisfied (-99) Don't know Don't know is coded as missing.
Satisfaction with Democracy in EU (demo_EU_1, demo_EU_4)	On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not satisfied at all and 10 means very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in European Union? (Waves 1, 4)	(0) 0 Not satisfied at all (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8 (9) 9 (10) 10 Very satisfied

		(-99) Don't know
		Don't know is coded as missing.
Vote choice in 2013 national election (BTW_votechoice)	For this federal election you had two votes. A first vote for a party's candidate here in your electoral district and a second vote for a party list. Which party's LIST did you vote for? (Wave 3)	(1) CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union) (2) SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) (3) Grüne (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) (4) Freie Wähler (5) FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei) (6) Linke (Die Linke) (7) Piraten (Piraten Partei) (8) AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) (9) Other parties (98) Invalid Vote (99) Don't know Freie Wähler and Piraten are coded into other parties. Invalid Vote and Don't know are coded as missing.
Voting preference in 2014 European Parliament election (pref_EP_4)	If you vote, for which of the following party lists will you vote on election day? (Wave 4) Postal vote: Which party did you vote (Wave 4)	(1) CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union) (2) SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) (3) Grüne (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) (4) Freie Wähler (5) FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei) (6) Linke (Die Linke) (7) Piraten (Piraten Partei) (8) AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) (9) Other parties (98) Invalid Vote (99) Don't know

	Freie Wähler and Piraten are coded into other parties. "Invalid Vote" and "Don't know" are coded as missing.	

Perceived left-right ideological position of different parties (*partyname*_pos_2)	In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Here in Germany, where would you place each of the following political parties on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means the left and 10 means the right? (Wave 2)	(0) 0 Far Left (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8
	CSU (A) CDU (B) SPD (C) B90/Die Grünen (D) Freie Wähler (E) FDP (F) Die Linke (G) Piraten (H) AfD (I)	(9) 9 (10) 10 Far Right (-99) Don't know "Don't know" is coded as missing.

Left-right ideological Self-position (pos_self_2)	Where would you place yourself on the same left-right scale? (Wave 2)	(0) 0 Far Left (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8 (9) 9 (10) 10 Far Right

		(-99) Don't know
		"Don't know" is coded as missing.
Winner-loser perception (win_3)	In the recent election, would you say that the party you voted for was: (Wave 3)	A winner (1) A loser (2) Can't say (3) Don't know (9) "Can't say" and "Don't know" are grouped into one category
Personal economic situation (econ_self_1)	Financially, are you better off, worse off, or about the same as a year ago?	(1) Worse off (2) About the same (3) Better off (9) Don't know "Don't know" is coded as missing.
Economic situation in Germany (econ_DE_2)	Over the past year, has the economy in Germany: gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same? (Wave 2)	(1) Gotten worse (2) Stayed about the same (3) Gotten better (9) Don't know "Don't know" is coded as missing.
Attributing responsibility for general economic situation to incumbent (econ_attr_2)	Have the policies of the Federal government made the economy in Germany... (Wave 2)	(1) Worse (2) Not made a difference (3) Better (9) Don't know "Don't know" is coded as missing.
Income (income_1)	Which of the following best indicates your monthly household income before taxes? (Wave 1)	(1) Under 400 Euro (2) Between 400 and less than 750 Euro (3) Between 750 and less than 1250 Euro (4) Between 1250 and less than 1750 Euro (5) Between 1750 and less than 2500 Euro

		(6) Between 2500 and less than 3250 Euro
		(7) Between 3250 and less than 4000 Euro
		(8) Between 4000 and less than 5000 Euro
		(9) Between 5000 and less than 6500 Euro
		(10) Between 6500 and less than 9000 Euro
		(11) Between 9000 and less than 11000 Euro
		(12) Over 11000 Euro
		(98) Don't know
		(99) Prefer not to say
		"Don't know" and "Prefer not to say" are coded as missing.
Political Interest (polint_1)	On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means no interest at all and 10 means a great deal of interest, how much interest do you have in politics? (wave 1)	(0) 0 No interest at all (1) 1 (2) 2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5 (6) 6 (7) 7 (8) 8 (9) 9 (10) 10 A great deal of interest (-99) Don't know Don't know is coded as missing.
Gender (gend)	Are you...? (wave 1)	(1) Male (2) Female
Age (age)	In what year were you born? Please enter your response as a four-digit number (for	

	example, 1977). (wave 1)	
Education (educ)	What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (wave 1)	(1) Lower secondary incomplete (2) Lower secondary (3) Secondary (4) Technical high secondary (5) High secondary, post-secondary (6) Tertiary degree incomplete (7) Tertiary degree

Section A2. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Descriptive statistics of the variables are calculated using the full dataset not being weighted.

Table A.2.1 Continuous variables

	Count	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Change in satisfaction with democracy	2837	0.28	2.37	-10.00	10.00
Ideological distance between self and grand coalition	3830	1.61	1.43	0.00	10.00
Pre-election satisfaction with democracy	5765	5.95	2.36	0.00	10.00
Position on European integration	2751	4.49	2.76	0.00	10.00
Ideological distance between self and vote choice in 2013 national election	3164	1.35	1.56	0.00	10.00
Political interest	5898	6.59	2.51	0.00	10.00
Income	4,453	5.96	1.92	1.00	12.00
Gender	5910	1.51	0.50	1.00	2.00
Age	5910	45.14	13.27	18.00	88.00
Education	5910	2.24	0.72	1.00	3.00

Table A.2.2 Vote choice in 2013 national election

	Freq.	Percent
CSU	1567	40.18
SPD	760	19.49
Green	312	8.00
FDP	228	5.85
Left	168	4.31
AfD	263	6.74
Other parties	383	9.82
Abstain	219	5.62
Total	3900	100.00

Table A.2.3 Voting preference in the 2014 EP election

	Freq.	Percent
CSU	883	38.24
SPD	426	18.45
Green	252	10.91
FDP	71	3.07
Left	97	4.20
AfD	244	10.57
Other parties	294	12.73
Abstain	42	1.82
Total	2309	100.00

Table A.2.4 Winner/loser perception

	Freq.	Percent
Loser	1045	30.42
Winner	1988	57.87
Can't Say/Don't Know'	402	11.70
Total	3435	100.00

Table A.2.5 Personal economic evaluations

	Freq.	Percent
Worse off	1519	26.29
About the same	2842	49.19
Better off	1417	24.52
Total	5778	100.00

Table A.2.6 Sociotropic assessments of the economy

	Freq.	Percent
Gotten worse	1002	21.86
Stayed about the same	2077	45.31
Gotten better	1505	32.83
Total	4584	100.00

Table A.2.7 Evaluation of the federal government

	Freq.	Percent
Not satisfied at all	681	14.88
Not very satisfied	1216	26.57
Fairly satisfied	2435	53.21
Very satisfied	244	5.33
Total	4576	100.00

Appendix B: Regression tables for the analyses

Table B1. Change in SWD in Germany and vote choice in the 2013 federal election.

	Model 1
2013 federal election vote choice (Ref: CSU)	
SPD	0.18
	(0.14)
Green	0.15
	(0.21)
FDP	-0.44
	(0.23)
Left	-0.90***
	(0.25)
AfD	-1.33***
	(0.19)
Other parties	-0.33
	(0.20)
Pre-election Satisfaction	-0.57***
	(0.02)
Ideological distance with grand coalition	-0.13***
	(0.03)
Winner/Loser Perception (Ref: Loser)	
Winner	-0.02
	(0.15)
Can't Say/Don't Know'	0.10
	(0.18)
Personal economic situation (Ref: Worse off)	
About the same	0.08
	(0.11)
Better off	0.19
	(0.13)
Economic situation in Germany (Ref: Gotten worse)	
Stayed about the same	0.63***
	(0.13)

Gotten better	0.62***
	(0.15)
Political Interest	-0.01
	(0.02)
Income	0.03
	(0.02)
Female	-0.25**
	(0.09)
Age	0.01
	(0.00)
Education	-0.14*
	(0.06)
Cut point	
cut1	-11.95***
	(1.16)
cut2	-10.80***
	(0.73)
cut3	-10.16***
	(0.60)
cut4	-9.11***
	(0.48)
cut5	-8.25***
	(0.44)
cut6	-7.60***
	(0.43)
cut7	-7.00***
	(0.42)
cut8	-6.41***
	(0.41)
cut9	-5.57***
	(0.40)
cut10	-4.62***
	(0.40)
cut11	-3.45***
	(0.39)
cut12	-2.37***
	(0.39)
cut13	-1.50***

	(0.39)
cut14	-0.51
	(0.39)
cut15	0.04
	(0.39)
cut16	0.87[*]
	(0.41)
cut17	1.40[**]
	(0.43)
cut18	2.37[***]
	(0.49)
cut19	3.45[***]
	(0.66)
cut20	4.32[***]
	(0.92)
Observations	1772
Pseudo R^2	0.08

Entries are coefficients of the ordered logit model. DV of Model 1: Change in SWD in Germany.

Errors are shown in parentheses. Data source: MEDW Bavaria Panel Study and it is adjusted with post-stratification demographic weight. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table B2. Pairwise difference between estimates

Pairwise comparison	Level of Significance
CSU - SPD	n.s.
Green - CSU	n.s.
Green - SPD	n.s.
LP - Green	$p < 0.001$
AfD - FDP	$p < 0.001$
AfD - OP	$p < 0.001$

Note: ns means non-significant

Table B3. Replication of Table 2 using ideological distance that is weighted with the vote shares of CSU/CDU and SPD.

	Model 1
SPD	0.30
	(0.16)
Green	0.21
	(0.23)
FDP	-0.47
	(0.26)
Left	-0.71**
	(0.26)
AfD	-1.26***
	(0.20)
Other parties	-0.28
	(0.23)
Pre-election Satisfaction	-0.63***
	(0.02)
Ideological distance with grand	-0.13***
coalition (weighted)	(0.03)
Winner	0.00
	(0.16)
Can't Say/Don't Know'	0.24
	(0.20)
About the same	-0.01
	(0.12)
Better off	0.15
	(0.15)
Stayed about the same	0.69***
	(0.14)
Gotten better	0.73***
	(0.16)
Political Interest	0.00
	(0.02)
Income	0.03
	(0.03)
Female	-0.24*
	(0.10)

Age	0.00
	(0.00)
Education	-0.10
	(0.07)
Constant	4.03***
	(0.42)
Observations	1772
R^2	0.32

Entries are coefficients of the linear regression model. DV of Model 1: Change in SWD in Germany.

Errors are shown in parentheses. Data source: MEDW Bavaria Panel Study and it is adjusted with post-stratification demographic weight. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table B4. Explaining stable party voting for each vote choice in the 2013 federal election.

DV: Stable party voting=1; vote-switching=0	Model 1	Model 2
2013 federal election vote choice (Ref: CSU)		
SPD	-0.16***	-0.12**
	(0.03)	(0.04)
Green	-0.16***	-0.13**
	(0.04)	(0.05)
FDP	-0.43***	-0.42***
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Left	-0.25***	-0.19**
	(0.06)	(0.06)
AfD	0.03	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Other parties	-0.16***	-0.10
	(0.04)	(0.05)
Change in SWD (Germany)	0.02*	0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.01)
SPD # Change in SWD (Germany)	0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Green # Change in SWD (Germany)	0.00	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)
FDP # Change in SWD (Germany)	0.00	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Left # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.09***	-0.10***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AfD # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.06**	-0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Other parties # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
European integration self-placement	0.01**	0.01*
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Ideological distance with party chosen in national election		-0.03***
		(0.01)
Evaluation of federal government economic situation (Ref: Not satisfied at all)		
Not very satisfied		-0.01

		(0.04)
Fairly satisfied		0.02
		(0.04)
Very satisfied		0.12
		(0.07)
Political Interest	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Income	-0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Age	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Education	0.00	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.70^{***}	0.72^{***}
	(0.09)	(0.10)
Observations	1661	1516
R^2	0.08	0.10

Entries are coefficients of linear probability model. Errors are shown in parentheses. Data source: MEDW Bavaria Panel Study and adjusted with post-stratification demographic weight.

$^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Fig. B1. Predicted probabilities of voting the same party by a change in SWD for each vote choice in the previous national election (logit model)

Note: all other variables are kept at observed values and the 95% confidence intervals are shown (N = 1661)

Table B5. Replicating the second stage analysis using binary logit regression

Ref. outcome: Vote-switching	Model 1	Model 2
2013 federal election vote choice (Ref: CSU)		
SPD	-0.72***	-0.55**
	(0.14)	(0.18)
Green	-0.74***	-0.60**
	(0.20)	(0.22)
FDP	-1.89***	-1.86***
	(0.24)	(0.25)
Left	-1.11***	-0.89**
	(0.26)	(0.30)
AfD	0.18	0.36
	(0.24)	(0.27)
Other parties	-0.72***	-0.45
	(0.20)	(0.24)
Change in SWD (Germany)	0.10*	0.13**
	(0.04)	(0.05)
SPD # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.01	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.07)
Green # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.01	-0.03
	(0.09)	(0.09)
FDP # Change in SWD (Germany)	0.02	0.01
	(0.11)	(0.12)
Left # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.45***	-0.53***
	(0.12)	(0.13)
AfD # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.32**	-0.33**
	(0.10)	(0.10)
Other parties # Change in SWD (Germany)	-0.10	-0.11
	(0.08)	(0.09)
European integration self-placement	0.06**	0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Ideological distance with party chosen in national election		-0.13***
		(0.04)
Evaluation of federal government economic situation (Ref: Not satisfied at all)		
Not very satisfied		-0.03
		(0.18)

Fairly satisfied		0.10
		(0.20)
Very satisfied		0.61
		(0.33)
Political Interest	-0.01	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Income	-0.01	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.11)	(0.12)
Age	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Education	0.01	-0.03
	(0.08)	(0.08)
Constant	0.86[*]	0.97[*]
	(0.41)	(0.47)
Observations	1661	1512
Pseudo R^2	0.06	0.07
log likelihood	-1028.23	-923.27
Wald Chi-squared	141.52	149.31
Prob > Chi2	0.00	0.00

Entries are coefficients of binomial logit model. Errors are shown in parentheses. Data source: MEDW Bavaria Panel Study and adjusted with post-stratification demographic weight. [*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

The making of radical right voters: persuasion and contrast effects in a dynamic political context

Abstract: Under what circumstance do radical right party (RRP) voters become more identified with the right-wing label? Also, when do they perceive the center-right party as more left-wing and evaluate it more negatively? This paper uses the identity-based approach to ideology to answer these two intertwined questions. Specifically, it leverages the dynamic political context of Germany, in which AfD crossed the thresholds of thirteen concatenated subnational elections during the refugee crisis. This paper finds that AfD's first-time voters became more right-wing in their self-placement over the 2013-2017 election cycle. In addition, they came to perceive the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) as more left-wing and judged it in a more negative light. The purpose of this paper is to highlight that concatenated regional elections alongside a political crisis can shape the ideological identity of potential RRP voters and motivate these voters to see the mainstream center-right party as an outgroup.

Introduction

Recent studies on ideology have employed social identity theory to understand the notion of ideology. Instead of viewing ideology as a "system of beliefs" (Converse, 2006) that structures a person's issue positions, the identity-based approach argues that ideology can be treated as a group label that defines who is "us" and who is "them" (Devine, 2015; Ellis & Stimson, 2009; Malka & Lelkes, 2010; Vegetti & Širinić, 2019). In this line of thought, ideological labels, like left/right in the European context or liberal/conservative in the US context, are used to define the boundaries of political groups. It follows that voters will use left/right or liberal/conservative as political categories to group themselves and others, so as to define friends and foes. In short, the identity-based approach to ideology maintains that ideological labels can induce a sense of inclusion and exclusion, which motivates political judgment and behavior (Mason, 2018).

This paper builds on the identity-based approach to ideology but goes a step further in analyzing how a dynamic political context drives the first-time radical right party (RRP) voters to become more attached to the right-wing label and perceive the neighboring mainstream center-right party as an outgroup. This paper makes use of the case of Germany during the 2013–2017 election cycle to analyze these two intertwined processes. The dynamic political context of this paper's concern is the refugee crisis and the thirteen concatenated subnational elections in which Alternative for Germany (AfD) successfully passed the thresholds. AfD's success within this short period of time, together with the refugee crisis, brought ideology into the forefront of political conflict in two ways. For one thing, the AfD adopted a hardline stance on the immigration issue,

which other parties shied away from. For another, different media organizations and parties in Germany labeled AfD as an "extreme right" party because of its xenophobic rhetoric and its affiliation with Pegida, which is an anti-Islam, far-right political movement. This polarization in political debates raised the salience of ideological labels and ideological identities at the electorate level. The aim of this paper is to investigate whether the first-time AfD voters shifted their ideological self-placement further to the right in this dynamic context. This right-wing shift in ideological self-placement is called the persuasion effect. Also, this paper analyzes whether a contrast effect exists among the first-time radical right voters. Specifically, it tests whether these voters perceive the mainstream center-right party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), as more left-wing and evaluate it in a more negative light.

The contribution of this paper is threefold. First, it helps us to understand the rise of the AfD in Germany, which had been treated as an exception in terms of RRP's success for decades. Specifically, the analysis shows how the first-time AfD voters in 2013 came to identify with the right-wing label and treat the CDU as an outgroup in a dynamic political context. Second, the paper echoes the notion that the ideological self-placement of RRP voters and their perceived position of the mainstream right party are tinted with rationalization bias. More importantly, it argues that the rationalization bias is not static but is situational—the electoral success of RRP and the refugee crisis are important in driving these motivated reasonings.

Third, this paper brings together the recent works on the impact of refugee crisis and those on the impact of election outcomes. Studies on refugee crisis already investigate how the crisis affects far-right voting and citizens' attitude on refugees and immigrants

(Dinas et al., 2019; Dustmann et al., 2019; Gessler et al., 2021; Hangartner et al., 2019; Schaub et al., 2020; Steinmayr, 2020). But so far, the impacts of refugee crisis on citizens' left/right self-identification and their perception of outgroup party are not yet well-studied. This gap may be driven by the assumption that left-right placement is very stable over time. On the other hand, there are some evidence showing that election outcome can impact on citizens' left/right self-placement, but they mostly focus on national election instead of second-order elections (Bischof & Wagner, 2019; Bursztyn et al., 2017; Giani & Méon, 2021; Valentim, 2021). My research joins these two strands of work by showing that electoral results of concatenated subnational elections, when encountered with a political crisis, can shape the ideological identity of its potential voters and affect how they judge the mainstream center-right party.

The paper is organized as follows: in the coming section, it describes the theoretical approach to studying ideological identification and how the identification is affected by the electoral success of a party and refugee crisis. Based on the literature review, I derive specific hypotheses concerning how the first-time AfD voters shifted their left/right self-placement (i.e. persuasion effect), their perceived positioning and evaluation of the CDU (i.e. contrast effect). Next, I briefly describe why the case of Germany is a good case to study the persuasion effect and contrast effect. Then, I describe the panel data and the identification strategies of persuasion effect and contrast effect, which is followed by the results of the empirical analyses. The paper concludes by summarizing the findings and examining the implications of the study.

Ideological labels as identity

Ideology has long been regarded as a set of coherent issue positions, or what Converse (2006) describes as a "system of belief". According to this issue-based approach, left/right or liberal/conservative can constrain and impact upon a person's position on different issues (Converse, 2006; Free & Cantril, 1967; Van der Eijk et al., 2005).[1] Yet, there has been consistent empirical evidence questioning the extent to which the general public uses left/right or liberal/conservative to orient their issue preferences and articulate their policy preferences (Caughey et al., 2019; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008).

Although the electorate on average has little comprehension about the ideological meaning of the left/right or liberal/conservative distinction, it does not mean these political categories are obsolete. As suggested by Levitin and Miller (1979), even if most citizens do not structure their issue preferences based on ideology, they still use ideological labels—left and right—to identify themselves, candidates, and other political objects. Along the same lines, Conover and Feldman (1981) find that the ideological labels do have symbolic meanings, and have "ability to generate strong positive or negative feelings" (p. 621). In addition, they point out that ideological self-placement is an act of categorization, which implies a positive evaluation of the ideological label. Relatedly, Arian and Shamir (1983) argue that, even if most people do not have ideological conceptualizations and coherent views of the political world, the left/right labels are still useful because they are cues that inform voters on which parties are allies and which are foes. In short, this line of thought regards ideology as

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[1] A huge amount of research on the issue-based approach to ideology has been devoted to study whether ideology is one-dimensional or multidimensional. But to understand the main thrust of this paper, it is not strictly necessary to thoroughly delineate this debate. Therefore, I defer the details of the issue-based approach to ideology to Section A of the appendix and interested readers can refer to it.

labels, cues, and political categories that help voters to orient themselves in the political arena.

In recent years, political psychologists (mostly in the USA) have reinvigorated this tradition and adopted the social identity theory to study ideology (Devine, 2015; Malka & Lelkes, 2010; Mason, 2018; Popp & Rudolph, 2011). The motivation behind this literature is that there is a mismatch between ideological identities and issue positions. Specifically, the puzzle is that there are citizens who call themselves conservative but take a liberal position on economic policies, such as issues of education and welfare spending (Claassen et al., 2015; Ellis & Stimson, 2009, 2012). The key insight of these studies for this paper is: citizens use ideological labels to categorize themselves and other political objects. Accordingly, ideological terms, like liberal and conservative or left and right, can be regarded as a source of identity, which designates the ingroup and outgroup. In short, the ideological labels need not be based on values and issue attitudes, but can still engender a sense of inclusion and exclusion, and can thus motivate political perception, judgment and behavior (Mason, 2018). Following this literature, this paper considers ideological labels as identity, and uses this perspective to study the European context, where the ideological labels "left" and "right" are still widely used in the language of voters, parties and the media.

Also, the insight from social identity theory informs us that an identity is dynamic and situational (Huddy, 2001), and ideological identity is no exception. Thus, ideological identity can be shifted under a dynamic political context. The dynamic political context this paper looks at is RRP's breakthroughs of subnational parliaments during the refugee crisis. Recent research on the impact of election outcome already shows that

RRP's electoral performance can serve as a salient event that provide information to voters (Bursztyn et al., 2017; Giani & Méon, 2021; Valentim, 2021). Particularly related to this paper is the research conducted by Bischof and Wagner (2019), who found that right-wing party supporters report being more right wing after an RRP entered parliament.

On the other hand, the recent research on refugee crisis yields expectation of change in ideological identity as well. As suggested by different studies, the refugee crisis can generate a sense of threat, which affects citizens' attitude towards refugees and immigrants (Gessler et al., 2021; Hangartner et al., 2019; Schaub et al., 2020). And one can conjecture that the crisis has implications on citizens' identity as well, for the debate over migration is substantially rooted in group identity (Brader et al., 2008). Yet, the group identity this paper focuses on is not citizens' national identity, which is much explored in previous works, but the ideological identity. Given this highly salient event, together with the ideological cues provided by elites, I expect the refugee crisis has implications on how RRP voters categorize themselves and the party that opened border.

Taken together, this research is going to study how the first-time RRP voters change their ideological identity, when an RRP successively crossed over the thresholds of second-order elections amid a political crisis. On top of that, it analyzes how these RRP voters adjust the perceived ideological position of the neighboring center-right party on the left/right scale and their evaluation thereof.

Rationalization bias embedded in ideological identity

To understand how the potential RRP voters become more attached to the right-wing label and how they adjust their perception of the mainstream center-right party, this paper relies on the notion of rationalization bias in electoral studies, which is analogous to the "ingroup/outgroup bias" in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Turner et al., 1987). Studies of rationalization bias suggests that voters first choose or have preferences for a party, and then adjust their own position or their perceived position of different parties in order to fit their choice or preference (Conover & Feldman, 1982; Krosnick, 1990; Markus & Converse, 1979). Rationalization bias occurs not only in different issue domains; it can also take place in the ideological space (Bølstad, 2020; Calvo et al., 2014; Dahlberg, 2013; Drummond, 2010). The rationale behind this alignment of choice/preference and perception is to avoid cognitive dissonance (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014).

Studies of rationalization bias in the left/right scale focus on two kinds of effects: the assimilation effect and the contrast effect. The assimilation effect argues that voters are likely to place a party that they choose/prefer closer to their own position, and this effect can be further differentiated into two types, namely the projection effect and the persuasion effect. The former mechanism suggests that voters project their ideological position onto the party that they choose/prefer (Merrill et al., 2001; van der Brug, 2001). For example, if one person is a moderate right-wing voter and has an affinity for RRP, he or she would perceive RRP as being closer to his/her own position, just as Figure 1 shows. The persuasion effect is the other way round. It describes that voters adopt certain ideological position of the party that they choose or prefer (Abramowitz, 1978;

Brody & Page, 1972; Cohen, 2003; Lenz, 2013; Visser, 1994). Just as Figure 2 illustrates, RRP voters move toward the perceived position of RRP. To ascertain whether the projection effect or the persuasion effect is more likely, researchers need to rely on a panel that traces voters' left/right self-placement and the perceived position of their chosen/preferred party over time.
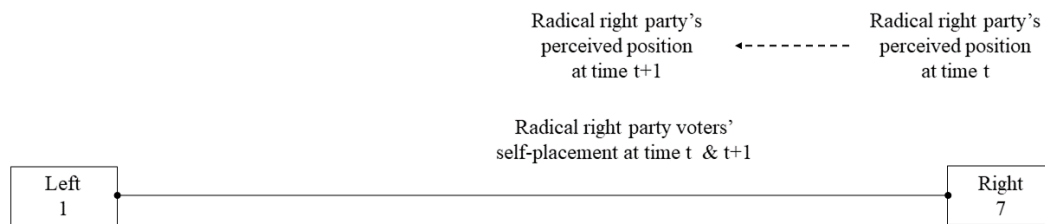
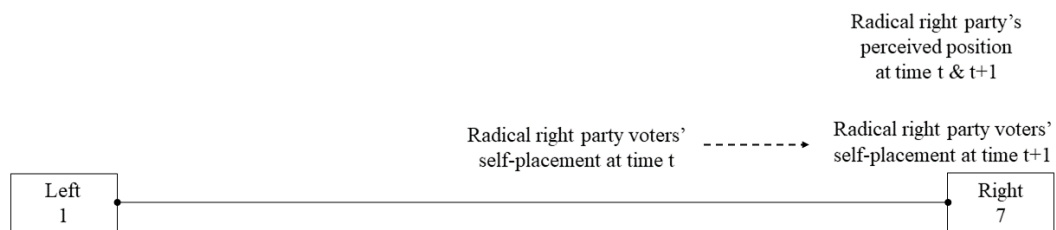

Figure 1. Projection effect

Figure 2. Persuasion effect

This paper suggests that the persuasion effect is more likely to occur than the projection effect among the potential AfD voters. This expectation is grounded in the argument made by Conover and Feldman (1982), who claims that "voters may engage more easily in projection if the policy stands of the candidates are ambiguous, whereas persuasion is more likely if the political environment is relatively unambiguous" (p. 229). Because the AfD is the only party that consistently emphasizes right-wing topics like immigration and crime throughout the refugee crisis, its political stance should be rather distinct in the ideological space (Nasr, 2020; van der Brug, 2004). Hence, this paper considers the persuasion effect more plausible than the projection effect among the first-

time AfD voters.

H1: In comparison to voters for other parties, first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal election are more right-wing in their self-placement than in previous election. (*Persuasion effect in left/right placement*)

On the other hand, the contrast effect can be traced back to the political psychology literature, which argues that people tend to overestimate the differences between those falling into different categories (Krueger & Rothbart, 1990; Mullainathan, 2002; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). It describes a categorization process in which voters position the party that they do not prefer further away from themselves, in terms of both issue positions and the left/right scale (Collins, 2011; Drummond, 2010; Granberg, 1987; Granberg & Brown, 1992; Vegetti & Širinić, 2019; Visser, 1994). Thus, the contrast effect focuses on voters' perception of the outgroup party that they have no affinity with (Bølstad & Dinas, 2016; Nicholson et al., 2018). The contrast effect thus expects that the potential RRP voters perceive the outgroup party to be further away from themselves than they really are.

Yet, which party does the potential RRP voters treat as an outgroup? This paper suggests that the mainstream center-right party is considered the outgroup party, based on both theoretical and empirical reasons. Regarding the theoretical reason, research on categorical perception demonstrates that voters in multi-party systems differentiate parties that are supposed to be on the same side of the ideological divide (Nicholson et al., 2018). That is, if voters choose between two different parties on the left, they perceive the two left-wing parties as dissimilar. This discrimination logic likewise

applies when voters choose two different parties on the right (Bølstad & Dinas, 2016), especially when the parties do not have a cooperative relationship (Adams et al., 2021). Outgroup discrimination between two similar options is nothing novel in electoral politics. This idea has long been suggested by Downs (1957), who claims that parties in multiparty systems "will strive to distinguish themselves ideologically from each other" (pp. 126–127). Similarly, as noted by Bowler (1990), "party competition will take place and/or be at its fiercest between adjacent parties rather than between ostensibly opposing parties such as Christian Democrats and Communists" (p. 69). Thus, this paper expects potential RRP voters to accentuate the differences between the mainstream center-right party and RRP on the left/right scale by positioning the former in a more left-wing direction, just as Figure 3 portrays.
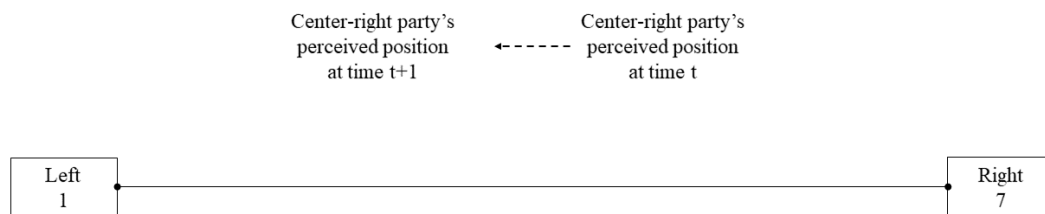
Figure 3. Contrast effect

There are empirical reasons why this expectation is plausible as well, primarily based on AfD's differentiating rhetoric and the fact that the CDU is always the AfD's target to pick fight with. During the refugee crisis in 2015, Angela Merkel, the chancellor and the then party leader of the CDU, decided to accept refugees who had transited through Europe. The crisis increased the salience of immigration as an issue in the public debate and among the German electorate (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019; Franzmann et al., 2020; Giebler et al., 2019). By relentlessly criticizing the refugee policy, the AfD exploited this opportunity structure and tried to be the owner of the immigration issue (Grande et al., 2019). Previous studies on left/right placement have already demonstrated that, in

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response to different salience issues raised in the party system, voters would adjust their perceptions of parties' left/right positions (de Vries et al., 2013; Harbers et al., 2012; Meyer & Wagner, 2019, 2020). Building on these studies, this paper expects that as immigrant issues become more salient, the position of a party is perceived as more left-wing if the party has a cosmopolitan policy view. Therefore, the first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal election should assign CDU in 2017 in a more left-wing position than in 2013, even though the traditional literature of German politics tends to classify CDU as belonging to the right-wing camp.

H2a: The first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal election perceive the CDU in 2017 as more left wing than they did in 2013. *(Contrast effect in left/right placement)*

Scholars have also noted that left/right ideological labels are political categories that are superimposed with the party labels (Huddy et al., 2015; Mason, 2018). Specifically, the perception of similarities and differences between the self and a party on the left/right scale can guide voters' evaluation of a party (Fortunato et al., 2016; Vegetti & Širinić, 2019). If the first-time AfD voters become more right-wing and simultaneously categorize the CDU as more left-wing, one can expect the CDU to clearly be an outgroup from their perspective. It follows that the contrast effect can be manifested in these voters' judgement of the CDU as well: they would view the CDU more negatively.

H2b: The first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal election evaluate CDU more negatively over the 2013-2017 election cycle. *(Contrast effect in party evaluation)*

The case of Germany

Before going into the details of the dataset and identification strategies, this section briefly explains why this research leverages the case of Germany to study the persuasion effect and contrast effect. The reason is fourfold. First, Germany has a multi-party system, which is useful for understanding and developing the identity-based approach to ideology. As mentioned before, the burgeoning research on this subject matter mostly focuses on the USA, where the ideological labels and party choices largely overlap due to its two-party system (Huddy et al., 2015). Yet, the European multiparty system can help us to disentangle the two and observe how they interact in a dynamic political context.

Next, it is related to German political culture. Unlike voters in other Western European countries, voters in Germany hesitate to identify themselves with the extreme right due to its association with xenophobia and Nazism (Bauer et al., 2017). As Mader and Schoen (2017) argue, "[t]he (moderate) right in Germany thus avoids the term 'right' and uses other labels such as 'bürgerlich' (in a sense 'bourgeois') instead. (p. 211)" Because of the taboo of the right-wing label, Germany represents a hard case in testing for the persuasion effect.

Thirdly, the transforming political landscape in the 2013–2017 election cycle raised the salience of ideological labels in the public mind. As AfD politicized the immigration issue and other parties responded antagonistically, ideological labels have been more often used to classify political competitors. As the tenet of public opinion research suggests, elite discourse can interact with the electorate level and shape public opinion

(Gabel & Scheve, 2007; Somer-Topcu et al., 2020; Zaller, 1992). Similarly, the literature on social identity theory establishes that people are more likely to categorize themselves in a particular label when that category sticks out and occurs more frequently (Hogg, 2005; Turner et al., 1987). Thus, the ideological label "right" should be more strongly connected to the AfD voters' identities, and their judgments of the outgroup party should be more likely to be affected in this context.

The last reason pertains to the unique features of the German political system. Both its federal and subnational electoral systems have a 5% electoral threshold.[2] And in comparison to other European countries, its subnational parliaments are much more powerful regarding their jurisdiction (Hooghe & Marks, 2016). Because of these reasons, AfD voters should think that the ideological label "right" is more socially acceptable once the AfD surpassed the subnational electoral hurdle. In other words, the information elicited by the electoral results in these concatenated subnational elections is likely to signal that there is a change in the social environment and this norm change would then affect AfD voters' perception of the right-wing label.

Data

To test for the persuasion effect and the contrast effect, this paper makes use of the panel provided by GESIS (2019), which covers the 2013-2017 election cycle. The panel consists of two cohorts. The first cohort was recruited before the 2013 federal election and it has 7599 respondents, while the second cohort was recruited in 2016 and it has

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[2] It shall be mentioned that there are some nuances between the federal electoral system and the subnational electoral system in terms of vote-seat distribution formulae, and whether the list vote is an open list or a close one. Despite these subtle differences, the electoral systems of the two levels are largely congruent in terms of the 5% hurdle and being mixed member proportional system.

2124 respondents. In total, there are 9723 respondents in the dataset. The dataset is reshaped into 6 waves, as shown in Figure 4. In all regression analysis, I use the design weight provided by GESIS due to the different sampling strategies in the two cohorts.
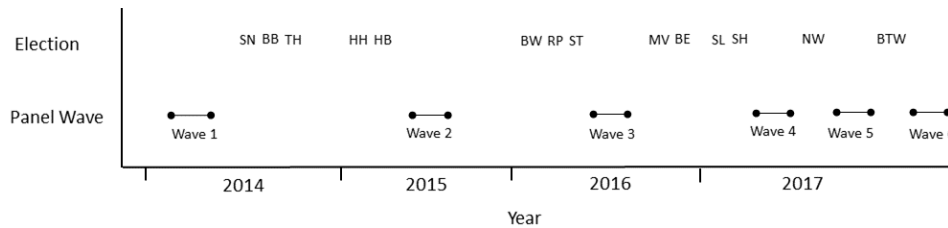

Figure 4. Data structure of GESIS panel

Note: Abbreviations of the election denote the following: BW=Baden-Württemberg; BE=Berlin; BB=Brandenburg; BTW=federal election; HB=Bremen; HH=Hamburg; MV=Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; NW= North Rhine-Westphalia; RP=Rhineland-Palatinate; SL=Saarland; SN=Saxony; ST= Saxony-Anhalt; SH=Schleswig-Holstein; TH= Thuringia

To estimate the persuasion effect and the contrast effect, this paper leverages the fact that subnational elections and the refugee crisis fall in-between waves. The key variable of the persuasion effect is the ideological self-identification of the left/right label. The surveys ask respondents to place themselves on a 1-7 left–right scale from wave 1 to 6, where higher values denote more right-wing placements. In addition, the panel has several constructs measuring the respondents' cultural attitude. In waves 3 and 4, respondents are asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I value cultural diversity in Germany because it is useful for the country.

- A society with a high degree of cultural diversity is more capable of tackling new problems.

- In general, I have positive attitudes about people from different cultural backgrounds.

- I like people from different cultural backgrounds.

All items have a scale from 1 (fully disagree) to 4 (totally agree). These constructs are useful in detecting whether the first-time AfD voters' position on these cultural issues has changed and become more structured over the course of the 2013-2017 election cycle.

Next, the variable concerning the contrast effect in left/right placement is the perceived left/right position of the CDU. Similarly, the surveys ask respondents to position different parties on a 1-7 left/right scale in waves 1 and 6. Talking about the contrast effect in party evaluation, there are several multi-dimensional constructs tapping into respondents' evaluation of the CDU in waves 2 and 3. These items include to what extent do they "see the CDU/CSU party member as enemy", to what extent are they "a firm supporter of the CDU/CSU" and the candidate orientation towards Angela Merkel. All these constructs are set at 1-7 scale. The details of the panel, the approach to handle missing data, and the summary statistics of all variables are reported in part B of the Appendix.

Model

To identify the persuasion effect, we estimate the effect of AfD's breakthrough into the subnational parliaments and the effect of refugee crisis on respondents' left/right placement. According to the theoretical expectation of the persuasion effect, AfD's breakthrough into subnational parliaments amid the refugee crisis can shift the ideological self-placement of the first-time AfD voters in the right-wing direction. Here, I compare the change in self-placement of the first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal

election, relative to that of non-AfD voters. Because this research is primarily interested in how first-time AfD voters in the 2017 federal election come to identify with the right-wing label, voters who voted AfD in both the 2013 and 2017 federal elections (i.e. loyal AfD voters) are excluded in the estimation.

The model of the persuasion effect can be formalized as follows:

$$LR_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Landtag_{it} + \beta_2 AfD_i \times Landtag_{it} + \beta_3 crisis_t + \beta_4 AfD_i \times crisis_t$$
$$+ \beta_5 crisis_t \times Landtag_{it} + \beta_6 AfD_i \times crisis_t \times Landtag_{it} + v_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where $i = 1 \ldots$ N respondents in the dataset; $t = 1 \ldots 5$ indicates the wave number. LR_{it} is the dependent variable, namely, the left/right self-placement of respondent i in wave t. $crisis_t$ is a dummy that switches on for the post-refugee crisis waves. AfD_i is a dummy switched on if respondent i is a first-time AfD voter in the 2017 federal election and 0 otherwise. $Landtag_{it}$ is a variable that measures the effect induced by AfD's breakthrough in subnational parliament, and the value of $Landtag_{it}$ is the number of subnational parliaments entered by AfD in wave t divided by 16. For instance, the value of $Landtag_{it}$ is 0 in wave 1, since AfD had not broken into any subnational parliament in wave 1. In wave 2, the value of $Landtag_{it}$ would then be $\frac{5}{16} = 0.3125$, for AfD had crossed the hurdles of five subnational parliaments; in wave 3, its value becomes $\frac{5+3}{16} = 0.5$, and so on and so forth.

In this model, β_1 and $(\beta_1 + \beta_2)$ estimate how subnational parliament breakthrough affects the left/right self-placement among non-AfD voters and first-time AfD voters respectively before the refugee crisis. β_3 and $(\beta_3 + \beta_4)$ estimate the impact of the refugee crisis on left/right self-placement among non-AfD voters and first-time AfD

voters accordingly. β_5 and $(\beta_5 + \beta_6)$ estimate the changes in left/right self-placement among these two groups of voters that are induced by subnational parliament breakthrough in the post-crisis period. One key assumption of this model is that all voters are equally affected by AfD's entry into subnational parliaments. To relax this strict assumption, I rerun the panel regression separately for the East German and West German subsamples in the robustness check.[3] And to estimate the change in cultural attitude, the constructs of cultural attitude mentioned above are substituted as dependent variables. Individual fixed effect model is used in the estimation, for this research is interested in the change in self-placement within-person.

The identification strategy of the contrast effect is different. Recall that the contrast effect focuses on whether the first-time AfD voters would put CDU in 2017 as more left-wing and see CDU in a more negative light than in 2013. However, to ascertain this left-wing categorization and negative evaluation of CDU are not simply due to CDU's liberal approach in migration policy but AfD voters' disaffection with CDU, it requires a baseline group for comparison. That is why this paper compares the changes in perceived position and evaluation of CDU between AfD voters in 2017 federal election who voted the CDU in 2013 (i.e. CDU defectors to AfD) and CDU voters in 2013 and 2017 federal elections (i.e. loyal CDU voters).[4] As a remark, more than 25% of the AfD voters in the 2017 federal election are CDU defectors in the dataset.

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[3] An alternative identification strategy is to estimate the effect of AfD's subnational parliament breakthrough *within a state*. Accordingly, one creates a dummy $Landtag_{ist}$ that switches on when AfD broke into the parliament of state s. Nonetheless, this research cannot use this identification strategy because the GESIS dataset does not provide the state in which respondents live.

[4] The terms "loyal CDU voters" and "CDU defectors to AfD" are simply used for abbreviation. As CDU always form a party list with its sister party in Bavaria (i.e. Christian Social Union, CSU), the vote choice option in the survey is the party list CDU/CSU.

The contrast effect employs a typical difference-in-differences estimation and the model equation can be written as follows:

$$DV_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 wave_t + \beta_2 AfD_i + \beta_3 AfD_i \times wave_t + X'_{it}\beta + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (2)$$

where the DV_{it} is the perceived position or different evaluation items of CDU across respondent i in wave t. $wave_t$ is a dummy switched on if the survey is conducted at subsequent wave. AfD_i is a dummy switched on when respondent i is AfD voter in the 2017 federal election. X_{it} is a vector of individual level covariates at wave t, which include age, gender, education, income, political interest, regional information of the respondents (i.e. East Germany/West Germany). In the difference-in-differences model, β_1 estimates the shift in perceived position/evaluation of CDU reported by the loyal CDU voters. β_2 estimates the perceived position/evaluation of CDU reported by the CDU defectors to AfD at previous wave (i.e. wave 1). β_3 is the coefficient measuring the contrast effect, for it estimates the shift in perceived position/evaluation of CDU reported by the CDU defectors to AfD relative to the loyal CDU voters. In the OLS regression, the observations are restricted to the CDU defectors to AfD and the loyal CDU voters, and all errors are clustered at the individual level.

Result

<u>Persuasion effect</u>

To begin with, we look at the change in left/right placement among non-AfD voters and first-time AfD voters throughout the 2013-2017 national election cycle. To facilitate interpretation, I simulate Figure 5 panel (a) based on the regression result (Full result is reported in Appendix Table C.1). The figure shows the left/right placement over the

number of subnational parliaments entered by AfD. In the simulation, the intercepts of both the first-time AfD voters and that of non-AfD voters are imputed based on the panel regression.

From panel (a), we can first notice there is a difference in left/right self-placement between the two groups of voters before AfD had broken into any subnational parliaments and the refugee crisis. This is expected because the first-time AfD voters and non-AfD voters had different ideological identification to start with. Next, talking about the change in left/right placement among non-AfD voters, we cannot see any substantive shift over this dynamic political context. Contrarily, among the first-time AfD voters, there is clearly a substantive right-wing shift, and the shift is non-linear over time. When AfD entered the first five subnational parliaments, left/right identification of these AfD voters remain stable. Yet, the right-wing shift is apparent after the three subnational elections that took place during the refugee crisis. Afterward, the left/right identification of the first-time AfD voters becomes once again steady in the subsequent five subnational elections. This abrupt change that takes place during the crisis is in line with the theoretical expectation of the persuasion effect in left/right placement, for the success in these concatenated regional elections provided AfD with more opportunities to politicize the migrant issue, rendering the ideological label more salient.

I also create Figure 5 panel (b) that illustrates the distribution of left/right self-placement among the first-time AfD voters in waves 1 and 5. In this histogram, only those first-time AfD voters who stay from wave 1 to wave 5 are included (N=130), and the dotted line denotes the mean position of this sample in wave 1 while the solid line

marks the mean position in wave 5. One can clearly observe a right-wing shift in their ideological placement—from 4.41 to 4.80 on a 1-7 scale—and the shift is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This right-wing shift in ideological identification is 8.84%, which is a rather sizable effect. As a robustness check, I run the regression using fixed effects ordinal logit model (Table C.2 Model 1), rerun the panel regression separately for the East German and West German subsamples (See Figure C.1 and Figure C.2), and this right-wing shift still holds. Overall, the above findings counter the idea that ideological placement is stable (Knutsen, 1995) and they provide clear support for the persuasion effect in left/right placement.
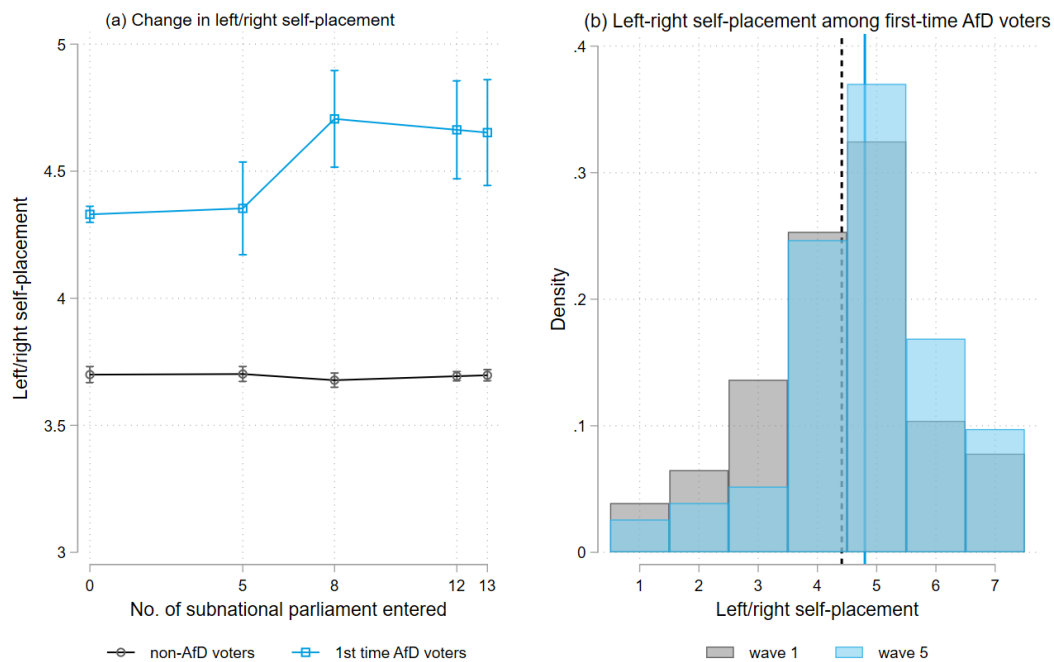

Figure 5. Persuasion effect: (a) Change in left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters and among non-AfD voters (b) Distribution of left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters in waves 1 and 5.

Having established that the first-time AfD voters become more identified with the right-

wing label, scholars of issue-based ideology can be curious about whether the right-wing shift in self-placement is driven by a change in cultural attitude. Moreover, they may suspect that these AfD voters are more structured in terms of their position on different cultural issues (Converse, 2006; Free & Cantril, 1967). Therefore, I test whether their cultural attitude has become more xenophobic over time and whether the correlation of different items related to the cultural dimension has increased over time among the first-time AfD voters.

The results cannot provide much support for these conjectures. I find that the change in cultural attitude among the first-time AfD voters reaches conventional level of statistical significance in only one of the four items (i.e. positive attitudes towards other cultures). On the other hand, surprisingly, the change in cultural attitude among non-AfD voters is statistically significant in three of the four items, although they do not place themselves as more right-wing (Table C.1). In substantive terms, the non-AfD voters are on average less likely to think that high cultural diversity can tackle new problems, has less positive attitude towards other cultures, and are less likely to like people from different cultural backgrounds. The analysis remains substantively the same when I use fixed effect ordinal logit model in estimation (Table C.2 Models 2-5). These results corroborate the findings of Schaub et al. (2020), which demonstrate that there is convergence of immigration attitude among right and left-leaning individuals in Germany after the refugee crisis, instead of polarization. Next, in testing the correlation of these cultural items over time among the first-time AfD voters, the change is statistically significant in only one out of six pairwise comparisons (Table C.3). So, despite the right-wing shift in ideological self-placement, one cannot conclude that the first-time AfD voters become more xenophobic and their cultural attitude
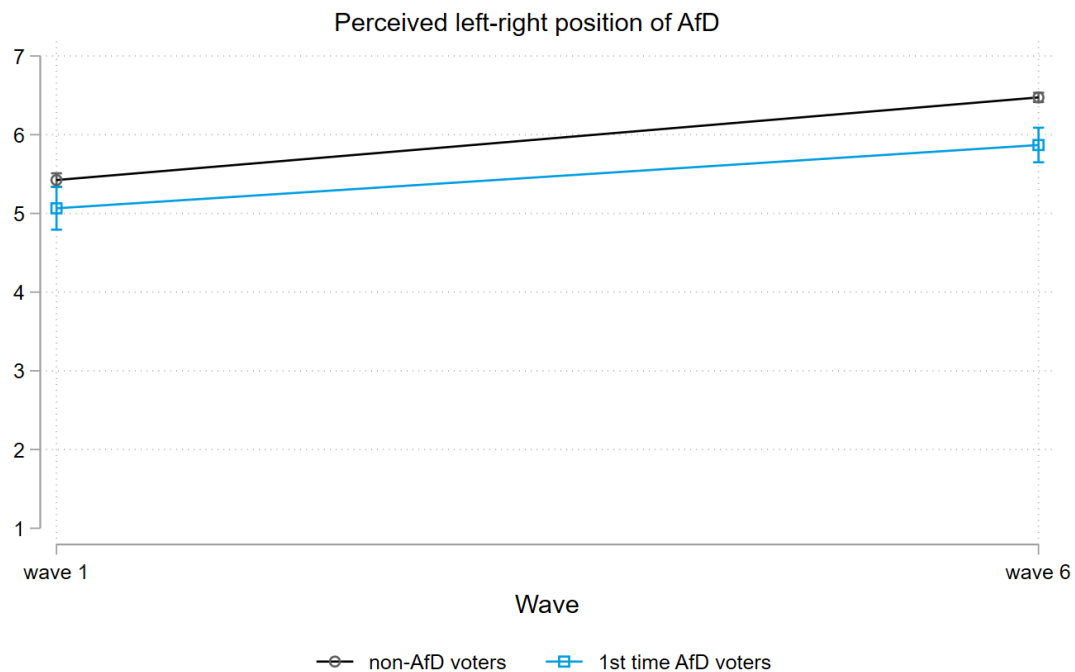
become more structured.

Figure 6. Change in perceived left/right position of AfD among first time AfD voters and non-AfD voters. Note: All covariates are controlled at the mean level.

Lastly, to further substantiate the findings of the persuasion effect, I check whether projection effect takes place simultaneously with the persuasion effect. Thereby, I use the perceived position of AfD as the dependent variable and run the same regression as stated in equation (2) (See Table C.4). The result does not provide support for the projection effect. Recall that the projection effect expects the first-time AfD voters perceive AfD as more moderate over time. But as shown in Figure 6, the estimation merely indicates that the AfD voters are more likely to position AfD as more left-wing in comparison to non-AfD voters, no matter at wave 1 (0.36 units, $p < 0.05$) or at wave 6 (0.44 units, $p < 0.001$). However, when one compares the change of perceived position of AfD from wave 1 to wave 6 among the first-time AfD voters, it shows that

they position AfD as more right-wing as well (0.80 units, p < 0.001), rather than in the left-wing direction.

Contrast effect

Moving on to the estimation of the contrast effect, we look at Model 1 of Table 1. As aforementioned, the contrast effect in left/right placement suggests the CDU defectors to AfD would put CDU in 2017 in a more left-wing direction than in 2013 than the loyal CDU voters. The results of Table 1 are in line with this expectation. First, the loyal CDU voters on average perceive CDU as slightly more left-wing (0.15 units, $p < 0.05$) in the course of such dynamic political context. Though this left-wing shift is expected given the CDU's refugee policy, this is still an interesting finding. On top of that, it reveals that, in comparison to loyal CDU voters, CDU defectors to AfD position CDU as more left-wing by 0.69 units on average ($p < 0.01$).

Table 1. Contrast effect in left-right placement and in party evaluation

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Defectors to AfD	0.01	0.20	-0.72*	-0.67**
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.31)	(0.24)
wave 6	-0.15*			
	(0.07)			
Defectors to AfD * wave 6	-0.69**			
	(0.23)			
wave 3		-0.09	-0.23*	-0.40***
		(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.06)
Defectors to AfD * wave 3		0.71**	-0.59$^+$	-2.10***
		(0.22)	(0.32)	(0.39)
Constant	4.91***	1.23***	7.75***	6.43***
	(0.61)	(0.34)	(0.64)	(0.52)
Observations	1072	834	834	834
R-squared	0.12	0.07	0.09	0.26

Note: DV of Model 1: Perceived left-right position of CDU; DV of Model 2: Seeing CDU/CSU party member as enemy; DV of Model 3: Firm supporter of the CDU/CSU; DV of Model 4: Candidate orientation towards Angela Merkel. Entries are coefficients of OLS. Clustered standard errors are shown in parentheses. Typical socio-demographic variables are omitted due to space limitation. Sample restricted to CDU defectors to AfD and loyal CDU voters. $^+ p < 0.10$, $^* p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

To further illustrate the contrast effect, I create Figure 7 panel (a) that shows the differences in perceived position of CDU across the two waves for these two groups of voters. It is obvious that at wave 1, the perceived position of CDU among two group of voters are indistinguishable from one another. Yet, during this dynamic political context, the CDU defectors to AfD are more prone to put CDU in a more left-wing position than the loyal CDU voters. In addition, looking at the distribution of the perceived position of CDU at wave 6 (see Table 2), there are 46.45% of the CDU defectors to AfD that categorize CDU into the left-wing camp (i.e. below 4 points of

the 1-7 scale), whereas only 14.60% of the loyal CDU voters do so. This finding provides further support for the contrast effect in left/right placement, as these first-time AfD voters categorize the neighboring mainstream center-right party into the opposite ideological camp.
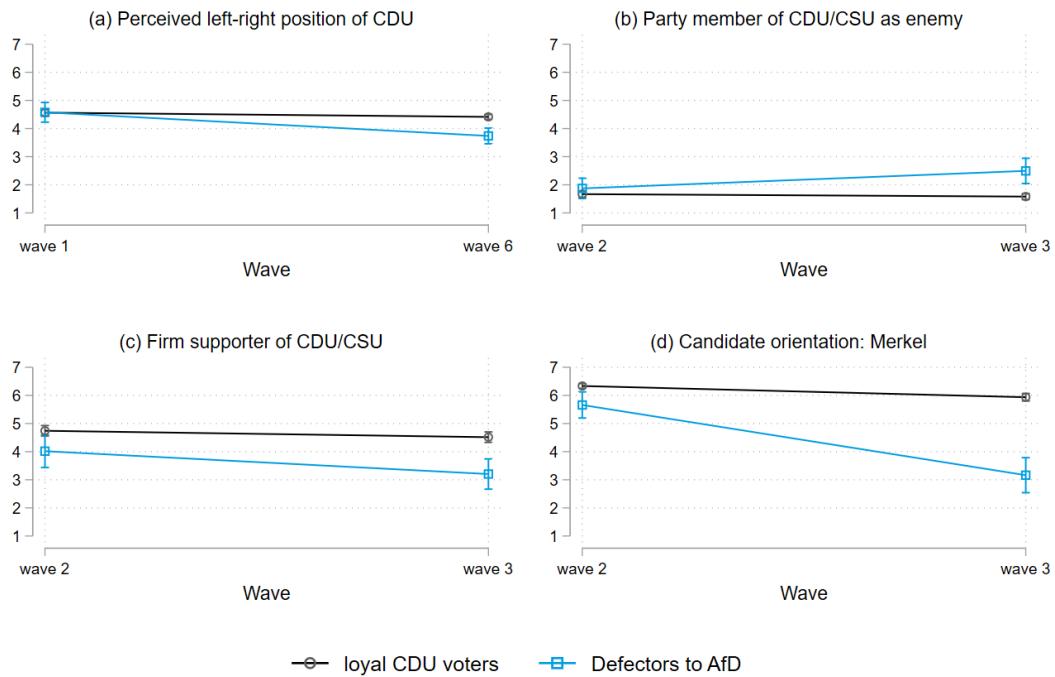

Figure 7. Contrast effect in left/right placement and party evaluation among CDU defectors to AfD and loyal CDU voters. Note: All covariates are controlled at the mean level.

Table 2. The distribution of perceived position of CDU at wave 6 among loyal CDU voters and CDU defectors to AfD

	loyal CDU voters	CDU defectors to AfD
1 (Left)	2.08	10.54
2	3.51	16.11
3	9.01	19.80
4	37.33	35.78
5	36.81	13.54
6	8.40	1.98
7 (Right)	2.87	2.25
Total (%)	100	100
Total (N)	3123	314

Regarding the contrast effect in party evaluation, we turn to the results reported in Models 2-4 in Table 1. As expected, the CDU defectors on average evaluate the CDU more negatively than the CDU loyal voters after AfD broke into multiple subnational parliaments during the refugee crisis. As shown in panels (b)-(d) of Figure 7, CDU defectors to AfD and those of loyal CDU voters already differ slightly at wave 2 in terms of being a firm supporter of the CDU/CSU and their evaluation towards Merkel. But after AfD had passed through three concatenated subnational elections in-between waves 2 and 3, all the party evaluation measures of the two group of voters further depart from one another. In comparison with the loyal CDU voters, the CDU defectors to AfD becomes more likely to see the party member as enemy in wave 3 (0.70 units, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, relative to the loyal CDU voters, defectors to AfD are less likely to view themselves as a firm supporter of the CDU/CSU (0.63 units, $p < 0.10$). And it is noteworthy that, compared to wave 2, loyal CDU voters in wave 3 are also slightly less likely to view themselves as firm supporter (0.22 units, $p < 0.05$). The strongest change is the negative view towards Merkel: loyal CDU voters view the party leader more

negatively in wave 3 (0.39 units, $p < 0.001$). But in comparison with the loyal CDU voters**,** defectors to AfD see her in a much more negative light (2.10 units, $p < 0.001$). These findings surely corroborate the tenet of social identity theory in a dynamic context, which maintains that outgroup is judged more inferior when the boundary between ingroup (i.e. AfD) and outgroup (CDU) becomes more salient.

For the robustness check, I conduct a placebo test for the contrast effect. OLS regression is rerun again, but in equation (2), the perceived position of CDU at wave 6 is replaced by the perceived position of CDU during the pilot phase (before wave 1). The result shows that the placebo test is safely passed, as CDU defectors to AfD do not position CDU as more left-wing in earlier period (See Table C.5).

Conclusion

Applying the identity-based approach to ideology, this paper investigates how a dynamic political context shapes first-time RRP voters' ideological self-placement, their perceived ideological position and evaluation of the mainstream center-right party. It leverages the case of Germany, where refugee crisis took place and AfD had broken into thirteen subnational parliaments in the 2013-2017 election cycle. Specifically, this paper finds that the first-time AfD voters identified themselves as more right-wing. Also, the CDU defectors to AfD perceive the CDU as more left-wing and evaluate it in a more negative light. These findings shed important light on the micro-level psychological foundation of RRP voters in Germany, which had been treated as an exception in terms of RRP's success for decades.

In addition, the present research makes a connection to the recent studies on how party strategies and party conflicts shape the perceived left/right position of a party (Adams et al., 2021; Dahlberg, 2013; Nasr, 2020; Somer-Topcu et al., 2020). As shown by the contrast effect in left/right placement, the perception of the outgroup party is subject to the differentiating strategy of the ingroup party in a dynamic political context. Even though the RRP and the mainstream center-right party are supposed to be on the same side of the ideological continuum, a significant portion of RRP voters can perceive the position of the mainstream center-right party as left-wing. This speaks to the fact that ideological labels are malleable political categories susceptible to the rhetoric of a party. Moreover, the results illustrate that the perceptions of a party on the left/right scale are heterogenous among RRP voters and non-RRP voters, and this rationalization bias can be strengthened by RRP's success in second-order elections during a political crisis.

Also, this paper brings together the literature of refugee crisis and that of the impact of electoral results. For one thing, it fills the gap of the refugee crisis research by investigating how this crisis impact on voters' left/right self-identification and their perception of outgroup party, on top of citizens' attitude towards refugees and immigrants. For another, this research contributes to the burgeoning literature on how electoral results lead to norm change or change in political attitude. Unlike extant studies which tend to focus on first-order national elections, this article illustrates that the electoral results of second-order elections can bring about comparable changes too. When an RRP continuously crosses the thresholds of subnational elections during a political crisis, the first-time RRP voters will align themselves to the right-wing label, despite the absence of substantive change in cultural attitudes. Furthermore, these RRP voters are more likely to regard the mainstream center-right party as an outgroup, which

can be manifested in the left/right perceived position and evaluation.

Overall, this paper highlights the role of concatenated second-order elections, alongside a political crisis, in explaining the change in political identity and perception of outgroup party among the first-time RRP voters. It is noteworthy that both the persuasion effect and the contrast effect take place within just one national election cycle. This analysis shall open avenues for studying RRP voters in other European countries, where concatenated second-order elections occur alongside a political crisis. For instance, do the Spanish regional elections and its Catalan crisis exert any persuasion effect and the contrast effect upon Vox's voters? And to what extent do the Italian regional elections, which took place during the migrant crisis, affect the political identity and attitude of Lega Nord voters? These questions can certainly be subsumed within the framework of dynamic political context in understanding the making of RRP voters.

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Appendix

Part A. Issue-based approach to ideology

Ideology has long been regarded as a set of coherent issue positions, or what Converse (2006) suggests as a "system of belief". According to this line of thought, can structure citizens' position on different policies, political preferences and orientations (Converse, 2006; Free & Cantril, 1967; Van der Eijk et al., 2005). Very often, the issue-based constraint is measured by a respondent's attitudes toward different issues and analyze their correlations.

One key debate within the issue-based approach to ideology is whether it is one-dimensional or multi-dimensional. For scholars who maintains ideology is one-dimensional, they relate ideology mainly to economic issues that underlie the traditional class cleavage. On that regard, left/liberal means advocating pro-working class, welfare state, while right/conservative means pro-capitalists, laissez faire (Converse, 2006; Free & Cantril, 1967; Inglehart & Klingemann, 1976; Van der Eijk et al., 2005; Zaller, 1992). On the other hand, studies adopting the multi-dimensional perspective relate ideology to various cultural issues, in addition to the economic issues (Dolezal & Hutter, 2012; Feldman & Johnston, 2014; Jost et al., 2009; LaPalombara, 2007; Treier & Hillygus, 2009). This cultural cleavage has different names, such as "Green, Alternative and Libertarian (GAL) vs Traditional, Authoritarian, and Nationalist (TAN)" (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Hooghe et al., 2002), "Libertarian vs Authoritarian" (Kitschelt, 1994) (Kitschelt, 1994; Norris & Inglehart, 2019), "Integration vs Demarcation" (Kriesi et al.,

2006; Kriesi & Hutter, 2019). But after all, the cultural cleavage would structure citizens' views on gender issue, individual autonomy, environmental issues, immigration issues.

Some scholars argue that the left/right ideology can be seen as a "super-issue" (Inglehart, 1984), and its substantive issue content vary across countries. (Freire, 2015; Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990; Huber & Powell, 1994). Also, the meaning of "left" and "right" is found to be malleable over time even within a given country (de Vries et al., 2013; Franzmann et al., 2020; Giebler et al., 2019; Neundorf, 2012; Van der Eijk et al., 2005). This change in the issue basis of left/right is suggested to be dependent on the everyday processes of political cooperation and conflict. In other words, the meaning of left/right is politically constructed and is sensitive to the dynamics of the political context. Last but not least, even when holding the time and space constant, the understanding of how different issues is related to left/right can be heterogenous among different individuals (Bauer et al., 2017; Mader & Schoen, 2017). Due to these reasons, this paper does not assume that the left/right ideological label is necessarily based on a fixed set of issue preferences and the meaning is homogenous within the electorate.

Part B. Details of the GESIS panel

Data structure and missing data

The following description is largely based on the documentation of the GESIS Panel - Standard Edition (Study Number: ZA5665). In the dataset, there are two cohorts: the sampling method of the first cohort is probability based, whereas for the second cohort, individuals from East Germany had a higher chance than those from West Germany to join the panel. The second cohort was recruited in 2016. Because of the different sampling strategies in the two cohorts, I use the design weight in the regression analysis.

Regarding the situation of panel attrition, more than 30% of respondents from the first cohort stay in at least 3 waves, while more than 40% of respondents from the second cohort stay in three waves. In case there are missing items concerning the typical socio-demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, education), they will be filled in using the previous or subsequent waves. In case the dependent variables of different models are missing, the estimation would exclude those missing observations across models, so as to ensure consistent samples.

Table B.1 Variable Description

Variable	Question Wording and Coding	GESIS Variables
Left/right self-placement (pos_)	In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right". Where would you place yourself on this scale from "left" to "right"? (Waves 1, 5, 6)	aaab089a bcaj055a cbzc061a dbzc061a
	1 Left	ebzc061a
	2	eebu163a
	3	efaj090a
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7 Right	
	98 Don't know	

-11 Not invited

-22 Not in panel

-33 Unit nonresponse

-77 Not reached

-99 Item nonresponse

-111 Ambiguous answer

In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right". Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means "left" and 10 means "right"? (Waves 2, 3, 4)

0 0 Links

0 Left

1 1

2 2

3 3

4 4

5 5

6 6

7 7

8 8

9 9

10 10 Rechts

10 Right

-11 Not invited

-22 Not in panel

-33 Unit nonresponse

-77 Not reached

-99 Item nonresponse

-111 Ambiguous answer

The ideological self-placement at waves 2-4 are standardized to a 1-7 scale. Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Not reached, Item nonresponse, Ambiguous answer were coded as missing.

Perceived left/right position of CDU (pos_CDU_)	If you use this scale from "left" to "right", where would you place the following political parties? Item text: CDU	aaab073a (placebo) bcaj056a eebu156a
	1 Left	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7 Right	
	98 Don't know	
	-11 Not invited	
	-22 Not in panel	
	-33 Unit nonresponse	
	-77 Not reached	
	-99 Item nonresponse	
	-111 Ambiguous answer	
	Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Not reached, Item nonresponse, Ambiguous answer were coded as missing.	
Perceived left/right position of AfD (pos_AfD_)	If you use this scale from "left" to "right", where would you place the following political parties? Item text: AfD	bcaj062a eebu162a
	1 Left	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7 Right	
	98 Don't know	
	-11 Not invited	
	-22 Not in panel	

	-33 Unit nonresponse	
	-77 Not reached	
	-99 Item nonresponse	
	-111 Ambiguous answer	
	Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Not reached, Item nonresponse, Ambiguous answer were coded as missing.	

Cultural diversity is useful (cul_useful_)	Please indicate on the scale, ranging from "fully disagree" to "fully agree", to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.	dbbd159a dbbd177a dbbd195a dbbd213a
	Item text: I value cultural diversity in Germany because it is useful for the country.	ebbd114a ebbd119a ebbd124a
	1 Fully disagree	ebbd129a
	2 Rather disagree	eebd222a
	3 I rather agree	eebd227a
	4 I totally agree	eebd232a
	99 I don't want to answer	eebd237a
	-11 Not invited	
	-22 Not in panel	
	-33 Unit nonresponse	
	-66 Missing by design	
	-77 Not reached	
	-99 Item nonresponse	
	I don't want to answer, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item nonresponse were coded as missing.	

Cultural diversity is solution to	Please indicate on the scale, ranging from "fully disagree" to "fully agree", to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.	dbbd160a dbbd178a dbbd196a

problems		dbbd214a
(cul_sol_)	Item text: A society with a high degree of cultural	ebbd115a
	diversity is more capable of tackling new problems.	ebbd120a
		ebbd125a
	1 Fully disagree	ebbd130a
	2 Rather disagree	eebd223a
	3 I rather agree	eebd228a
	4 I totally agree	eebd233a
	99 I don't want to answer	eebd238a
	-11 Not invited	
	-22 Not in panel	
	-33 Unit nonresponse	
	-66 Missing by design	
	-77 Not reached	
	-99 Item nonresponse	
	I don't want to answer, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit	
	nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item	
	nonresponse were coded as missing.	

Positive	Please indicate on the scale, ranging from "fully disagree"	dbbd161a
attitudes	to "fully agree", to what extent you agree or disagree with	dbbd179a
towards other	the following statements	dbbd197a
cultures	Item text: In general, I have positive attitudes about	dbbd215a
(cul_att_)	people from different cultural backgrounds.	ebbd116a
		ebbd121a
	1 Fully disagree	ebbd126a
	2 Rather disagree	ebbd131a
	3 I rather agree	eebd224a
	4 I totally agree	eebd229a
	99 I don't want to answer	eebd234a
	-11 Not invited	eebd239a
	-22 Not in panel	
	-33 Unit nonresponse	
	-66 Missing by design	
	-77 Not reached	
	-99 Item nonresponse	

I don't want to answer, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit
nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item
nonresponse were coded as missing.

Liking people from different cultural backgrounds (cul_like_)	Please indicate on the scale, ranging from "fully disagree" to "fully agree", to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements Item text: I like people from different cultural backgrounds. 1 Fully disagree 2 Rather disagree 3 I rather agree 4 I totally agree 99 I don't want to answer -11 Not invited -22 Not in panel -33 Unit nonresponse -66 Missing by design -77 Not reached -99 Item nonresponse I don't want to answer, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item nonresponse were coded as missing.	dbbd162a dbbd180a dbbd198a dbbd216a ebbd117a ebbd122a ebbd127a ebbd132a eebd225a eebd230a eebd235a eebd240a
Party member as enemy (CDU_enemy_)	Please indicate to what extent the following statements capture your opinion on each party. If someone reveals this particular party membership during a conversation, I start seeing him as a political enemy. Item text: CDU/CSU 1 Does not apply at all	ccax050a dcax050a

2 2

3 3

4 4

5 5

6 6

7 Fully applies

98 Don't know

-11 Not invited

-22 Not in panel

-33 Unit nonresponse

-77 Not reached

-99 Item nonresponse

-111 Ambiguous answer

Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item nonresponse were coded as missing.

Convinced adherent (CDU_firm_)	I am a firm supporter of this party. Item text: CDU/CSU	ccax060a dcax060a

1 Does not apply at all

2 2

3 3

4 4

5 5

6 6

7 Fully applies

98 Don't know

-11 Not invited

-22 Not in panel

-33 Unit nonresponse

-77 Not reached

-99 Item nonresponse

-111 Ambiguous answer

Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse,

Missing by design, Not reached, Item nonresponse were coded as missing.

Candidate orientation (Merkel_)	What do you think of the following politicians? If you are not sufficiently familiar with a politician, please choose the option "I do not know". Item text: Angela Merkel 1 - 3 Nothing at all 2 -2 3 -1 4 0 5 +1 6 +2 7 +3 Very much 98 I don't know -11 Not invited -22 Not in panel -33 Unit nonresponse -77 Not reached -99 Item nonresponse -111 Ambiguous answer The scale is recoded as 1-7. Don't know, Not invited, Not in panel, Unit nonresponse, Missing by design, Not reached, Item nonresponse were coded as missing.	ccax045a dcax045a

<u>Descriptive statistics of the variables</u>

Descriptive statistics of the variables are calculated using the full dataset not being weighted

<u>Table B.2.1 Left/right self-placement</u>

	Count	**Mean**	**SD**	**Min**	**Max**
wave 1	3427	3.79	1.27	1.00	7.00
wave 2	3640	3.81	1.17	1.00	7.00
wave 3	3292	3.81	1.16	1.00	7.00
wave 4	4303	3.80	1.14	1.00	7.00
wave 5	3838	3.78	1.29	1.00	7.00

<u>Table B.2.2 Perceived position of parties</u>

	Count	**Mean**	**SD**	**Min**	**Max**
CDU at wave 1	3333	4.63	1.34	1.00	7.00
CDU at wave 6	3690	4.30	1.18	1.00	7.00
AfD at wave 1	2768	5.26	1.65	1.00	7.00
AfD at wave 6	3624	6.35	1.46	1.00	7.00

<u>Table B.2.3 Cultural Attitude</u>

	Count	**Mean**	**SD**	**Min**	**Max**
cul_useful_ at wave 3	3184	2.89	0.80	1.00	4.00
cul_useful_ at wave 4	4212	2.87	0.79	1.00	4.00
cul sol_ at wave 3	3124	2.83	0.82	1.00	4.00
cul sol_ at wave 4	4165	2.79	0.80	1.00	4.00
cul_att_ at wave 3	3185	3.07	0.72	1.00	4.00
cul_att_ at wave 4	4196	3.02	0.71	1.00	4.00
cul_like_ at wave 3	3121	3.02	0.70	1.00	4.00
cul_like_ at wave 4	4090	2.97	0.69	1.00	4.00

Table B.2.4 Evaluation of CDU/CSU

	Count	Mean	SD	Min	Max
CDU_enemy_ at wave 2	2946	2.81	2.00	1.00	7.00
CDU_enemy_ at wave 3	3182	2.69	1.90	1.00	7.00
CDU_firm_ at wave 2	3020	2.68	1.99	1.00	7.00
CDU_firm_ at wave 3	3176	2.61	1.91	1.00	7.00
Merkel_ at wave 2	3523	4.94	1.84	1.00	7.00
Merkel_ at wave 3	3721	4.53	1.99	1.00	7.00

Table B.2.5 Sociodemographic variables

	Count	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	61761	47.52	15.00	18.00	74.00
Political interest	29044	2.83	0.92	1.00	5.00

Sex	Freq.	Percent
Men	31038	49.29
Women	31927	50.71

Education	Freq.	Percent
Student	154	0.41
Left school without degree	362	0.96
Degree after 7 years of school attendance at most (abroad)	153	0.40
Polytechnic secondary school GDR, Degree 8th or 9th grade	595	1.57
Polytechnic secondary school GDR, Degree 10th grade	3545	9.38
Lower secondary school	6494	17.18
Secondary school	8921	23.60
Advanced technical college certificate	4518	11.95
General qualification for university entrance	13065	34.56

Region	Freq.	Percent
West	36099	77.62
East, including West Berlin	10409	22.38

Part C. Further Tables and Figures

Table C.1 Persuasion effect on left-right self-placement and cultural attitude

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Subnational parliament	0.01	-0.11	-0.23***	-0.22***	-0.17**
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
1st time AfD voters * subnational	0.07	-0.23	-0.07	-0.51*	-0.31
parliament	(0.32)	(0.25)	(0.33)	(0.25)	(0.20)
post-crisis	-0.05				
	(0.04)				
1st time AfD voters * post-crisis	0.51*				
	(0.20)				
post-crisis * subnational parliament	0.06				
	(0.09)				
1st time AfD voters * post-crisis *	-0.30				
subnational parliament	(0.41)				
Constant	3.76***	3.03***	3.02***	3.26***	3.15***
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Observations	13619	3956	3956	3956	3956
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.00	0.82	0.77	0.79	0.81

Note: DV of Model 1: Left/right self-placement; DV of Model 2: Usefulness of cultural diversity; DV of Model 3: High cultural diversity can tackle new problems; DV of Model 4: Positive attitudes towards other cultures; DV of Model 5: Liking people from different cultural backgrounds. Entries are coefficients of fixed effect model. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. $^{*}\ p < 0.05$, $^{**}\ p < 0.01$, $^{***}\ p < 0.001$

Figure C.1 Persuasion effect in East Germany: (a) Change in left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters and among non-AfD voters (b) Distribution of left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters in waves 1 and 5.
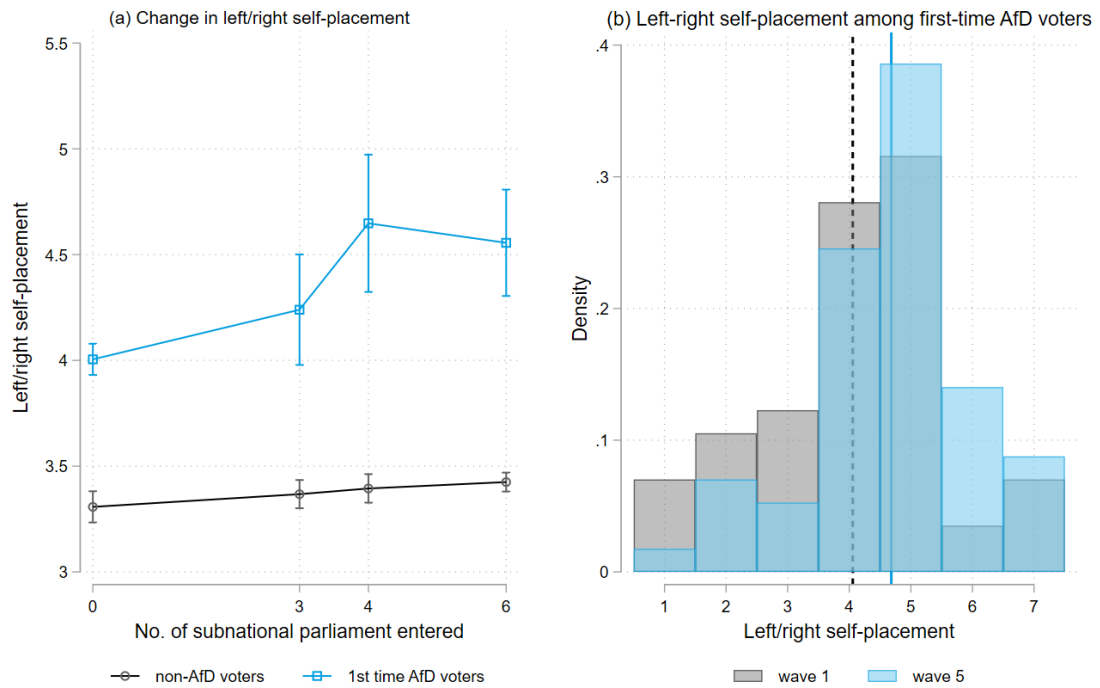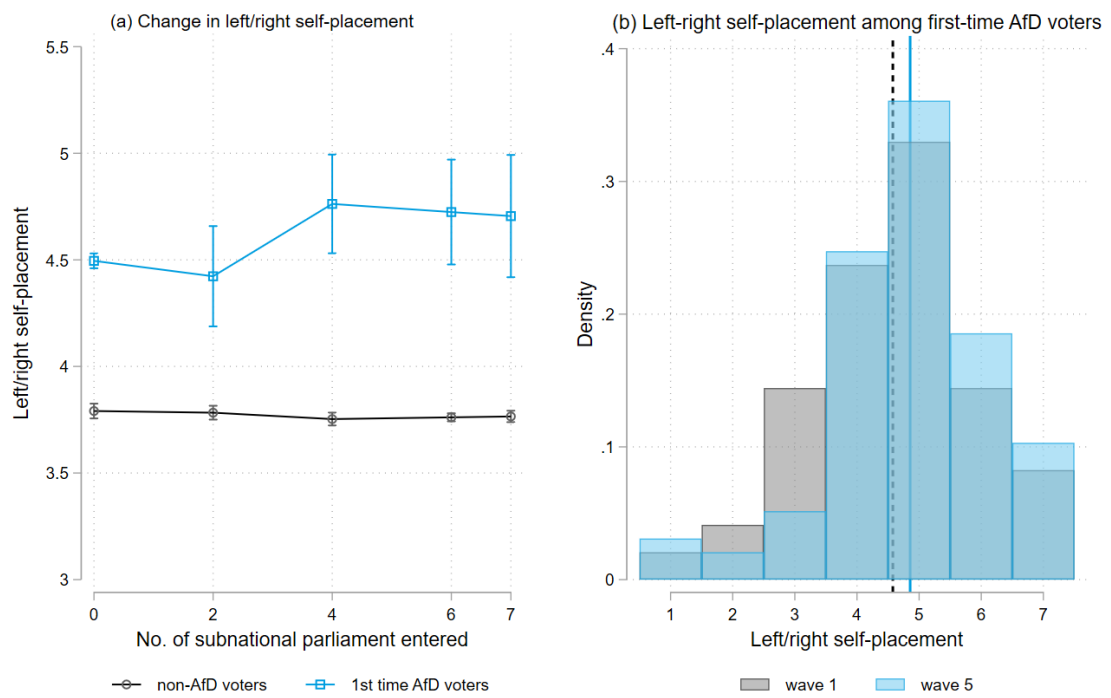
Figure C.2 Persuasion effect in West Germany: (a) Change in left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters and among non-AfD voters (b) Distribution of left/right self-placement among first-time AfD voters in waves 1 and 5.

Table C.2. Persuasion effect on left-right self-placement and cultural attitude

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Subnational parliament	-0.02	-0.64	-1.05***	-1.23***	-1.05**
	(0.21)	(0.35)	(0.32)	(0.33)	(0.34)
1st time AfD voters * subnational	0.23	-1.02	0.10	-2.07	-2.19
parliament	(0.79)	(1.26)	(1.07)	(1.15)	(1.37)
post-crisis	-0.12				
	(0.14)				
1st time AfD voters * post-crisis	1.29*				
	(0.50)				
post-crisis * subnational parliament	0.12				
	(0.28)				
1st time AfD voters * post-crisis *	-0.85				
subnational parliament	(1.02)				
Observations	39319	1412	1822	1466	1314
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
pseudo R-squared	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02

Note: DV of Model 1: Left/right self-placement; DV of Model 2: Usefulness of cultural diversity; DV of Model 3: High cultural diversity can tackle new problems; DV of Model 4: Positive attitudes towards other cultures; DV of Model 5: Liking people from different cultural backgrounds. $^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Table C.3 Correlation of different pairs of cultural attitude constructs and their differences across waves

Pair of constructs	Corr. at wave 3 (1)	Corr. at wave 4 (2)	p-value of H_0: (1=2)
Cultural diversity is useful & Cultural diversity is solution to problems	0.775	0.621	0.003
Cultural diversity is useful & Positive attitudes towards other cultures	0.453	0.496	0.589
Cultural diversity is useful & Liking people from different cultural backgrounds	0.488	0.493	0.950
Cultural diversity is solution to problems & Positive attitudes towards other cultures	0.398	0.304	0.303
Cultural diversity is solution to problems & Liking people from different cultural backgrounds	0.416	0.269	0.107
Positive attitudes towards other cultures & Liking people from different cultural backgrounds	0.843	0.784	0.061

Note: Different cultural attitude constructs are paired together in each wave. Only the first-time AfD voters are included in this test (N=388). The STATA command covtest is used to test whether the difference in the correlations of the pairs is statistically significant across waves.

Table C.4 Projection effect: Effect of subnational parliament entry on the perceived left-right position of AfD

	Model 1
1st time AfD voters	-0.36[*]
	(0.15)
wave 6	1.05[***]
	(0.05)
1st time AfD voters * wave 6	-0.25
	(0.16)
Constant	6.79[***]
	(0.31)
Observations	4099
R-squared	0.16

Note: DV of Model 1: Perceived left-right position of AfD. Entries are coefficients of OLS. Clustered standard errors are shown in parentheses. Typical socio-demographic variables are omitted due to space limitation. [*] $p < 0.05$, [**] $p < 0.01$, [***] $p < 0.001$

Table C.5 Placebo test for the contrast effect in left-right placement

	Model 1
Defectors to AfD	0.40
	(0.26)
wave 1	0.02
	(0.14)
Defectors to AfD * wave 1	-0.35
	(0.26)
Constant	3.44***
	(0.41)
Observations	532
R-squared	0.11

Note: DV of Model 1: Perceived left-right position of CDU; Entries are coefficients of OLS. Clustered standard errors are shown in parentheses. Typical socio-demographic variables are omitted. Sample restricted to CDU defectors to AfD and loyal CDU voters. $^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$