

**Essays on
Policy Effects on Political Engagement and Intergroup Relations**

Kumulative Habilitationsschrift zu Erlangung der

Venia legendi in Politikwissenschaft

Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät

Universität zu Köln

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Köln 2020

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Original Sources of Chapters

Chapter 1: Ziller, Conrad (2019). Policy Effects on Political Engagement. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 71: 285-312.

Chapter 2: Ziller, C. and Helbling, M. (2020): Public Support for State Surveillance. Working paper currently under review.

Chapter 3: Ziller, C. and Helbling, M. (2019): Antidiscrimination Laws, Policy Knowledge and Political Support. *British Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 1027-1044.

Chapter 4: Ziller, Conrad and Thomas Schübel (2015). “The Pure People” versus “the Corrupt Elite”? Political Corruption, Political Trust and the Success of Radical Right Parties in Europe. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 25 (3): 368-386.

Chapter 5: Heizmann, Boris and Conrad Ziller (2020). Willing to Share the Burden? Attitudes Towards the Allocation of Asylum-Seekers in Comparative Perspective. *Social Forces* 98(3): 1026–1051.

Chapter 6: Ziller, Conrad (2014). Societal Implications of Antidiscrimination Policy in Europe. *Research & Politics* 1 (3): 1-9.

Chapter 7: Ziller, Conrad and Sara Wallace Goodman (2020). Local Government Efficiency and Anti-Immigrant Violence. *The Journal of Politics*. Online first: <https://doi.org/10.1086/707399>

Chapter 8: Berning, Carl C. and Conrad Ziller (2017). Social Trust and Radical Right-Wing Populist Party Preferences. *Acta Politica* 52 (2): 198-217.

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Introduction

1. Relevance, Research Question, and Scientific Goals

About thirty years ago, Francis Fukuyama (1989, 4) anticipated the passing of “the end-point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” However, the current political situation does not match this expectation. Over the past years, many Western democracies have witnessed declining support for incumbent governments on the part of citizens and rising electoral success among populist radical right parties that overused anti-elite and anti-immigrant rhetoric in order to attract voters (Algan et al. 2017). Donald Trump won the Republican nomination and the U.S. Presidency in 2016 with the help of an anti-elitism (“drain the swamp” rhetoric), anti-immigration campaign (Newman et al. 2020). Similarly, anti-establishment populism and anti-immigration motives were key issues in the “Brexit” referendum—the public vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (Goodwin and Milazzo 2017).

Pippa Norris (1999) has argued that shrinking political support for democratically elected political elites reflects higher degrees of criticism and assertiveness, especially among highly educated citizens. Current voices are however less optimistic, and find that broad segments of society are becoming politically disenchanted as they struggle with the rapid cultural changes that are being caused by globalization and immigration, particularly subsequent to Europe’s large refugee intake in 2014-16 (Foa and Mounk 2017; Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Events such as the financial crisis of 2007-8, as well as the growing economic inequalities within and between European Union member states, have further eroded political trust (Van Erkel and Van der Meer 2016) and fostered people’s insecurity and anti-immigrant sentiments (Kuntz, Davidov, and Semyonov 2017). Besides these demographic and economic developments, political authorities nevertheless exert a crucial influence on citizens’ attitudes and behaviors. Two avenues for this are political communication and policy implementation. For example, racist elite communication has been found to encourage prejudiced citizens to express their grudges openly (Newman et al. 2020), while the enactment of liberal same-sex relationship regulations has led to more positive public opinion toward lesbians and gays (Abou-Chadi and Finnigan 2019).

This habilitation thesis sets out to evaluate the relevance of policy implementation for citizens’ political engagement and intergroup relations. The core research question is *whether and how*

public policies influence political engagement and intergroup relations. The thesis consists of two parts. Part One, on policy effects concerning political engagement, comprises four studies. Chapter 1 is a review article of cross-national comparative studies on the relationship between policies (mainly social policy and immigrant integration policy) and citizens' political engagement. It also sets the stage for this habilitation in conceptual and theoretical terms. Chapter 2 is an experimental study that examines how variations in state surveillance policy affect policy support and political trust, while Chapter 3 investigates the relationship between anti-discrimination policy and political support in a cross-sectional, comparative perspective. Chapter 4 examines how experience with political corruption affects individuals' political trust, and ultimately the appeal exerted by populist radical right parties. Part Two is concerned with policy impacts on intergroup relations, and encompasses four studies. Chapter 5 examines how immigrant integration policy relates to attitudes regarding the distribution of asylum seekers across European Union member states. Chapter 6 addresses how national anti-discrimination policies and related policy knowledge influence citizens' perceptions of and experiences with discrimination. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on local conditions. While Chapter 7 investigates the role of local government efficiency for anti-immigrant violence, Chapter 8 looks at social trust as a neighborhood condition, and explores its impact on anti-immigrant sentiments and preferences to vote for a populist radical right party.

At first glance, it seems obvious that political contexts shape citizens' political orientations and influence the way in which they respond to politically relevant issues such as immigration. However, classic theories of political behavior have very much focused on the role of socioeconomic backgrounds and social networks (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), individual self-interest (Downs 1957), or psychological traits and predispositions (Campbell et al. 1960). Similarly, research on intergroup relations placed considerable emphasis on cultural factors and values (Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004), demographic change due to immigration (Hopkins 2010; Newman 2013), and economic concerns (Dancygier and Donnelly 2013; Gerber et al. 2017). Political theories of political engagement and intergroup relations have focused on the role of political institutions, organized interests, mobilization, and communications flows (e.g., Druckman and Lupia 2016; Verba et al. 2002; Zaller 1992), while the role of policies—and the incentives and sanctions, as well as the informational content they carry—have not been the centerpiece of interest.

Policies as relevant political contexts attracted increased attention among researchers subsequent to several key publications on welfare policies in the U.S. context (Campbell 2003; Mettler 2002; Pierson 1994; Soss 1999; Skocpol 1992). The seminal study entitled *Dismantling the Welfare State* (Pierson 1994) found that attempts to scale back pensions in the UK and the U.S. fared differently because of different degrees of political mobilization and opposition among citizens. At the same time, Pierson described mechanisms through which policies affect citizens' political engagement, which in turn impacts the course of subsequent political processes and policy development. These conceptual foundations have laid the ground for subsequent studies on policy effects, and can be subsumed under the heading of *policy feedback*, which also serves as a central theoretical framework in this habilitation thesis.

Drawing on policy feedback as a theoretical toolkit, a major aim of this habilitation is to theoretically specify (and empirically test) mechanisms that meaningfully connect policies with individual attitudes and behaviors. To do so, the chapters specify theoretically informed pathways as to how policy (or policy-related) predictors affect attitudes and behaviors. In several chapters, these mechanisms are explicitly tested using mediation analysis (e.g., Chapters 4 and 8). In other chapters, I use moderation analysis to specify mechanisms, which means that policy effects can be expected to be particularly relevant for some groups (but not for others), or for citizens of specific countries (e.g., Chapters 3 and 5).

Goal 1: Specifying and testing mediating and moderating mechanism in order to gain a better understanding of how policy shapes individual attitudes and behaviors

Another feature of this habilitation is that the collected studies examine policy and policy-related predictors at varying conceptual and geographical levels. Policy effects are typically studied by comparing the impact of welfare programs in single countries (Soss 1999; Watson 2015), conducting cross-national comparative research (Gingrich and Ansell 2012; Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013), as well as incorporating an over-time perspective (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010). Studies focused on regional or local variations in policy implementation are rare (but see Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010). The studies in this habilitation employ various foci. Several studies focus on national policy contexts (e.g., Chapters 3, 5, and 6), while others incorporate a local focus (e.g., Chapters 7 and 8). National policy contexts typically affect individual behaviors by the distribution of resources and information (Pierson 1994), while regula-

tions implemented at the local level are often more proximate, and can thus be more consequential in terms of social norms and experiences with public officials (Bisgaard, Dinesen, and Sønderskov 2016; Huckfeldt et al. 1995).

Goal 2: Examining various levels of policy implementation in order to gain a more detailed perspective of policy-citizen effects

A number of limitations in the current literature can be identified with reference to methodological issues. In a literature review on policy effects, Mettler (2015) identifies three methodological limitations, and examines how future studies could move beyond them. Past studies were very much focused on the effects of social policy (rather than on a wider range of public policies), mainly looked at policy impact on target groups (rather than on other societal groups or on the general population), and largely applied descriptive and correlational methods (rather than longitudinal or experimental designs).¹ The collected studies of this habilitation address all three methodological limitations by taking effects of policies other than social policy and welfare programs into account, focusing on the general public as well as on target groups (e.g., Chapters 2, 3, and 5), and employing advanced empirical designs, including survey experiments and longitudinal data analysis (e.g., Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7).

Goal 3: Applying state-of-the art empirical methods in order to overcome methodological limitations inherent in previous research

The collected articles of this habilitation can be classified as pertaining to political sociology, which studies relationships between politics and society, whether this refers to the analysis of societal and socio-structural foundations of political order (Holzer 2015), to political institutions as a framework for social action and the development of preferences and attitudes (Hall and Taylor 1996), or to the role of political decisions when it comes to allocating resources in shaping the status and power of social groups (Schneider and Ingram 1993). According to Gabriel and Maier (2009), political sociology has also become a unique sub-discipline of political science which has a strong empirical and analytical orientation, and where quantitative methods

¹ The use of sophisticated empirical models is also essential because policy feedback is conceptualized as an endogenous loop, where policy impacts citizens' attitudes and behaviors, which in turn influence subsequent policy formulation and implementation. This endogeneity leads to bias in estimates from regression analysis, assuming the exogeneity of predictor variables. Consequently, this endogeneity issue occurs not only for the causal path linking policy measures and citizens' attitudes and behaviors, but also for research into representation and government responsiveness that examines how public opinion affects (and corresponds with) policy outcomes (e.g., Brooks and Manza 2006; Hagemann, Hobolt, and Wratil 2017; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019).

are the major tools in applied research. Three other areas of political science are relevant to this habilitation as well. The methodological approach of comparing political systems across borders and over time applied in most of the studies of this habilitation falls into the sub-discipline of comparative politics. Given policy as a central predictor variable, this habilitation can be situated in the field of comparative public policy, an interdisciplinary area focusing on public policy (and its predictors and consequences) as a major unit of comparative analysis. Finally, comparative political behavior can be listed as a relevant sub-discipline that broadly investigates how citizens participate in politics, form opinions and attitudes, and impact the political process.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

The central predictor variables of the collected studies are political engagement and intergroup relations. *Political engagement* can be defined as cognitive and emotional involvement in political matters, which manifests itself in individuals' political interest, political knowledge, political opinions and attitudes, and—in broad conceptualizations—political participation that includes voting behavior and membership in political or civic associations (Barrett and Brunton-Smith 2014; Zukin et al. 2006). Chapter 1 reviews existing studies, and thus incorporates various forms of political engagement such as political interest, policy attitudes, political trust, and voting behavior. Chapters 2 and 5 focus on policy orientations which reflect a quite specific evaluation of political regulations and laws. Policy orientations can be conceptualized as attitudes toward issues (i.e., an assessment of political options or priorities) and policy performance (or outcomes) (Dalton 2014). Other chapters examine somewhat diffuse evaluations of the political system and authorities, including political trust (i.e., the individual assessment that the political system produces preferred outcomes and will be responsive even if left untended [Miller and Listhaug 1990, 358]), and satisfaction with democracy (e.g., Chapters 3 and 4). Chapters 4 and 8 then go on to address voting (intentions) for populist radical right parties as a form of political behavior.

Intergroup relations refer to the attitudinal or behavioral responses to outgroups determined by social identities (Tajfel and Turner 1986), which includes intergroup contact and friendship, but also outgroup resentment and discrimination, up to violent behavior between groups. According to theories of attitude formation (Eagly and Chaiken 1993), attitudes have cognitive components (e.g., stereotypes about an outgroup), as well as affective (e.g. negative sentiment toward

an outgroup), and behavioral ones (e.g., a discriminatory intention). The theory of planned behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010) argues that attitudes together with situational circumstances (e.g., social norms) produce behavioral intentions and actual behavior. This suggests that intergroup attitudes and behaviors are conceptually interrelated—at least to a certain degree—and that contextual settings are relevant predictors. The studies in this habilitation thesis refer to the European context, and largely focus on intergroup relations in terms of native-immigrant relations. I specifically focus on attitudes toward the distribution of immigrants (Chapter 5), anti-immigrant sentiments (Chapter 8), perceptions and experiences of discrimination (Chapter 6), and anti-immigrant violence (Chapter 7).

The core predictor variable is *policies*, which are specific laws and regulations implemented in order to address societal problems (Almond and Powell 1978). They represent outputs of the political process (*politics*), which in turn broadly defines “who gets what, when, how” (Lasswell 1936). Policies can be classified in various ways. Most commonly, they are classified according to the policy area to which they pertain. Such areas are labor market, education, immigration and integration, health, climate and environmental protection, trade and economic, security, foreign affairs, and infrastructure. Policies can also be classified according to their operating mode (e.g., distributive, redistributive, regulatory), consequences (e.g., generating costs and benefits, or potential for conflicts), or governance principles (e.g., providing information, using authority of the law, monetary incentives) (see Knill and Tosun 2012). The collected studies of this habilitation focus on social policy (Chapter 1), immigrant integration policy (Chapters 1 and 5), anti-discrimination policy (Chapters 3 and 6), and surveillance policy (Chapter 2). Chapter 7 employs the concept of local government efficiency, which refers to an operating principle of local administration in providing infrastructure and public services. Rather than referring to a specific policy, local government efficiency represents an administrative style of policy implementation that ranges from inefficient to efficient. Similarly, Chapter 4 uses concepts of political corruption, and Chapter 8 uses contextual social trust as predictor variables that nevertheless indirectly refer to specific policies and institutional foundations. Apart from institutional quality, anti-corruption laws and compliance regulations shape the extent of corruptive practices (Borz 2019). Moreover, social cohesion of citizens and neighborhoods might be addressed by poverty reduction programs and improvements in the local physical environment and infrastructure (Kearns and Forrest 2000; Sampson 2012).

Connecting policy and citizens' attitudes and behaviors requires additional conceptual and theoretical underscoring, which is summarized in the following paragraphs (and extensively discussed in Chapter 1 of this habilitation). In general, the formulation and implementation of public policies refers to the central purpose of a political system, and the effectiveness and legitimacy of these outcomes can be considered as critical evaluative dimensions in liberal democracies (Easton 1975; Roller 2005). Hence, it is not only relevant that the formulation of policies follows democratic principles, but also that policy implementation meets citizens' demands—a core assumption of political representation and responsiveness (Page and Shapiro 1983). The extent to which ordinary citizens are able to develop attitudes toward specific policies has been debated. While early scholars of political behavior were quite pessimistic about citizens' political knowledge and awareness (Converse 1964), others suggest that citizens use various heuristics (including information from peers) to develop policy orientations (Conover and Feldman 1984; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000).

Apart from simply knowing that a policy exists, the policy feedback literature (Campbell 2003; Pierson 1994; Skocpol 1992) provides insights into *how* policies affect citizens. More generally, this strand of research stipulates that the design of implemented policies shapes citizens' policy orientations and political engagement, which in turn determine future policy development. To illustrate this, we can borrow from contemporary French politics: President Emmanuel Macron had planned to introduce a reform to standardize a variety of pension schemes, as well as increasing the current retirement age. Subsequent to these plans, unions and workers (who are considered to have benefitted from particularized regulations) protested (in part violently) against these plans in late 2019 and early 2020.² As a response, Macron showed some willingness to reformulate his policy plans, especially regarding the planned increase in the retirement age. This example shows that certain policies (in this case pensions) provide material benefits for specific groups (here pensioners), who—depending on the nature of these benefits—develop policy support. If government intends to scale back benefits, groups supporting the initial regulations are expected to become politically engaged (e.g., through political protest) in order to defend their benefits, which might in turn impact how policy development evolves in future.

A core mechanism through which policy affects citizens' attitudes and behaviors is shaping their material interests, which in the literature is referred to as resources effects. These include

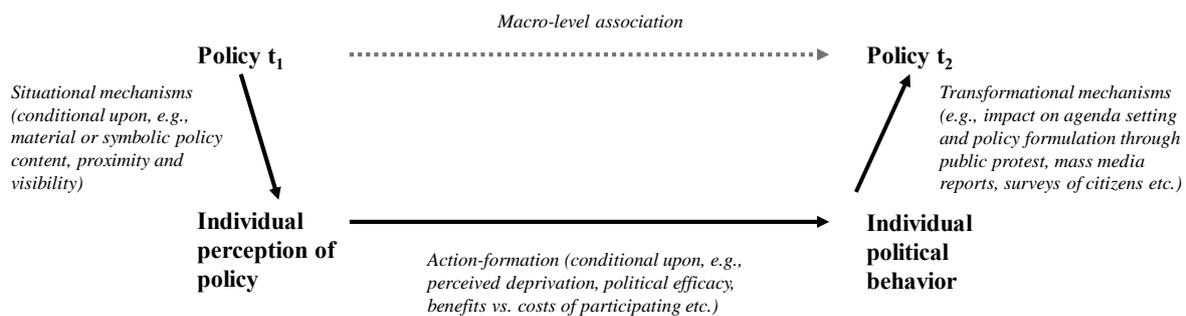
² <https://www.voanews.com/europe/french-government-unions-exchange-barbs-strike-deadlock>

financial incentives, payments, fines and penalties, and the provision of public services. In addition, symbolic or interpretive effects emphasize the informational and normative content that policy measures convey. For example, beneficiaries of a policy may not only develop a positive attitude toward political authorities due to material gain, but also because policies indicate that governments are addressing their concerns (Mettler 2002). Besides, citizens may cognitively adapt to enacted policy measures in such a way that existing policies increasingly shape the space of policy options perceived as feasible and implementable. As a result, policy options that were previously possible become suppressed and increasingly less likely to be implemented (Busemeyer and Neimanns 2019, 283). As additional specification of policy effects, Soss and Schram (2007) emphasize as relevant conditions proximity (i.e., citizens' exposure to policy measures), and visibility (i.e., the degree to which a policy is salient to the public). If the visibility of a policy measure is high and proximity is low, policy effects are likely to be mediated by mass media, while in the case of low visibility and high proximity, individuals' personal experience drives policy effects. Policy effects are most likely to occur if visibility and proximity are high, as in the case of social security policies. This classification allows us to predict policy effects for various policy areas, including cases of low proximity and low visibility, for which limited or no policy effects on citizens are anticipated.

Recent studies of policy feedback stress that positive (self-reinforcing) feedback loops—according to which extended policy benefits lead to increased policy support—are only one possibility (e.g., Fernández and Jaime-Castillo 2013; Jacobs and Weaver 2015). Negative policy feedback refers to a decrease in policy support over the course of time, even despite an extension of policy measures. One reason can be non-anticipated costs or the salience of policy alternatives that occurred after the implementation of a policy. For example, the German G8 high school reform to reduce the total number of years spent at *Gymnasium* evoked public debate about additional strains placed on students (Huebener and Marcus 2015), and ultimately led some German *Länder* to revoke the reform and move back to the previous schooling model. Another reason is that public opinion of a policy issue also represents public demand for a specific policy among the population, which might decrease as a result of the policy actually being introduced. This argument is highlighted by the so-called thermostatic model of representation (Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Wlezien 1995), according to which policies meeting public demand lead to an adjustment of public preferences, and would in the long run result in an equilibrium of representation.

The outlined foundations of policy feedback can be understood as an application of methodological individualism, which provides a theoretical paradigm according to which macro-level social phenomena require micro-level (individual) foundations. A graphical illustration of such an explanatory mechanism based on the elements of the prominent Coleman's boat (Coleman 1990) is depicted in Figure 1. Considering policy change between two points in time as constituting a macro-level phenomenon, possible mechanisms through which policy affects individuals refer to resource and interpretive effects, and are conditional upon the visibility and proximity of policy content, as outlined above. Individuals' perception of a policy might then lead to political participation in relation to the implemented or planned policy (e.g., support or opposition), conditional on specific theories of action which take situational and structural parameters into account (cf. Esser and Kroneberg 2015). In aggregate, individual political behavior can affect agenda setting, policy formulation, and ultimately policy implementation, depending on how well citizens can make their voices heard in the political arena. Similar mechanisms can be specified regarding intergroup attitudes and behavior where policy shapes attitudes toward outgroups (e.g., by stimulating threat and conflict perceptions, or intergroup tolerance), which then feed back to policy development depending on additional assumptions (Schlueter, Meuleman, Davidov 2013).

Figure 1: Illustration of Policy Feedback



Besides policy feedback, parts of this habilitation thesis draw on further theoretical arguments and social mechanisms, including political corruption and accountability (Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Chang, Golden, and Hill 2010), social capital and collective efficacy (Portes 1998; Sampson et al. 1997), as well as on theories concerning intergroup conflict and contact that connect macro-level characteristics such as immigration, economic development, and immigrant integration policies, with individual views on immigrants and immigration (Blumer 1958;

Esses et al. 1998; Heizmann 2016; Pettigrew and Tropp 2011; Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013). Nevertheless, these arguments are very much in line with the core assumptions of a macro-micro model of social action which renders methodological individualism as the underlying methodological paradigm of the collected studies of this habilitation.

3. On the Relationship between Political and Intergroup Attitudes

The core attitudinal constructs underlying the outcome variables in this habilitation thesis pertain, on the one hand, to attitudes toward political authorities, which can be classified as *vertical* orientations referring to citizen-state relations. On the other hand, attitudes toward outgroups can be conceptualized as *horizontal* orientations between social groups. While these two bundles of orientations appear at first glance to be distinct from one another, previous studies find that negative orientations toward political authorities and negative sentiments toward outgroups, and toward immigrants in particular, are substantially interrelated (McLaren 2015; Citrin et al. 2016).³ Such a correspondence is also reflected in radical right-wing populism, which explicitly comprises anti-elitism and nativism (or ethnocentrism) as constitutive features (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). In theoretical terms, an empirical relationship between political (vertical) and intergroup (horizontal) attitudes can be established in three different ways.

First, both attitudinal concepts might be determined by a common denominator that is related to stable trait differences between individuals. These traits can be rooted in personality differences, which in turn are shaped by processes of socialization and genetic dispositions (Funk et al. 2013). A likely candidate is lack of openness or high levels of dogmatism (Rokeach 1960), which can be expected to cause people to be less affirmative of pluralism, notwithstanding whether this is related to people's social or cultural backgrounds (outgroups), or proponents of a democratic political system that is based on the idea of deliberation and a marketplace of ideas. In a similar way, correlates of traits exist in the literature that have been shown to be relevant for political attitudes as well as intergroup sentiments. These traits include right-wing authoritarian (Altemeyer 1981), social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), and hierarchical self-interest (Hagan et al. 1999).

³ It needs to be emphasized that these studies are based on samples in Western democracies, which means that anti-elitism largely refers to grudges held vis-à-vis representatives of the democratic system. This relationship might be smaller or non-existent in authoritarian systems.

With reference to socialization processes, research shows that parents transmit political orientation to their children. For example, Coffé and Voorpostel (2010) find empirical evidence that particularly mothers transmit their preference for voting for a radical right party to their daughters. Besides an attitudinal transmission, scholars have argued that an impact of parents might be due to the transmission of social status (Glass et al. 1986). From this perspective, it is the socio-economic background that matters for the development of political orientations in children. In a similar vein, Siedler (2011) finds that unemployment among parents during childhood increases the probability that male adolescents will develop a preference for right-wing extremist attitudes which refer to anti-pluralism in terms of rejecting democratic principles and outgroups. In addition, the quality of the parent-child relationship developed in early childhood appears to be relevant for the formation of political and intergroup attitudes. Children and adolescents who experienced warm, reliable parenting reported lower levels of conflict in their interactions with peers (Ducharme et al. 2002), a more sociable approach toward strangers (Lamb et al. 1982), higher preferences for novel stimuli (Pedersen et al. 1979), and lower levels of right-wing extremist attitudes (Decker and Brähler 2006).

Second, a number of studies present a theoretical narrative and empirical evidence that opposition to immigration leads to eroding levels of trust in political authorities and satisfaction with democracy (Citrin et al. 2014; McLaren 2012; McLaren 2015). The idea underlying this causal claim is that citizens most concerned about immigration also “believe that the political system (the elites and institutions) have sold out the public by failing to protect the national community from the potentially disruptive and divisive force of immigration” (McLaren 2012, 205). Similarly, the so-called European “refugee crisis” 2014-16 has caused a political crisis with eroding levels of trust and an upsurge of populist support for the radical right (Dinas et al. 2019; Gattinara 2017; Halla et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the causal link running from immigration attitudes to political orientations is debatable since individuals differ in the way they are aware of immigration as a political issue, and some even base the evaluation of political authorities on issues completely other than immigration (e.g., the economy, minority rights, or environmental protection).

Third, some authors argue that political orientations such as political trust causally determine attitudes toward immigration (Hetherington and Globetti 2002; Macdonald 2020). According to this narrative, citizens who trust the government and its ability to competently manage public policy should be more willing to accept pro-immigration policies compared to those who distrust the government. Macdonald (2020) argues that political trust becomes particularly relevant

(or “activated”) when people are insecure about the costs and benefits of a specific policy. Trustful citizens assume that government will produce societal benefits and limit any potential negative externalities of immigration; thus, they are less likely to express fears about immigrants taking away jobs or relating to increasing crime rates. The author provides empirical evidence from cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental data from the U.S. showing that political trust facilitates support for pro-immigration policies. While this study heightens the relevance of political sources of immigration attitudes, it needs to be emphasized that the explained constructs mainly refer to preferred immigration levels. Attitudes toward immigration and toward immigrants are certainly related empirically, but at the same time reflect distinct types of attitudes, where the former have a stronger political connotation than the latter (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010).

In summary, empirical evidence and theoretical arguments exist that demonstrate a substantial interrelation between attitudes underlying political engagement (particularly political trust) and those underlying intergroup relations (particularly attitudes toward immigration). Whether the causal relationship is unidirectional or bidirectional (or even caused by a common factor) cannot be determined with certainty against the background of current empirical evidence, and also moves beyond the scope of this habilitation thesis, which is centered on policy effects on citizens. At the same time, this review demonstrated links between political (vertical) and intergroup (horizontal) attitudes through a number of social mechanisms—both of which are central outcome variables in this habilitation.

4. Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1: Policy Effects on Political Engagement

This chapter provides an overview of theoretical approaches related to policy feedback, and reviews cross-sectional comparative studies that link policy indicators and forms of individual-level political engagement. Specifically, the review focuses on social policies and immigrant integration policies as two widely-publicized policy areas. In terms of theory, the chapter lays the ground for subsequent chapters of this habilitation thesis. It provides a short conceptual foundation of policy and political engagement, and of classic accounts of policy feedback. A substantial part of the theory overview is devoted to mechanisms linking policy and political engagement, conditions that influence the strength of a relationship between policy and citizens’ attitudes and behaviors, as well as methodological challenges and possible solutions.

The review part includes studies focusing on social policies and immigrant integration policies. To illustrate different mechanisms of policy feedback, the selected studies cover policy effects on both target populations and the general population. Related to that, the review covers studies addressing implications of policy design (e.g., means-tested *versus* universal welfare programs, or multicultural *versus* assimilationist policies), and the role of these design aspects for policy effects on target groups and the general population. Since the review is part of a special issue on cross-national comparative research, I discuss the data and methods used in the reviewed studies quite extensively.

In summary, the review of empirical studies finds that policy effects on political engagement are highly conditional upon third factors, including the policy design and features of administrative implementation, the broader institutional and economic context, and individual characteristics. Moreover, I find a substantial variation in terms of methodology. A number of the studies reviewed apply multilevel analysis of cross-sectional data to account for the non-independence of observations, while only a few applied longitudinal (or experimental) methods in order to tackle issues related to unobserved heterogeneity or reciprocal causal relationships.

Chapter 2: Public Support for State Surveillance (with Marc Helbling)

This chapter examines citizens' support for state surveillance. The point of departure is that citizens may become particularly mistrustful toward political authorities when the state expands its mass surveillance, especially with regard to facial recognition and motion detection, which represent timely and broadly discussed options of state surveillance. While surveillance of target populations (typically potential criminals), as well as dragnet surveillance (i.e., surveillance of most if not all citizens) emphasize the provision of (perceived or actual) safety, they at the same time encroach on civil liberties. In comparison, dragnet surveillance has broader implications, as it is directed at a larger number of citizens. This yields a greater information asymmetry where governments have leverage to process and use (even commercially) data on citizens, which potentially undermines citizens' policy support and trust in political authorities.

Apart from the scope of surveillance (dragnet versus targeted), we also examine the role of data security and safety threat for public support for state surveillance. The empirical setup is based on a pre-registered survey experiment conducted in Germany, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These four countries differ in their historical development and current public opinion

regarding state surveillance, and are expected to show whether or not policy effects on policy support and political trust (the two outcome variables of this study) are context dependent.

The results show that citizens are ready to approve the introduction of far-reaching state surveillance that includes measures of facial recognition and motion detection. Public support is further enhanced if these measures are to be targeted at potential criminals, rather than at all citizens, as well as if a safety threat is salient. Concerns about data security reduce support. While these conditions matter for the support of specific policies, they do not influence how trustworthy citizens consider government and other political authorities to be.

Chapter 3: Antidiscrimination Laws, Policy Knowledge and Political Support (with Marc Helbling)

This chapter investigates how anti-discrimination policy and related policy knowledge influence citizens' support for the democratic system and its institutions. Building on theories of political support, citizens' support for political authorities and institutions is considered indispensable to the stability and viability of democratic systems, while a critical view of government performance and outputs is seen as unproblematic, or even desirable. Political support (indicated by, for example, political trust or satisfaction with democracy) is not only based on evaluations of performance and policy outputs, but also on a match between citizens' democratic ideals and the actual quality of democratic procedures. Equal rights are core democratic principles that come under pressure through discrimination and group-based inequalities.

In terms of theory, this chapter applies the policy feedback framework, and specifies mechanisms (e.g., resource and interpretive effects) on how anti-discrimination measures influence the political support of target groups (i.e., people suffering from discrimination), as well as the general public (especially those who endorse equal treatment). In addition, we argue that anti-discrimination laws are relevant for target groups, while related policy knowledge about rights to equal treatment shapes responses from the general public.

In empirical terms, we use repeated cross-sectional survey data from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey, merged with time-varying country-level information on anti-discrimination legislation and aggregated survey responses on a knowledge-of-rights indicator. The results of the longitudinal multilevel models with country fixed effects show that increases in policy knowledge over time systematically predict greater political support, especially

among individuals who hold egalitarian values. Individuals who are discriminated against express particularly high levels of political support in contexts where anti-discrimination laws are expanded. In overall terms, the results amplify the role of group-specific effects as well as policy knowledge as a key factor in studying policy feedback effects.

Chapter 4: “The Pure People” versus “the Corrupt Elite”? Political Corruption, Political Trust and the Success of Radical Right Parties in Europe (with Thomas Schübel)

Chapter 4 examines the role of political corruption in dealing with public officials for radical right party support in 12 European countries. Specifically, we ask whether having experienced political corruption makes individuals particularly amenable to the populist rhetoric of the far right. According to the main argument, people who have been involved in a situation of bribery in dealing with public officials are expected to lose trust in public officials, and in political institutions more generally. In turn, this loss of political trust should then translate into a higher propensity to vote for a radical right party, as these parties offer “remedies” for political discontent by promising to restore the *vox populi* as soon as they are in government. Hence, this chapter examines the anti-establishment (or anti-elitism) framework of contrasting “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite” that is widely used by the radical right throughout Europe.

To empirically investigate this hypothesis, we analyze European Social Survey data covering twelve Western and Eastern European countries. The results support our argument, showing that persons who have been asked to pay a bribe in return for a favor when dealing with public officials indeed express systematically less trust in public officials than those who have not had any experience of this kind. The trust-eroding effect is not limited to the specific group of public officials, but extends further to basic political institutions (e.g., a country’s legal system). As expected, citizens who distrust public officials or political institutions are in turn more likely to vote for a radical right party. It is important to note that experience with public corruption does not explicitly refer to policy as a predictor variable, while at the same time there is a substantial variation in corruption experience across countries (between 1.3 percent of respondents in Switzerland reported experiencing corruption and 12.2 percent in Poland), which points to the role of institutional and political sources of corruption prevalence.

In addition to the individual-level mechanism, this chapter examines whether the relationship between corruption experience, political trust, and support for the radical right depends on the specific political context. Indeed, we detect weaker eroding effects of corruption experience on

trust in public officials in countries with low institutional quality. Citizens in countries where the rule of law is low, and public officials are less likely to be impartial, might simply be more accustomed to the abuse of political or bureaucratic power. We also find that radical right parties are particularly able to mobilize support from distrusting voters when in opposition. This lends credence to the argument that radical right parties have a harder time attracting disenchanted voters with populist anti-establishment rhetoric once they themselves are part of incumbent governments.

Chapter 5: Who Is Willing to Share the Burden? Attitudes Towards the Allocation of Asylum Seekers in Comparative Perspective (with Boris Heizmann)

This chapter examines determinants of public support for the redistribution of asylum seekers at European Union level, using comparative survey data merged with macro-level information, including immigrant integration policy. Following the large influx of asylum seekers during the “refugee crisis” in 2014-16, public and political debates emerged about whether or not asylum seekers should be allocated more evenly across the member states of the European Union, instead of Germany, Sweden, Austria, and Hungary bearing a disproportionately large share. We study support for the redistribution of asylum seekers at European Union level from a public-opinion angle, presuming relevance of public opinion for political decisions of incumbent governments.

Theoretically, several arguments informed by intergroup contact and conflict theories point toward the role of asylum seeker intake, prior immigration stocks, economic circumstances, and immigrant integration policy, as relevant explanatory mechanisms at the macro level. At the individual level, we argue that apart from socio-economic and threat perceptions, political views on the European Union (e.g., Euroscepticism) are also critical explanatory factors. Moreover, we assess the extent to which the explanatory capacity of predictors differs depending on the levels of asylum seeking prevalence in a country by focusing on sub-samples split at the median of asylum seeker presence.

These arguments are tested using multilevel models on Eurobarometer data from 2015 merged with macro-level data. The results show that a high level of asylum seeker intake and larger immigrant stocks in 2010 are associated with a greater willingness to redistribute asylum seekers. Apart from this, immigrant integration policies also play a role: The more inclusive a country’s political stance toward third-country nationals is, the greater the public support for a more

even allocation of asylum seekers. At the individual level, views of the EU as a competent political stakeholder, and general attitudes toward immigration, are substantially related to support for redistribution efforts. These individual-level patterns occur both in countries with large numbers of asylum seekers, and in those with only a few, indicating that respondents largely take a broad European view on this topic, rather than a national one.

Chapter 6: Societal Implications of Antidiscrimination Policy in Europe

Similarly to Chapter 3, Chapter 6 examines policy effects of anti-discrimination policy in a comparative European perspective. While the enactment and implementation of European Union Directives on anti-discrimination measures has received substantive attention in research, little is known about whether and how such measures influence citizens' experiences and perceptions of discrimination. The goal of this chapter is thus to evaluate the relationship between anti-discrimination policies, citizens' knowledge in this policy area, and their handling of discrimination.

Based on the policy feedback approach, I specify resource and interpretive mechanisms on the relationship between anti-discrimination laws and discrimination, as well as highlighting the role of citizens' knowledge regarding their rights. In this sense, it is pivotal that citizens be aware that unequal treatment based on group membership is illegal, and that they acquire the competence and efficacy to take action against oppression. The fact that the EU directives on anti-discrimination have been accompanied by initiatives to improve citizens' knowledge about their rights related to equal treatment and discrimination strengthens the rationale that anti-discrimination measures are expected to enhance policy knowledge, which in turn shapes discrimination experiences and the perceptions thereof. As indicators of outcome variables, I examine personal experience with discrimination, discrimination personally witnessed or witnessed via hearsay (third-party discrimination), sociotropic perceptions of discrimination (i.e., the perceived prevalence of discrimination in one's country), and self-identification with a group that is on the receiving end of discrimination. Grounds for discrimination include gender, age, ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, and sexual orientation.

Using data from a standardized policy indicator and repeated cross-sectional survey waves of EU states, I first examine the relationship between anti-discrimination policy and societal levels of knowledge about victims' rights. Subsequently, multilevel models test how differences in policy and knowledge levels predict individuals' reported levels of experienced and perceived

discrimination. The results show that people who live in countries with effective anti-discrimination laws know more about their rights to equal treatment than do those from countries with less effective policies. For the most part, policy differences across countries are unsystematically related to discrimination-related outcomes. However, an increase in knowledge levels over time is associated with higher reports about witnessed discrimination, lower sociotropic perceptions of discrimination, and less individual self-identification with a group that is discriminated against. The findings suggest that, to the extent that anti-discrimination policies foster knowledge of the law, they contribute to citizens' awareness and empowerment against discrimination.

Chapter 7: Local Government Efficiency and Anti-Immigrant Violence (with Sara Wallace Goodman)

This chapter investigates the degree to which efficient local governments play a role in reducing anti-immigrant behavior. Since communities provide a crucial experiential context for native-immigrant interactions, perceived institutional quality, and a socially cohesive community, may reduce intergroup tensions and vigilante violence.

For the empirical analyses, we used data on violent attacks on refugees in Germany in 2015. Local government efficiency was measured using a novel indicator that relates expenditures of municipalities with service provision, such as the accessibility of public transport, schools, and family physicians. Our results show a robust negative link between local government efficiency and violence. In other words: We find less anti-immigrant violence in municipalities where local administrations operate efficiently in terms of service provision. The efficiency measure that we employ corresponds substantially to the degree to which residents perceive their local governments as being efficient, which we determine by relating the indicator scores to aggregated survey responses from a survey conducted in German municipalities. Another feature is that our indicator works differently than municipalities' mere capacity to spend, or the overall wealth of a community. Instead, it is important to look at the relationship between spending and output in order to meaningfully capture how well local government functions.

We extend the analysis from Germany during its unprecedented refugee intake in 2015 by using Dutch police records on the number of criminal offenses committed against immigrants per municipality and year and a time-varying indicator of local government efficiency. This study expands on the initial findings by studying the relationship in another national context, using

longitudinal data (which offers us repeated observations over time to adjust for unobserved municipality-level heterogeneity), and branching out from refugees to immigrants as a wider category of “otherness”. We also find here a negative relationship between local government efficiency and anti-immigrant violence. Together, the results of this chapter show that the efficiency of local governments in providing public services has the potential to not only improve the quality of life in cities and communities (and thus the satisfaction of their residents), but also native-immigrant relations.

Chapter 8: Social Trust and Radical Right-Wing Populist Party Preferences (with Carl C. Berning)

Chapter 8 examines the role of social trust as an individual and neighborhood-level determinant for radical right-wing populist party preferences. Specifically, the main argument is that a high level of social trust decreases radical right-wing populist preferences, and that this relationship is essentially mediated by negative attitudes toward immigrants.

In terms of theory, we specify an underlying mechanism for the individual-level relationship by arguing that social trust affects exclusionary attitudes through shaping individuals’ generalized worldviews related to authoritarianism (i.e., perceiving the social world as dangerous and threatening), and social dominance (i.e., perceiving the social world as a “competitive jungle,” in which the strong dominate the weak). Both of these generalized attitudes can be meaningfully linked to outgroups in general, and to immigrants more specifically, as immigrants or ethnic minority members usually challenge both social (or cultural) conformity and status hierarchy. At the macro level, we draw on theories of social capital, collective efficacy, and neighborhood effects, arguing that shared social beliefs operate as social norms that have an impact on individuals beyond personal traits. While neighborhood-level social trust does not represent a specific policy, it can be argued that local politics and regulations addressing the economic status of communities and neighborhoods, local physical environment and infrastructure, and public services, critically affect the prevalence of social trust and cohesion in a neighborhood.

In empirical terms, we test the arguments using multilevel structural equation modeling with data from the Netherlands’ Life Course Study and support for the Party for Freedom (PVV) as an outcome variable. The results show that individual social trust decreases radical right-wing populist party preferences. Beyond the micro-level relationship, we find that neighborhood social trust decreases radical right-wing populist party preferences. In either case, the effects are

mediated by anti-immigrant sentiments. The findings of this chapter provide evidence of the importance of social trust as a multilevel construct in explanations for radical right-wing populist party preferences.

Table 1 summarizes the studies featured in this habilitation thesis.

Table 1: Summary of studies

Study title	Author(s)	Research question(s)	Dependent variable(s)	Core independent variables	Data	Methods	Status
Ch. 1 Policy Effects on Political Engagement	Conrad Ziller	Through which mechanisms do policies affect political engagement?	Broad conception of political engagement including policy support, political trust, satisfaction with democracy, voting behavior, and membership in political and civic organizations	Social policies and welfare programs, immigrant integration policies (incl. citizenship rights)	Information on 16 published studies	Systematic review of existing studies	Published
Ch. 2 Public Support for State Surveillance	Conrad Ziller; Marc Helbling	How do citizens respond to surveillance measures depending on the range and scope of the policy measure, the risk of violations of data protection, and the salience of security-related threats?	Policy attitudes, political trust	Policy scope, data security, safety threat	Survey data (own online data collection) from Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, and France	Mean comparison (via regression analysis) of different treatment conditions	Under review
Ch. 3 Antidiscrimination Laws, Policy Knowledge and Political Support	Conrad Ziller; Marc Helbling	Whether (and how) anti-discrimination laws impact political support in Europe among both the targeted groups and the general population?	Evaluation of public administration, satisfaction with democracy, political trust	Anti-discrimination policies, knowledge of rights (country-year aggregates); Moderators: experienced discrimination, egalitarian values	Eurobarometer studies (EB; 2009, 2012); European Social Survey waves (ESS; 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012) of 21 countries (2-3 time points); merged with macro-level data (e.g., MIPEX anti-discrimination indicator)	Multilevel regression models with country and time fixed effects	Published

<p>Ch. 4 “The Pure People” versus “the Corrupt Elite”? Political Corruption, Political Trust and the Success of Radical Right Parties in Europe</p>	<p>Conrad Ziller; Thomas Schübel</p>	<p>How does individual experience with political corruption affects the probability to vote for a radical right party (via political trust)?</p>	<p>Populist radical right party support (voting at last election), political trust as a mediator</p>	<p>Experience of political corruption, political trust; Moderators: Rule of law, radical right party in government</p>	<p>ESS 2004 of 12 European countries merged with macro-level data (e.g., WGI data on rule of law)</p>	<p>Structural equation models; multilevel regression models</p>	<p>Published</p>
<p>Ch. 5 Who Is Willing to Share the Burden? Attitudes Towards the Allocation of Asylum Seekers in Comparative Perspective</p>	<p>Boris Heizmann; Conrad Ziller</p>	<p>Which macro and micro-level factors determine European citizens’ preferences about the policy issue of achieving a more equalized distribution of asylum seekers among European Union member states?</p>	<p>Agreement on whether asylum seekers should be better distributed among European Union member states</p>	<p>Proportion of asylum seekers, immigrant integration policies, anti-immigrant attitudes, Euroscepticism</p>	<p>Eurobarometer 84.1 (2015) of 26 European countries; merged with macro-level data (e.g., MIPEX composite indicator)</p>	<p>Multilevel regression models</p>	<p>Published</p>
<p>Ch. 6 Societal Implications of Antidiscrimination Policy in Europe</p>	<p>Conrad Ziller</p>	<p>What is the relationship between anti-discrimination policies, citizens’ knowledge in this policy area, and their handling of discrimination?</p>	<p>Personal experience with discrimination, discrimination personally witnessed, sociotropic perceptions of discrimination, self-identification with a group discriminated against (various grounds); knowledge of rights as mediator</p>	<p>Anti-discrimination laws, knowledge of rights (country-year aggregates)</p>	<p>Eurobarometer 2006-2012 (4 waves), ESS 2006-2012 (4 waves); merged with macro-level data (e.g., MIPEX anti-discrimination indicator)</p>	<p>Multilevel regression models (with country fixed effects)</p>	<p>Published</p>

<p>Ch. 7 Local Government Efficiency and Anti-Immigrant Violence</p>	<p>Conrad Ziller; Sara Wallace Goodman</p>	<p>Does local government efficiency mitigate anti-immigrant violence?</p>	<p>Incidents of anti-immigrant violence</p>	<p>Local government efficiency derived from cost-efficiency models (using data envelopment analysis)</p>	<p>Data on incidents of anti-immigrant violence merged with structural indicators (e.g., local government efficiency) of German <i>Kreise</i> and Dutch municipalities</p>	<p>Negative binomial regression models (with unit and time fixed effects)</p>	<p>Published</p>
<p>Ch. 8 Social Trust and Radical Right-Wing Populist Party Preferences</p>	<p>Carl C. Berning; Conrad Ziller</p>	<p>How does social trust affect radical right-wing populist party preferences?</p>	<p>Preference for a populist radical right party, anti-immigrant sentiments as mediator</p>	<p>Social trust (individual and contextual), anti-immigrant sentiments</p>	<p>Netherlands' Life Course Study merged with neighborhood characteristics</p>	<p>Multilevel structural equation models</p>	<p>Published</p>

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