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Clarity of voter choices: neglected foundation for ideological congruence

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Abstract. Ideological congruence between voters and governments is desirable, the wisdom goes, because it implies enactment of policies close to those preferred by voters. Party polarization plays a paradoxical role here: more polarization reduces voter-government congruence if parties making up a government move away from the center-ground where most individual voters are located; yet increasing polarization permits those governments' policies to become more distinct in the eyes of voters. This paper investigates how political system clarity helps to resolve this paradox. We examine the interplay of several sources of clarity and, in particular, of the joint role of party and voter polarization. We argue and find that, if polarization of survey respondents increases in step with party polarization, this provides clarity that can override party polarization's negative effect on voter-government congruence. But other types of clarity also play important roles in accounting for the range of values that congruence takes on.

Keywords. Ideological congruence, electoral clarity, polarization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ideological congruence between individual voters and their elected governments is crucial for well-functioning representative democratic systems. The argument from democratic theory states that this type of congruence indicates policy-making in line with the voter preferences, what Pitkin (1967) called substantive representation. And past research has shown that voters themselves like it, as ideological congruence is one of the most reliable predictors of satisfaction with democracy (Kim 2009; Ferland 2016). Yet ideological voter-government congruence does not appear out of nowhere, nor is it the result of just one feature of the electoral system. Rather, Golder and Ferland (2018) argue that the type of congruence we are dealing with in this paper, proximity on the left-right ideological axis between individual voters and parties making up the government, is the end result of a number of stages in the translation of voters' preferences into votes, votes into seats, and seats into government policy. We are interested particularly, but not unique-

ly, in the role played by party system polarization and its seemingly paradoxical effects on congruence.

Much controversy surrounds the question of how the polarization of party systems[1] might affect ideological congruence between individual voters and the parties making up their governments (Belchior 2013; Dalton and Anderson 2011; Powell 2013). For example, if all parties are competing for the center-ground (Downs 1957), then party polarization will be close to zero, as all parties will aim to attract the same voters, and it will make little difference which party or parties win office. Viewed in this light, more party polarization will increase the distinctiveness of policies offered by different parties and will make it easier for voters to choose a party close to their preferences. This reasoning finds some confirmation when we look at studies of satisfaction with democracy: "when party systems offer more policy choices that are proximate to . . . voter positions, satisfaction increases" (Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011, 1153). But the same study also finds that, if parties (and, by implication, governments formed by those parties)[2] move too far from the ideological center, satisfaction is reduced (Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011, 1165), perhaps due to reduced ideological congruence between centrist voters and more polarized government parties (Cf. Powell 2013).

This raises the question: how much party polarization is enough to ensure meaningful distinctions among parties without incurring deleterious consequences for ideological congruence? We suggest a previously unanticipated role for voter polarization in mitigating the ill-effects of party polarization. We argue that a joint increase in party and voter polarization can facilitate joint 'sorting' of voters and parties (as will be explained) in terms of their left-right positions, injecting a degree of clarity into the choices facing voters. We expect this clarity to promote ideological (left-right) congruence between voters and governments (as will also be explained). And we will show that, if voter polarization does increase in step with party polarization, this indeed improves ideological congruence between voters and the parties making up their governments.

Still, clarity in terms of distinctiveness of parties and of voter preferences for those parties is only one type of clarity and perhaps not the most important one. Indeed, more than minimal polarization may only be needed if other sources of clarity are absent. Such additional sources of clarity in the choice between parties include (2) government status – whether it controls a majority of legislative seats – and (3) party system size – the effective number of parties – as well as (4) a component that Powell and Whitten (1993) referred to as clarity of responsibility but that we re-conceptualize as the size of the party most likely to gain control of the legislature (that is to say: the size of the largest party). This fourth type of clarity was originally seen as a basis for government accountability, but we elaborate its theoretical underpinnings so as to refocus them from accountability to choice. We name the resulting measure 'electoral clarity'.

We find that, when all four of these sources of clarity in the choice between parties are taken in conjunction, we are able to account for close to the full range of values that ideological congruence (left-right proximity between voters and their governments) takes on empirically, at least in European political systems – the venue for our research.

In the theoretical section we elaborate our argument with reference to earlier findings and explicate the link between clarity and polarization (both of the party system and among voters) as well as the link between clarity and ideological congruence (between individual voters and the parties making up their governments). We proceed by formulating our hypotheses and describing our data. We then examine the effects of polarization and other sorts of clarity on congruence. We conclude with a discussion of our findings.

2.1 Theory and argumentation (1): how clarity in party choice can overcome polarization's deleterious effects on congruence

Congruence is an important dependent variable in political science research (see Golder & Ferland 2018 for a survey of the different conceptualizations of congruence), as it is widely held that democratic governance is enhanced by the enactment of policies as close as possible to those preferred by the median voter (Powell and Vanberg 2000). This expectation occurs at the aggregate level. And, although our focus in this paper is also on the circumstances in which election outcomes provide good representation, our topic calls for individual-level data – the level most appropriate for measuring congruence between individual preferences and party offerings and the only level at which we can measure voter polarization.[3] At the individual level our research interest

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[1] When we mention party polarization, we refer to the polarization of the party system as conceptualized by Dalton (2008), unless otherwise noted. Our data section has details.

[2] We address problems arising from the party/government distinction in our theory section.

[3] We treat the two types of polarization as distinct concepts (in our data they correlate only 0.05 – see our online appendix Table B3), with par-

translates into an expectation that individual voters will more strongly support governments that enact policies close to their own preferences.[4] In our argumentation and findings we thus focus on either or both of these levels according to which is most appropriate.

Returning to the system level, it is also widely assumed that **polarization** of the party system has ill-effects on the will and capacity of political parties to cooperate in enacting legislation (Barber and McCarty 2015; McCarty 2016; Kim and Urpelainen 2017). This could make it hard for governments in polarized party systems to implement the policy proposals responsible for attracting their supporters, limiting ideological congruence between government parties and their voters. However, it is not clear how much polarization would be needed in order to bring this negative scenario into being and, as already mentioned, lower but still positive levels of polarization may be highly desirable.[5]

Some scholars working on polarization in the American context draw attention to potentially positive effects of what they call 'sorting'.[6] Sorting of legislative parties yields greater differences between those parties and lesser differences within each of them, leading those parties to become more distinctive in their policy offerings. Such a development facilitates parallel sorting of voters into those whose preferences are closer to one party than to another (Hetherington 2009). This could mean, Hetherington (2001) argues, that polarization may have moved American parties into more distinctive ideological positions, clarifying choices for voters, with beneficial consequences for congruence (Hetherington 2009, 427). There is no reason why this clarifying effect of party polarization should not also occur in multi-party European contexts.

In the US literature on **voter polarization**, one study finds a small yet significant connection between elite/party polarization and voter consistency (the coherence of both Republican and Democratic supporters): the more polarized the political elites are, the more voters participate in party cue-taking (Levendusky 2010), with consequences for sorting and confirming the beneficial outcome that Hetherington (2009) anticipated. Having clarity as to where parties stand on a range of issues allows individual voters to 'vote correctly' according to their preferences (Lau and Redlawsk 1997) – which is another way of saying that clarity lets voters sort themselves, in relation to party stances, according to their (the voters') policy preferences. Because there are multiple party locations, as voters sort themselves according to those locations they will *ipso-facto* become less centrist, distributing themselves more widely across the span of left-right locations and helping to address a paradox, alluded to above, that we now bring into focus.

Any supposed link between party polarization and congruence runs into Powell's (2013) suggested impediment: party polarization may simultaneously stand in the way of congruence due to increasing distance of more polarized parties from centrist voters. At the same time, little meaningful sorting of voters can occur if most voters occupy the same center-ground. This latter insight is our ticket to resolving this apparent paradox. To this end we want also to study polarization in the electorate. If voter polarization rises in step with party polarization, then appropriate sorting might avert the negative effects we would otherwise expect.

A problem for researchers studying the interplay of polarization and congruence is that, while comparative studies of polarization focus on parties or voters, congruence studies such as this one tend to focus on governments and voters. For obvious reasons, US researchers often find no need to distinguish between party-voter congruence on the one hand and government-voter congruence on the other; but researchers who focus on countries that frequently see multi-party coalition governments must address the distinction, as we now do.

It is true that, even if voters sort themselves 'correctly' into camps that match with the ideologies of different parties, this is not the same as voters sorting themselves into camps that match with the ideologies of different potential coalition governments. Still, such sorting into party camps may yet be a necessary pre-requisite for ideological congruence between individual voters and parties that are members of such a coalition government. It is widely assumed that coalition governments reflect the policies of their member parties, and this assumption is confirmed in much recent work on coalition formation and policy-making (e.g. Duch et al. 2009; Armstrong and Duch 2010; Hobolt and Karp 2010; Moury 2013; Fortunato and Stevenson 2013; Jungblut 2017). Certainly, in the absence of some such mechanism for linking clarity of party choices to voter-government congruence,

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ty polarization capturing the supply side of electoral politics and voter polarization the demand side.

[4] It is of course possible that aggregate expectations, such as those of Powell and Vanberg (2000), would not be reflected at the individual level; but the theoretical basis for Powell's supposition should apply at either level and our findings suggest conformity in this respect.

[5] A large literature addresses the question whether party polarization itself produces voter polarization but that debate is outside the remit of this paper (cf. Spoon and Klüver 2015). We are not here postulating any causal linkage, just investigating possible consequences of joint movement in the measures.

[6] It is important to note that U.S. measures of party polarization differ from Dalton's measure, which we employ (footnote 11), because they focus rather on *within-party* cohesion than on *between-party* differences (e.g. Aldrich 2012, who uses roll-call data; cf. Schlesinger 1985).

our research design would not yield the sensible findings that we are able to report.

2.2 Theory and argumentation (2): effects of other types of clarity for party choice

If clarity in party stances due to party polarization (along with appropriate voter polarization) facilitates ideological congruence between individual voters and government parties, then other sources of clarity in party choices may also be important. Indicators of such additional sources of clarity would need to be included in models of ideological congruence if effects of voter sorting were to be properly specified. We conceptualize such additional sources of clarity as comprising what we call '**Political system clarity**,' a multifaced concept that needs to be carefully unpacked.

We start from the obvious need for voters to be able to discern the policy positions taken by each party of relevance to them, if those voters are to select a party with good prospects of advancing their policy preferences. We see major potential obstacles in the way of voters' abilities to readily assess party qualities. Some of these (party system size and government status) have been identified as providing opportunities for increasing voter satisfaction if the obstacles are minimized (perhaps because small party systems and majority governments facilitate ideological congruence between voters and their governments). Another (electoral clarity) has figured rather in studies of economic voting and in turnout studies (though sometimes under other names). Figure 1 shows the distinct elements that comprise the composite notion of Political System Clarity (and their relationships with ideological congruence).

It is evident that **minority cabinets** impede clarity of choices because of the difficulties they have enacting *any* policies (Christiansen 2018; Plescia and Kritzinger 2017), making it hard for voters to know to what extent such cabinets should be blamed for policy shortcomings. Choices should thus be easiest where majority governments clarify responsibility for government policies (Christmann and Torcal 2018).[7] Regarding **party system size**, it is also obvious that the more parties there are competing for votes the harder it will be for voters to become acquainted with their relative strengths and weaknesses (Kroh 2009). Simply keeping track of differences between their policy proposals will be increasingly challenging as party system size increases (Farhang and
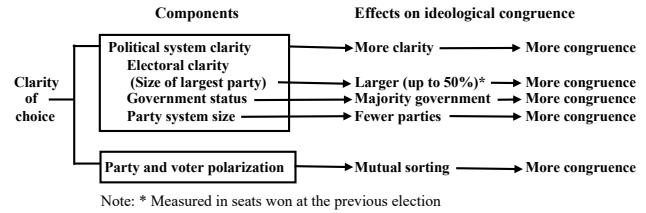
Figure 1. Sources of clarity in party choice and their effects on ideological congruence.

Yaver 2016; Martini and Quaranta 2015). Moreover, the more parties there are, the greater the need for ruling coalitions (Downs 1957), which affects not only government representativeness and effectiveness (Berggren et al. 2004) but also clarity (Anderson 2000). A final component of political system clarity is **electoral clarity** to which we now turn.

In a country where coalition governments are the norm, voters would need to know a great deal about likely coalition preferences of the parties on offer (Fortunato and Stevenson 2013) in order to be able to make sensible use of their vote. This problem will evidently be particularly acute to the extent that the parties are small ones. In majoritarian systems, some scholars suggest, the problem would be less (Powell and Whitten 1992; Powell 2013; Sanders et al. 2014). One reason these scholars point to is that such systems tend to have fewer parties; but another seldom-mentioned reason is because in such systems there is almost always at least one large party, and voters can focus their attention on whether to vote for that party or for (one of) the alternative(s). But this ability to focus on a large party as opposed to its alternatives is not just a feature of majoritarian systems. Many proportional systems are also characterized by having a large party: a party that, if in government, will dominate any coalition of which it forms part and that, if in opposition, will define the most likely alternative to the government in power. So we contend that the active ingredient in majoritarian systems when it comes to their clarity is the **size of the largest party**, measured in terms of its **likelihood of gaining control of the legislature** – an ingredient we also find in proportional systems. Since legislative control is achieved with 50 percent of seats, what matters is the gap between the party's size in seats and 50 percent.[8] This measure (unlike the electoral system measure that was its precursor) has the great advantage of varying from one

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[7] These authors also suggest that smaller coalition governments would be similarly beneficial, but we found no significant effect of this variable on voter-party left-right congruence.

[8] The smaller the gap, the higher the clarity. Evidently if the second-largest party also holds close to half the seats then we have a two-party system, often assumed to have what we see as high clarity. Parties controlling more than half the seats are rare (footnote 12). The small number of two-party systems and over-sized parties in Europe make it unprofitable for us to make these further distinctions.

election to another and not just between countries. It has been widely used in turnout studies (Franklin 2004; Johnson et al. 2007; Franklin and Hobolt 2011; Vowles et al. 2015; Franklin 2020), as a measure of the extent of effective electoral competition, but never (to the best of our knowledge) in studying party choice. In order to avoid a cumbersome phrase when referring to this measure we will generally refer to it simply as electoral clarity.

Although all of these variables have previously been seen as relevant to voter decision-making, only in regard to electoral clarity do scholars regularly explain this relevance in terms of the role the variable plays in clarifying voter choices – and then only in studies of economic voting and some turnout studies.

3. HYPOTHESES

We start from the apparent paradox mentioned earlier. Powell (2013) suggests that parties in a more polarized party system must logically be more distant from centrist voters. However, Powell does not consider what might happen if voters themselves were also to become more polarized. Evidently, should voters become sufficiently polarized and this were accompanied by appropriate sorting, there would be no logical impediment to congruence between voters and parties being maintained or even enhanced with rising party polarization, as already explained.

On this basis, our first hypothesis has two parts:

H1a: Party polarization has a negative effect on *ideological congruence* between voters and governments,

H1b: unless *voter polarization* increases in step with party polarization, stimulating voter sorting and improving clarity of voter choices.

Other sources of political system clarity should also play important roles.

H2: Smaller party systems, majority governments and electoral clarity also contribute to clarity of choices, further increasing ideological congruence.

These sources of clarity provide additional (or alternative) sources of ideological congruence between voters and governments. Given that our measure of electoral clarity is a new contribution to conceptions of political system clarity, we need to document its potency:

H3: Among components of political system clarity, *electoral clarity* makes a notable contribution.

4. DATA AND METHOD

In order to test our hypotheses, we rely on Eurobarometer (EB) data and on the ParlGov database (see Appendix A below). Our cross-sectional time-series starts in 2004 because this is when a large wave of 14 new countries joined the Eurobarometer universe, yielding coverage of 27 countries (our online Appendix B has details).[9] We end in 2016 – the latest year for which all clarity variables are available. From each of the six-monthly EBs asking suitable questions we selected only countries that had held an election during the six months before each survey, for a total of 75 elections (Appendix A has details). Unfortunately a question crucial to our analysis (left-right self-placement) was not asked in every EB. Deleting studies from which that question was missing left us with 71 usable EBs (detailed in our online Appendix B).

Our dependent variable, *Ideological Congruence* pairs the Eurobarometer indicator of respondent left-right position with the ParlGov indicator of party position, both using the same ten-point scale, and takes the inverse of the absolute difference between each respondent's position and the weighted average of government party positions (from expert surveys listed in Appendix A), thus focusing on the proximity between voters and governments. Weighting is by the size of each party, measured as the proportion of legislative seats won at the election immediately prior to the survey.[10]

Our inputs are *Party Polarization, Voter Polarization* and three indicators of political system clarity. Party Polarization is measured by the Dalton (2008, 906) index, derived from the same ParlGov measure of party position as for ideological congruence, and weighted in the same way.[11] *Voter Polarization* is the standard deviation of EB respondents' left-right self-placements (cf. Ezrow et al., 2014). *Electoral Clarity* is coded as the inverse proportion absolute gap between half the legislative seats and the proportion of seats held by the largest party in the legislature at the election concerned.[12]

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[9] Starting earlier would increase the weight of established political systems, possibly vitiating the power of a research design involving a wide range of different types of polity. We restrict our data to surveys conducted within 6 months of an election for reasons given in Appendix A.

[10] Findings are no different if parties are weighted by seats in the governing coalition. Left-right position is widely used for measuring both polarization and congruence. For a survey see Kroh (2009). Duch et al. (2008) find, by analyzing 86 voter preference surveys from 30 countries, that left-right position is by far the dominant determinant of party choice.

[11] Dalton (2008: 906) describes the index as "PI = SQRT{Σ(party vote sharei)*([party L/R scorei – party system average L/R score]/5)^2}," where the i subscript represents individual parties. This index is comparable to the standard deviation of a distribution and is similar to statistics used by other scholars. Its value is 0 when all parties occupy the same position on the left–right scale and 10 when their weights are evenly split between the scale's two extremes.

[12] A positive gap between size of largest party and half the legislative seats is seldom of more than trivial magnitude in Europe; but any such

Our final two variables are *party system size* (the effective number of parties) and *government status* (whether the government commanded a majority of seats).[13] We see both of these variables as contributing, along with electoral clarity, to what we call political system clarity (Appendix A has details). Though somewhat interrelated, they present no risk of multicollinearity (see online Appendix B).

We have no measure of 'sorting' but significant effects of the interaction between party and voter polarization will strongly suggest the operation of some such mechanism.

Because our focus is on determinants of congruence, an individual-level concept, we employ survey data to measure our dependent variable (as well as one critical independent variable, voter polarization); but because our interest is in contextual effects on congruence we include no other individual level measures (such as education or political interest) that might influence individual abilities to vote correctly. These would only complicate an already elaborate research design.

In order to make the interpretation of the final models more intuitive, we rescaled all the continuous variables onto 0-1 scales, to match our dummy variable indicator for majority cabinets; and inverted them where necessary so that higher values should predict higher clarity (Appendix Tables A1 and A2, below, have details).

Regarding modelling strategy, we employ a two-level mixed effects regression model, with country at the higher level and respondent at the lower level. We specify no level for election year because some of our controls only vary at that level. Some would argue that this feature of our data calls for a fixed effects regression model, which is presented in online Appendix B. The coefficients are almost identical. All effects are significant at the 0.001 level or better.

5. RESULTS

To test our hypotheses Table 1 contains a model focused on our suggested solution to Powell's (2013) seeming paradox regarding ideological congruence between voters and government. It shows that the negative effect of party polarization expected by H1a (row 1) is by far overridden should voter polarization rise in

Table 1. Effects of polarization on voters' ideological congruence with government left-right position, controlling for aspects of political system clarity (mixed effects model).

Outcome: ideological congruence Inputs	Coef	(s.e.)
1) Party polarization (0-1)	-0.21	(0.02)
2) Voter polarization (0-1)	-0.06	(0.02)
3) Party polarization * voter polarization	0.70	(0.06)
4) Electoral clarity (1 - largest party abs. proportion gap from 50%)	0.19	(0.01)
5) Majority government (0, 1=yes)	0.05	(0.01)
6) Party system clarity (1 - proportion of max n of parties <=10)	0.29	(0.02)
7) Intercept	0.43	(0.03)
Random-effect parameters		
Variance of country intercepts	0.02	(0.00)
Residual variance	0.03	(0.00)
Log-likelihood	9521.05	
Observations	37,296	
Number of elections	27	

Note: All coefficients significant at p<0.001, one-tailed.

step with party polarization (row 3), confirming H1b.[14] Other sources of clarity also show the effects expected of them, confirming H2. In particular, electoral clarity shows effects that are greater by a factor of 4 than those of majority government (confirming H3). The robustness of these findings is suggested by a fixed effects replication in online Appendix B, Table B4.

Figure 2 uses the estimates from Table 1 to graph the levels of voter-government left-right congruence predicted by the interaction of party polarization and voter polarization, separately for high and low clarity contexts. So different levels of clarity locate the same three slopes at different levels on the graph, showing how our model's predictions encompass close to the full range of values that congruence takes on. Clarity of all three types (electoral, government, and party system size) are set to values least conducive to congruence for low clarity contexts and to their opposite extremes for high clarity contexts.[15]

The graph demonstrates several important points about effects on congruence.[16] First, any increase in

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deviation suggests non-competitive elections that would make it harder for voters to achieve desired left-right proximities in much the same way (if for different reasons) as a negative gap.

[13] We code party system size (available only until 2016) as the number of electoral parties, capped at 10 (and linearized by taking the square root). See Appendix A, below for details.

[14] When we use the word "effect" we do not mean to imply evidence of causation.

[15] Online Appendix B supplies another robustness check (Figure B4) in which predictions are graphed that are based on data from which cases containing outlying values of polarization have been removed. The resulting picture is very similar to that shown in Figure 2, demonstrating that these findings do not result from outlier leverage.

[16] The underlying density plot for congruence is repeated in vertical format in online Appendix B, Figure B1. A density plot for voter polarization is shown in the same appendix, Figure B2.
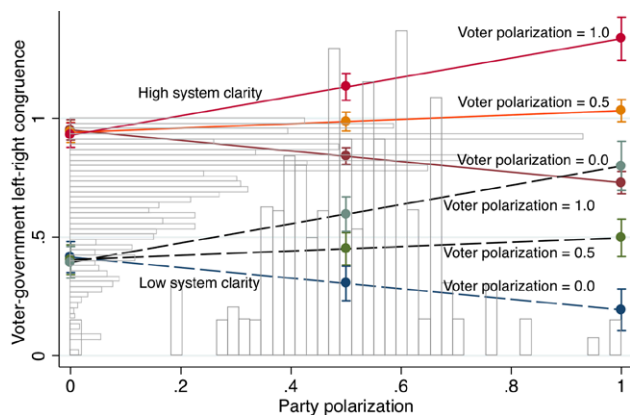
Figure 2. Left-right congruence between voters and governments predicted by the interaction of party polarization and voter polarization at two different levels of political system clarity (spikes show 99% confidence intervals) overlaying densities for each axis.

party polarization has negative effects unless voter polarization stands close to or above its mid-point in our data (the lowest trace in each group of traces slopes downwards).[17] With higher than medium voter polarization, increasing party polarization can be beneficial to left-right congruence (the other traces slope upwards). The joint effects of increases in both types of polarization overcome the paradox suggested by Powell's (2013) insight (at least with European survey data), reinforcing the confirmation of H1b that was already seen in Table 1.

The palpably greater levels of congruence seen for high system clarity than for low system clarity confirm the importance of political system clarity for congruence (H2). A substantial share of clarity's systemic effects is attributable to our new measure of electoral clarity (row 4 of Table 2), confirming H3. Even so, in contexts of low system clarity, high party polarization accompanied by high voter polarization go far towards mitigating low system clarity's debilitating effects on congruence (the highest low-clarity trace actually overlaps the lowest high-clarity trace at the far right of Figure 2). This finding suggests that suitable combinations of party and voter polarization can themselves provide a good degree of clarity to otherwise opaque political systems – a sort of stand-in for political system clarity – and that moderately high congruence can result, though this happens infrequently (see Figure B3 in our online Appendix B).

We also see that the logical requirement of a minimum level of party polarization is satisfied in a very

high proportion of the elections that we study (the underlying density plot for party polarization in Figure 2 shows 84 percent of cases with party polarization above 0.4).[18]

Curiously, Figure 2 shows predicted values of voter-government congruence that exceed the maximum value congruence can take on.[19] This could result from a variety of circumstances but robustness tests in our online Appendix B suggest trade-offs occurring at specific elections between system clarity and different types of polarization. There are thus a variety of ways in which elections can attain the highest levels of left-right congruence between voters and governments.

6. DISCUSSION

In this paper we have investigated how clarity of choices helps to overcome various obstacles that voters may find in choosing parties that will form governments ideologically close to them in left-right terms. We show that there are various types of clarity of which the most difficult to evaluate, both conceptually and operationally, is the clarity that can come from the interplay of voter and party polarization. We asked how it is possible to get good levels of ideological congruence between voters and governments despite the need for some party polarization whose effects (based on existing research) should be negative. The answer to this puzzle turns out to be straightforward. Voter polarization can offset the negative effects of any party polarization that may be present. This offsetting presumably comes into being through the workings of a previously theorized sorting mechanism – workings that clarify the choices voters need to make between the parties they could support – and manifests itself through effects on congruence. Such manifestations have not previously been observed outside the United States.

The effects of voter polarization are, however, contingent. Positive effects on voter-government left-right congruence are only seen where there is elevated party polarization. Any attempt to assess effects of voter polarization must take the level of party polarization into account. Otherwise inconsistent effects will likely be observed.

Our new understanding of the clarifying effects of voter and party polarization contribute to a more general understanding of the ways in which various aspects

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[17] Unlike party polarization, voter polarization is somewhat skewed towards low values (see online Appendix B, Figure B2), so it makes sense to focus on upward deviations from the norm.

[18] Note that the zero point for polarization of each type is set not by some absolute standard but by the lowest level of polarization actually found in our data.

[19] From a purely arithmetic standpoint these out-of-bounds predictions could be eliminated by subjecting the outcome variable to a logarithmic transformation. But the resulting graph would not make the point we want to make regarding redundancy among predictors.

of clarity assure voter-government left-right congruence. Aspects of clarity, taken together, between them account for a range of outcome values that come within about 0.2 of spanning the entire range of values that congruence takes on in practice. The fact that predicted values can exceed maximum congruence by a considerable margin suggests a degree of redundancy in the effects we measure, which provide more than one route to maximum congruence.[20]

In arriving at these findings, we have also to a considerable extent succeeded in unpacking the concept of political system clarity into components that all play important roles. Two of these (majority governments and low effective numbers of parties) have figured in earlier theorizing of relevance to voter-government congruence; but an important role is played by a measure not previously used in such studies: the size of the largest party relative to the point at which it would control the legislature. Such control is achieved when a party controls half the legislature's seats. Proportion absolute gap between largest party size in seats and 50% of total seats is an indicator of clarity that incorporates what we take to be the active ingredient in Powell and Whitten's (1993) insight about the clarity imparted by majoritarian electoral systems: they tend to yield party systems with at least one large party. But that active ingredient can be found in electoral systems of all types. Proportional representation does not rule out parties comparable in size to the largest parties in majoritarian systems. And the effects of this variable are highly significant and of comparable magnitude to other, previously theorized, cognate effects.

Our new measure of electoral clarity thus makes an important contribution to our elucidation of the paradoxical foundations for left-right congruence between individual voters and their governments.

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APPENDIX A: DATA SOURCES AND CODING

1) Survey data

Our survey data come from the European Commission's Eurobarometer public opinion surveys (https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Archive/index). Our versions were obtained from the GESIS data archive (https://www.gesis.org/en/eurobarometer-data-service/survey-series).

A critical aspect of our research design was to restrict our surveys to those conducted in proximity to a national election. This choice was made because empirically our findings were less reliable (had lower levels of statistical significance) if we moved outside the span of time when memories of recent elections (and left-right stances adopted at the time of those elections) can still be considered reliable. Outside a six-month span, research has shown that memories become degraded by evolving partisanship in light of evolving political circumstances (see van Elsas et al. 2016). Limiting our data in this way left us with 71 EB surveys fielded across 27 European countries between 2004 and 2016 (see our online Appendix B for details).

2) The ParlGov measure of party left-right location:

Sources for these data are the Chapel Hill expert Surveys (CHES) conducted in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014. Original values were rescaled (0-10) before calculating the mean (weighted by party size in seats). The ParlGov codebook reports these values as time-invariant and they appear to have all been taken from the 2010 CHES survey. However, when we examine the CHES data from surveys most proximate to each of our time-points we find very little variation over time, and the ParlGov data we employ correlates 0.87 with the time-variant CHES data. It makes no substantive difference to our findings which version we employ but those we get from the ParlGov version are more conservative. See (http://www.parlgov.org/documentation/codebook/#party).

For party polarization (foootnote 9) we weighted these data by each party's proportion seats.

Voter-government left-right congruence is the difference between a voter's self-placement and the placement in ParlGov data of parties flagged there as being members of the government (again weighted by size of party in seats).

3) Sources for measures of political system clarity

Data needed to construct our measure of electoral clarity and majority government were taken from the ParlGov data archive (http://www.parlgov.org/documentation/codebook/). Our measure of party system clarity was taken from Golder and Bormann's Democratic Electoral Systems dataset, 1946-2016 (http://mattgolder.com/files/research/es_v3_codebook.pdf). See (Bormann and Golder 2013). A measure of coalition size evaluated for inclusion in our study and referred to in the main text (footnote 7) was also obtained from the ParlGov data by counting the number of parties flagged as being members of a government.

Table A1. Overview of the variables (original values).

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Party Polarization	71	0.42	0.07	0.16	0.66
Voters Polarization	38,124	2.19	0.32	1.50	3.19
Voter-government left-right congruence	38,124	0.75	2.53	-7.10	7.20
Number of effective parties	71	4.98	1.52	2.01	9.62
Size of largest party	71	0.36	0.11	0.15	0.59
Majority Government	71	0.47	0 .33	0.00	1.00

Note: Ns shown are valid Ns with listwise deletion when predicting left-right voter-government congruence. For analysis, all variables were rescaled to range from 0 to 1 (see Table B2).
* Party systems with 12 parties were coded 10 to avoid outlier effects (see text following Table B2). There were no 11-party systems.

Number of effective parties in the electorate (ENEP) has a curvilinear effect on congruence, with a steep decline in congruence over the first 8 parties that flattens out thereafter, with some hint of a negative effect with more than 10 parties (cf. Berggren et al. 2004) that, however, does not prove statistically significant in our data because there are so few very large party systems. Given that we have no systems with 11 parties, the few 12-party systems have considerable leverage, so we cap our measure at 10. The variable is then linearized by taking its square root. All variables were rescaled to range from 0 to 1 and reversed if necessary (by subtracting them from 1) to ensure that positive movements would indicate increasing clarity (see Table A2, below, supplemented by Table B2 in the Online Appendix).

Table A2. Continuous inputs re-scaled 0-1, inverted and/or capped as necessary.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Party Polarization	71	0.19	0.17	0	1
Voters Polarization	37,296	0.26	0.16	0	1
Voter-government left-right Congruence	38,124	0.75	0.19	0	1
Number of effective parties**	71	0.72	0.16	0	1
Electoral Clarity (1 - largest party abs gap from 50%)	71	0.44	0.28	0	1
Majority government	71	0.65	0.48	0	1

Note: Ns shown are valid Ns with listwise deletion when predicting left-right voter-government congruence.
* Capped at 10 parties and linearized (see text).

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Decades of Party Distrust. Persistence through Reform in Italy

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Abstract. One common feature of the Italian political space over the past half century has been the presence of distrust in political parties and the presence of anti-system parties on both the left and the right. Discontent with existing elites and the political system has taken many forms, including referendums altering the electoral system. Both the character of the main parties and the rules by which they are elected have been reformed 4 times since the 1980s. However, as the elections of 2013 and 2018 and the referendum of 2016 demonstrate, Italians still have a high amount of resentment towards party elites and the operation of the system. Using data from Italian National Election Studies, this paper traces the development of this party resentment with a focus on three questions: 1) How has resentment towards party representiveness changed with the electoral and party reforms 2) Who was likely to hold this resentment 3) What was the party affiliation of those most resentful, or did they abstain? Results stress that socio-demographic differences had little effect on understanding the source of party resentment; distrust in parties correlates well with distrust in parliament and political administration. General social distrust did not translate into a distrust for parties. We conclude that discontent can be separated into a political dimension associated with current governance and one of a more systemic nature.

Keywords. Political parties, protest voting, party distrust. Italy.

1. INTRODUCTION

One common feature of the Italian political space over the past half century has been the distrust of political elites and presence of anti-system parties on both the left and the right. This elite discontent and frustration with political system has taken many forms, including referendums altering the electoral system (Bergman and Passarelli 2021). Both the character of the main parties and the rules by which they are elected have been reformed four times since the 1980s. However, with the continuing success of "anti-party" parties (Mudde 1996) the elections of 2013 and 2018 and the referendum of 2016 demonstrate (Bergman and Passarelli 2021), Italians still have a high amount of resentment towards party elites and the operation of the system. Using data from Italian National Election Studies, this paper examines

correlates with this resentment over a period of time ranging from 1968 to 2018 with a focus on three main questions: (1) How has resentment towards party representativeness changed with electoral and party reforms? (2) Who was likely to hold party resentment? (3) What was the party affiliation of those most resentful, or did they abstain?

After introducing the concept of party discontent, the Italian case, and our dataset, results indicate that socio-demographic differences have little explanatory effect on understanding the source of party resentment; distrust in parties correlates well with distrust in parliament and political administration. General social distrust did not translate into a distrust for parties. While electoral reform had little impact, the partisan emergence of the Five Star movement has provided a party for those with anti-party sentiments to vote for. Our conclusions provide support for the notion that discontent can be separated into a political dimension associated with current governance and one of a more systemic nature (Bergman and Passarelli 2021; Passarelli and Tuorto 2018).

2. PARTY DISCONTENT

Political discontent and mistrust towards political parties is not only a contemporary phenomenon. The negative attitudes of people (citizens and voters alike) are somewhat ontologically linked to the nature of the political parties. Since the ancient Roman and Greek polis, people maintained controversial attitudes towards the political groups that led the governments of those still early societies. As Piero Ignazi notes – echoing Giovanni Sartori (1976) - most of the problem lays on the name: «party has a bad etymology. It comes from the Latin verb *partire* meaning *to divide*, and from the derived noun *pars*, which means *part*. Thus, part contains the genetic code of partiality and division» (2017, p. 1). While the divisions created by partisanship have been longstanding, it is quite recent that this political phenomenon has been the object of academic interest in a comparative manner (Gidron et al 2020). Since the seventies, a notable anti-party anti-politic sentiment has been present in European political space (Mudde 1996). Political parties' legitimacy had begun to be questioned. Moreover, after a period of comparatively high trust, especially after WWII in countries who completed the transition[1] from authoritarian and totalitarian regimes

to democracy, more critical views of the political parties took hold as political parties began to be a source of shame (Dalton, 1996; Mair, 1995). If the negative sentiments towards political parties persist in most of the advanced democracies, then this distrust cannot arise from the negative evaluation of a single party nor its performance. Instead, the «criticism points also, even if not explicitly, to [the party's] nature, more than its role» (Ignazi, 2017, p. 1).

In order to better detect the phenomena of political party discontent (Daalder, 2002) it is crucial to first define what anti-party sentiment is. Poguntke and Scarrow have indicated a two-fold meaningful distinction to tackle the anti-party attitude. They have distinguished between the 1) elite level and the 2) mass level (1996). In the first case, the anti-party sentiment (élite) «presents itself in the form of criticisms concerning the current roles of parties in democratic systems […] such criticisms may be presented in the language of democratic theory (Poguntke and Scarrow, 1996, pp. 257-258). On the one hand, «this expectation inevitably leads to a negative evaluation of the role of political parties as distorting intermediaries between politicians and the general will». On the other side, «those who see a strong and effective state as the guarantor of the common good view parties as troublemakers which undermine the capacities of the state». The second level of anti-party system (mass level) can be defined as «inspired, amplified and fueled by anti-party theorizing by intellectual and political elites» (*ibid*).

The anti-party sentiment is then different from protest voting or feelings (Schedler, 1996). Protest voting represents an attempt to scare the élite, extant political parties, the incumbent, or democratic institutions as whole. Although it is possible to detect a few similarities and points of contact between these related concepts, it is evident that they refer to different political phenomena. A protest vote can be policy driven, and it is usually affected by short-term factors, such as the economic performance and the incumbents' role (Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000). In electoral terms, protest is expressed through a vote against the party voters supported in the past and/or against the elite at the government (Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995). Electoral volatility is an indicator of "protest", but in and of itself is not sufficient evidence of anti-party sentiment, as supporting alternative longstanding political parties does not demonstrate an antagonism towards them.

Anti-party sentiment, therefore, cannot be expressed directly through electoral behavior. Anti-party sentiment is addressed to "politics", to political parties beyond a single actor, and the policies approved or discussed by these actors.

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[1] Different interpretations are reported by authors claiming that the political transition to democracy has generated the increase of the anti-party sentiment, as happened in Germany after 1989 or Spain after 1977 (see Torcal, Gunther and Montero, 2001, p. 4).

Having defined anti-party sentiment, two general approaches have been adopted to measure this attitude: The first takes an "index" approach of anti-party sentiment by aggregating different survey items. Torcal and Montero (2006) adopt this index approach, using the following items to measure the party discontent: « (1) Parties criticize one another, but in reality they are all alike. (2) Political parties only divide people. (3) Without parties, there can be no democracy. (4) Parties are needed to defend the interests of various groups and social classes. (5) Thanks to parties, people can participate in political life. (6) Parties are useless.» An alternative specification, directly detects the anti-party attitudes through precisely worded survey questions (e.g. trust on parties). In particular, scholars usually examine anti-party sentiment as an independent variable in analyzing survey results explaining "Party identification", and "Party Sentiment"[2]. Here, we seek to flip this standard approach, and examine the correlations placing anti-party sentiment as the dependent variable.

3. THE ITALIAN CASE: PARTY RESENTMENT AFTER LUKEWARM SENTIMENTS

Italy represents a peculiar case where there has been comparatively both high level of party membership, party identification, and anti-party sentiment (Bardi, 1996; De Petris and Poguntke, 2015; Morlino and Tarchi, 1996). Since WWII, Italy has been characterized by high electoral participation and political parties served as crucial actors in leading almost all aspects of the social life; albeit at the same time, they were also subjects of mistrust. In fact, one common feature of the Italian political space over the past half century has been the presence of anti-system parties on both the left and the right. Discontent with existing elites and the political system, has more than once, and resulted in referendum-based reforms to the political system. Both the character of the main parties and the rules by which they are elected have been reformed 4 times since the 1980s (Passarelli, 2018, p. 862). However, as the general elections of 2013 and 2018 and the referendum of 2016 demonstrate, Italians have a high amount of resentment towards party elites and the operation of the system (Bergman, 2019). Our first question seeks to examine the development of party discontent over-time and whether this has been impacted by different parties or electoral systems. The grey line on Figure 1 displays the low level and decreasing trust in political parties. Conversely during these
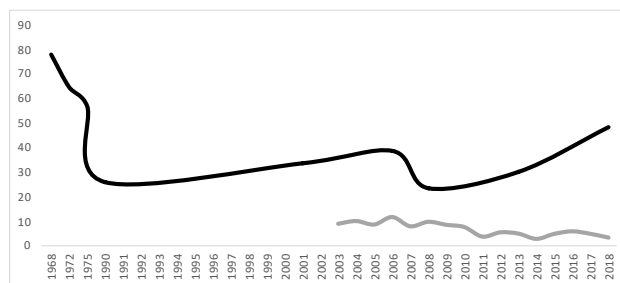
Figure 1. Trust in Political Parties and Party Identification in Italy (1968-2018). Source: Demopolis (several years); Bellucci e Segatti (2008); Itanes (1968-2018). Legend: black line refers to the Party identification (very + quite close); The grey line indicates the rate of trust in political parties (High + enough trust). Total on Italian voters.

more recent years, party identification has increased as evidenced by the black line in Figure 1[3].

The two most recent general elections (2013 and 2018) have seen new political forces channeling anti-party sentiments gain a large share of voters. In 2013 a new party – the Five Star Movement (M5S) – obtained about one quarter of the votes in its first national parliamentary election. Its political agenda was founded on anti-party sentiment, not only against the incumbents, but also against all the "old" parties per se, both considered to be negative for the country. In 2018 the M5S collected more than 30 per cent of the national votes, making it the largest single party in the Italian parliament. In the same year, another historical anti-party movement increased its vote share: the Northern league (LN) obtained about 17% of votes. Two years earlier, in 2016, there had been a constitutional referendum, which intended to amend the bicameral nature of policy-making. 60 per cent of voters did not support the proposal of changes and studies say that voters decided on the basis of a protest against the elite and the prime minister in charge, Matteo Renzi (Bergman, 2019).

As argued by Sani and Segatti (2001), an explanation for the temporal stability of anti-party sentiment over time are rather well rooted in the Italian political culture. Concern over the long-term anti-party sentiment trend, well known in many contemporary democracies (Van der Meer 2017), has coupled its effects in the Italian context where the national trend towards mistrust for parties was already in place. Therefore, in Italy, there has been an increasing tension between professional political elites and the citizens. Nevertheless, Italy was seemingly characterized by stable electoral behaviors, comparatively high level of political participation, and high turnout.

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[2] The Italian National Election Survey uses this approach.

[3] Probably due to the polarization effect.

These decades of partisan stability were mainly driven by the ideological positioning and electoral challenge between the Communists and the anti-communists, broadly grouped around the Christian democrats. After 1989 and fall of the Berlin Wall, judicial investigations indicted most of the former parties who had governed in an anti-communist coalition since 1948. This offered the chance for new parties to appear. The early performance of the Northern Leagues, the communists' transition towards a social-democratic ideology, and the birth of Forza Italia – the party owned by the tv tycoon Silvio Berlusconi - radically modified the once stable party system (Bellucci and Segatti, 2010). Those social and political changes paved the way for electoral reform – from a proportional open list toward mixed-member majoritarian – that was characterized by periods of increasing electoral volatility (Passarelli, 2018). From 1994 the party system evolved from a multiparty structure towards a more bipolarized format around two big (catch-all) coalitions, one from the centre-left and the other from the centre-right. The latter pattern stood until 2013, when as previously mentioned, the M5S appeared on the political stage and refused coalition with any other party, increasing party fragmentation, and introducing a tri-polarization of political space. This structure was reaffirmed during the 2018 election[4]. On the electoral side, Italian turnout has only slightly decreased, though remained comparatively high (over 70%).

These party system's changes were in concert with a highly unstable electoral system. Since the 1990s, the system has been reformed four times in an attempt to stabilize the party system through altering the rules of translating votes into seats. As discussed above, this goal was not reached and new parties continued to proliferate. Party system instability and voters' disaffection towards parties persist especially towards traditional political forces.

The electoral and party reforms discussed above might have led to changes in attitudes towards party representativeness and the partisan identification of voters holding anti-party sentiments – questions 1 and 3 of our purpose. We now introduce the variables that can help identify which other characteristics of voters might correlate with anti-party sentiment.

4. SOURCES OF DISTRUST

As discussed above, we situate anti-party sentiment as our dependent variable and we aim to explain the fac-

tors correlated with it. On a general stand it is assumed that anti-party attitudes are related to a decrease in generic support for the democratic regime and the way that existing parties limit the critical role of citizens (Norris 1999). In the Italian context, Sani and Segatti (2001) have indicated that anti-party sentiments coexist with high levels of party identification and high levels of support for the democratic regime. We propose the following correlates with anti-party sentiment in Italy and later analyze them in a diachronic perspective.

C. 1: greater democratic disaffection correlates with greater anti-party sentiment

Mistrust of democracy might lead to mistrust of the parties operating within it. We expect that in the Italian case, as Sani and Segatti have pointed out (2001), this relation is consistently negative (Maraffi, 2007).

C. 2: those abstaining from electoral involvement have greater anti-party sentiment

Voters and citizens who are not satisfied with the institutional performance are usually considered to be keener to express their protest in different ways, including abstaining from the political process (Hirschman, 1970)[5]. In this manner, they can express antagonism towards the incumbent or protesting without necessarily being antagonistic towards democracy (Katsanidou and Eder, 2018). We expect that abstaining will be positively related with anti-party sentiment.

C. 3: lower trust in Parliament correlates with higher anti-party sentiment.

Those people who show low levels of trust towards the representative institutions also express low trust towards political parties (Torcal and Montero, 2006). Negative attitudes towards the Parliament, who is the ultimate place where political parties express their identities, should be associated with a lower level of trust in political parties[6].

C. 4: lower trust in others (social capital) correlates with higher the anti-party sentiment

As the extensive literature on social capital argues, (horizontal) trust in other community members can intensify feelings of (vertical) trust in political institutions and political parties themselves (Cartocci, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2018). As with correlate # 3, the

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[4] In post-election bargaining, however, M5S broke with its no-coalition promise and joined with the LN, another anti-party party in a coalition government.

[5] Kang (2004) has also measured the effect as influenced by different electoral systems.
[6] Public administration may also been seen as an avenue for parties to express their competence. Negative attitudes towards public administration should also be associated with a lower level of trust in political parties.

voters who are less keen to trust others and so show less social capital/trust, should be associated with a higher levels of party discontent.

Moreover, it is important to consider political parties and their link to voters. In this light, we suggest three further correlations.

C. 5: greater attachment to political parties is correlated with lower anti-party sentiment.

From a theoretical point of view, we expect that being closer to a political party should generate a lower level of party discontent and mistrust. However, this is not always the case, as the Italy context has demonstrated (Sani and Segatti, 2001). Therefore, we shall verify whether this relation keeps its expected direction when subjected to multivariate analysis or whether it has changed overtime.

C. 6: party membership is particularly correlated with lower anti-party sentiment

As for the party identification, we expect that those who are enrolled as party members will be less critical towards political parties. Being part of the "political community" should in fact induce party members to be less critical towards organization to which they belong.

C7: *voters for anti-system parties are correlated with greater anti-party sentiment*

It has been argued that lower levels of political trust are correlated with voting for protest parties, serving as a 'safety valve' of political discontent in the Belgian case (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018). Similarly, in Italy, we expect that a party (like the M5S or LN) that stresses anti-politics attitudes and policies should have voters that also express negative feeling towards politics, institutions and political parties as intermediate actors between citizens and democratic institutions.

C. 8: voting in proportional elections is correlated with lower anti-party sentiments

As the electoral system offers opportunities and constrains to voters and to political parties, we can expect that with PR electoral systems (2005-2013), negative feeling towards parties could have been ameliorated, at the least in terms of representation; that is voters could support an anti-party party and expect it to gain electoral representation.

We will examine these correlations in a bivariate and multivariate analysis controlling for socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, education, ideological self-placement on a left-right scale, and geograph-

ic location (via random effects). We also include which party a respondent indicated they voted for to examine the effect of the presence or absence of anti-party parties (LN and M5S)

5. OPERATIONALIZATION

We examine these correlations through the use of ITANES post-election survey data. Our primary dependent variable is asked after each election: "tell me how much you trust each of the following institutions [parties]: not at all, a little, somewhat, very much". Given the nature of this variable (1-4), an ordered logistic regression will be used in analysis to compare our theoretical explanations. These surveys also include many of the covariates we are interested in. These include gender, education, age, importance of religion, left-right ideology, employment and voting behavior.

We operationalize our correlations as follows:
- C1 democratic dissatisfaction: believes to be true that "people like me have no influence on what the government does";[7]
- C2 abstention: respondent did not vote in the election;
- C3 distrust in parliament[8]: level of distrust in parliament;
- C4 low social capital: if respondent agrees that "you are never prudent enough with people";
- C5 strong party identification: if respondent feels close to a political party;
- C6 party member: if respondent is or was a member of a political party;
- C7 anti-system party voter: if respondent voted for LN or M5S;
- C8 electoral system: if respondent voted between 2005 and 2013.

6. FINDINGS

There are three questions that we answer: (1) How has resentment towards elites and systemic party representativeness changed with the electoral and party reforms? (2) Who was likely to hold this resentment? (3) What was the party affiliation of those most resentful, or did they abstain?

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[7] Although this variable is used to measure political efficacy in other ITANES studies, we here use it as a proxy for democratic dissatisfaction
[8] Distrust in public administration is also included for years 2001 and 2006 when the question was included on the ITANES post-election survey.

We first present cross-tabulation analysis on elections from 2001 onward to 2018 and then multivariate analysis. In this time period, the party system and the electoral system have changed several times. The 2001 election used a mixed-member system. The center-right House of Freedom coalition of Forza Italia, National Alliance, Northern League, Christen Democrats, and three smaller parties challenged the Olive Tree coalition of Democrats of the Left, The Daisy, and three smaller parties. The Communist Refoundation Party and Italy of Values served as alternative party choices to the large coalitions.

The elections of 2006 and 2008 were cast using a PR system with a bonus for the largest coalition. The parties of the left all united into the Union coalition to challenge the center-right House of Freedoms. The 2008 election simplified the party system as Forza Italia merged with the National Alliance and the Daisy and Democrats of the Left merged into the Democratic Party.

2013 saw the emergence of a centrist grouping – With Monti for Italy – and populist protest movement - 5 Star Movement. The former performed below expectations while the later provided a vessel to channel protest and the party became the largest one after elections. 2018 saw the creation of yet another electoral system consisting of multi-member constituencies. After the election, the League outpolled Forza Italia and joined into alliance with the 5-star movement. The variety of electoral systems and party constellations provides a variety of institutional arrangements that might be the source of political distrust.

Figure 2 presents the mean and standard deviations of the dependent variable: distrust in parties. Recall that a "4" means "not at all" trusting of political parties and "1" means "very much" trust in political parties. The elections in the 2000s all had a similar level of distrust. Most voters noted having "a little" trust in political parties. The rise of the 5 Star Movement in 2013 and 2018[9] exemplifies a greater level of distrust among the Italian public (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2015; 2018). The amount of distrust of political parties has risen steadily in the 2010s. This provides some evidence that the rise of a tri-polar system with the 5-star movement might be associated with increased distrust in political parties. Subsequent analyses will examine this claim further.

Next, Figure 3 presents the level of distrust by party voted for in the Chamber of Deputies. The trendlines
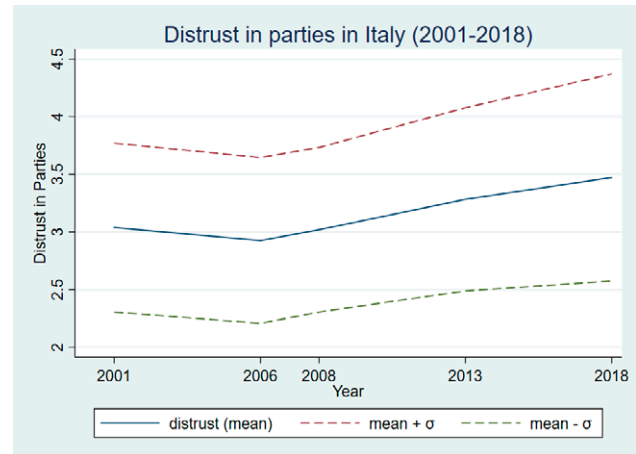
Figure 2. Political Distrust over Time (Source ITANES 2001-2018).

show how the voters for each political grouping have changed in their distrust over time. In 2001, the parties on the right had greater amounts of distrust than those on the left. Forza Italia voters had the greatest levels of distrust of parties. Berlusconi led this coalition of center-right voters and was elected Prime Minister. In 2006, this pattern continues, with center-right voters expressing greater amounts of distrust then those on the left. However, by 2008, this pattern is no longer detectable. Center-right voters slightly decreased in their overall distrust while center-left voters increased in their levels of distrust. For context, between these years, the center-left was elected into office, but coalition dynamics brought down the government early.

A technocratic government supported by the centrist parties had been installed in 2011, yet by 2013 all partisan voters increased their level of distrust. Most notably, the 5 Star Movement's voters in both 2013 and 2018 exhibit expressly greater levels of distrust. This party stands above the others with its level of distrust. The overall level of distrust in these election years is correlated with the great performance of this party. The far-right League voters also by 2018 have distinctly higher levels of distrust. These two parties joined into a governing coalition in 2018. With greatly different ideologies, they are however joined in their anti-establishment positions.

One of our main questions of interest is whether an individual respondent feels close to a party. We are able to go further back in time with the ITANES data on this question. Results are presented in tables 1-3. Table 1 demonstrates a steady trend of respondents not feeling close to any particular party. With the exception of 1990 (during the breakup of the old party system), the past two decades have seen only about half the individuals as in previous decades expressing attachment to a political party.

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[9] The scale was resized to 1-4 from 1-10 in 2018. ITANES provides 4 possible responses to this variable: not at all, a little, somewhat, very much. However, in the 2018 survey they asked respondents to answer on a scale from 1-10. On the figure, we kept 1 as the minimal and divided all other values by 2.5, which would bring the maximum value to 4.
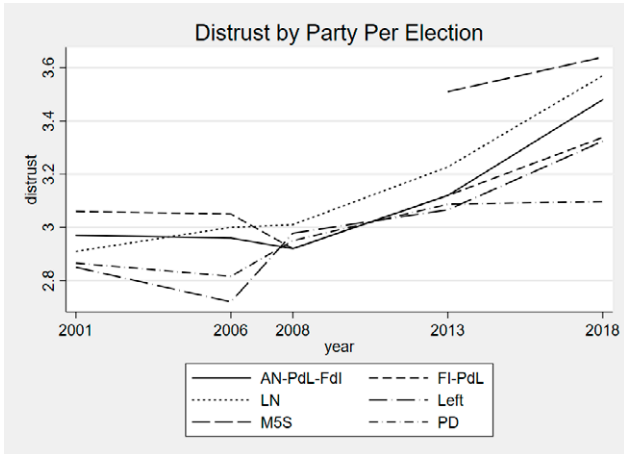
Figure 3. Distrust by Party Over Time (Source ITANES 2001-2018).

Table 2 introduces a potential co-variate: region. A pattern of decline can be detected across the nation, although some regional differences are evident. Overall, Italy faced between 12 and 13 point drop in party affinity, with a low point in the mid-2000s. From the high in 1968, the North-East experienced the greatest decrease in party affinity – with 1 in 5 respondents losing a party attachment. On the other-hand, the Red Zone, with its traditional attachment to parties of the left expressed only a 7 point drop. Another regional difference to note is that after the 2005 electoral reform, the Northern regions experienced an increase in party attachment, reversing the steady downward trend. From a lowpoint in 2008, all regions expressed an increase in party attachment in the 2013 election, the first national election that the 5 star movement contested winning 25% of the vote.

Table 3 identifies if there is any age cohort effects-that is, can we attribute the decline in party attachment to specific age cohorts? Do respondents born later have less attachment than their elders? Here too, the answer appears to be no. All age cohorts dropped by at least 30pp. Younger cohorts actually have greater connection to parties in the current era (Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009). This may be because older parties have been dissolved. It does present a brief conundrum, however. If younger voters have grown up with the existing parties, perhaps they will feel a stronger connection. It is also worth noting that those born during the WWII-era previously had lower than average party identification, while in the contemporary era, they are the most connected.

Summary statistics for all variables used in analysis are presented in the appendix along with a table of bivariate correlations. We now turn to regression analysis to answer our final question, of what are the indi-

Table 1. Party Identification Over Time.

%	1968	1972	1975	1990	2001	2006	2008	2013	2018
Very + quite close	77.8	64.5	56.8	25.8	33.5	38.5	23.3	30.0	48.2
Only sympathizer	5.4	7.0	12.0	23.5	21.3	16.9	27.9	43.5	22.6
Not close	16.7	28.5	31.2	50.7	45.2	44.6	48.9	26.4	29.2

Source: adaptation from Biorcio, 2008-2018 (Itanes).

Table 2. Party Identifiers by Region across years (closeness to a party) (% Very + quite close+symp).

	1968	1972	1975	1990	2001	2006	2008	2013	2018
North-west	85.9	74.6	64.9	49.1	54.5	61.5	53.1	77.0	72.5
North-east	90.0	73.7	71.2	35.4	46.9	50.6	56.1	70.8	70.9
Red zone	77.1	65.6	66.1	56.3	64.7	57.6	55.1	75.2	69,9
Center	82	69.7	75.6	50.4	57.8	52.8	52.7	72.6	67.4
South	82.7	71.7	70.2	51.9	50.7	51.9	45.6	71.5	71.2
Italy	83.2	71.5	68.8	49.3	54.8	55.4	51.2	73.5	70.8

Source: adaptation from Biorcio, 2008-2018 (Itanes).

Table 3 Party identifiers by age cohort in Italy across years (closeness to a party) (% Very + quite close+symp).

	1968	1972	1975	1990	2001	2006	2008	2013	2018
Until 1925	83.2	73.2	67.3	51.8	48.4	42.3	44.7	60.0	-
1926-1935	82.8	71.1	67.7	45.1	54.5	48.6	48.3	79.7	*
1936-1945	83.4	65.7	69.4	47.6	56.6	53.1	53.2	80.9	92.3
1946-1955	83.7	75.5	72.9	53.5	57.9	62.2	51.5	76.5	71.9
1956-1965			66.1	46.8	53.0	55.9	50.2	73.2	69.5
1966-1975				50.7	56.8	58.3	49.4	69.9	66.4
1976-1985					51.5	54.1	54.3	73.0	74.4
1986-1995								67.7	71.3
1995-2000									87.5
Italy	83.2	71.5	68.8	49.3	54.8	55.4	51.2	73.5	70.8

Source: adaptation from Biorcio, 2008 (Itanes).
* Less than five cases.

vidual characteristics of voters that have higher levels of distrust. Four category ordered logistic regression will be used for 2001, 2006, 2008, and 2013. Because respondents could provide a 1-10 range in 2018, this year includes a 10 category ordered logistic regression. For ease of interpretation, coefficient plots identify which variables are statistically significant by the confidence intervals of their estimated effect being statistically different from 0. All models include random-effects at the regional level to control for regional variation that is not covered by our individual-level indicators, such as differences in the party system or historical legacies. Full regression output is presented in the online appendix.
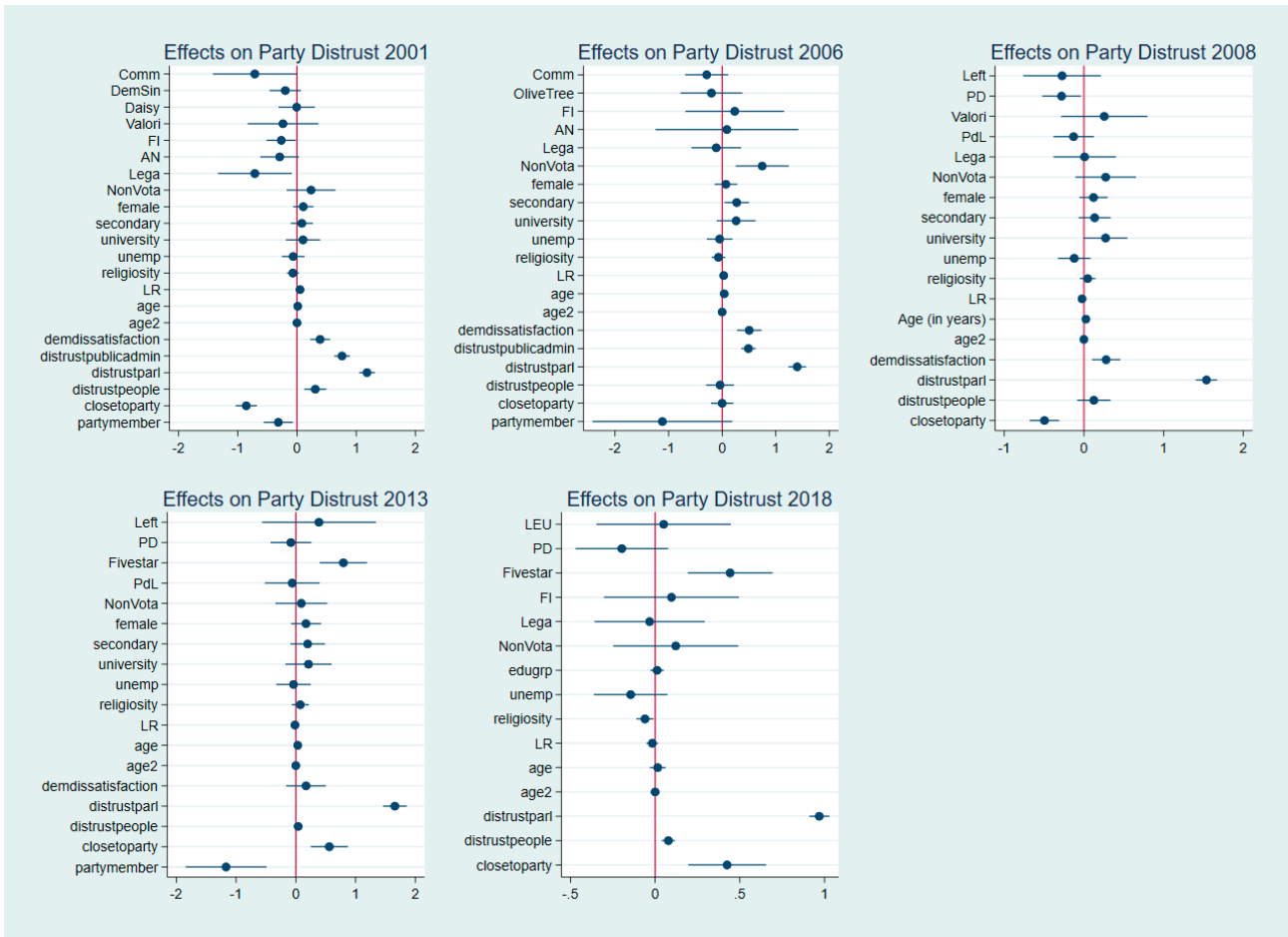
Figure 4. Effects on Party Distrust 2001-2018.

Figure 4 indicates that partisan and abstaining differences in anti-party sentiment was minimal in 2001. Lega and Forza Italia voters seem to show less trust than voters for smaller parties or those wishing not to answer[10]. Radical left voters also have lower levels of trust. This should be balanced against the finding that voters who identify further to the right have greater amounts of distrust in parties. None of the socio-demographic controls have significance. However, each of our predicted correlations is supported. Those who do not believe that democracy is empowering, that lack confidence in government administration, that lack confidence in parliament and others express greater levels of distrust towards parties. On the other hand, those who do feel close to a particular party or who are party members have greater amounts of political trust in parties. Assessment of each of our individual predictive variables

are summarized on Table 4 after the discussion here of whether electoral or party reform or partisan identification/abstention has an effect in each specific year.

The results from 2006 are slightly less supportive of expectations, although we are not too surprised by results. Of all major party groupings, only abstainers have a statistical difference in the amount of trust in parties. This election was the first performed with the new electoral system. Parties all joined into two coalitions, and as such, individual party identities and histories might have less importance. With all parties joining into coalitions, partisans could not express distrust by voting for any party over others than abstaining. In the 2008 election, with results that follow similarly to the previous election. Again, those who feel close to a party express greater trust in parties with those voting for the newly formed Democratic Party, in-power from 2006, expressing an even greater trust than voters for minor parties.

The emergence of the anti-party "5 Star Movement" in the 2013 election produced a great change in

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[10] The baseline for our regression models are the voters for minor parties. All regression models include random effects for region.

the effects of our predicted variables. Voters for the 5 Star Movement expressed much greater distrust in parties than those voting for minor parties. Also, now voters that felt close to a party expressed greater distrust in parties. This could be evidence of 5 Star Movement voters having a "party" to feel close to. This pattern is again evident in the results for 2018. Again, the voters for the 5 Star Movement were significantly more distrustful of parties, while voters for more traditional parties had no such effect. We again see that those feeling close to a party do, in fact, have greater distrust in parties. We suggest that this again might be a result of the strong presence of the Five Start Movement and/or the now re-emergent Lega. Although identifying with Lega has no independent effect in terms of mistrust.

Table 4 summarizes the results of our analyses. Some general patterns can be detected. While in the 2000s, democratic dissatisfaction correlated with a distrust of parties, by the 2010s this was no longer valid. Parliamentary distrust was the only consistent predictor of distrust in parties. The sign of being close to a party switched between the 2000s and 2010s. A major difference between the 2000s and 2010s that might explain these changes is the emergence of the Five Star Movement. Voters previously distrustful of parties, might be more satisfied with democracy and feel affinity towards the representation provided by the Five Star Movement.

The emergence of this anti-establishment party is expressive of a new way for voters who distrust parties to participate in the political process. Further analysis is needed to understanding the continuing impact of the 5 Star Movement.

We can summarize the findings of our analysis of multiple decades of data in three key points. First, socio-demographic differences had little effect on understanding the source of party resentment. This substantiates the bivariate findings of a lack of cohort effects. Second,

distrust in parties correlates well with distrust in parliament and political administration. General social distrust did not translate into a distrust for parties. Thus, we can conclude that discontent can be separated into a political dimension associated with current governance and one of a more systemic nature. Third, while we did not expect it, the rise of the 5 Star Movement as a party that represents a distrust of traditional parties has implications that will continue to affect the future of distrust of parties in Italy, especially now that it is part of the governing coalition. Similar to a case study of New Zealand (Bale and Roberts 2002), electoral reform has not resulted in increased trust in political parties.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this work we have focused on the problem of trust in parties in a particularly relevant case, the Italian one. The result shows that, despite a series of reforms, overall patterns of party distrust have not altered. In toto, the results of this work tell us that socio-demographic differences had little effect on understanding the source of party resentment. Distrust in parties correlates well with distrust in parliament and political administration while general social distrust does not correlate with a distrust for parties.

Of course, Italy as a case study has some particular characteristics, such as the common trope of anti-partitism, the widespread popular criticism of the elites, and the dialectic between political actors in republican Italy since the immediate post-war period. This later aspect is evidenced by the reference to the Giannini's "Uomo Qualunque", the enduring presence and activism of Radical Parties throughout the First Republic pre-2000s, and the 2010s legislative and executive successes of a movement declaredly anti-system: the Five Stars. This later movement has provided a political outlet for anti-party sentiment, as it was the only party whose adherents felt statistically different about the trustworthiness of political parties[11]. In toto, party discontent appears to be able to be split into a political dimension associated with current governance and parties and one of a more systemic nature focus on political institutions themselves (Bergman and Passarelli 2021; Passarelli and Tuorto 2018).

Future research should study more closely the precise mechanisms that promote anti-party sentiment. Our analysis here focused diachronically, but there might be specific factors that impact voters more

Table 4. Summary of results.

Correlations	Elections				
	2001	2006	2008	2013	2018
C1: Democratic Dissatisfaction	+	+	+	.	n/a
C2: Non-voters	.	+	.	.	.
C3: Parliament Trust	+	+	+	+	+
C4: General Trust	+	.	.	.	+
C5: Close to Party	+	.	+	-	-
C6: Party Member	+	.	n/a	+	n/a
C7: Anti-System Voter	.	.	.	+	+

+ = supported, . = null, - = opposite prediction, N/A = not asked.
Source: authors' own elaboration on statistical analysis.

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[11] Similar to findings on the LPF in the Netherlands, our results for the LN are suggestive that their voters are not motivated by political discontent (van der Brug 2003).

strongly in one election than another. Similarly, our analysis did not investigate subnational contextual factors towards party sentiment. There could be regional variation worth exploring perhaps related to economics, government efficiency, corruption, or regional leadership (Van Erkel and Van Der Meer, 2016). Finally, the rhetoric of partisan and non-partisan elites could be examined systemically to further understand how anti-party themes might be transmitted in the public arena.

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Party guests or party crashers? Non-members' political engagement across party organizations

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Abstract. Over the past decade, many parties have created new possibilities for affiliating and involving citizens, often rivalling the classic conception of party membership. So far, the existing literature has mainly focused on classifying these new and different types of affiliates. However, little attention has been paid to what these "non-full-membership" options imply in terms of formal rights and obligations. We explore here the opportunities that parties offer to non-members to participate and get involved in intra-party activities and we contrast them with the rights and obligations of full, fee-paying, traditional members. This article addresses this gap based on an original database consisting of membership rules in 68 parties in 13 established democracies. We not only map the current landscape of rules managing the involvement of non-members within parties, but also explore potential factors- party family and size- explaining the variation across parties. We find a strong association between party family and the range of possibilities for non-members' involvement with parties on the left and environmental parties providing more space for the participation of non-members. We also find that smaller parties tend to involve more non-full-members by allocating more rights to them. Our findings and new database provide a first step for future research to study the regulation of the involvement of non-members in intra-party activities, what determines it, and how it affects the traditional concept of party membership and societal linkage.

Keywords. Party politics, party membership, intra-party democracy, political participation, comparative politics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The continued progressive decline of electoral turnout and party membership in advanced democracies triggered a debate of the growing irrelevance and inability of parties to act as instruments for linking society with the state and aggregating preferences (Mair, 2013:16). In response, several parties have recently developed more flexible paths of political engagement outside elections (Scarrow 2015; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017; Scarrow et al. 2017). They have adopted various organisational reforms to re-establish and strengthen their existing societal linkages by providing members with new rights and powers (Scarrow 2015; Pizzimenti et al. 2020). At the same time,

parties moved beyond these classical ties by granting rights and powers to alternative forms of engagement such as supporters or primary voters (Poguntke et al. 2016; Webb et al. 2017; Gerbaudo 2019). Party elites now seem convinced that providing new forms of engagement beyond traditional party membership could help them not only to recruit volunteers, but also increase their financial resources and - in the end - preserve their membership (Sandri et al. 2015; Kölln 2016; Dommett 2020). Even though it is rather uncommon for supporters to pay much for being involved in party activities, and they pay markedly less than membership dues, they represent a way to encourage smaller donations and to collect significant amounts of funding during specific political events such as open primaries (Scarrow 2018; von Nostitz & Sandri 2018) .

This new strategy of internal organization allows for a more flexible engagement with parties as it provides different channels of affiliation, each offering varying opportunities to access party activities and internal decision-making, adjusted to individual needs. Thus, it allows for wider societal linkage as it is able to include a more diverse society. For example, parties nowadays allow non-members to participate in electoral campaigns, policy development, leadership and candidate selection (Fisher et al. 2014; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017; Gauja, 2014; Mjelde 2015; Aylott & Bolin 2017; Ignazi 2020). Yet, despite the recent spread of these new typologies of participatory opportunities, further empirical research is needed to fully grasp what they actually entail in terms of instruments and possibilities for intra-party participation, rights and obligations. Moreover, the role and power of non-formalized forms of membership within political organizations still need to be empirically assessed, clarified, and compared to those of full members. This article aims at addressing this gap in the current literature by assessing the degree to which political parties allow for non-member participation in their activities.

The article distinguishes between two main channels of affiliation: registered party members (be them fee-paying, full members or "light" members) and non-members (i.e. citizens that have some form of flexible ties with the party, or any form of partisanship such as supporters, sympathizers or primary voters, but who are not registered formally as affiliates in any form). A formal registration requires a standardized application procedure, and an empirical form of approval of the acceptance of the request both by the prospective member and/or the party (eg: signature of a membership request form). Informal registration processes take the form of an oral or written informal request by the

prospective member; or an online subscription by simply clicking on a button on the party website, or by entering the name and email of the prospective member on the party website. The article explores how these two forms of party activism are integrated and regulated in the formal party rules. The article then compares, and contrasts their respective rights and obligations, in order to assess their respective role and power within the party. These two main alternative affiliations represent two different organizational trajectories, one resulting in party membership, the other resulting in weaker, more flexible party ties.

This is relevant as it allows for apprehending the organizational transformations of contemporary political organizations. Further, these recent reforms challenges the traditional variation in terms of rights, obligations and forms of involvement among the different modes of partisan affiliation in established democracies and thus needs to be empirically documented and analysed. While the variation in membership forms within 'multi-speed membership parties' has been explored by a growing empirical literature (Scarrow 2015 & 2020; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017), the role, powers and activities of non-members within parties remain less clearly outlined by existing studies and needs to be comparatively and empirically assessed (Aylott & Bolin 2017; Ignazi 2020; Scarrow 2020).

Further, recent studies have explored the attitudes and behaviours of new, non-formalized forms of adhering to a political party (notably Hooghe & Kölln 2020 and Gomez and Ramiro 2019). However, most of these studies rely on survey data for measuring individual self-reported behaviours, rather than exploring the organizational role of such new innovative repertoires of political engagement and mostly focus on party or country case studies.

Thus, the authors created on an original comparative database exploring the formal regulation of rights, obligations, costs, recruitment procedures, and other variables measuring the organizational boundaries of parties for both party members and non-members in 13 established democracies in 2014. Change over time is not addressed in this article. For the moment, we focus on how the two different patterns of involvement are regulated and which powers they give to citizens, rather than looking at the extent to which non-members actually take advantage of the opportunities to participate.

The article starts by discussing the current state of the literature. After exploring these new forms of partisan mobilization in a descriptive manner, the article advances expectations about two possible factors that could explain the different degree of (non-) integration

of new membership types: (1) party family, and (2) party size. Our exploratory findings show a strong association between party family and the degree of non-members' involvement, and that smaller parties tend to involve more non-members.

2. EXPLORING HOW MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS CAN PARTICIPATE WITHIN PARTIES

The recent literature often argues that the introduction of new forms of party affiliation, such as formalized supporters' networks, or of participatory opportunities for non-members, is a party organizational response to cope with such challenges as decreasing voter loyalty and declining party membership (Scarrow 2015). Other studies argue that these reforms make it possible to attract new sections of the electoral market, but do not guarantee loyal and consistent electoral support (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Cross and Katz 2013), thus negatively impacting upon the transformation of primary voters, supporters and "cyber-members" into affiliated members (Sandri et al. 2015). In this regard, party organization studies suggest that if parties aim at transforming new types of affiliates into full members, they need to make a choice between giving non-members many or few rights in comparison to full members (Scarrow et al. 2017). Giving new types of affiliates, and non-full members in particular, a broad range of rights could increase parties' societal reach overall, which is crucial for electoral politics, for strengthening the parties' social linkage role and for consolidating their legitimacy in an era of declining membership, even if they will never join as full members.

Conversely, allocating limited rights to new types of affiliates makes it possible to protect activists and to secure the recruitment of loyal full members, who are more likely to engage within the party (Kernell 2015). While openness in itself is unproblematic for the working of internal processes as long as members have little say over party decisions, if such a process is linked with membership empowerment and/or access to decision-making power that does not require any indication of organizational commitment (Bolleyer 2007), the inclusion of non-members with extensive rights can create tensions. In line with this argument, it is often argued that such reforms not only trigger potential conflict among traditional party delegates, activists and supporters (Cross and Katz 2013; Gauja 2013; Scarrow 2015), but challenge the role and powers of traditional affiliated members. These reforms also blur parties' organizational boundaries and the distinction between members and non-members (Katz and Mair 2009; Gauja 2014), challenging the notion of formal party membership (Gauja 2013; Scarrow 2015).

Several studies have explored empirically how parties manage affiliation (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017; van Haute & Gauja 2015; Bolleyer & Correa 2020). Yet, further empirical research on the involvement of non-members is needed in order to explore the degree to which this trend could help parties to strengthen the representational linkage between citizens and the state. The article contributes to the current literature by measuring and comparing the actual rights allocated to full members and to non-members. Building on previous research (Scarrow 2015; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017; Gauja and van Haute 2014), we explore the regulatory instruments for involving non-members within parties and the extent to which traditional members are protected by party structures in terms of obligations, specific rights, and degree of permeability. The contribution of our article to the literature is both empirical, because we develop further and go beyond previous theoretical analyses (Gauja, 2014; Mjelde 2015), and in terms of analytical model, given that, contrary to previous empirical studies (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017), we focus specifically on the intra-party engagement rules for non-members.

The growing literature on new forms of party affiliations has raised the relevant question of the potential individual and meso- level consequences of parties' strategies to reach out to broader groups of potential supporters offering them new affiliation options (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017). Previous studies have also raised the question of which role should parties give to traditional party members and to new affiliates within these innovative organizational settings, in particular in terms of party ownership (Scarrow 2015).

In particular, this article's results relate to studies with similar questions and operationalisations of variables in two ways. First, if compared to Scarrow's multi-speed membership concept and research (2015), the article contributes to the literature by looking specifically at non-membership possibilities to get involved in parties, rather than mapping the universe of different types of affiliation. Moreover, different from Scarrow, we not only look at affiliation categories, but also empirically assess the regulations, obligations and rights associated to each one of such categories. In addition, we relate the degree of organizational accessibility of membership types with the powers allocated to each of them. Second, different from the studies using the PPDB project's data (Poguntke et al. 2016; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017), our analytical perspective focuses on the individual point of view of potential members and non-

members, to explore the channels through which they can get involved within the party, and the financial costs they have to face and the accessibility rules of the different (members and non full members) affilation modes, rather than the party itself. Moreover, the works based on the PPDB data only identify the existence of alternative types of affiliations, but the operationalization of the variables does not allow distinguishing clearly how many and what types of options for affiliating with the party beyond formal mebership exist. When assessing who is deciding upon program, candidate selection, etc., the PPDB lists how non-members are included, nonetheless a further clarification among the different modes for being involved still needs to be developed.

Hence, while the PPDB dataset allows measuring whether there are other types of party affiliations than full membership and how non-members may influence party decision-making, it does not offer detailed information on what type of alternative affiliations are offered, how many, how they are regulated and what rights and obligations the different kinds of non-members have. The PPDB dataset provides this information for full membership categories, and describes the rights of non-members to participate in some decision-making processes, but without clearly formalizing and distinguishing the various non-member categories. In contrast, Scarrow provides a detailed overview of the universe of party affiliations, including full membership, offered on the party websites. Her seminal study also assesses how easy it is to enrol in parties online (i.e. the accessibility index). However, her data does not develop further how parties regulate these different types of affiliations in terms of both rights and obligations. Further research is needed in order to assess what non-members can do exactly within a party and at what cost and how this compares to full members. Therefore, this study aims at bridging the small but important empirical gaps remaining in these two sets of previous studies (the PPDB based ones and Scarrow's) by focusing on comparison of the powers allocated to members and non-members. As party rules, party websites and affiliation types offered change overtime, we needed to collect data measuring these main dimensions of analysis at the same time, and thus we had to resort to a new, separate data collection.

We consider that involved non-members are voters/party identifiers that are not necessarily interested in becoming full members, but who voluntarily connect with a party, who want to participate in specific internal events (online or physical; open to the public or closed to registered participants) and are thus willing to register as a party "friend", "supporter", "cyber/guest member" or "sympathizer" (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017). In order

to do so we explore four main dimensions analysing party organizational settings and regulatory differences.

The main dimension of analysis captures the *modes of partisan affiliation as a member or non-member* offered by parties and their costs. This is particularly relevant from an individual perspective given our research question, as individuals willing to connect with a party have two options: joining as a full member or through non-members. The choice is primarily based on a cost-benefit analysis of each status from the supply side of party membership (Heidar 2006; Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017). Citizens will enroll as full members only if they consider that the benefits of full membership outweigh its cost and obligations. This dimension comprehends two sub-dimensions based on the sets of rights and obligations regulating the two membership types, measuring:

(a) How *organizationally permeable* are parties, especially in terms of barriers for joining (Scarrow 1996: 17). The lower the barriers, the broader is the party's societal reach. This is measured on a spectrum that goes from parties that consider all who attend a party event or donate to be party members, to party rules entailing the regular payment of inscription fees, exclusivity and other formal procedures for joining. This is relevant because with full organizational permeability the status of non-members and of members would be identical, even though this does not mean that different groups share the same rights. As long as parties offer both forms of affiliation, there may be a substantial difference in obligations and rights attached to them.

(b) The *balance of power of members vs. non-members,* measuring the range of the requirements imposed and privileges distributed to the different categories of partisan affiliation (Pedersen, 2003: 39). In particular, it captures the *degree of formal involvement of non-members*, meaning the statutory mentions of what non-members are permitted to do. We look at the distribution of power within parties by accounting for the activities or privileges traditionally reserved for members that are also offered to all the other categories of partisan affiliation (Gauja and Van Haute 2014). This is not about real participation/involvement but formal opportunities to get involved.

Specifically, we outline the extent to which non-members can participate in and are formally integrated within the party. Furthermore, we discuss the implications of adopting these new forms of engagement. Ultimately, we show that rather than substituting the existing conception of party membership, the non-members complement it as new and smaller parties can gain supporters and all parties can recruit more resources in times –such as elections for example- when they need

them more without challenging (and risking losing) their traditional grass-roots. Further, our study adds to the understanding of party membership by focusing on the empirical assessment of both the regulation of new affiliation categories and of non-member participation within parties, rather than simply exploring how parties manage affiliation as done by previous studies.

We further argue that the parties' choice to increase linkage options is affected by their organizational (and specifically their size) and party family features. The choice of party-level (demand side) explanatory factors to explore potential features underlying cross-party variation is supported by a growing number of studies that have recently applied an organizational perspective to the study of the main determinants of party membership (Gauja and van Haute 2015, van Haute 2016; Scarrow et al. 2017; Kölln 2016; Weldon 2006). Based on the literature on party politics, intra-party democracy (IPD) and political membership (for a review, see van Haute, 2016), we identified two main factors that could explain the variation in the types of partisan affiliations and in their respective degree of involvement within the party: *party size* and *party family*.

Regarding *party size,* our theoretical standpoint is Michels' classic argument ([1911] 1962) that larger parties require more complex organizational structures, triggering the deterioration of IPD and opportunities for internal mobilization. More recent empirical studies have shown, however, that organizational complexity, usually associated with party size, gives members greater opportunities to participate in the political processes (Scarrow 2000). Some studies argue that more members are active when more elaborate organizational structures of large parties provide additional opportunities for participation (Scarrow 2000: 95). This could also suggest that organizational complexity may increase the chances of involving also non-members in party activities. However, the larger the party, the more it benefits from already broad legitimacy, social linkages and grass-roots resources. Thus, larger parties have fewer pressures to adopt new affiliation categories and to give new affiliates extensive rights, and tend to protect existing full members to a greater degree (Scarrow 2000).

Small parties, on the contrary, need more volunteers for running effective campaigns, for increasing their legitimacy and for broadening their societal linkages. So, by providing channels for participation also for non-members, and by endowing them with extensive rights, small parties aim to attract supporters and then mobilize them when needed.

This rationale of capturing variation of the possible involvement of non-members within parties provides our dependent variable. In contrast, other less recent empirical and theoretical literature shows that smaller parties tend to involve their members more (Tan 1998; Weldon 2006). By extension, smaller parties are also more likely to involve non-members in order to strengthen their base and broaden their organizational reach. Larger mass-based parties tend to rely on more complex organizational structures and to give more power and individual rights to their enrolled members. By doing so, larger parties incentivize their participation. On the contrary, smaller parties are more likely to be organizationally open in order to compensate for their modest size (especially during electoral campaigns) and thus to allocate more rights to non-members (Faucher 2015; Scarrow 2015; Garland 2016). They are less interested in having a broad grassroots base of activists and aim rather at reaching out to a wider range of individual supporters. Following this logic, we argue that smaller parties are characterized by a higher degree of involvement of non-members. As this is an exploratory study, we do not formulate proper, verifiable hypotheses, but expectations that are rather more general:

Expectation no. 1: The smaller the size of parties, the greater statutory participation rights for non-members.

Second, party family might contribute to explaining the variation in the degree of involvement of non-members and the extent of rights and obligations distributed to them. The literature often argues that parties situated at the two extremes of the right-left spectrum are generally characterized either by complex structures for securing high membership participation (left) or by strongly hierarchical organizations (right) (Kitschelt 2000). Bolleyer (2007) hypothesizes that new parties on the left embrace societal individualization processes fully and incorporate them organizationally, weakening their organizational boundaries. Thus, we expect party family to constitute relevant factors explaining how parties link to civil society. Thus we expect parties belonging to social-democratic/leftist families to be characterized by a higher degree of involvement of non-members.

In terms of party family previous literature supports the relationship between party family and intra-party democracy (IPD) (Gibson and Harmel 1998; Bolin et al. 2017, Von dem Berge and Poguntke 2017). Leftist and social-democratic parties are traditionally more open to broadening their base, thanks to their experience with associated membership (trade unions) and the fact that they need to rely more on mass funding rather than a few wealthy donors (Garland 2016). Thus, different party families with its diverse organisational traditions should also affect the role and relationship of members, non-

members and their inclusion into the party organisation.

Moreover, in order to identify our main explanatory factors, we build not only on the above-mentioned main theories of party organization, but also develop further some theoretical implications raised but not fully assessed by PPDB based research. The latter (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017 and Scarrow 2015) has shown that there is a huge variation in the degree of accessibility across parties and countries and that this variation is higher than the variation of regulation of different types of affiliation (multi-speed index). So, we assess the association between the range of affiliation forms offered by parties and party families, but we also go beyond this by looking at the relationship between rights and obligations of each affiliation category and party styles or organizational tradition (measured by a proxy, party size). We thus try to explain variation in party organizational trajectories by party size and not only by county and party family. We thus contribute to the ongoing debate about party accessibility, type of affiliation and party organizational traditions by assessing to what extent party size could explain parties' strategies concerning their membership boundaries. As Scarrow suggests, organizational styles and "traditions might constrain experiments with new types of affiliation options: parties which view members primarily as fans should be least concerned to police the boundaries of membership, while those which view members as part of a cleavage community, or of an ideological movement, might be more likely to preserve control over admission to the party" (2014: 20).

Expectation no. 2: Parties belonging to centre-left party families will allow for more involvement of non-members than parties belonging to centre-right and other party families.

Our aim is more exploratory than explanatory; thus we mostly explore correlations among variables rather than establish causal links. The article primarily contributes to our understanding of what the party base is and the exploration of parties' degree of openness to non-members makes it possible to evaluate how they interact with their voters and with society.

3. DATA AND METHODS

We decided to collect a small-N empirical dataset. It consists of 68 parties in 13 stable parliamentary democracies[1] where (at least some) parties use different modes

of partisan affiliation and direct democracy (such as primary elections). The dataset is mainly based on publicly available material from the parties' websites and statutes. This captures how parties formally presents its affiliation options to the public and how they organize on paper, which of course in reality and daily practice might diverge from this formal regulation. In order to analyse the regulation of members and non-members across parties in different political settings the dataset covers both democracies in the European Union (EU) and non-EU European democracies but also Commonwealth countries. We also include France, now a semi-presidential system, but its party traditions formed during the country's era as a parliamentary democracy. One of the central reason to focus on these cases are their shared political tradition, experiences and influence on each other leading to similar views on how parties should organise in general and in relation to its members and supporters more specifically (Scarrow 2015: 7-8).

The second reason is that parties in these countries are strongly affected by the current membership decline and thus at the forefront to develop new strategies and approaches to address this development (Scarrow 2015; van Biezen et al. 2012). Lastly, the similarity of the cases and the general comparability of their political systems reduce the contextual variation in order to develop the analysis ceteris paribus. Still the cases provides variations in key features such as electoral system, party system, form of government, concentration of executive powers vs power sharing, etc. that which have been linked to party organizational development and role of party membership. These and the range of organizational differences present in our main unit of analysis, the individual party (including parties with no or limited IPD), provides the theoretical variation of our main independent variables (party size and family) needed for assessing its impact on non-member participation. We limit our study to parliamentary parties that have either obtained at least 5%[2] of votes in the last elections or have coalition or blackmail potential (mainly new right-wing populist parties such as FN, UKIP, AfD or BZÖ; see Appendix A for full list of cases). Thus, while our findings relevance are limited to the cases analysed here, our cases represent and exemplify the diversity that exists across parties and thus our case selection is likely, compared to a selection of more homogenous set of countries, to be representative

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[1] Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, UK, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand.

[2] The choice of this criterion is based on the fact that the legal threshold of 5% of votes casts is the highest and most used threshold in the rules for national parliamentary and EU elections in EU members states (e.g. is used by Germany, Belgium – by constituency- , France – for EU elections-, etc.). See for instance: https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-PI(2018)004-e

in the minimal sense of representing the full variation of the population. It therefore allows conducting explorative research that is also relevant for parties operating in other countries not covered here.

Our dataset differs from previous studies (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017, and particularly the PPDB project dataset, see Poguntke et al. 2016 and Scarrow et al. 2017). Our dataset integrates a broader set of indicators for measuring non-member participation by analyzing party statutes and websites. The inclusion of websites is also important as nowadays they are often the first point of contact and parties can make it easier to join as either member or non-member or to become active by providing for online participation (online voting, members' area/forums, etc.).

More specifically, we look at both party statutes (i.e. internal formal rules) and their websites (i.e. the public face of the party) per each selected case at the same point in time. More specifically, we assess how these two sources of information present and regulate the different modes of interaction with the party for members and non-members. These two sources combined also allow assessing the degree of difficulty to become active within the party (i.e. individual effort or cost). Thus, the article - like past studies - looks at statutory regulation, but also at party websites as the first and main point of interaction between parties and actual and potential members.

As explained above (see section 2), the PPDB study could be enlarged by looking not only at rights and obligations generally allocated to alternative affiliation categories, but also at the regulation of specific types of non-formalized membership and at the powers allocated to each of them, compared and contrasted to those allocated to full members. This would make a significant difference in the analysis of the dynamics of political activism since it allows measuring more effectively the degree of openness of party organizational boundaries and its consequences. This allows exploring more in depth the different strategies of contemporary parties: are they more interested in boosting their enrolment numbers by providing less costly full membership or are they aiming at mobilizing new activists, even though they are not formally enrolled? Are they distributing rights to both full members and non-members to increase engagement at any cost or are they keeping some privileges only for full members as to maintain a smaller but more loyal base?

Moreover, while we focus on a small N sample of parties, within each country case we cover more parties than the PPDB Round 1 (see France for example) and we use similar indicators as Scarrow (2015) but collect more recent data (Scarrow's data captures the situation in 2011). We also develop further indexes that comple-

ment Scarrow's accessibility index and multi-speed indexes. Overall, this article offers a more fine-grained dataset with a specific focus on both members and non-members possible activities within parties, in particular if compared to the operationalization of the variables in the PPDB. The latter uses mainly one item to measure other types of affiliations (at least according to the codebook, see Poguntke 2016): the item "CR7FRIEND", which assess whether the party statutes recognize a separate level of formal affiliation with reduced obligations and reduced rights (for instance, party "friend" or "registered sympathizer"). This item does not include members with reduced dues but full rights, such as reduced fees for young people or unemployed citizens. Therefore, in the PPDB, alternative affiliation is a dichotomous variable coded 0 if the party allows only formal membership, and 1 if the party also offers an alternative affiliation option (Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017).

The limited geographical reach of our small-N sample ensures that concepts such as IPD and membership are understood in a similar way and allows for meaningful comparison. Our main data source was the most up-to-date parties' statutes, provided online or by the party, as well as their websites for further information such as membership fees or the possibility of non-affiliated participation options.

3.1. Operationalization of the dependent variables

Next we provide the main indicators and their operationalization measuring party organizational settings:

1. *Types of affiliation and non-formalized membership*: following previous studies (in particular Scarrow 2015 and Kosiara-Pedersen et al. 2017), we account for six categories of partisan affiliation based of the degree of formality and their cost (fees): Full formal members, (registered) Supporters, Financial supporters, Trial members[3], Registered primary voters, and Non-affiliated participants/volunteers. They are coded as dichotomous variables and merged into an additive index. All parties provide the option of formal, full, direct membership. The higher the score, the more different possibilities for getting involved with the party exist.

We also coded the price for each of these affiliation categories by using the average annual fee level (in Euros). The inclusion of price of affiliations is vital as it determines the cost of participation and can be instrumental in increasing certain types of party affiliation

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[3] Trial Members: informal membership with the formal possibility and individual intention of becoming full member.

or discourage them. Thus, it can increase participation in primaries or encourage people to join as supporters or members depending on the cost-benefit analysis of cost of participation and rights gains. Further, different costs of engaging with parties can allow for inclusion of broader shares of society in party activities and thus can be used to improve societal linkage. In short, affiliation cost plays a major role in determining who participates, in what activities and at what point in time. Some parties even use progressive income dependent membership fee scales or a percentage of the income rather than absolute numbers[4]. Therefore, we calculated the average fee (highest-lowest fee possible/2).

2. *The degree of organizational permeability for full-membership*: this scale is based on indicators measuring membership accessibility, its formality- signature, visit to party office or online-and the degree of complexity of recruitment procedures[5]. We recoded the data following the path of least resistance. Thus, if members can sign up both online or in person with a signature we recoded only the former. Further entry barriers considered are: minimum age requirements[6], the body responsible for selecting the new members, sponsorship by existing member(s), membership incompatibility rules, and disciplinary procedures for disrespecting the requirements or violating party rules[7], all coded dichotomously. The fees are re-coded as either below average (=0) and above average (=1). Combined costs and barriers to entry indicators provide one single index measuring the level of organizational permeability. The final index is a simple additive scale of the score of each party on each category (Cronbach's alpha: 0.43), from 0 to 8.

3. *Rights and obligations allocated to full-members*: these variables are measured through two cumulative

indexes of obligations imposed (0 to 4) and privileges distributed (0 to 8) to formal members (Cronbach's alpha: 0.26 and 0.77). The higher the individual score, the more extensive rights and/or more obligations full-members have. We look at the following rights: right to stand as candidate for elected office,[8] to attend the party congress without being delegate, to vote at the party congress, to call the party congress, to select the party national executive organ, to select parliamentary candidates[9], to select presidential or prime ministerial (or, generally, chief-executive) candidates, and to select the party leader.[10] We explored the following obligations: to pay an inscription fee; to go through a probation phase, to adhere to party rules/principles; and to be involved regularly in party activities (Cronbach's alpha: 0.26).

4. *The degree of formal involvement of non-members* this variable focuses on the participatory privileges (and potential obligations) of non-members. The rights of non-members cumulative index ranges from 0 (no rights) to 7 (all possible rights). The index includes the following indicators: non-member right to participate in party activities in general (canvassing, campaigning, rallies, attending local party meetings/events, etc.); right to attend the party congress; right of voting in internal votes (at all levels); right to stand as candidate for elected office; right to select parliamentary candidates; right to select presidential/PM/chief-executive candidates; right to select the party leader. While in some of these activities non-member can always engage spontaneously, many parties nowadays provide official possibilities to sign up to for example to help with campaigning and thus create a more formal link with non-members. Here, in addition to the rights listed in the statutes, we coded these official offers as specific rights of non-members.

3.2 Operationalization of the independent and explanatory variables

We have selected two independent variables that could explain variation in membership categories and the rights/obligations of members vs. non-members: party family and party organizational type.

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[4] This is mainly case for full membership fees. For example, the German Greens charge consists in 1% of annual income after taxes. We have calculated it by using the average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita in Germany (data provided by the OECD: http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/income/)

[5] In Switzerland, it is the cantonal party organization that regulates the entry requirements. We used the regulation of Bern and Zurich to code these regulations as they are – in terms of population- the biggest cantons and thus their rules apply to most party members. Also in Australia membership fees are set by the State party branches (we calculated average values where possible). In some cases, membership fees are set by regional and not national party bodies (for example in Austria). In this case, we calculated the average price of party membership.

[6] Some parties set a minimum age, but this minimum is below voting age (usually to be over 16 years old). We still consider it as a barrier to entry.

[7] The provision of disciplinary procedures is here seen as something positive as it allows rejected applicants to challenge the rejection or expulsion and requires the deciding body to justify it ruling.

[8] This is coded as "yes" if the party statutes clearly state the right of all members to be candidate and candidacy does not require any further requirements.

[9] Here too, we recoded the data following the path of least resistance. Some parties allow members only to approve the final list, others grant them the right to amend the proposed list, and others let members intervene at all stages of the process. We decided to look at whether members are formally involved in at least one stage of the process.

[10] All rights and obligations were coded 1 when stated in party rules or websites and 0 when non-existent.

1. *Party family*: for coding party family, we use the classifications of the Comparative Manifesto Project based on right-left positions ("rile scores"). We divided the cases into two broad categories of *left and non-left party family groups* . The former includes ecological, social democratic and socialist parties while the *non-left* consists of liberal, Christian democratic, conservative and nationalist parties. For some cases, such as special/one-issue parties, agrarian or ethnic and regional parties, the classification is more challenging and the article used the proximity of the *rile score* to the parties grouped as left or non-left in order to classify them correctly. The CMP date set included all parties coved in the article.

Our dataset consists of 33 (45.8%) left and 37 (51.4%) non-left parties. The use of similar classifications of party families in the latest party politics literature (Pilet and Cross 2014 and 2015; Van Haute and Gauja 2015; Pettitt 2014. Poguntke et al. 2016) points to the fact that such classifications provide a good proxy for ideological orientation (and party styles and organizational traditions), which gives a good indication of the party's general attitude towards members, including their roles, rights and obligations within the party and thus are appropriate in assessing our expectations. We also unpack the differences between party families further by outlining how they differ in terms of organizational permeability, rights and obligations of members and non-members.

2. *Party Size*: in order to measure party size and its effect on the involvement of non-members, we use the pertinent proxy of M/E ratio based on aggregate membership size to calculate the relative size of each individual party's grassroots base with regard to the overall electorate[11]. We classified the M/E ratios – based on each countries mean values for the M/E ratios[12] – using three distinct cut-off-points: small, medium-sized or large membership party. Consequently, for instance, the Australian Labour and Irish Fianna Fail are classified as large, the Austrian Swiss SPS/PSS or Belgium CDH are classified as medium, and the BZÖ or the German AfD are classified as small. Table 1 outlines the classification of parties according to size (per country):

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[11] It is possible that party rules about non-member rights could affect the proportion of voters who choose to become members; if so, the M/E ratio is not independent from the rules themselves. Using vote share to assess party size would avoid this problem. However, we decided to keep M/E as measure of party size because it is the main indicator used in the literature on membership and party organizations (van Haute and Gauja 2015).

[12] Cut-off points: (1): E/M Score more than 0.5 points < the national mean of M/E ratio = small party; (2) E/M Score less than 0.5 points < the national mean of M/E ratio= medium-sized party (3) E/M Score > the national mean of M/E ratio = large party.

Table 1. Party size.

	Small party	Medium-sized party	Large party	Total(N)
Australia	0	2	3	5
Austria	3	0	2	5
Belgium	2	3	4	9
Canada	2	2	1	5
France	1	2	2	5
Germany	7	0	0	7
Ireland	0	2	2	4
Italy	2	2	3	7
New Zealand	1	2	1	4
Portugal	0	2	2	4
Spain	1	1	2	4
Switzerland	1	1	3	5
UK	1	1	2	4
Total(N)	21	20	27	68

4. NON-MEMBERS' CHANNELS FOR PARTICIPATION WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES

In the following section, we discuss the collected data by presenting our general findings and then we assess our two expectations linking the relationship between party size and family on the scope of intra-party participation opportunities for non-members. It is important to point out that the statistical significance of our analysis is limited by the small number of cases in the database.

First, we present a few descriptive accounts of our data. Table 2 offers an overview of the average, minimum and maximum prices for each category of party affiliation, for both members and non-members.

While in German and French parties full membership costs are much higher than in most other countries, in Belgium and Spain they are very low. In for example the Australian Pirate party, as well as the M5S and SEL

Table 2. Price of full membership and non-membership types of affiliation.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Price of Standard Membership	66	0	330	41.7	62.5
Price of Supporter Status	36	0	250	11.5	43.1
Price of Financial Supporter	19	4	3955	325.2	923.8
Price of Trial Membership	3	0	30	10	17.3
Price of Primary Voter	14	0	2	0.5	0.85

Note: Total N=68 parties.

Figure 1. Organizational permeability index (%). Note: Total N=68 parties.

Figure 2. Membership rights index (%). Note: Total N=68 parties.

in Italy, full members can join by contributing a voluntary donation. The party affiliation as a "supporter" is mostly free (e.g. for the German, Australian or Austrian Greens) or very inexpensive (e.g. for the UK Labour and Tories). However, for the Irish Fianna Fail, joining as a supporter is actually more expensive than as a full party member, with the former costing 75 euros and the latter 50 euros.
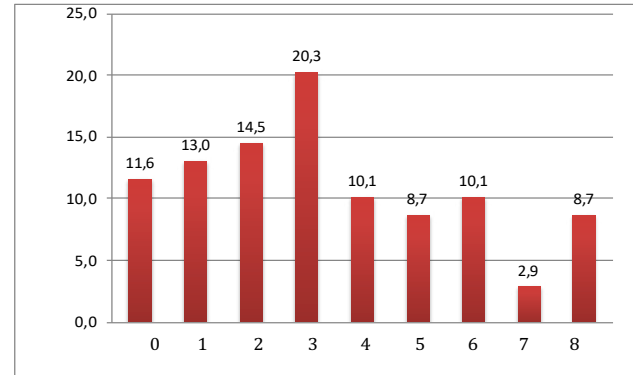
If we look now at the degree of organizational permeability, Figure 1 shows that the lower the score, the more permeable the party is for full members. The less "open" parties in our database are right of center parties such as the Belgian NVA, Austrian ÖVP or the Swiss UDC. The more permeable ones, besides US parties, are usually Greens and new left/populist parties (e.g. Podemos and M5S). For most parties in Westminster democracies, entry barriers are very low and citizens can join by simply enrolling online. In contrast, the German Greens require the local party unit to decide to accept new members. Many parties, including the British UKIP as well as the Italian LN and SPD, impose a probation phase for new members, and the Spanish PP requires sponsorship by an existing full member to join.

Figure 2 offers insight on the rights and obligations allocated to full-members: Most parties provide members with rights in three areas. Further, there seems to be a polarization of the sample along this indicator: equally large shares of parties either provide no rights at all or a very high number of rights. If almost half of the sample allows full members to stand as candidates for elected office without any additional requirement or to attend the party congress as observers, only a few parties allow them voting rights at the congress. Almost ¼ of the selected parties involve full members in the selection of the executive body, while 47.2% allow for participation in leadership, 62% in parliamentary, and 51% in chief-executive candidate selections.

Figure 3 shows that most parties impose quite extensive obligations with a score of two or three. While only a few parties require a probation phase (e.g. Belgian and some far right parties), 77.8% still require members to respect party principles and positions, and 30% require members to actively participate regularly in party activities. Most impose annual membership and membership incompatibility rules.

Figure 4 shows the parties' distribution along the non-members participation index (Cronbach's alpha: 0.64). No party actually achieves the maximum score of 7. Only five parties -mainly left and green parties with candidate and/or leadership primaries- grant rights in five or more areas to non-members, while the majority grants only one right, primarily to formally attend party meetings (local or national level) and/or participate in electoral campaign activities. Right or populist parties (e.g. the French FN or the Portuguese CDS-PP) do not allow any form of involvement by non-full members. The remarkable exception to the above is the Flemish green party, Groen, which grants extensive powers to full members but none whatsoever to supporters and voters.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the selected parties per different types of party affiliations offered according to their formal rules. Unsurprisingly, all par-

Figure 3. Membership obligations index. Note: Total N=68 parties.

Figure 4. Non-members' participation index (%). Note: Total N=68 parties.

Figure 6. Non-Full member types of affiliation (%). Note: Total N=68 parties.

Figure 5. Variation in the types of affiliation (%). Note: Total N=68 parties.

types of affiliation beside full membership offered by parties are represented by the "supporter" and "non-affiliated participants" categories.

There is also a small group of parties, 12.5% of the sample, that seem to resist the current trend of providing alternatives to full membership. This raises the question of what factors influence the party'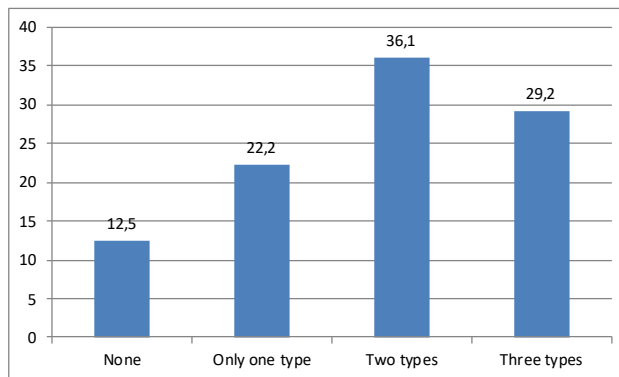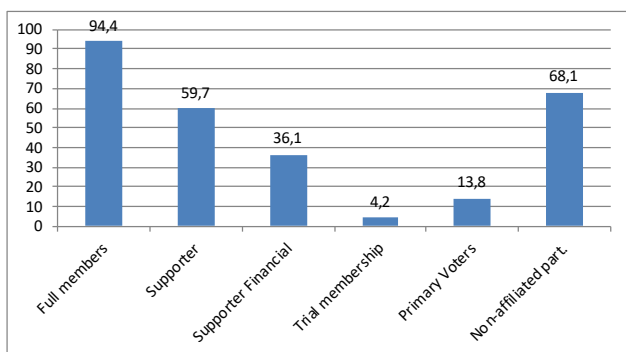s choice of different type of affiliations and the scope of affiliation modes they offer. In the next section of the article, we analyse the impact of two potential factors: *party size* and *party family*.

4.1. Party Size

We argue that party size relates to the variety of modes available to individuals to get involved with a political party and the rights and obligations attached to each of these different modes of affiliation. The relationship is expected to associate smaller parties with greater opportunities for non-membership participation. Table 3 partially supports our expectation that smaller parties are characterized by a higher degree of involvement of non-members, reinforcing claims by Tan (1998) and Weldon (2006). Almost 53% of the selected parties classified as small provide two types of additional forms of affiliation beyond full membership, and 19% even allow three more modes of affiliations they are also the smallest group of parties offering no other form of affiliation. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 3, there is a high share of large parties (34.5%) offering three types of additional forms of affiliation, with the aim of extending their social reach beyond their own traditional *classe gardée.* Alternatively, due to the generalized low membership rates, such parties may as well actually only get to keep their *classe gardée* also with new recruitment measures. This challenges findings of previous studies on small

ties offer full membership. More interestingly, almost 60% of the sampled parties also offer the possibility to join as a party "supporter" and even more parties (68%) allow for some forms of non-affiliated participation. However, only 10 parties in the sample use open primaries to involve voters and supporters in their internal decision-making.

Figure 6 provides insight into how many different types of party affiliation beyond full membership parties can provide according to their internal regulations. As Figure 6 shows, the maximum score is three (e.g. the French PS) and no party in our sample allows for more than three different types of non-member affiliation in addition to full membership. While for instance in all four New Zealand parties people can choose between two different types, the Swiss BDP/PBD and French FN only offer one type of non-member affiliation, as (financial) supporter. We can see that most parties (58.3%) provide either one or two types of affiliations beside full membership. Combining this with the findings presented above (Figure 5), we can assume that most other

Table 3. Non-members types of affiliation per party size (%).

	Non-Full member types of affiliation			
	None	1 type	2 types	3 types
Small party	4.8	23.8	52.4	19
Medium-size party	18.2	18.2	31.8	31.8
Large party	13.8	24.1	27.6	34.5
Total	12.5	22.2	36.1	29.2

Note: Total N=68 parties.

parties, and at the same time reinforces claims by Scarrow (2000).

To further explore our expectations, we run a correlation matrix outlining the association between the party size and other variables such as the types of affiliation and the degree of involvement of non-members within parties (Table 4). In line with our theoretical expectations, there is a moderate and negative association between the party size and the extent of non-membership participation opportunities (Tan 1998; Weldon 2006). As we move from small party to medium-sized to large party sizes, the provision of different forms for non-membership participation decreases. Thus, party sizes seem to be associated with the number and types of party affiliations available.

We also find two statistically significant relationships in the matrix where we can reject H_0. Firstly, we find a positive and significant correlation between the degree of organizational permeability of the party and the obligations of full members. This supports the argument that parties that are more open reach out to non-members to strengthen their legitimacy and electoral support (Faucher 2015; Scarrow 2015; Garland 2016) but are also rooted in a highly disciplined, well organized and highly loyal membership base. Organizational permeability is combined with a strong and tightly regulated organizational role for full members.

Second, we find a positive and significant strong correlation between the number of non-full membership types of affiliation and the extent of the involvement of non-members. Thus, when parties offer a broad range of non-full membership types of affiliation, they also usually give non-enrolled members a varied choice of instruments for getting involved in the party and different channels for influencing intra-party decision-making. We also find a positive but not significant correlation between the indexes measuring membership rights and membership obligations (Table 4). Thus, the more rights members have, the more obligations they also have. This shows that party structures entailing broad roles for their grassroots members also require in return a high degree of loyalty (in the sense of willingness to remain involved even though this entails several obligations) and involvement from them.

4.2. Party Family

We argue that the party family relates to the variety of modes available for individuals to get involved with a political party and the rights and obligations attached to each of these different modes of affiliation (Kitschelt 2000). The direction of causality is the following: we expect that those parties belonging to social-democratic and leftist families, traditionally more open to internal democratization, will be characterized by a higher degree of involvement of non-members (Bolleyer 2007). In order to explore this link more systematically, we ran a correlation matrix exploring the link between party family and our dependent variables (table 5). It clearly shows a positive and significant association between non-member participation and party family (leftist parties are coded=1, non-leftist parties=0). It also shows a positive link between party family and types of non-member affiliation within parties. When moving from non-left parties to leftist ones, the degree of involve-

Table 4. Correlation matrix: party size.

	Organizational permeability	Membership rights	Membership obligations	Non-member participation	Non-Full member types of affiliation
Organizational permeability	1				
Membership rights	-.101	1			
Membership obligations	.285*	.216	1		
Non-member participation	-.092	.078	-.172	1	
Non-Full member types of affiliation	-.185	-.065	-.331	.489*	1
Party size	.100	-.078	-.060	***-.138****	-.009

* Significant at the 0.05 level. ** Significant at the 0.01 level.
Note: Total N=68 parties.

Table 5. Correlation matrix: party family (left vs non-left parties).

	Party Family (left vs non-left parties)	Organizational permeability	Membership rights	Membership obligations	Non-member participation
Party Family (left vs non-left parties)	1				
Organizational permeability	_-0.58	1			
Membership rights	.196	-.101	1		
Membership obligations	-.043	.285*	.216	1	
Non-member participation	.495**	-.092	.078	-.172	1
Non-Full member types of affiliation	.132	.139	-.065	**-.331****	**.489****

* Significant at the 0.05 level. ** Significant at the 0.01 level.
Note: Total N=68 parties.

ment and the possibilities that are provided to non-full members in the party increase (supporting findings by Duverger 1954; Kitschelt 2000)[13].

Further, a positive and significant association emerges between the degree of organizational permeability of the party and the obligations that full members have to perform (table 5) and a significant negative association emerges between membership obligations and the variation in types of non-full members' affiliation. Moreover, we can see an expected positive, significant and strong association between the scope of non-member involvement in party activities and the number of non-full membership types of affiliation. The other correlations we observe in table 5 are similar to those observed in the correlation matrix concerning party sizes. Firstly, the more rights are given to members, the broader the obligations for full members (but the association is not significant). Secondly, parties allowing several non-full member types of affiliation will also give these affiliates a broader scope of rights and instruments for getting involved within the party (and the correlation is significant)

We explored our expectations by splitting the sample into two the groups of left and non-left parties. The next section unpacks this further by looking in more details at the differences in organizational permeability, rights and obligations of members and non-members across the nine party families (1-9 scale, from far left/communists =1 to populist radical right = 9[14]) identified by Krouwel's seminal work (2012: 363).

The explorative scatterplot below clearly outlines this relationship. When moving from the left to right of the spectrum of party family, and thus from *left* to *non-left parties,* the degree of non-members' involvement in party activities clearly decreases (figure 7).

If we look more in detail at each party family (table 6,) we can see a complex relationship between party family and organizational permeability.

Organizational permeability is relatively high in most parties regardless of the party family they belong to (table 6). However, in order to join the majority of Communist/far left parties, Social-democratic parties, Christian-democratic parties and far right parties, prospective full-members must satisfy a comprehensive list of criteria. The entry barriers seem to be particularly high in ethnic regionalist parties, parties of the mainstream left, rightist parties and particularly Christian-democratic ones. Interestingly, conservative parties and far left/Communist parties are split equally between the two groups. New left/socialist parties provide the highest share of cases with low entry barriers, followed by environmental parties and liberal ones. The Social- and Christian-democratic parties have the lowest share of
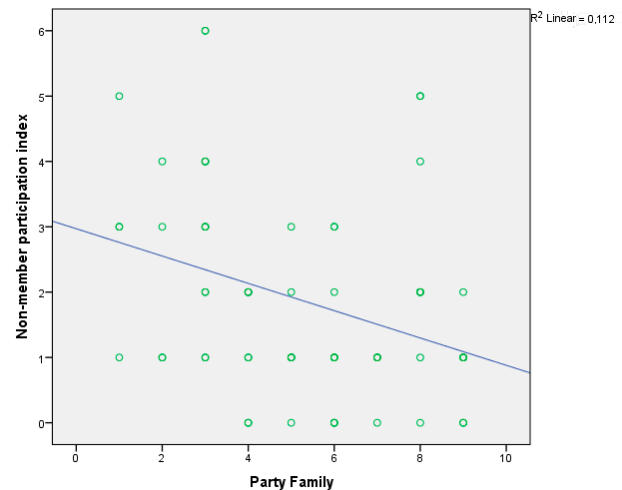
Figure 7. Party family and non-member participation (scatterplot with OLS line and confidence intervals). Note: Total N=68 parties.

[13] It is worth noting that large-scale change in party regulations occurs very slowly, so even if the data have been collected in 2014-2015 the validity of the data is guaranteed.
[14] Greens/environmental parties are recoded as=2 on the scale.

Table 6. Organizational permeability by party family (%).

	High Organizational permeability (low entry barriers)	Low Organizational permeability (high entry barriers)
Communist/far left	50	50
Enviromental	55.6	44.4
Socialist/new left	66.7	33.3
Social Democcats	33.3	66.7
Christian Democrats	14.3	85.7
Liberal	42.9	57.1
Conservative	50	50
Ethnic Regionalist	20	80
Populist radical right	37.5	62.5
Total	40	60

Note: Total N=68 parties.

Table 7. Non-members participation by party family (%).

	Low Involvement of Non-members	High Involvement of Non-members
Communist/far left	75	25
Enviromental	66.7	33.3
Socialist/new left	75	25
Social Democcats	64.3	53.7
Christian Democrats	100	-
Liberal	100	-
Conservative	100	-
Ethnic Regionalist	100	-
Populist radical right	100	-
Total	85.9	14.1

Note: Total N=68 parties.

Table 8. Rights and Obligations of members by party family (%).

	Membership rights index		Membership obligations index	
	Low	High	Low	High
Communist/far left	75	25	25	75
Enviromental	33.3	66.7	55.6	44.4
Socialist/new left	25	75	25	75
Social Democcats	85.7	14.3	64.3	35.7
Christian Democrats	71.4	28.6	37.5	62.5
Liberal	71.4	28,6	66.7	33.3
Conservative	92.3	7.7	46.2	53.8
Ethnic Regionalist	80	20	20	80
Populist radical right	50	50	75	25
Total	69.6	30.4	50.7	49.3

Note: Total N=68 parties.

parties with high permeability, and the environmentalists are in a middle position. Thus, at first sight it seems that most parties erect substantial barriers to protect their full members regardless of party family.

Table 7 shows that, as expected, the parties on the left side of the party family spectrum provide the highest possibility for non-member participation. The score is particularly high among social democrats and environmental parties. Among all centre, centre-right to far right parties, the scores on the index for non-membership participation is very low or non-existent. Thus, this seems to support the idea that those parties belonging to social-democratic and leftist families, traditionally more open to internal democratization, will be characterized by a higher degree of involvement of non-members (Bolleyer 2007).

In addition, party families providing the highest possibility for non-members to participate correspond to those with low organizational permeability such as mainstream and far left party families. This could imply that those parties having high entry barriers to protect their organization and activists from purely event-based members or "instant members" would also provide different means of participation for non-members. Within those parties, non-members can participate in a broad range of intra-party activities and take part in internal decision-making, but their status is clearly separated and distinct from the status and role of full members. For instance, in July 2016 the UK Labour NEC ruled that only those who have been members for more than six months will be allowed to vote in the leadership race, while new supporters will be given two days to sign up as registered supporters and to pay £25 to vote.

Table 8 shows that in most party membership obligations are high and are accompanied by low scores on the membership rights index. Again, it can be seen that new left parties and environmental parties are among the party families scoring highest in the membership rights index, and socialist/new left parties also require that their members follow a broad set of obligations. Overall, we can see that left (far, new and mainstream) and environmental parties have higher entry barriers but also allow for more possibilities for non-members to participate within the party. Furthermore, they compensate for this by providing full-members with substantial rights to influence the internal decision-making, particularly in the case of socialist and new left parties. This further supports the link between party family and the regulation of non-member rights of participation within the party highlighted by the above correlation matrix

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we explore differences in parties' responses to recent societal challenges by allocating new rights and power to its members and non-members. We map the current landscape of rights, obligations and degree of involvement of non-members and we also explore potential factors underlying the variation across parties. The empirical analyses show only a limited support for our first expectation. There seems to be an association between party organizational size (measured by membership size) and the use of non-formalized forms of adhering to a political party. However, no statistically significant association emerges between the regulation of participatory rights for non-members and party organizational sizes. Our results support claims that large parties tend to give more rights to their enrolled members, while smaller parties are more likely to be organizationally open and allocate more rights to non-members (Faucher 2015; Scarrow 2015; Garland 2016).

Conversely, there seems to be some empirical support for our second expectation, linking party family with the provision and regulation of non-member participation opportunities and rights. The analysis supports our explorative expectations that parties on the left and environmental parties provide more space for the participation of non-members (Duverger 1954; Kitschelt 2000; Bolleyer 2007). The correlation matrix confirms this association. These two party families are also characterized by high barriers to entry for new full members and substantial full-membership rights. Within right wing and conservative party families, we do not observe a uniform pattern in the distribution of full-party members' rights and obligations or in the level of permeability. However, most right wing and conservative parties allow very limited forms of non-membership participation within their organizational structures. This seems to imply that the regulations regarding full- and non-membership rights and obligations are (at least up to now) more differentiated based on party family effects rather than because of organizational imperatives to increase competiveness.

This research has important theoretical, empirical and normative repercussions. Our main theoretical contribution relates to the scholarly debate on the trade-off between openness and the organizational viability of parties (Katz and Mair 2009; Cross and Katz 2013; Ignazi 2020). Our findings show how different parties – in terms of family and size - offer different participatory channels to non-members, but the relationship between organizational openness and party type is more fluid and complex than theorized by previous literature. We thus challenge the distinction often found in the literature between parties as either membership organization or a loose "collection of voters" (Scarrow et al. 2017; Faucher 2015). Our findings also challenge the debate on parties as "empty vessels" (Katz and Kolodny 1994). If members are not important, why create non-members possibilities to participate at all? Parties see both full members and non-members as key actors for supplying vital resources and communication during elections. In addition, we show that full members maintain the main rights and remain the central decision-makers in many areas, which goes against the cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 2009).

In empirical terms, we provide new comparative data on parties' societal reach and linkage function in advanced democracies. At a normative level, our research shows that parties need to strike a balance between members' and non-members' rights in order to strengthen their societal linkages, representation capacity and legitimacy, but at the same time use new forms of affiliation as a recruitment mechanism, to secure long term, loyal members. Parties need to maintain a clear line of distinction between the two groups but also to provide specific incentives for non-members in terms of rights and influence gained so that they may be willing to take up the costs of becoming full members.

Most importantly, the most interesting finding of this mainly descriptive exercise is that some of the parties, which maximize formal participation opportunities for non-members, are also those that make it most difficult to join as a full member. It makes sense that parties might come up with a better deal for supporters if obtaining membership is seen as too arduous; on the other hand, if this better deal is too attractive, that might further erode the attraction of party membership. Yet parties that maintain high barriers to membership while reducing barriers to supportership do not seem to be concerned about this possible trade-off. This entails relevant implications for the ability of parties to secure and strengthen their social linkage role. In fact, our findings suggest that keeping a double-track process for getting involved in the party might be counterproductive for the political economy of party survival (both electoral and organizational). However, it ensures that a potentially higher number of individual citizens could be convinced to become involved in politics even if in a less formal and continuous way.

Future research might thus focus on this point and possibly investigate further to see whether membership has been stable or growing in parties with above average supportership opportunities. A second new avenue of research based on new data and findings is not only to

explore the scope of rights granted to members and non-members, but also their nature. Specifically, the analysis of the difference between rights related to the party as organization or as electoral actor could shine further light on the balance of power between the party on the ground, in central and public office. In short, the challenge faced by parties of how to achieve more societal linkage without risk to the organization needs to be explored further.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Cases included in the database.

Country	Party	Year of adoption of statutes	Year of Party Website analysed
Australia	National Party of Australia	2013	2014 for all parties
	Australian Labor Party	2014	
	Liberal Party of Australia	2009	
	Australian Greens	2014	
	Pirate Party Australia	2014	
Austria	SPÖ	2012	
	ÖVP	2007	
	FPÖ	2001	
	Grüne	2012	
	BZÖ	2005	
Belgium	MR	2005	
	PS	2013	
	Ecolo	2013	
	CDH	2002	
	SPA	2002	
	GROEN	2011	
	CD&V	2009	
	Open VLD	2011	
	NVA	2014	
Canada	Conservative Party	2013	
	New Democratic Party	2013	
	Liberal Party of Canada	2014	
	Bloc Québécois	2014	
	Green Party	2013	
France	PS	2012	
	UMP	2012	
	Front de Gauche	2013	
	EELV	2013	
	FN	2011	
Germany	CDU	2012	
	CSU	2014	
	SPD	2014	
	Greens	2014	
	Left	2014	
	AfD	2014	
	Pirate	2014	
Ireland	Fine Gael	2011	
	Labour Party	2013	
	Fianna Fail	2013	
Italy	PD	2012	
	SEL	2012	
	M5S	2009	
	UDC	2007	
	PDL	2011	
	NCD	2014	
	LN	2014	
New Zealand	National Party	2013	
	Labour Party	2014	
	Green Party	2012	
	New Zealand First	2013	

Country	Party	Year of adoption of statutes	Year of Party Website analysed
Portugal	BE	2012	
	PS	2012	
	PSD	2011	
	CDS-PP	2014	
Spain	IU	2012	
	PSOE	2012	
	PP	2012	
	Podemos	2014	
Switzerland	SVP/UDC	2008	
	SPS/PSS	2012	
	FDP.The Liberals	2009	
	CVP/PDC	2008	
	BDP/PBD	2912	
United Kingdom	Labour	2013	
	Conservatives	2009	
	Liberal Democrats	2013	
	UKIP	2014	

Understanding public Euroscepticism

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Abstract. Euroscepticism has become more and more embedded both at the EU and national levels (Usherwood et al. 2013) and persistent across domestic debates (Usherwood and Startin 2013). This study presents an in-depth analysis of contemporary narratives of Euroscepticism. It first introduces its question related to understanding public Euroscepticism, following the British EU referendum campaign and outcome, to then present the established literature, and the analysis of the British case study. A survey run in Britain in May 2019 shows that, as already noted by Oliver Daddow (2006, 2011), Euroscepticism is very much identifiable in the traditional narratives of Europe as the Other. Context accountability (Daddow 2006) is still cause for concern in Britain and by assuming a more positive view of a European Britain (Daddow 2006) does not make the debate more informed. Images, narratives and specific issues to reform the Eurosceptic toolbox into a more neutral, but informative, instrument could be applied at the grassroots level, as the post-referendum demonstrations and manifestations have shown. British citizens are reclaiming their own European citizenship, and deconstructing existing Euromyths can be a first small step forward.

Keywords. Euroscepticism, public opinion, Brexit; narratives.

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, 2nd July 2016, thousands of people marched through London to show their support for the EU (European Union) and in protest against the UK (United Kingdom) EU membership referendum (23 June 2016) result, when 51.9 per cent of British citizens voted Leave. Gathering around Park Lane, demonstrators walked up to Parliament square within a wave of EU flags and placards, reading slogans as 'We Love EU', 'Never gonna give EU up' and 'Brexshit'. One of the organizers, Mark Thomas, commented that he felt 'anger [and] frustration' and needed to do something (BBC 2016).

A few months later, after the EU institutions received the UK Prime Minister Theresa May's notification letter triggering Art. 50 (29 March 2017), the EU Council President Donald Tusk (2017) gave his official speech by closing on an emotional tone, '…we already miss you.' On a similar note, the European Parliament (EP) Brexit Coordinator Guy Verhofstadt talked of the letters he had been receiving, and the emotion coming up nearing the opening of the negotiation to exit the EU (BBC 2017).

The 2016 British referendum shows that, theoretically, identity, rational utilitarian frameworks of analysis, political parties' cues or other quantitative analyses cannot fully explain its outcome. Narratives, and embedded national discourses, are missing from the overall picture. Yet, narratives engage through psychological realism, such as the red bus used in the British Leave campaign, and mobilize emotions. The role of narratives is critical to examine how people relate to the EU and what Euroscepticism is about. Recent EU crises reclaim the urgency of understanding how the EU is represented and articulated to accept the challenge of the persistent distance between the EU and citizens. This study focuses on the narratives that mobilize public Euroscepticism that emerged after the British EU referendum, examining what the narratives are and what they tell us about public Euroscepticism.

When studying public attitudes at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, before the EU enlargement, the focus tended to examine decreasing levels of support, across member states and candidate countries – ie.: mainly Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. In Poland, the largest of the EU candidate countries, and member states, as in Germany and Austria, citizens were fearing the social costs of the negotiation reforms in the former cases, and floods of immigration from neighbouring countries, in the latter. Identity, rational utilitarian frameworks of analysis or the study of the relationship between attitudes towards the nation state and democracy, or political cues could explain general patterns of support and opposition, where a ratio between costs and benefits determined attitudes in the Eastern region (Guerra 2013), and domestic politics could affect attitudes across Western member states (Guerra and Serricchio 2014).

Since then, research has also sought to explain that public Euroscepticism is different compared to party Euroscepticism. With the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), when public opinion became for the first time 'both a measure and a determinant of the process of European integration' (Gabel 1998: 9), studies developed more to explain than to understand public Euroscepticism.

This analysis first explores why it is fundamental to address a question on understanding Euroscepticism, following the British EU referendum campaign and outcome, to then present the established literature on Euroscepticism, and key concepts and contributions. The analysis of the narratives on the British referendum shows how generalizations can be challenging and people's voices are critical to understand the main embedded themes and dimensions of opposition to the EU. While these are mainly explanatory at the domestic level, this research suggests that a comparative analysis could offer an essential overview to understand public Euroscepticism.

WHY 'UNDERSTANDING' EUROSCEPTICISM

Euroscepticism has long remained under-examined in its meanings and manifestations across

the public, with some notable exceptions investigating civil society, the European public sphere or lack of it, and the role of the media (Dutceac Segesten and Bossetta 2019; Bijsmans et al. 2018; Eurosphere 2013; FitzGibbon 2013). The financial and refugee crises first and the British referendum, since 2016, have brought contestation to the forefront, and scholarly debates have started to examine the opposition that started to increase in the post-financial crisis years (Usherwood et al. 2013; Caiani and Guerra 2017; Stefanova 2014; Guerra and Serricchio 2014), and its national differences (De Vries 2018). This analysis suggests that listening to the different voices could have helped understand the British referendum outcome.

As noted for the case of identity (Risse 2010), attitudes become more salient at times of crisis, and by investigating the national narratives and emotions attached, in the UK after the referendum, this study seeks to stress the relevant characteristics of the domestic politics of EU integration at the public level and the debates originated within that context, and the narratives that have been mobilized across public opinion, listening to people's voices. Recent contestations address the idea of the EU in the Treaties, and John FitzGibbon suggests the term 'Euroalternativism', to indicate 'pro-systemic opposition' that proposes alternative policies and institutional reforms, while arguing that 'another Europe is possible' (2013). Almost fifteen years ago, Taggart (2006) suggested proceeding by examining domestic politics, as dynamics at the domestic level are critical to understand Euroscepticism. Thus, this analysis seeks to reconcile two fields of studies, European domestic politics and European Studies (Hutter et al. 2016), bearing in mind that public Euroscepticism is not likely to be explained by party models. Public Euroscepticism can show apathy towards politics in general, and low salience of the EU (see Guerra 2013). At the public level, Euroscepticism can be represented by a more passive, attitude, against some policies or due to the perceived distance of the EU institutions, while the Greek referendum in 2015 and the British referendum in 2016 show how debates can radicalize and create, what Tsebelis calls, an emerging tribalism, 'division into non-communicating competitive groups in political and social life' (2018: 81).

Consequently, the objective here is to examine the different narratives of Euroscepticism, exploring the in-depth understanding of its manifestation, and its articulation emerging at the domestic level, in the Brexit case study. It is in the different embedded traditions, nuances and messages, and lack of messages, at the domestic and EU levels, that we can understand public Euroscepticism.

KEY CONCEPTS, ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC

The core interest is the voices of Euroscepticism in their emergence and narratives at the domestic level to offer a tool that can be applied in comparative perspective. The assumption is that this approach is critical to understand public Euroscepticism, as it would examine it within its own environment, while still applying a comparative perspective. The years of publication of the different contributions on Euroscepticism emerged across the European Studies research in the early 1990s, following the unexpected impact of citizens' opposition to the elite driven development of the EU integration process. At that time, the urge of new theories led to a new contribution, postfunctionalism (Hooghe and Marks 2009), seeking to explain unprecedented contestation towards the EU, emerging from more heated debates at the public level. The Danish rejection of the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) signaled a turning point, as the legitimacy of the EU became more challenged. The definition of Euroscepticism commonly used is provided with reference to political parties, as 'the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' that can be 'on principle', too 'inclusive' or too 'exclusive' (Taggart 1998: 365-366). Taggart's typology later develops towards a taxonomic approach and distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' party Euroscepticism. The former defines when 'there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership', but opposition to one or more policies or the party opposes the EU because it may be against the 'national interest' and the latter indicates 'a principled opposition to the EU and European integration', usually in those political parties aiming to withdraw their country from the EU or opposing EU integration or further developments (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 7).

An alternative explanation, based on a 'two-dimensional conceptualization' (Kopecký and Mudde 2002), and an ideological dimension, distinguishes diffuse and specific support for European integration, indicating support for the 'general ideas' and support for the 'general practice' of the EU integration process. The limits of the theoretical exercise emerge with the Europragmatist category, where a political party opposes the EU, but supports further developments of the EU integration process. Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart's analysis has remained for party analyses, but also to indicate public forms of opposition. Yet, public Euroscepticism does not show the same stances of party Euroscepticism. In this research, the scope is to understand the emotional mobilization and effectiveness of narratives at the public level, that have become clear with the 2016 British referendum.

HOW BREXIT CHANGES PUBLIC EUROSCEPTICISM

Brexit has created new directions of research, that answer the urgency of understanding how the EU is represented and articulated to accept the challenge of the persistent distance between the EU and citizens, beyond parties and institutions. As Flood had already observed, Euroscepticism presents challenges, as Eurosceptics can blame the EU for excessive regulation and intervention, on the right, or being committed to liberalism, on the left, and represents a 'multitude' of types and viewpoints (Flood 2002). This develops

in the embedded traditions and narratives, or discourse, at the domestic level (Usherwood and Startin 2013; Daddow 2013).

The British referendum played the role of decisive turning point. A turning point or crisis is based on a construction that posits the Self vs. the Other. This returns in the everyday lived experiences, where the national context is contrasted with the international narrative, as foreigner, well represented by Brussels, and the EU (see Wodak and Angouri 2014). National political actors can use a critique for 'internal necessities' (Wodak and Angouri 2014: 418), with 'blame' entering the narrative (Guerra 2019; see also Krzyżanowski 2019). The media and social narrative helped to renegotiate the campaign to 'take back control', and sustain the fear of immigrants, leading to anxiety, day by day, creating a daily storytelling in the newspapers. Local communities were mobilized by holding together against the Other.

The rhetoric deployed by both camps generated anxiety, uncertainty, anger and disappointment, and brings the study of emotions to the centre of the analysis. Emotions have been at the centre of studies since Aristotle, Plato and Hobbes (Marcus 2000), and have recently returned also across different fields of research (de Boise and Hern 2017). The notion of affect re-emerged in humanities and social sciences during the 1990s. Draw-

ing upon Spinoza and Deleuze, the corpus of 'affect theory' has since then gained momentum in the scholarly circles of social sciences. The advocates of affect agree in general that the notion is worthy of scientific attention as an 'entity', a 'being' or 'becoming' independent from the realm of cognition. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017) It appears that both campaigns had an influence in increasing citizens' apprehension and uncertainties, across different age cohort. Still, while women and young people tend to be more anxious or uncertain, men are likely to feel angry and disappointed; among their open answers (Guerrina et al. 2016) the possible challenges towards the future and the lack of stable expectations and probable economic instability are likely to have played a role on voters. The increasing salience of the domestic debates viewed the British referendum open a wealth of emotions attached to EU membership, in particular after the result became clear in the morning of June 24th, which, this study suggests, have created a turning point in the study of EU integration and Euroscepticism, and require a more in-depth study, in its everyday narrative and emotional dimensions.

Beyond the limits of the study of public Euroscepticism

Both the Sussex and North Carolina Schools have had limited scope for widespread expansion, beyond the study of party-based Euroscepticism. Studies on public support mainly apply frameworks to understand citizens' attitudes towards the EU, with a focus on different aspects of the relationship between public opinion and domestic politics. A changing political Union, with the Treaty of Maastricht, brought to the study of rational utilitarian and affective dimensions of attitudes (Gabel 1998). In Gabel's study, emerging from the determinant role that public opinion was currently playing, the utilitarian changes according to the benefits and is shaped by domestic politics. For these reasons, it could be to a certain extent unstable. The affective dimension, embracing abstract values and commitments to an idea, generally correlates with the length of membership and results more stable. The analysis is contingent to the post-Maastricht EU policy development, but well describes how the different national dynamic relations between the utilitarian and affective dimensions can change (Gabel 1998: 103) and impact levels of support. Emotions are becoming more and more significant, in particular as studies show that citizens may have a limited knowledge

on the EU political system, because of its complexity and abstractness (Anderson 1998), and narratives need to be taken into account, as national considerations cannot be underestimated and can guide citizens' orientation towards the EU (see also Kritzinger 2003; Guerra 2013).

As Liesbeth Hooghe argued, in the introduction to a special issue on drivers of EU integration, EU politics and integration have increasingly become more controversial and explanations found empirical evidence based on different frameworks and dynamics (2007; see also Börzel 2005; Risse 2005). Nonetheless, none of these studies attempted to define public attitudes to understand and define the different degrees and characteristics of citizens' view about the EU, beyond perceived subjective domestic costs and benefits ratio (Guerra 2013) and domestic benchmarks (De Vries 2018).

As stressed by Daddow in the case of the New Labour government, 'positive European values would have meant currently apathetic or sceptical members of the public becoming comfortable with the idea of multilevel identities as British and European, and beginning to think 'European' (2011: 34). This analysis takes into account the characteristics of the current phenomenon of Euroscepticism and its different connotations, where both negative and neutral views can be traced. It is further critical to note the role of the media, as the UK case study shows (Daddow 2012), that can channel and perpetuate the image of the EU, as framed in the news, in the public debate. Yet, Patrick Bijsmans (2017) stresses there is likely a critical positive attitude, supporting the polity, but opposing policies and debates (ie: Euroalternativism), with further differences across national media debates (Bijsmans et al. 2018).

This analysis suggests that contemporary forms of public Euroscepticism would require a more detailed in-depth study at the mass level, reconciling both case studies and comparative research designs, and political science and European Studies traditions. Due to the changing nature of public Euroscepticism and its persistence, this study contends that research contributions could reflect on contemporary developments. Euroscepticism and contestation towards the EU ring a bell, and it is more important to understand what Euroscepticism signals in order to understand it, now that contestation does not necessarily translate into Euroscepticism.

Euroscepticism may not have an impact of the policymaking process at the EP level, because Eurosceptic MEPs may be split among different political groups (McDonnell and Werner 2019), but the EU is definitely more contested (Hutter et al. 2016).Their presence at the heart of the EU is an asset for its legitimation, MEPs represent EU citizens and opposition and resistance to the

EU should not be routinely viewed as an obstacle to EU integration, but also as a resource for the affirmation of the EU as democratic political system (Brack 2015), with Euroscepticism (Stier et al. 2020). The study of Euroscepticism can further develop, not just moving, as it has been done, from dependent variable to independent variable and its influence and impact, but also examining its different manifestations at the public level, understanding its narratives, listening to people's voices. The British referendum is here examined by exploring the relationship between citizens and the EU, and addressing what we can learn from after the British referendum.

LISTENING TO PEOPLE'S VOICES

In April 2019, the research project, 'Euroscepticism, Emotions and the Everyday', commissioned 11 questions for a new YouGov survey, with a representative sample of 1813 British citizens. If good news seems to be fleeting, messages and narratives could be structured through 'hot points' (Interview 2018), events that have characterized moments between the EU and each member state, and can transform the national narrative beyond temporary debates. The main focus of the study here examines the national narratives on the EU, after the extended departure from the EU. These 'hot points' in the national narratives, influenced by the domestic context, can more easily be mobilized and affect citizens' emotions and their experience. This is the main research interest here: What are the national narratives on the EU, when you directly ask citizens?

The question asked reads as follows, 'Thinking about the history of Britain's membership of the EU… What 4 events would you say are the most notable in Britain's membership of the EU?'

More than half of the respondents could not cite any event and answered 'I don't know' (54.8 per cent), and
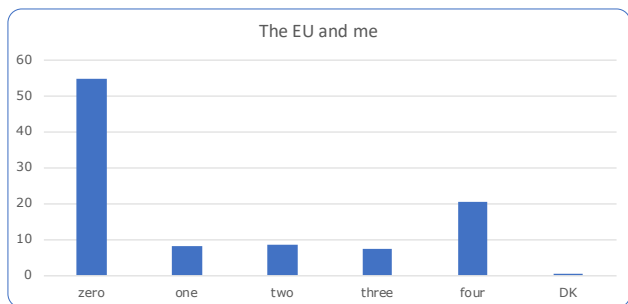
Figure 1. Britain and the EU: 'Thinking about the history of Britain's membership of the EU… What 4 events would you say are the most notable in Britain's membership of the EU?'

less than a fourth (20.7 per cent) could cite four events or four dimensions.

Among the answers, nine respondents cite 'bananas', 'Banana making sure they are not straight', while the Common Agricultural Policy emerged also in terms of 'Butter mountains'. Just one person cites 'solidarity', 'solidarity following attacks', with reference to the 2017 London Bridge terrorist attack or the 2005 one. Four cite 'cooperation', and a majority, among the list of events/hot points, (52) cite 'human rights', 'Agreeing and abiding by common values for human rights'. 14 cite immigration, quite often in negative terms and with reference to the Labour government, 'Labour opening the floodgates to mass immigration'.

Deconstructing people's voices

After examining the answers provided, it was clear that those who could articulate better the EU, also added some significant hot points, and most of the four hot points. Britain and the EU could thus represent,

N164: (i) Peace and good relationships with European neighbours; (ii) Trade with EU; (iii) Free movement of people across Europe, including to UK; (iv) No issues with NI/Republic border

N338: (i) Better workers rights and conditions [sic.]; (ii) Better conservation (natural environment) measures; (iii) Better bathing water quality; (iv) Freedom of movement, easier to learn from other cultures

N520: (i) Joining in 1973 on the third attempt.; (ii) The Thatcher rebate on Britains [sic.] membership (1980s?).; Britain is able to opt out of adopting the Euro.; (iv) Harmonisation of security policies.

N719: (i) The Schengin [sic.] Agreement which we foolishly opted out of which would have given us totally free movement with no need of passports.; (ii) The Maastricht Treaty which gave us commonality on security. Now superceded [sic.] by the Lisbon Treaty.; (iii) Europol which was formed to combat serious international crime and terrorism.; (iv) European Time Directive which gave us a maximum 48 hour week.

N1114: (i) Clean beaches; (ii) Financial growth; (iii) Status within the world; (iv) Improved labour rights.

N1130: (i) Free trade with Europe; (ii) easy travel/movement in the EU; (iii) A united voice against world problems; (iv) Greater protection of rights for individuals.

N1762: (i) Workers rights directive; (ii) Policy on environment (Paris accord); (iii) Policy on corporate tax evasion; (iv) Sending the idiot/Racist Nigel Farage to be our representative in the EU!

In some cases, it also provided the flow of opposing views to the EU,

N44: Germany opening the borders to all comers be they terrorists or not; (ii) Germany insisting on uncontrollable immigration; (iii) The cost of membership; (iv) The tariffs & the French dominated CAP.

N104: (i) Joining under false pretences-Common Market-not!; Not joining the Euro-thank god !; (iii) Masstricht treaty; (iv) Voting to Leave *[sic.]*

N112: (i) immigrants; (ii) immigrants; (iii) lost power of laws; (iv) crap

N143: (i) Governed by unelected European beaurocrats *[sic]*.; (ii) Pay through the nose to the EU and create ridiculous EU laws that we are obliged to comply with.; (iii) Create food mountains and pay producers even though there is a glut.; (iv) EU Crippled the British fishing industry.

N159: (i) paying millions over the years to subsidise 20 odd other poorer countries; (ii) Labour opening the floodgates to mass immigration; (iii) David Cameron coming back with his tail between ihis legs; (iv) giving away our fishing industry and selling off the utilities to foreign countries *[sic.]*

N261: (i) The Common Market becoming part of the EU in 1973, mainly for trade.; (ii) The idiots, and crooks who are part of the EU, headed by Junker; (iii) David Cameron walking away without a Plan B after the Referendum in 2016; (iv) The absolute farce of what has happened about us leaving the EU and the delays and indecisions.

N398: (i) immigration; (ii) control of us; (iii) large contribution byUK [sic.]; (iv) dictatorship

N456: (i) paying to opt out of the euro.; (ii) paying large budgets to an organisation that is not audited and refuses to be audited.; (iii) financially supporting an organisation that was responsible to the wine lake and butter mountain; (iv) financially supporting an organisation that allows migration of too many foreign nationals – too many to be integrated into the local ways of life without strife e.g. German problems at New Year.

N519: (i) us paying vast AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO THE EU; (ii) EU DEMANDING MORE MONEY BECAUSE OF THE BLACKMARKET ECONOMY; (iii) FRANCE WANTING MORE FISHING RIGHTS; (iv) BLAIR GIVING BACK THE CONCESSIONS tHATCHER WON *[sic.]*

In general, the negative ones show the main tropes and logics already seen in previous research (Daddow 2006, 2011; Fanoulis and Guerra 2017). While analysis on attitudes tend to focus on generalizable explanations, listening to people's voices enables us to understand how a few logics are embedded in their perception of the EU. In opposition, the EU is mainly seen as a cost, an open door for uncontrolled immigration, and limiting the scope to govern for Britain, losing out due to EU membership. The EU is perceived through the main debates filtered by the press and political debates. More objective views generally show a more sophisticated understanding or a rather inclusive view of the other, as cooperation, and the advantages of membership. In a case, a rather Eurosceptic respondent cited as one of the two 'hot points', the pet passport, adding, with surprise, that 'it works!'.

Definitely, EU membership seems to require the experience of citizenship (see Guerra and Serricchio 2014; Kuhn 2015) or a sophisticated understand of what membership means, in a country, Britain, where levels of knowledge about the EU are abysmal (Manners, 2018), and the older, 'the least knowledgeable, most incorrect, and most unable to answer simple questions on the EU' (in Manners, 2018: 1215). As Taggart and Szczerbiak (2014) pointed out, there exists research on public opinion on EU integration, but less on the drivers of the opposition and how this opposition emerged across public opinion. This analysis seeks to examine the issues and moves beyond the study of attitudes to understand the national narratives that mobilize citizens.

By narratives, this project addresses those written accounts and events that are shared across the national context. The relevant characteristics of the history of EU integration at the domestic level and the debates originated within that context (as hot points) emerges while listening to citizens' voices. 'Hot points' traced through the history of EU integration at the national level could help communicate the EU itself, 'the Irish case could be described through a non-confrontational forum towards the peace process, the economic boom, structural funds (roads) and best chance' (Interview 2018), by listening to British citizens, while the main narratives could also be framed through different logics. If the EU seems still to be slightly trapped into a national politicization,

the recent 2019 EP elections show that it is possible to involve part of the citizens into a more transnational European debate.

Yet, during the British EU referendum campaign, when the European issue raised its salience, the former Mayor of London, currently Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, supporting Vote Leave, returned on the theme of common *Euromyth* among the British press. One of the most famous Eurosceptic journalists in Brussels between 1989 and 1994 for the *Daily Telegraph*, Johnson was probably quite acquainted with the banana stories, more recently compared to their first debut in the UK. (Earle 2018)

The first piece of news around the EU banning round bananas was published in 1994 (European Parliament 2019a), and published by four newspapers, *The Sun*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Mirror*. The headline, "Curved bananas have been banned by Brussels bureaucrats, with shops ordered not to sell fruit which is too small or abnormally bent" (21 September 1994) can be dissected to bring together different British Eurosceptic logics (see also Fanoulis and Guerra 2017), that have remain embedded in the narratives we have seen in the 2016 referendum campaign. These logics are strengthened by the often cited use of words as 'Brussels' and 'bureaucrats', but also 'Eurocrats', dictating to Britain. This node underlines 'British difference' from the continent (Daddow 2006: 315). On the contrary, Brussels triggers suspicion, and distrust towards European leaders, it becomes the cradle of corruption and mishaps. Whatever related to the EU enters the British debates as an 'illegitimate intrusion … which has become part of the political culture of British EU membership and its reporting in the tabloid press' (Daddow 2006: 315). In addition, the reference to 'shops' (ie: British shops), in the headline, represents the threat of EU membership against working class people who struggle in their everyday life (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017). Defending Britain against the EU is also defending the interests of the common British citizens.

A similar logic resurfaced during the referendum campaign and just after. The idea is that 'EU policy regulations harm British producers and the British market', 'let the farmers sell what they produce and compete with the supermarkets! The supermarkets have had a hold of the farmers and the public for far too long!! [sic] (13 July 2016)' (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017: 319). The perceived 'abuse' of the EU on local and national British interests is linked to the same logic when applied at a higher level. Daddow notes the same in *The Sun*, where also simple comments on Britain's European policy could be reported using the same narrative,

The continent acts out its role of the threatening Other across the Channel with those 'lesser breeds', the French and the Germans, playing the roles of untrustworthy Machiavellian villains leading its machinations against Britain. Compared to the trustworthy Americans, Anderson finds the Sun depicting the EU as 'a corrupt and untrustworthy interventionist predator, driven by a Franco-German plot to damage British economic interests, British security and British sovereignty…' (2006: 317)

The EU cannot be trusted, and Britain, geographically distant from the continent, has been perceiving the Franco-German alliance as a threat to British economic interests, security and sovereignty. These themes resurface, around a new article still published in *The Sun* (4 March 1998). The headlines point to the trivial dimension of EU politics and decision-making. Brussels is not just responsible of negatively affecting the economy of British farmers and the economy, but its institutions are not effective and do not have any positive influence on Britain. On the contrary, member states plot against Britain, and the EU cannot work on serious policy regulations. Yet, in both cases, the European Commission had recommended to draft legislation after receiving the request by individual governments and national agriculture ministers in order to harmonize standards across the EU. 'Following extensive consultation with the industry, the proposed quality standards were adopted by national ministers in Council in 1994.' (European Parliament 2019b), without receiving any reply from the British press.

Yet, new headlines, as still in *The Sun*, on Monday 18 February 2013, addressing another important narrative in the British press, the unsustainable cost of membership, "£3 billion" to be paid because of the EU. The article was presented as an EXCLUSIVE *[sic.]*, and the headline in bold. The news was referring to a share of POSEI *(*EU Fund for Remote countries or Islands, *'Programme d'Options Spécifiques à l'Éloignement et l'Insularité'*), defined as 'colonies' in the original article. The news was framed as if the EU would hand out 'BILLIONS *[sic.]* … on paradise isles'. This is a narrative that has been continuously repeated, during the referendum campaign, the Leave.EU blog reported the post of a British citizens complaining about the waste of money and the 'giver' role of Britain,

Every week an enormous sum is paid to the EU … Most EU countries are takers, it is spent anywhere other than in Britain. £100 M, £150 M, £200 M, £250 M, £300 M … it's a truly colossal, massive, enormous amount—Every week. (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017: 317)

The money spent for the EU has been the most successful for the Leave.EU campaign. Narratives, through

psychological realism, as the red bus and the £350 million that can be saved to be spent on the NHS (National Health Service) instead, brought together different connotations that could positively affect support for Leave among British citizens. Since 1948, the NHS in the UK is one of the biggest employer in the world, and one of the most efficient and inclusive. The comparisons in the newspapers (see for example, Moran 2018) are generally done with the USA, or New Zealand, in this case, or other Commonwealth countries, as the efficiency and the quality of the service is done within the Commonwealth Fund report too, the reference to the NHS shows to what extent embedded national discourses can be strengthened and diffused.

On a similar theme dimension, the reference is to 'wasting money', generally for poorer countries or supporting a corrupt bureaucracy. Here *The Sun* story underlines that 'Brussels is handing out BILLIONS to banana, tobacco and rum industries on paradise isles [it was revealed yesterday]' *[sic.]*, showing a few inconsistencies. As reported by the European Parliament, POSEI funding data are available since 2006, and the data in the British article just provided a comparison of national income, not of the unemployment rate, and reference was done to remote 'small' islands, but not to their national governments, ie.: Spain and France, EU member states. The idea of the 'abuse' of British money is further linked to the reference to 'paradise isles' 'and to the reproduction of lines fed to it by a single anti-EU lobby group, with no balancing opinion.' (European Parliament 2019c). This type of messages returns and is often reproduced, as for the referendum campaign in 2016,

> Every week an enormous sum is paid to the EU … Sums are then sent back to be spent in Britain, the EU dictates what to be spent on. An eye watering remaining sum does not come back to Britain, it is spent in Poland, Greece, Romania, Slovakia—Most EU countries are takers, it is spent anywhere other than in Britain.£100 M, £150 M, £200 M, £250 M, £300 M … it's a truly colossal, massive, enormous amount—Every week (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017: 317)

The strength of these narratives that regularly return in the news, or we have seen in the referendum campaign, gains salience by being continuously repeated. (Krzyżanowski 2020) Studies show that Euroscepticism has generally low salience in the public debate (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008), but it rises when the EU discourse becomes controversial at the domestic level. The European integration project has developed as an incremental, gradual and unspectacular process, and the EU is debated when there are more opportunities. Between

November 1987 and December 1995, the Eurobarometer surveys asked citizens whether they had recently seen or heard, in the papers, on the radio, or on television, anything about the European Commission in Brussels. Those replying they did represent a very low percentage, with the majority answering "No" or "Don't know". In 2008 only 44 per cent of citizens replied they were interested in EU affairs, with 58 per cent preferring reading about their country's politics (Special EB, 35 years of Eurobarometer, 2008). 'Between 1982 and 1992, a relative majority of people interviewed (44 per cent on average) had a positive view of the European Parliament. Nevertheless, on average, one in five (21 per cent) indicated that their perception of this institution was negative and for more than one in four (27 per cent) its image was neutral. (Daddow and Guerra 2019)

Similarly, according to a Centre of European Reform study in London, one of the most repeated arguments was that the Commission in Brussels 'dictated' 75 per cent of British laws, while a study of the House of Commons Library, showed that the percentage of secondary legislation resulting from EU requirements was about 8-10 per cent, mainly with regard to business regulation, VAT and excise duties. Also, it was reported that Britain daily contribution to the EU budget was £50 million – while the net contribution was 1 per cent of the total spending. Finally, when talking about the EU as the bureaucratic heart of Europe and the number of people employed, it is worth to be noted that the European Commission employs about 23,000 employees, and the European Parliament less employees compared to the Birmingham City Council (Daddow and Guerra 2019).

'Bananas', 'Brussels', 'dictating', and 'costs' returned in Boris Johnson's referendum campaign, in a speech in Cornwall in May 2016 (Henley 2016), and could succeed by linking the theme to traditional embedded narratives. According to Johnson, it was 'absolutely crazy that the EU [was] telling us how powerful our vacuum cleaners have got to be, what shape our bananas [had] got to be, and all that kind of thing', it was 'costing UK businesses about £600m a week in unnecessary regulation'; [he was] 'delirious' with Vote Leave's claim, repeated on the side of the battlebus, that Britain 'sends the EU £350m a week' (Henley 2016).

This British Euroscepticism that resurfaced and took strength with the EU referendum in 2016 is nothing new. As noted by Daddow:

> Euroscepticism is more than myopic nationalism or the 'wrong' historical stories being told. It is both deeper than that. It is wider because Euroscepticism makes commercial intellectual sense (2006: 328).

In a previous analysis, four logics (ie: narratives) clearly emerged from the analysis of the Leave-EU blog posts in the week before the referendum (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017), (i) a focus on sovereignty and the Leave vote to "get rid of" EU "dictatorship", as its policies harm "British producers and the British market" (13 July 2016), and voting Leave as patriotic duty; (ii) a dichotomous antagonistic relationship, and the idea that Britain can 'do better' outside the EU emerges, using a "us vs. them" dialectic, reversing history down, where voting "No" protects future generations; (iii) the moment to take history back, and EU membership as a mistake, a bad decision taken in the 1970s; (iv) increasing disillusionment with domestic political elites, sometimes defined as the 'the cronies', reinforced by the uncertain pace of the path towards Leave and the triggering of Article 50, with an embedded fear of immigration and the urgency of defending democracy as a priority in taking a final decision (Fanoulis and Guerra 2017).

Euroscepticism and opposition towards the EU cannot be understood far from its context. The time of its emergence also signal its possible success, and the use of colours (red, ie.: bus), and narratives ('Governed by unelected European beaurocrats' *[sic.]*', and tropes bring back the British Eurosceptic toolbox together: it is about British democracy, sovereignty, the high costs that impoverish our farmers and fisheries, the trivial work of unelected corrupt bureaucrats, the uncontrolled flow of immigration, and the political elites (Blair, Gordon Brown, Merkel, Juncker among the ones cited both in blogs and in the survey here used) and institutions (generally the European Commission) that opened their doors to this chain of events. Although only 20 per cent could provide four hot points in the history of Britain's relationship with the EU, citizens' voices show how fundamental they are in order to understand public Euroscepticism.

CONCLUSION

The analysis sought to provide a new approach to investigate and understand public Euroscepticism. Opposition towards EU integration emerges from its domestic context, from a national toolbox that is easy to deconstruct when we understand its traditions and narratives. For researchers examining public opinion and EU integration the 2016 British EU referendum provides the opportunity to explore Euroscepticism in-depth and examine how it changes across time, within and outside Britain.

It is critical to examine and discuss the current challenges of the EU, and explore how the EU is debated

and contested at the domestic level. This becomes more urgent now, and studies are emerging on what to do and how in terms of governability (see Fabbrini 2019), while Donald Tusk, President of the European Council (2014-2019) comments on Brexit as the vaccine against Euroscepticism. Since Spring 2018, results from the Eurobarometer surveys have not changed, and the majority of European citizens have indeed a positive image of the EU (40 per cent), higher that those replying they have a negative image of the EU (21 per cent) or neutral (37 per cent) (EB89 2018: 15), but domestic context deeply varies. Euroscepticism is likely to be here to stay, and this analysis seeks to offer a contribution on its manifestations and tools at the domestic level, and how narratives can accompany the idea of the EU across member states.

The case of the UK is paradigmatic and it magnifies how public Euroscepticism can highjack the public debates, and if it is reasonable and desirable to expect that the EU respond to the distance between the institutions and citizens. Remote governance is difficult to be communicated. If more and more mobile citizens can benefit from experiencing the EU, the vast majority of EU citizens still lack basic knowledge. If simple messages work in a Eurosceptic environment, can safety in quality food and drink products that are protected from imitations, on the basis of their origin and geographical status under EU law, make a difference? By presenting this basic information, in very simple terms, as for example, informing that 'Cornish pasty' is protected under EU law (Henley 2016), messages reveal the impact of EU membership on countries.

Starting from the initial questions, addressing the understanding Euroscepticism, and its emotions and narratives, it is clear that the national narratives are significant. As noted already by Daddow (2006, 2011), Euroscepticism is very much identifiable in the traditional narratives of Europe as the Other. It enters the British governability by 'dictating' and not offering a choice. It emerges through domestic political actors and news, where the narratives and logics that can more easily reach the public are introduced, and the actors and ideas are contained in a sort of national [in this case, British] toolbox. In Britain, as aforementioned, it contains, 'Brussels', 'bureaucrats' or 'Eurocrats', the verb to 'dictate', and [the enormous] 'costs' that could be used for the NHS or British farmers and fisheries. It is about democracy and sovereignty, supporting Leave during the referendum campaign was also to protect Britain. At a very colloquial level, staying in the EU, as one of the respondent said, represents the '[A]mount of money we give them.' (N546); 'The waste of money has been incredible. e.g. MEP's expenses, and the monthly move to

Strasbourg.' (N847); 'Have to have their rules that don't apply to us' (N882); 'Having to abide by laws about this country made by other countries', 'Right size and shape of fruit and veg!' (N1003). The EU is perceived through very simple messages, often reconstructed by the national narrative that is often not accurate - further ignoring also the information provided by the European Commission Office in London (European Parliament 2019c).

Galpin and Trenz (2019) already pointed to the diffuse negativity in the UK media. The comparative analysis of their study on the 2014 European Parliament elections shows that by addressing a distinction between the polity, policy and political debates as diffuse, and specific issues, both UK actors and news tend to speak negatively about the EU. Context accountability (Daddow 2006) is still cause for concern in Britain and by assuming a more positive view of European Britain, as pitched well by Daddow (2006) does not make the debate more informed. Images, narratives and specific issues can become very simple images and narratives and reform the Eurosceptic toolbox into a more neutral, but informative instrument. This should be done at the grassroots level, as the recent demos and manifestations have shown. British citizens are reclaiming their own European citizenship, and losing the free movements is not worth to pay for most of those who voted Remain, but also some Leavers. Deconstructing *Euromyths* could be a first small step forward.

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