Populist Radical Right Parties in Government:
Representational Correctives or Vehicles of Discontent?

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ABSTRACT

In the past decades, populist radical right (PRR) parties in Europe have seen a rise in popularity and have recently started entering European parliaments and governments. Supporters of the populist radical right are generally found to be less supportive of the political system than others, and scholars have found that the rise of these parties tend to further fuel their supporters' distrust. However, recent research has found that by accounting for parliamentary and governmental representation, PRR parties can increase political trust and satisfaction among the population, especially for their supporters.

Building on these findings, this thesis seeks to dive deeper into the consequences of government representation of populist radical right parties, specifically by looking at different groups of individuals. As it has proved theoretically and empirically important, I differentiate between supporters and non-supporters of populist radical right parties. The main contribution of this thesis, however, is the included interaction effect of voters displaying «authoritarian predispositions», a set of human values prioritising conformity over autonomy. The theoretical background for this is very limited, even though authoritarianism constitutes one of three core components of populist radical right parties.

The analysis is done by employing a two-way fixed effects OLS approach using a combination of the nine available rounds from the European Social Survey and the ParlGov database. The results unsurprisingly indicate a strong positive effect of populist radical right in government for supporters. For non-supporters, the results also indicated a positive effect, although statistically insignificant. Most importantly, the analysis indicates no observed interaction effect of displaying authoritarian predispositions on political trust. As this relationship is still an understudied topic within political science, the findings undeniably warrant further research.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why Study Populist Radical Right Parties?

In recent decades, European countries have witnessed a wave of upcoming populist radical right (PRR) parties, constituting the most successful new party family since the end of the Second World War (Mudde 2013) . This has led populism in general, and especially *radical right populism,* to become a frequent subject of discussion, both in the media and academia. Within the latter arena, most of the attention so far has been concentrated on the origins and growth of the PRR party family, while research on the consequences of the phenomenon has been more scarce (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016; Schulze, Mauk, and Linde 2020). To contribute to filling this gap, this master thesis is focused on investigating how PRR parties affect citizens' attitudes towards and evaluations of the political system. More specifically, I seek to discover how the inclusion of populist radical right parties in national governments affect European voters' levels of political trust.

I am interested in this topic for several reasons. First of all, for a democracy to function properly, it is crucial to have the support of ordinary citizens (Schulze, Mauk, and Linde 2020, 2). Citizens' opinions about their political institutions can function as an assessment of the health of democratic regimes (Easton 1975; Hetherington 1998; Martini and Quaranta 2020), and high levels of trust are seen as a predictor for legitimacy and effective government (Mishler and Rose 2001). Due to the importance of political trust for democracy demonstrated in earlier research, it is important to empirically investigate the impact of PRR parties' representation on political trust. Second, one may argue that populist parties being included in governments is contradictory to their existence, as "one cannot protest against oneself in government" (Müller 2016, 4). The populist anti-elite rhetoric suggests that becoming part of the political elite should not be in their interest, as one of their primary attributes concerns criticism towards political elites. Despite this, PRR parties are increasingly entering governments all over Europe, and time has shown that populists can, in fact, govern as populists (Müller 2016, 4). Third, existing research have suggested that aggregate levels of political trust and support in Europe are declining, and that Europe is undergoing a crisis of democracy and support (Foa and Mounk 2016, 2017). However, others show that discontent seems to have decreased, most prominently in countries with strong populist radical right

parties (Harteveld et al. 2021; Linde and Dahlberg 2016). I am interested in explaining this puzzling relationship.

Although existing research is limited, scholars have recently started investigating how populism, and populist radical right parties more specifically, affect political trust. The results from this research are going in different directions. Some scholars, investigating the effects of the increased electoral strength of populists and radical right parties, find sobering results. Supporters of the populist radical right are found to be less supportive of the political system than others, and the rise of these parties tend to further fuel their supporters' distrust (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016; van der Brug 2003). Others, however, have found that by accounting for the representational function of these parties, support and satisfaction with the political system have increased (Harteveld et al. 2021; Haugsgjerd 2019). In other words, accounting for the effect of representation in parliament and government, scholars have found that PRR parties can function as "representational correctives" in out-of-date European party systems.

1.2 My Contribution – Research Question

This thesis aims at contributing to existing research by including two separate interaction terms to the initial relationship between PRR parties in government and political trust. First, I will investigate whether the effect of PRR government inclusion on trust differs among supporters and non-supporters of PRR parties. Several existing studies leaves this interaction out, thus missing out on a potentially important moderating effect. However, it is becoming increasingly evident from established theory that the effects of including PRR parties in government is different between these groups (Harteveld et al. 2021; Haugsgjerd 2019).

However, the main contribution of this thesis is the inclusion of the effect of "authoritarianism". Often, this concept is used to refer to some form of undemocratic regime or ruler. In this case, the usage and understanding of this term is quite different. Briefly stated, it refers to a set of human values or "attitudes", where the more authoritarian individuals express preferences for conformity over autonomy, and stresses issues like law and order (Mudde 2007, 22-23). As will be thoroughly explained below, this type of authoritarianism constitutes one of three core components of the populist radical right party family.

Additionally, compared to the populist and nativist components of the PRR, authoritarianism has received little scholarly attention. Some scholars have found that people with authoritarian attitudes tend to support populist radical right parties (Donovan 2019), while others find no such relationship (Dunn 2015a). Simultaneously, authoritarians are expected to deviate from other groups in their high levels of political trust (Devos, Spini, and Schwartz 2002; Dunn 2020), while PRR supporters on the other hand are found to be less trusting (Kokkonen and Linde 2021; McLaren 2011, 2012). In other words, investigating how authoritarian voters react to the inclusion of PRR is interesting, especially since theory provides few consistent clues on what to expect. Based on this, the research question of this study is as follows:

> *How are European voters' political trust affected by the inclusion of populist radical right parties in government? How does this effect vary between supporters of PRR parties, people with authoritarian predispositions, and the overall population?*

To investigate this, I use a combination of individual-level survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and country-level data from the ParlGov project. I apply two-way fixed effects OLS regression models to control for unobserved heterogeneity connected to within-country and year-specific factors. I study 23 Eastern and Western European countries. The results show that as expected, supporters of PRR parties are significantly more trusting in both politicians and parliament in years of PRR government inclusion. For individuals with higher levels of authoritarian attitudes, trust in politicians and parliament also increase, although not any more than for other groups. In other words, there is no indication of an interaction effect taking place, which is interesting.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins by providing a background on the history of populist radical right parties, followed by a presentation of some theoretically important explanations for the rise of the PRR party family. This is included to provide a better basis for understanding the potential consequences of the populist radical right party family.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework for the thesis is presented. Beginning with a conceptual discussion, a thorough definition of populist radical right parties and political trust is presented. PRR parties are comprised of nativism, populism and authoritarianism, concepts that are all in need of further explanation. Following this, theories seeking to explain the mechanisms between populist radical right government inclusion and political trust is presented. The main argument presented here is that PRR parties can function as "representational correctives" for voters that have previously felt disengaged and dissatisfied with the political system and authorities. The theory-section is structured in three sections focusing on three groups of respondents: supporters of PRR, non-supporters of PRR and authoritarians. This results in a total of five hypotheses.

In chapter 4, the methodological framework is presented. Here, the data structure is presented, followed by a presentation of the variables. A discussion of measurement is presented to better understand the relationship between theoretical concepts and measurements of real-world phenomena. A presentation of the fixed effects approach is then presented, with a discussion of the merits and limitations of this method.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the regression analyses, structured in three sections. A discussion of the results in relation to the hypotheses is presented in chapter 6. I discuss potential explanations for the results by drawing on theory and previous research, specifically for the results that were relatively unexpected. In the last chapter, I provide some concluding remarks on the main findings of the thesis. Lastly, the limitations of the thesis is discussed, before I end with providing some suggestions for future research.

2 BACKGROUND

To better understand the position of populist radical right parties in Europe today, I will begin with a background section. Here, the focus will be on providing a base for understanding the position of the populist radical right today, and how it got there. First, a brief historical background will be presented, beginning with the fascist movement during the second world war. Then, I will present some of the common explanations provided for the rise of the populist radical right party family. Lastly, moving further towards the research question of this thesis, a review of some existing relevant literature will be presented, looking at the different perspectives in previous research.

2.1 History

A few decades ago, populist radical right parties began to cross what Rokkan termed "the final institutional threshold" that a political movement must cross in their way towards the core of political systems – access to executive power (Haugsgjerd 2019, 19). Although these "new populists" now constitutes a whole new party family, similar movements and parties has been present for much longer. Mudde, for instance, identifies four "waves of the post-war far right" (2019). These waves represent the evolving stages of the far right, although with some uncertainties as to exactly how and when these waves took place (Mudde 2019).

The first wave started after the end of the war, lasting for approximately ten years. In this period, the far right was often termed "neo-fascists", although the majority of them were backwards-looking old fascists that still supported the ideology after the war (Mudde 2019, 18). Although the ideology of the radical right looks different today, it is still rooted in fascist ideas (Rydgren 2007, 246). As the war had just ended, and fascist ideas were illegal in most states, these groups had to operate outside the formal political system. The second wave began in 1955, with the success of "the Poujadists" in France. This movement constituted one of the first successful PRR parties, moving slightly away from pure fascism (although maintaining core fascist traits) and further towards populism (Mudde 2019). Although the party was a brief success, it left an important legacy with its youth-party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who later became the leader of the Front National. Later, but still within the second wave, other parties began to form that constitutes an important part of far-right politics today, such as the Danish Progress Party (Eatwell 2003, 45; Mudde 2019).

Even though important far-right parties had begun to enter the political stages around Europe, their voter-bases were still quite scarce. It was not until the 1980's and 90's that they started to become significant players within European parliaments (Immerzeel and Pickup 2015). This was mostly due to mass immigration and unemployment. In addition to new parties being introduced, old mainstream parties transforming with their new, far-right leaders also became important players on the field. Reaching the turn of the century, the majority of these parties could be defined as *populist radical right*, consisting of a combination of populist, nativist, and authoritarian features (Mudde 2019). At this point, a fourth wave of far-right politics was emerging, fuelled by incidents like the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the migration crisis in 2015 and the 2008 economic crisis. Before this, far-right parties had mainly been outsiders in politics, with a few exceptions. What characterised the fourth wave was that these parties were beginning to enter mainstream politics, now increasingly considered to be feasible coalition partners (Mudde 2019, 2013). As Figure 2.1 illustrates, the vote share of PRR parties has increased significantly in the past two decades. With the growth and formation of the PRR as a party family, a similar surge in scholarly work on the subject took place. Scholars were now seeking to explain how the rise of this new party family had taken place.

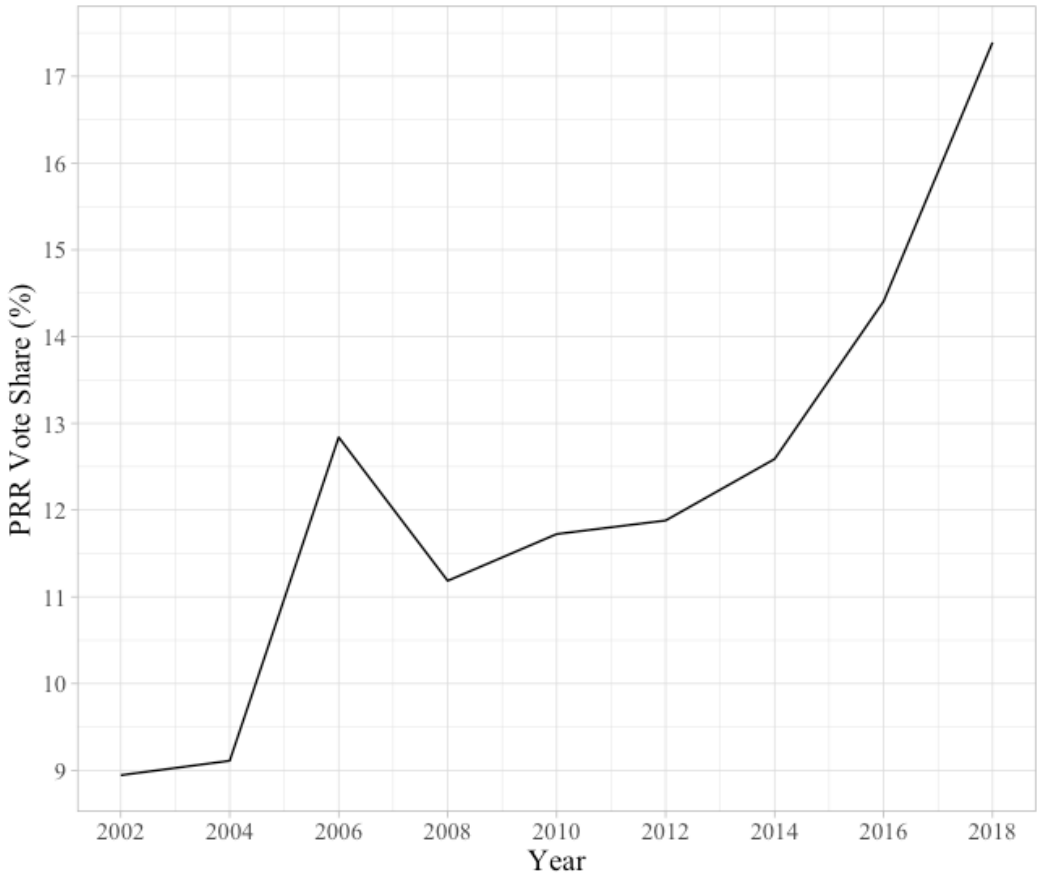


Figure 2.1 *PRR Vote Share in Europe, 2002-2018*
Source: The ParlGov elections database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022).
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

2.2 Explaining the Rise of the Far-Right

This thesis is focused on the consequences of populist radical right parties. However, to understand the phenomenon, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the many possible explanations for the rise of these parties. Most of these explanations can be separated into two main categories that complement each other, demand- and supply-side approaches (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 211). In this section I will briefly present some of the most important explanations within the two.

The most common explanations are located within the first, looking at factors that have changed the preferences of citizens within modern democracies (Rydgren 2007, 247). In other words, these theories are interested in the factors that have increased dissatisfaction with democracy and society among citizens, which in turn makes them vote for PRR parties. The

demand-side explanations can again be separated into different specific theses. One of the most common explanations in the literature on PRR parties argues that a group of people have ended up as the "losers of modernisation", using the new radical right parties to channel their efforts to undo social change associated with the modernising society (Mudde 2007, 203; Rydgren 2007, 248; Minkenberg 2003). This theory is quite complex, consisting of two other separate explanations, the "social breakdown thesis" and the "relative deprivation thesis" (Rydgren 2007, 247) The first argues that socially excluded individuals are more prone to support radical right parties. The "relative deprivation thesis" focuses on how individuals are insecure about their lives and future, resulting in feelings of loss and deprivation (Rydgren 2007, 247). This is often operationalised by looking at the declining economic status of certain groups, although it is also often connected to other "relative deprivations" such as loss of status (Rydgren 2007, 248). Generally, crises of various sorts (unemployment, immigration, or declining support) are generally seen as explanations for the rise of PRR parties (Mudde 2007, 205). This is also connected to explanations focusing on issues like ethnic differences, xenophobia, and loss of culture as responses to rising levels of immigration (Rydgren 2007, 250-251; Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 912; Mudde 2007).

Another way of explaining electoral support for the far right is to separate between ideologically motivated support versus so-called "protest voting" (van der Brug, Meindert, and Tillie 2000; Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021) While the first explanation focuses on policy-driven motivations, the latter approach is interested in how people vote for these parties mainly to express their dissatisfaction with the political system (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021). This explanation is more specifically related to the "populist" attribute of these parties, a topic that will be revisited later in this thesis.

Supply-side explanations focus on external and internal political opportunity structures (Rydgren 2007, 252; Mudde 2007, 232). External factors are concerned with the institutional, political, and cultural context where parties operate (Mudde 2007, 233). More specifically, the electoral system and the general political space seem to matter when explaining the rise of PRR parties. Not surprisingly, it is a well-known fact that in majoritarian systems with higher electoral thresholds, smaller new parties struggle to enter the political space compared to more proportional systems (Norris 1997). Whether this can equally account for PRR parties is less certain, but the unfavourable institutional system has been used to explain cases such as the failure of the British PRR (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 913).

Regarding the political context, how established parties relate to new PRR parties also play an important role. There needs to be space for the PRR party in the political system (Mudde 2007, 237). In other words, if mainstream parties fail to represent the opinions of a substantial portion of the electorate, it is only natural for citizens to seek new parties that are willing to address issues that are important to them (Betz 1994, 34-35). If there are no major shortages within existing parties, PRR parties are not "needed", and will therefore be less successful. It is also argued that some cultural environments are more predisposed to PRR success, although identifying exactly what and why is challenging when it comes to the concept "political culture" (Mudde 2007, 243-244).

Internal supply-side factors explain the success of PRR parties by looking at the party itself, arguing that although external contexts and processes may facilitate opportunities for success, the party needs to actively exploit these opportunities in order to be successful (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 915). These factors are largely connected to the role of ideology and organisation, as well as the strategies of the party and their leadership (Mudde 2007, 256; Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 915). Some authors have found that PRR parties with more moderate ideologies are more successful (Mudde 2007, 257), although the research on this is relatively scarce (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 916). In any case, it is important that the party adapts their ideology and strategy to the national context where they operate (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 916). Regarding organisation, parties are dependent on loyal members and volunteers to spread their message, in combination with a coherent political program (Rydgren 2007, 256). Scholars have also found that a charismatic leader is often key in achieving success, although it is also shown that a leader needs to be pragmatic to function internally. These two are often seen as opposites, as charismatic leaders are often not the best internal leaders, and vice versa (Mudde 2007, 260-264).

In other words, there is no shortage in theoretical explanations within the field studying populist radical right parties. Although this section has merely provided a brief overview, it is useful to keep in mind when moving on to discussing how PRR parties can affect political trust.

2.3 Review of Existing Literature

As a starting point, a main finding in literature on political trust is that supporters of populist radical right parties are generally less trusting and supportive of the political system than others (Haugsgjerd 2019, 32; Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009). Disagreement arises when questioning how discontent and distrust relate to PRR parties specifically. One strand of literature argues that voting for PRR parties is an expression of pre-existing discontent with the political system, in other words the "protest voting" explanation mentioned above. Sometimes titled the "expressing discontent logic", it suggests that citizens vote for these parties not to show support for the party's policies, but rather to express their dissatisfaction with the existing political establishment (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016). According to this logic, dissatisfied voters mobilise behind populist parties to express their distrust with the political establishment (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016, 34).

However, in the context of PRR parties, it is important to note that the expressing discontent logic may look different from protest or populist parties in general. As will be clarified later, the main definitional attribute of these parties is nativism, not populism. Therefore, supporters of PRR parties may be dissatisfied because their *political interests* are poorly represented by the political elite. In other words, they may express dissatisfaction with politics because of their *policy preferences*, not because of the elites alone (McLaren 2012, 2017). This may appear similar to the general "protest against the elites" argument, but it is important to keep in mind that for PRR voters, policy preferences are likely to play an important role in their dissatisfaction as well (Akkerman and de Lange 2012).

For this reason, a range of scholars have argued that protest and dissatisfaction is not "unideological" like the protest voting-logic suggests, but rather clearly directed against certain policies like immigration and law and order (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 912; van der Brug 2003). In other words, dissatisfaction alone cannot explain support for PRR parties. According to this logic, dissatisfaction mainly arises after having voted for the radical right populists. This logic has been referred to as the "fuelling discontent" logic, meaning that the rhetoric of populist parties fuels dissatisfaction among the people exposed to it (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016; Haugsgjerd 2019, 32). Although these two logics may seem like contrasts at first, they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, empirical research have suggested a two-way relationship between discontent and populist voting, meaning that both

logics likely account more or less for the relationship between discontent and populist voting (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016).

With this being said, it seems unlikely that the act of voting for a populist party alone will further discontent among voters. After all, the anti-system rhetoric of the populist party would already be spread among their supporters long before they gain electoral strength, as these parties are shown to be quite successful in spreading their populist message outside the electoral arena (Rooduijn 2014). In other words, populist rhetoric may have a negative impact on voters in terms of trust, but that effect should have taken place long before the electoral success of these parties. As Mauk (2020) points out, the extensive use of social and digital media to spread populist messages will likely have contributed to this.

As both the "expressing discontent logic" and the "fuelling discontent logic" agrees that PRR parties are strongly connected to political distrust, it may seem puzzling that aggregate levels of political discontent have not increased in the past decades, at least not in Western Europe. In fact, discontent with the way democracy works seems to have decreased in most West European countries, and especially in countries where PRR parties have gained a substantial amount of electoral support (Martini and Quaranta 2020; Linde and Dahlberg 2016). This indicates a more complex relationship between populist/PRR voting and distrust, a relationship that may also hinge on the inclusion of populist radical right parties in parliaments and governments.

In the next sections, some existing literature investigating the various consequences of the rise of the PRR will be presented. A large portion of the earlier research on the subject has taken on a more pessimistic view of the consequences of PRR parties, mainly seeing them as vehicles of discontent and antidemocratic values. Still today, a large portion of the literature focus on these negative consequences of the PRR, specifically concerning its ambivalent relationship with (liberal) democracy. In the following section, I will take a closer look at this line of research, before moving on to literature that takes on a more "optimistic" approach.

2.3.1 *PRR Parties as Vehicles of Discontent*

Several scholars have expressed concern with regards to the threats posed by populism, nationalism, authoritarianism as well as other features commonly associated with the

increased electoral success of PRR parties (Krastev 2011; Kriesi 2014; Galston 2018; Puddington and Roylance 2017). These fears are often expressed with regards to freedom, democracy, and human rights (Puddington and Roylance 2017). Many scholars are specifically concerned about populism's ambivalent relationship with democracy, especially the "liberal" aspect of it.

According to Galston, populism constitutes a direct threat to liberal democracy (2018). The anti-pluralistic world view that all populists adopt, referring to "the people" as one homogenous group, is inherently problematic. Dividing a country's population into one group of "the people" vs. "the others" violates some of the most basic principles of modern democracies, namely inclusion and equal rights to participation and representation (Galston 2018, 12). Societies will always be characterised by plurality, as different groups within society will always have different opinions and values. In Galston's own terms: "populism is the enemy of pluralism, and thus of modern democracy" (2018).

Similarly, Müller fears that populism is a direct threat to liberal democratic values, specifically as populism is often concealed as a higher form of democracy ("let the people rule"), while in reality, these are anti-democratic actors speaking the language of democracy (Müller 2016, 6). Müller makes it quite clear that populism is not a corrective to liberal democracy in terms of "fixing representation", although it can contribute to identifying certain underrepresented groups. He concludes that populism is not just a threat to the "liberal" aspect of democracy, but to democracy itself (2016, 103). This differs from other scholars, who sometimes juxtapose democracy with populism, resulting in only the "liberal" aspect of democracy being seen as violated by populism (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016, 33). Doing so can potentially be dangerous, however, as the populist perception of "rule of the people" is inherently different from the democratic one. After all, what is commonly referred to as "the people" in populist rhetoric is only a select group of the actual people. As Mudde described it, "opponents are not just people with different priorities and values, they are *evil*" (2004, 544).

This "threat from inside" is highlighted by other scholars as well. Krastev, for instance, presents quite a grim view of the fate of democracy (2011). Paradoxically, he argues that the rise of populism and distrust in political institutions across Europe is the product of successful democracy itself, similar to the concerns by Müller described above. In his view, it is not

realistic to expect people to regain trust in democratic institutions, and the focus should therefore rather be on how society can function without the trust of its citizens at all (Krastev 2011, 13).

Hooghe and Dassonville finds that protest voting, as opposed to ideologically motivated voting, leads to a decrease in political trust (2018). Additionally, having voted for such a party in a previous election seems to lead to a further drop in levels of political trust, culminating in what the authors have termed a "spiral of distrust" (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018). Their findings correspond with others', who also find that populist parties fuel discontent among their voters (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016). However, what many of these studies have in common is that they only look at the act of voting for these parties alone, disregarding the potential moderating effects made by government inclusion and parliamentary representation.

In addition to potential threats to liberal democracy and political trust, scholars have also found that voters become more polarised when radical right parties enter parliaments for the first time (Bischof and Wagner 2019). This, they argue, is because voters identifying with PRR parties will experience a legitimisation-effect of their radical views when the PRR party they support gain electoral representation. Simultaneously, voters opposing these views will express their dissatisfaction with the sudden legitimisation of these radical views, and distance themselves further from the radical right party.

2.3.2 *PRR as Representational Correctives*

As time has passed and more (radical right) populists have entered parliaments and governments across Europe, the inclusion and recognition of PRR parties has been normalised (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021, 2; Mudde 2019). Recent studies on the consequences of populism have also shown that including populist (radical right) parties in governments can have positive effects on society. By giving voice to citizen's concerns that have previously been neglected by mainstream parties, populist radical right parties can fill a "representational void" in political systems, more in line with the evolved conflict structures of modern European societies (Kriesi 2014).

The representational role of the party system as vehicles of political support for its citizens is not a new topic within political science research. It has been pointed out that individuals' support/trust increases when the parties that are represented in the national parliament have similar policy preferences to them (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 7). Similar findings were made already in the 1990's by Miller and Listhaug, who compared levels of political trust between Norway, Sweden, and the United States from 1964-86 (1990). They found that protest parties can contribute to stop declining political trust over time, by giving dissatisfied citizens a means of representation (Miller and Listhaug 1990).

Harteveld et al. (2021) finds that the recent electoral successes of PRR parties has had an overall positive effect on satisfaction with democracy. They find that this effect is contingent on the responses from established parties. More specifically, when PRR parties are included in governments, satisfaction with the way democracy works increases among a substantial portion of the electorate. Government inclusion causes a significant increase in satisfaction among voters with nativist attitudes, while it does not affect satisfaction among non-nativists, resulting in an overall increase in satisfaction among the population (Harteveld et al. 2021).

Similar findings are presented by Haugsgjerd (2019), who investigates the effect of government inclusion on supporters of Fremskrittspartiet, a Norwegian PRR party. His analysis reveals an instant boost in satisfaction with democracy among supporters of the party the first time they are included in a government coalition. His findings lend support to the "moderation thesis", suggesting that executive power leads PRR parties to moderate their populist rhetoric, again leading to a decline in discontent among their supporters.

Another contribution to the literature is made by Mauk (2020), who finds that populist party success increases levels of political trust among the general population, especially in countries with lower quality of government. These findings support the idea that by increasing their electoral strength, PRR parties can fill a representational void in political systems, despite populist voting having found to be both an expression of distrust as well as fuel for further distrust in the political system (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016). However, by not differentiating between different groups of voters, as well as only looking at the increase in vote share, this study has limitations that warrant further investigation.

In an unpublished article, Haugsgjerd and Linde (unpublished manuscript) contribute to existing literature by studying how PRR success affect levels of satisfaction with democracy among the overall population. Their time-series cross-sectional dataset also enables them to study both short- and long-term consequences. Their results support the notion that when studying the consequences of the rise of PRR parties, it is important to acknowledge the impact of parliamentary representation and government inclusion. They demonstrate that when taking the representational effect these parties provide in account, the results look drastically different from what many scholars have previously found.

To sum up, the recent research presented in this section has shown that there are alternative ways of assessing the impact of PRR parties. It is a complex topic with many details to account for. Some findings are based on populist parties, while others focus specifically on the populist *radical right*. Either way, all findings are relevant for understanding the complex relationship between PRR parties and political trust. Specifically, it has been highlighted the importance of also considering the representational function of political parties, which will be further discussed in the theoretical framework. It is important to note, however, that seeing populist radical right parties as an opportunity for increasing substantive representation among the electorate does not mean that it is unproblematic in terms of (liberal) democracy. It is certainly possible for PRR parties to increase trust or satisfaction among its supporters while remaining a potential threat to liberal democratic principles, especially when applying a long-term perspective.

2.3.3 *Background on Authoritarian Predispositions*

Up until now, the focus has largely been on PRR parties and their relation to liberal democracy and political trust. As mentioned in the introduction, however, this study also seeks to uncover potential intervening effects posed when accounting for pre-existing attitudes of citizens. Previous research on this has been relatively scarce, although some scholars have explored the potential effects of similar individual traits. For example, Kokkonen and Linde (2021) has shown that people with "nativist" attitudes display a different view of democracy than others, often preferring more direct, and less representative, democracy (2021). Nativism is one of three central components of the populist radical right party family, along with "authoritarianism" and "populism". In this paper, the focus will be

on authoritarianism, and more specifically how people with authoritarian predispositions react to the inclusion of PRR parties in government.

As one of the main components of PRR parties, authoritarianism has previously been disproportionally overlooked in existing literature (Dunn 2015a). Most articles that study PRR parties mention authoritarianism as one of the core components of populist radical right ideology, but rarely go any further in discussing its implications. A thorough definition will be presented in the theoretical framework, but as a brief introduction, authoritarian predispositions involve a preference for conformity over autonomy, stressing values like security, law, and order (Mudde 2010, 1174; Rydgren 2007). The nativist and populist components of PRR parties has received significantly more attention, especially populism. This is evident by the amount of research focusing on the "anti-establishment" profile of these parties (Rydgren 2017, 486). The goal of this thesis is therefore to shed light on what role authoritarian predispositions play when it comes to support for PRR parties and political trust.

Cultural explanations of political trust highlight individual processes of socialisation as important determinants of trust (Mishler and Rose 2001). Based on existing scholarly work on authoritarians, these predispositions arise due to basic feelings of insecurity during early-life socialisation (Inglehart and Norris 2017). In the post-war period, general security and well-being were on the rise, leading to more emphasis on values like freedom, equality, and tolerance. In the aftermath of the second world war, psychologists were therefore increasingly interested in understanding the phenomenon of Fascism and Nazism in Germany. This led to the famous work "The Authoritarian Personality" by Adorno and his colleagues (Aho 2020; Mudde 2007, 22). Their conclusion was that underlying authoritarian predispositions among large parts of the population were an important explanation for the success and continuance of the Nazi regime (Aho 2020). Since then, scholars have studied authoritarianism in close relation to fascism and the radical right (Mudde 2010, 1169). The understanding of the term is changing, however, and increasingly being adapted to contemporary contexts (Aho 2020, 330).

Although modern European societies are largely characterised by peace, democracy and stability, new issues and changing societal conflict structures has led to a "cultural backlash" among parts of the population (Inglehart and Norris 2017). Concerns regarding immigration and general cultural change has triggered authoritarian and xenophobic attitudes, leading to a

burst in support for new populist radical right parties and movements (Inglehart and Norris 2017). Although some have studied the combinations of authoritarianism and nativism, two main components of the PRR, it is still unclear exactly how authoritarianism and PRR parties interrelate. As Dunn have demonstrated, authoritarian attitudes and support for the populist radical right are far from consistent (2015a). Additionally, authoritarianism is now not only understood as a component of radical right ideology, but rather as a set of attitudes that can exist among people with different political preferences (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019).

The role of authoritarian predispositions in relation to PRR parties and trust will be discussed in more detail in the theoretical framework. Hopefully, this introduction has provided a brief review of the emergence of the concept, and how it is understood in the literature. Having once been established as a phenomenon to explain support for Fascist movements, the concept is now more dynamic, and applicable to contemporary democratic societies. In light of this, it is about time to investigate further what role the authoritarian personality plays in the context of modern populist radical right parties.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Populist Radical Right – Conceptualisation

Existing scholarly work on topics related to populist radical right parties have for the past decades managed to generate a chaos of terminology (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021, 3; Rydgren 2017). Although this might at first glance seem like a conceptual problem, where authors disagree on the right definition, it is more an issue related to the lack of any clear definition at all (Mudde 2007, 12). To be fair, this has since been addressed in the literature, and more scholars are now in agreement on the definitional traits of the populist radical right party family. Still, a whole range of different terms are being used to describe what is mostly a common phenomenon, such as "radical right", "far right", "far-right populism", "extreme right", "exclusionary populism" and so on (Mudde 2007; Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021). Due to this prevailing unclarity, a conceptual discussion and clarification is necessary.

In social sciences, concepts are the building blocks of research, functioning as containers of knowledge and data (Sartori 1970, 1039). Conceptualisation is important, because as Goertz put it: "To develop a concept is more than providing a definition: it is deciding what is important about an entity" (Goertz 2006, 27). This is well captured in Mudde's conceptual approach, where he specifies his choice of terminology by highlighting that populist radical right parties should be called just that, as the primary term of the concept is "radical right", not "populism" (Mudde 2007, 26; Rydgren 2017). A concept needs to contain enough definitional traits for it to be properly separated from other similar concepts, while still being able to "travel" far enough to encompass all relevant cases (Sartori 1970). This is also highly important to establish before any discussion on case selection and quantification occurs. Before measuring, it needs to be established exactly what is being measured, and this process of conceptualisation needs to be completely independent from any process of quantification (Sartori 1970, 1038).

One might think that a discussion of conceptualisation is unnecessary in most cases, as concepts and definitions are mostly pre-established in existing literature. However, all scientific work on a subject is concerned with producing new information or altering our understanding or interpretation of existing research. Therefore, to some degree, almost every scientific work on a subject alters our understanding of basic concepts, and thereby contribute to the process of reconceptualisation (Gerring 2012, 112-113). Moreover, the world is

changing. The concepts that were well adapted decades ago may no longer fit the right cases today. In other words, our conceptual tools need to be able to travel, both in time and in space (Sartori 1970). This is also the case for populist radical right parties. As illustrated above, the evolution of PRR parties involved numerous terminological and conceptual changes, adapting to variations in the real world. Still, this reconceptualisation should not be done by simply broadening the meaning of the term, resulting in *conceptual stretching.* This would lead to a loss of precision needed when studying social science phenomena (Sartori 1970, 1034-1035).

In this thesis, I will follow the conceptual approach presented by Mudde (2007) for several reasons. First, because it provides a well-structured, thorough conceptualisation that alters the terminology and attributes associated with PRR parties while constructively building upon previous research. Second, it is used by a range of other scholars, making it well established and recognised in the field. Third, the definition of populist radical right parties provided by Mudde is also used by the PopuList, who provides the classification of PRR parties in Europe used in this (and many other's) work (Rooduijn et al. 2019).

Mudde starts by presenting a minimum definition consisting of the core ideological feature of these parties, namely nationalism (Mudde 2007, 16). With this as a base, he develops a maximum definition by building on his previous work on *extreme right* parties, concluding that the new maximum definition should consist of three core ideological features: *nativism*, *authoritarianism*, and *populism* (Mudde 2007, 22). After having established this, he constructs a ladder of abstraction to sort out the terminological confusion surrounding the concept, concluding that the term "populist radical right" is best suited for the job (Mudde 2007, 26). In the following sections, I will present and discuss the contents of each of these defining traits.

3.2 Nativism

As mentioned, the starting point of the minimum definition of the populist radical right led to nationalism. Therefore, a short introduction on nationalism, and why that term is not preferred here, is needed. First, nationalism has been extensively used in scholarly debate and the media for decades. Originally referring to an ideology with the goal of achieving a *mono-cultural* state, it has now been conceptually stretched far enough for its initial meaning to lose some of

its purpose (Mudde 2007, 16). To move away from this conceptual problem, it can be distinguished between "ethnic" and "state" nationalism. However, none of these alone seem to fully capture the ideology of the parties of concern here, which is why Mudde eventually turns to the term *nativism* (2007). Nativism can be defined as:

> an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state (Mudde 2007, 19).

This definition captures several elements of other similar terms that are often used to describe these parties. It is based on a combination of ethnic and state nationalism, while excluding the more liberal forms of nationalism (Mudde 2007). Commonly used descriptions like "xenophobia" and "anti-immigrant" are both captured in this definition, while avoiding reducing the concept to only one of them (Betz 2017; Mudde 2007, 19). In practice, nativism in contemporary PRR parties often shows itself in the form of policy-proposals like stricter immigration and integration policies, and a rejection of minority rights (Akkerman and de Lange 2012, 579; Kokkonen and Linde 2021).

Being built on an exclusionary form of nationalism, nativist ideology idealises the native people as one homogenous group, whose ideas should be prioritised over the ideas of minority groups. Foreigners are seen as a threat to the homogenous nation-state, and natives that support the ideas rights of foreigners are often seen as traitors (Kokkonen and Linde 2021). The idea of nativism is sometimes expressed by referring to true citizens as opposed to non-citizens. Importantly, nativism encompasses a preference for natives *simply on the ground of them being "native"* (Betz 2019, 12). These references to a homogenous nation and external threats to group norms and stability have clear bonds to both the populist and the authoritarian components of the PRR.

There will always be a cultural component to nativism (Dunn 2015a; Betz 2019). As ambiguous at the term "culture" might be, it refers here to the subjective differences between people imagined by citizens with these attitudes, referring to everything from religious, ethnic, national, or "racial" differences (Betz 2019). In other words, nativism is context-dependent, and will be interpreted differently based on where it is studied (Minkenberg 2003). The common denominator is their exclusionary approach (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021, 3).

That is also one of the reasons why nativism is the preferred term. Descriptions like "nationalistic", "anti-immigrant", or "racist", terms that are often used when describing these parties, only captures some aspect of their nativist stance (Betz 2019).

Anti-immigrant, for example, would in many cases be a useful term to represent the parties in question, specifically when studying Western Europe (Mudde 2010). Looking at prominent PRR parties' policy-proposals, they are almost always critical of immigration (Rydgren 2007; Mudde 2013; Carter 2018). However, this term only captures a common outcome, and not the core, of their ideology. PRR parties adopt anti-immigrant policies because they are *nativist*, not because they are against *all* immigration. This becomes clear when comparing different countries, and different types of immigration. In East European countries, mass immigration has not been of major concern in comparison to West European countries (Mudde 2007, 19). However, xenophobic nationalism is present in both Western and Eastern countries, capturing nativist attitudes towards marginalised minority groups in society.

Therefore, for the concept to better be able to travel outside Western Europe (i.e. Eastern/post-communist Europe), the term "nativism" is better suited. Terms like "anti-immigrant" are more concerned with one specific policy-question, and in this case one that is not nearly as relevant in the Eastern parts of Europe as in the Western (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 910).

3.3 Populism

The rise of populism resulted in a simultaneous rise in academic work centred on the subject (Mudde 2004). Despite this rapid increase in attention both in academia and the media, populism has for a long time been considered an ambiguous concept, and it is frequently being used with no clear reference to its meaning (Mudde 2007; Müller 2016, 1). As Müller points out, the term "populism" is often stripped of any meaning, often more associated with particular moods, emotions and attitudes than actual political ideas (2016, 1). Populism can be understood as an ideology, a communication style or even separate from the actors themselves, and rather as the property of a message (Rooduijn, de Lange, and van der Brug 2014).

There is a reason why almost all influential academic work on the subject starts by pointing out the fact that no one really knows what they are talking about (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Müller 2016). All parties and politicians want to appeal to "ordinary people", and there are plenty of parties that run "against the establishment" (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021; Müller 2016). Still, these are the two most central definitional attributes of the populist rhetoric. In this section, populism, as the second definitional attribute of populist radical right parties, will be defined and discussed. The main goal of this section is to clarify what populism in practice means, and perhaps more importantly help the reader understand why not every party and politician should be considered populist. My thesis will specifically be based on the definition presented by Mudde, defining populism as:

> A thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people (Mudde 2007, 23).

This definition needs further explanation on several accounts. First, it is important to note that populism here is referred to as a "thin-centered ideology". This means that unlike "thick-centered" ideologies like socialism, liberalism or fascism, populism lack complex and comprehensive answers to important political questions (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 6). It also means that populism can come in a range of different forms, depending on what "host ideology" it latches itself onto. For this reason, it has been labelled a "chameleonic" ideology (Taggart 2000). In this thesis, the host ideology of interest will of course be the "radical right".

The definition above also accompanies two important attributes that are always present in populist ideology: "anti-elitism" and "anti-pluralism" (Mudde 2004, 543; Müller 2016, 3). The first involves seeing politics as something that should reflect the views of "the moral people" as opposed to "the amoral elite" (Mudde 2004, 543-544). The latter rejects the idea of a heterogenous society, viewing "the people" as one, homogenous group with similar values and opinions (Mudde 2004, 544). Following Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser's approach, the definition can be further separated into three core concepts: the people, the elite, and the general will (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). To

understand populism, it is therefore also necessary to understand what is meant with each of these concepts.

Having established a definition, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of who the referenced "people" and "elite" are, and what the "general will" really means. When referencing "the people", populists are not actually referring to *all* people in a society, a country or so on. In practice, their appeal involves a claim to exclusive representation of a *perceived* homogenous group (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 19; Taggart 2000). Who "the people" are is therefore highly context dependent (Canovan 1999, 4). The perceived homogenous group called "the people" will vary based on factors such as the host ideology or the geographical context of the populists (Kriesi 2014, 362). "The pure people" is always pitted directly against "the evil elite", and by being its opposite, "the elite" is constructed from the conception of "the people" (Mudde 2004, 544; Rooduijn, de Lange, and van der Brug 2014, 564). The crucial aspect when discussing both concepts is morality, as the elites are always portrayed as *corrupt* and *evil* (Mudde 2004, 544; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 11; Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016). The notion of a perceived "general will" is also made possible by the imagined "real people". Populists claim that they alone can represent the *true* grievances of "the people" (Heinisch and Wegscheider 2020). As "the people" is considered a homogenous group by populists, so are their "general will", and it is the populist's job to properly address this "general will". It is strongly related to the basic democratic idea of popular sovereignty, although with a very different understanding of what popular sovereignty really means (Rooduijn, van der Brug, and de Lange 2016, 33).

Having discussed the core of populism as a concept, it becomes clear that one should be careful in considering it a simple democratic force representing the true opinions of an oppressed people. Neither should populism be feared as an imminent threat to democracy as we know it. Canovan points to a "populist shadow" cast by democracy, inescapable due to the tension between democracy's pragmatic and redemptive faces (1999). Simplified, this refers to democracy as the combination of strict rules and practices (pragmatic) with the force of passion, salvation, and spontaneity (redemptive) (Canovan 1999, 10). Canovan argues that reflecting on the recurrence of populism will contribute to a better understanding of democracy (1999). Similarly, I also think that by understanding these two faces of democracy, one can get a better view of populism, and why it exists. Taking democracy's redemptive side

into account, the simple view of populism as anti-democratic by nature is blurred by a more complex understanding of what democracy is, and how it is comprehended by citizens.

3.4 Authoritarianism

The last definitional feature of the PRR party family is authoritarianism. In social sciences, and comparative politics specifically, the most common understanding of authoritarianism is a form of undemocratic regime or ideology. In the context of this thesis, however, the understanding of authoritarianism is very different, rooted in social psychology (Mudde 2007, 22). Simply stated, it involves emphasising topics like law and order, traditional values, and authority (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 911; Donovan 2019, 450; Heinisch and Wegscheider 2020, 35; Duckitt and Bizumic 2013, 843). As with nativism and populism, this thesis is based on the definition of authoritarianism presented by Mudde (Mudde 2007).

Mudde's definition is inspired by the traditional work of Theodor Adorno et al. They identify "the authoritarian personality" as an individual who glorifies and is submissive and uncritical towards authorities, and who seeks to punish outsiders based on some moral authority (Mudde 2007, 22). Altemeyer builds on Adorno's work when establishing his definition of "right-wing authoritarianism" as a combination of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Mudde 2007, 22). His work resulted in the much-used right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale consisting of several survey questions designed to measure the phenomenon (Aho 2020, 335). Mudde does not limit his definition to only *right-wing* authoritarianism, however, defining it as:

"*the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely"* (Mudde 2007, 23).

The definition presented by Mudde (2007) is relatively broad, but it encompasses some specific attributes that should be further explained. The first part concerns the belief in *a strictly ordered* society. In other words, it seeks to capture how authoritarians view society with a preference for law, order, and strict rules. The second component is authority, capturing the submissive side of authoritarianism. Respect and pride towards authorities and the state are central components. Third, the authoritarian aggression of Altemeyer's approach

is visible through their punitive measures and moralism (Carter 2018, 169). In other words, people who violate the law and orders of society established by authority should be punished (Feldman 2003).

It should be stressed that authoritarianism has a rather confusing conceptual history, making it relatively hard to define. Both the definition and the measurement of the term has changed over time (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019). The first measurement (the F-scale) by Adorno et al. was designed to explain the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe (Dunn 2015a, 368). Since its publication in 1950, the work of Adorno et al has been subject to critique, related to its psychoanalytic conceptualisation and the empirical approach of the F-scale (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019; Feldman 2003). While Altemeyer, with his RWA-scale, sought to overcome these challenges, his conceptualisation has been criticised for reflecting ideological beliefs rather that psychological dispositions(Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019). Due to the ambiguity of the concept, critics have claimed that authoritarianism is nothing more than conservatism (Feldman 2003).

Since then, authoritarianism has been reconceptualised to represent a set of *predispositions* as opposed to a stable set of attitudes or a personality trait (Dunn 2015a). This means that authoritarian attitudes are not always present, but rather triggered by exogenous factors and the environment (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019). This enables the concept to capture authoritarianism as independent from any specific ideological preferences. According to theory, the most relevant environmental factor triggering authoritarian predispositions is *perceived threat*, which is based on authoritarians' preference for conformity over autonomy (Feldman and Stenner 1997). The relevance of this perceived threat will be further discussed in the theory section below.

As Carter points out, a large portion of previous research has studied authoritarianism with regards to regime types or personality traits (Carter 2018, 169; Altemeyer 2004). Many of the typical authoritarian traits mentioned above seems more like individual traits than aspects of an ideology. However, it is possible to identify some more specific authoritarian traits within party ideologies. For example, policies directed at protecting traditional social norms and values, like opposition against abortion, same-sex marriage, or minority rights represent the conventionalism of Altemeyer's right-wing authoritarianism. All these policies aim at protecting the traditional order of society in some way and can be found in many PRR parties'

programs (Carter 2018, 169). When it comes to the submissive side of authoritarianism, this can be manifested through the rhetoric of PRR parties on issues like order, discipline, and respect towards authorities. These attributes are more related to their general vision of society than specific policies. Lastly, authoritarians favour punishment for those who violate the rules and order of society (Duckitt and Bizumic 2013, 860). In party ideology, this can be seen through strict policies on issues concerning law and order, proposals for longer sentences, and a general priority for increasing prison establishments and the police force (Carter 2018, 169).

Among contemporary PRR parties, authoritarianism is often expressed in a combination with nativism. Common examples of this are the notion that immigrants threaten the homogenous nation, and that they also pose a threat with regards to crime and terrorism (Akkerman and de Lange 2012, 582). This picture fits well with Stenner's view of authoritarians as individuals that are cognitively and psychologically incapable of dealing with diversity (Stenner 2005; Dunn 2015a). In practise, this means that authoritarians are likely to rally behind a strong leader when facing a perceived threat of a fragmenting society (Stenner 2005).

3.5 Defining Political Trust

The general notion of trust is quite an ambiguous concept. The understanding of what trust means depends largely on what or whom the trust is directed towards. In other words, viewing trust and support as a multidimensional concept is highly important (Norris 1999). As a general concept, however, Newton defines trust as "the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible" (2007, 343). Similarly, Martini and Quaranta (2020, 30) define trust as an expectation connected to the future behaviour of another part with regards to a specific action that is considered beneficial for the trusting. These general definitions provide a good base for examining the concept further, and for looking into the dynamics of trust. They are also closely related to other academic definitions of trust, where the main component concerns how people evaluate risk, and decide to put confidence in others (Uslaner 2013; Newton 2007).

A common distinction is made between social or interpersonal trust, and political or institutional trust (Newton 2007, 344). Social trust is related to the confidence people express

in their fellow citizens, while political trust is more often seen as citizens' evaluations of their institutions and their performance (Newton 2007). The interest of this thesis is *political trust*. Simply stated, this involves an evaluation of the trustworthiness of various political institutions and actors (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 30). Easton studies the concept of trust within the bigger context of "political support" (1975). Support can be defined as "an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favourably or unfavourably, positively or negatively" (Easton 1975, 436). In this sense, support is therefore understood as an evaluation, which is a growing tendency within research on trust (van der Meer 2010).

Easton goes on to separate between *specific* and *diffuse* support. This is related to the fact that citizens may be highly dissatisfied with sitting authorities and their policies, while still maintaining their underlying attitudes and respect towards the democratic institutions in society (Easton 1975). Citizens should, in theory, be able to separate their immediate evaluations of authorities and their actions (specific support) from the more fundamental evaluations of the basics of the political system (diffuse support). Trust, along with legitimacy, is part of the diffuse side of support. According to Easton, trust is therefore related to "evaluations of what an object is or represents – to the general meaning it has for a person – not of what it does" (Easton 1975, 444).

An underlying assumption from the diffuse and specific sides of support is that people have a certain amount of political awareness. This is not necessarily the case, however, and scholars have objected to this. People may not have the cognitive abilities required to differentiate their specific support towards sitting authorities from their underlying attitudes towards the political regime (Easton 1975). Some people may also be more inclined to base their political trust on short-term evaluations than others. Studies have, however, found that most voters have a general understanding of their political system, and sufficient information about sitting authorities to make up a general evaluation of their performance (van der Meer 2010).

3.6 Theories

Responsiveness, accountability, and competence are attributes that makes democracies appear more trustworthy in the eyes of citizens. As populist parties are known for undermining these messages, it is natural to expect that trust will decrease with the rise of populist radical right

parties (Mauk 2020). However, as the literature review and the conceptual discussion above have illustrated, scholarly opinions are mixed. Some claim PRR parties are destined to operate as vehicles of discontent and anti-democratic values, while others are open to these parties serving as representational correctives in out-of-date European party systems. In other words, theory on the subject offers not one, but several possible explanations and assumptions. And importantly, scholars have developed conflicting theories as to how citizens' political trust and support will be affected. In this section, I will go through some central theories that seeks to explain how the presence of PRR parties in government may affect people's political trust. Following the recent surge of literature, I argue that the success of PRR parties in combination with mainstream parties' strategies towards them (inclusion vs exclusion) plays an important role, and that when accounting for these effects, PRR parties can function as "representational correctives". In the last section, I will present the theoretical expectations related to citizens with authoritarian predispositions. Specifically, I will discuss how such dispositions will interact with the relationship between populist radical right representation in government and political trust.

As a starting point, two main competing theories exist in the literature that seeks to explain the origins of political support among citizens(Mishler and Rose 2001). Cultural theories view trust in institutions as something that is learnt through early processes of socialisation, and therefore originates outside the political sphere (Martini and Quaranta 2019; Delhey and Newton 2003). In this line of thought, social trust is often seen as an important determinant of political, or institutional, trust (Daskalopoulou 2019). Institutional theories, on the other hand, argue that political trust rises and falls based on direct evaluations of institutional performance (Mishler and Rose 2001). In this sense, citizens are expected to be highly responsive to the political environment (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 5). The focus of this theoretical background will be on institutional explanations, explicitly related to representation. Following this, however, I will also discuss how authoritarian attitudes relate to PRR parties and trust, and therefore also incorporate the cultural aspect.

3.6.1 *Expectations Regarding Supporters of PRR Parties*

Previous literature has already established the important role of substantive representation when it comes to political support and trust in political institutions. Generally, elected officials should act in accordance with citizens' preferences and interests (Martini and

Quaranta 2020, 59-62; Cho 2012). The general representative function of the political system is highly important. In fact, it constitutes the core of modern democracy, where parties are elected to govern as *representatives* of the people (Caramani 2017). In reality, this is not always an easy task. Scholars have found that over time, the representational function of European political systems has gradually eroded (Caramani 2017).

One reason for this is connected to the decreased level of congruence between citizens and their representatives. Congruence theory suggests that in systems where representatives match the electorate, citizens have overall higher levels of support in political institutions (Martini and Quaranta 2020). In fact, previous research has demonstrated that individuals do not mind losing an election and abiding by the policies of a party they did not vote for as long as the general system and procedures are considered fair (Dunn 2012). Most likely, however, citizens will not perceive their institutions as "fair" unless they feel like their specific interests are being voiced by a selected representative in the political arena (Dahlberg, Linde, and Holmberg 2015; Dunn 2015b). In other words, the perception of representation, both on the aggregate and the individual level, is an important determinant of political trust (Miller and Listhaug 1990). Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below illustrates trust in politicians and parliament for supporters and non-supporters of populist radical right parties. It also shows periods of PRR government inclusion, providing a first glimpse of the relationships of interest.

The importance of representation is the starting point for zooming further in on the expected relationship between PRR parties in government and political trust. Concerning policy-representation, several scholars have found that concern over immigration is strongly related to lower levels of political trust (McLaren 2011; Citrin, Levy, and Wright 2014). In addition, the ideological divide that arises between citizens who are opposed to immigration and those that are more welcoming can further decrease levels of trust (McLaren 2012). Interestingly, people who are welcoming towards immigrants, living in countries with more exclusive policies towards immigration, also express less trust in the system (McLaren 2017). These findings are interesting, because it highlights that being critical towards immigration may not be the sole reason behind these individuals' comparatively lower levels of trust that previous research has suggested. In fact, the real reason is likely the *underrepresentation* of these preferences, not the preferences alone. This is an important distinction, which strengthens the "representational correctives" argument made in this thesis. It also makes sense that trust decreases when people feel like the system is not responsive to their demands, especially

when political trust is conceived as a direct evaluation of the functioning of political institutions (Miller and Listhaug 1990; Martini and Quaranta 2020; Mishler and Rose 2001).

The theory is therefore that by addressing these policy-gaps in representation, PRR parties can function as "representational correctives" to the political system and increase trust among their supporters (Harteveld et al. 2021; Mauk 2020). By increasing their electoral strength, these parties may make the system appear more responsive to people's demands. An often-used theoretical explanation to account for the rise of trust is the classic "winner-loser" theory. Simply stated, it has been established in previous research that "electoral winners", people that voted for a party that ended up on the winning side of an election, are more supportive and trusting towards the political system (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 140; Harteveld et al. 2021; Haugsgjerd 2019; Dahlberg and Linde 2017). This is likely to have an impact on supporters of PRR parties as well.

To further specify the argument, *inclusion in government* is expected to have additional positive effects for supporters of PRR parties, for several reasons. When parties gain more votes, it is natural to assume that supporters will become more satisfied and trusting simply because their concerns are being *voiced* by representatives. However, actual representation, and inclusion in government specifically, should further increase trust. Inclusion signals that the party is being seen as a viable coalition partner by other parties, and it further indicates that the system is listening to the demands of the people (Harteveld et al. 2021). Additionally, in terms of the policy-congruence theory, PRR parties are assumed to have a larger impact on policy-implementation when they are included in government as opposed to when they are not (Stecker and Tausendpfund 2016). Therefore, supporters will perceive the system to be more responsive to their specific policy-demands when PRR parties are included in government, and this effect should happen immediately after inclusion takes place (Harteveld et al. 2021).

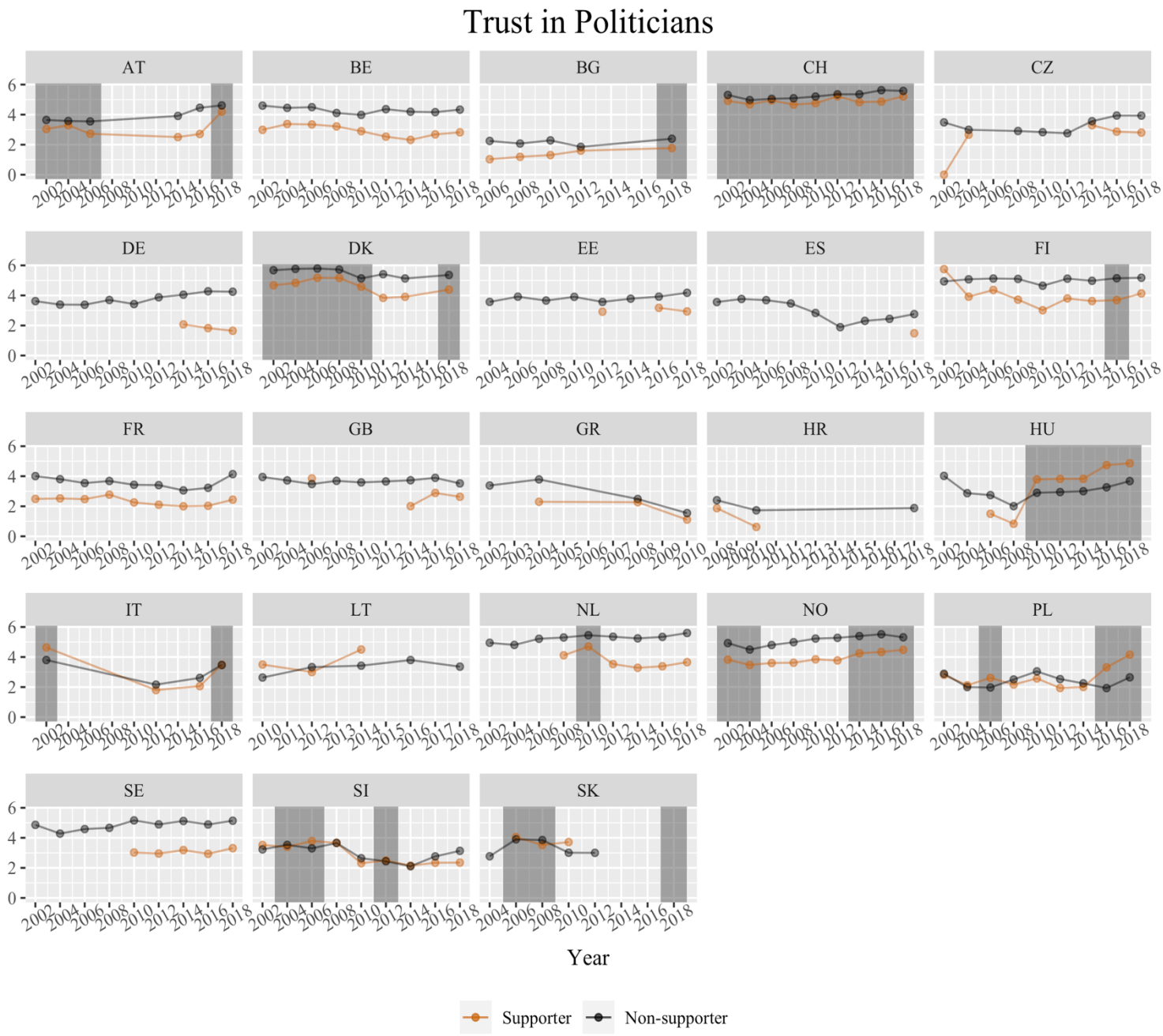


Figure 3.1 *Trust in politicians for supporters and non-supporters of PRR parties in all countries.* ***The shaded areas indicate years where a PRR party is in government.***
Source: The European Social Survey (2018) and the ParlGov cabinets database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022).
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

Some scholars have, however, demonstrated that PRR parties are relatively unsuccessful when it comes to implementing their policies (Mudde 2013). If this trend continues in the long run, it could affect trust among PRR supporters negatively, as they again feel let down by the system and its responsiveness. However, as this study only includes a relatively short

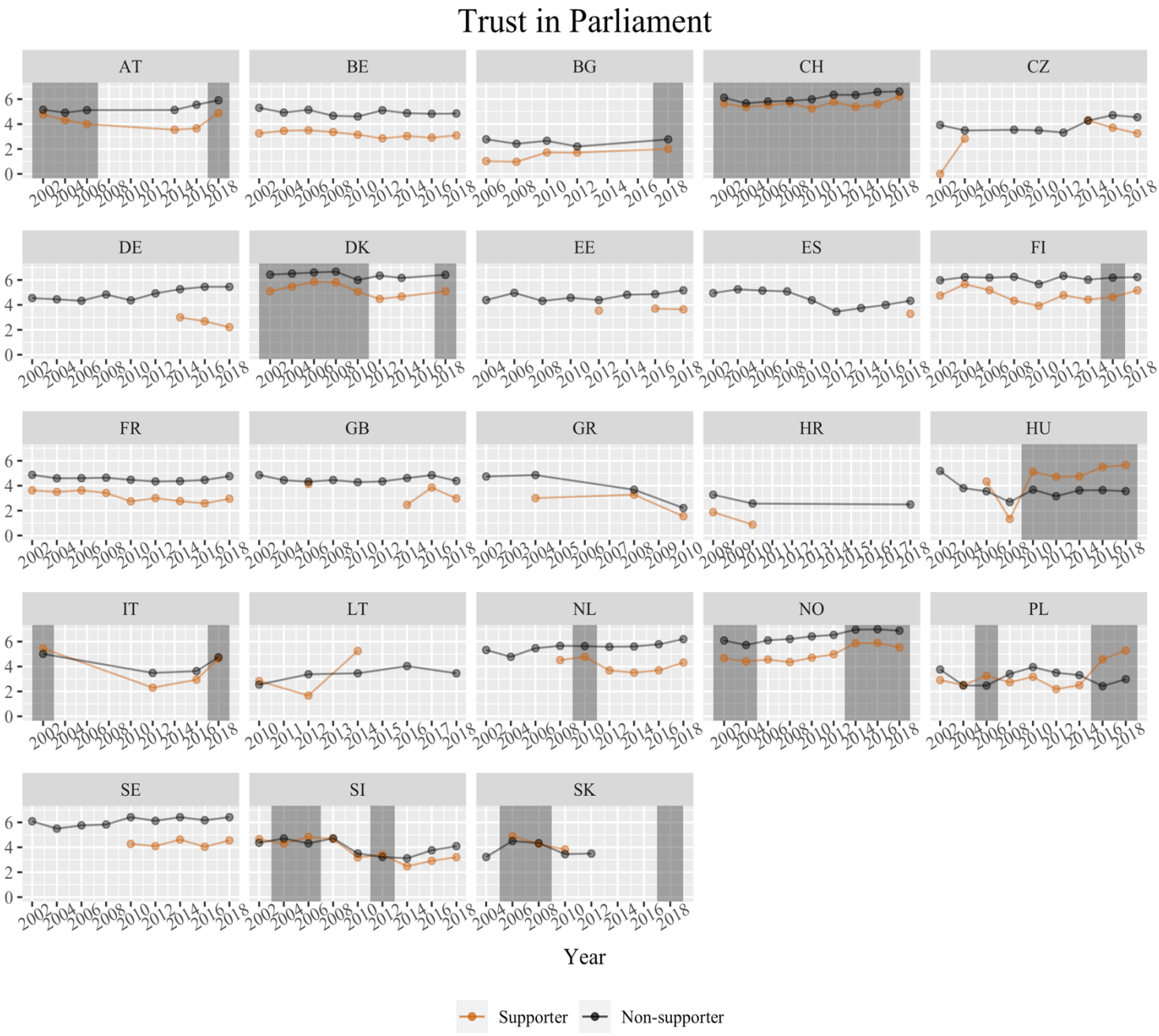


Figure 3.2 *Trust in parliament for supporters and non-supporters of PRR parties in all countries.* ***The shaded areas indicate years where a PRR party is in government.***
Source: The European Social Survey (2018) and the ParlGov cabinets database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022).
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

time-period, the more long-term effects are not possible to account for. And more importantly, voters will likely not be able to assess the real policy-impact of the government, at least not until a few years have gone by. Therefore, the assumption is that when PRR parties are included, their supporters will immediately interpret that as a win, and expect

policies related to immigration and other concerns to be addressed in the future. In other words, the main argument here is related to *perceived representation*, as opposed to actual policy-output.

It should be noted that the "representational correctives" theory presented here is related to both the *populist* and the *radical right* side of PRR parties (Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020). The substantive demands of PRR supporters, often related to stricter immigration policies, has already been discussed. However, turning to the *populist* side of the parties, inclusion may have a separate, specific effect when it comes to trust. Being included in government can contribute to dampening the populist hatred towards the elites, as the populists and their followers are no longer considered "disregarded outsiders". It is not as easy criticising elites when the PRR parties themselves have become part of the established authorities.

One theory seeking to explain how executive power affect the support and trust of PRR supporters is the moderation/radicalisation hypothesis (Haugsgjerd 2019). This theory is based on how the PRR parties themselves respond to being included in government. When entering office, parties in general may be inclined to moderate their rhetoric to better be able to cooperate with other parties (Krause and Wagner 2021; Rooduijn, de Lange, and van der Brug 2014). This is a common assumption, as parties constantly need to balance vote- and office-seeking behaviour (Heinisch and Hauser 2016; Cohen 2020). This moderation-tactic may be especially relevant for PRR parties, as their outsider-profile and anti-establishment rhetoric is part of their electoral appeal. Assuming that moderation takes place when PRR parties enter government, different expectations to the effect this may have on citizens' political trust can be proposed.

First, as the PRR party is moderating their populist rhetoric, their ability to fuel their supporter's distrust will decrease. In this sense, the first expectation is that government inclusion, given that the PRR party moderates their rhetoric, will increase political trust among supporters (Haugsgjerd 2019). However, assuming that people vote for these parties because they agree with their policies, the effect may be different. Voters will expect the PRR party to propose radical policy-suggestions in line with their nativist stance. If they moderate their rhetoric to cooperate better with other parties, this may feel like a betrayal to their supporters. Especially considering their anti-establishment profile. When supporters see their

party cooperating with "the enemy", their trust in the political system may decrease even further (Cohen 2020).

As opposed to the moderation hypothesis, PRR parties assuming office may rather be inclined to continue their anti-establishment profile while still being represented in government (Haugsgjerd 2019). Referred to as the "one foot in, one foot-out" strategy, the parties may then be able to continue fuelling their voters' distrust from a government position. With this argument, supporters of PRR parties will be expected to decrease their political trust when the PRR party enters government with a radicalisation-strategy. It seems unlikely, however, that supporters' trust is dependent to such a high degree on how PRR parties strategize in government. If anything, it seems more likely that voters will react positively to the PRR parties maintaining their initial profile. Therefore, another expectation from the radicalisation hypothesis is that voters' levels of trust will increase when PRR parties enter governments with a radicalisation strategy. After all, the trust of voters will likely have been affected before government inclusion takes place (Mauk 2020, 47). By maintaining an outsider-profile and anti-establishment rhetoric, supporters of PRR parties' trust should increase, as their preferred party is able to balance their initial outsider-profile with government representation (Heinisch and Hauser 2016, 89).

These expectations both depend on how the PRR party behaves when taking office, which I am not able to investigate here. Still, the theoretical assumptions are relevant, and may contribute to understanding the effect government inclusion has on citizens' trust. Based on the theoretical assumptions presented above, the first hypothesis concerning supporters of PRR parties is stated as follows:

> ***H1:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, supporters of PRR parties will express higher levels of trust in politicians and parliament*

3.6.2 *Expectations Regarding Non-Supporters of PRR Parties*

Having accounted for the theoretical expectations of PRR inclusion for *supporters* of PRR parties, it is now time to turn to theoretical expectations for *non-supporters*. At first glance, it may seem obvious that this relationship looks the opposite from that of supporters: trust will

decrease, because non-supporters disagree with the policy-proposals of PRR parties (Harteveld et al. 2021). However, this is not necessarily the case.

Following the work of Easton, it can be theorised that some citizens have built up what he calls a "reservoir of goodwill" over time (1975). In other words, having experienced longer periods of good performance and support towards political institutions, non-supporters of PRR parties have built up a reservoir of "goodwill", or trust, that can work as a buffer in times when they do not agree with the policies of sitting authorities (Harteveld et al. 2021, 117; Linde and Peters 2020). Referring to the specific and diffuse side of support discussed earlier, the idea is that people are able to separate their immediate dissatisfaction with specific policies or politicians in office from the more general, underlying support for the democratic system and its institutions (Easton 1975). The reservoir of goodwill is therefore a manifestation of citizens' diffuse support, which means that political trust is generated though performance *over time* (Easton 1975, 449). When a PRR party enters government, this should not be enough for people to lose trust in the political system, despite them disagreeing with the new policy-proposals. As they have experienced longer periods of being on the "winning" side of an election, it may be easier for non-supporters to stay hopeful that their preferred party will win again in the future (Harteveld et al. 2021, 117).

Turning again to congruence theory, all citizens should benefit from more ideological congruence at the aggregate level (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 60; Dunn 2015b). After all, competition and some degree of polarisation is viewed as healthy for democracies (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 7-8). PRR parties increasing in size and gaining representation in parliament and government may lead citizens who oppose their views to participate more in politics. For the opposition, this may involve turning up for elections to "keep the rascals out" (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 920). And even though on the individual level, this may seem unlikely to increase trust among the general population, it may trigger disengaged people on both sides to become engaged in politics again. Similar explanations are presented by Mauk, who theorises that for people who are opposed to both the radical right and the radical left of politics, the rise of populist parties may lead to a renewed appreciation for the liberal democratic system (Mauk 2020, 47). This is more connected to the populist component of these parties specifically. People who are attracted to the populist message, but not necessarily support the radical right host ideology, may express increased trust in the political system when populist messages are allowed a voice.

Based on these theoretical assumptions, non-supporters of populist radical right parties are expected to remain on relatively stable levels of trust in political institutions. This leads to the second hypothesis, stated as follows:

> ***H2:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, non-supporters of PRR parties will become neither more nor less trusting of politicians or parliament*

The combination of the two first hypotheses lead to a third hypothesis concerning the general population:

> ***H3:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, overall levels of trust in politicians and parliament will be higher than in year of exclusion*

3.6.3 *Expectations Regarding Authoritarian Predispositions*

The final, and arguably most important, part of the theoretical background for this thesis concerns the role of authoritarian predispositions and attitudes. Few, if any, scholars have empirically examined the role of authoritarian attitudes when it comes to the relationship between PRR inclusion and political trust. Still, viewing individual characteristics and socio-cultural background as important explanatory factors is not new in the literature on political trust. Scholars have established that basic socialisation processes determine whether people learn to trust others, which again is seen as being related to political trust (Mishler and Rose 2001, 32). When, as in this case, political trust is understood as an evaluation of political institutions, it makes sense that individual characteristics also impact how political institutions are evaluated (Martini and Quaranta 2020). To put it simply, if individual characteristics had no impact on levels of trust, there would be little to no variations in levels of trust within countries, which there is (Martini and Quaranta 2020). Figures 3.3 and 3.4 below illustrates trust in politicians and parliament for individuals with high, average, and low levels of authoritarianism. In the same way as Figures 3.1 and 3.2 above, they provide a first glimpse of how authoritarians' levels of trust are affected by PRR in government.

As there are no direct theories explaining how authoritarianism interacts with PRR parties and trust, this section will be built on the limited research that exists. First, authoritarians and trust more generally will be explored, before moving on to how PRR parties in government may affect this relationship. The hypotheses will therefore be based on my interpretation of how these different theoretical bases will unfold when analysed together.

3.6.3.1 Authoritarianism and political trust

Some scholars have investigated the relationship between authoritarian predispositions and political trust more broadly. Theory suggests that initially, authoritarians should be more trusting of political institutions than others. Devos, Spini & Schwarz (2002) found that higher levels of trust correlated with individual values like stability, protection, and preservation of traditions. This can be partly explained by authoritarians' submissiveness towards authority (Dunn 2020). Generally, theory suggests that people who value law and order and stability will be more trusting in political institutions that contributes to the stability and order of society. As more authoritarian individuals are concerned with issues of group security and preservation of societal norms and rules, it makes sense for these individuals to be more trusting of authoritative institutions whose purpose is to ensure the stability of society. Individuals placing more value on individual autonomy will on the other hand place less trust in these institutions, as they restrain individuals' freedom and possibilities (Dunn 2020; Devos, Spini, and Schwartz 2002). Again, this makes sense. By upholding the rules and laws of society and ensuring stability and security, political institutions will necessarily also restrain individual's rights and freedom. Based on this, the first assumption is that people with more authoritarian predispositions will initially be more trusting of political institutions than others.

As explained in the conceptual discussion, authoritarian predispositions are not necessarily the same as always displaying punitive and intolerant attitudes. Rather, authoritarian attitudes are expressed as a reaction to *perceived threat*. This is an important aspect to consider when discussing theoretical expectations regarding trust. Researchers have argued that authoritarian predispositions are directly triggered by individuals' perceived threat (Feldman and Stenner 1997). That way, people that have underlying authoritarian predispositions will not "act upon them" unless they feel threatened somehow (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that only individuals that feel some sort of threat to the order of society will

be more trusting. When all is well, individuals will prioritise their individual freedom and display less trust in political authorities.

In terms of the role of threat, Dunn finds that people who are more authoritarian will not be very sensitive to threat at all (2020). In fact, perceived threat will have a stronger impact on those that are normally more liberal, leading them to adopt more restrictive attitudes. In this sense, authoritarians will remain "stable supporters" of political authorities and institutions, regardless of the perceived threat. Liberals, on the other hand, will be more trusting the more they perceive threat, because threat leads them to become "more authoritarian" (Dunn 2020). Berntzen presents yet another interpretation of the role of perceived threat (2020). He finds that both authoritarians and non-authoritarians react to threat, but differently. By studying the citizens' evaluations of voter groups after the 2011 terror attacks in Norway, he finds that people with authoritarian predispositions rally behind populist radical right voters when faced with political conflict. Non-authoritarians, on the other hand, gather in support for social democratic voters (Berntzen 2020).

In other words, different interpretations of the role of perceived threat exists when it comes to explaining authoritarians' and non-authoritarians' levels of political trust. Future research could benefit from taking this factor into account when analysing the relationship between authoritarians, PRR parties and political trust.

3.6.3.2 Authoritarianism and the populist radical right

Going back to the theory on authoritarian submission, an important part to note is that the political institutions in question need to be considered "legitimate" for authoritarians to trust them (Dunn 2020; Tyler 1997). A natural further question is therefore to what degree authoritarians view politicians and parliament as legitimate authorities, and whether this depends on who is in a governing position. This is likely to be affected by whether the individual supports the parties in government.

From this, it can be assumed that there is some correlation between displaying authoritarian predispositions and support for PRR parties. After all, support for strong government and a priority for law and order are core attributes of PRR parties. Therefore, as Dunn points out, the theoretical basis for such an assumption should appear relatively sound, as PRR parties

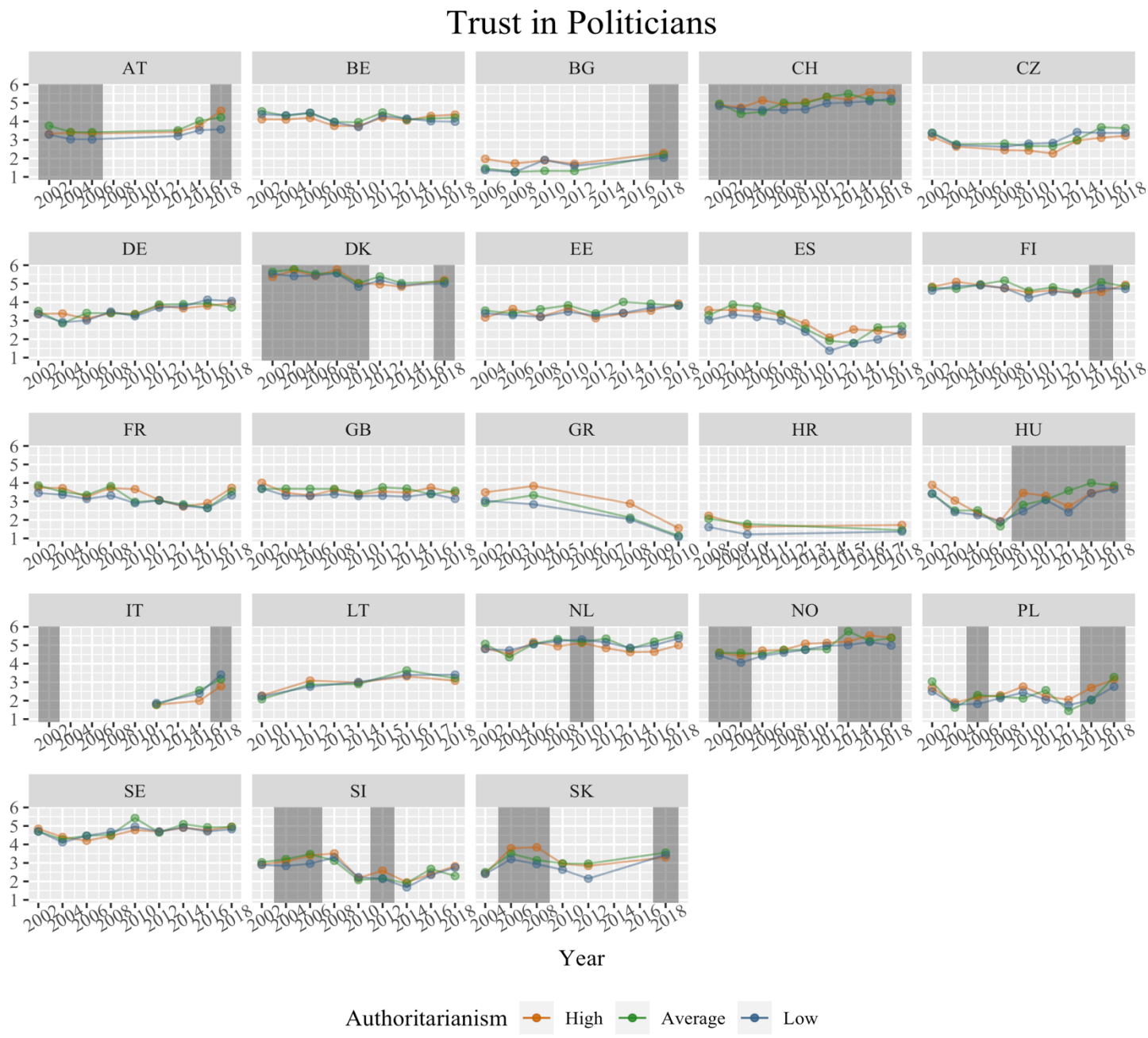


Figure 3.3 *Trust in politicians for people with high (above 75th percentile), average (25-75th percentile), and low (below 25th percentile) authoritarianism.* ***The shaded areas indicate years where a PRR party is in government.***
Source: The European Social Survey (2018) and the ParlGov cabinets database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022)
Plots built in R with the package "ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

invoke rhetoric that should appeal to voters with authoritarian predispositions (2015a). Other scholars have also established a correlation between authoritarian predispositions and PRR parties. For instance, Donovan (2019) finds that PRR parties may function as an outlet for people who display "illiberal sentiments" and favour strong, unchecked leaders.

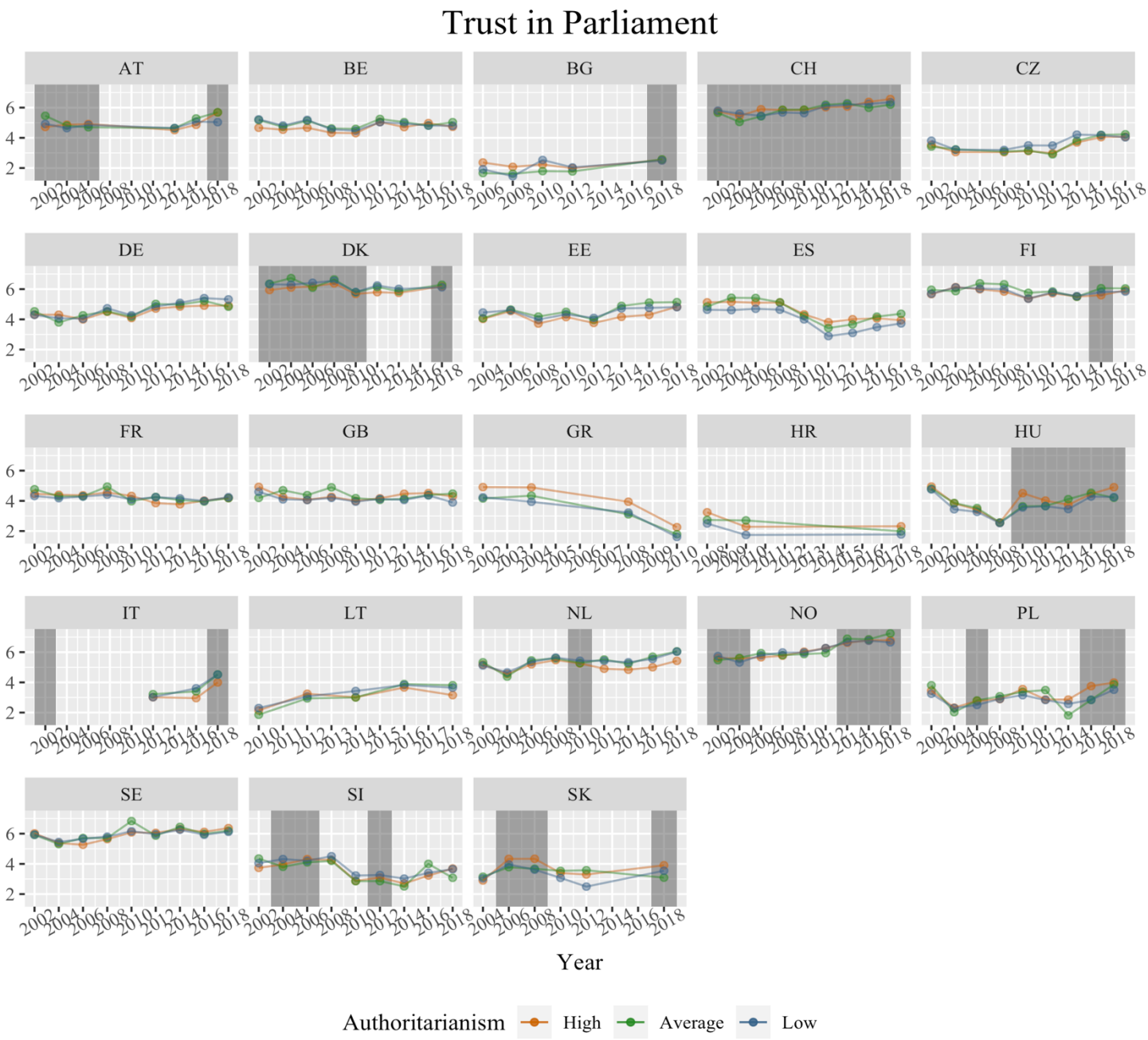


Figure 3.4 *Trust in parliament for people with high (above 75th percentile), average (25-75th percentile), and low (below 25th percentile) authoritarianism.* ***The shaded areas indicate years where a PRR party is in government.***
Source: The European Social Survey (2018) and the ParlGov cabinets database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022).
Plots built in R with the package "ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

However, not all scholars agree that authoritarianism and voting for PRR parties always correlate. In fact, Dunn (2015a) has demonstrated that while nativist attitudes almost always predict support for PRR parties, authoritarianism is not nearly as consistent. He shows that while exclusive nationalists will consistently prefer PRR parties, individuals with

authoritarian predispositions are a lot more inconsistent (Dunn 2015a). This resonates well with other more recent findings as well. While earlier research argued that authoritarians are consistently hostile towards inferior minority groups in general, recent theoretical insight has found this to be less likely (Feldman 2003, 43). In other words, authoritarianism does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with the prejudice it is often associated with. This could be explained by the fact that a core trait of authoritarianism like conformity and submission to authority are at odds with the rhetoric of PRR parties (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 911). Authoritarians may therefore prefer parties that are less critical towards the establishment in their effort to protect the stability of society.

A potential explanation for this could be the fact that authoritarian attitudes are not limited to the political right. In fact, research has shown that a significant group of voters have left-wing preferences on economic issues and right-wing/traditional views on socio-cultural issues, resulting in no ideal party option to match their interests (Lipset 1959; Hillen and Steiner 2020; Lefkofridi, Wagner, and Willmann 2014). The fact that left-wing authoritarians exist make the expectations from this group of voters more complex. On one hand, it could be hypothesised that only right-wing authoritarians will react positively to PRR inclusion. It would make sense for this group to become more trusting of political institutions when PRR parties are included, because they are likely to agree with them on important policies. Additionally, right-wing authoritarians will be more likely to react to threats like immigration and multiculturalism, issues that are frequently voiced by PRR parties. When these parties enter governments, right-wing authoritarians may therefore become more trustful because they feel like their specific concerns related to these issues are being handled by legitimate authorities. After all, PRR parties often speak loudly on issues related directly to national security and stability, which may be particularly appealing to right-wing authoritarians.

Assuming that right-wing authoritarians do support PRR parties, these expectations, combined with the "representational correctives" theory, strongly indicate that right-wing authoritarians are likely to react positively to the inclusion of PRR parties. The combination of supporting the policies of the party in question and being generally more submissive towards authorities leads to this expectation.

However, left-wing authoritarians also need to be accounted for. As already established, people who place themselves on the economic left and the cultural right (authoritarian) side of

politics practically have no real party options in elections (Hillen and Steiner 2020). In other words, they are faced with a choice between their leftist stance on economic issues and their right-wing, conservative views on cultural issues. The outcome of this choice may vary between individuals, depending on their level of authoritarianism. From previous research, however, it can be assumed that most people with authoritarian attitudes identify on the right-wing of the politics (Donovan 2019). Based on this, the expectation for this group of respondents is that they will prioritise their left-wing views, despite their preferences for conformity over autonomy. This is also in line with the work of Lefkofridi, Wagner & Willmann (2014) who finds that generally, left-wing authoritarians tend to resort to left-liberal parties.

On one hand, left-wing authoritarians are therefore expected to be less supportive of political institutions when PRR parties are in government. As they identify themselves as belonging to the left side of politics, they are likely to perceive threat differently to right-wing authoritarians as well. Additionally, by belonging to the left side of politics, they may be affected by the (winner)-loser thesis, leading them to become less trusting with the inclusion of PRR parties.

However, taking account of the fact that most likely, there are fewer left-wing authoritarians than right-wing authoritarians, this is not expected to impact the relationship to a high degree. Additionally, returning to the abovementioned assumptions regarding Easton's "reservoir of goodwill", left-wing authoritarians are not expected to drastically impact the relationship in any way.

Depending on the number of left-wing authoritarians compared to right-wing authoritarians, it could be assumed that combined, authoritarians' level of political trust will not increase or decrease drastically but remain relatively stable. This is based on the assumption that authoritarians are initially more trusting towards political institutions than others. Additionally, being more trusting generally could imply, along with the theoretical assumptions of Dunn (2020), that their evaluations of trust might not be as contingent on short-term evaluations as with others. In other words, it could be assumed that authoritarians will trust politicians and the parliament regardless of the governing coalitions because of their submissive dispositions and general priority for safety and stability. The first hypothesis is therefore as follows:

H4: In years where PRR parties are included in government, voters with authoritarian predispositions will maintain stable levels of trust in politicians and parliament

However, as most authoritarians are assumed to identify more with right-wing parties, this may lead to a slight positive increase in levels of trust:

H5: In years where PRR parties are included in government, voters with authoritarian predispositions will express slightly higher levels of trust in politicians and parliament

To sum up, the theoretical expectations regarding people with more authoritarian predispositions is far from clear. Research on the topic is scarce. The hypotheses above are therefore based on a combination of theoretical insights from different topics of research. In other words, these hypotheses merely represent a starting point for attempting to understand how authoritarian attitudes affect the much more studied relationship between PRR parties and political trust and support.

Trust in Politicians vs. Trust in Parliament

As a last note, it should be mentioned that expectations regarding effects on trust in politicians and trust in parliament are slightly different based on theory. Parliament can be said to represent the diffuse side of support, while trust in politicians is largely an expression of the more specific, and evaluative, side of support. Although both are treated as measures of political trust, it is important to treat them separately. This is well captured in Norris' theoretical framework (1999). Building on Easton's work on political support, Norris and her collaborators separates support for community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions and political actors (Norris 1999). Following this, the expectations for trust in politicians and parliament are slightly different.

Parliament represents an enduring political institution, while politicians are regularly replaced (Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009, 161). It is, of course, not possible to measure whether citizens make this same distinction when evaluating these institutions. Nevertheless, it is important to keep this distinction in mind when studying political trust. As the relationship between citizens and parliament is less personal, and less likely to be affected by

recent events (Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009, 161), a general expectation from the separation of trust in parliament and politicians is that trust in politicians will be more strongly affected (either positively or negatively) by PRR government inclusion. This is related to Easton's notion of diffuse and specific support. Specific support is characterised by evaluations of authorities and their actions, while diffuse support refers to more underlying attitudes towards fundamental institutions. As government inclusion is a more short-term change that affects authorities and their actions, and not the fundamental structure of the political system, trust in politicians is expected to be more strongly affected. This regards all the hypotheses presented above.

4 METHOD & DATA

4.1 Data Structure

Before presenting the method used in this thesis, it is necessary to first present the structure of the dataset, as this determines the methodological choices made. I use data from two different sources to test my hypotheses, the European Social Survey (ESS) (European Social Survey 2020) and the ParlGov database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022). Additionally, the categorisation of populist radical right parties are based on the classification of the PopuList (Rooduijn et al. 2019). The ESS is a cross-national survey that has been conducted in rounds every two years since 2001. The data is gathered by conducting face-to-face interviews with the respondents. Every sampling-year, a different sample of individuals is collected from the same populations (countries). In total, 40 countries have participated in at least one ESS round. At this point, a total of 9 rounds are currently available, and all of these are included in this analysis.

This leads to a pooled cross-section data structure, with three levels nested within each other. One of the main advantages of pooled cross-section data is that it enables some aspect of time variance in the analysis, as opposed to standard cross-sectional models. Additionally, by including all available ESS rounds, the number of observations is drastically increased, which automatically strengthens the analysis. In statistical research, size matters, because larger sample sizes provides more evidence to test the hypotheses (Gerring 2012, 365; Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 164). With this data structure, it is not necessary for all countries to be present in all rounds, which is also an advantage. This data structure has become increasingly common in social science among researchers that seeks to compare individuals across national contexts (Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran 2019). The dataset has 330 505 individuals, nested within 23 countries, in a total of 176 country-years. Note, however, that the number of observations drops substantially with the listwise deletion of missing values in the analyses.

I have focused this analysis on countries where PRR parties are/have been present, including Western, Eastern, and Central Europe. The following 23 countries are included in the analysis: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia,

Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. It should be noted that not all countries have participated in all 9 rounds.

Data from the ParlGov project is mainly used to measure whether PRR parties are included in government in a specific country-year. The ParlGov is a data infrastructure containing information on parties, elections, and cabinets in 37 European democracies (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022). Variables measuring the seat- and vote-share of PRR parties in each respective country are also included to produce descriptive statistics and plots, contributing to a better contextual understanding.

In the following section, I will present the variables used in the analysis. Specifically, I will discuss measurement in relation to the theoretical framework presented above, concerning the variables' validity when it comes to testing the hypotheses. Following this, I will present some potential problems connected to survey data and missing values.

4.2 Variables

4.2.1 *The European Social Survey*

4.2.1.1 Dependent variable: Political trust (trust in politicians and parliament)

To measure the phenomenon "political trust", I use two separate variables. These are "trust in country's parliament" and "trust in politicians". Other variables are also commonly used to measure political trust, such as "trust in political parties". In this thesis, I have chosen to deliberately exclude this one. I assume that most respondents display very varying levels of trust in parties depending on the political party in question. A measure asking respondents their trust towards political parties in general is therefore unnecessary to include.

Still, I think including both trust towards politicians and the country's parliament is interesting, since it can be investigated whether there is any difference in the two measures for supporters of PRR parties, non-supporters of PRR parties and people with authoritarian predispositions.

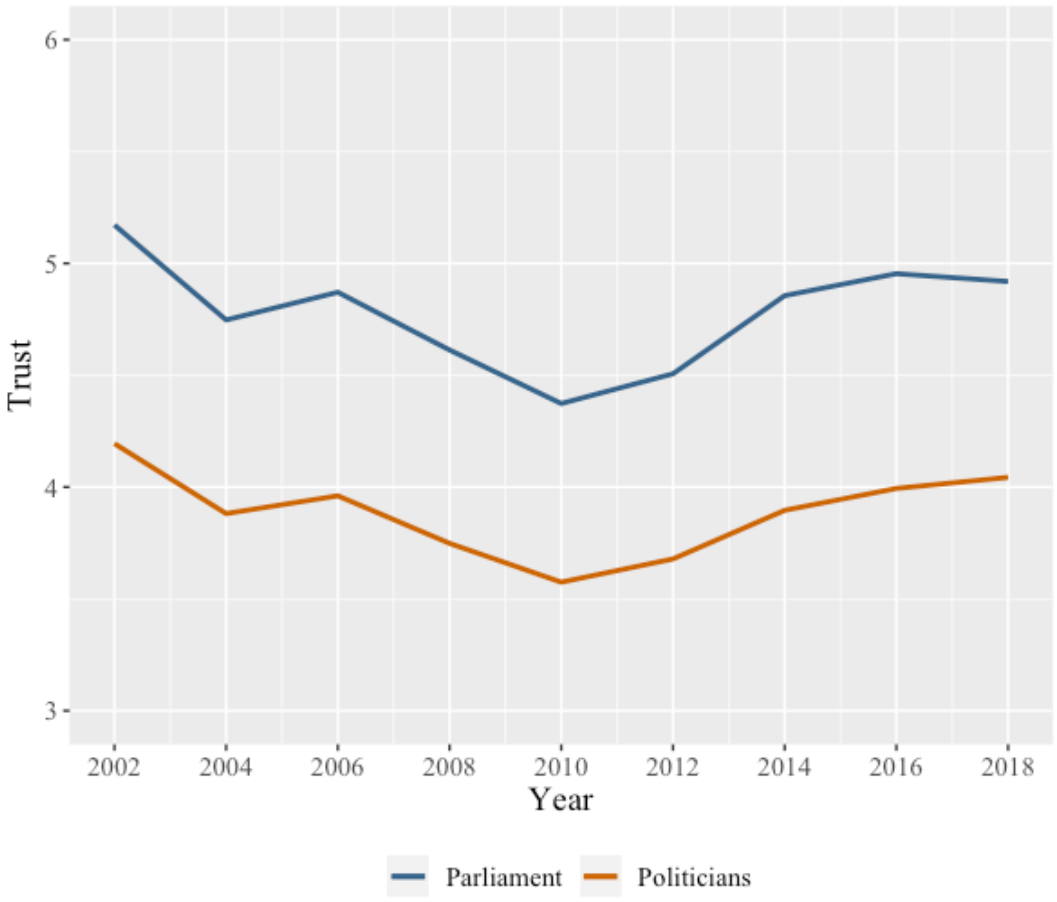


Figure 4.1 *Mean level of trust in politicians and parliament, 2002-2018*
Source: The European Social Survey (2018), round 1-9
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

Recalling Norris' theoretical framework (1999), trust in parliament falls under the category "regime institutions" together with trust in political parties. Trust in politicians, on the other hand, is placed under the "trust in authorities" category. Therefore, these measures should be treated separately in the analysis, as they actually measure different dimensions of trust (Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009, 161). It should be noted, though, that it has been argued that political trust is a one-dimensional concept, and that citizens are unable to distinguish between trust in different types of political institutions (Hooghe 2011). However, Figure 4.1, which illustrates the mean levels of trust in politicians and parliament in all countries, shows that people consistently place more trust in parliament than in politicians. The two measures do follow each other very consistently, though, which may indicate that people evaluate one in relation to the other.

In the ESS, each respondent is asked to score their level of trust towards a specific institution (parliament and politicians) on a scale from 0-10, where 0 means no trust at all and 10 means complete trust in the given institution. As with almost all survey data, it is important to note that although a specific definition and operationalisation of political trust is provided in this thesis, respondents of the ESS did not have this in mind when evaluating their own trust. Especially when it comes to such an ambiguous concept as political trust, every individual is likely to have their own understanding of what the concept means. In other words, despite researchers establishing exact definitions and operationalisations of trust, it is impossible to make sure people's perceptions of trust match that of scholars and theory before they answer the question. Generally, the problem of knowing exactly what respondents mean is an issue connected to all research involving survey data, which is important to be aware of. For instance, Schneider (2017) finds that in some cases, citizens within different cultures and societies have different understandings of what political trust means (2017). It is therefore important to be mindful of this when performing cross-national research like this.

4.2.1.2 PRR vote (voted for a PRR party last national election dummy)

The next variable of interest from the European Social Survey is the "PRR vote" dummy, capturing whether respondents voted for a PRR party or not in the last national election. This variable was constructed by first collecting data on the variable "party voted for last national election" from each country in the analysis. From there, the party names in each country were combined where necessary, as these were not standardised in the ESS rounds. Then, observations in all countries were combined into one variable with all parties in every country. Lastly, a dummy was constructed by coding each PRR party as 1, and all other parties as 0, following the categorisation provided by the PopuList (Rooduijn et al. 2019). In cases where electoral alliances were established before the election, so that voters voted for an electoral alliance and not the individual parties, the alliance was coded 1 if half or more of the parties in the coalition was a PRR party, and 0 if not. In some countries, where they hold several election rounds, the individual party choice in the first election is considered.

It is important to emphasise that this variable is used to measure whether an individual should be considered a "supporter" or a "non-supporter" of PRR parties. In other words, by having voted for a PRR party last national election, respondents are considered "supporters", which could be potentially misleading, as they may have changed their minds since the election took

place. However, it is assumed that most people who report having voted for a PRR party last national election still consider themselves a supporter of the party at the time of the ESS sampling.

By following the PopuList's categorisation of PRR parties, some newer and smaller PRR parties will be excluded, and coded as 0. This, however, will only affect a very small number of respondents, and not result in any major losses in the analysis. It should be noted that this variable does not capture *when* the election of interest took place, something that will necessarily vary in all countries and years. In other words, the "PRR vote" dummy simply captures the last party an individual reported to have voted for, regardless of when the last national election took place.

4.2.1.3 Authoritarian Predispositions

To measure respondents' authoritarian predispositions, the variable "authoritarianism" was constructed by combining a set of twelve survey questions from the Portrait Values Questionnaire in the ESS. This scale was designed by Shalom H. Schwartz to measure people's basic value orientations. There are 21 questions in the scale in total (European Social Survey 2021). To measure authoritarian predispositions, twelve of the survey questions are used. The questions are separated in two, where the first six constitutes conservation values and the last six constitutes openness values. More specifically, questions measuring self-direction, stimulation and hedonism are subtracted from measures of conformity, tradition, and security (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019). This resulted in the "authoritarianism scale", ranging from -15 to 15. It has been recoded, so that higher scores indicate higher levels of authoritarian predispositions. Research has shown that this measure of authoritarianism correlates strongly with other commonly used measures, for instance Altemeyer's right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale (Arikan and Sekercioglu 2019, 1103). The survey questions used to construct the scale can be found in Appendix A1.

4.2.1.4 Control Variables

In multivariate regression analyses, it is essential to include control variables, in order to control for effects that may theoretically influence the causal relationship of interest (Kellstedt

and Whitten 2018, 216). The controls that I include are variables that in previous literature have been established to be related to political trust in different ways.

Education, gender, and age are variables that are very commonly used when studying phenomena related to individuals' trust and support in political institutions. These variables constitute socio-demographic status, which has been established as having an impact on political attitudes and evaluations of democracy and political institutions (van Erkel and van der Meer 2016, 184; Newton 2007, 350; Mishler and Rose 2001, 35). Education is measured by asking respondents "how many years of education have you completed, whether full-time or part-time?". Gender is coded as a dummy variable where 1 is male and 0 is female. Age is simply the age of the respondent.

In addition to the typical socio-demographic control variables above, *political interest* has also been found to have an impact on evaluations of the political system (Mauk 2020). People who are interested in politics are generally also more informed about the political system, which in turn makes them more positive in their assessment of various political institutions (Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009). Initially, this variable ranged from 4 (not at all interested) to 1 (very interested). To better correspond with the measures of the other variables, it was recoded to range from 0 (not at all interested) to 3 (very interested).

Another important control variable that should be included when studying political trust is the closely related *social trust*. In the ESS, social trust, or trust in other people, is measured by asking respondents: "generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?". The scale ranges from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate higher levels of trust in others. Previous research has established a close relation between social and political trust, which is why it is important to include (Daskalopoulou 2019).

4.2.2 *The PopuList*

Before moving on to the data collected from the ParlGov project, I will first clarify the reference used for identifying which parties that are populist radical right in the dataset. As previously mentioned, I use the PopuList's classification of populist radical right parties. The PopuList is a cooperation between academics and journalists and consists of parties from a

total of 31 European countries. The parties that are included can be classified as populist, far right, far left, and Eurosceptic. To be included, parties need to have gained at least one seat or 2% of the votes in a national parliamentary election (Rooduijn et al. 2019).

As mentioned previously, the PopuList utilises the same definition(s) by Mudde (2004, 2007) of populism and the radical right as used in this thesis. Doing so, they provide a clear categorical classification of PRR parties that is highly convenient in quantitative analyses. It is worth noting, however, that other measures of populism have been advocated for by other authors, such as rather measuring it as a continuum. In the latter, parties can be more or less populist, while in the first approach they are either populist or not. In this thesis, the categorical approach is preferred because of the quantitative approach. In more detailed, qualitative studies, however, measuring populism and radical host ideologies as degrees on a continuum will provide more insight.

Lastly, two corrections had to be made regarding the PopuList's classification. The Law and Justice party (PiS) in Poland and Fidesz in Hungary should, according to scholars, not be considered populist radical right until 2005 (PiS) and 2010 (Fidesz) (Muis, Brils, and Gaidyte 2021, 8). They originated as conservative right-wing parties but has since radicalised. These are important cases to consider, because of their electoral strength and influence over the years. They are consequently coded as populist radical right after 2005 and 2010, respectively.

4.2.3 *ParlGov Data*

4.2.3.1 PRR in government

The "PRR in government" is a dummy variable identifying whether there are any populist radical right parties in government. The variable is constructed from ParlGov data identifying which parties are in government in a given year. If one or more PRR parties are included in government, the variable is coded 1, and if not, 0. In election years, the new government is considered. Additionally, this variable is expanded here to also include parties that function as parliamentary support for minority governments. This expands the number of country-years with PRR parties in government slightly. Also, it can be assumed that being a support party

for a government is an important role, and that voters will react to this similarly to parties being in government.

It should be noted that in years where ESS field work coincides with a national election, results may be misleading. Pose that field work is done from January to May in a given country-year. Later that year, a national election is held, where a PRR party enters government for the first time. In this scenario, respondents will be asked about their trust prior to the election. In other words, the PRR in government value will indicate 1 in that year, even though respondents' level of trust has not had a chance to be influenced by the party's entry into government.

4.3 Problems with the Data

In this case, a combination of survey data and observational data is used. Survey data has some important shortcomings when it comes to measuring phenomena of interest, which was also briefly mentioned with the measurement of political trust above. First, people's unwillingness to answer may affect the representativeness of the sample. Additionally, respondents may give wrong and untruthful answers for a range of reasons. As such data involves people's own assessments and evaluations of a given question (or variable), the validity of the results is initially lower than with other types of data (Grønmo 2016, 209-210). For example, Hadjar & Beck illustrate this problem regarding self-reporting on the variable "non-voting" (2010). Respondents may be inclined to give more "socially acceptable answers" compared to their actual voting behaviour. Similar problems can be assumed to arise when asking respondents what party they voted for. Populist radical right parties, specifically, are often considered taboo-parties, which may cause some respondents to not report having voted for them (Harteveld et al. 2019).

When asking about voting behaviour last election, some people may also have genuinely forgotten what party they voted for. Not all people are very interested in politics and may not give very much thought and consideration into their choice, which could lead them to forget. Especially if they are not loyal supporters of one specific party. As the ESS conducts face-to-face interviews, the problem of reliability may decrease. The likelihood of people providing direct untruthful answers is likely less than with online survey schemes or the like. Sitting in

front of an actual person is likely to lead people to take the survey more seriously and feel like their answers matter. On the other hand, on a question asking about voting behaviour, it may lead to a higher number of people not wanting to answer. Elections are secret, and some people will likely not want to openly discuss who they voted for. This is especially the case with radical parties. Because of this, being interviewed by a person rather than answering an anonymous survey scheme, may lead to more missing values in the dataset.

4.3.1 *Missing Data*

Another important shortcoming with the data concerns missing values (NA's). As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the "PRR vote" variable has a substantial number of missing values (39,49%). The variable "authoritarianism" also has some missing values that are worth noting (6,98%).

The fact that the "PRR vote" variable has a lot of missing observations was expected. It is important to be aware of when interpreting the results, however. In practice, it means that in the models including this variable, the number of total observations will be smaller due to listwise deletion. In fact, in the models introducing the interaction of "PRR vote", 134 543 and 135 015 observations were deleted due to missing values. This is a big weakness to the analysis. It means that in the models where "PRR vote" is included, the analysis is run on only around 60% of the whole sample. It should be noted, however, that the NA's are not only people who voted, but did not report on what party. This category also encompasses those that did not vote, which is likely to be a substantial portion of the sample. To improve the analysis by reducing missing values, I could have included those that did not vote as 0, instead of NA's. This would substantially decrease the number of NA's in the analysis and lead to stronger estimates because of more respondents. However, people that did not vote are equally likely to support a PRR party as any other party. Doing so would therefore mean interpreting potential supporters of PRR parties as 0, simply because they did not vote, which would be misleading. As there is no way of knowing the "would-have's", these are better coded as NA's.

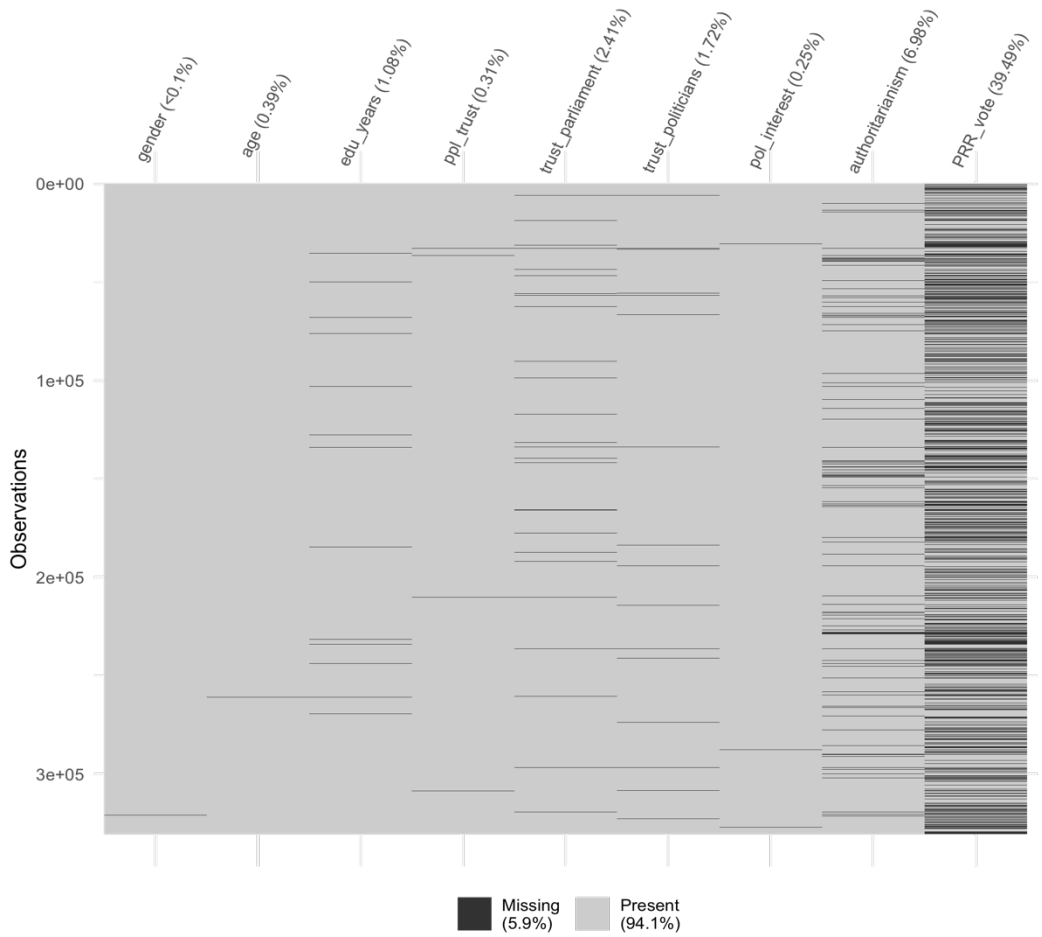


Figure 4.2 *Illustration of missing data for each individual-level variable. Grey areas indicate where values are present, while the black lines indicate missing data*
Source: The European Social Survey (2018), round 1-9.
Plots built in R with the package "visdat" (Tierney 2017).

4.4 Multivariate Regression with Two-Way Fixed Effects

Having presented the data that will be used in the analyses, I will now discuss the methodological approach used to estimate the effect of PRR inclusion on trust, namely an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model with country and time fixed effects (FE). Before discussing the method further, however, I will make some general remarks on methodology and causation that will provide a basis for further discussions.

Choosing the right method to answer the research question is highly important. Method refers to the procedures for gathering and analysing data (Gerring 2012, 6). In other words, the method and data need to correspond to analyse the hypotheses in the best possible way. In this

thesis, I am interested in assessing the general relationship between my dependent and independent variable by utilising large numbers of data, which makes the approach quantitative in nature (Gerring 2012, 362). As opposed to experimental designs, where randomisation and treatment groups automatically account for other possible explanations, controls need to be manually applied when performing regression analyses (Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 215-216).

The goal of this thesis is to figure out how the inclusion of PRR parties in government affects different voters' levels of political trust. In other words, I am interested in the potential *causal relationship* between PRR inclusion and political trust. Most phenomena of interest within the social sciences are of a causal nature. Simply stated, this involves studying how an independent variable X affects a dependent variable Y. Or, in other words, how X *causes* a change in Y (Gerring 2012, 204). However, establishing such a causal relationship is not that straightforward. Finding a *correlation* is not the same as establishing *causation*. To do so, a credible causal mechanism connecting X to Y needs to be established, rooted in theory and previous findings. Importantly, the possibility that the relationship is opposite, i.e., that Y causes X, needs to be eliminated. Additionally, there must be covariation between X and Y. Lastly, and importantly, confounding variables (Z) need to be controlled for (Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 56).

4.4.1 *The Problems with Nested Data – And How to Deal with It*

As already stated, the data used in this thesis has a pooled cross-section structure. For analysing such data, different methods can be utilised (Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009). The most important aspect to consider is its nested structure. One of the assumptions underlying standard linear models are independently distributed error terms between individuals in the sample (Bell and Jones 2015, 135). In other words, there should be no relationships among the individuals in the sample when the independent variables are accounted for (Finch, Bolin, and Kelley 2019, 23). In nested, or hierarchical, data structures like the one in this thesis, applying a standard linear regression would violate this assumption. This is because the individuals in the ESS are nested within countries, and their values on the dependent variable(s) are likely to be linked to the context of the individuals (countries in specific years). In other words, the sample (all individuals in the dataset) were not collected randomly from a whole population, but rather from each specific country. Ignoring the fact that individuals are

correlated within clusters could lead to underestimation of the standard errors, and an increased chance of committing a Type 1 error (Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009, 178; Steenbergen and Jones 2002, 219-220).

Having established the pitfalls of ignoring the nested structure, it is time to turn to possible solutions to this problem. Generally, two main approaches are considered in the literature: random, multilevel, or hierarchical models and fixed effects models (with clustered standard errors) (Bell and Jones 2015). Although researchers tend to favour one over the other, it is important to acknowledge that there are advantages and limitations to both approaches (Clark and Linzer 2015). The terminology and definitions surrounding the terms "fixed" and "random" effects are often confusing, and sometimes even contradicting (Gelman 2005). Therefore, a short introduction on both is presented here, in order to better clarify and ground the choice of model in this thesis.

The multilevel approach is a highly useful method in many circumstances, specifically if one is interested in explaining effects on the individual level with both individual and contextual factors that vary between countries (Steenbergen and Jones 2002). Multilevel models allow the residuals to vary between countries and individuals, resulting in the random effects (RE) model. In other words, by dividing the unexplained residuals in two levels, the RE model targets the issue with non-independently distributed error terms (Bell and Jones 2015). Although multilevel models, or RE models, have many merits, the chosen model for this thesis is the fixed effects model. This choice is mostly grounded in theory. Simply stated, I am not interested in examining the *difference between* contexts, which is what the multilevel model does well. My focus is instead on *within-country* variation.

If, for example, the interest of this study was to investigate how the economic context of each country affected political trust, a multilevel model would be preferable, because the individual variable of interest would depend on the country-level *context*. In other words, I would be interested in explaining *between*-country variance. In this thesis, the individual variable of interest, "PRR inclusion" is measured independently of the context of the country. Importantly, this is not to be mistaken with saying that the national context has no impact. Rather, the point is that all individuals in the sample can be analysed together, because I am not interested in explaining what affects trust at the country-level. I am simply interested in examining how trust is affected by PRR inclusion, within each nested unit in the sample.

4.4.2 *Fixed Effects – Usage and Advantages*

The fixed effect model is used in cases where it is necessary to control for unobserved heterogeneity in the dependent variable (Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran 2019). It lets the researcher control for unobserved group-level effects by including a set of dummies for each contextual unit. That way, the focus of fixed-effects models is on explaining intra-group variation, as opposed to examining differences between the higher-level units, or clusters.

One of the advantages of the FE approach is that it produces unbiased estimates and is therefore generally more robust than RE models (Clark and Linzer 2015, 402). It is also very useful when studying large-scale survey data like the ESS, where every individual is nested within a specific unit (Schmidt-Catran, Fairbrother, and Andreß 2019). After all, it makes sense to assume that in addition to the independent variables in the analysis, political trust is likely to be affected by factors within each specific country. As these factors are unknown and probably highly complex, controlling for these effects manually would be an impossible task. Including fixed effects is therefore a good way of avoiding "poorly fitted models with misleading estimates" (Clark and Linzer 2015).

In this thesis, applying fixed effects lets me control for the many theoretical factors that may affect trust in politicians and parliaments within countries. First, theoretically important explanations, such as the electoral system or quality of government that has been established to have an impact in previous literature, is controlled for (Mauk 2020; Miller and Listhaug 1990; Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014). Additionally, as established earlier, the fact that both East and West European countries are included in the analysis makes it important to control for the variation that may exist between these countries. Western European countries have a longer democratic history, while Central- and East European countries have more recent experiences with non-democratic forms of government. These are factors likely to affect evaluations towards the political system (Schneider 2017). Additionally, the history of the PRR party family looks different in Eastern Europe, and immigration has not been of the same concern as in Western Europe. The policy profile of PRR parties in Western and Eastern parts of Europe therefore look different. Immigration issues has largely been monopolised by PRR parties in Western Europe, while the same issues in Eastern Europe are equally captured by the mainstream right (Harteveld et al. 2021, 118). Lastly, it is also worth noting that there are often fewer constraints on executive power in these countries. In countries such as Poland

and Hungary, this has allowed the PRR parties in government to become substantially more powerful than most PRR parties in Western Europe (Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020, 253).

In addition to these more-or-less known intervening factors, all the unobserved factors within countries that impact levels of trust are accounted for with the fixed effects model. For example, the nature of PRR parties will naturally vary between countries. Some are far more radical than others, while others are commonly considered borderline cases (Mudde 2007, 32). In other words, the fact that PRR parties (in terms of their extremeness and size) differs greatly from country to country will likely have some effect on political trust. For instance, the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet is considered far less extreme than the National Front in France, even though both belong to the same party family (Mudde 2007). Such differences are a common problem with quantitative research more generally, but in this case, it can be somewhat accounted for by applying fixed effects.

As well as controlling for within-country heterogeneity, I also include fixed effects for the ESS waves. Like country fixed effects, this is included to control for time-specific factors that may affect overall levels of political trust. For example, the global recession in the late 2007-08 would likely have had an impact on levels of trust in large parts of Europe in that specific period (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 1). Similarly, other time-specific events could have affected political trust, that are unobserved and hard to identify. The models control for this as well, resulting in no potential unobserved time-related factor influencing how PRR inclusion affects political trust.

Fixed effects alone do not correct the standard errors, which is why applying clustered robust standard errors at the country-level is important (Giesselmann and Schmidt-Catran 2019, 203). As is evident from performing a Breusch-Pagan test on the models (se Appendix C), the models would violate the basic OLS assumption of no heteroskedasticity without applying robust standard errors. By clustering the standard errors at the higher (nested) level, the bias arising from unmodeled group-level error is accounted for (Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009, 180). Theoretically, if one could collect variables that perfectly accounted for this group-level error, there would be no need for going beyond regular OLS models. In practice, however, it is impossible to account for all possible factors. Therefore, clustered standard errors are highly useful in cases where the data has a nested structure. The idea is that by clustering the standard errors, one can account for the cases where everyone within a cluster has high or low

standard errors (Bell and Jones 2015, 135). That way, the high or low standard errors within the cluster is not treated as individual high or low standard errors. This tends to lead to larger standard errors in the resulting model (Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009, 185), which lowers the risk of non-significant findings appearing as significant. In other words, it makes the results more robust.

4.4.3 *Fixed Effects – Weaknesses*

Although there are obvious advantages to the fixed effects approach like the ones presented above, it is equally important to establish its shortcomings.

Fixed effects have been criticised for "controlling out" the context instead of explicitly modelling it, which can lead to overly simplified results that fail to explain potential context-dependent factors of interest (Bell and Jones 2015). This criticism is not unwarranted, and it is certainly true that controlling away the distinctiveness of higher-level units leads to a loss of potentially interesting information for the researcher. However, as already stated, the main independent variable of interest here is of the sort that in itself is not really context dependent. Of course, whether a PRR party manages to enter government in one country is obviously connected to factors within that country, like the party system, or the country's democratic history, which is exactly why this needs to be controlled for by applying fixed effects. No scholars can investigate all possible explanations to all sides of a phenomenon simultaneously, however. The subject of interest is chosen carefully to contribute to a specific part of the field, building on previous research and findings. Future research could benefit greatly from focusing on how national context affect PRR inclusion, but that is simply beyond the scope of this thesis. As the ESS states on their website: "when the clusters (countries) are of little theoretical interest, the best solution is to correct for clustering by applying robust standard errors" (i.e. clustered standard errors) (ESS EduNet 2022).

Another limitation of the FE model is the fact that it is relatively sensitive to sample size. Additionally, if X varies little within each unit, one could encounter "the problem of high variance" (Clark and Linzer 2015, 402). However, neither of these are major issues for this thesis, especially concerning sample size. Another downside to using fixed effects is that the generalisability of the findings is reduced, as the effect of the explanatory variable may become very dependent on the sample. In this case, however, generalisability is not of great

concern. PRR parties are largely a European phenomenon, and those that do exist outside Europe are of a different nature. In other words, the goal of this thesis is to say something about the consequences of PRR parties *in Europe* by studying PRR parties *in Europe*. Therefore, the problem of generalisability is not a substantive issue for this thesis.

4.4.4 *Adding Interaction Effects*

Some of the hypothesis presented in the theoretical framework require the inclusion of interaction terms in the analysis to be tested. Interaction effects, simply stated, takes place when the effect of one explanatory variable is contingent on the value of another. This concerns the two variables "PRR vote" and "authoritarianism", separately. In other words, I am interested in 1) how voting for a PRR party and 2) how displaying authoritarian predispositions affect the relationship between PRR inclusion and political trust.

The first is an interaction already established in previous research to be analytically interesting to include. By including the interaction of the "PRR vote" variable, I am able to test how the initial relationship between PRR inclusion and political trust changes when accounting for supporters vs. non-supporters. As established in the theory section, the theoretical expectations are different for supporters and non-supporters, which makes it necessary to explore this interaction. The second interaction effect included is the effect of authoritarianism, which is arguably the most interesting question, as it has not been studied in this sense before. In other words, I seek to find out whether the relationship between PRR inclusion and trust changes depending on levels of authoritarian predispositions across individuals.

There are some basic conditions that should be met when applying multiplicative interaction models (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). The first is already mentioned, namely that the hypotheses being investigated are conditional by nature. Second, all consecutive terms need to be included in the model separately in addition to the interaction effect, to measure both the presence and the absence of the interaction. Third, the constitutive elements of the interaction term must not be interpreted as the average, unconditional effect like in regular regression models. The implications of this will be further explained in the analysis below, but it is useful to note before presenting the results. Lastly, unconditional marginal effects of each term in the interaction should be calculated. Because of the third implication, the variable

constituting the interaction therefore needs to be included in a separate model from the one with the interaction (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). To better interpret the results of interaction terms, marginal effect plots should also be included to illustrate how the effects of the explanatory variable varies with the value of another, i.e. the interaction term (Berry, Golder, and Milton 2012; Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006).

5 ANALYSIS

In this section, I will go through the results of the regression analyses and discuss the observed relationships among the independent variables and the dependent variables trust in politicians and trust in parliament. The results will be split into three parts, Table 5.1, Table 5.2, and Table 5.3, in relation to the hypotheses presented in the theoretical framework. First, I will present the results related to the general relationship between PRR inclusion and trust, without separating between voters and authoritarian attitudes. Second, I will go through the model including the interaction effect of having voted for a PRR party. Lastly, I will present results on the interaction between authoritarian predispositions and PRR inclusion. A discussion of the results and its implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

Each model is run twice, first with trust in politicians as the dependent variable and then with trust in parliament as the dependent variable. All regression models are performed in the statistical program R (R Core Team 2021). For easy application of two-way fixed effects, the package "fixest" is used (Berge 2018). In each table below, the corresponding models are placed next to each other, for easier interpretation and comparison between the two dependent variables. I will therefore present the results accordingly, going through two-and-two models together. The model summaries are created with the package "modelsummary" (Arel-Bundock 2022).

Before presenting the results, it should be noted that the measurement level of the independent variables is not standardised. This means that comparing the effects of different variables has little use, as the size of the coefficients are dependent on the measurement level of the independent variable. In other words, the coefficient for age will naturally be smaller than for political interest, because age has a significantly bigger range between its lowest and its highest value than political interest. Standard errors are included in the parentheses. The statistical significance is indicated by stars (*), showing the likelihood that the effect is true, and not due to chance. The more stars, the more significant the findings are. It should also be noted here that all models include fixed effects for country and ESS rounds. Also, standard errors are clustered by country in all models.

	Model 1: **Politicians**	Model 2: **Parliament**	Model 3: **Politicians**	Model 4: **Parliament**
PRR in Government	0.264**	0.298***	0.265**	0.296***
	(0.103)	(0.095)	(0.103)	(0.090)
Gender	-0.039**	0.126***	-0.150***	0.019
	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.026)
Age	0.002	0.000	-0.003**	-0.004***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Years of Education	0.035***	0.066***	-0.013**	0.018**
	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.008)
Social Trust			0.251***	0.267***
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Political Interest			0.424***	0.410***
			(0.018)	(0.019)
Observations	320387	318175	319074	316892
R2 Adj.	0.165	0.179	0.245	0.252

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 5.1 *Results of regression analyses for unconditional effects of PRR in government.*

5.1 PRR Inclusion and Political Trust

The first two models investigate the relationship between PRR inclusion and trust, including the socio-demographic control variables gender, age, and years of education. The first model, with the dependent variable trust in politicians has an adjusted R squared (R2 Adj.) of 0.165, meaning that 16.5 % of the variation in trust in politicians can be explained by the variables in the model. For model two, the explanatory power is slightly higher (R2 Adj.: 0.179). The adjusted R squared is a measure of the explanatory power of the model, adjusted to control for the number of independent variables included, which makes it a good measure of the actual explanatory power of the model (Wooldridge 2013, 166).

All variables in models 1 and 2 are significant on a 1% level, expect for age of respondent. The independent variable PRR in government indicates a positive relationship in both models. As PRR in government is a dummy variable with only two values (0 and 1), the coefficients can be interpreted as how many units on the scale from 0-10 trust rises when PRR parties are

in government (1), as opposed to when they are not (0). Therefore, the results can be interpreted as when PRR parties are included in government, trust in politicians and parliament increase with 0.264 and 0.298 units, respectively. The effect of gender is significant in both models. For trust in politicians, there is a weak negative relationship, indicating that men (1) have a slightly lower level of trust in politicians than women (0). For trust in parliament, the coefficient is positive, indicating that men have a higher level of trust in parliament. The last significant control variable, years of education, indicate a positive relationship in both models. In other words, going up one unit (year) on education leads to a rise in trust of 0.035 and 0.066 for politicians and parliament, respectively.

In model 3 and 4, the rest of the control variables are added, namely social trust and political interest. This leads to an increase in the adjusted R squared of both models, which is 0.245 in model 3 and 0.252 in model 4. This indicates that social trust and political interest are important control variables, significantly increasing the explanatory power of the models. The next thing to note is that the effect of PRR inclusion on trust in politics (model 3) and trust in parliament (model 4) are significant. The coefficient in model 3 is significant on a 5% level while the coefficient in model 4 is significant on a 1% level. Additionally, both coefficients indicate a positive effect, like in models 1 and 2. For trust in politicians, PRR inclusion leads to a 0.265 increase in trust. For trust in parliament, the coefficient indicates a rise of 0.296 units.

As for the control variables, the effect of gender on trust in politicians is largely the same, but slightly stronger than in model 1, and still significant. For trust in parliament, the effect is still positive, but weaker than in model 2 and not significant. The variable age has become significant in both models, and now indicate a negative effect on trust when age increases with 1 unit. Years of education is still significant in both models, although for trust in politicians, it now indicates a negative effect rather than a positive effect, like in model 1. The effects of social trust and political interest are highly significant and positive in both models.

	Model 1: **Politicians**	Model 2: **Parliament**	Model 3: **Politicians**	Model 4: **Parliament**
PRR in Government	0.338**	0.364***	0.145	0.127
	(0.129)	(0.107)	(0.116)	(0.118)
PRR Vote	-0.306	-0.426	-0.795***	-1.027***
	(0.214)	(0.262)	(0.137)	(0.130)
Gender	-0.103***	0.107***	-0.101***	0.110***
	(0.022)	(0.033)	(0.022)	(0.033)
Age	0.003**	0.000	0.003**	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Years of Education	-0.001	0.032***	-0.001	0.032***
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)
Social Trust	0.249***	0.259***	0.248***	0.259***
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Political Interest	0.378***	0.347***	0.378***	0.347***
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.023)
PRR in Government × PRR Vote			1.027***	1.261***
			(0.248)	(0.325)
Observations	195962	195490	195962	195490
R2 Adj.	0.239	0.243	0.242	0.247

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 5.2 *Results of regression analyses including the interaction term PRR vote.*

5.2 Introducing the interaction of PRR vote

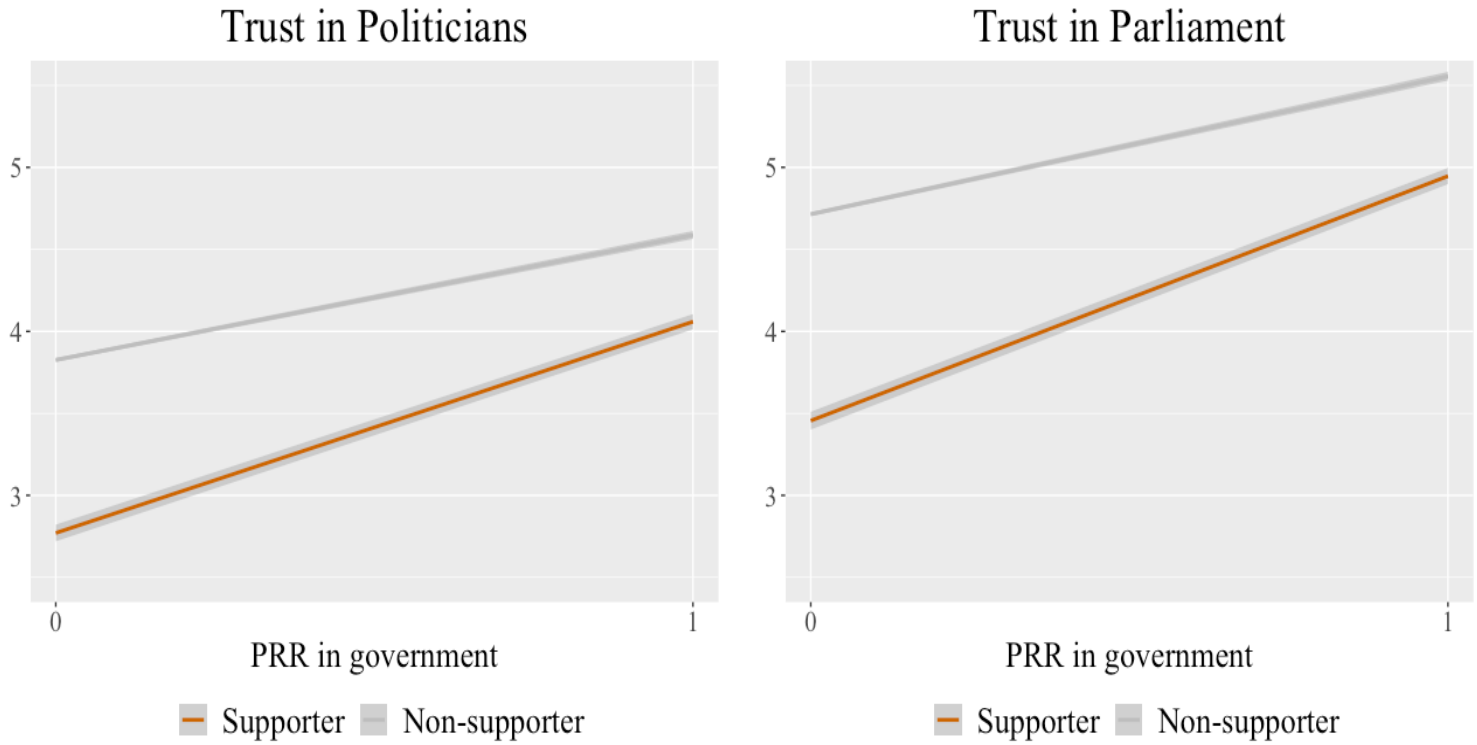
In Table 5.2, the regression model introducing the interaction term of PRR vote is included. As explained in the method section above, it is necessary to include the unconditional effects of the variable constituting the interaction term separately, which is why model 1 and 2 is included as well. Therefore, the interaction is introduced in model 3 and 4.

The adjusted R squared in model 1 is 0.239, and 0.243 in model 2, slightly lower than the similar models in Table 5.1. The effect of PRR in government is still significant for both trust

in politicians and parliament, and the coefficients indicate slightly stronger effects than in previous models. The newly introduced variable PRR vote represents the *unconditional* marginal effect of having voted for a PRR party on trust. It indicates a negative effect, although none of the coefficients are significant. The effect of gender is still significant in both models, and still negative for trust in politicians and positive for trust in parliament. Age is now only a significant effect on trust in politicians, indicating a slightly positive effect. As for year of education, this effect is now only significant for trust in parliament, with a relatively similar effect as in previous models. Social trust is still highly significant in both models, and the positive effects are mostly like the previous models. The coefficients for political interest are also still significant on a 1% level, and the indicated relationship is slightly weaker than in the previous models.

In model 3 and 4, the interaction between PRR vote and PRR in government is introduced. The adjusted R squared in model 3 is 0.242 and in model 4 it is 0.247. The interaction term indicates a strongly significant and positive relationship for both trust in politicians and parliament. As both variables constituting the interaction are dummies, the coefficient can be interpreted as the effect of PRR inclusion when the effect of PRR vote is *present*, or 1. In other words, having voted for a PRR party in the last national election with a PRR party being included in government leads to an increase in trust of 1.027 and 1.261 units for trust in politicians and parliament, respectively. It should also be noted that the effect is stronger for trust in parliament than politicians. An illustration of the interaction effect is presented in Figure 5.1.

The inclusion of the interaction term clearly affects the coefficient of PRR in government, making it weaker and not significant. This is because when the interaction is included, the coefficient for PRR in government should be interpreted as the effect of PRR parties in government on trust when the interaction term is *absent*, or 0. In other words, the effect of PRR in government in models 5 and 6 indicate the effect of PRR inclusion for non-supporters. Interestingly, it still has a positive sign, although none of the two are statistically significant. The coefficients for the variable PRR vote are highly significant and negative in both models. Like PRR in government, it is important to not interpret this effect as unconditional. For trust



in politicians, having voted for a PRR party leads to a decrease in 0.795 units *when PRR vote*

Figure 5.1 *Interaction plot illustrating the effect of PRR in government on political trust for supporters and non-supporters of PRR parties. Note: Based on regressions 3 and 4 in Table 5.2*
Source: The European Social Survey (2018), round 1-9 and the ParlGov database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022).
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

is absent, or 0, while for trust in parliament the same effect is a decrease of 1.027 units. In other words, having voted for a PRR party last national election, when there is *no PRR party present in government,* leads to a strong negative effect on trust for supporters of PRR parties. Moving on to the control variables, all of them indicate the same effects as in model 1 and 2, making it unnecessary to go through each of them separately again. Figure 5.1 illustrates the interaction effect, showing that the gap in trust between supporters and non-supporters decrease substantially when PRR parties are included. Still, even with PRR parties in government, political trust is still higher among non-supporters than among supporters of PRR parties. It should again be noted that despite the line in the interaction plot, the effects of PRR inclusion on non-supporters were not significant, so the results are inconclusive.

	Model 1: **Politicians**	Model 2: **Parliament**	Model 3: **Politicians**	Model 4: **Parliament**
PRR in Government	0.257**	0.284***	0.234**	0.266***
	(0.100)	(0.082)	(0.101)	(0.080)
Authoritarianism	0.046***	0.048***	0.040***	0.044***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Gender	-0.123***	0.051*	-0.124***	0.051*
	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.025)
Age	-0.006***	-0.008***	-0.006***	-0.008***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Years of Education	-0.008	0.023***	-0.008*	0.023***
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.008)
Social Trust	0.253***	0.268***	0.253***	0.268***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Political Interest	0.431***	0.422***	0.431***	0.422***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.018)
PRR in Government × Authoritarianism			0.024**	0.019*
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Observations	298798	296855	298798	296855
R2 Adj.	0.249	0.256	0.249	0.256

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Table 5.3 *Results of regression analyses including the interaction term authoritarianism.*

5.3 Authoritarianism and Political Trust

In Table 5.3, the variable authoritarianism is introduced. In the same way as in the Table 5.2, it is first introduced as an unconditional marginal effect in models 1 and 2, and as an interaction with PRR vote in models 3 and 4.

The adjusted R squared in models 1 and 2 are 0.249 and 0.256, respectively. The effect of PRR in government is significant in both models. The coefficients indicate that with the inclusion of a PRR party in government, trust in politicians increases with 0.257 units and trust in parliament increases with 0.284 units. Authoritarianism is significant on a 1% level in

both models. Independent of whether a PRR party is in government, trust seems to increase slightly in both models when going up one unit on the authoritarianism-scale.

The control variables in models 1 and 2 indicate roughly the same effects as in previous models. Gender is significant in both models, still showing a negative effect on trust in politicians and a positive effect on trust in parliament. Age is significant in both models 1 and 2, indicating that being older leads to a slightly lower level of trust in politicians and parliament. Years of education is still only significant for trust in parliament, suggesting the same weak positive effect of being higher educated. The two last variables social trust and political interest are still significant, and both indicate largely similar effects as in previous models. Higher social trust and more political interest leads to more trust in both politicians and parliament.

Models 3 and 4 include the interaction of authoritarianism. The explanatory power of the models is exactly similar as in models 1 and 2, with adjusted R squares of 0.249 and 0.256. Starting with the interaction term, the coefficients in both models are significant, although slightly less so for trust in parliament. Both also indicate weak positive relationships. As this interaction is between a categorical and a continuous variable, the interpretation is slightly different from the previous interaction term. Additionally, it is hard to interpret solely from looking at the regression model. The interaction effect is therefore illustrated in Figure 5.2 for ease of interpretation. To plot the interaction effect, the authoritarianism scale is divided into "low" (below 25%), "average" (25-75 %) and "high" (above 75 %) authoritarianism. It should be noted that very few individuals have scores that are higher than 10 or lower than -10. Most people are centered around -5 to 5. In other words, "high" or "low" authoritarianism here is not necessarily very high. See Appendix A2 for a histogram of authoritarianism.

Figure 5.2 illustrates that there does not seem to exist a substantial interaction effect of being more authoritarian. In fact, all lines in the figures are relatively parallel, suggesting that all groups are being similarly affected by the inclusion of PRR parties in government.

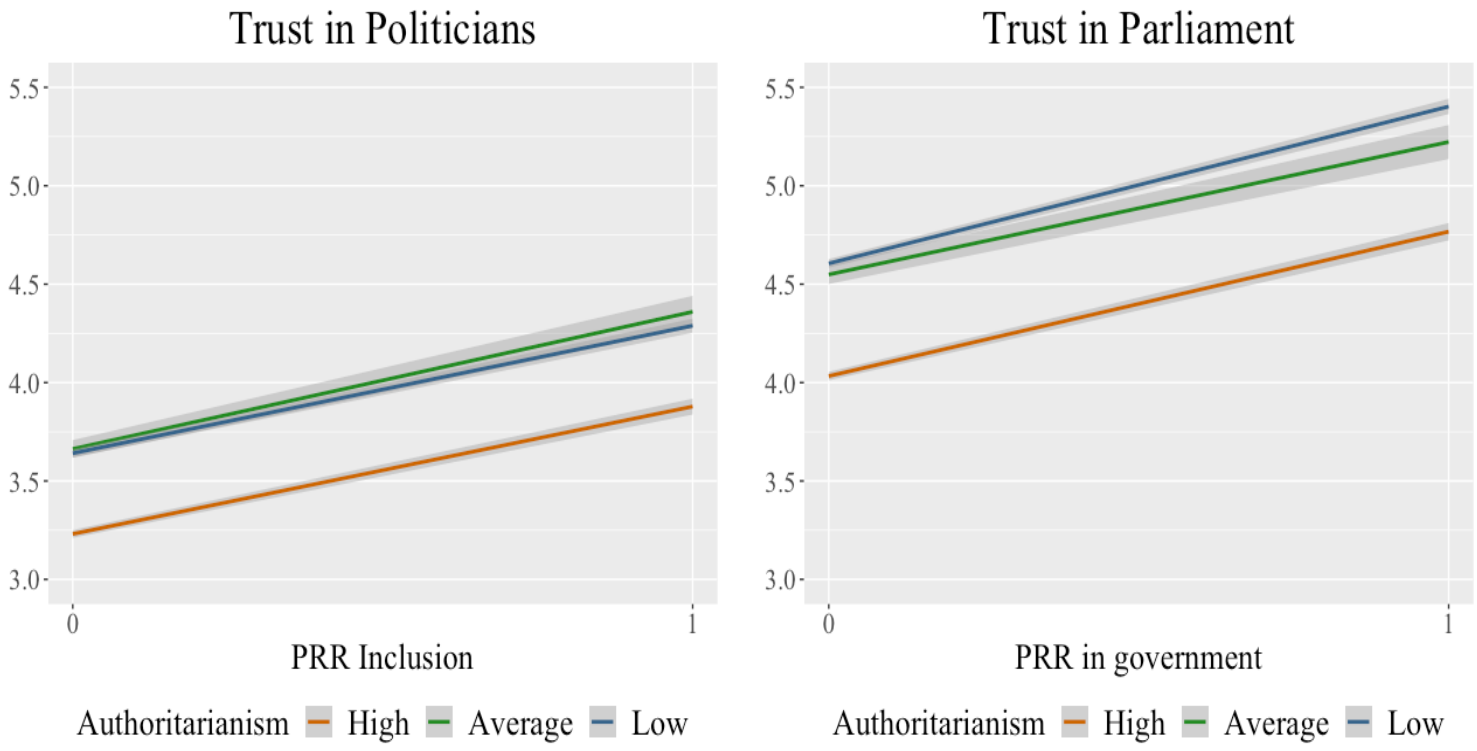


Figure 5.2 *Interaction plot illustrating the effect of PRR in government on political trust for people with high (above the 75th percentile), average (25-75th percentile), and low (below the 25th percentile) levels of authoritarianism. Note: Based on regressions 3 and 4 in Table 5.3.*
Source: The European Social Survey (2018), round 1-9 and the ParlGov database (Döring, Huber, and Manow 2022)
Plots built in R with the package"ggplot2" (Wickham 2016).

Additionally, people scoring high on authoritarianism has slightly lower levels of trust than those scoring average and low. If any interaction exists, it seems to be for people with low levels of authoritarianism on trust in parliament. As illustrated in the right-side plot in Figure 5.2, trust in parliament seems to increase slightly more with the inclusion of PRR parties. In other words, the interaction indicates that trust increases for the more authoritarian, but not any more than for the other groups.

Summary of Results

Overall, the results of the regression analyses indicate that PRR inclusion has a significant positive effect on political trust among the general population. For PRR party voters, the effect is very clear. Without PRR parties in government, their trust is significantly lower, while introducing the interaction leads to a burst in trust in both parliament and politicians.

Interestingly, trust also increases for non-PRR voters, although this effect is not significant for either trust in politicians or trust in parliament. For authoritarians, the results indicate no major interaction effect. Trust increases for all groups on the authoritarianism scale, with relatively parallel relationships between the three groups.

6 DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the analyses will be reviewed and summarised in relation to the research question, theory, and the hypotheses. Generally, many of the theoretical expectations were strengthened by the results of the analyses, while some were somewhat different than expected. Overall, it is also clear that the effects of PRR government inclusion on trust in parliament is stronger than for trust in politicians, which is a bit surprising. This will be further discussed in the end of this chapter. In the last two sections, I will discuss the shortcomings of the thesis, followed by some suggestions for future research.

> ***Research Question:*** *"How are European voters' political trust affected by the inclusion of populist radical right parties in government? How does this effect vary between supporters of PRR parties, people with authoritarian predispositions, and the overall population?"*

> ***H1:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, supporters of PRR parties will express higher levels of trust in politicians and parliament.*

The first hypothesis is supported by the findings in the analysis. Looking at the unconditional effect of having voted for a PRR party, it is clear that trust is lower for this group of voters to begin with. Introducing the interaction shows that PRR parties being included in government leads to a strong increase in trust for people who support a PRR party. This suggests that by being included in governments, populist radical right parties can function as "representational correctives" for citizens that have previously felt disregarded and disengaged with the political system. In other words, the main theoretical argument is supported by these findings.

This is coherent with a lot of existing research investigating the effects of PRR parties on political trust or democratic satisfaction, especially those that take parliamentary and/or governmental representation into account (Harteveld et al. 2021; Mauk 2020; Haugsgjerd 2019). It suggests that representation is important in generating citizen support, especially for those that have long felt overlooked by established authorities. Inclusion in government is a sign that established authorities are willing to cooperate with and listen to the concerns of the radical right and its supporters. The results cannot determine whether PRR parties moderate

or radicalise when entering government. However, it suggests that if parties moderate their rhetoric in government, voters either do not mind or have not yet had time to react to the moderation. If the parties radicalise, or at least maintains most of their radical rhetoric, the results suggest that voters are not further "fuelled" by the party's rhetoric. Overall, the findings indicate that regardless of the strategies of PRR parties in government, voters will react positively to their inclusion, which supports the hypothesised expectations.

> ***H2:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, non-supporters of PRR parties will become neither more nor less trusting of politicians or parliament.*

Although the effect for non-supporters of PRR parties were statistically insignificant based on the commonly accepted levels of statistical significance in the analysis, it still indicated a positive effect. This is worth discussing, as it suggests potentially interesting implications for theory.

The expectation related to this hypothesis was that initially, non-supporters would be expected to become less trusting with the inclusion of PRR parties in government. However, based on Easton's notion of a "reservoir of goodwill", the potential negative impact of the inclusion of PRR parties was expected to be neutralised. This would, as the hypothesis states, result in the expectation that non-supporters would not be significantly affected by the inclusion of PRR parties, leading to stable levels of trust with and without inclusion. However, as both supporters and non-supporters become more trusting when PRR parties are included in government, and as the results for non-supporters were statistically insignificant, this hypothesis can be refuted.

Although the positive effect is somewhat surprising, it provides support to the argument that citizens do not mind losing an election, as long as the system in general is considered fair (Dunn 2012). Also, the "reservoir of goodwill" is still likely to play an important role, although with a different result than expected. This may indicate that the representational function of the political system goes beyond the "winner-loser" argument, and that citizens who do not support these parties may still benefit from overall increased representation.

Additionally, as indicated by theory, all citizens should benefit from increased ideological congruence (Martini and Quaranta 2020, 60).

As the political trust of non-supporters actually increases, the results may also suggest that the populist rhetoric appeals broader than to only supporters. After all, a larger portion of the electorate may feel disengaged by the political system, leading them to become more supportive when a party that voices these populist sentiments are included in government. After all, the analysis only separates between supporters and non-supporters, even though there are significant differences between voters within the non-supporter category. These differences could potentially explain the increased trust within this group. People that generally identify on the right side of the political spectrum could be pleased that a PRR party is included, even though they did not vote for them.

Another factor that may contribute to explaining these findings is the fact that when in opposition, politicians and parties are generally evaluated more positively by citizens. This may lead non-supporters of PRR parties to evaluate the political system more positively in years where PRR parties are in government, as politicians outside government are able to criticise the PRR party and hold them accountable. That way, citizens may experience the system as more responsive, even though their preferred party is not in a governing position. This is connected to the theoretical argument that some degree of competition and polarisation is viewed as being healthy for democracy (Schulze, Mauk, and Linde 2020).

> ***H3:*** *In years where populist radical right parties are included in government, overall levels of trust in politicians and parliament will be higher than in year of exclusion.*

The third hypothesis is supported based on the results of the analyses. In all models measuring the unconditional, marginal effects of PRR inclusion, the effect is significant and positive. In other words, overall levels of trust increase with the inclusion of populist radical right parties in government. Having already discussed the findings specifically related to supporters and non-supporters, this is not surprising. Both groups of voters reacted positively to PRR inclusion, which leads to overall higher levels of political trust. The third hypothesis is therefore strengthened, based on the same theoretical arguments discussed above.

H4: *In years where PRR parties are included in government, voters with authoritarian predispositions will maintain stable levels of trust in politicians and parliament.*

H5: *In years where PRR parties are included in government, voters with authoritarian predispositions will express slightly higher levels of trust in politicians and parliament.*

Moving on to people with authoritarian predispositions, the results indicated no interaction effect for those scoring high on the authoritarianism-scale, as trust increased for all three groups. In other words, hypothesis 4 can be refuted, while hypothesis 5 is supported. To start off, authoritarians does not seem to have higher levels of trust than other groups to begin with, which is interesting. If anything, the interaction plot indicated that authoritarians have slightly lower levels of trust to begin with. This result deviates from others', who find that authoritarianism is correlated with higher levels of trust (Dunn 2020; Devos, Spini, and Schwartz 2002). In other words, theory suggesting that values like conformity, tradition and security corresponds with high political trust is not supported from the findings in this thesis. There may be different explanations for these findings. For example, the data and measurement used for the variables of interest can affect the outcome. Dunn, for instance, uses data from the World Values Survey. His measurement of political trust is also different from the one used here, with 4 categories of trust to choose from instead of a continuous scale. Additionally, he combines the scores so that he ends up with only two categories: high and low trust (Dunn 2020). This may be one reason why the results vary.

Although the predicted values in the interaction plot are slightly lower for those with high authoritarianism than the rest, Figures 3.3 and 3.4 in the theoretical framework illustrates that overall, levels of trust are relatively similar for all three groups. In some countries and years, authoritarians are slightly more trusting than others, while in other contexts they are less trusting. This may suggest that the effect varies between contexts, something this analysis is not able to account for. The fact that there is no observed interaction effect of having authoritarian attitudes may suggest that authoritarians are less comfortable with challenging existing authorities than supporters of PRR parties are. Even if they support the message of PRR parties, their trust in politicians and institutions may be based on other factors than for

non-authoritarians. It also supports the notion that people with authoritarian predispositions are more stable in their trust, because of their preference for order and security.

The findings do support the theory stating that although often associated with PRR parties, authoritarians are not necessarily supporters of these parties. It can be assumed that if authoritarianism correlated strongly with being a supporter of PRR parties, the effect of inclusion on political trust would be stronger. Although authoritarians become more trusting when PRR parties are in government, this increase happens for all groups, not just authoritarians, suggesting that a notable portion of authoritarians do not classify as supporters of PRR. In other words, although some authoritarians are likely to channel their attitudes towards support for PRR parties, the relationship seems to be more complex. Compared to nativism, another component of the populist radical right, support for PRR parties is a lot less consistent for authoritarians.

6.1 Trust in Politicians versus Trust in Parliament

Although the hypotheses did not explicitly refer to either trust in politicians or trust in parliament, a general relationship can be identified regarding the different effects on the two dependent variables. Initially, trust in parliament is consistently higher than trust in politicians, which makes sense according to theory. Parliament represents a fundamental political institution. Politicians, on the other hand, are regularly replaced. In other words, voters are more likely to trust a fundamental aspect of the political system than they are to place their trust in politicians. As Norris notes, trust in politicians is better understood as evaluations of authorities and their actions (1999), while trust in parliament constitutes the more diffuse and rigid type of support.

Based on this, the expectation was that the results would indicate stronger effects for trust in politicians than for trust in parliament. However, this does not seem to be the case. The effect of PRR in government is in fact stronger for trust in parliament in all models. As trust in parliament is higher in the first place, this would initially suggest that it would require more for it to increase. After all, trust on a scale of 1-10 can only increase a certain amount. In other words, the assumption was that since trust in politicians was initially lower, it would require less for it to increase compared to trust in parliament.

However, the main argument for theorising that trust in politicians would be more strongly affected is rooted in the notion of specific and diffuse support, as well as the separation between trust in political institutions and political authorities (Easton 1975; Norris 1999; Söderlund and Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009). Politicians represent the more specific, evaluative side of support, which is why it was expected that this measure of trust would be affected most. The composition of government is relatively frequently changed, suggesting that people would not base their basic evaluations of the political system on such a short-term factor.

Although the results were somewhat surprising, there are several potential explanations for the observed effects. For supporters of PRR parties, having a party they support and voted for being represented in government is likely to change their more underlying evaluations of the political system. Additionally, some may evaluate parliament and government similarly as the two are closely related. It would make sense for PRR supporters to evaluate parliament positively when a PRR party is in government, because being in government likely also means that they occupy a substantial share of parliamentary seats. Additionally, related to their populist component, it makes sense that supporters are still relatively distrusting of politicians. A core aspect of populist rhetoric concerns references to “the corrupt politicians”. Also, politicians as a concept does not really depend on who occupies government positions. Therefore, it makes sense for supporters of PRR parties to remain somewhat sceptical towards politicians, despite their preferred party being included in government.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In previous work, the populist radical right has often been reduced to either being seen as a threat or as a corrective to democracy (Immerzeel and Pickup 2015). With this thesis, I have hopefully demonstrated that while PRR parties may indeed contribute to correcting the representative function of the political systems, the picture is a whole lot more complex. These parties should not be reduced to their populist rhetoric, being seen as simple "protest parties" against the "serious" mainstream political parties. I think PRR parties have come to stay, and they are increasingly establishing themselves as viable coalition partners. Their policy-proposals constitute real issues that a substantial portion of European electorates are concerned with, and not recognising this can have serious consequences in the long term.

However, having said this, it is also important to note that the rise of the PRR party family may pose serious challenges to democracy. These parties advocate for restrictive policies and a vision of democracy that violates some of the basic pillars of modern democratic systems. The idea of a homogenous nation with no room for disagreement within the group goes against the fundamental values of liberal democracy like minority rights, civil liberties and checks and balances on the executive (Kokkonen and Linde 2021).In other words, it is important to highlight that this thesis does not seek to discredit the scholarly work focusing on these consequences of the PRR, as a lot of the concerns expressed are valid.

Nonetheless, trust in political institutions and authorities has seen increase in the past years, especially in countries with prominent PRR parties. As scholars have previously argued that the populist radical right fuels discontent and distrust, this has needed further investigation. The findings presented here has contributed to a growing strand of literature seeking to explain the relationship between populist radical right parties and trust, arguing that accounting for the role of representation is highly important.

To answer the research question, the results presented here strengthen the findings from previous research related to supporters of PRR parties. When PRR parties are not included, trust is significantly lower for supporters. With inclusion, trust in politicians and parliament increase significantly, lowering the gap between supporters and non-supporters. For non-supporters, the findings presented here are also in line with previous research, arguing that non-supporters do not become less trusting with the inclusion of PRR parties. In fact, PRR

parties in government suggests a potential increase in trust for non-supporters as well, although the results are not significant, which is somewhat puzzling. This can partially be explained by Easton's "reservoir of goodwill", although other mechanisms are likely at play. It may also be that the populist rhetoric appeals to a broader part of the electorate, as suggested by existing research.

The main finding of this thesis, concerning the interaction effect of authoritarian predispositions, may perhaps raise more questions than answers. Theory provided few clues for what to expect, although some scholars have found authoritarians to be more trusting than others. This argument is not supported by the findings of this thesis, however. Additionally, there is no observed interaction effect between authoritarian attitudes and PRR in government for political trust, even though authoritarianism constitutes an important definitional attribute of populist radical right parties. Generally, these findings are explorative, and requires further inquiry.

7.1 Limitations of the Thesis

Having so far focused on the findings of the analysis and its implications, it is important to also recognise the shortcomings of the thesis. First, because the ESS is limited to 9 rounds, I have not been able to study the effects of PRR government inclusion in a longer time-series perspective. As theory suggests that the consequences may look different in the long term, this is an important limitation. Depending on whether the parties adopt a moderation or a radicalisation strategy when in government, voters may react in different ways after longer periods of PRR inclusion.

Although separating between supporters and non-supporters has proved important for the results, it could further be assumed that different groups within the non-supporter category will also react different. This thesis is not able to account for these potential variations.

As for authoritarianism, the results of this analysis have merely provided an explorative starting point for understanding the complex relationship between authoritarian predispositions, populist radical right parties and political trust. The analysis is built on separate theories connected to PRR parties and political trust, revealing the slightly

unexpected result of no observed interaction effect. However, the theoretical background and the analytical results has indicated that taking account of more specific mechanisms may reveal more, such as separating between left- and right-wing authoritarians, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The high amount of missing data is also an obvious limitation for the thesis. As around 40% did not provide an answer to what party they voted for last national election, the resulting analysis is weakened by the low number of respondents. More importantly, those who did not provide an answer may have had specific reasons to not do so. In other words, the results are likely to be biased, as the high number of missing values on a specific variable like that damages the representability of the sample.

7.2 Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis has contributed to research in different ways, by building on existing theories and by exploring new relationships within the literature on populist radical right parties and political trust. As this thesis only provides a first glimpse at how authoritarian predispositions may interact with the effect of PRR in government on political trust, this leaves vast opportunities for future research. For instance, separating between right-wing and left-wing authoritarians would be theoretically interesting. The expectations from these groups are different, and to further understand the complex relationship between authoritarianism, the populist radical right and political trust, it will be necessary to account for these differences.

It has also been established that perceived threat is an important intervening factor in the study of authoritarianism. Future research could benefit from taking this factor into account, specifically when comparing different groups within the category of authoritarianism. As theory is conflicted as to whether and how authoritarians, non-authoritarians or both react to perceived threat, the role of perceived threat warrants further investigation. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate whether authoritarianism plays a different role depending on the national context, specifically in terms of the role of perceived threat. It could be hypothesised that in countries with more recent experiences of authoritarian regimes, the dynamics of authoritarian dispositions is different than in more stable democracies.

Additionally, if there is a positive effect of PRR government inclusion on non-supporters specifically, separating between different groups within this category could contribute to unravelling the potential reasons why an increase in trust is observed. For instance, as discussed above, voters who identify with some of the policies of PRR parties but vote for different parties are likely to become more satisfied and trusting than voters who do not. However, being in opposition may also affect voters in unexpected ways, leading to higher levels of political trust for those that are most opposing to the restrictive policies of the PRR. Differentiating between more groups of voters may therefore contribute to disentangle these mechanisms and improve our understanding of the consequences of the populist radical right party family.

In terms of method, future research could also benefit from applying longer time-series analysis to compare short-term and long-term effects of PRR government inclusion on political trust. Theory suggests that depending on factors like the strategy of the PRR party in government, long-term effects are likely to be different from those observed in this thesis. All parties tend to experience a "cost of governing" and examining to what degree this affects the trust and support of citizens after inclusion would be interesting. As the electoral participance of PRR parties is still a relatively new phenomenon, research has not been able to thoroughly examine the more long-terms effects. Additionally, applying methods like synthetic control, that allow the researcher to examine the effects of a treatment (PRR in government), compared to the non-treated (no PRR in government) would provide analytically important insights.

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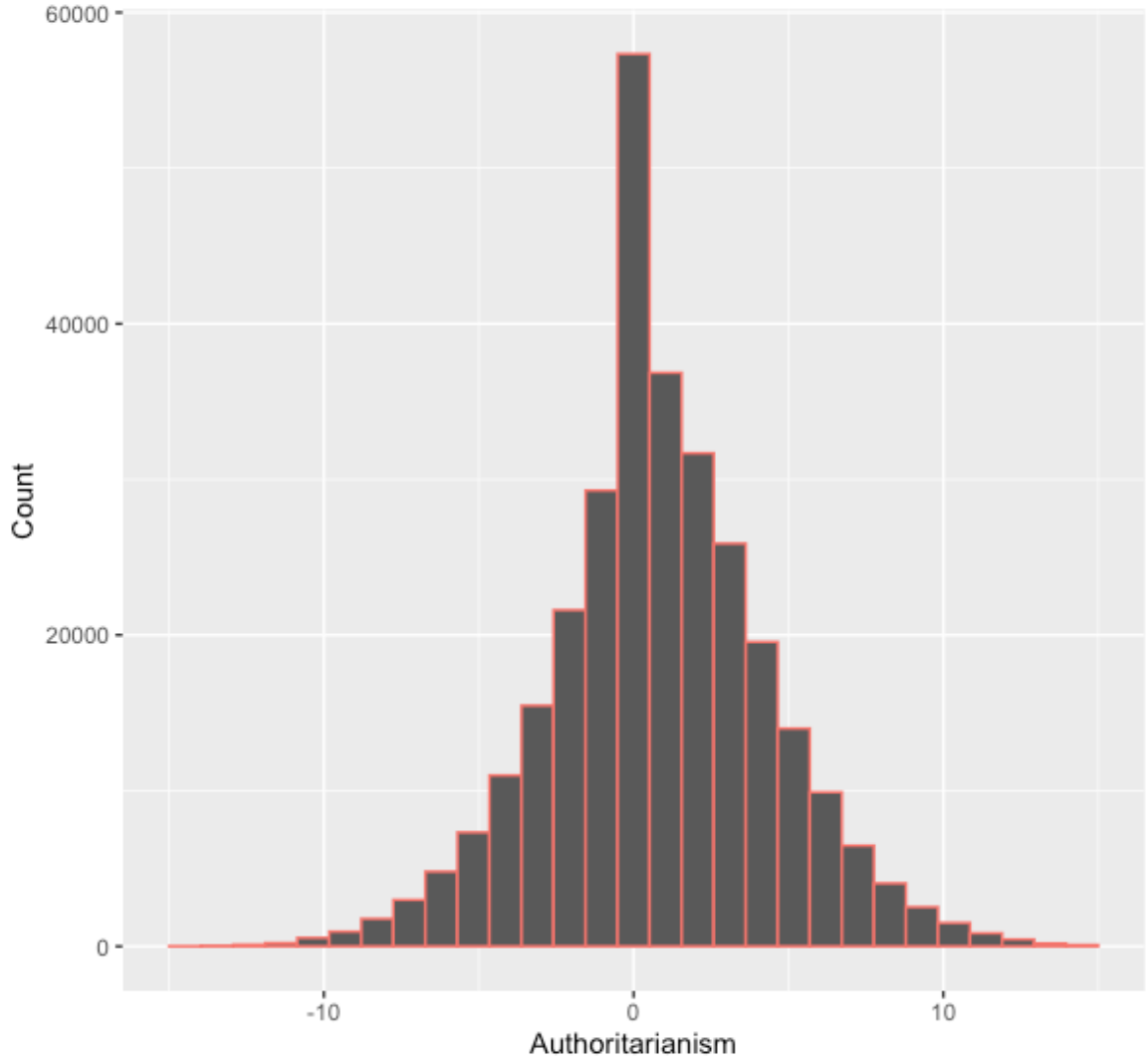
APPENDIX

Appendix A1 *Survey questions measuring authoritarian predispositions. The first six constitutes conservation values, while the last six constitutes openness values. Source: The European Social Survey (2020), round 1-9.*

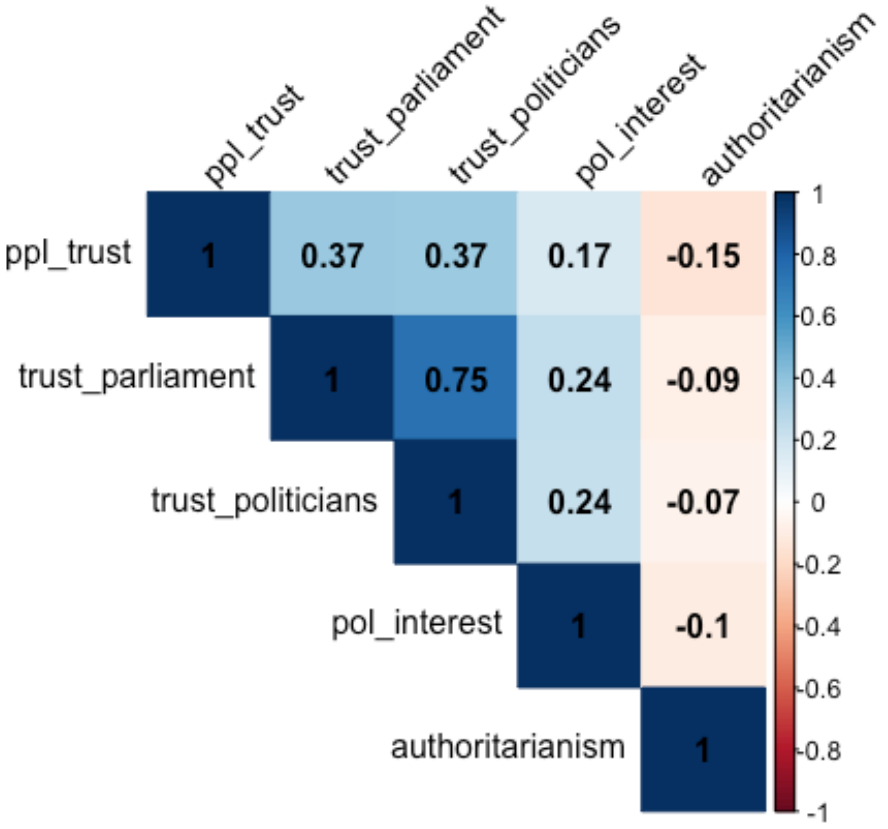
1. She/he believes that people should do what they're told. She/he thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
2. It is important to her/him always to behave properly. She/he wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
3. It is important to her/him to be humble and modest. She/he tries not to draw attention to herself/himself. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
4. Tradition is important to her/him. She/he tries to follow the customs handed down by her/his religion or her/his family. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
5. It is important to her/him to live in secure surroundings. She/he avoids anything that might endanger her/his safety. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
6. It is important to her/him that the government ensures her/his safety against all threats. She/he wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
7. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her/him. She/he likes to do things in her/his own original way. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)

8. It is important to her/him to make her/his own decisions about what she/he does. She/he likes to be free and not depend on others. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
9. She/he likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She/he thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
10. She/he looks for adventures and likes to take risks. She/he wants to have an exciting life. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
11. Having a good time is important to her/him. She/he likes to 'spoil' herself/himself. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)
12. She/he seeks every chance she/he can to have fun. It is important to her/him to do things that give her/him pleasure. Very much like me (1), Like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), A little like me (4), Not like me (5), Not like me at all (6)

Appendix A2 – Histogram of authoritarianism



Appendix B: Correlation Analysis of continuous variables



Appendix C: Breusch-Pagan Tests for Heteroskedasticity (before applying robust clustered standard errors)

Significant P-values indicate heteroskedasticity

Data: mod 1 (Table 5.1) **BP = 5073.9, df = 34, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 2 (Table 5.1) **BP = 6134.8, df = 34, p-value < 2.2e-16**
Data: mod 3 (Table 5.1) **BP = 4525, df = 36, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 4 (Table 5.1) **BP = 5915.8, df = 36, p-value < 2.2e-16**
Data: mod 1 (Table 5.2) **BP = 4196.6, df = 37, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 2 (Table 5.2) **BP = 5638.5, df = 37, p-value < 2.2e-16**
Data: mod 3 (Table 5.2) **BP = 4082.9, df = 38, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 4 (Table 5.2) **BP = 5371, df = 38, p-value < 2.2e-16**
Data: mod 1 (Table 5.3) **BP = 4511.6, df = 37, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 2 (Table 5.3) **BP = 5887.2, df = 37, p-value < 2.2e-16**
Data: mod 3 (Table 5.3) **BP = 4513.7, df = 38, p-value < 2.2e-16**	Data: mod 4 (Table 5.3) **BP = 5900.9, df = 38, p-value < 2.2e-16**