



Are would-be authoritarians right? Democratic support and citizens' left-right self-placement in former left- and right-authoritarian countries

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Are Would-Be Authoritarians Right? Democratic Support and Citizens' Left-Right Self-Placement in Former Left- and Right- Authoritarian Countries

Abstract

Conventional wisdom dictates that the more citizens lean toward either end of the ideological spectrum, the lower their support for democracy. The main model pitted against this 'rigidity-of-the-extremes model' is the 'rigidity-of-the-right model'. This model assumes that rightist citizens are less supportive. This study proposes and empirically demonstrates the validity of an alternative model, which we call 'the authoritarian legacy model'. This model predicts that whether leftist or rightist citizens are less supportive of democracy depends on countries' experience with left- or right-authoritarianism. To evaluate its validity, we present a systematic comparative investigation of the relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs, using European and World Values Survey data from 38 European countries ($N = 105,495$; 1994-2008). In line with this model, our analyses demonstrate that democratic support is lowest among leftist citizens in former left-authoritarian countries among rightist citizens in former right-authoritarian countries. We find that this relation persists even among generations that grew up after authoritarian rule. These findings suggest that traditional ideological rigidity models are unsuitable for the study of citizens' democratic beliefs.

Keywords: democratic support; left-right self-placement; ideological rigidity; authoritarian legacies; political history; extremism and democracy

Introduction

Who opposes democracy? In their seminal work *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford proposed that would-be authoritarians share fundamental ideological beliefs. In recent years, this work has regained significance. The rise of radical right movements and strongman politics seem to indicate that democracy is not fully uncontested (Foa and Mounk 2017; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). For this reason, scholarship has sought to understand the relation between citizens' ideological and

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3 democratic beliefs. Two models have been proposed to study this relation. The ‘rigidity-of-
4 the-extremes model’ dictates that the more citizens lean toward either end of the ideological
5 spectrum, the lower their support for democracy (see, e.g., Mounk 2018; Rokeach 1956). The
6 main theory pitted against this model is the ‘rigidity-of-the-right model.’ This model predicts
7 that citizens on the right end of the spectrum are less supportive (Jost et al. 2003; Jost 2017).
8 In this study, we propose a third model, which we refer to as the ‘authoritarian legacy model.’
9 This model posits that whether leftist or rightist citizens are less supportive depends on
10 historical experiences with left- or right- authoritarianism. To evaluate its validity, we present
11 a systematic comparative investigation of the relation between citizens’ ideological and
12 democratic beliefs across countries.
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26 To substantiate our argument, we combine insights from the literature on cognitive
27 rigidity (Greenberg and Jonas 2003; Jost, 2017; Rokeach 1956), authoritarian legacy effects
28 (Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2019; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2019) and elite behaviour in post-
29 authoritarian countries (Bourne 2018; Van Spanje 2018). We argue that reminders of the past
30 regime provoke two types of responses. The first response occurs among citizens who
31 maintain a positive reading of the past. These citizens may enjoy the societal order one would
32 typically find under authoritarian rule (Adorno et al. 1950; Popper 1945) or feel that the past
33 regime was particularly effective in catering to their ideological preferences (Gryzmala-
34 Busse 2002; Loxton and Mainwarring 2018). In effect, they may feel more inclined to
35 identify with the past regime’s ideological or democratic beliefs. The second type of response
36 occurs among citizens who maintain a negative reading of the past. These citizens may be
37 appalled by the regime’s authoritarian practices (e.g., repression and violence) or believe that
38 only democracies are able to cater to their ideological preferences. Consequently, they may
39 become more supportive of the regime’s antipode: pro-democratic ideological opponents. If
40 this is the case, leftist citizens should be less supportive of democracy and rightist citizens
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3 more in countries such as Slovakia or Poland. Inversely, rightist citizens should be less
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5 supportive and leftist citizens more in countries such as Austria and Greece.
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8 Our study offers several contributions. Empirically, we demonstrate that existing
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10 models of ideological rigidity are unsuitable for the study of democratic beliefs. In particular,
11
12 we refute the assumption that the relation between citizens' ideological and democratic
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14 beliefs is invariant across countries. This finding is consequential for comparative democracy
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16 research, in which it is standard practice to make such assumptions (see, for instance, Ferrin
17
18 and Kriesi 2016). Our study also offers an important theoretical refinement of arguments
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20 made in earlier research on legacy effects in new democracies. That is, we draw on evidence
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22 that even a distant legacy establishes pressures to reaffirm democratic values and discredit
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24 authoritarian ones (see de Leeuw et al. 2020). Our argument is, therefore, particularly suited
25
26 to study long-term legacy effects on citizens' political beliefs. Methodologically, we
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28 contribute by developing nonlinear tests of our expectations. To this end, we pool data of
29
30 105,495 individuals in 38 European countries from the European and World Values Survey
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32 (1994–2008). We take advantage of the variety of historical backgrounds to assess how the
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34 relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs varies with countries' political
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36 history. We subsequently leverage variation in individuals' birthyear to assess whether these
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38 effects persist despite processes of generational replacement.
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49 **Theory and Hypotheses**

50 ***Ideological rigidity models***

51 In the early 1950s, scholars such as Adorno et al. (1950) and Rokeach (1956) first articulated
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53 the hypothesis that authoritarian-minded citizens are similar in their ideological rigidity. They
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55 argued that the defining psychological traits of these less democratic citizens – e.g.,
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57 intolerance, overconfidence, distress, dogmatism and simplicity – pushes them toward certain
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3 (extreme) ideological beliefs. Popular and scholarly belief is that these traits push less
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5 democratic citizens toward either end of the ideological spectrum (see Kruglanski et al. 2014;
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7 Greenberg and Jonas 2003; Rokeach 1956). Social psychologists labelled this assertion the
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9 ‘rigidity-of-the-extremes model’. The main model pitted against it is called the ‘rigidity-of-
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11 the-right model’. This model differs in its insistence that citizens with rightist beliefs are
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13 more cognitively rigid and, thus, less supportive of democracy (Adorno et al. 1950; Jost et al.
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15 2003; Jost 2017).

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19 In their current form, the predictions derived from these two models are mutually
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21 exclusive. The reason for this is that they assume that cognitive rigidity affects citizens’
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23 beliefs in the same way everywhere: no matter the context, less democratic citizens tend to
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25 lean more toward either end of the spectrum *or* just the right end. In what follows, we
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27 propose an alternative model to study the relation between citizens’ ideological and
28
29 democratic beliefs. We call this the ‘authoritarian legacy model’. To be sure, in proposing
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31 this model, we do not refute the established knowledge that cognitive rigidity constitutes the
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33 basis of citizens’ ideological and democratic beliefs. Instead, we reject the idea that this
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35 rigidity influences mass political behaviour in different countries in the same way.
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42 ***The authoritarian legacy model***

43 *Authoritarian legacies*

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46 The central premise of authoritarian legacy research can best be understood as a criticism of
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48 the idea of a ‘zero hour’ (Minkenberg 2015). This idea holds that it is possible to facilitate a
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50 complete break with the authoritarian past and start with a clean slate. Authoritarian legacy
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52 scholars refute this idea. They argue that one will always be able to find traces of the past
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54 regime in the present. The vehicles of these traces may be material. They may take on the
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56 form of literature, education, popular culture, architecture, democratic propaganda, etcetera.
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3 The vehicles of these traces may also be human: citizens may socialise their children into
4 particular beliefs that they acquired due to their experiences with authoritarianism. In effect,
5 citizens living in former authoritarian countries are exposed to many traces left behind by the
6 past regime, irrespective of whether they have lived through it or not. In this study, we focus
7 on traces resulting from the two most salient traits of twentieth-century authoritarian regimes
8 in Europe, that is their authoritarianism and extreme ideologies (Dinas and Northmore-Ball
9 2019; Kailitz 2013; Neundorf 2010). That is, communist and socialist states were
10 authoritarian and left-wing. Others, such as Nazi Germany or the military regimes, e.g., Spain
11 and Greece, were authoritarian and right-wing.

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24 The purpose of legacy research is to demonstrate that these traces affect individual,
25 elite and mass political behaviour. The authoritarian past, then, serves as an additional
26 contextual factor that one would not find elsewhere that needs to be taken into account when
27 studying political behaviour. In this case, authoritarian legacies may affect political behaviour
28 because the word 'authoritarianism' calls to mind images of the past regime. Besides, the
29 label 'left' calls to mind the images of the past regime in countries with a left-authoritarian
30 legacy and the label 'right' in countries with a right-wing legacy (Bobbio 1996; Dinas 2017;
31 Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2019; Fuchs and Klingemann 1990). In other words, the past
32 creates an interpretative lens through which citizens judge the meaning of these words (Art
33 2005; Morlino 2010). In effect, citizens in former authoritarian countries are more likely to
34 believe that their ideological and democratic beliefs say something about their support for the
35 past regime or its practices.

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 *Two types of legacy effects*

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53 The connotations the word 'authoritarianism' and the labels 'left' and 'right' have acquired in
54 former authoritarian countries are, therefore, hardly neutral. They call to mind specific
55 images of what living under the rule of the past regime would look like. In the following
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3 paragraphs, we theorise that citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs are (directly or
4 indirectly) influenced by the authoritarian past. In particular, we theorise two types of legacy
5 effects.
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10 This first type comprises the traditional understanding of legacy effects. It envisions
11 legacies as an inheritance from the past regime. This effect occurs among citizens who
12 maintain a positive reading of the past and adjust their political beliefs accordingly. There are
13 two reasons why citizens would feel more inclined to maintain such a positive reading. The
14 first reason mirrors the argument put forward in the cognitive rigidity literature (Adorno et al.
15 1950; Rokeach 1956). This explanation acknowledges that even after democratic transition,
16 some citizens prefer the societal hierarchy and order one would typically find under
17 authoritarian rule (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017, 2019). These less democratic citizens
18 experience democratic freedoms as a burden rather than a privilege (Popper 1945). Of course,
19 the stronger these feelings are, the less these citizens would mind identifying with the
20 ideology of the past regime (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2019).
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35 A second reason why citizens would maintain a positive reading of the past regime is
36 that they support its ideological practices, values, or policies (Fuchs and Klingemann 1990).
37 These citizens feel attracted to the ideological core of the past regime and commend
38 authoritarian forms of government for their ability to follow through on their promises
39 (Gryzmala-Busse 2002; Loxton and Mainwaring 2018). That is, authoritarian governments
40 need not compromise and are, therefore, particularly effective in realising their policies.
41 Besides, these citizens are reminded of a time where supporting the regime's ideological
42 beliefs ensured that one would be entitled to its benefits (Backes and Kailitz 2015; Dinas and
43 Northmore-Ball 2019). For this reason, some citizens may be more embracive of
44 authoritarian forms of government. For instance, in former communist countries, this should
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3 mean that citizens who develop a typically ‘left-wing’ (communist) preference for a planned
4 economy are more sympathetic toward authoritarianism (Thorisdottir et al. 2007).
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8 The theoretical mechanisms behind the first type of legacy effects have received a
9 substantial amount of attention in legacy literature. By contrast, this literature has mostly
10 overlooked the reactions among those who maintain a negative reading of the past. However,
11 various studies within the fields of militant democracy (Bourne 2018; Costa Pinto 2010;
12 Morlino 2010), party politics (Art 2005; Van Spanje 2018), and media coverage (de Leeuw et
13 al. 2020; Gunther, Montero, and Wert 2000) in post-authoritarian countries suggest that
14 disassociating oneself with the beliefs of the authoritarian predecessor is a common practice.
15 Once again, there are two reasons why this type of legacy effect would occur among citizens.
16 First, some citizens feel appalled by the authoritarian traits of the past regime. Their cognitive
17 characteristics are the opposite of the would-be authoritarians described in the work of
18 Adorno et al. (1950). They are characterised by high levels of cognitive flexibility and
19 commend democracy for the freedoms it grants to them and others. These citizens remember
20 the past regime for its atrocities, violence and repression. Of course, they are reluctant to
21 identify with the ideology of the past regime. Even more so, they may feel more inclined to
22 identify with the opposite ideology, which they might conceive as the voice of democratic
23 activism.
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26 Second, some citizens may be appalled by the memory of the past because they
27 maintain different ideological beliefs. They remember the authoritarian past as a time that
28 citizens with similar ideological convictions were at risk of being persecuted or assassinated
29 (Wachsmann 2008). To these citizens, democracy represents a system in which they have the
30 freedom to express their ideological beliefs and that, to some degree, will cater to their needs.
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32 The memory of the past may, therefore, reaffirm their democratic values. The more citizens
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3 disagree with the ideological beliefs of the past regime, then, the more supportive they may
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5 be of democracy.
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8 These mechanisms need not apply to all citizens for legacy effects to occur. It is very
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10 well possible that only a share of the population deliberately adjusts their political beliefs in
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12 accordance with their reading of the past. That being said, the remainder of the population
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14 may still be indirectly affected by these mechanisms. For instance, their political beliefs may
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16 be influenced by citizens who are subjected to these mechanisms, or they may learn to
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18 associate the labels 'left' and 'right' with 'good' or 'bad' in another context, without knowing
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20 its historical origins.
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23 24 25 26 *Empirical implications and evidence*

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28 The authoritarian legacy model has various implications for the relation between citizens'
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30 ideological and democratic beliefs. Furthermore, if we find evidence in favour of this model,
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32 we offer an important innovation to earlier models of ideological rigidity. Our novel model
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34 has two empirical implications. The first implication is that the *direction* of the relation
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36 between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs depends on countries' authoritarian
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38 history. In particular, our model predicts that lower levels of democratic support are
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40 associated with leftist beliefs in former left-authoritarian countries and with rightist beliefs in
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42 former right-authoritarian countries. These expectations imply a break with earlier
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44 ideological rigidity frameworks and existing democracy scholarship, which assume that the
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46 relation between these two beliefs is invariant across contexts. The second implication is that
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48 the *shape* of this relation depends on countries' authoritarian history. That is, if less
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50 democratic citizens are pushed toward one end of the spectrum and more democratic citizens
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52 toward the opposite end, we should find that the relation takes on a more linear form in
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54 former authoritarian countries than elsewhere. The 'rigidity-of-the-extremes' model may,
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3 therefore, only correctly predict citizens' democratic support in countries without a legacy of
4 left- or right-authoritarianism. Likewise, the 'rigidity-of-the-right' model may only correctly
5 predict citizens' democratic support in countries with a legacy of right-authoritarianism.
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10 Thus far, a comprehensive analysis of legacy effects on the relation between citizens'
11 ideological and democratic beliefs (and the shape thereof) is still lacking. However, the
12 findings of extant studies in this area are consistent with our argument. Focusing on post-war
13 Italy, La Palombara and Waters (1961) find that support for authoritarian alternatives is
14 considerably higher among rightist (48.0%) than among leftist (42.5%) citizens. In Central
15 and Eastern Europe, both Dalton (2006) and Tufis (2014) reveal leftist citizens to be least
16 supportive of democracy. The data collected by the Pew Research Center (Wike et al. 2018)
17 shows similar patterns, with rightist citizens being most supportive of authoritarian
18 alternatives in former right-authoritarian Germany and Italy. In Venezuela, a country that has
19 been ruled by left-wing strongmen since 1999, on the other hand, they find leftist citizens to
20 be most supportive of authoritarian rule. The argument discussed above can bring together all
21 these findings. In particular, we can derive two expectations:
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37 **Hypothesis 1:** (a) Rightist beliefs are associated with lower levels of democratic
38 support in former right-authoritarian countries and (b) leftist beliefs in former left-
39 authoritarian countries.
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44 **Hypothesis 2:** The relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs is (a)
45 different in former authoritarian countries and (b) follows a more linear pattern than
46 elsewhere.
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54 **Data and methods**

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56 ***Data: European and World Values Study***
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3 For this study, we rely on cross-sectional survey data collected within the framework of the
4 European and World Values Study. The advantage of these surveys is threefold. First, five
5 survey-wave combinations (1994–2008) include a seven-item measurement of democratic
6 support, tapping into both support for democracy and the rejection of authoritarian
7 alternatives. Second, these surveys include all countries in the European region, thereby
8 ensuring a substantial variability in countries' political history. Finally, their over-time
9 availability permits us to assess the durability of legacy effects. The data in these surveys
10 were collected through a sample representative of the adult population, using face-to-face
11 interviewing techniques. Countries with a history of both right- and left-authoritarianism (i.e.,
12 Hungary and East Germany) were not included in our analyses.¹ The pooled dataset
13 comprises 105,495 respondents in 38 countries (country-level response rate between 71% and
14 89%).

30 *Variables*

31 This study aims to assess whether the authoritarian past affects the relation between citizens'
32 democratic and ideological beliefs. In the theory section, we formulated two arguments why
33 this would be the case, one in which democratic support was the dependent variable and one
34 in which left-right orientation was the dependent variable. Although the analysis techniques
35 we use still require specifying one as an independent and the other as the dependent variable,
36 we can retain this bidirectional nature by alternating between dependent variables. In the
37 results section, we report the results of two sets of analyses, one using democratic support as
38 the dependent variable and the other using left-right orientation. For the sake of parsimony,
39 we only discuss the analyses using democratic support as the dependent variable. As the
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59 ¹ To ensure that our findings are not dependent on a single case, we conducted a series of Leave-One-Out Tests
60 (Annex B.1). These tests reveal that the exclusion of a single country, does not alter the results.

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3 remainder of this study shows, the second set of analyses yields exactly the same
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5 conclusions.
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8 To measure democratic support, we use an extended version of the ‘democracy-
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10 autocracy index’, proposed by Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2017). This index consists of seven
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12 items on a four-point scale, ranging between ‘very bad’ and ‘very good’ or ‘disagree
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14 strongly’ and ‘agree strongly’. Support for authoritarian rule is calculated as the mean of
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16 items asking whether respondents agreed that (1) having a leader who does not have to bother
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18 with elections and (2) having the army govern is a good way of government; and that
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20 democracies (3) do not have a well-functioning economic system, (4) are bad at maintaining
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22 order and (5) are indecisive. We use the mean of items asking whether respondents agreed
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24 that democracy is (1) a good way of government and (2) better than any other form of
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26 government to measure support for democratic rule. We construct the index by subtracting
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28 support for authoritarian rule from support for democratic rule. The outcome is an index
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30 ranging between full support for authoritarian rule (-3) to full support for democratic rule
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32 (+3), with a Cronbach’s α of 0.755. Citizens’ ideological beliefs are measured using their
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34 self-placement on the left-right dimension, originally ranging between 1 ‘left’ to 10 ‘right’.
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40 The only truly independent – and exogenous – variables in this study are countries’
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42 and citizens’ experiences with authoritarianism. To determine countries’ experiences, we first
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44 use V-Dem data (Coppedge et al. 2020) to tentatively map all twentieth-century authoritarian
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46 regimes. To avoid relying on arbitrary cut-off criteria, we pinpoint the start- and end-dates
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48 based on identifiable historic events, such as transfers of power, coups and the first
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50 democratic elections.² Countries with a mostly uninterrupted experience with democracy
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52 since the turn of the twentieth century are considered democratic legacies. We classify
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² Annex A.1. contains a the justification for and validation of the start- and end-dates of each regime.

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3 countries with a history of fascism or military regimes as right-authoritarian and post-
4 socialist or post-communist countries as left-authoritarian. The regime classification is
5 visualised in Figure 1. We subsequently use information about respondents' birthyear to
6 distinguish between respondents who have experienced authoritarian rule after the age of five
7 and respondents who have not. This variable enables us to assess whether country-level
8 legacy effects persist despite processes of generational replacement.³
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17 [Figure 1 About Here]
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19 We also include several demographic controls to factor out the possible confounding
20 influence of citizen characteristics. We first include two variables to permit analysis of
21 generational differences: a continuous measurement for citizens' age and a dummy for each
22 survey-wave combination. Second, we include an ordinal variable gauging respondents' level
23 of educational attainment, ranging between '0' no formal education to '9' completed
24 university-level education.⁴ Third, we measure political interest on an ordinal scale ranging
25 from '1' very interested to '4' not at all interested. Finally, we include dummies for
26 respondents' sex and whether they are natives. Before running the analyses, we inverted the
27 scales of inversely coded items and rescaled all variables to range between the values '0' and
28 '1'. The summary statistics can be found in Table 1.
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42 *Analysis strategy*

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44 In analysing legacy effects, we face four methodological challenges: (1) identifying legacy
45 effects, (2) assessing the durability of legacy effects (3) obtaining adequate estimations given
46 our data, and (4) testing legacy effects. The first challenge involves separating legacy effects
47 from other noise in the data. In particular, we wish to separate variation in the relation
48 between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs explained by countries' authoritarian
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58 ³ A detailed overview of the age distribution by country is visualised in Annex A.2.

59 ⁴ We have treated this variable as continuous in the models. Using a categorical specification does not affect the
60 estimations of the variables of interest.

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3 past from variation explained by other factors. A good way to deal with this is by looking at
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5 how former authoritarian countries' patterns differ from those elsewhere. The variation they
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7 share, then, clearly has nothing to do with the authoritarian past, and the remaining variation
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9 can be attributed to countries' authoritarian past. In other words, we can resolve this problem
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11 by using countries with a democratic legacy as a benchmark.
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15 A second challenge arises when assessing the intergenerational durability of legacy
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17 effects. That is, it is statistically difficult to disentangle these so-called 'cohort effects' from
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19 the potentially confounding influences of age and period. To resolve this, we use age-period-
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21 cohort analysis techniques, which deal with this problem by including constrained
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23 specifications of age and period variables as controls. Imposing these constraints reduces the
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25 correlation between them. In our case, we include a dummy variable for each survey-wave
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27 (i.e., period), and we constrain the coefficient of age to be linear.⁵
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31 The third challenge involves obtaining adequate estimations of our effects. Doing so
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33 requires optimising the estimation (coefficient, standard error and shape) of the association
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35 between citizens' left-right orientation and democratic support. In particular, we wish to
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37 obtain an estimation of left-right orientation [democratic support] for each legacy that best
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39 represents that of all units of analysis (i.e., countries) classified under that legacy. Obtaining
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41 an adequate estimation of the coefficient and standard error entails eliminating a possible bias
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43 introduced by the complicated, nested structure of the data. Using multilevel analysis
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45 techniques, with observations nested in countries, enables us to factor out the 13.63%
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47 variance explained by the clustering of respondents within countries. Another advantage of
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49 this technique is that it allows us to consciously impose and lift constraints on the cross-
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51 national variability in the strength of individual-level coefficients. Allowing the coefficient of
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⁵ Using a categorical specification does not alter the conclusions.

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left-right orientation [democratic support] to vary (i.e., random slopes), enables us to assess whether the average value of this coefficient varies along with countries' authoritarian legacy. Rather than relying on the crude practice of interpreting p-values, we calculate 90% bootstrapped confidence intervals, thereby facilitating a 5% confidence level for our one-sided hypotheses. This procedure enables us to obtain a sampling distribution of plausible parameter estimates, which we visualise through coefficient plots. We consider a hypothesis fully supported when the upper and lower bounds align with our expectations. Models 1a to 1c are based analyses of a single legacy, using the following equation:

$$(1) y_{ij} = (\beta_0 + u_{0j}) + \beta_1 Ideology + \Sigma\beta X + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

in which y_{ij} denotes the value on democratic support for individual i in country j , β_0 the grand intercept, u_{0j} the deviation between the grand intercept and the intercept for country j , β_1 the fixed effect for citizens' left-right orientation, $\Sigma\beta X$ the coefficients for the control variables and ε_{ij} the stochastic error for individual i in country j . Model 1d uses the pooled data and models the interaction between countries' legacy and citizens' left-right orientation.

The equation for Model 1d can be described as:

$$(2) y_{ij} = (\beta_0 + u_{0j}) + (\beta_1 + u_{1j}) Ideology + \beta_2 Left\ Wing + \beta_3 Right\ Wing + \beta_4 Ideology \cdot Left\ Wing + \beta_5 Ideology \cdot Right\ Wing + \Sigma\beta X + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Equation 2 differs from Equation 1 due to the addition of dummies for countries' legacy (β_2 and β_3), the partition of the fixed effect for ideology into a grand coefficient β_1 and a country-random part u_{1j} and a cross-level interaction between ideology and legacy (β_4 and β_5).

The fourth and final challenge is testing legacy effects on the shape of the relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs (Hypothesis 2b). This is a challenge parametric techniques cannot address for at least two reasons. First, parametric techniques force us to make presumptions about the shape of these relations. This is problematic because these techniques may provide support for any specification, even if they are incorrect.

Second, parametric techniques also do not provide a measure of linearity. This limitation makes it difficult to test our expectations formally. To address this challenge, we employ a nonparametric analysis technique: Generalised Additive Mixed Models (GAMMs). In layman's terms, this technique allows us to drop any presumption we might have about the shape of the relation. It furthermore ensures that the estimated shape of the effect reflects its actual shape. It does so by lifting the restriction that predictions must be a weighted sum of the predictors. Instead, this technique allows the outcome to be modelled as a sum of linear terms βX , combined with arbitrary (a priori unknown) functions $f(X)$ for the terms of interest.

In the case of GAMMs, these arbitrary functions $f(X)$ are (cubic) spline functions, which can be imagined as elastic line gauges bend on certain values of the scale of the variable of interest (i.e., 'knots'). During the estimation procedure, GAMMs learn to find the optimal position for these knots. In our case, we use these techniques to produce smoothed curves and unbiased confidence intervals for citizens' left-right orientation. As Equation 3 demonstrates, the specifications of these models is the same as for Models 1a to 1c, with the sole exception that the fixed effect for ideology is now estimated using a spline function:

$$(3) y_{ij} = (\beta_0 + u_{0j}) + f(\beta_1 \text{ Ideology}) + \Sigma \beta X + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

To test Hypothesis 2b, we look at a statistic evaluating to what degree the curve deviates from linearity: Effective Degrees of Freedom (edf). The higher the value of this statistic, the more the curve deviates from linearity. This statistic, therefore, allows us to formally establish whether the relation between democratic support and left-right orientation follows a more linear pattern in former authoritarian countries.

Results

Legacy effects on the relation between citizens' democratic and ideological beliefs

The first and principal expectation of this study is that rightist beliefs are associated with lower levels of democratic support in former right-authoritarian countries (Hypothesis 1a) and with leftist beliefs in former left-authoritarian countries (Hypothesis 1b). To test this, we estimate a separate linear analysis for each legacy. The results of these analyses are presented in Models 1a to 1c in Figure 2.⁶

[Figure 2 About Here]

These analyses provide full support for Hypothesis 1. The negative value of the coefficient for left-right orientation in Model 1a shows that in former right-authoritarian countries, the most rightist citizens are 0.59 points (9.83%) less supportive than the most leftist citizens. These findings are in line with the expectations formulated in Hypothesis 1a. Likewise, the positive value of the estimate for left-right orientation in Model 1b predicts that in former left-authoritarian countries, the most leftist citizens are 0.39 points (6.50%) less supportive than the most rightist citizens, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 1b.

To ascertain that these differences can be attributed to countries' past, we benchmark the coefficients for left-right orientation in countries with an authoritarian legacy to that in countries with a democratic legacy.⁷ We expected this coefficient would be significantly different in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere (Hypothesis 2a). The main coefficient for left-right orientation in Model 1d (Figure 2) represents its correlation with democratic support in countries with a democratic legacy, and the interaction terms represent

⁶ To better understand these country-level legacy effects, we investigated whether the strength of the relation between citizens ideological proximity to the authoritarian predecessor and their democratic support varies along the regime's characteristics. The findings in Annex C.1. reveal this is not the case.

⁷ To ensure that these cross-national differences can indeed be attributed to the authoritarian past regime, and not just geographic differences in left-right alignment, we mapped several important correlates of the left-right dimension in Annex A.4 across legacies. This analysis shows that democratic support is the only correlate where the coefficient flows in the opposite direction in former left-authoritarian countries.

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3 the deviation from this coefficient in former authoritarian countries. Model 1d fully supports
4 our expectations. This model predicts that in countries with a right-wing legacy rightist
5 citizens are 0.53 points (8.83%) less democratic and in countries with a left-wing legacy
6 leftist citizens are 0.33 points (5.52%) less democratic than their ideological counterparts.
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8 Elsewhere, rightist citizens are less democratic, but this difference is 5.32% (0.24) less than
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10 in former right-authoritarian countries. Hence, the analyses provide full support for
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12 Hypothesis 1b.
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19 [Figure 3 About Here]
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21 A final expectation was that countries' authoritarian past would encourage citizens
22 with a positive reading of the past to disassociate with the regime's authoritarian and
23 ideological beliefs, and citizens with a negative reading to disassociate from its beliefs. If this
24 is the case, the relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs should be more
25 linear in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere (Hypothesis 2b). To test this, we
26 calculate an *edf*-statistic based on the results of nonlinear analyses. A lower value on this
27 statistic indicates a higher degree of linearity. Figure 3 confirms our expectations. It shows
28 that in countries with a democratic legacy, lower support is concentrated on both ends of the
29 left-right spectrum. In former authoritarian countries, by contrast, lower support is
30 concentrated on just one end. The *edf*-statistics tied to the estimations in former authoritarian
31 countries confirm the tentative conclusion that the relation between left-right orientation and
32 democratic support follows a more linear pattern in former authoritarian countries than
33 elsewhere. The value of this statistic is considerably lower in these countries (7.82 in left-
34 wing legacies, 8.05 in right-wing legacies) than that in countries with a democratic legacy
35 (*edf* = 8.73). The analyses, therefore, provide full support for Hypothesis 2b.
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55 These findings are important for several reasons. In general, our findings suggest that
56 a core assumption of existing rigidity models, namely, its insistence that citizens' democratic
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3 and ideological beliefs are related in the same way in every context, is incorrect. In addition,
4 these findings provide support for two important refinements of extant research on
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6 authoritarian legacies. They show that legacy effects exist in all former authoritarian
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8 countries, new and old alike. The nonlinear analyses furthermore show that authoritarian
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10 legacies do more than encourage citizens with a positive reading of the past to associate
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12 themselves with the past regime's ideological and authoritarian beliefs: they also pressure
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14 citizens with a negative reading to disassociate themselves.⁸
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21 *The intergenerational durability of legacy effects*

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23 A central claim we make in our theory section is that legacy effects are able to transcend
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25 generations. We perform age-period-cohort analysis to test whether this is the case. These
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27 analyses include an interaction term between citizens' ideology and whether or not they have
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29 experienced authoritarian rule. The inclusion of this interaction term permits us to estimate a
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31 separate line for citizens who have experienced authoritarian rule and those who grew up
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33 thereafter. The main coefficient of left-right orientation, then, represents its association with
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35 democratic support among citizens who grew up after authoritarian rule. The interaction term
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37 with experience represents the difference in the value of this coefficient for citizens who have
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39 experienced authoritarian rule. If the main coefficient is significant, we may conclude that the
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41 hypothesised legacy effects persist across generations.
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47 [Figure 4 About Here]

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49 The results for the linear analyses are visualised in Figure 4. The analyses provide strong
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51 evidence that the observed legacy effects survive processes of generational replacement. The
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57 ⁸ To determine whether this second type of legacy effect also applies to the extreme ends of the ideological
58 spectrum, we compared the distribution of democratic support for citizens identifying as far-left (1 or 2 on the
59 left-right scale) or far-right (9 or 10). The results are summarized in Annex A.3. and confirm that legacy effects
60 apply to both ends of the scale.

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3 main coefficient for citizens' left-right orientation in Figure 4, Model 2a predicts that in
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5 former right-authoritarian countries, rightist citizens born after authoritarian rule are 0.61
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7 points (10.17%) less democratic than their right-wing counterparts. Likewise, the main
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9 coefficient for left-right orientation in Model 2b predicts that in former left-authoritarian
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11 countries, leftist citizens born after authoritarian rule are 0.22 points (3.66%) less democratic
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13 than their right-wing counterparts. In other words, these analyses consistently show that
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15 legacy effects also occur among generations who grew up after authoritarian rule.
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19 [Figure 5 About Here]
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21 We perform a nonlinear analysis to evaluate whether legacy effects on the *shape* of the
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23 relation between citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs persist across generations
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25 (Figure 5). We may conclude that legacy effects persist if the value of the effective degrees of
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27 freedom of the coefficient for citizens' left-right orientation is lower than that in countries
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29 with a democratic legacy. Here, too, we find strong evidence that our hypothesised legacy
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31 effects persist across generations. The left panels in Figure 5 show that in former left-
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33 authoritarian countries, the relation is both more linear among citizens who have not (edf
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35 $=2.08$) and citizens who have ($edf=6.86$) experienced authoritarian rule than among citizens
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37 in countries with a democratic legacy ($edf=8.73$). The right panels mirror these findings for
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39 countries with a right-authoritarian legacy. These panels show that the relation between
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41 citizens' ideological and democratic beliefs is considerably more linear among citizens who
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43 have not experienced authoritarian rule ($edf=7.11$) and those who have ($edf=5.95$) than
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45 among citizens in countries with a democratic legacy ($edf=8.73$).
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51 What can we learn from these findings? If we take a closer look at the left panels of
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53 Figure 5, we see that in former left-authoritarian countries, deviations from linearity among
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55 citizens with direct exposure to authoritarianism are mostly located on the left side of the
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57 ideological spectrum. The right panels, by contrast, show that these deviations exist on both
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3 sides in former right-authoritarian countries. This observation yields an especially important
4 conclusion. It tells us that the second type of legacy effect, that is the desire of citizens with a
5 negative reading of the past to disassociate with the authoritarian and ideological beliefs of
6 the regime, only exists in former right-authoritarian countries.
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15 **Discussion**

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17 Who opposes democracy? Despite growing concerns over the future of democracy, there is
18 surprisingly little popular and scholarly agreement regarding the ideological alignment of less
19 democratic citizens. Most point to the ideological extremes as the main source of lower
20 support. Others believe that lower support is exclusively concentrated on the right end. In this
21 study, we proposed, tested and demonstrated the validity of another model, called the
22 ‘authoritarian legacy model’. We showed that whether lower support is located on the left
23 side, the right side or both sides of the ideological spectrum depends on historical experiences
24 with left- or right-authoritarianism.
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35 Our findings play well to several longstanding debates in political
36 science. Theoretically, our study shows that the models political psychology has developed to
37 study ideological rigidity are unsuitable for studying democratic support. To be sure, the
38 overwhelming empirical evidence in favour of the authoritarian legacy model does not
39 disprove any of the theoretical arguments fielded in political psychology. Citizens’
40 ideological and democratic beliefs may still very well be rooted in their cognitive rigidity.
41 Instead, this study should be viewed as an invitation for scholars working in this field to take
42 into account the historical background of a country, at least when studying democratic
43 support. That is, we show that the validity of the predictions made by earlier ideological
44 rigidity models is a matter of context. For example, our findings provide support for the
45 ‘rigidity-of-the-extremes’ hypothesis, but only in countries with a democratic legacy.
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3 Likewise, we found support for the ‘rigidity-of-the-right’ hypothesis, but only in former
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5 right-authoritarian countries.
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8 Our study also offers two additions to extant research on authoritarian legacy effects.
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10 First, we theorised a novel type of legacy effect, caused by citizens’ desire to disassociate
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12 with the ideological and authoritarian beliefs of the past regime. We investigated this by
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14 studying legacy effects on the shape of the relation between left-right orientation and
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16 democratic support. Our findings provide compelling evidence for this refinement of earlier
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18 theories. Our nonlinear analyses revealed that rightist beliefs imply stronger support for
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20 democracy in former left-authoritarian countries, as much as leftist beliefs imply weaker
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22 support. Inversely, leftist beliefs indicated higher support in former right-authoritarian
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24 countries, as much as rightist beliefs indicated weaker support. A second, related,
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26 contribution is that that this extension enabled us to theorise legacy effects that are not only
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28 relevant in the context of new democracies. Our findings provided evidence that the
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30 authoritarian past structures the association between left-right orientation and democratic
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32 support in former authoritarian countries, old and new democracies alike.
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38 The findings of our study are also empirically relevant for multiple reasons. In
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40 general, our findings confirm that the ideological beliefs of less democratic citizens are more
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42 similar in former authoritarian countries than elsewhere. Although not necessarily opposed to
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44 democratic government, these citizens may be swayed to support authoritarianism if they feel
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46 democratic government does not cater to their psychological needs or ideological interests.
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48 This means that an important condition for the mobilisation of less democratic citizens is
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50 more strongly fulfilled in these countries than elsewhere. Moreover, we found that legacy
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52 effects are durable and do not disappear along the process of generational replacement. This
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54 conclusion is especially valuable, given that many other authoritarian legacy effects (e.g., on
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56 left-authoritarianism; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2019) do tend to vanish with generational
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3 replacement. Unlike conclusions of earlier research, our study, therefore, seems to suggest
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5 that the authoritarian past creates a structural opportunity for reactionary movements, but also
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7 for democratic activist movements. This may explain why parties with an ideological link to
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9 the authoritarian past do not only have a stable basis in new democracies, such as the
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11 Czechian Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) but also in established
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13 democracies, such as the German National Democratic Party (NPD).
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17 Methodologically, this study offers two contributions arising from our decision to
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19 develop a nonlinear test of our expectations. First, using nonparametric methods enabled us
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21 to drop preconceptions regarding the shape of the relation between citizens' democratic and
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23 ideological beliefs. Lifting these constraints enabled us to achieve higher levels of confidence
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25 regarding the shape of effects than a theoretically informed model specification would. This
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27 exploratory feature of nonparametric methods is especially valuable in studies like ours, in
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29 which there are various conflicting theoretical claims about the shape of a relation. Second,
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31 this approach permitted us to propose a novel way to study legacy effects. We argued and
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33 empirically demonstrated that the authoritarian past resulted in a more linear relation between
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35 citizens' democratic and ideological beliefs. Besides, the exploratory nature of these analyses
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37 also enabled us to formulate more nuanced conclusions that would have gone unnoticed using
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39 only parametric methods. For instance, we did not find any evidence that more democratic
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41 citizens who experienced left-authoritarian rule were more inclined to identify with rightist
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43 ideological beliefs. By contrast, we did find evidence that this is the case in former right-
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45 authoritarian countries. This observation necessarily invites us to reflect on the reason why
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47 this is not the case in former left-authoritarian countries. A possible reason is that left-wing
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49 regimes were more consistent in their efforts to indoctrinate the masses than right-wing
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51 regimes. This regime characteristic may contribute to the homogenisation, rather than
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53 polarisation, of public opinion. This may explain why individual legacy effects are only
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3 found on the left side of the ideological spectrum. Further theorisation and analysis on shape
4 effects may, therefore, yield more nuanced conclusions about the influence of countries'
5 authoritarian past.
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10 This tentative suggestion necessarily brings us to the discussion of other limitations
11 and avenues for future research. First, in the theorisation of legacy effects, we focused on
12 countries with either a legacy of right- or left- authoritarianism. In effect, the arguments put
13 forward here cannot be applied to countries with competing authoritarian (left- and right-
14 wing) legacies, such as Hungary and East Germany. In these rare cases, both the left- and the
15 right end of the ideological spectrum are tainted by an anti-democratic connotation. It is,
16 therefore, unclear what the empirical implications for mass political behaviour would be.
17 However, qualitative analysis of these cases can be very instructive, and they may even help
18 further refine our theory. Knowledge on how citizens' deal with these competing pressures
19 may help us better understand which type of regime traces (e.g., reference in political debate,
20 memorial sites, museums, popular culture) prevail in citizens' considerations. Second, it is
21 important to note that our finding that leftist citizens are less democratic in former left-
22 authoritarian countries seems to be at odds with the observation that radical right parties are
23 flourishing in some of these countries (for instance *PiS* in Poland). We believe that the reason
24 for this is that the left-authoritarian past has enabled the radical right to acquire a pro-
25 democratic reputation. This argument can be loosely substantiated by the fact that *PiS* entered
26 the electoral arena as a pro-democratic party with a strong anti-communist rhetoric. This
27 rhetoric may have permitted this party to ward off accusations of political extremism. More
28 research is necessary to investigate whether this is the case.
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54 Despite these shortcomings, it is clear that the implications of this study reach beyond
55 the question which citizens are more likely to oppose democracy. Contrary to earlier research
56 on legacy effects, our study shows that the authoritarian past establishes lasting and society-
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3 wide effects, that will not simply vanish with generational replacement. As such, this study
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5 tells us a great deal about the mobilisation potential of reactionary and democratic activist
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8 movements across different countries.
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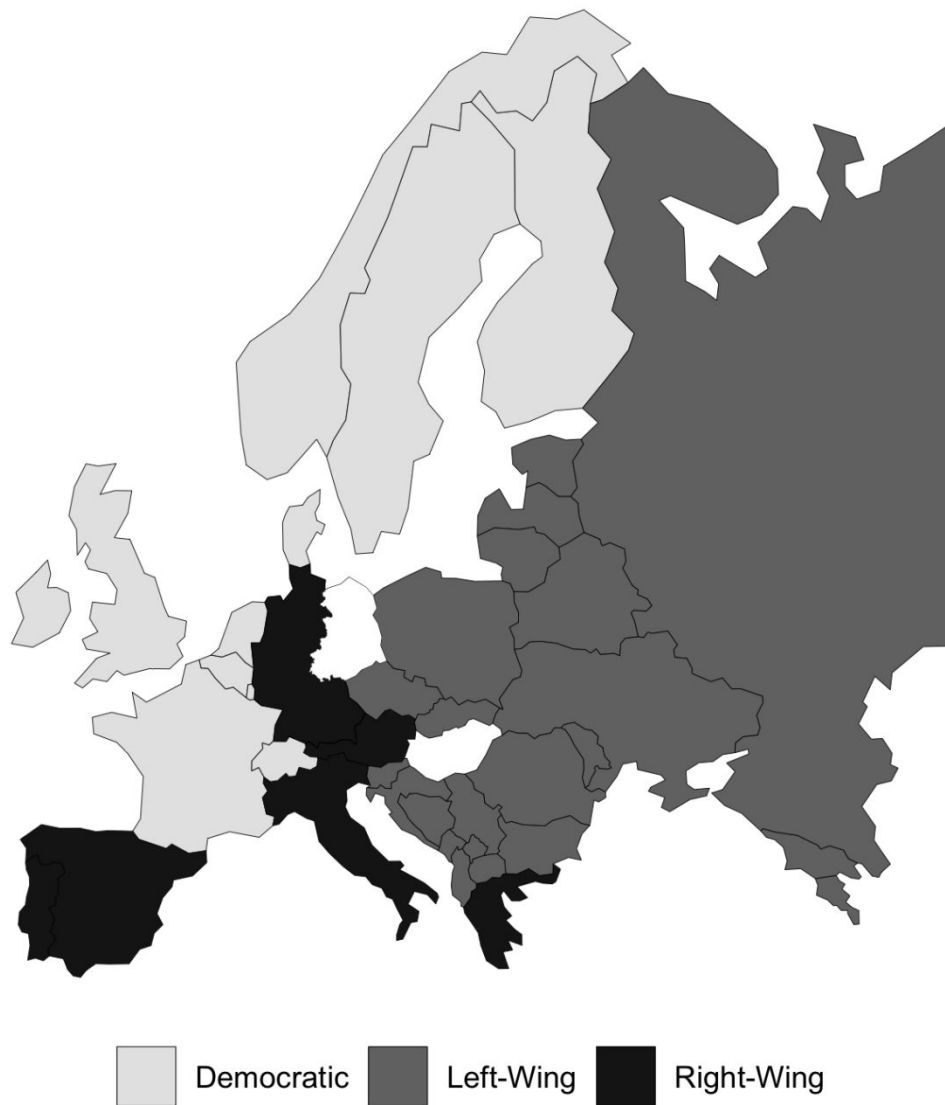
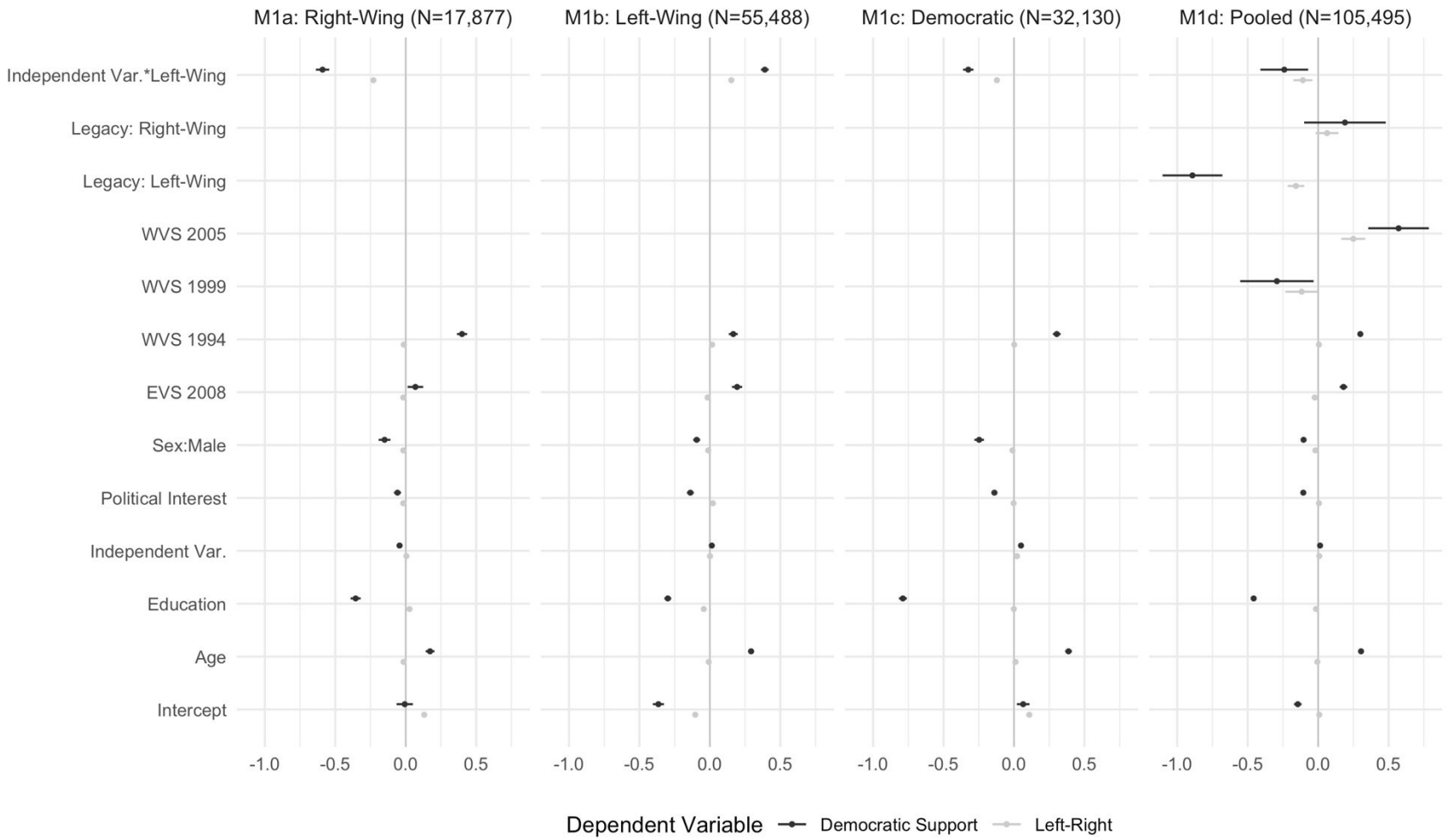


Figure 1. Regime classification. Notes. The start- and end-dates of each regime, as well as the justification and validation of the classifications scheme, can be found in Annex A.1. The fill colour of countries that were excluded from the analyses is white.



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Figure 2. Linear test of legacy effects. Source. European and World Values Survey (1994-2008). Notes. Entries are the result of multilevel analyses with observations nested in countries. Figure shows the normally distributed sampling distributions, derived from 90% bootstrapped confidence intervals (iterations = 10.000, seed = 1993). The intercept is not included in the visualisation to increase the readability of the results. The 'independent variable' of the analyses is 'left-right orientation' when the dependent variable is democratic support and 'democratic support' when the dependent variable is 'left-right orientation'.

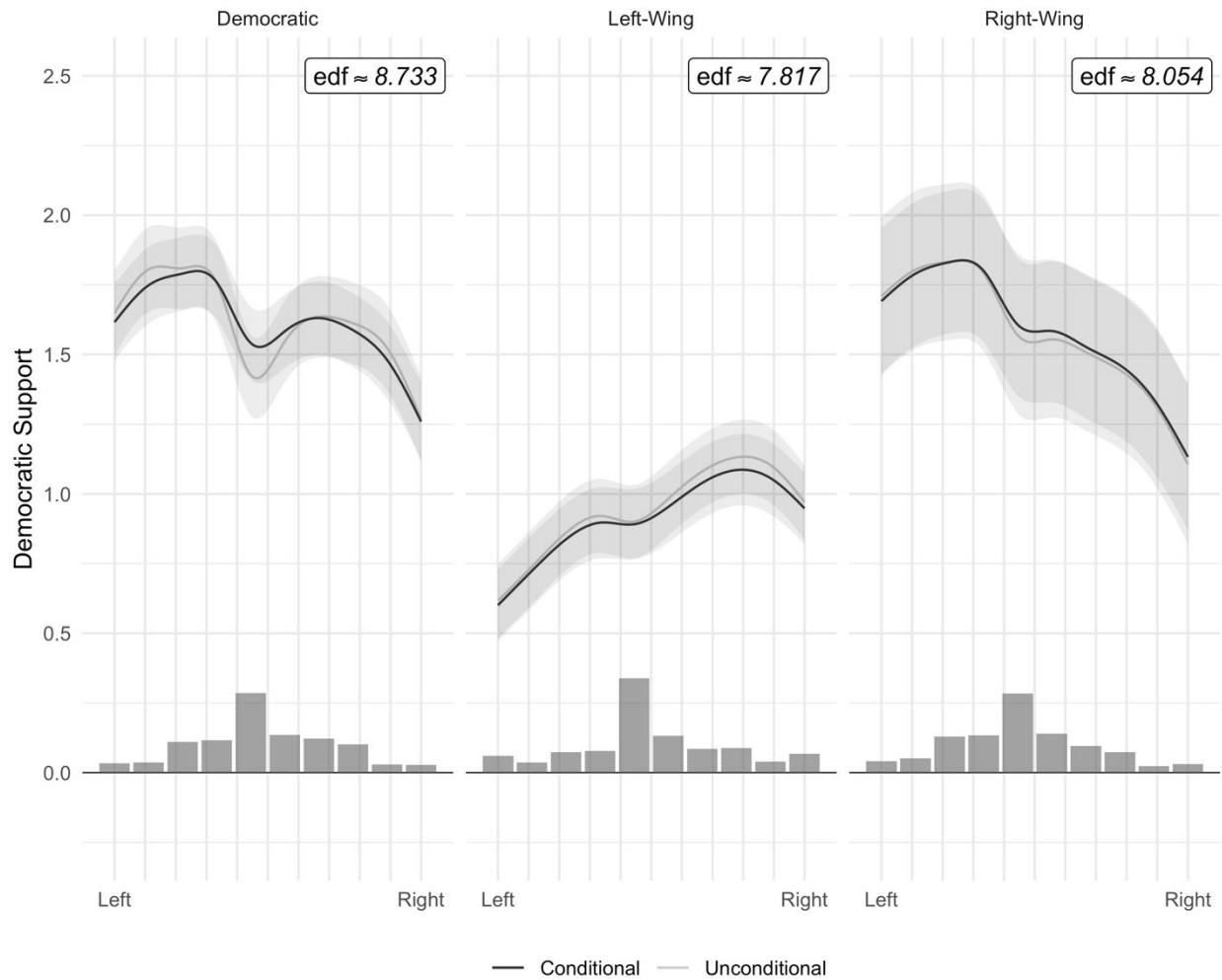


Figure 3. Nonlinear test of legacy effects. Notes. Figures are the result of Generalized Additive Mixed Models, with a cubic spline function estimation for citizens' left-right orientation (knots = 10). The grey bound represents a 95% confidence interval around the predicted value. The edf-statistics can be read as measures of linearity and only apply to the conditional estimations. The lower the value of this statistic, the more linear a relation is.

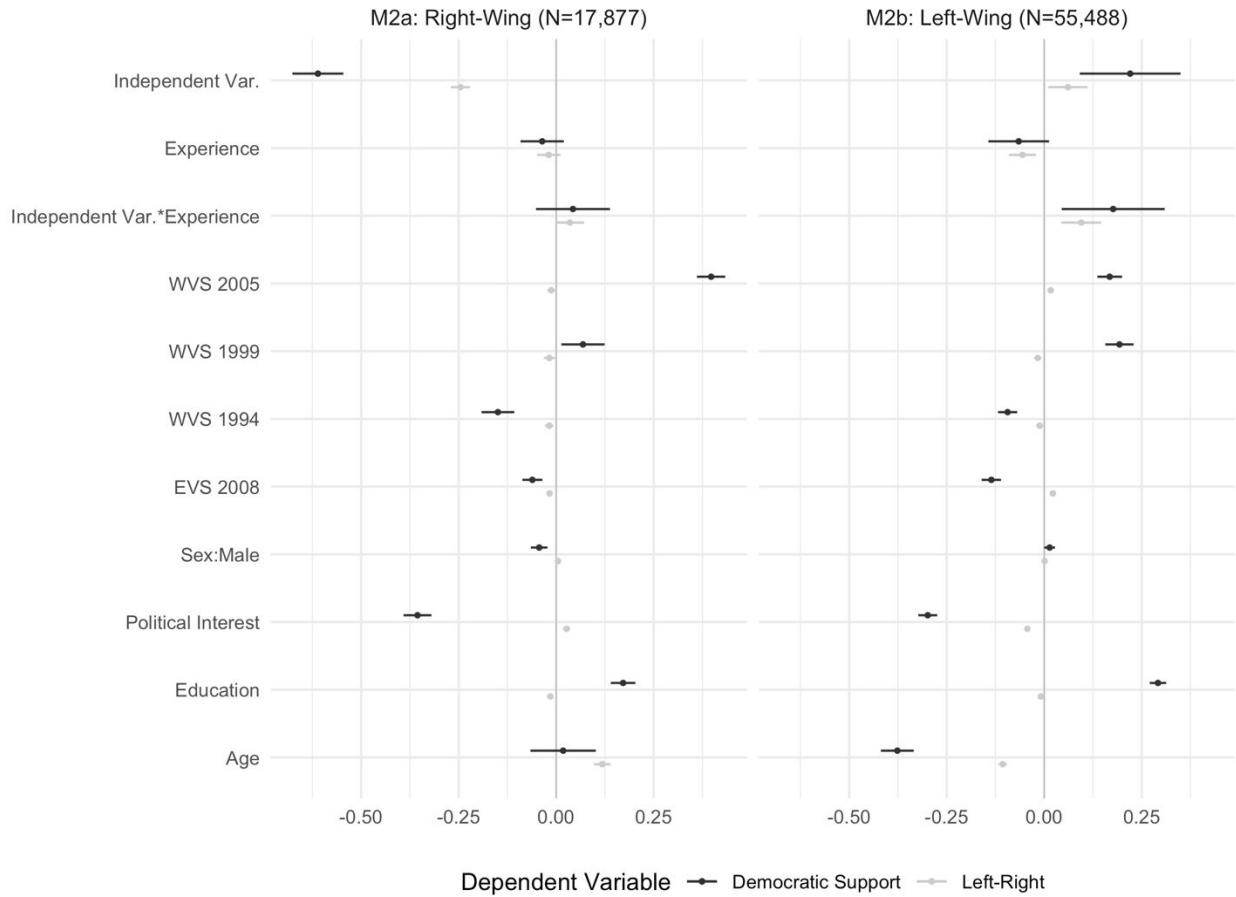


Figure 4. Linear test of generational difference. Source. European and World Values Survey (1994-2008). Notes. Entries are the result of multilevel analyses with observations nested in countries. Figure shows the normally distributed sampling distributions, derived from 90% bootstrapped confidence intervals (iterations = 10,000, seed = 1993). The intercept is not included in the visualisation to increase the readability of the results. The ‘independent variable’ of the analyses is ‘left-right orientation’ when the dependent variable is democratic support and ‘democratic support’ when the dependent variable is ‘left-right orientation.

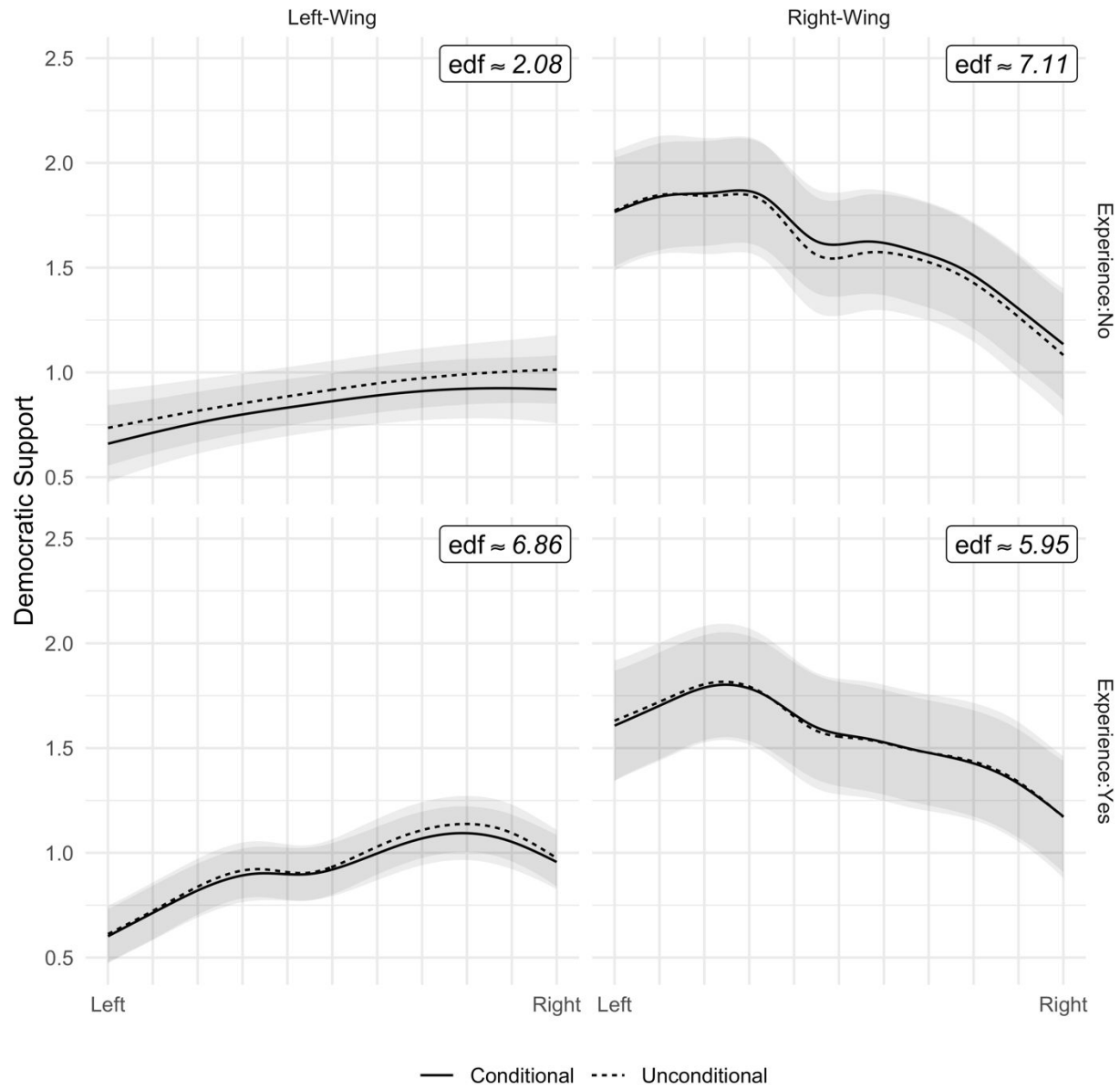


Figure 5. Nonlinear test of generational differences. Notes. Figures are the result of Generalized Additive Mixed Models, with a smoothed spline function estimation for citizens' left-right orientation (knots = 10). The grey bound represents a 95% confidence interval around the predicted value. The edf-statistic can be read as a measure of linearity. The lower the value of this statistic, the more linear a relation is.

Table 1. Summary statistics.

Variable	N	Mean/Prop.	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Democratic Support	11,2801	1.250	1.051	-3	3
Age	11,2801	0.334	0.179	0	1
Educational Attainment	11,2801	0.466	0.339	0	1
Experience: No	12,340	0.156			Ref.
Yes	66,853	0.844		0	1
Left-Right	11,2801	0.487	0.238	0	1
Political Interest	11,2801	0.499	0.298	0	1
Sex: Male	55,296	0.490			Ref.
Female	57,481	0.510		0	1
Survey-Year: EVS 1999	26,973	0.239			Ref.
EVS 2008	41,361	0.367		0	1
WVS 1994	23,983	0.213		0	1
WVS 1999	5770	0.051		0	1
WVS 2005	14,714	0.130		0	1

Democratic support and citizens' left-right self-placement in former left- and right- authoritarian countries

Supplementary File

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A Additional Information

A.1 Regime Start- and End Dates

A.1.1 Overview Start- and End Dates

1. Left-Wing

- Albania from the establishment of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1946 to the first elections in 1991.
- Armenia from the establishment of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920 to the first democratic parliamentary elections in 1990.
- Belarus from the establishment of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic in 1917 to the first democratic presidential elections in 1994.
- Bosnia from the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 to the first democratic general elections of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina held in 1990.
- Bulgaria from the establishment of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in 1946 to the first democratic elections of the Constitutional Assembly held in 1990 in the Republic of Bulgaria.
- Croatia from the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 to the first (not fully democratic) elections of the Republic of Croatia held in 1990.
- Czechia from the establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1948 to the first democratic federal elections held in 1990.
- E. Germ. from the establishment of the German Democratic Republic in 1949 to the first democratic elections in 1990.
- Estonia from the establishment of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 to the first democratic parliamentary elections in 1992. Period does not include the Nazi occupation between 1941 and 1944.
- Georgia from the establishment of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1921 to the first parliamentary elections in Georgia in 1990.
- Hungary from the establishment of Hungarian People's Republic in 1949 to the first democratic parliamentary elections held in the Third Hungarian Republic in 1990.

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3 Latvia from the establishment of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 to the first
4 democratic elections in 1990. Period does not include the Nazi occupation between
5 1941 and 1944.
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9 Lithuania Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 to the first democratic elections held in
10 1992. Period does not include the Nazi occupation between 1941 and 1944.
11
12 Macedonia from the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 to the
13 first democratic elections in 1990.
14
15
16 Moldova from the establishment of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 to the first
17 democratic parliamentary elections in 1990.
18
19
20 Poland from the establishment of the Polish People's Republic in 1947 to the first parliamen-
21 tary elections in 1989.
22
23
24 Romania from the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Romania in 1947 to the first
25 democratic general elections in 1990 in Romania.
26
27
28 Russia from the establishment of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Re- public to the
29 first democratic presidential elections in 1991.
30
31
32 Serbia from the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 to the
33 general elections in 1992.
34
35
36 Slovakia from the establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1948 to the first
37 democratic parliamentary elections held in 1990.
38
39
40 Slovenia from the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945, to the
41 first democratic parliamentary elections in 1990 in the Republic of Slovenia in 1990.
42
43
44 Ukraine from the establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1919 to the first
45 democratic parliamentary elections in 1990.
46

47 **2. Right-Wing**

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49 Austria from 1932 when Austro-fascist dictator Engelbert Dolfuss assumed his office as
50 Chancellor to the first democratic Austrian legislative elections in 1945.
51
52
53 Greece from the military *coup d'état* in 1967 to the first parliamentary democratic elections
54 held in 1974 in the Third Hellenic Republic.
55
56
57 Italy from the year Benito Mussolini entered office as prime-minister in 1922 to the first
58 democratic general elections held in 1946.
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3 Portugal from the *coup d'état* by Antonio Carmona in 1926 to the first democratic constituent
4 assembly elections held in 1975.
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7 Spain from the year Francisco Franco entered office as president in 1936 to the first demo-
8 cratic general elections in 1977.
9

10
11 W. Germ. from the year Adolf Hitler assumed office as Chancellor in 1933 and dictator to the
12 first democratic federal elections in West Germany in 1949.
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A.1.2 Validation Start- and End Dates

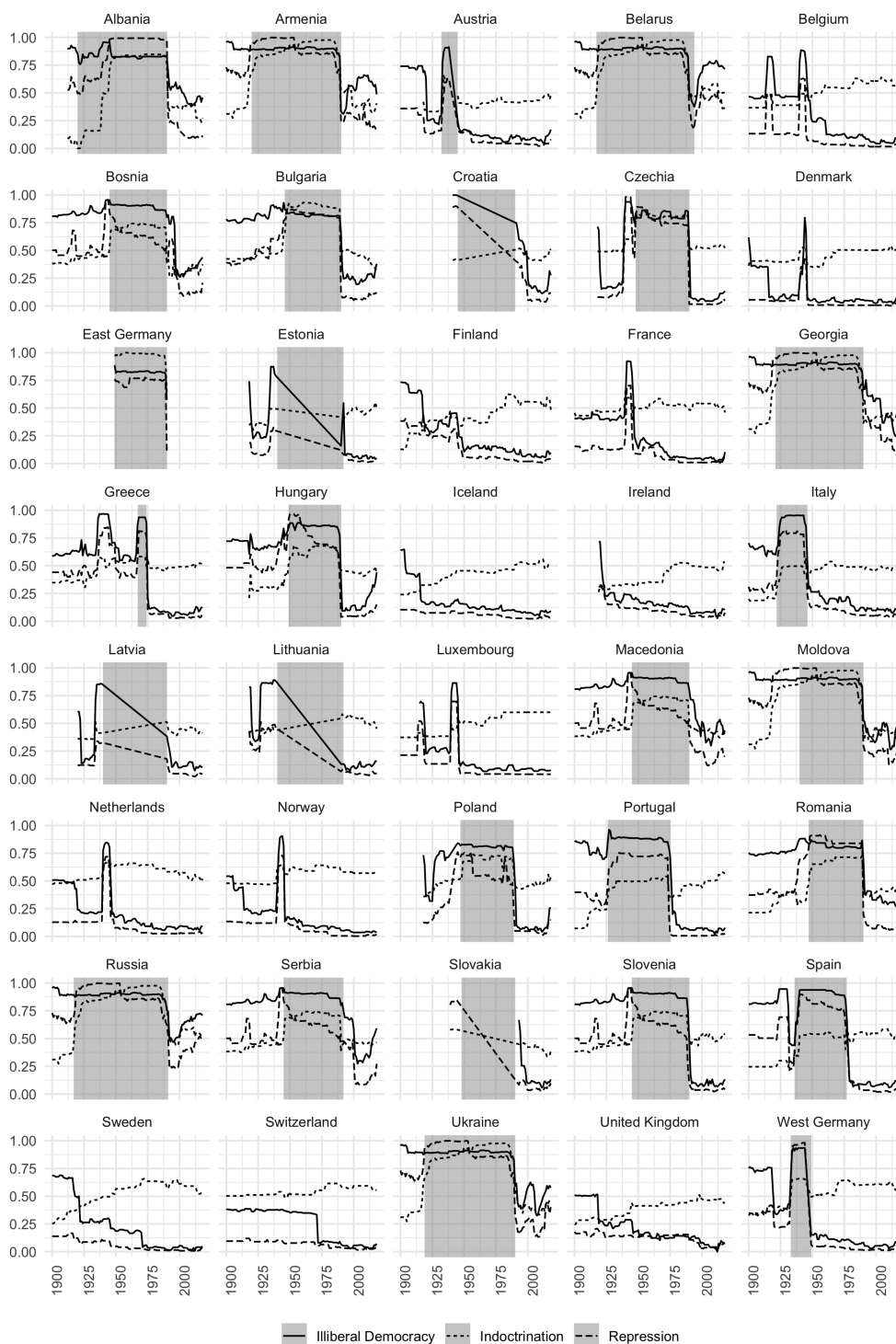


FIGURE A.1.2: Regime date validation. *Source:* V-Dem (2019) *Notes:* Figure represents the level of indoctrination and repression (indices produced by Dinas & Northmore-Ball, 2019 using V-Dem data) and the absence of electoral democracy (i.e., illiberal democracy). All indices were rescaled to a scale ranging between 0 and 1. The grey areas denote the period of time coded as authoritarian rule.

A.2 Distribution Year of Birth by Country

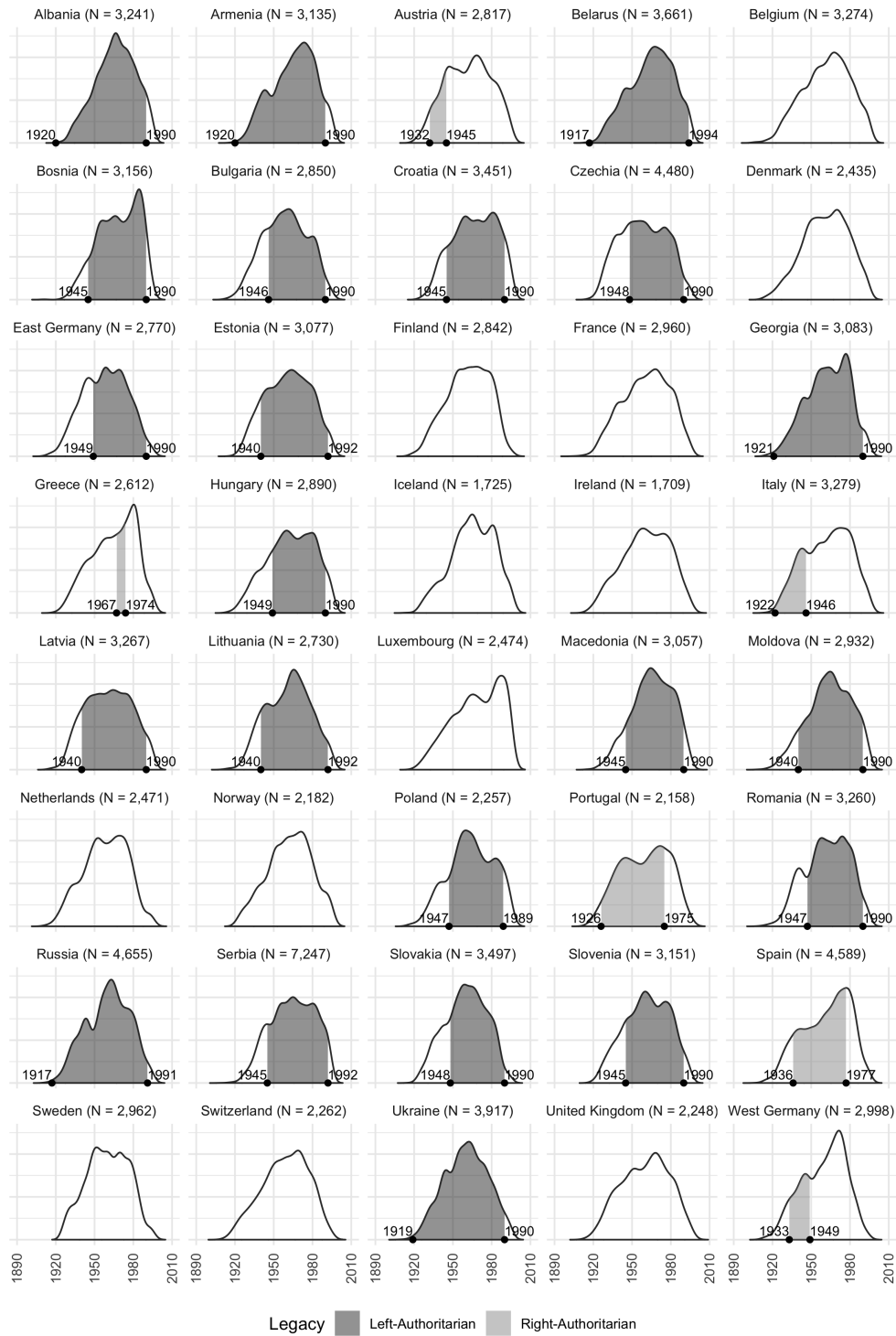


FIGURE A.2: Year of birth distribution. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure depicts a density function of respondents' birth year by country. The grey areas denote the periods of time coded as authoritarian rule.

A.3 Democratic Support and Ideological Extremism

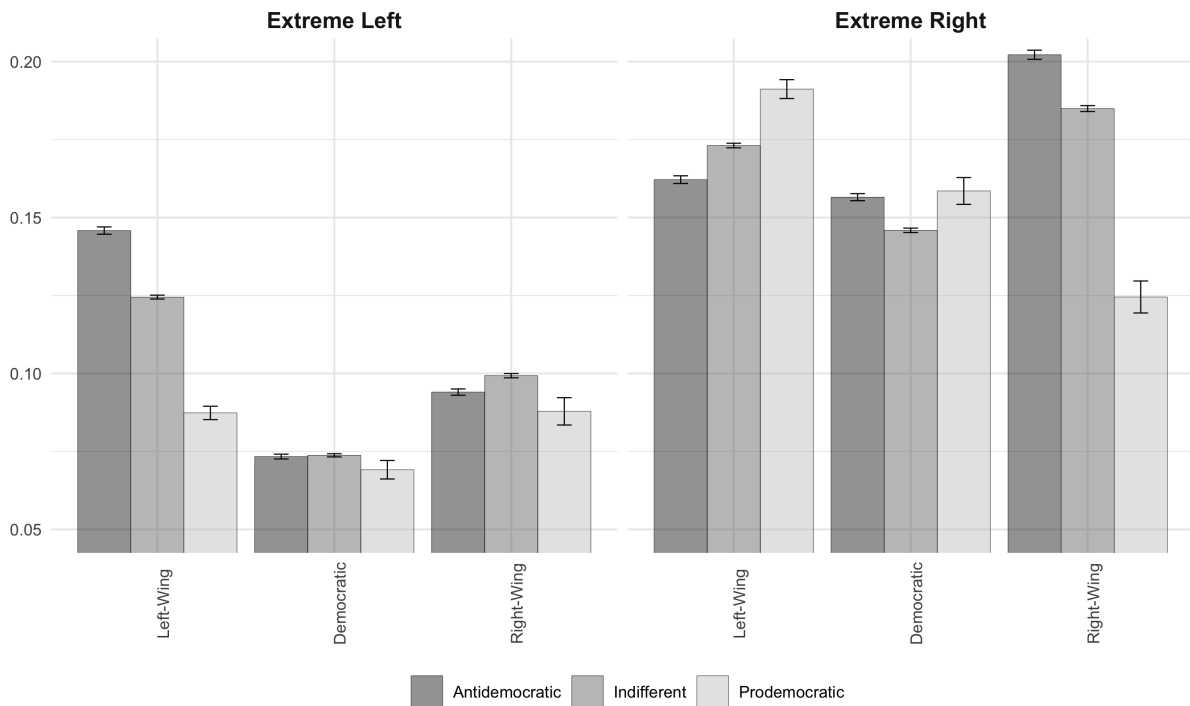


FIGURE A.3: Democratic support and ideological extremism. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure depicts the percentage of antidemocratic (DAP < 0), neutral (DAP = 0) and prodemocratic (DAP > 0) respondents identifying as extreme left (i.e., 0-1 on the left-right scale) and extreme right (i.e., 9-10 on the left-right scale) by legacy. The vertical whiskers represent a 95% confidence interval around the predicted percentage.

A.4 Correlates of the Left-Right Dimension

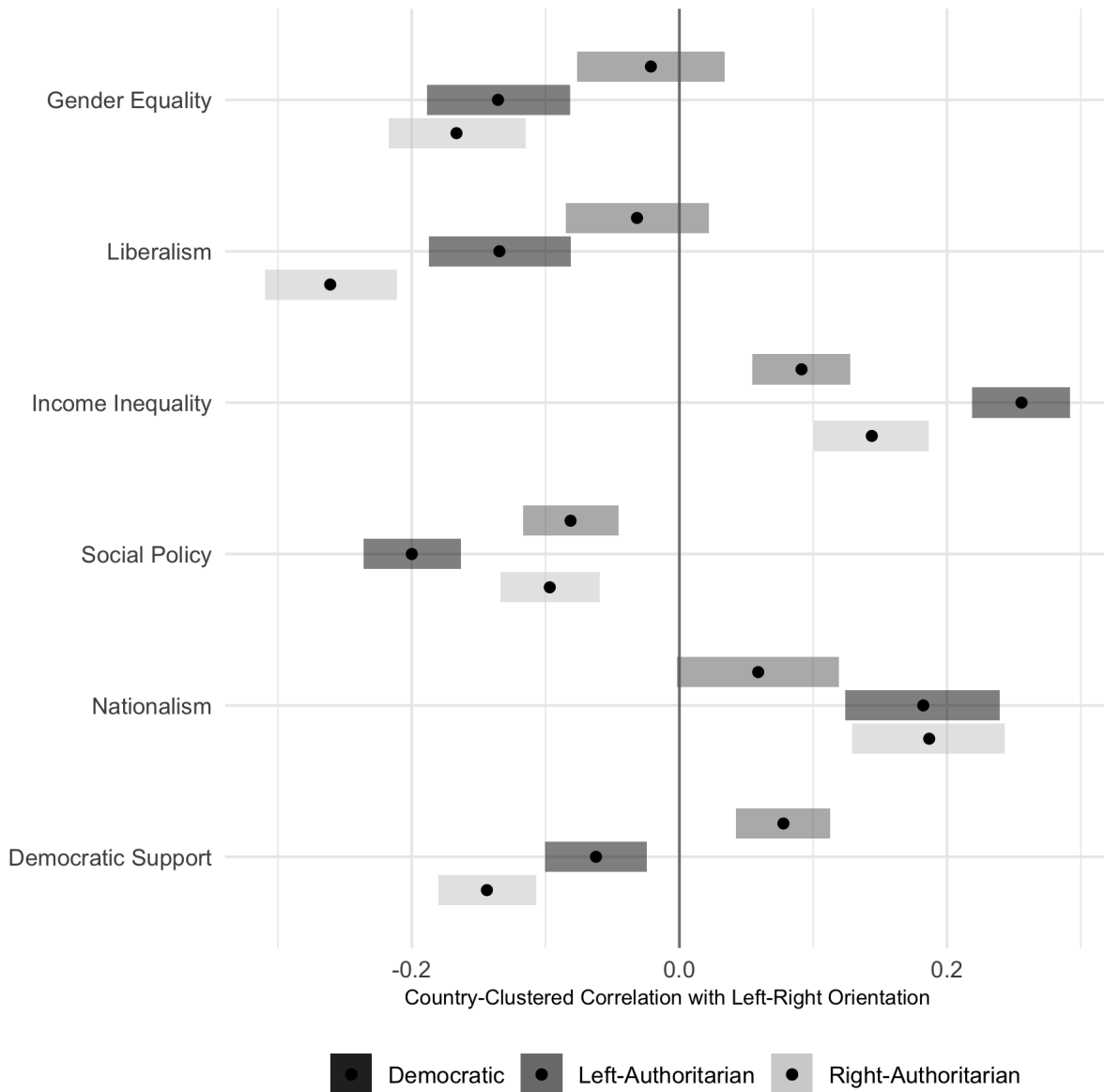


FIGURE A.4: Correlates of the left-right dimension. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure depicts the country-clustered correlates of democratic support by legacy. The horizontal bar represents a 95% confidence interval around the predicted correlation. The points represent the point estimates.

B Robustness Tests

B.1 Leave-One-Out Tests

Removed	M1a	M1b	M1c	M1d	M2a	M2b	M3a	M3b	M4a	M4c
Austria	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Greece	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Italy	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Portugal	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Spain	✓			✓	✓		ns		✓	
West Germany	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Albania		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Armenia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Belarus		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Bosnia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Bulgaria		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Croatia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Czechia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
East Germany		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Estonia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Georgia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Hungary		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Latvia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Lithuania		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Macedonia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Moldova		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Poland		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Romania		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Russia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Serbia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Slovakia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Slovenia		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Ukraine		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Belgium			✓	✓						
Denmark			✓	✓						
Finland			✓	✓						
France			✓	✓						
Iceland			✓	✓						
Ireland			✓	✓						
Luxembourg			✓	✓						
Netherlands			✓	✓						
Norway			✓	✓						
Sweden			✓	✓						
Switzerland			✓	✓						
United Kingdom			✓	✓						

TABLE B.1.: Leave-one-out tests. *Source:* WVS – EVS (1994-2008). *Notes:* A ✓ indicates that the substantive conclusion of the analysis has remained the same after removing one country from the sample.

B.2 Directional Analyses

Model	Key Term	DV: Dem. Support						DV: LR Orientation						Robust?
		Gender	Education	Religiosity	Pol. Interest	Native	All	Gender	Education	Religiosity	Pol. Interest	Native	All	
M1a	Indep. Var.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
M1b	Indep. Var.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	✓
M1c	Indep. Var.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
M1d	Indep. Var. × Legacy: Left	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	✓
M1d	Indep. Var. × Legacy: Right	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓
M2a	Indep. Var. × Experience	+	ns	+	+	+	+	ns	ns	+	ns	+	+	±
M2b	Indep. Var. × Experience	+	ns	+	+	ns	ns	+	+	+	+	+	ns	±
M3a	Indep. Var. × Exposure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ns	-	-	±
M3b	Indep. Var. × Exposure	+	+	+	+	ns	ns	+	+	+	+	ns	ns	±
M4a	Indep. Var. × Early Exposure	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	✓
M4b	Indep. Var. × Early Exposure	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	✓

TABLE B.2: DIRECTIONAL ANALYSES. *Source:* WVS – EVS (1994-2008). *Notes:* – indicates a significant negative effect, + a significant positive effect and ns an insignificant effect. A ✓ indicates that all analyses yield the same conclusions as the original analysis ± that they only partially yields the same results.

B.3 Analyses by Country

Country	Left-Right	Left-Right × Experience	Left-Right × Exposure	Left-Right × Early Exposure
Austria	-0.045***	-0.001ns	0.001ns	0.003ns
Greece	-0.036***	0.061***	0.008*	0.055**
Italy	-0.094***	0.001ns	0.000ns	0.009ns
Portugal	-0.034***	-0.046*	-0.001*	-0.030ns
Spain	-0.098***	0.006ns	-0.000ns	0.016ns
West Germany	-0.073***	0.004ns	0.000ns	-0.005ns
Albania	0.055***	0.056†	0.002**	0.023ns
Armenia	0.032***	0.079**	0.001**	0.006ns
Belarus	-0.003ns	-0.255ns	0.000ns	-0.290ns
Bosnia	-0.026ns	-0.005ns	-0.002**	0.031ns
Bulgaria	0.132***	-0.099ns	0.001†	-0.132†
Croatia	-0.029***	-0.0159***	0.000ns	-0.006ns
Czechia	0.116***	0.020ns	0.002***	-0.027ns
East Germany	-0.091***	0.079ns	0.002*	-0.109*
Estonia	0.071***	0.167**	0.001*	0.136*
Georgia	-0.011ns	0.021ns	0.000ns	0.034ns
Hungary	0.011ns	0.001ns	-0.001ns	0.024ns
Latvia	0.035***	0.020ns	0.000ns	0.053ns
Lithuania	0.027**	-0.005ns	-0.000ns	0.006ns
Macedonia	-0.003ns	-0.048ns	-0.001**	-0.026ns
Moldova	0.048***	0.014ns	0.001ns	0.000ns
Poland	0.027***	-0.020ns	-0.000ns	-0.019ns
Romania	0.038***	-0.092ns	0.000ns	-0.096ns
Russia	0.105***	0.092ns	0.000ns	0.076ns
Serbia	0.025***	0.002ns	0.000ns	0.004ns
Slovakia	0.053***	0.109†	-0.001ns	0.048ns
Slovenia	-0.009ns	0.040ns	0.001ns	0.094ns
Ukraine	0.089***	0.019ns	0.000ns	0.015ns
Belgium	-0.058***			
Denmark	-0.036***			
Finland	-0.037***			
France	-0.068***			
Iceland	-0.007ns			
Ireland	0.042**			
Luxembourg	0.001ns			
Netherlands	-0.076***			
Norway	-0.021*			
Sweden	-0.029***			
Switzerland	-0.047***			
United Kingdom	0.012ns			

TABLE B.3: Analyses by country. *Source:* WVS – EVS (1994-2008). *Notes:* *** p<0.001
** p<0.010 * p <0.050 † p<0.100

B.4 Prodemocratic vs. Antidemocratic Citizens

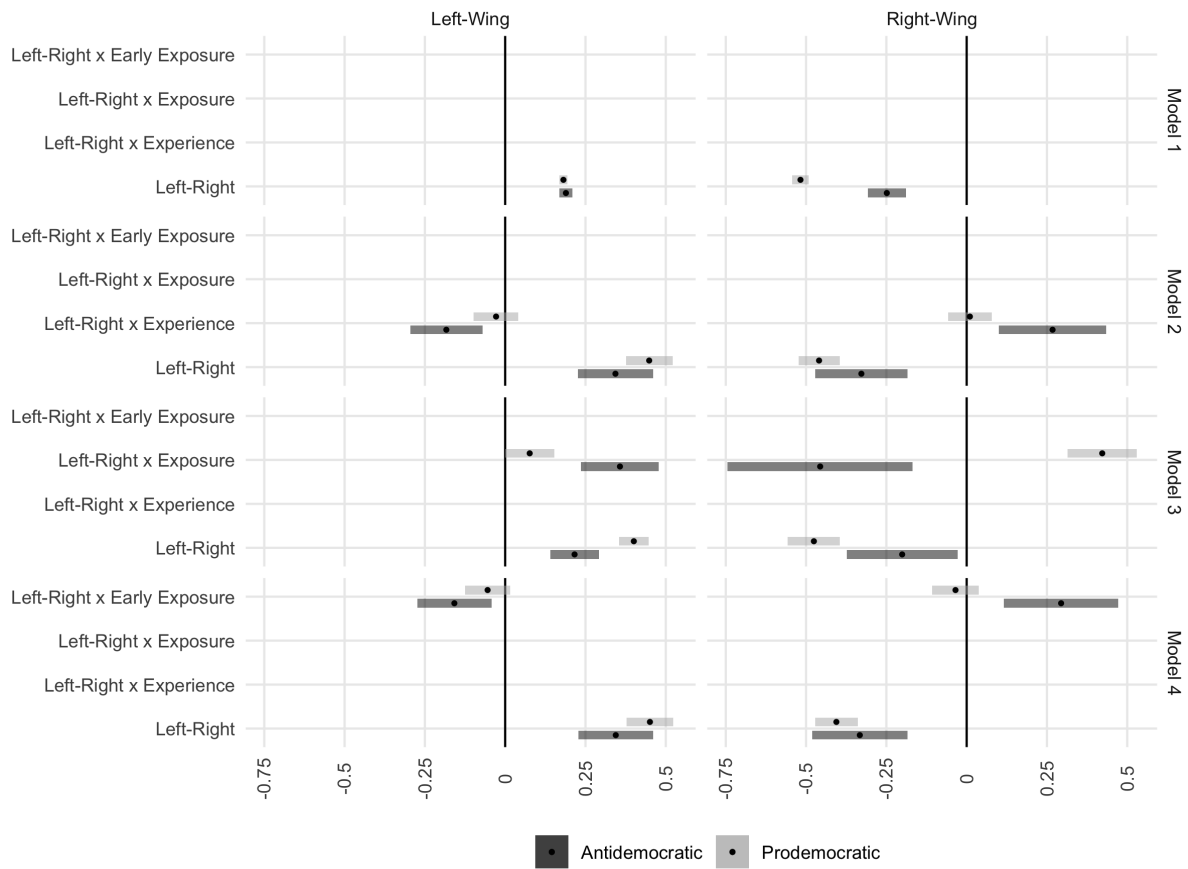


FIGURE B.4.: Effects for pro- and antidemocratic citizens. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure shows the results of analyses with the same specification as those presented in Table 2 and Table 3 in the main document, but with separate estimations for prodemocratic citizens (DAP > 0) and antidemocratic citizens (DAP < 0). The horizontal bars represent a 95% confidence interval around the predicted effect. The points represent the point estimates.

C Explanatory Mechanisms

C.1 Country-Level Legacy Effects

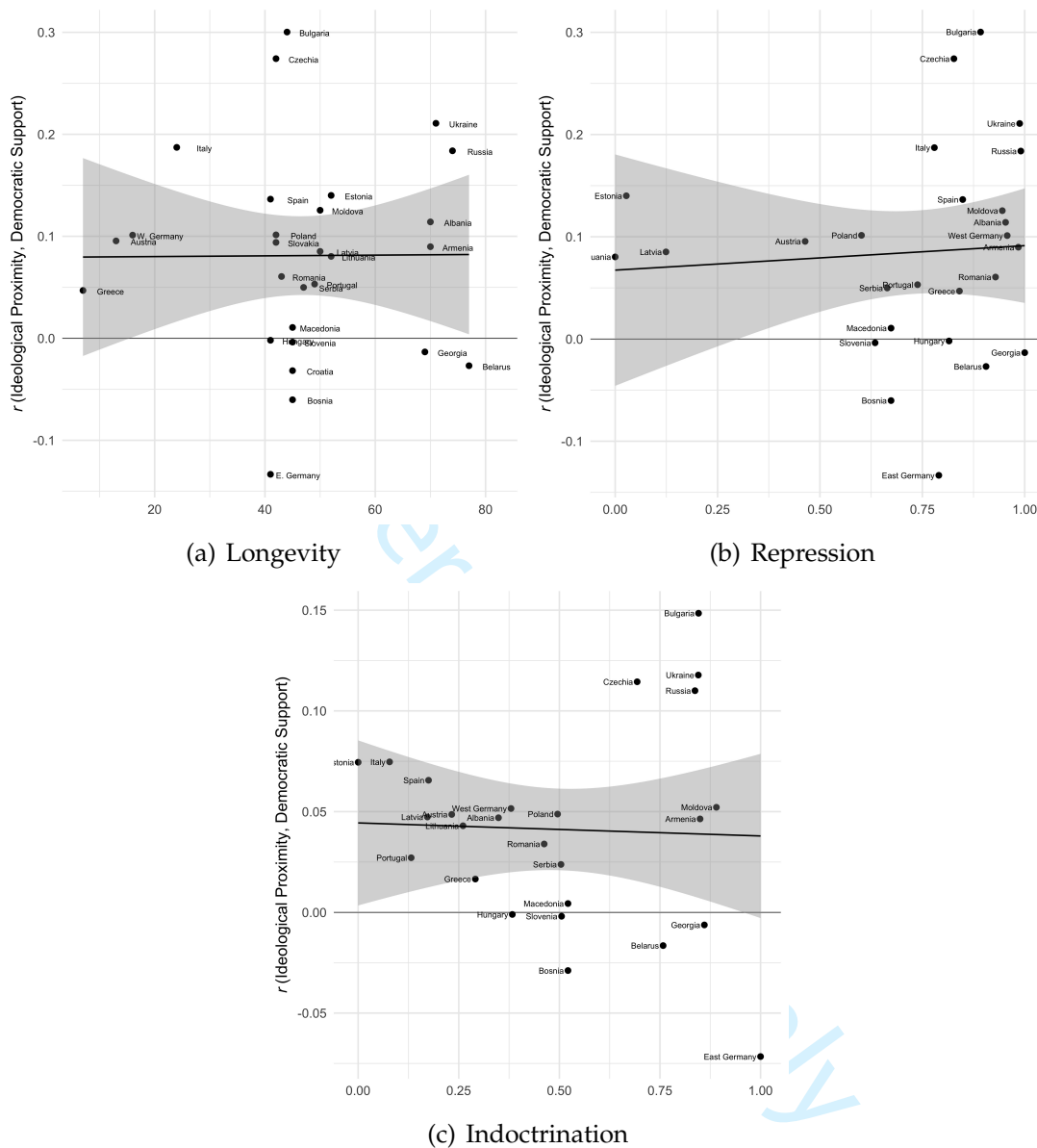


FIGURE C.1.1: The moderation effect of regime characteristics. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* The figure represents the relation between regime characteristics and the strength of the correlation between citizens' ideological proximity to the authoritarian predecessor and democratic support. The level of indoctrination and repression are indices produced by Dinas & Northmore-Ball (2019) using V-Dem data. All indices were rescaled on a scale from 0 to 1.

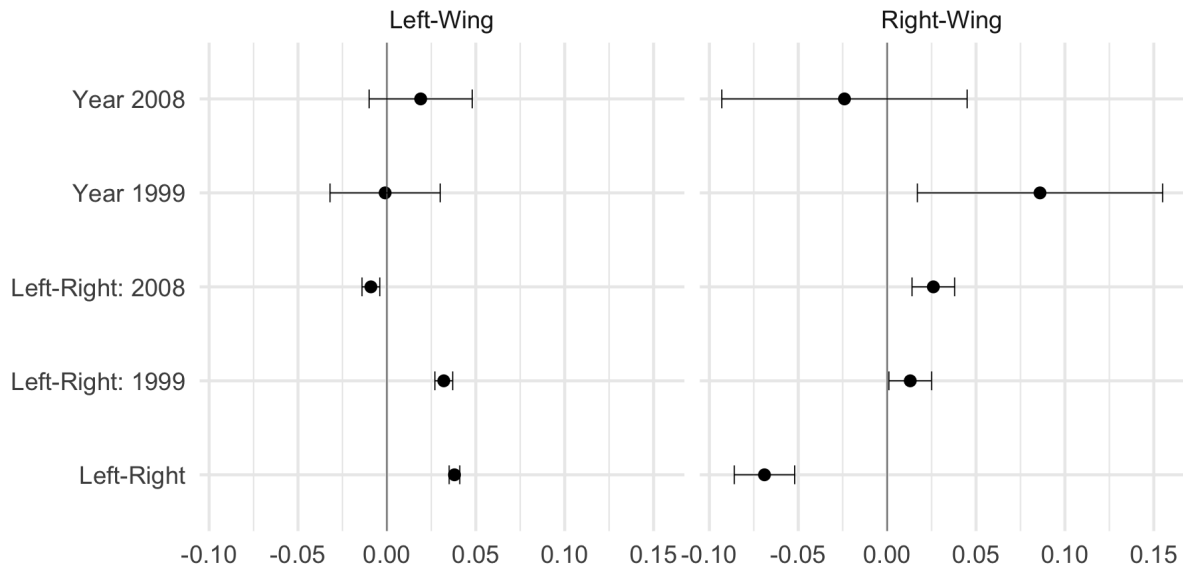


FIGURE C.1.2: The moderation effect of time. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure shows the results of a multilevel analysis with democratic support as the dependent variable. The interactions between left-right orientation and year can be interpreted as the effect of the distance of experiences with authoritarianism.

C.2 Generational Differences

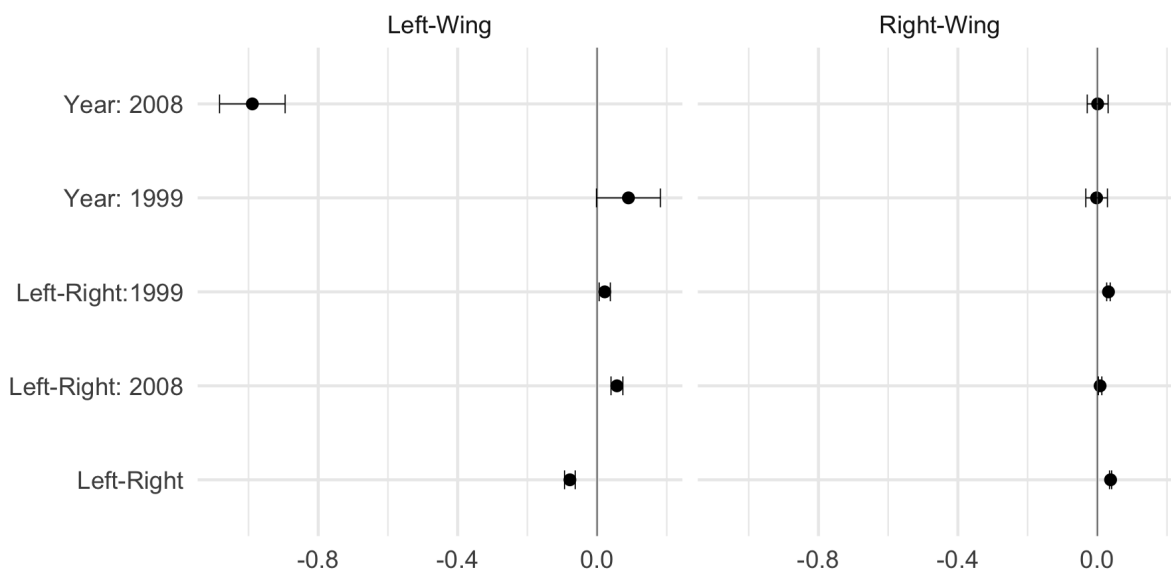


FIGURE C.2.1: Democratic learning effects. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure shows the results of a multilevel analysis among citizens with direct experiences with authoritarianism with democratic support as the dependent variable. The interactions between left-right orientation and year can be interpreted as "democratic learning effects"

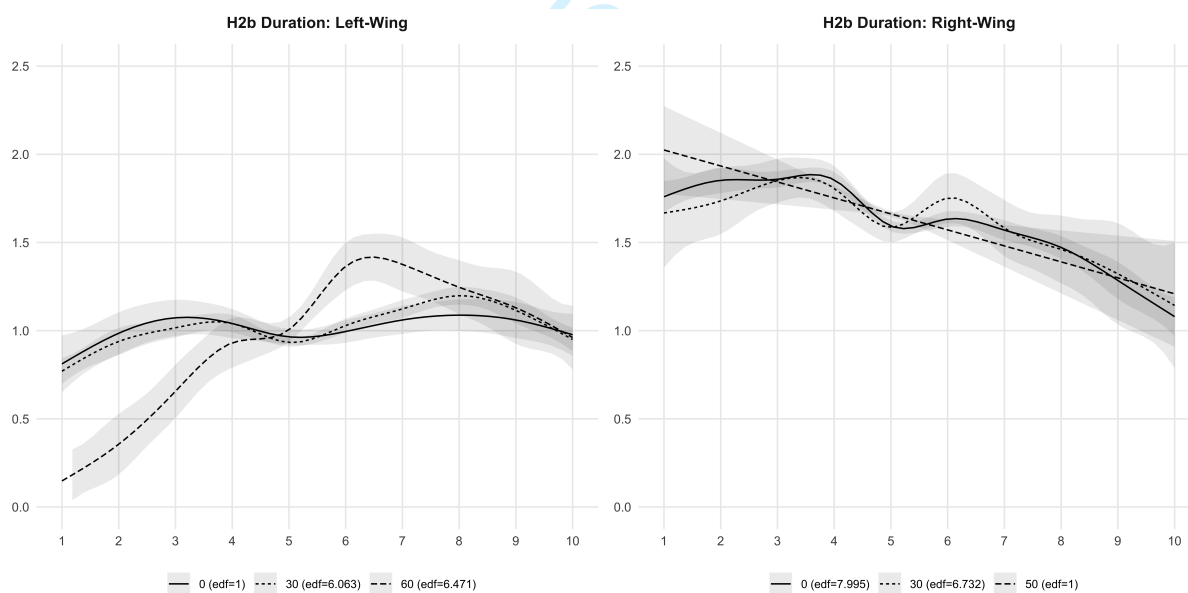


FIGURE C.2.2: Duration of exposure. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure presents a robustness test of a multilevel analysis using age of exposure as the main explanatory variable. The results show that the hypothesised legacy effect persists no matter the duration of citizens' exposure to authoritarian rule.

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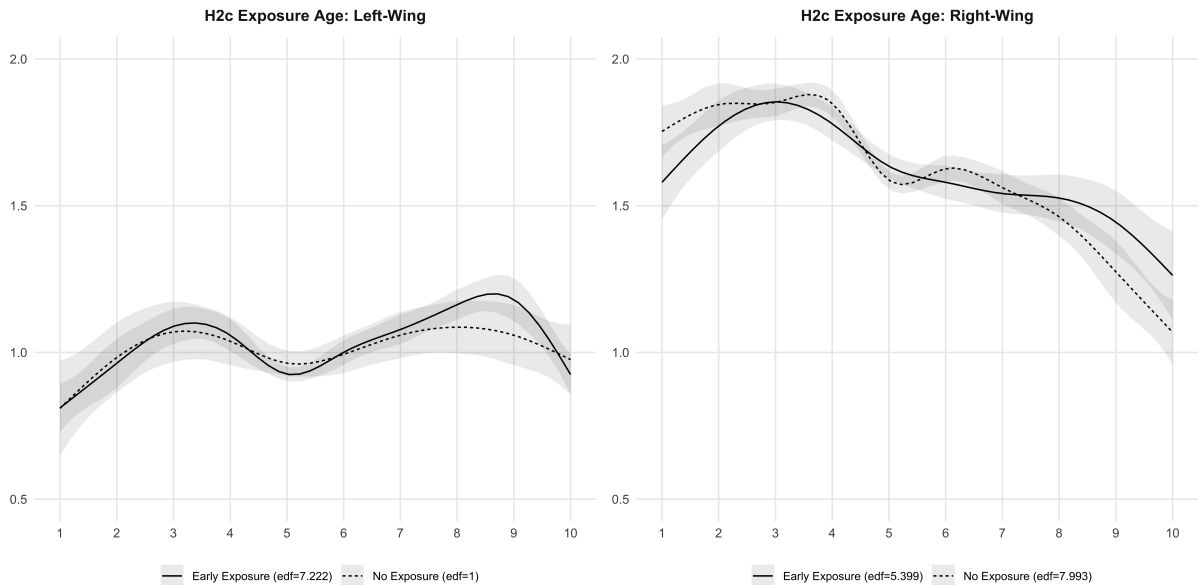


FIGURE C.2.3: Age of exposure. *Source:* EVS WVS (1994-2008) *Notes:* Figure presents a robustness test of a multilevel analysis using age of exposure as the main explanatory variable. The results show that the hypothesised legacy effect persists no matter the age at which citizens experience authoritarian rule

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