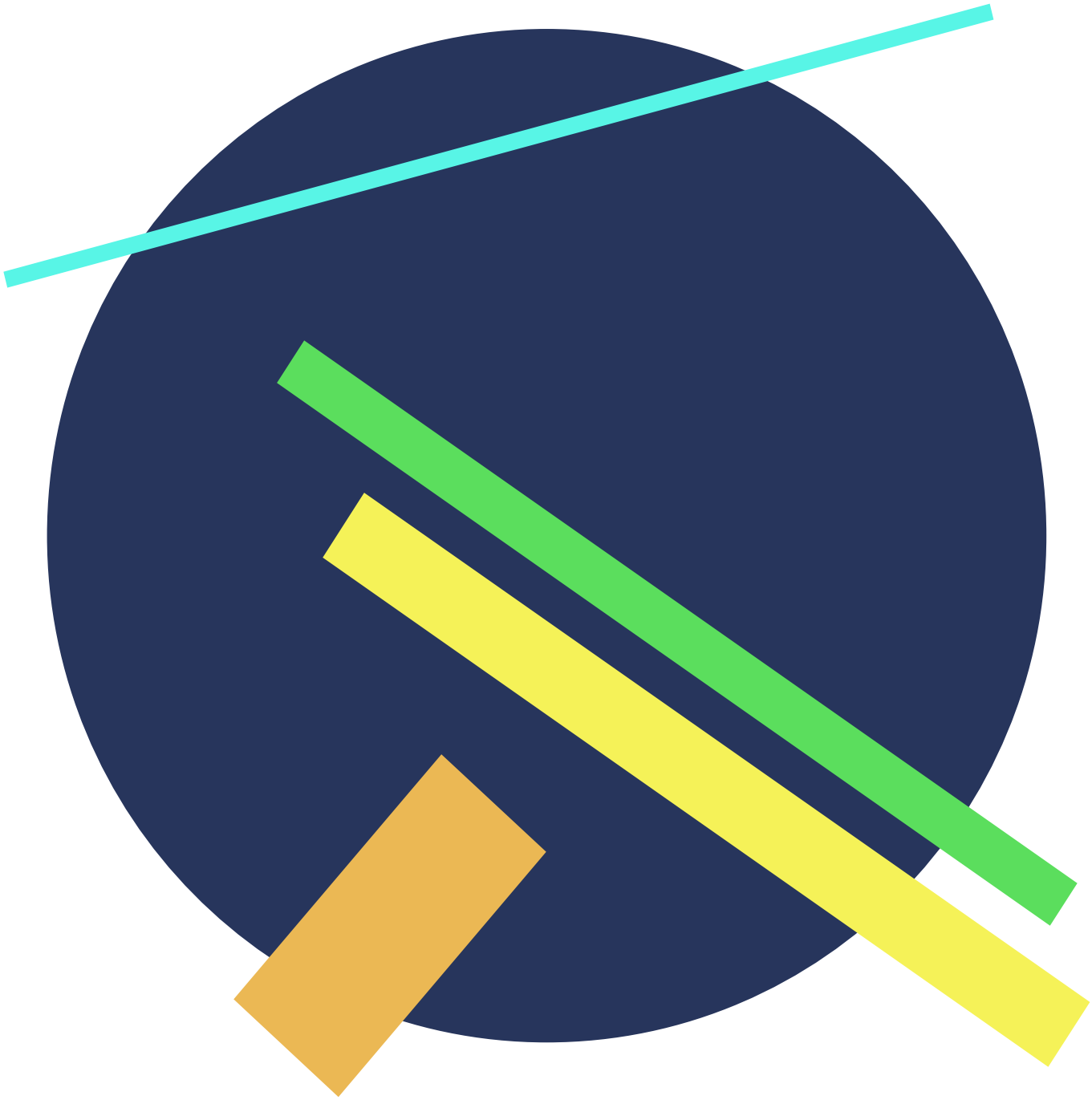
Politikon:

the IAPSS Journal of Political Science



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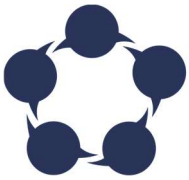

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Editorial Note

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Anya Kuteleva, *Editor-in-Chief*
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Abstract

The latest issue of Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science features a diverse selection of articles exploring various political aspects. These contributions offer insightful analyses on topics ranging from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's populist discourse to the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the Conversations section focuses on transnational collaborations in academia, with reflections on student engagement and academic publishing experiences.

In this issue of *Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science*, we present a diverse selection of articles that explore different facets of political dynamics and governance. These articles offer insightful analyses and thought-provoking perspectives on various topics, contributing to a deeper understanding of contemporary political issues.

Furkan Çay and Assem Kalkamanova's study, "Measuring Populist Discourse of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: A Quantitative Content Analysis," examines Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's populist discourse. Through a quantitative content analysis of his campaign speeches, Çay and Kalkamanova unveil the evolving dimensions of populism in Erdoğan's rhetoric and its connection to the political landscape in Turkey.

Andrea Capati's contribution, "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility: A 'Critical Junctures' Analysis of the European Union's Financial Assistance Regime," examines the EU's response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. Capati's analysis offers insights into the transformation of the EU's financial assistance regime as a consequence of this critical juncture.

Sarah Joan Clifford's article, "Silent Masculinity: The Discursive Interplay of Gender and White Logic in Alberta's K-6 Draft Curriculum," offers a discursive analysis of gender representation in Alberta's K-6 Social Studies draft curriculum. By scrutinizing the curriculum's portrayal of history and its implications for identity formation, Clifford unveils the nuanced interplay of gender and historical narratives.

Kristin Eichhorn's research note, "Selecting the Electorate: Disenfranchisement and Selective Voter Registration in Electoral Autocracies," explores the manipulation of democratic processes in electoral autocracies. Focusing on the strategic adjustments of

suffrage rights in response to electoral contexts, Eichhorn reveals the intricate mechanisms employed by autocrats to secure their political survival.

Each of these articles enriches the scholarly landscape by providing distinct viewpoints, thorough examinations, and valuable understandings. We anticipate that the readers of *IAPSS Politikon* will find this issue to be both intellectually stimulating and captivating, fostering additional investigation and conversation about the intricate political phenomena explored in these pages.

This issue also showcases two contributions to the Conversations section, a newly established non-peer review section of *IAPSS Politikon*. This section is open to opinion essays, interviews, pedagogical discussions, film commentaries, and critical reflections on academic events within the realm of Political Science. It aims to expand the boundaries of Political Science to encompass creative interventions and interdisciplinary dialogue, thus fostering a dynamic and inclusive platform for scholarly exchanges.

Within this issue, the contributions to the Conversations section focus on transnational collaborations in academia. Oleksii Zahreba reflects on student engagement and the representation of the Global South at the IPSA 2023 World Congress held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Velomahanina Tahinjanahary Razakamaharavo brings a distinctive perspective to academic publishing, drawing from the experiences of students from Madagascar and insights derived from the Hybricon project.

The matters of accessibility and inclusiveness addressed by Zahreba and Razakamaharavo carry notable importance for *IAPSS Politikon*. One of our key challenges is ensuring that researchers worldwide at all stages of their careers can benefit fully from innovations in research publishing, including the transition to open access and broader "open science" practices. At *IAPSS Politikon*, we are committed to empowering students and emerging scholars, facilitating their contributions to the field of Political Science while ensuring their work attains the visibility it rightfully deserves. To challenge the existing patterns in academic publishing, especially when scholars face growing pressure to "publish or perish," we recognize the need to enhance efforts in offering training and support to researchers across the Global South in all aspects of publishing. This includes aiding researchers in designing methodologically robust research projects, fostering effective interdisciplinary collaborations, honing article-writing skills, adeptly addressing revision requests, and navigating communication with editorial teams. As we navigate these changes, we are committed to nurturing an inclusive and supportive environment for scholarly advancement.

Measuring Populist Discourse of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: A Quantitative Content Analysis

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Abstract

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has long been considered a populist leader. This study attempts to investigate the evolution of Erdoğan's populist discourse by examining his political campaign speeches throughout all years of his rule. Using computer-based quantitative content analysis, we analyze the dimensions of populism in Erdoğan's speeches over time. Our data includes 42 election campaign speeches held between 2004 and 2018. We demonstrate how three dimensions of populism (people-centrism, anti-elitism, moralistic imagination of politics) manifest in Erdoğan's speeches and how Erdoğan's degree of populism varies from one election campaign to another. People-centrist approach constitutes the largest share of his discourse in comparison to other dimensions throughout all campaign speeches. Erdoğan's anti-elitist rhetoric was insignificant during the initial period of his incumbency. However, it increased considerably in the 2014 and 2018 election campaigns. We connect these empirical trends to the particular events in Turkish politics. Thus, this study contributes to the field by providing an empirical approach to Erdoğan's speeches.

Keywords

Content analysis; election campaigns; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; Turkish politics; Turkish populism

Introduction

Due to the rise of populist parties and leaders in the last decade, studies of populism expanded and gained popularity. Today, a wide range of politicians on the right (i.e., Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Victor Orban, and Marine Le Pen) and on the left (i.e., Bernie Sanders and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela) are characterized as populists. However, many scholars argue that they do not illustrate precisely the same characteristics of populism (e.g., Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Müller 2017; Pappas 2016).

In this study, our purpose is to answer two research questions. The first question inquires how three dimensions of populism (anti-elitism, people-centrism, and moralistic imagination of politics) manifest in Erdoğan's speeches throughout the political campaigns

from 2004 to 2018. Although people-centrism is the main feature of populism, other features such as anti-elitism and moralistic imagination of politics are also extensively used by the Turkish leader. Therefore, the investigation into this question should reveal the distribution of three dimensions of populism in his speeches over the years of his rule. The second question looks at which political campaigns demonstrate the most populist rhetoric of Erdoğan.

To answer this question, we utilize a computer-based content analysis which means that a pre-defined dictionary serves as a measure of populism. A dictionary is a thesaurus, a canonical concept associated with a list of equivalent synonyms. But it has turned into a fixed expression. It is considered that the dictionary allows being exclusive to single out key features by selecting the terms linked to each key feature. So, in the empirical part of our study, we use computer-based content analysis of the election campaign speeches of Erdoğan between 2004 and 2018.[1] The advantage of automated text analysis methods is the capacity to analyze large quantities of text. We analyze texts in the original language to capture Erdoğan's unique rhetorical style.

For the dictionary-based automated text analysis, we used the R software package from the quanteda family developed by Ken Benoit. We adopted Ezgi Elçi's dictionary (2019), revising several keywords and using the Keyword-in-Context analysis to clarify the conceptual framework of the three dimensions of populism. In addition, Turkish is an agglutinating language, and one word can have many meanings in a specific context. Hence, we further refined and adjusted the dictionary in the course of the analysis.

In the first section, we elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of populism. The second section provides an in-depth discussion of the roots of Turkish populism. After the detailed description of our methods and data, we discuss our findings. The final section summarizes and presents our key findings.

Populism: Conceptualization and its Ambiguities

No consensus on what constitutes populism exists and hence the phenomenon does not have a formal definition. Scholars examine populism as a communication style (i.e., Jagers and Walgrave 2007), a movement (i.e., Di Tella 1965), a thin-centered ideology (i.e., Mudde

[1] Corpus of speeches can be provided upon request as it consists of hundreds of pages of textual data. We accessed Erdoğan's speeches at the official website of the National Library *Cumhurbaşkanlığı Millet Kütüphanesi (*The Nation's Library*)*. This time frame of analysis was chosen for two reasons: Erdoğan came to power in 2003 and 2004 marked his first political campaign speech. Our last date is 2018 because it is the last date when Erdoğan gave a speech during political campaigns.

2004), discourse (i.e., Laclau 1977), and a political strategy to maintain power (i.e., Betz 2002). Such a broad variability in the approaches towards populism can be explained by the fact that it falls short of being a self-sufficient ideology, yet contains elements of different ideologies and ideological concepts and is largely context-dependent.

The term "populism" originated in Latin America and its interpretation has spread across the world (Barr 2018, 44) with an emphasis on the links between charismatic leadership and power. As Mudde and Kaltwasser point out, the popular agency approach considers it to be "a positive force for the mobilization of the (common) people and for the development of a communitarian model of democracy"(2017, 3). In other words, populism brings freedom through radical democracy (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 3-4). Further, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017, 19-20) argue that such an approach disregards the demand side of populism and offer an alternative definition that captures two essential characteristics of populism, "appeal to people" and "denunciation of elites." Accordingly, populism is "as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite'" (Mudde 2004, 543). Mudde describes populism as a thin-centered ideology because it lacks the coherency of other ideologies such as socialism, liberalism, or capitalism. He also argues that populists have a Manichean worldview. That is to say, there are mere "friends and foes" (2004, 544). To date, Mudde's "minimal definition" (Pauwels, 2011) is one of the most popular definitions in the field of populist studies.

Other attempts to define populism include Jan-Werner Müller who conceptualized populism as "people against elites who are deemed corrupt or in some other way morally inferior" (2017, 20). He interprets populism as a "moralistic imagination of politics." Further, he adds another core element: "anti-pluralism" based on moral claims. Along similar lines, Jagers and Walgrave (2007) offer three core characteristics of populism: reference to people, anti-elitism, and populism as a "monolithic group" that excludes foes of the nation (2007, 3). Based on the three-fold definition, they distinguish thin and thick populism, concluding that "thin populism" is a "political communication style of political actors that refers to the people" (2007, 3).

The diverse conceptual approaches to populism that we discuss above agree on two core points: anti-elitism and people-centrism. However, these two core points alone are not enough to put the label "populist" on a politician. Other ideologies (i.e., socialism) also use people-centrism and anti-elitism in their discourse, and thus we need to narrow down our definition (Elçi, 2019). In the interpretation of Mudde (2004) and Jagers and Walgrave (2007),

we come across "exclusion" as an additional core point. However, Elçi (2019) mentions many populist parties and leaders who display inclusive features (e.g. SYRIZA and Podemos). Thus, exclusion alone cannot be a third core point. Müller and Kaltwasser's argument (2017) emphasized that anti-pluralism strengthened with a moralistic discourse is a crucial factor to differentiate populists. So, in addition to anti-elitism and people centrism, we add a third core point: the moralistic imagination of politics.

Literature on Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Populism

Although Recep Tayyip Erdoğan engaged in politics since the 1990s, his impact on Turkey has been rather limited until he came to power with the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) in 2002.

Populist elements emerged at the very dawn of Erdoğan's political career. After the 1997 military memorandum, known as the February 28 process, Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi,* RP) lost its power and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan had to resign. In the power vacuum, Erdoğan began to act as RP's leader, participating in the party events beyond Istanbul (Çakır and Çalmuk 2001, 84). In December 1997, during a visit to Siirt, a city in southeastern Turkey, he addressed the situation with political Islam as follows:

> There is no freedom of expression in Turkey... our reference is Islam. They can never digest us. Even Western people have freedom of belief. Why can it not be respected in Turkey? Minarets are our bayonets, domes are our helmets, and mosques are our barracks. Nobody will be able to silence the call to prayer. We will surely end racial discrimination in Turkey. Because RP do not agree with other parties … they tried every possible way to prevent RP from coming to power. But no power could prevent this. (As cited in Hurriyet 2021)

The political establishment was not pleased with such a speech. In the aftermath, Erdoğan was banned from politics for five years and spent four months in prison (Çakır and Çalmuk 2001, 85-86). Allegedly, these experiences strengthened his belief that politics in Turkey should belong to the people rather than Kemalist elites.

In the 2000s, Erdoğan gained considerable visibility and impact as a politician. In this early period of his political career, he was under heavy scrutiny by the Turkish political establishment[2] because of his Islamist background[3] (Türk 2018, 150-51). To consolidate power and avoid clashes with his political opponents, he attempted to establish stable

[2] Composed of the military, business circles, judiciary, and top brass of Turkish bureaucracy.

[3] For detailed analysis over Erdoğan's Islamist background see Ruşen Çakır and Fehm Çalmuk's *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - Bir Dönüşüm Öyküsü* (2001).

relations inside and outside the country. Therefore, the first term of his government (2002-2007) is characterized by an insignificant degree of populism by many researchers (e.g., Türk 2018; Aytaç and Elçi 2019). However, the tendency towards populism is already noticeable. For example, in 2003, in an interview with Deborah Sontag, Erdoğan claimed that "there is a segregation of Black Turks and White Turks" and "your brother Tayyip belongs to the Black Turks" (Sontag 2003). In such a populist dichotomy, "Black Turks" are associated with Anatolian groups who are Sunni Muslims, whereas "White Turks" represent secular followers of Kemalist principles (Yilmaz 2021, 4).

Some studies examine the populist tendencies of Erdoğan's party, AKP (Sawae 2020; Dincsahin 2012; Elçi 2019; Aytaç and Elçi 2019). For example, Aytaç and Elçi's (2019) survey reveals that nearly 70% of Turkish voters agree that "referendums are the ultimate measure of the will of the people," while 67% support the statement that "the power of the few special interests prevents our country from making progress." The survey also demonstrates that supporters of AKP are more likely to have populist attitudes than supporters of other parties. Thus, we can argue that Erdoğan's populism is focused on satisfying Turkish voters.

Empirical studies of populism in Turkey are few but insightful (e.g., Öney 2018; Aytaç and Elçi 2019; Elçi 2019). For example, Ezgi Elçi (2019) conducted a quantitative content analysis of parliamentary speeches of Turkish political leaders. His findings reveal that Erdoğan scores more populist than other leaders while Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of CHP, is the least populist leader. It also described how Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi,* MHP) exploits Manichean discourse, whereas the Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi,* HDP) stands as an anti-elitist party. Overall, Elçi argues that Turkish democracy is damaged by continuous populism exploited by not only Erdoğan but also other political leaders.

In sum, Erdoğan's populism is well-covered in academic studies, yet little work has thoroughly examined its particular dimensions (people-centrism, anti-elitism, and moralistic imagination of politics), as well as its evolution. This study focuses on this gap. We explore how the three dimensions of populism are distributed in Erdoğan's public speeches during his six election campaigns between 2004 and 2018. In addition, we unveil the dynamics of Erdoğan's populist rhetoric, identifying campaign speeches that exhibit the most intense populist discourse. As a result, we explain Erdoğan's evolution as a populist leader.

Methodology and Data

Many populism studies lack a structured approach to measuring populism. However, many researchers (e.g., Jagers and Walgraves 2007; Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels 2011; Pauwels 2011; Elçi 2019) conducted content analysis for the measurement of populist actors and parties. As such studies show, computer-based content analysis is a rigorous and adaptive research technique that allows the analysis of large volumes of textual data quickly and efficiently (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011, 1272-73).

Units of measurement in the computer-based content analysis are words. The most crucial procedure in computer-based content analysis is dictionary development. For instance, in regards to classical content analysis, Pauwels (2011) argued that while formulating the codebook researchers can be highly subjective. Similarly, Rose et al (2015) claim that manual dictionary development is prone to biases in choosing some specific words and taking no notice of others. Taking these concerns over verification and validity, we avoid developing a new dictionary. We rely on Elçi's dictionary that not only combines several dictionaries of forefront researchers such as Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011), Pauwels (2011), and Espinal (2015), but also adds new words to grasp the particularities of Turkish populism.

The main goal of our quantitative content analysis using R is to count the frequency of terms in our dictionary in each dimension over all of Erdoğan's speeches that we analyze. The automated dictionary-based approach is a reliable method because it avoids human decision-making as part of the text analysis. The quality of computer-based content analysis is defined by the validity of the dictionary and contextual sensitivity. To forestall the problem that the same word can change meaning within different contexts, we use Keyword-in-Context analysis. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) propose to use a combination of classical and computer-based content analysis by making conscious decisions on selected words when there is a reference to the people and negativity towards the elites (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011, 1280). We checked the face validity of terms in the dictionary by doing the Keyword-in-Context analysis for all terms to ensure that they reveal the analyzed dimension of populism. Words marked with an asterisk in Table 1 required specific attention. For example, we removed the term "compromise" used by Elçi from our dictionary because Keyword-in-Context verification revealed that this word has a non-populist meaning.

For computer-based content analysis, agglutinating languages such as Turkish, Hungarian, Finnish, and Estonian are particularly challenging because words may contain different morphemes. For instance, the Turkish word *insan-lar-dan* (from the people) contains a stem (*insan*) and a two-word element (*lar-dan*). The word *lar* identifies plurality,

whereas *dan* stands for "from." Such and similar suffixes that can introduce a bias of false-positive words were removed from the list of populist words.[4] In sum, data cleaning included removing false-positive words and stopwords.

Populism in our study is operationalized by using three dimensions of populism. Accordingly, our dictionary consists of three categories: anti-elitism, people-centrism, and moralistic imagination of politics (see Table 1).

Table 1: Dictionary for the Quantitative Content Analysis

Anti-elitism		**People-centrism**		**Moralistic Imagination of Politics**	
Turkish	*English*	*Turkish*	*English*	*Turkish*	*English*
Darbe	Coup*	Egemenli*	Sovereignty*	Tehdit*	Threat*
Egemenler*	Hegemons*	Ezilen*	Obsessed*	Tezgah*	Set up*
Elit*	Elite*	Halk*	People*	Hain*	Traitor*
Oligar*	Oligarch*	Irade*	Will*	Ihanet*	Betray*
Seçkin*	Notable*	Millet*	People*	Kirli*	Dirty*
Lobi	Lobby*	Referandum*	Referendum*	Odak*	Power*
Vesayet*	Tutelage*	Sandık*/sandığ*	Ballot box*	Yalan*	Lie*
Yolsuzlu*	Corrupt*	Kardeş*	Brother/sister*		

Source: The list of words is adopted from Elçi 2019, p.16

Election campaigns display an intense polarization due to political leaders' aims to achieve political success (Doğanay et al 2016, 117), hence campaign speeches present a fruitful source for a study of populism. In the Turkish political context, the intensity of such polarization significantly increased after Erdoğan came to power. Particularly, during the 2007 election campaign and thereafter, his rage toward several groups among other military and judiciary elites, interest rate lobby, foreign powers, and Gülen Movement began to unfold (Türk 2018). Erdoğan used election campaigns as platforms to mobilize people and practice populist rhetoric in public speeches. Due to the high amount of election campaign speeches made by Erdoğan, we sampled only the speeches that Erdoğan gave in the largest

[4] False positive words as in Elçi's study: *halkalı**, *halkapınar**, *halkbank**, *milletler**, *milletli**, *milletvekil*. Due to it was unnoticed by Elçi, we have added another irrelevant words: *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi* (Grand National Assembly of Turkey), *Birleşmiş Milletler* (United Nations), *Millet Bahçesi* (The National Garden), *millet kıraathane* (the nation's coffee), *darbesavar* (the anti-coup), *halkbank*, *halk ekmek fabrikasi* (the nations' bread factory), *dostluk halkasi* (the friendship ring), *halka* (ring), *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party), *halkoylamasi* (referendum), *hava kirliliği* (air pollution), *kirli hava* (dirty air), *odakli* (oriented), *odaklanmak- odaklamak* (focus).

cities of Turkey's seven regions: Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya, Samsun, Van, and Diyarbakır. However, in cases when Erdoğan skipped one of those cities, we sample the second-largest city or the third-largest city.[5] We collected a total of 42 election campaign speeches. Data consist of speeches in general elections (2007, 2011, and 2018) and local elections (2004, 2009, and 2014).[6] The lack of data on the 2015 general elections is the main limitation of the study. As Erdoğan became president in 2014, he selected Ahmet Davutoğlu to succeed him. While taking the leadership of AKP, Davutoğlu organized election campaigns in 2015. Thus, Erdoğan did not hold election speeches that year.[7]

Findings and Discussion

Firstly, we attempt to determine what dimensions of populist rhetoric are more prominent in Erdoğan's discourse. Our study reveals that people-centrist ideas constitute the overwhelming majority of his rhetoric, from 96.6% in 2004 to at least 86.5% in 2014. As such, the people become the main dimension of his populism, and references to people constitute the largest part of his populist rhetoric.[8]

Figure 1 demonstrates that anti-elitism and moralistic political imagination were at their lowest during Erdoğan's early incumbency while the share of people-centrism was at its highest. The reason behind this trend, perhaps, lies in Erdoğan being cautious not to provoke the Kemalist establishment with anti-elitist and moralistic imagination of politics. From 2007 onward, we see that the share of people-centrism slightly decreases, while anti-elitism and a moralistic political imagination worldview rises. Indeed, we cannot understand this phenomenon without taking into account the context of the 2007 presidential election process. AKP received great support from international allies and the Turkish masses (Cay 2019). Despite the tensions between conservative AKP and the Kemalist elites that had begun a few months before the election, Erdoğan's insistence on AKP's presidential candidate exacerbated the conflict. The Kemalist elites were able to prevent the election of Abdullah Gül, an AKP candidate, even though Erdoğan pushed forward with the early elections and challenged the Kemalist elites by juxtaposing their elitist rhetoric with a heavy

[5] For example, in 2007 we selected Ağrı instead of Van. Whereas in 2009, Bursa, Elazığ, and Konya were selected instead of Istanbul Van and Ankara, respectively.

[6] We could not start the date from 2002 because Erdoğan was subject to the political ban until 2003. Thus, he could not hold political campaign speeches in the 2002 general elections.

[7] Highly disputed constitutional amendments held in 2017 once again put Erdoğan in charge of AKP.

[8] It is worth noting that people-centric terms, such as *millet* (nation) and *kardeşlerim* (my brothers and sisters), are in the top 50 of most frequently used terms in Erdoğan's speeches.

populist one. Erdoğan's criticism of the Kemalist establishment continued (Dinçşahin 2012). Hence, the share of anti-elitism and moralistic imagination of politics in his speeches increased.

Figure 1 also shows that the share of moralistic imagination of politics hits the peak in 2014. An increase in Erdoğan's heavier moralistic populist discourse lies in two core events. The first event is the Gezi Park protests of 2013 which began after a development project was authorized. The project was aimed at building an artillery barrack and a small shopping mall in place of Gezi Park trees. When Erdoğan insisted on setting up the project, protesters occupied main squares across the country. As news about clashes between protesters and police forces emerged in the international media, Erdoğan got alarmed. His concerns were justified. Multiple recent examples of political crises in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen were still fresh in memory. With the development of social media networks and digital communication tools, transaction costs of organizing a protest or coordinating a social movement dropped significantly. Many events of the so-called Arab Spring were a part of an ad hoc stream. Importantly, the Gezi Park protest movement united people of multiple backgrounds: left-wing liberals, women wearing headscarves, nationalists, football fans, and Kurds. To discredit the protesters, Erdoğan addressed the role of the "interest rate lobby,"[9] social media, "internal traitors," and foreign powers in organizing and promoting protests.

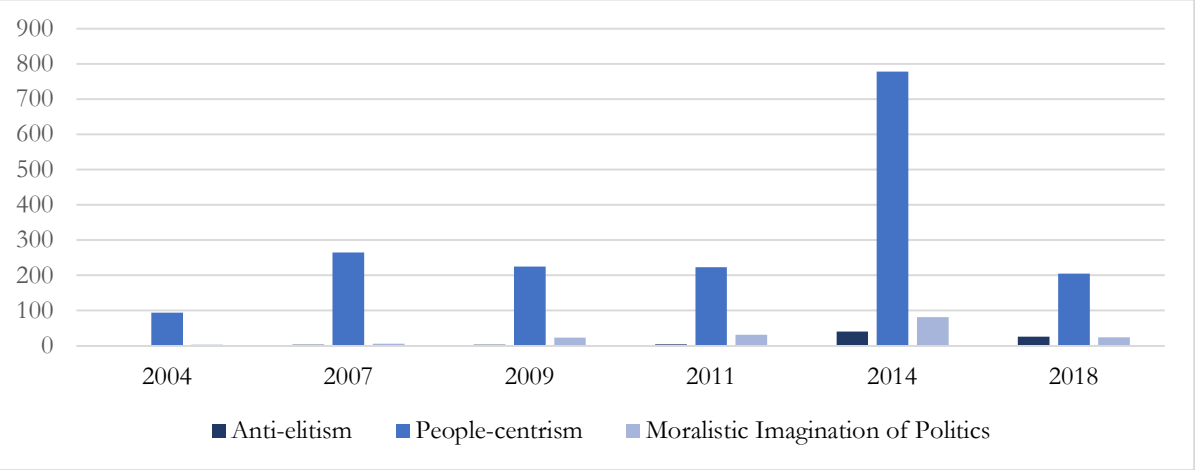
The second event is the conflict between Erdoğan and the Gülen Movement in December 2013. As anti-corruption investigations began on December 17, 2013, the police detained several key political figures, including Erdoğan's son and top-brass bureaucrats. As the conflict escalated, Erdoğan launched large-scale purges, blaming the judiciary and police forces for being influenced by the Gülen Movement. He initiated corruption scandals and blamed foreign powers and the Gülen Movement for plotting against the government (Türk 2018, 156-57). Later, he began to call his new political opponents *hain* (traitors) and labeled them as *kirli* (dirty). In the aftermath of these events, the significant increase in the moralistic imagination of politics in Erdoğan's 2014 speeches is therefore not surprising.

Anti-elitism strongly manifests itself again in the 2018 political campaigns amid the failed coup. An unprecedented attempt to overthrow Erdoğan's regime on July 15, 2016, took hundreds of lives and changed the political atmosphere in Turkey. The government declared a state of emergency. Shortly after, Erdoğan cracked down on his political

[9] The term "interest rate lobby" includes investors, economists, and journalists who mention raising base interest rates as a macroeconomic tool. In Erdoğan's interpretation, interest rates should be low to curb inflation. His theory goes against classical macroeconomics theory which uses high interest rates as a tool to slow down inflation.

opponents (Türk 2018, 157-58). To re-consolidate his power, Erdoğan held democracy watch rallies and boosted his appeal to the people based on the narrative of "the people" standing up against "foreign elites" who seek to hurt the country. Looking at significant political events, we notice a stronger use of populist elements in Erdoğan's speech: referring to his people, creating enemies, and excluding some groups while favoring others.

Figure 1. Three Dimensions of Erdoğan's Populism



Source: Authors

In Figure 2, we show the total frequency of populist words through campaign speeches. Erdoğan held the most populist speeches in 2007 and 2014. The upsurge from 2004 to 2007 can be explained by the growing tensions before and after the 2007 presidential election process. Agreeing with the opposition over a consensus candidate, the Turkish military implied that intervention is possible if an Islamist candidate attempts to run for the presidency. For example, Yaşar Büyükanıt, the former 25th of general staff, highlighted the following in April 2007:

> The president to be elected is also the commander-in-chief of the Turkish Armed Forces. In this respect, it is closely related to the TSK. We believe that both our president and our commander-in-chief are loyal to the basic values of the republic, the ideal of the secular, democratic and social state of law expressed in our constitution, but to the unitary structure of the state, but not in words but in substance, and that a president will be elected there in a way that reflects this in his actions. (Hürriyet 2007)

Furthermore, a night before the Grand National Assembly of Turkey elections on 27 April 2007, the Turkish Armed Forces released the so-called "e-memorandum", stating that

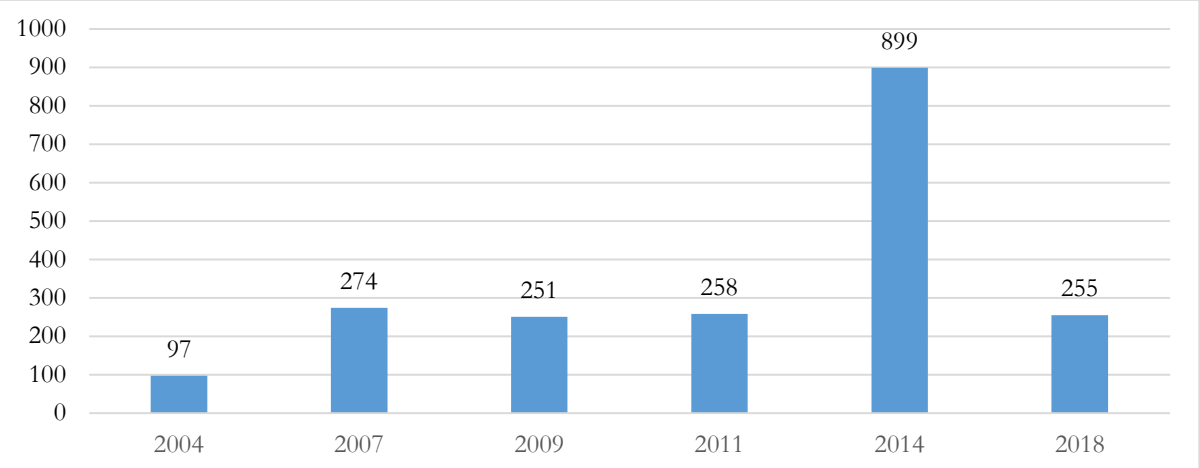
> It is observed that some circles who have been carrying out endless efforts to disturb fundamental values of the Republic of Turkey, especially secularism, have escalated their

> efforts recently… Those activities include requests for redefinition of fundamental values and attempts to organise alternative celebrations instead of our national festivals symbolizing unity and solidarity of our nation. Those who carry out the mentioned activities which have turned into an open challenge against the state, do not refrain from exploiting holy religious feelings of our people, and they try to hide their real aims under the guise of religion […] Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in those arguments, and absolute defenders of secularism. Also, the Turkish Armed Forces are definitely against these arguments and negative comments. They will display their attitude and action openly and clearly whenever it is necessary. (BBC NEWS 2007)

Consequently, the Turkish military aimed to use the secularism debate to re-design Turkish politics. Erdoğan was nevertheless determined not to be as defensive as previous governments. In response to the "e-memorandum," he emphasized the significance of the people's will and decided to hold a snap election in July 2007. During the campaign, he claimed that elites do not want the people to have power, emphasizing the dichotomy of "elites vs. the people" (Dinçşahin 2012, 10). As a result, in 2007 his populist discourse escalated and the frequency of populist key terms increased in comparison to 2004.

In addition, Figure 2 demonstrates that Erdoğan's total number of populist words surged in 2014. The long-running Gezi Park protests of 2013 and the unexpected clash with the Gülen Movement before the 2014 local election forced Erdoğan to construct new "enemies." The 2014 presidential election marked the beginning of the most populist era in Erdoğan's rule.

Figure 2. Dynamics of Populism in Erdoğan's Election Campaign Speeches



Source: Authors

Conclusion

Erdoğan has long been considered the populist colossus of Turkey. We traced his populist discourse in the election campaigns from 2004 to 2018, examining 42 public speeches. Using computer-based content analysis, we measured three dimensions of Erdoğan's populism over time. The people-centrist approach has always constituted the largest share of his discourse in comparison to other dimensions. The frequency of the people-centrist approach has been the highest throughout all the years studied and spiked fourfold in 2014. In addition, the results show that initially Erdoğan's anti-elitist speeches were insignificant, but their intensity increased considerably in the 2014 and 2018 election campaigns. Concerning the dimension of moralistic imagination of politics, we do not see a clear pattern. This dimension fluctuated and did not show a consistent pattern.

Our study analyzed the dynamics of the overall populism throughout Erdoğan's political campaigns. We conclude that Erdoğan intensified the populist rhetoric, responding to significant political events, such as the 2007 presidential election crisis, the 2013 Gezi Protests, and the 2016 coup attempt. In other words, he relied on populism in times of political challenges. To defy the Gülen Movement and the Gezi Protesters, Erdoğan constructed imaginary enemies including thugs, interest rate lobby, financial lobby, and foreign collaborators. Therefore, the analysis of Erdoğan's political speeches allows us to assume that, in case of similar situations in the future, Erdoğan is likely to use a heavy populist rhetoric in speeches to address 'brothers and sisters' and denunciate elites.

To date, the researchers who have examined Erdoğan's populism failed to provide empirical evidence for their key claims. Intending to close this gap, our study connected Erdoğan's fluctuating populism with the most important political events throughout his incumbency.

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The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility: A "Critical Junctures" Analysis of the European Union's Financial Assistance Regime

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented exogenous shock for the European Union (EU) and its Member States, one that demanded a joint response at the EU level rather than several differentiated responses at the Member State level. As such, the pandemic crisis opened up a "window of opportunity" for institutional change in the EU's financial assistance regime. This change pertains to the development of a set of rules governing the disbursement and withdrawal of funding to Member States in the context of crisis management. The paper thus aims to answer the following question: How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the EU's financial assistance regime? Drawing on a revisited historical institutionalist framework that allows for the examination of different types of institutional development, the paper argues that the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a "critical juncture" for the EU's financial assistance regime, resulting in a shift from intergovernmental coordination (with the European Stability Mechanism) to a form of limited supranational delegation (with the Recovery and Resilience Facility).

Keywords

Critical junctures; COVID-19 pandemic; Financial assistance regime; Institutional change; Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Less than a week later, the European Council started advancing an interpretation of the pandemic as a European emergency that demanded a joint response at the EU level rather than several differentiated responses at the member-state level (Capati et al. 2022). On 17 March 2020, European Council President Charles Michel voiced the need "to work together and to do everything necessary to tackle the crisis and its consequences" and invited the Eurogroup to "adopt without delay a coordinated policy response" to the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic (European Council 2020a). In the immediate aftermath of its outbreak, the pandemic crisis was thus perceived as an unprecedented

exogenous shock for the European Union (EU) and brought about large-scale socio-economic effects across its Member States.

As such, the pandemic crisis opened a "window of opportunity" for institutional change in EU economic governance (Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020), and especially in the EU's financial assistance regime, that is the set of rules governing the disbursement and withdrawal of funding to the Member States in the context of crisis management (Rehm 2022). As a matter of fact, while the financial response to the Eurozone crisis was mainly provided through the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), with a lending capacity of up to €500 billion, the pandemic crisis led to the adoption of Next Generation EU (NGEU) and, within it, of the innovative Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), a new financial instrument that replaced the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) as the major crisis-management tool in the EU (Buti and Fabbrini 2023). While the ESM has remained fully operational following the outbreak of the pandemic, and even inaugurated a pandemic-related credit line without conditionality to provide financial support against COVID-19, no Member State has ever applied for it and financial assistance has mostly been provided through the RRF (Fabbrini and Capati 2023), which amounts to €723.8 billion out of NGEU's €800 billion.

This paper thus raises the following question: How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the EU's financial assistance regime? To answer it, the paper adopts a revisited historical institutionalist framework of "critical junctures". While the literature has widely referred to critical junctures to account for radical changes (Ferrera et al. 2023; Schelkle 2021; Verzichelli and Edinger 2005), what makes them "critical" often remains unexplored. Building on Hogan (2006), the paper opens the black box of critical junctures through a reconceptualization and subsequent operationalization, before testing the concept to the outbreak of the pandemic crisis and the establishment of the RRF. The paper argues that the COVID-19 pandemic does constitute a critical juncture for the EU's financial assistance regime as it moved from intergovernmental coordination (with the ESM) to a form of limited supranational delegation (with the RRF), resulting in a swift and comprehensive third-order change.

The above argument has the following structure. The first section illustrates the paper's historical institutionalist framework of critical junctures. It conceptualizes critical junctures as consisting of "swift," "encompassing," and "third-order" change following a "generative cleavage." It then operationalizes such criteria to set the stage for the empirical analysis. The second section discusses the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it was perceived by decision-makers and civil society to test for the "generative

cleavage". The third section investigates the establishment of the RRF to test for "swift" and "encompassing" change. The final section examines the governance system of the RRF in comparison with that of the ESM to test for "third-order" change. Based on the outcome of such tests, the last section qualifies the temporal sequence going from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to the establishment of the RRF as a critical juncture for the EU's financial assistance regime and discusses potential implications for the European integration project at large.

Analytical Framework and Research Hypotheses

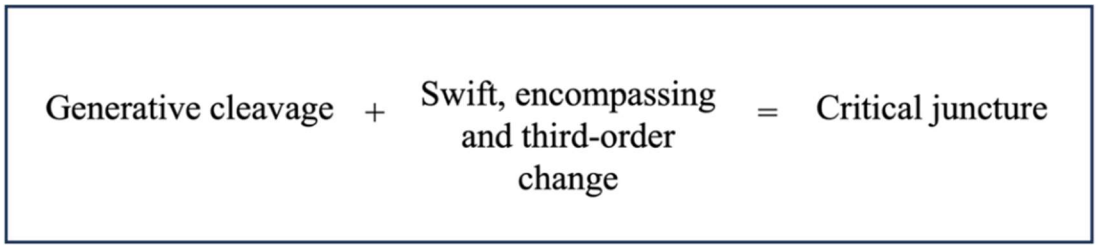
As the study of European integration spread from its roots in International Relations to Comparative Politics, historical institutionalism (HI) established itself as a viable alternative to both neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism (Christiansen and Verdun 2020). While these latter seek to conceptualize the main drivers of European integration either in terms of transnational actors or Member State governments, HI scholars are more interested in the institutional outcome of European integration as well as the nature and shape of institutional transformations. By broadly defining institutions as "a set of formal and informal rules that shape actors' behaviour" (Christiansen and Verdun 2020, 1), the focus of HI is thus on institutional construction, maintenance, and adaptation (Sanders 2006). To explain institutional development, HI scholars traditionally relied on such concepts as "path dependence," "incremental change," and "critical junctures." To this effect, institutions are supposed to be "sticky": once they are established, they tend to persist over time and condition the choices of decision-making actors, resulting in long path-dependent processes. However, endogenous or exogenous shocks may open the door to institutional change. This may take the form of incremental or gradual change or of a critical juncture depending on the nature of the shock as well as on the scale and scope of the change itself.

This paper builds on a critical junctures framework of institutional change to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the EU's financial assistance regime. As a conceptual tool, critical junctures point to a model of institutional development based on "punctuated equilibrium," whereby periods of relatively long institutional stability and self-reinforcing path dependence are, every now and then, interrupted by phases of radical and abrupt change. To this effect, critical junctures are defined either as "choice points when a particular option is adopted among two or more alternatives" (Mahoney 2002, 6) or as "relatively short periods of time during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest" (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 438).

However useful to grasp the general contours of critical junctures, these definitions and their theoretical underpinnings do not provide a clear blueprint for empirical analysis. What exactly *is* a critical juncture? What is it *not*? And what can a critical juncture *do without*?

Borrowing from Hogan (2006), this paper conceptualizes critical junctures in terms of two constitutive elements: a generative cleavage and change that is swift, encompassing and third-order. Such constitutive elements are separately a necessary condition, and jointly a sufficient condition, for a critical juncture to occur. This conceptualization emphasizes what critical junctures are about, rather than what they might give rise to (e.g., path dependence, legacies, heritage, etc.). In particular, the kind of change associated with a critical juncture is radical (i.e., third-order) in its scale, comprehensive (i.e., encompassing) in its scope, and quick (i.e., swift) in its pace, regardless of how enduring it might be. This allows for recognizing critical junctures as they happen rather than in hindsight (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptualization of a "Critical Juncture"



Source: Adapted from Hogan (2006, 664)

A generative cleavage is an exogenous shock or tension which opens up a "window of opportunity" for institutional change. Such an exogenous shock, generally a large-scale unanticipated crisis, constitutes the first step of a causal mechanism through which previous self-reinforcing dynamics are eased and change becomes possible (Stark 2018). The generative cleavage is not itself a critical juncture: the latter being "an episode of institutional innovation" that follows from, and is permitted by, the generative cleavage (Collier and Munck 2017). Research on critical junctures has focussed, *inter alia*, on wars, revolutions, constitutional revisions and economic crises as preferred generative cleavages (Cortell and Peterson 1999). For our purposes, the proposed generative cleavage is the macroeconomic crisis produced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on Hogan and Timoney (2017), we propose an operational definition of economic crisis based on a combination of objective and subjective factors.

Objectively, the COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a macro-economic crisis if it leads to the deterioration of at least two dimensions of the economy in the EU27 among wealth (real GDP, GDP per capita), government finances (government debt to GDP, government deficit to surplus), labour (employment) and industry (industrial production) (Hogan and Doyle 2007). The rationale behind this operational definition is the following. While a worsening of just one dimension might be part of the normal ebbs and flows of the business cycle, a simultaneous deterioration of two or more dimensions of economic activity arguably points to an economic downturn. Subjectively, a macro-economic crisis also needs to be perceived as such by political decision-makers (EU institutions and Member States governments), civil society (analysts and the media) and international institutions (such as the IMF, OECD and WTO). Indeed, following a securitization logic whereby an actor names a certain development a "problem" and claims the right to address it (Murphy 2020), a crisis is at least partially a product of threat perceptions and is framed accordingly into narratives about those perceptions' nature, scale, causes and implications (Boin *et al.* 2009). Such narratives eventually influence how the crisis is governed beyond objective economic indicators (Table 1). To assess whether the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived as a large-scale economic crisis, the paper combines qualitative evidence from primary sources between March and October 2020, including official documents of EU institutions and public statements by EU and national policy-makers, newspaper articles, policy briefs, and economic reports. If the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived as a macroeconomic crisis, there should be evidence of this in the discourses of policy-makers, international institutions and civil society (Lynggaard 2019).

Table 1: Operationalisation of "Generative Cleavage" as a Macro-Economic Crisis

	Dimensions	Operationalization
Objective factors	Wealth	Fall in real GDP, fall in GDP per capita
	Government finances	Increase in government debt to GDP, increase in government deficit to GDP
	Labour	Fall in employment
	Industry	Fall in industrial output
Subjective factors	Perception of EU decision-makers	EU institutions and Member State governments perceive a macro-economic crisis
	Perception of international institutions	Institutions such as the IMF, OECD, and WTO perceive a macro-economic crisis
	Perception of civil society	Analysts and the media perceive a macro-economic crisis

Source: Adapted from Hogan and Timoney (2017, 72)

Based on this operationalization of a generative cleavage in the form of a macro-economic crisis, we can empirically test the following research hypothesis:

> *[H1, generative cleavage]: The COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a generative cleavage for change in the EU's financial assistance regime.*

For a critical juncture to emerge, the generative cleavage should be followed by institutional change – specifically, by a kind of change that is third-order (in scale), swift (in pace) and encompassing (in scope) at the same time. A third-order change is a radical, large-scale change. As Hogan points out, the operational definition of a radical change ultimately depends on a researcher's interpretation of their research subject, but "standards must be employed in measuring the level of change, and these should be clearly defined, and logical to the subject under examination" (2006, 665). To operationalize a radical change, this paper borrows from Hall's (1993) account of so-called "orders of change". In an analysis of economic policy paradigms, Hall identifies three possible kinds of policy change, which he defines as *orders*. According to Baumgartner (2013), Hall's attempt is to understand the nature of policy change and determine whether that typically has the characteristics of incremental evolution or punctuated equilibrium. A first-order change is "a process whereby instruments settings are changed […] while the overall goals and instruments of policy remain the same" (Hall 1993, 278), whereas a second-order change occurs "when the instrument of policy as well as their settings are altered […] even though the overall goals of policy remain the same" (Hall 1993, 279). Finally, a third-order change is an occasional and simultaneous change "in all three components of policy: the instrument settings, the instruments themselves, and the hierarchy of goals behind policy" (Hall 1993, 279). Drawing on Hall's orders of change, we operationalize a third-order change as a radical change that concerns not only the instrument's settings but the instruments themselves and their logic of functioning. In our case, a third-order change implies the establishment of a new financial instrument in lieu of the existing one, with a different governance system (or logic of functioning).

In addition to its scale, the pace of change is also crucial to our understanding of critical junctures. While it needs to be large-scale, the institutional innovation stemming from a critical juncture must take the form of a swift change. Contrary to the long-drawn-out process of institutional evolution associated with incremental (or gradual) change, critical junctures bring about abrupt transformations that quickly follow the exogenous shock. As opposed to instances of gradual change, in a critical juncture, the generative cleavage is also

part of the causal mechanism leading up to institutional innovation. When applied to an electoral or party system, an exogenous shock may well lead to an institutional change in a matter of a few months. As a case in point, the Italian corruption scandal of 1992, known as *Tangentopoli*, brought about a swift reconfiguration of the governing parties (Waters 1994). However, when it is applied to an overarching institutional system, a swift change may be conceived of as occurring over a longer timeframe. Similar to Hogan (2006), this paper focuses on the institutional pattern for the establishment of a financial instrument in response to a macro-economic crisis, hence a "swift change" is the change that occurs within, and no later than, twelve months of the proposed generative cleavage.

Finally, critical junctures depend on the scope of institutional change too. In this respect, encompassing change is only achieved when the institutional transformation has "an effect upon all […] of those who have an interest in the institution or institutions it is impacting upon" (Hogan 2006, 666). In other words, the third-order, swift change originating from critical junctures also needs to be comprehensive with respect to those actors who are part of the institutional system undergoing change. To be sure, the notion of encompassing change depends on the specific research subject. If applied to the features of a given model of political economy following an exogenous shock, as it is in the tradition of comparative political economy, an encompassing change entails that all countries adopting a given political economy structure would undergo analogous change (Parker and Tsarouhas 2018). In this paper, an encompassing change is operationalized as one that applies to the EU27 and thus leads to no opt-outs or "differentiated integration" (Schimmelfennig and Winzen 2023) (Table 2).

Table 2: Critical Junctures: Operationalisation of Third-order, Swift and Encompassing Change Following a Generative Cleavage

Requirement	Operationalization
Third-order change	Resulting in the establishment of a new financial instrument based on a different governance system
Swift change	Taking place within twelve months of the generative cleavage
Encompassing change	Applying to the EU27, with no opt-outs or differentiated integration

Source: Author

The proposed instance of a third-order, swift and encompassing change is the adoption of the RRF as the new major instrument in the EU's financial assistance regime. The above operationalization allows us to empirically test the following research hypotheses:

[H2a, swift change]: Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility qualifies as a swift change in the EU's financial assistance regime.

[H2b, encompassing change]: Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility qualifies as an encompassing change in the EU's financial assistance regime.

[H2c, third-order change]: Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the establishment of the Recovery and Resilience Facility qualifies as a third-order change in the EU's financial assistance regime.

Depending on the presence or absence of a generative cleavage and institutional change, four different institutional pathways may emerge. First, in the absence of both a generative cleavage and institutional change, the temporal sequence simply configures itself as institutional path dependence. In normal times, institutions produce self-reinforcing lock-in mechanisms which are inherently difficult to alter. Through the logic of positive feedback, institutions yield increasing returns as they serve such fundamental tasks as providing public goods or solving collective action problems by favouring coordination (Pierson 2004). Path dependence fosters a condition of institutional equilibrium or reproduction, the reversal of which is associated with high costs. Second, in the absence of change, a generative cleavage leads to so-called "near-misses" (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). A near-miss occurs when the outcome of a generative cleavage is not a change, but institutional continuity. In such cases, "a window of opportunity opens quickly, permissive conditions allow for the possibility of change but the status quo reasserts itself and no change occurs" (Stark 2018, 36). Near misses can be studied in a critical junctures perspective that seeks to account for how and why an exogenous shock leads to institutional persistence (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). However, the non-occurrence of institutional change does prevent the emergence of a critical juncture.

Third, in the absence of a generative cleavage, institutional development takes the form of incremental or gradual change rather than a critical juncture. Existing historical institutionalist accounts show that gradual change does not originate from an exogenous

shock (i.e., a generative cleavage) but is more often the result of endogenous processes of institutional transformation (Thelen 2004). Contrary to critical junctures, gradual change is either minor in scale, slow in pace, or limited in scope. Consequently, to explain institutional evolution, contemporary theories of gradual or incremental change have refrained from a critical junctures framework and resorted to such conceptual tools as *displacement*, *layering*, *drift*, and *conversion* (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). Finally, when a generative cleavage is combined with institutional change, the temporal sequence leads up to a critical juncture. Specifically, a critical juncture consists of an exogenous shock followed by a swift, encompassing and third-order change. As opposed to incremental change, critical junctures are abrupt and large-scale transformations that terminate long periods of path-dependent institutional reproduction. To that effect, when a critical juncture concludes, it might leave room for yet another path-dependent phase of institutional stability (Table 3).

Table 3 Institutional Pathways Originating from the Presence/Absence of a Generative Cleavage and Institutional Change

		Change	
		NO (institutional continuity)	YES (institutional transformation)
Generative Cleavage	NO	Path-dependence	Gradual (or incremental) change
	YES	Near-miss	Critical juncture

Source: Author

The COVID-19 Pandemic: Testing for the Generative Cleavage

This section seeks to establish whether the COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a generative cleavage. To do so, it first examines the impact of the crisis in the EU on such economic dimensions as wealth (real GDP, GDP per capita), government finances (government debt to GDP, government deficit to GDP), labour (employment) and industry (industrial production). To qualify as a generative cleavage, a deterioration of at least two of such dimensions must follow. Second, it discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived by EU decision-makers, international institutions and civil society. To qualify as a generative cleavage, all or most of such actors must perceive the crisis as a real threat to the stability of the Union, one requiring a major institutional response.

In 2020, real GDP fell by 6.1% due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially due to the health emergency and national lockdowns. This was an even larger shock compared to 2009 when the Euro crisis was at its height (-4.3%) (Eurostat 2021). GDP per capita concurrently dropped to €29,890 from €31,310 of the previous year. The economic impact of COVID-19 was, however, slightly asymmetric across the EU. Euro area countries were relatively more affected vis-à-vis non-Eurozone countries, with real GDP dropping by 6.4%. According to the data collected by Eurostat (Eurostat Data Browser 2021), countries from Southern Europe suffered the most severe impact, including Spain (-10.8%, provisional), Greece (-9.8%, provisional), Italy (-8.9%), Portugal (-8.4%, provisional) and France (-7.9%, provisional). Among the least impacted countries were Denmark (-2.1%), Finland (-2.8%), Sweden (-2.9%), the Netherlands (-3.8%, provisional) and Germany (-4.6%, provisional). Overall, the COVID-19 crisis led to an unprecedented decrease in the EU's total and per capita economic output in 2020.

Following the pandemic outbreak, government debt in the EU touched 90.7% of GDP, up 13.2 points compared to 2019. In 2020, the largest increases in debt to GDP were recorded in Greece, Spain, Cyprus and Italy, each up at least 20 percentage points compared to 2019. Most of the other Member States registered increases of at least 10 percentage points, while a small minority contained the increase in debt-to-GDP to a few percentage points (Eurostat Data Browser 2021). The dramatic increase in the government debt to GDP ratio in 2020 is the combined result of Member States relying on public debt as a key tool to counter the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and negative economic outputs. Along the same lines, government deficit increased to 6.9% of GDP in 2020 reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 crisis (Eurostat 2021). All Member States registered a general increase in government deficit relative to GDP in 2020, going from Denmark (1.1%) to Spain (11.0%) (Eurostat 2021). This also results from the need for the Member States to address the impact of the COVID crisis through drastic increases in government expenditure relative to income.

In 2020, employment in the EU decreased to 72.4%, down 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous year (Eurostat Data Browser 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic rise in the number of absences, reduced working hours and jobs lost. The income loss was concentrated in vulnerable sectors, with food and accommodation recording a decline of almost 20% (Eurostat Data Browser 2021). The general fall in EU employment is the first recorded since 2013. All the Member States registered a drop in their employment rate in 2020 except for Malta, Croatia and Poland. The country that suffered the largest

decline in terms of employment rate was Spain (2.3%) (Eurostat 2021). Similarly, the outbreak of the pandemic had a significant impact on industrial production in the EU, causing it to fall by 8.0% in 2020 (Eurostat 2021). This was largely due to the fall in the manufacturing of motor vehicles, furniture, machinery, basic metals and metal products (Eurostat Data Browser 2021). The general decline in industrial was quite heterogeneous and mostly concerned large manufacturing countries, including Italy (-11.4%), France (-11.1%) and Germany (-10.2%). The impact of the crisis on industrial output was less perceived in Malta (-0.2%), Latvia (-1.7%) and Greece (-2.1%) (Eurostat Data Browser 2021).

Beyond its objective economic impact, the COVID-19 pandemic was also widely perceived as a large-scale crisis in the EU. On 19 March 2020, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte declared: "We are confronted with an exogenous, global shock that has no precedents in modern history. And as political leaders we are called to make the necessary, bold, yet tragic choices" (Johnson *et al.* 2020). On 4 April, at a press conference ahead of a Eurogroup meeting on the response to the pandemic, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that "Europe, the EU, is facing its biggest test since its foundation" and "everyone is equally affected so it must be in everyone's interest that Europe should emerge strongly from this test" (Posaner and Mischke 2020). On the same note, in an interview with the *Financial Time*s on 16 April, French President Emmanuel Macron defined the pandemic as "a shock, a very anthropological one", adding that "we have put half the planet on hold to save lives, it is unprecedented in our history" (Mallet and Khalaf 2020). On 19 April, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán talked of "a time of war" (Reuters 2020). Along the same lines, on May 1st Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte conceded that "the present situation calls for unusual forms of multidisciplinary and international cooperation, and for solidarity. Because we can only fight this crisis by working together and sharing our knowledge" (Rutte 2020).

Such rhetoric was shared by the leaders of EU institutions. On 16 March, in his remarks after the G7 videoconference on COVID-19, European Council President Charles Michel admitted that "this crisis is serious" and "it is going to be long and difficult", adding "all of us are fully determined to do everything necessary, everything that must be done" (European Council 2020a). On his part, in early April, European Parliament President David Sassoli claimed that "we need the tools to overcome this emergency and start with a reconstruction plan" and "we must be prepared for the effects of this crisis and not be overwhelmed" (European Parliament 2020). Upon the presentation of the Recovery Fund to the European Parliament on 27 May, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the EU was facing "its very own defining moment" as "what started with a virus

so small your eyes cannot see it, has become an economic crisis so big that you simply cannot miss it" (European Commission 2020). She stressed that "the crisis has huge externalities and spillovers across countries" and hence "none of that can be fixed by any single country alone" and "it is way bigger than any of us" (European Commission 2020).

International institutions were equally assertive in their forecasts of the impact of COVID-19. In a policy brief published in March 2020, acknowledging that "COVID-19 has profoundly changed our lives, causing tremendous human suffering and challenging the most basic foundations of societal well-being", the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggested that "immediate short-term government responses are needed to save lives and livelihoods" (OECD 2020). On 8 April 2020, in a press release, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) expected global trade "to plunge as the COVID-19 pandemic upends the global economy", with such a decline "explained by the unprecedented nature of this health crisis and the uncertainty around its precise economic impact" (WTO 2020). In its regional economic outlook for Europe in autumn 2020, the International Monetary Fund stated that "the coronavirus disease has caused dramatic loss of life and major damage to the European economy" (IMF 2020). While praising the unprecedented measures taken at the EU level to counter the effects of the pandemic, the IMF suggested that "the outlook for 2020 remains bleak and the recovery will be protracted and uneven" (IMF 2020).

The severity of the pandemic was consistently pointed at by both analysts and the media throughout 2020. In a May policy brief, Bruegel contended that the containment measures adopted by European governments to curb the spread of the pandemic "have led to a severe recession" and that the "impact of COVID-19 on the European economy might ultimately turn out to be even greater than currently estimated" (Anderson *et al.* 2020). In April, the European Policy Centre published a discussion paper claiming that "the coronavirus is an unprecedented external shock that is challenging the EU and its Member States," a "fundamental" crisis that poses "a dramatic threat to public health and the life of citizens" and "will require unparalleled monetary and fiscal measures by central banks and governments" (Emmanoulidis and Zuleeg 2020). In September, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) claimed that the recovery of the European economy "is likely to be incomplete for some time, not least because of the substantial degree of social distancing measures still in place" (Gros 2020). The key media outlets mirrored this narrative. As such, *The Financial Times* titled its issue on 13 March "Traumatic day on global markets spurs central

banks to step up action." A few days later, on 19 March, the print edition of *Politico* came out with the headline "The World 'At War'."

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had both a strong objective and subjective impact on the EU. For one, the severity of the crisis was registered by all key macroeconomic indicators, including GDP, government finances, employment and industrial production. For another, the crisis was widely perceived as such by political decision-makers, international institutions and civil society. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as a generative cleavage for large-scale institutional change, confirming H1.

The Establishment of the RRF: Testing for Swift and Encompassing Change

The COVID-19 outbreak turned into a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 as the SARS-Cov-2 virus reached "alarming levels of spread and severity" (WHO 2020). The RRF was negotiated and adopted within a year from that date. Negotiations for the establishment of the facility took place between late March and mid-February 2021. These involved just about every EU institution, including the European Council, the European Commission, the ECOFIN (and Eurogroup), and the European Parliament. In addition, political initiatives of individual Member States – notably Germany and France – also contributed to boosting the process. The RRF was eventually established by means of the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP) and integrated into the MFF 2021-2027. Contrary to the ESM, it thus applies to the EU27 as a whole. The adoption of the RRF followed three different policy-making phases: an agenda-setting phase in March 2020; a policy-formulation phase between April and early May 2020; and a decision-making phase between late May and mid-July 2020. While the RRF regulation was only approved on 11 February 2021, steps taken at the EU level to complete the recovery package after July 2020 concerned the own resources decision, the NGEU, the MFF for 2021-2027 and the conditionality regime for the protection of the Union's budget, all of which were finalised between 14 and 17 December 2020.

The agenda-setting phase started with the European Council meeting of 17 March, where President Charles Michel framed it as a European crisis that needed to be addressed at the EU level more than it could be addressed by Member States on their own (Zgaga *et al.* 2023). On 26 March, the European Council remarked the exceptional nature of the crisis affecting all EU countries and committed itself to a "comprehensive response", asking the Eurogroup to present proposals "in light of developments" (European Council 2020b). This framing of the pandemic was echoed, on 25 March, by the political leaders from nine

Member State governments – including France, Italy, and Spain – in a letter to Charles Michel. The letter acknowledged the unprecedented nature of the crisis, binding the member states to a common future, and argued that "we are collectively accountable for an effective and united European response" (Letter of the Nine 2020, 3).

This set the stage for the subsequent policy formulation phase. On 9 April, the Eurogroup presented its report on the economic policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic, putting forward the proposal for a major Recovery Fund that would be "temporary, targeted and commensurate" (Council of the EU 2020a). On 20 April, Spanish Deputy Prime Minister for the Economy Nadia Calviño urged EU leaders to agree to a €1.5 trillion recovery instrument entirely based on grants (i.e., non-repayable financial support). In an interview with *The Financial Times*, Calviño said that the monetary policy of the ECB needed to be complemented by common fiscal policy tools and that Spain supported the option of an instrument "funded through permanent debt issued by the European institutions". Calviño argued that the choice between the already existing ESM and a new coronavirus fund was "not only about financial stability" but rather about "providing a common European response to the crisis" (Dombey 2020).

On 23 April, the European Council agreed to move forward towards the establishment of a recovery fund "which is needed and urgent." However, because of lasting internal disagreements between France, Italy and Spain on the one hand and the self-defined "Frugal Four" (including Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) on the other, the European Council asked the European Commission to "analyze the exact needs and to urgently come up with a proposal that is commensurate with the challenge we are facing" (European Council 2020c). To build momentum for an ambitious response to the crisis, on 18 May France and Germany announced the "French-German Initiative for the European Recovery from the Coronavirus Crisis." Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic was "unprecedented in the history of the European Union" and committing themselves to "paving the way out of the crisis," the two governments proposed a €500 billion "Recovery Fund" to be financed by borrowing operations of the European Commission on the financial markets on behalf of the EU (German Federal Government 2020a).

Drawing on the French-German initiative, on 28 May the European Commission initiated the formal decision-making process, presenting its legislative proposal for a "Recovery and Resilience Facility" to be approved as a regulation by the European Parliament and Council through the OLP. The European Commission's proposal constituted the first comprehensive scheme for the adoption of the RRF, defining its size,

composition (between grants and loans) and governance mechanism. The Commission's plan was the object of exploratory conversations among the permanent representatives of the Member States until 13 June and of hard bargaining among the top political leaders in the European Council meeting of 19 June. At the end of the meeting, while observing that on some elements of the proposal "there is an emerging consensus", President Michel admitted that "it is necessary to continue to discuss" (European Council 2020d) and convened an in-person summit for July 2020. It was on this basis that government leaders met on 17-21 July in what turned out to be the second-longest European Council meeting in the history of the EU. In their *Conclusions* to the meeting, European leaders committed to establishing the RRF as the major financial instrument to address the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, reaching a compromise on the Commission's proposal in terms of size, composition and governance. The European Council thus invited the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament to finalize work on NGEU and the RRF (European Council 2020e).

Towards the end of the year, the final steps were taken for the EU's long-term budget. After two days of discussion, the European Parliament gave its consent to the package. On 17 December, the Council was thus able to adopt a regulation laying down the MFF for 2021-2027. The Council finally urged the Member States to speed up national processes for the ratification of the Own Resources Decision, a necessary condition for the implementation of NGEU (Council of the EU 2020b). The following day, negotiators of the German presidency and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the RRF, including the scope of the facility, horizontal principles, eligibility rules for the NRRPs, the structure and content of each plan, and the Commission's assessment criteria. Such provisional agreement was then sent to the Council and European Parliament for final endorsement (Council of the EU 2020c). On such basis, on 11 February 2011, the two institutions finalized work and adopted a regulation establishing the RRF as the core programme of NGEU.

The RRF regulation identifies the main goal of the recovery instrument in the provision of financial assistance to the Member States with a view to mitigating the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19. To that effect, funding under the RRF is made available to help Member States elaborate investment and reform programmes on policy areas of European relevance, including the green and digital transition, economic and social cohesion, resilience and policies for the next generation. As both national financial backstops and the existing ESM were perceived as inadequate to address the costs of the pandemic

crisis as well as to achieve the above goals, the RRF regulation was adopted as a measure at the EU level in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as set out in Article 5 TEU (RRF Regulation, 37). The adoption of the RRF leads to a dramatic increase in the level of solidarity in the EU through the introduction of non-repayable funds (or "grants") and the unprecedented emission of large-scale common European debt. By endowing the EU with a fiscal capacity to stabilize the economy in the face of cyclical recession or unprecedented shocks, the RRF constitutes a key step in the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (Fabbrini 2022; Schmidt 2020).

Overall, the policy-making process at the EU level for the adoption of the instrument unfolded between the European Council meeting of 17 March 2020 and the final RRF regulation of 11 February 2021, covering a period of less than eleven months. Despite the unexpected scale and the unprecedented nature of the shock, EU institutions and the Member States were able to act quickly, providing the Union with a new financial instrument within a year of the pandemic outbreak. Adopted through the OLP, the RRF falls within the legal scope of the EU Treaties and stands as an integral part of NGEU and the 2021-2027 MFF. Contrary to the ESM, the RRF applies to the EU27 with no exceptions or opt-outs, resulting in no "differentiated integration". For these reasons, the RRF qualifies as a *swift* and *encompassing* change, confirming H2a and H2b.

The Governance of the RRF in Comparison with the ESM: Testing for Third-Order Change

The ESM, which was responsible for the EU's response to the Eurozone crisis, provides financial assistance to ESM members through macroeconomic adjustment programmes based on strict conditionality. To this end, if an ESM member is in need of financial support, the ESM Board of Governors mandates the Commission, along with the ECB and the IMF, to negotiate the conditionality scheme of the financial assistance facility in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). At the same time, on a proposal from the ESM Managing Director and after the consent of the Board of Governors, the ESM Board of Directors approves a financial assistance facility agreement, including the financial terms and conditions of the programme and the disbursement of financial assistance. Finally, the European Commission, along with the ECB and IMF, monitors the compliance of the ESM member with the conditionality agreed in the MoU (ESM Treaty 2012, Art. 12 and 13). Overall, the decision-making process for granting stability support and the disbursement of financial assistance is spearheaded by the Board of Governors and finalized by the Board of

Directors, while the prevailing logic is based on mutual agreement, consensus, and unanimity. Indeed, although the Board of Directors may approve financial assistance facility agreements by a qualified majority, it is the Board of Governors that initiates and steers the decision-making process for providing stability support, and it does so by mutual agreement. This arguably makes the ESM an instrument based on the intergovernmental coordination among Member State governments (Smeets *et al.* 2019).

Contrary to the ESM, the RRF moves the EU's financial assistance regime towards a form of "supranational delegation." The RRF operates on the basis of two decision-making procedures: one for the disbursement of financial contributions and the other for the suspension (and lifting thereof) of financial commitments and payments (RRF Regulation 2021). Both procedures revolve around the European Commission and the Council, but the balance of power leans toward the Council in the former procedure (disbursement) and towards the Commission in the latter (suspension and lifting of suspension) (Fabbrini and Capati 2023). In practice, the Commission assesses Member States' National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) based on a specific list of criteria. On a proposal from the Commission, the Council approves such an assessment by QMV, paving the way for the Commission's decision on the disbursement of the financial contribution. An emergency break allows Member States to exceptionally ask the President of the European Council to bring any NRRPs to the next European Council meeting, in which case the Commission cannot authorize the disbursement of the financial contribution until the European Council has discussed the matter. The powers of the European Council on NRRPs are, however, limited in both time and scope. On the one hand, the European Council cannot take longer than three months to discuss the national plan. On the other, Member State governments within the European Council have no veto power over the disbursement of financial contributions, and the final decision on authorizing such disbursement lies with the European Commission. The European Commission can also propose to the Council to suspend all or part of the financial assistance under the RRF or to lift such suspension, with the Council acting by reversed qualified majority voting (RQMV). This slightly diminishes the decision-making role of the Council compared to the Commission with respect to the procedure for the activation of financial assistance, as here the Council needs a qualified majority to reverse the Commission proposal.

The institutions involved in the decision-making process and their voting rules suggest the governance of the RRF is not fully supranational and by far not intergovernmental. A fully supranational procedure would entail the Council and European

Parliament sharing decision-making powers on a Commission proposal, with the Council acting by QMV and the Parliament by simple or absolute majority. That is, in a fully supranational procedure, the power of Member State governments within the Council would be counterbalanced by a supranational institution, the EP, as a co-decision-maker (as per Art. 294 TFEU). Under the RRF, the Commission has the monopoly of policy initiative, while the Council decides on a Commission proposal alone. At the same time, intergovernmental governance would imply a preeminent role of the European Council and the Council, both acting by unanimity (as per Art. 24 TEU). In the governance of the RRF, the European Council is only allowed to discuss an NRRP before the Commission can authorize the payment if explicitly requested by a Member State government. Moreover, Member State governments within the Council and, even more so, within the European Council can exercise no veto power at all with respect to the activation or withdrawal of financial assistance. Hence, the governance of the RRF constitutes a form of "limited supranational delegation." Table 4 below summarises the governance features of the RRF in comparison with those of the ESM.

Table 4 Governance of the ESM in Comparison with the RRF

	Governance		Outcome
	Decision-Making Institutions	Voting Rules	
European Stability Mechanism (ESM)	ESM Board of Governors, ESM Board of Directors, ESM Managing Director	Unanimity (Board of Governors) and QMV (Board of Directors)	Intergovernmental coordination
Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)	European Commission and Council	Disbursement of financial contributions: QMV in the Council on a proposal from the European Commission Suspension (and lifting thereof) of commitments and payments: RQMV in the Council on a proposal from the European Commission	Limited supranational delegation

Source: Adapted from Fabbrini and Capati 2023

As the RRF represents an innovative financial instrument with respect to the ESM, and one based on a different governance system (limited supranational delegation rather than intergovernmental coordination), it qualifies as a third-order change, confirming H2c. The occurrence of a swift, encompassing and third-order change with the establishment of the RRF, leading to a critical juncture for the EU's financial assistance regime, is synthesized in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Occurrence of Swift, Encompassing and Third-order Change in the EU's Financial Assistance Regime with the Establishment of the RRF

	Change			Outcome
	Swift	Encompassing	Third-order	
Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)	YES: Adopted in February 2021, within a year of the pandemic outbreak (March 2020)	YES: Applies to EU27	YES: Leads to the establishment of a new instrument with a different governance system with respect to the previous one	Critical juncture

Source: Author

Conclusion

This paper argued that the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of the RRF constitute a critical juncture for the EU's financial assistance regime. To support this argument, the paper relies on a revised framework rooted in historical institutionalism. The paper examines the macro-economic crisis caused by the pandemic as the generative cleavage, and the adoption of the RRF as the primary financial response to the crisis as a swift, encompassing, and third-order institutional change.

Theoretically, the paper provides a framework for analyzing different types of institutional development beyond critical junctures. Depending on the presence and/or absence of a generative cleavage and ensuing change, various institutional pathways can be observed, such as path-dependence (lack of both generative cleavage and change), near-misses (presence of generative cleavage but no change), and incremental change (absence of generative cleavage but presence of change). This framework enables more accurate analyses of critical junctures and exploration of potential explanatory factors behind different types of institutional development. Empirically, the paper qualifies the temporal sequence between the pandemic outbreak and the adoption of the RRF as a critical juncture for the EU's financial assistance system, capturing the event as it unfolded rather than in hindsight. This

analysis is independent of the long-term implications it may or may not have for EU economic governance in the future. The paper demonstrates that the macroeconomic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak imposed significant economic costs on Member States and was seen as an unprecedented challenge by EU decision-makers, international institutions, and civil society. Furthermore, it shows that the change associated with the adoption of the RRF, as the new major financial instrument in the EU, was swift in pace (as it took place within one year from the pandemic outbreak), comprehensive in scope (as it applies to the EU27 with no opt-outs) and radical in scale (moving financial assistance in the EU from "intergovernmental coordination" to "limited supranational delegation").

Finally, a fully-fledged critical junctures framework that is able to explain how institutional change comes about requires accounting for the structural context in which the critical juncture emerges as well as the agency-driven mechanisms taking place between the generative cleavage and the manifestation of change. To this effect, further research is needed to theoretically formulate and methodologically organize the plausible causal link between structural antecedents and ideational processes underpinning institutional development during critical junctures.

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Silent Masculinity: The Discursive Interplay of Gender and White Logic in Alberta's K-6 Draft Curriculum

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Abstract

This paper presents a discursive analysis of the gendering of Alberta's K-6 Social Studies draft curriculum. It examines if and to what extent the social studies curriculum promotes a gender-less portrayal of history buttressed by a façade of diversity and inclusion. In borrowing from Carol Bacchi's theories of "what's the problem represented to be" (WPR) and policies as gendering, it focuses on the discursive positioning of gendered norms and knowledge structures within the curriculum to unearth how the curriculum cultivates traditional masculinist and settler-colonial forms of historical truth while silencing those who contradict these narratives (1999; 2017). Through paying attention to the inclusion of binary gendered representation, their contextual underpinnings, and where gendered absences are positioned, the paper uncovers how the curriculum promotes a return to historical narratives predicated on patriarchal and white thought that pose dire implications for student's conceptualization(s) of their and their province's identities.

Keywords

Alberta; Curriculum; Masculinity; Policies as Gendering; Whiteness; WPR

Introduction

When Alberta's Premier Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party (UCP) were elected to office in April 2019, one of their key electoral points was to revise the province's curriculum. Kenney's announcement came amid his preceding officeholder's curriculum overhaul that, if put into place, would have included previously overlooked topics from past curriculums, such as "gender diversity and sexual orientation" (Bennet 2016). According to Kenney, a curriculum that focuses on these "progressive" and "socialist" topics ill-prepares students for the "digital age," the global economy, and the real-world labour market (Bennet 2019). To respond, Kenney proclaimed that he "will stop the NDP's [New Democratic Party's] ideological rewrite of the school curriculum" and "develop a modern curriculum that is focused on essential knowledge and skills instead of political agendas and failed teaching fads" (Bennet 2019). Put more simply, Kenney highlights two separate but inter-connected problems: the curriculum's ideological situatedness and its presumed negative impact on Alberta's labour market.

On March 29, 2021, Alberta unveiled its new draft curriculum for elementary students. The social studies portion of the draft offers four key objectives that require students to engage with the following: 1) "diverse events, people, places, and ideas related to local communities, Alberta, Canada, and the world"; 2) "the nature of work, economies, and financial literacy"; 3) "the connections between people, places, and environments"; and 4) "the origins of ideas, viewpoints, religions, and cultures to foster understanding and tolerance" (Alberta Education, 2021). Through these goals, students are expected to "build foundational knowledge of shared culture, tradition, and history" and foster "respect for people of diverse backgrounds that transcends differences and unites us in a pluralistic society" (French 2021). While the curriculum's diversity-oriented language draws vocally on the ideal of multiculturalism, opponents of the revision criticize it for its racially charged and dangerous conceptualization of Albertan history that will influence a child's sense of belonging and community (Peck 2021; Patrick 2021; Pratt 2021; Roach 2021). Through labelling it as "Euro-ethnocentric" (Roach 2021), "laden with colonial history" (Patrick 2021), and complicit in perpetuating "paternalistic, Christianized, and militaristic" versions of history (Pratt 2021), I frame this study around Premier Kenney's call to focus on essential knowledge through questioning whose knowledge is dominant and made visible, whose is excluded, and what implications these assumptions carry for the construction of Albertan history. While Kenney's narratives of essential knowledge are intrinsically tied with broader understandings of economic growth and Alberta's labour market, this article solely engages with parsing apart the curriculum's ideological situatedness to allow for future analyses of the interconnectedness of the curriculum and labour.

In a myriad of ways, this argument is not new: the foundational assumption that provincial and national education systems are permeated with hegemonic narratives in both syntactic and substantial ways has been long developed by scholars in the education field (see Apple 1988; Alayan and Podeh 2018; Teff-Seker 2020). For instance, Alayan and Podeh note how educational narratives are "intended to support agendas of certain groups or institutions, often used as socialization tools to maintain or foster hegemonic influence" (as cited in Teff-Seker 2020, 533). Similarly, Apple (1988, 22) identifies how the educational system maintains "existing relations of domination and exploitation," setting what Godlewska *et al.* (2017, 447) refer to as the "ground rules" for what is "worthy of attention." As a result, dominative national or provincial stories "posit histories that count and histories that are made invisible" (Stanley 1998, 50). In focusing on the ubiquitous influence of knowledge structures and discourse, these and other scholars demonstrate how the education system often frames

history to inscribe narratives of nationhood and identity that are exclusive, hierarchical, and oppressive (Miles 2021; Pashby *et al.* 2014; Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011).

While it is incontrovertible that a torrent of education literature seeks to deconstruct the meaning behind national and provincial priorities in education systems, these studies often eclipse the gendered language embedded in educational discourses, leaving only a few studies that specialize on the constitutive effects policies have for the gendering of the curriculum (Kostas 2021; Bourke *et al.* 2020; Mertanen *et al.* 2020). In acknowledging the curriculum's highly politicized nature that is constructed by the state to socialize students in a particular manner and in turn, construct particular kinds of citizens, I add to the burgeoning educational literature by adopting a gendered discursive lens to deconstruct what gendered and racialized knowledges the Albertan government wants its students to equate with its history.

In this paper, I consider if and to what extent the social studies curriculum promotes a gender-less portrayal of history buttressed by a façade of diversity and inclusion. To answer this question, I adopt a post-structuralist ontology of power, discourse, and knowledge to theorize how the curriculum "*naturalize[s]* relations of domination," "*conceal[s]* the radical contingency of social relations," and stabilizes current practices of historical reflection to construe hegemonic versions of knowledge as fact (Howarth 2010, 309). To focus on the discursive positioning of gendered norms and knowledge structures within the curriculum, I borrow from Carol Bacchi's (1999; 2017) theories of "what's the problem represented to be" (WPR) and policies as gender*ing*. Bacchi's feminist ontology challenges what assumptions and representations of a problem are constituted within a policy proposal by questioning whose worldviews these policies cultivate and sustain. In simplified terms, the WPR model unsilences what structures of power and hegemonic truths are implicated in the representation of a "problem."

This study has three components. The first curates a theoretical and methodological discussion that unpacks the central tenets of Bacchi's WPR model, her conceptualization of policies as gender*ing*, and her contribution to feminist reflexive praxis. The second touches upon the usage of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the paper's method, the curriculum as the chosen analytical corpus, and my data collection. The third, and most rigorous section, scrutinizes the social studies draft curriculum's discursive positioning of gendered and racialized identities to unveil how it overtly utilizes hidden narratives of masculinity and whiteness under the guise of gender equality and diversity. As a result, it constructs Albertan

and Canadian history as a masculine enterprise that leaves little room for women and non-binary inclusion.

Policies as Gendering: Theoretical Background and Methodology

According to Bacchi, those in power often frame political issues as having "only one possible interpretation of the issue at stake" (1999, 1). While she contends that contestations arise regarding an issue's representation, critical dissections of the policy are stifled. In other words, subjects are not encouraged to criticize how "issues take shape within these discussions," what factors lead to their interpretation, and what assumptions are intertwined within this policy proposal (Bacchi 1999, 1). To encourage such reflection and counter policy study's "relativist assumption that any one 'truth' is as good as any other," Bacchi conceives of the framework "What's the Problem Represented to be?" (WPR) (Baachi 2012, 22). The approach challenges the conceptualization of policies as "attempted 'solutions' to 'problems'" and redefines policies as embedded with multiplicities that constitute "competing interpretations or representations of political issues" (Bacchi 1999, 2). Formulating her central question, Bacchi tackles both the discursive formation of a problem and how it relies on fixed assumptions and interpretations those in power have about the world. The WPR model asks six questions:

> 1. What's the 'problem' […] represented to be in a particular policy?
> 2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?
> 3. How has this representation of the "problem" come about?
> 4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
> 5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?
> 6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced? (Bacchi 2009, xii).

Underlying this model is a post-structuralist focus on the constitutive effect of knowledge practices, power relations, and discourse, viewed through Bacchi's articulation of *policy-as-discourse*. Following a Foucauldian theorization of the term, she defines discourse as "regimes of truth' that go beyond ways of talking to include 'practices with material consequences" (Foucault 1994, 132; Bacchi 1999, 2). As discourses are influenced by and implicated in the social processes around them due to their fluid relational capacity and ability to construct meaning systems of knowledge, truth, and fiction, Bacchi identifies how policies hold the ability to construct social problems, much like discourse. Policies do not exist independently

of how they are represented or spoken about, but are instead, relational configurations "rendered intelligible within the *context* of a particular practice" (Howarth 2010, 311). Hence, policy-as-discourse articulates how policy practices construct a subject through discourse, according to prescribed understandings of knowledge and truth to further solidify the enduring realities of today's social order.

While maintaining the social constructiveness of knowledge that delineates and legitimizes a policy problem, Bacchi turns toward knowledge practices within policies that constitute subjects through processes of subordination and oppression. In doing so, she theorizes policies as "gendering, racializing, heteronorming, [and] disabling" practices by asserting that modes of oppression are not isolated but intertwine with each other and thus, one must consider the multiplicity of subordinating practices nested in a policy's narrative (Bacchi 2017, 34). The word practice in the context of Bacchi's gender analysis refers to the ongoing and performative process of gendering an individual, which Butler (1990, 25) argues is "always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed." In pairing the active verb of gendering with practice, Bacchi sheds light on how policies shape, and make come into existence, gendered entities such as 'woman' and 'man' that are marked as 'masculine' and 'feminine' (Bacchi 2017, 21; Connell 1995). The word gender*ing* removes the sexed category away from practices of 'man' and 'woman' to focus on how bodies become labelled by their performance(s) of gendered 'norms and assumptions', leaving any sexed body in a policy space the ability to exude masculine or feminine traits (Baachi 2017). In emphasizing the *doing* of gendered categories rather than their fixed and real assumptions, she renders the categories open for challenge and refrains from perpetuating a violent binary logic of gender. Instead, Bacchi challenges gender's naturalization and highlights the "dynamic processes involved in how inequality is 'done'" by examining a policy's constitutive and interactive effects across numerous oppressive planes (Dhamoon 2011). As a result, her theory calls into question the processes and practices of category formation that are implicit in all policy's designation of a problem.

While Bacchi is widely regarded as having "reframed the very objects of policy studies" following her WPR method (Goodwin 2012, 29; see also Mertanen *et al.* 2020), Goodwin notes that Bacchi's contribution is also heavily methodological. In acknowledging society's gendered intonations, Bacchi calls for theorists to deploy feminist reflexive practices when analyzing policy. She encourages policy theorists to confront "built-in assumptions, presuppositions, and biases," to challenge how problems are represented in policy proposals and question what implications this designation of the word "problem" carries for society

(Goodwin 2012, 30). When conducting gendered analyses, this means confronting hidden normative and exclusionary assumptions in narratives of gender equality and the construction of man and woman that cordon off the innate fluidity of gendered bodies in society. Bacchi argues for the researcher to be ethically responsible by "reflect[ing] on the particular reality their methods and concepts create" (Bacchi 2017, 22). By turning the researcher's gaze toward their assumptions in policy proposals, Bacchi's emphasis on feminist reflexivity extends her post-structuralist theorization of policy-as-discourse by drawing attention to the researcher's own biases and presuppositions. Hence, I adopt Bacchi's feminist reflexive methodology by curiously questioning by whom, how, and for whom certain policies and practices are made to benefit while remaining aware of my gendered presuppositions (Enloe 2004).

Method and Data Collection

Following Bacchi's post-structural and discursive theorizations of policy, this paper employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to make visible the structures of knowledge and power embedded in society. The method examines "how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways" by (in)visibility, discursive positionalities, rhetorical patterns, portrayals of truth and fiction, and (in/ex)clusion that frame a narrative in a particular light (Lazar 2007, 149). In shaping this study around the constitution of knowledge, reality construction, and making visible systems of meaning-production, CDA unearths how a seemingly mundane artifact, such as elementary curricular materials, perpetuates gendered knowledges and hegemonic truths. In sum, CDA problematizes the discursive and productive potential the curriculum possesses, demonstrating its viability to disrupt the gendered constructions in Alberta's K-6 draft curriculum.

The core data collected consists of the draft kindergarten to grade 6 (K-6) social studies documents alongside an excerpt from *The Dorchester Review* to offer a short historical analysis of the curriculum's conception. The draft K-6 curriculum consists of eight subjects: English Language Arts and Literature, Fine Arts, Français immersion et littérature, Français langue première et littérature, Mathematics, Physical Education and Wellness, Science, and Social Studies (Alberta Education 2021). While all subjects are of equal importance, I focus explicitly on the social studies portion of the curriculum as it delves the most heavily into discussions of identity, community, citizenship and informs "the schooled construction of the nation" (Sant 2017, 107; see also Miles 2021).

The Dorchester Review is a "robustly polemical" Canadian history journal that gives a voice to "elements of tradition and culture inherent to Canadian experience that fail to conform to a stridently progressivist narrative" (The Dorchester Review 2023). As a small, libertarian-leaning outlet, it publishes work that is male-centric and perpetuates discursive violence and colonial logic towards marginalized communities in Canada, such as through residential school denialism. In connecting it to broader discussions of Alberta's education system, the Albertan government hired *The Dorchester Review*'s founding editor C. P. Champion as a subject matter expert to review the social studies draft curriculum. During this time, Champion used *The Dorchester Review* as a platform to vocalize his concerns about the state of education in the province. These views became mired in controversy and demonstrated a broader trend in the Albertan political sphere that lent itself to highly white, settler-colonial, and patriarchal beliefs. In acknowledging Bacchi's call for the researcher to address both the representation of a problem alongside the proposed solution, I draw on discussions from *The Dorchester Review* to understand the "problem" construction of the previous K-6 Curriculum and what knowledge the government relied upon to propose a "solution."

To make sense of my approach with Bacchi's six WPR questions, I pair Questions 1, 2, and 3 together as Bourke *et al.* (2020, 730) argue that it is "necessary to work backwards from the 'practical texts' to answer these two questions." In the Foucauldian tradition, practical texts are key production sites of governmental decisions that offer an opportunity to assess a policy's constitutive effect(s) (Bacchi 2017, 27). *The Dorchester Review* acts as the practical text for these three questions as it outlines Champion's justification for why a new curriculum had to be created, his knowledge assumptions, and what problem he intends to solve. To do this, Bacchi (2009) recommends identifying prominent categories, binaries, and key concepts in the text. Question 4 sheds light on what, or who, has been ignored in the policy construction. Question 5 challenges the reverberations of the problem construction by analyzing subjectification effects as Bacchi fears that a problematization may negatively affect a group and hence questions who that may be (Bourke *et al.* 2020). Question 6 looks at the reverberations of the policy. As the curriculum draft is not yet implemented across the province, I can only hypothesize the effects of the problem representation and posit how it could be disrupted when put into force. As a result, I do not engage with Question 6 in this paper.

The following analysis interrogates the knowledge assumptions in Champion's construction of the curriculum, and the organizing ideas, guiding questions, and learning

outcomes for each grade of the K-6 social studies draft curriculum. In doing so, I identify two core themes: masculinity and whiteness. Together, they illuminate how Albertan history narratives are promulgated on hidden gendered and settler-colonial logic, prompting a level of conformity toward the "dominant modes of intelligibility" in the curriculum (Giroux 2004, 790).

What's the Problem Represented to Be?

In this section, I first situate the analysis in a brief discussion of the Albertan political context and define the problem, what assumptions are embedded in this problem, and its brief genealogical evolution. Grounded in this problem construction are binaries and categories of discourse used in the text to define and separate groups based on their lived experiences, identities, and histories, which I argue are: the binary ours versus foreign and the categories of whiteness and gender.

Similar to many settler-colonial societies established on the basis of white hegemony, misogyny, and settler-colonialism, Alberta's political culture is a mix of conservativism and desires for white protection but also hints at contemporary attempts at reconciliation and equality. As Wesley and Wong (2021, 62) note, Alberta's political culture can be equated to "non-conformity, frontiermanship, and bootstrap individualism that corresponds with a 'cowboy' mentality." In viewing the province as entangled with "notions of nostalgia, moral traditionalism, free-market capitalism, and libertarianism," Wesley and Wong assert that Alberta was "built on settler-colonial assumptions" that seep into individuals' understandings of Self and Other. However, nationally, discourses of multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, and diversity serve to upend these narratives. At the time of the draft curriculum's creation, Albertan politics was becoming increasingly fragmented due to pushes for greater inclusivity and simultaneous attempts to temper white anxieties and preserve tradition.

To Champion, the previous curriculum was nothing short of an ideological affront to socialist dogma set to undo Alberta's capitalist mode of production and indoctrinate students (citizens) with false conceptualizations of gender, settler-ism, and Albertan history. As Scott argues, Champion voices concern for the aberrant "ongoing cultural changes" taking place in the "western" world, igniting fear that those who have held advantaged positions in society are "becoming marginalized and left behind in their own countries" (2021, 4; see also Norris 2016). The problem represented to be in this narration is the misrepresentation of Albertan history and the dilution of core Albertan values that are "trending in the wrong direction" (Scott 2021, 8). As a rebuttal, the new curricular draft aims

to refocus Alberta's ideological commitments and "reinstate what are perceived as traditional values," beliefs, and "factual" narratives of Albertan history. In doing so, it challenges the curriculum's previous degradation by partisan ideology and "the prevailing, politicizing social justice tendency that has already gone too far" (Scott 2021, 8; see also Champion 2020).

Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and multiple federal apologies to marginalized communities in Canada, Alberta's previous curriculum synchronously moved toward an apologetic discourse revolving around educating students on historical injustices and multiculturalism (Alberta Education 2005). In other words, Albertan whiteness became disrupted and de-hierarchized with the focus reverted away from learning about Alberta's contribution to the "great" world wars and European historical ties and instead, toward the concepts of reconciliation, debunking settler-colonialism, and critical thinking skill development. To illustrate, Champion decries and lays blame on the curriculum's misguided teaching "fads," such as the "need [for] 'more' First Nations 'perspectives'" that "brainwashes children into thinking of themselves as 'settlers' stealing land" (Champion 2020). He further contends that albeit there is "value in [learning about] other cultures," we "can never truly appreciate or evaluate *foreign* culture without first knowing *our* own" (emphasis added, Champion 2020). Our history, to Champion, originates from "Classical, European, and US history because North American societies are offshoots of Europe's," while Indigenous and immigrant histories that do not adhere to the white Western European past of conquest and settlement are Othered and should not be visible in historical Albertan narratives (Champion 2020). As a result, the usage of the possessive pronoun "our" draws tight boundaries around who Champion sees as included in the historical narratives – the logic that is predicated on the furtherance of the white Albertan identity even though the myth of the white province is not very tenable.

In bringing the educational discourses back to portraying Alberta as who it "really is," Champion recommends the curriculum move away from a thematic approach to a chronological pedagogy. He argues that "[t]hematic history seems ideally suited to transmitting left-wing dogma" and that it is

> [b]etter to equip them [students] with the great stories and give them a key life-skill by the end of high school: the capacity to think critically about men and ideas and their place in history, as opposed to imposing sterile doctrines of race and 'gender.' (Champion 2020)

Immediately, it is apparent that Champion's vociferous writing is predicated on hegemonic, masculinized, and white presuppositions. Not only does the quote impose binary thinking that epitomizes a patriarchal understanding of the importance of masculinist narratives in

history while rendering women and non-binary individuals invisible, but it also further denigrates the importance of identity factors such as race and gender in the education system to fallaciously misconstrue the multi-racial and gendered realities of the province. In the context of Champion's often male-centric language, the above quote acts as an instantiation of his writing's hidden gendered logic that frames stories of the white, masculine, European settler as neutral historical "truths" while those who do not conform to the historical path of 'men and ideas' are rendered unintelligible (Champion 2020). Together, the policy proposal's goal is to revert Albertan history narratives back to their European underpinnings, take the politics out of the classroom, and replace far-flung tales of racial discrimination with 'our stories' of pride and conquest (Champion 2020).

What is Left Unproblematic and Silenced in This Problem Representation?

In speaking in Baachi's terms, Champion frames Alberta's education "problem" around the unwanted imposition of Indigenous knowledge, and "'sterile doctrines of race' and 'gender'" in previous curricular narratives (Champion 2020). However, at first glance, the curriculum's discussion of Albertan history goes against this assertion in terms of its racial and gendered representation(s) and could be argued as inclusive. In its overview, the curriculum is interested in reflecting "diverse events, people, places, and ideas related to local communities, Alberta, Canada, and the world" and in the "origins of ideas, viewpoints, religions, and cultures to foster understanding and tolerance" (Alberta Education 2021). On the surface, these discourses run parallel to broader Canadian multicultural narratives and create a false sense that the curriculum is truly created for a diverse audience with history from an array of perspectives and events. However, as Abu-Laban and Nath (2020, 516-17) point out, multiculturalism "is not a linear process of greater inclusion and progress," while Thobani (2007, 184) notes that discourses of inclusion and belonging often construct a façade over past and present racism and oppression. Lastly, Bakali (2015, cited in Abu-Laban and Nath 2020, 517) sees the use of multiculturalism as linked to a state's white-saviour complex that normalizes "the settler-colonial state's determination of who should be 'tolerated' or 'saved' and on what terms." As a policy that manages diversity, multiculturalism regulates conceptualizations of difference and stabilizes understandings of nation and belonging by limiting diversity to only forms that are pre-determined as safe for the state. In situating the curriculum as one of "understanding and tolerance," it positions the white

settler as drawing up boundaries around who can be tolerated and what forms of diversity are safe for students to consume.

In the curriculum's narratives, it continues to draw on notions of diversity across gendered ways by referencing predominantly European male but also white women's accomplishments. As much of early European colonialism and governmental involvement was heeded by men, the curricular narratives follow suit and ask students to memorize a plethora of facts regarding Canadian, American, and European wars, war figures, and dates of conquests by Christopher Columbus and Vasco de Gama. Depictions of white Canadian women became visible after the 1800s when a greater number of women immigrated to the region to help the colonial effort. Already, the curriculum's attempt to reflect a diverse understanding of Albertan history falls short by selectively elevating stories of white women over women of colour. Throughout the text, four key women are highlighted and given biographical space: Laura Secord, Joan of Arc, Madeleine de Verchères, and Susanna Moodie. Secord was an Upper Canadian woman who warned Britain's troops before an impending American attack in 1813, Joan of Arc a French heroine in the Hundred Years' War, and Verchères a "Canadienne heroine widely known for rallying to the defence of New France" against an Iroquois attack (Alberta Education 2021). Verchère's iconic status is also situated in a more contemporary context as being "used to inspire women to engage in the [First World] war effort in Canada" (Alberta Education 2021). Diverging from these narratives of war involvement is Moodie, a pioneer who "clear[ed] a farm near Peterborough" albeit "[m]ost of the settlers were men" (Alberta Education 2021). By defying feminized norms of the time due to their presence in highly masculinist spaces, students are taught to celebrate white women's performance of certain traits such as war-making and homesteading, while normalizing the invisibility and silencing of women of colour or those who were primarily involved in work such as home care and child-rearing (Hooper 2001). In other words, the text draws attention to gender performances where policies make to come into existence sexed bodies who conform to masculinist knowledge assumptions while subordinating those who do not perform the state's desirable norms across both gender and race.

All while the curriculum makes its first attempt to brand itself as gender-inclusive and non-patriarchal, it simultaneously furthers white supremacist logic masked in narratives of equality. Similar to practices of white feminism, the curriculum erases women of colour and fails to "hold white women accountable for the production and reproduction of white supremacy" (Moon and Holling 2020, 253). As Moon and Holling point out, by erasing the "built-in privilege of whiteness" and equating all women with white women, racism is

"conveniently made invisible" (Moon and Holling 2020, 254). More specifically, in the draft curriculum, suffrage is framed as an unproblematic movement that granted women the right to vote. However, the movement was both inundated with eugenics supporters and actively sought to exclude Indigenous women (who were not granted the right to vote until decades later). Through whitewashing this movement and overlooking their racist and classist stances, the draft curriculum overlooks the reality that many suffragettes wanted "gender equivalence within a white racial system that benefitted them" rather than racial and gender equality (Moon and Holling 2020, 255). By overlooking an opportunity to engage student's critical thinking skills, the draft curriculum pursues both a white and ablest line of thought that minimizes and ignores the realities of women of colour and prevents a broader reflection on both the successes of the suffragette movement as well as the harms committed.

In centring white women's experiences and foregoing their own complicity in Canada's settler-colonial project, the curriculum reproduces hegemonic whiteness obscured by gender equality. Further embedded in forms of women's representation are nuanced gendered subordinating practices. To illustrate, for a Grade 5 project, students are given a list of 31 male and 12 female historical figures, such as the Famous Five and American abolitionist Harriet Tubman, and encouraged to produce a short report on one of the individuals. While the draft curriculum highlights numerous independent women in active positions of resistance instead of as passive citizens, many of these women's significant achievements lack the context that is afforded to their male counterparts whose similar accomplishments are heavily represented in broader "Knowledge" and "Understanding" sections of the curriculum. As the 31 men listed are given curricular space outside of the context of the suggested assignment, the 12 women are not, meaning that all students must engage with narratives of male conquest and pioneering but interacting with women's achievements is offered as a *choice* in which students may not participate. For example, the Famous Five were suffragettes involved in a drive for women's equality. Although the push for suffrage was, and still is an iconic movement in Canadian history, the topic itself is not discussed until Grade 6 and is seemingly glanced over at best, with students only being asked to *recognize*, but not inquire into, how "[v]oting rights did not always apply equally for women, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, or for people of colour" (Alberta Education 2021). In separating the topic of suffrage across two grades with no substantial discussion given in either grade, the draft curriculum makes it difficult for students to actively engage with the suffragette's relationship to actual policy change. As such, it leaves unproblematic the lack of narration surrounding suffrage, demonstrating that topics that are viewed exclusively as

benefiting women and minority groups are often minimized in curricular narratives and must be self-selected by students to make their way into classroom discussions.

In a more nuanced capacity, the curriculum also promotes exclusionist discourses predicated on Euro-centric and patriarchal presuppositions of rule. In Grade 1, students are taught that European societies were ruled by feudalism, monarchies, and the "divine right of kings"; in Grade 2 students are to 'understand the history of hereditary rulership (monarchy) and the origins of modern forms of democracy' that were composed of the Athenian Council of 500, male citizens, and 'non-citizens'; in Grade 3, students must engage with terminology such as the "Magna Carta," "parliamentary democracy" and the "council of barons" who "represent[ed] the people" (Alberta Education 2021). Missing from these narratives of European governance structures is the notion of *who* had access to democratic representation and why European structures are privileged over other forms of governance. As the text uses gender-neutral terminology such as "common people" and "subjects" to construe the act of democracy as a form of equality, implicit in this designation of 'subjects' is the acknowledgment that women were barred from partaking in any form of responsible government and hence are not encapsulated in this purported genderless terminology (Alberta Education 2021). In effect, students learn to link the concept of "democracy" to elitist European rule where only land-owning men had the privilege to participate in society while those who do not conform to this identity are labelled as "non-citizens" (Alberta Education 2021). Students are not encouraged to think of alternative forms of governance outside of the European continent.

Even though students are introduced to European government at an early age, it is not until Grade 5 that students encounter alternative forms of governance with women's representation, such as the Iroquois Confederacy's matrilineal conception of ruling. Students are to understand how the Confederacy was a matriarchal society "unlike early European society headed by men with a patriarchal line of authority, kings, and male-dominant culture" (Alberta Education 2021). The positioning of Indigenous forms of governance in Grade 5, compared to European governance structures in Grades 1 through 4, enables students to normalize Canadian, British, and French governments with a 'patriarchal line of authority, kings, and male-dominant culture' and construct matriarchal forms of governance as "unlike" *our* Canadian form of ruling (Alberta Education 2021). While the text discursively includes women-led forms of governance, the positionality of male governance structures much before Indigenous forms coupled with the direct comparison of the Iroquois Confederacy's system being unlike "ours" in Grade 5, serves to *Other* women-led structures and further

normalizing settler-colonial leadership styles (Poitras 2021). Again, students are not given the opportunity to learn about other forms of governance systems outside of the Canadian and European contexts or to critically engage with why these systems pervade our society. While the curriculum is framed by policymakers as actively engaging in a plethora of stories that include women and marginalized communities, the narratives are positioned in a way that privileges discourses of the white male, European settler over all others.

While the text is promulgated on a set of gendered silences, it is also grounded in the racialized logic of erasure. Students from the age of five are taught to 'identify differences and similarities' amongst classmates (Alberta Education 2021). By grade 1, they are asked how to construct groupings centred around the words "we" and "they": for example, what "do *we* have in common with" the Americans and the British, while "they" questions regard Indigenous and minority groups' histories (Alberta Education 2021). In applying this skill set to a domestic context, students are cautioned that "newcomers bring new and unfamiliar religious faiths and practices" that make acceptance "come less easily" (Alberta Education 2021). To Saleh (2021), the curriculum's use of discourses such as "Eastern civilizations," "different," "the Orient," and "they" construct an "exotic Other" through oppositional logic that teaches students to essentialize cultures and leave unproblematic binary logic that subordinates groups who do not identify with the white Albertan history. Concurrently, by grade 3, students are taught to objectify African American people by referring to them as "blacks" who were "'property' of white settlers" (Alberta Education, 2021). Further, students are told to analyze "*why* advertisements would be placed in newspapers offering rewards for the capture of a runaway slave," to memorize the KKK slogan and question why the KKK *attracted* and "*appealed* to Americans and Canadians" (emphasis added, Alberta Education 2021). The usage of reductionist logic, positive adjectives, and discursive subjugation prompt students to justify why slave owners and white North Americans performed in this manner instead of criticizing the racial logic put forward in the text. As a result, the text marginalizes, reduces, and makes absent all discourses of African-American history aside from narratives of slavery and white oppression (Brown and Kelly 2001). While this is also an example of discursive absence, it, more importantly, demonstrates the clear boundaries the text constructs around whose history qualifies as Albertan by presupposing the derivation of the Albertan "we" to be from descendants of European settlers rather than inclusive of all the province's citizens.

For Indigenous cultures and histories, the curriculum draws on discourses of diversity and cultural pluralism by including "the history of First Nations and Inuit" and

prompting students to explore their "languages and varied traditions" (Alberta Education 2021). Albeit subtly, these efforts are met with a rhetorical style that incoherently places Indigenous peoples as past entities with no current structures of livelihood. While the text utilizes active verbs to describe European colonialism, it points to how the "First Nations, Métis, and Inuit *had* different languages and unique cultural practices" and "*inhabited* the land" (emphasis added, Alberta Education 2021). Moreover, students are asked to "retell the stories of First Nations or Inuit peoples and folk tales of early civilizations" (Alberta Education 2021). In deploying a past tense grammatical style and positioning conversations of Indigenous histories in the same breath as ancient civilizations that had "existed but have vanished," Indigenous peoples are framed as historic entities no longer existing (Alberta Education 2021). By leaving unproblematic discourses of Indigenous erasure, the curriculum harmfully perpetuates neo-colonial and misogynistic thinking that once again, elevates historical narratives of the white male, European settler over that of women and people of colour.

Conclusion: What Effects are Produced by This Representation of the "Problem"?

Due to this study's timely position before the implementation of the draft curriculum across Albertan schools, I can only hypothesize how it would affect student's understanding of Self and Other as well as their critical thinking and inquiry-based skill deployment. Further studies should be undertaken in the coming years to survey how a curriculum that dismisses the complexities of gendered and racialized histories through constructing a monolithic "we" while essentializing the rest of society into the category of "they" will impact students' historical interpretations of society. Moreover, one must reflect on how, while the curriculum deems what is worthy for an educator to teach in a class, it is up to that educator and the learning resources created to determine what students engage with and learn. As a result, this study only interprets the statist logic and knowledge structures evoked throughout the curriculum – but not how students interact with and understand the material.

Together, this article makes visible the oppressive and masculine performances embedded in Alberta's attempted gender and racially-diverse portrayal of its history. By challenging the positionality and constitution of these narratives in the curriculum, this article's usage of Baachi's WPR model unearths how the curriculum cultivates and perpetuates traditional masculinist and settler-colonial forms of historical truth while silencing those who contradict these narratives. In paying attention to the inclusion of binary

representation, their contextual underpinnings, and where gendered absences are positioned, I uncover the discursive processes at play to highlight how Champion's solution requires a return to historical narratives predicated on knowledge structures of patriarchy and whiteness. Moreover, in questioning how knowledge structures frame problems through practices of oppression and subordination, I identify how policies shape and perpetuate both gendered and racialized categories as they delineate tight boundaries between who belongs to Albertan history and who is excluded from these narrations.

In terms of the curricular draft's racializing discourse, it promotes a facade of diversity that is promulgated on the construction of an us/them binary that portrays Albertans as a white European entity that excludes Indigenous and minority groups from its narrative. As a result, this analysis illuminates how the curriculum deploys a provincial "we" that is grounded in narratives of colonial, masculine governmentality to reclaim Alberta's traditional values due to Champion's fear of purported ideological fads that require counteracting. In highlighting both patriarchal logic and white thought, the findings demonstrate how the curriculum's "essential knowledge" draws on a façade of equality to reignite white narratives of the province and reclaim *our* position in society (Alberta Education 2021).

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Selecting the Electorate: Disenfranchisement and Selective Voter Registration in Electoral Autocracies

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Abstract

Autocrats utilize (nominally) democratic elections, to claim procedural legitimation. To secure their political survival in these elections, they have an extensive menu of manipulation at their disposal. These manipulations are not only addressed at contestation but also inclusiveness of the elections. Although autocrats formally claim universal suffrage, informal restrictions and practices are implemented. Analyzing elections held between 1970 and 2020 in electoral autocracies, I find empiric evidence for strategic adjustments of suffrage rights as a response to electoral contexts.

Keywords

Electoral autocracy; Inclusiveness; Legitimation; Political freedoms; Disenfranchisement

Introduction

Only a few countries hold no elections at all, and multi-party elections have become common practice even among non-democratic regimes. Skepticism towards these elections is based on the assumption that their purpose mainly serves the regime (Hermet 1978; Morgenbesser 2014). In fact, ballot-box stuffing, intimidation and coercion of voters and oppositional candidates, or blatantly fabricated electoral results create an image of an absence of democratic standards and integrity held in non-democratic regimes. At the same time, it is fair to ask why autocrats go through all that extra effort for mimicry of democratic procedures (Przeworski 2018, 8).

Claiming popular support through elections enables autocrats to legitimize their claims to power to their people and the international community. This legitimation is crucial for their political survival and the stability of the regime and cannot be permanently replaced by other means of power preservation, such as repression or redistribution (Albertus and Menaldo 2012; Gerschewski 2013; Wintrobe 2007). However, these anticipated regime-supporting functions can easily turn into regime subversion (Schedler 2013). For example, the so-called colored revolutions for example in Georgia and Ukraine have demonstrated how electoral fraud damages the desired legitimation and may result in post-electoral unrest

and liberalization. To circumvent these risks, a diverse "menu of manipulation" has been established, including for instance strategic ballot removal of oppositional candidates, extra-legal mobilization, coercion, and phony electoral monitoring (Merloe 2015; Schedler 2002).

Emphasizing the instrumental relevancy of multi-party elections in non-democratic regimes, previous research has emphasized contestation (Hyde and Marinov 2012; Lindberg 2009; Donno 2012; Bunce and Wolchik 2010). However, to claim legitimacy, elections are required to be both contested and inclusive (Dahl 1971; Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008). Electoral inclusiveness, which refers to the extent to which all eligible citizens are allowed to participate freely and without discrimination in the electoral process, is one of the "basic nuts-and-bolts conditions required to achieve minimal standards of electoral integrity" (Norris 2013, 567). The relationship between electoral inclusiveness and electoral integrity is symbiotic, ensuring inclusiveness bolsters integrity by promoting fairness and representation while upholding electoral integrity reinforces inclusiveness by preventing voter suppression and discriminatory practices. Together, electoral inclusiveness and integrity cultivate public trust and confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes, thereby solidifying the foundation for a genuinely democratic system. Non-democratic regimes may adapt to these standards to claim legitimacy, but they often resort to manipulative tactics to restrict the full exercise of voting rights and skew the electoral outcomes in their favor.

Although most regimes claim universal suffrage, there is much anecdotal evidence referencing formal and informal disenfranchisement, as the following examples illustrate. In Myanmar, the Rohingya people have been disenfranchised by invalidating their ID cards (Horsey 2015). In 2000, the authorities in the Philippines conducted voter registration exclusively during working hours, which discouraged first-time voters from enlisting. In contrast to previous years when a holiday was granted for registration, allowing young people the opportunity to travel to their home provinces and register, the lack of this provision in 2000 hindered their participation (Bagas 2004). In Senegal, the electoral administration failed to deliver voting cards on time which observers viewed as "an intentional move to disenfranchise certain groups, such as teachers or people living in particular areas" (Evrensel 2010, 289). In the 1999 Malaysian elections, almost 700,000 people were not able to cast a ballot, as their registration was not approved before the elections (Levitsky and Way 2010, 326). In the 2013 Zimbabwean elections, opposition supporters were systematically disenfranchised through denial of registration or being denied to vote on election day (Merloe 2015, 89). Similar to fraud, impeded electoral inclusiveness and the practice of controlling the electorate have been linked to civic unrest. In both Guatemala and Kenya,

flawed registries led to informal disenfranchisement and caused post-electoral violence (Snyder 2013).

Moving beyond this anecdotal evidence, there is no systematic comparative research on electoral inclusiveness in autocracies. The main challenge in the analysis of these autocratic practices is authoritarian secrecy: to maintain the legitimizing *façade*, autocrats hide any activities damaging democratic standards while intending to secure political survival (Pepinsky 2014). This research note addresses this gap in the literature by systematically analyzing the inclusiveness of nominally-democratic elections held under autocratic rule.

By highlighting the dimension of inclusiveness, this article provides an important opportunity to advance our understanding of contemporary autocracies. The combination of democratic procedures with authoritarian governance has caused terminological confusion about the character of these regimes: elections were technically free and fair but the regime was obviously neither transitional nor democratic (Armony and Schamis 2005). By including breaches of the principle of inclusiveness on the research agenda, the (democratic) quality of an election can be re-assessed. Thus, uncertainty about the character of hybrid regimes and electoral autocracies as well as conceptual stretching concerning (nominally) democratic institutions in these regimes is avoided.

This article is divided into four sections. In the following section, I differentiate formal and informal disenfranchisement and link them to autocrats' desire for procedural legitimation. In section 3, I discuss available operationalizations and data which will be analyzed in section 4. Section 5 discusses these findings and directs attention to further research questions.

Inclusiveness and Procedural Legitimation

To ensure political survival, autocrats strategically craft a solid foundation for their claim to power (Gehlbach, Sonin, and Svolik 2016; Wintrobe 2007). Legitimation and legitimacy beliefs are crucial components of this foundation (Gerschewski 2013). Although there are different sources of internal legitimation, such as ideology or economic performance, procedural legitimation crafted through multi-party elections signals popular support and legitimacy also externally (Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017).

Despite the fact that multiparty elections are introduced with the aim of securing political survival, they "still contain the *possibility* of eroding authoritarian stability"(Schedler 2009, 337, empahsis in the original). To minimize this risk and to avoid electoral defeat while enjoying the desired benefits of elections, autocrats tilt the electoral playing field in their

favor (Bunce and Wolchik 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010). To achieve this goal, autocrats may restrict contestation and inclusiveness of elections. Previous research has mainly identified restrictions on contestation, for example through fraud, control over media, or selective candidate registration (Lehoucq 2003; Szakonyi 2022). However, it is essential to note that nominally-democratic elections in autocratic regimes must maintain a facade of inclusiveness.

To highlight legitimacy and build loyalty among citizens, autocratic regimes use the illusion of inclusive elections to full capacity: "Legal apartheid is not a viable model anymore"(Schedler 2002, 44). Therefore, autocrats are incentivized to formally provide universal suffrage to their citizens, which is understood as the cornerstone of inclusiveness (Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado 2008, 637). At the same time, a compliant electorate may be pivotal for electoral outcomes (Schedler 2013, 95). As a result, autocrats are interested in claiming inclusiveness while controlling who casts a ballot and who does not. To strike a delicate balance between these two objectives, autocrats find themselves walking a tightrope. Blatant restrictions on suffrage rights may turn the desired regime-supporting effects into regime subversion based on popular perceptions of exclusive elections (Snyder 2013; Norris 2012).

The intersection between inclusiveness and disenfranchisement is complex, and understanding their dynamics is vital for safeguarding the integrity and legitimacy of electoral processes. Disenfranchisement can take place even in seemingly inclusive systems, through various means like voter suppression, gerrymandering, or biased electoral regulations. On the other hand, in certain cases, a degree of inclusiveness may coexist with instances of disenfranchisement. Nonetheless, autocrats seeking to restrict electoral inclusiveness may employ both formal and informal disenfranchisement tactics (Schedler 2002).

Formal disenfranchisement is implemented through legal restrictions on suffrage rights. Despite universal suffrage, some restrictions remain in place in democracies and autocracies alike. These restrictions are a question of political boundaries and refer to age, citizenship, criminal records and mental status (Bauböck 2018b; 2018a). Most countries set the legal voting age at 18 (Beckman 2009). Similarly, there is little variance concerning citizenship requirements: In most cases, suffrage is granted to citizens only. However, in times of globalization and transnational migration, this question is linked to residency requirements and the possibility of external voting, which are important in terms of accessibility of the ballot (Lafleur 2015; Bauböck 2015; Caramani and Grotz 2015). Lastly, disenfranchisement based on criminal records or cognitive impairments is common practice

(Beckman 2009; Uggen, Behrens, and Manza 2005), but it remains a controversial issue . (Easton 2006; López-Guerra 2014). Both may vary in terms of scope and severity of the restrictions (Beckman 2009; Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019). Taken together, formal disenfranchisement can be implemented as a legalization of selective suffrage rights. However, it openly challenges the inclusiveness of elections and may thwart the desired legitimation function. Therefore, autocrats are expected to at least legally provide universal suffrage. In contrast, informal disenfranchisement may undermine the alleged formal inclusiveness while providing the autocrat control over the composition of the electorate.

Informal disenfranchisement refers to practical restrictions on the right to cast a ballot and may occur at different times of the electoral cycle. In the phase leading up to an election, it may be implemented during voter registration. This is especially the case if voter registration requires action taken by the potential voter (Franko, Kelly, and Witko 2016). The need to actively register for elections increases not only the cost of casting a ballot but also is socially biased against minority groups (Hershey 2009; Hill 2003; Sobel and Smith 2009). Furthermore, inaccurate voter registries may prevent voters from casting a ballot. On election day, the verification of identity and provision of access to the ballot are particularly prone to informal exclusion. For example, biased precinct offices in heterogenous societies may cause favoritism for the own group leading to "disenfranchisement of qualified potential voters, or enfranchisement of unqualified voters"(Neggers 2018, 1295). Furthermore the accessibility of the polling place is crucial (Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019; Alvarez and Hall 2006). Absentee precinct officers or changes of polling places on short notice "can easily leave voters without a place to vote and disenfranchised, even if only temporarily"(Alvarez and Hall 2006, 499). Although registration and identity verification processes are organized by electoral administration bodies, informal disenfranchisement should not be classified as mere electoral maladministration. This term rather addresses "more routine flaws and unintended mishaps by election officials" (Norris 2013, 568) and hence would imply a transfer of all responsibility to the individual election officials, whereas it is obvious that the regime is interested in controlling the outcome, potentially creating a principal-agent relationship (Alvarez and Hall 2006, 495).

Considering the aforementioned risks of openly fraudulent and non-inclusive elections, autocrats are incentivized to interfere only in certain contexts. As described above, they possess a diverse range of manipulations and balance these manipulations with ensuring some freedoms. If, for example, elections are free from manipulation and conducted fairly, the autocrat needs to remain in control of who casts a ballot to secure political survival.

Similarly, interferences with suffrage rights are more likely to occur in the context of contested elections. Previous research has shown, that autocrats adapt their strategies of rigging the elections to the degree of competitiveness (Lehoucq 2003; Harvey 2016). In competitive elections, the value of each individual vote increases as it may become detrimental to the outcome of the election (Dawson 2022). Therefore, higher degrees of contestation are expected to lead to higher degrees of disenfranchisement.

Operationalization and Data

To analyze electoral inclusiveness, I use data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) (Coppedge *et al.* 2021). The analysis focuses on parliamentary and presidential elections held in electoral autocracies between 1970 and 2020. These regimes hold nominally democratic elections but do not provide a level electoral playing field. Democracies and closed regimes have been excluded from the sample. Formal disenfranchisement is assessed using data on the percentage of the population which legally has the right to vote, the legal voting age, and restrictions on female suffrage. Informal disenfranchisement is captured using data on the *de facto* enfranchised adults and the accuracy of the voter registry.

To analyze under which conditions inclusiveness varies, I consider the broader electoral playing field. Firstly, the variable *Free and Fair* assesses electoral integrity irrespective of the extent of suffrage. The *Margin of Victory* is used to capture whether an autocrat may have feared electoral defeat. Although autocrats can assess the outcome of the election beforehand, I do not use the outcome of the election under analysis due to concerns of endogeneity: if autocrats fear contestation in the upcoming election, they might restrict inclusiveness effectively. This changes the outcome of the election and thus the margin. Therefore, I use the margin of the previous election as an approximation of the anticipated contestation. Whether margins are a suitable measure for contestation depends heavily on the electoral system. In majoritarian electoral systems, margins are more directly linked to the distribution of power (Eichhorn and Linhart 2021). Hence, I interact margins in parliamentary elections with a dummy variable for majoritarian electoral systems. This interaction term is not used in presidential elections due to the lack of variation in the electoral system.

Lastly, I control for two aspects outside of the electoral arena: *Legitimation* and *Transparent Laws*. Legitimation measures the extent to which the regime supports its claim to power using a specific ideology. Transparent laws refer to the rule of law and the predictability of law enforcement.

Results

The sample consists of 390 parliamentary and 344 presidential elections. These elections were held between 1970 and 2020 in 105 and 89 countries respectively.

Regarding formal disenfranchisement, there is virtually no variance across these elections. Legally, electoral autocracies provide universal suffrage. Exceptions in the sample are South Africa (until the mid-1990s) and Brazil (1986). These restrictions are attributed to limited female suffrage. Further restrictions apply in Thailand, where the members of the clergy are legally disenfranchised. Restrictions in Nigeria (1979), the Philippines (1977), and Myanmar (2012) could not be attributed to a specific group retrospectively. Similarly, the legal voting age, with a few exceptions, is 18.

However, this legal situation is not reflected in reality. Although universal suffrage is the norm, on average only 95 percent of legally enfranchised voters are *de facto* enfranchised. Furthermore, voter registries are flawed and informally disenfranchise eligible voters. To assess whether these restrictions occur in certain electoral contexts, Table 1 summarizes the results of regression analyses and presents the standardized coefficients of linear regression models. Cross-sectional correlation and autocorrelation are accounted for by using panel heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors and panel-specific autocorrelation (Kashin 2014).

Table 1: Determinants of informal disenfranchisement

	Parliamentary Elections		**Presidential Elections**	
	Suffrage	Registry	Suffrage	Registry
Free and Fair	-0.18***	0.44***	-0.28***	0.45***
	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.09)	(0.03)
Margin	0.08**	-0.07**	0.19***	-0.13***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.02)
Majoritarian Electoral System	-0.07	-0.09**		
	(0.06)	(0.03)		
Ideology	-0.07	0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.03)
Transparent Laws	0.26***	0.20***	0.42***	0.16***
	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.01)
Free and Fair*Margin	0.07	0.02	(0.06)	-0.08***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	0.03	0.02
Contestation*Majoritarian	0.02	0.02		
	(0.03)	(0.02)		
Constant	-0.07	0.01	-0.23**	-0.01
	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.11)	(0.03)
N	390	390	343	343
Countries	105	105	83	83
R^2	0.15	0.57	0.17	0.90

Note
Linear regression model. Panel heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors (Huber-White) and panel-specific autocorrelation (AR1). Standard Errors are in parentheses.
* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; ***p<0.01

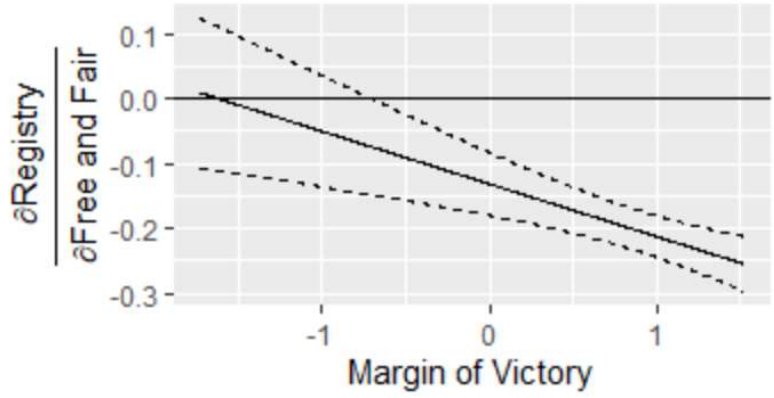
Source: Compiled by the author

Concerning the electoral context, free and fair elections as well as electoral margins are statistically significant but change the direction of effects depending on the dependent variable. Free and fair elections are associated with lower degrees of suffrage but higher accuracy in electoral registries. Conversely, larger electoral margins in the previous election are associated with a higher degree of suffrage but less accurate voter registries. These reversed effects illustrate the autocratic strategic decision-making within different electoral contexts and provide careful evidence for the systematic character of informal disenfranchisement.

As discussed above, the decision to introduce nominally-democratic elections entails the risk of potential electoral defeat for the autocrat. To secure political survival while simultaneously claiming democratic norms, the autocrat can manipulate different parameters of the electoral playing field. In this regard, suffrage is broad if the autocrat is not substantially contested – as indicated by larger electoral margins. The positive effect of margins on electoral registries is interpreted as an indication of over-registration. Over-registration indicates that suffrage rights are possibly extended to individuals who are legally ineligible to vote. This operational definition of over-registration can be viewed as a strategy to deepen procedural legitimation by claiming widespread support through inclusive elections and large electoral margins. It is essential to analyze the accuracy of voter registries while considering that discrepancies may signify both disenfranchisement and instances of over-registration.

At the same time, autocrats, to a greater degree, control who casts a ballot and who doesn't, if the elections are otherwise freer and fairer from manipulations. However, this is necessary only, if elections are contested. This relationship is emphasized by the statistically significant interaction effect of the margin of victory and free and fair elections in Model 4. Accordingly, Figure 1 illustrates the marginal effect of the degree of freedom and fairness of elections on the accuracy of registries as the margins of victory vary. With increasing margins, the negative effect of free and fair elections in registry accuracy decreases indicating that regimes are willing to grant political freedoms if they do not fear electoral defeat. This effect, however, is not statistically significant for very small electoral margins.

Figure 1: Marginal effect (Model 4)



Turning to the control variables, the presence of alternative ideological foundations for the regime does not affect the degree to which informal disenfranchisement occurs. Therefore, the desire for procedural legitimation seems independent of ideological legitimation. The strong positive effect of transparent laws in all four models implies that when law enforcement is transparent and predictable, it positively impacts the protection and exercise of voting rights and contributes to more accurate voter registries. This connection to electoral inclusiveness is significant as it suggests that when law enforcement operates transparently and predictably, there are fewer barriers or attempts to suppress voting rights, ensuring a more inclusive electoral process. By promoting fairness and accessibility, transparent and predictable law enforcement fosters an environment where all eligible citizens can participate in the electoral process, ultimately enhancing the integrity and legitimacy of elections.

The robustness of these findings was assessed using jackknife resampling (Ang 1998). Successively omitting one election from the original sample, I replicated the previous analysis with the reduced sample. The resulting coefficients are summarized in Table A5 of the appendix. The size of the replicated coefficients is very robust as indicated by calculated *t*-values in comparison to thresholds set by critical *t*-values. Similar to this replication of the coefficients, levels of statistical significance for the five main effects were replicated. While the levels of significance for free and fair elections and transparency of laws remain stable against the omission of every single election, there is some case sensitivity concerning margins, majoritarian electoral systems and ideology. All influential cases are listed in Table A6 in the appendix.

Concerning parliamentary elections, the frequency of Georgian elections is particularly striking. In total, four elections in Georgia are in the sample, all of which are

influential concerning the level of statistical significance of margins, majoritarian electoral systems, or ideology. Additionally, individual elections in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Uruguay, and Pakistan are influential.

Firstly, the case of Georgia stands out as it provided universal suffrage but exhibited less accurate electoral registries compared to the remaining sample of parliamentary elections. Notably, the elections in Georgia in 1999 and 2003, observed by the OSCE, revealed significant flaws and inaccuracies in the voter lists. These issues, including wide variations in registration numbers and delays in publishing voter lists, were particularly evident for internally displaced persons, raising concerns about inclusiveness. The systematic nature of these flaws, disproportionately affecting areas expected to support oppositional parties, adds to the complexity of the electoral dynamics (OSCE-ODIHR 2000; 2004). These problems were assessed by the observers as "the most contentious electoral issue"(OSCE-ODIHR 2004, 10). The systematics of the flaws was highlighted by oppositional parties, "as districts in which they expected to receive strong electoral support were the worst affected areas" (OSCE-ODIHR 2004, 10).

Secondly, the remaining cases form a group characterized by comparably low suffrage, which can be attributed to the suspension of elections before the ones under analysis. In these elections, the time spans between the elections are increased, resulting in less informative lagged margins for the regime. Consequently, an autocrat may be incentivized to restrict suffrage to certain regions or societal groups, aiming to maintain control and avoid potential risks associated with higher contestation in the upcoming election.

Concerning presidential elections, the only influential cases are the 2006 and 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Both elections had according to the data *de facto* universal suffrage. However, similar to Georgia, these elections experienced higher average flaws in the electoral registries compared to the remaining sample, indicating potential challenges to electoral inclusiveness. While a full qualitative analysis of these influential cases is not within the scope of this article, the identification of specific cases provides a starting point for further studies. Specifically, further research is needed to delve into the underlying factors and nuances influencing the relationship between electoral inclusiveness and registry accuracy especially in both cases.

Conclusion

Electoral inclusiveness is a cornerstone of democratic elections. As electoral autocracies utilize nominally-democratic elections to craft procedural legitimation, they are

incentivized to grant also universal suffrage to their citizens. This study set out to determine the electoral contexts in which suffrage rights are restricted and autocrats select their electorate systematically. Analyzing parliamentary and presidential elections held between 1970 and 2020 in electoral autocracies, three main findings are notable. First, there is empirical evidence that electoral autocracies legally provide inclusive elections through universal suffrage. Restrictions on suffrage rights are an exception. Second, suffrage rights are restricted informally as a response to electoral contexts. Political freedoms such as the right to vote are granted when the outcome of the election is certain. Third, the utilization of inclusiveness for autocratic purposes is not a one-way street. Aside from disenfranchisement, autocrats may use over-registration to establish a foundation for claims of mass support.

The implications of the findings for the trajectory and prospects of electoral autocracies are significant. The study's evidence that electoral autocracies tend to legally provide inclusive elections through universal suffrage, with restrictions being the exception, suggests that these regimes recognize the value of projecting an image of democratic legitimacy. Whether this image is used to impress the international community or rather addressed the domestic citizens for internal legitimation remains open for further investigation. However, the informal restrictions of suffrage rights in response to electoral contexts indicate that autocrats strategically manipulate inclusiveness to maintain control and ensure favorable election outcomes. This adaptability highlights the resilience of electoral autocracies in navigating projecting legitimacy and consolidating power. Moreover, the indications of over-registration as a tactic to establish a facade of mass support further underscores the complex interplay between electoral inclusiveness and manipulation in autocratic systems. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the evolution and durability of electoral autocracies and may inform strategies aimed at promoting genuine democratic progress in these contexts. Further research is essential to uncover the nuances of how autocratic regimes leverage electoral inclusiveness for their political purposes and to assess its long-term effects on the prospects of democratization in these settings.

These results are a first attempt to provide a systematic inventory of inclusiveness in nominally-democratic elections held in electoral autocracies. Although the findings are robust, some limitations require acknowledgement. Although the accuracy of registries was believed to enhance inclusiveness, this analysis provides some evidence that registry inaccuracy may also occur as a response to over-registration. The used indicator does not

differentiate these inaccuracies. Further research on this matter should determine different types of inaccuracies and the context under which they occur.

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Appendix

Table A1: Countries and Election Years

Country Name	Parliamentary Elections (N=390)	Presidential Elections (N=343)
Afghanistan		2009, 2014, 2019
Albania	1992, 1996, 1997, 2001	
Algeria	1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017	1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019
Angola	2012, 2017	
Argentina	1973, 1983	1973, 1983
Armenia	1999, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2018	1996, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013
Azerbaijan	2000, 2005, 2015, 2020	1992, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018
Bangladesh	1979, 1986, 1988, 1991, 2008, 2014, 2018	1981, 1986
Belarus	2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2019	2001, 2006, 2010, 2015, 2020
Benin	2019	1991
Bolivia	1978, 1979, 1980, 1985, 2019, 2020	1978, 1979, 1980, 1985, 2019, 2020
Brazil	1986	
Bulgaria	1990	
Burkina Faso	1978, 1992, 1997, 2015	1991, 2015
Burma/Myanmar	2012, 2020	
Burundi	1993, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020	1993, 2010, 2015, 2020
Cambodia	2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	
Cameroon	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2002	1975, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2018
Cape Verde	1985	
Central African Republic	1998	1992, 1999, 2005, 2011, 2015, 2020
Chad	2002	2001, 2006, 2011, 2016
Chile	1973, 1989	1989
Colombia	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990
Comoros	1992, 1993, 2015, 2020	1990, 1996, 2002, 2016, 2019
Croatia	1995	1997
Democratic Republic of the Congo		2006, 2011, 2018
Djibouti	1977, 1997, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018	1987, 1993, 1999, 2005, 2016
Dominican Republic	1974, 1978, 1990, 1994	1974, 1978, 1990, 1994
Egypt	1976, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1990, 2015	1976, 1981, 1987, 1993, 1999, 2005, 2012, 2014, 2018
El Salvador	1972, 1974, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997	1972, 1977, 1984, 1989, 1994
Equatorial Guinea	1999, 2004, 2008	1996, 2002, 2009, 2016
Ethiopia	2000, 2010	
Fiji	1992, 2006, 2014, 2018	
Gabon		1993, 1998, 2005, 2009, 2016
Georgia	1992, 1995, 1999, 2003	1992, 1995, 2000
Ghana	1979, 1992	1979, 1992

Greece	1974	
Guatemala	1974, 1990, 1994, 1995	1974, 1978, 1982, 1985, 1990, 1995
Guinea	2002, 2013, 2020	1998, 2003, 2010, 2015, 2020
Guinea-Bissau	1999, 2004, 2008, 2014	1999, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014
Guyana	1973, 1980, 1985, 1992, 19	
Haiti	2010	1990, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2015, 2016
Honduras	1971, 1981, 1985, 1989, 2013, 2017	1971, 1981, 1985, 1989, 2009, 2013, 2017
Hungary	2018	
India	2019	
Indonesia	1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997	
Iran	2000, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020	1981, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017
Iraq	2010, 2014, 2018	
Ivory Coast	1995, 2000	1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020
Jamaica	1980, 1983	
Kazakhstan	2004, 2007, 2012, 2016	1999, 2005, 2011, 2015, 2019
Kenya	1997, 2007, 2013, 2017	1997, 2002, 2007, 2013, 2017
Kosovo	2007	
Kyrgyzstan	2010, 2015, 2020	1995, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2017
Lesotho	1993, 1998	
Liberia	1997, 2005	1985, 1997, 2005
Madagascar	1977, 1983, 1989, 1993, 2002, 2007, 2019	1975, 1989, 1992, 2001, 2006, 2013, 2018
Malawi	1976, 1983, 1987, 1992, 2004, 2009, 2019	2004, 2009, 2019
Malaysia	1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2013, 2018	
Mali	1992, 2020	2013
Mauritania	1996, 2001, 2018	1971, 1992, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2019
Mexico	1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994	1976, 1982, 1988, 1994
Moldova	2005, 2009	
Montenegro	2001, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2016, 2020	2008, 2013, 2018
Mozambique	1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019	
Namibia	1994	
Nepal	1994, 1999, 2008	
Nicaragua	1972, 1984, 2011, 2016	1974, 1984, 2011, 2016
Niger	1996, 1999, 2009	1996, 1999
Nigeria	1979, 1983, 2003, 2007	1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011
North Macedonia	1998, 2014, 2016	
Pakistan	1977, 1985, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, 2013, 2018	2014
Panama	1989	1984, 1989
Papua New Guinea	1997	
Paraguay	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1989	1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1989

Peru	2000	1980, 1995, 2000
Philippines	1978, 2004, 2007, 2019	1977, 1986, 2004
Republic of the Congo	1992	1992, 2002, 2009, 2016
Republic of Vietnam		1971
Russia	1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2016	1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2018
Rwanda	2003 2008 2013 2018	2003 2010 2017
Senegal	1983	1983
Serbia	1996 2000 2014 2016 2020	2017
Seychelles	1979 1983 1993 1998 2002 2007 2011	1984 1993 1998 2001 2006 2011 2015
Sierra Leone	1973 1982 2002	1996 2002
Singapore	1972 1976 1980 1984 1988 1991 1997 2001 2006 2011 2015 2020	2011 2017
Somaliland		2010 2017
South Africa	1974 1977 1981 1994	
South Korea	1971 1973 1978 1981 1985	1971 1987
Sri Lanka	1989 1994 2010	1988 1994 2005 2010
Sudan	1996	2000 2010 2015
Suriname	1991	
Syria		1978 1985 1991 1999 2000 2007
Tajikistan	2005 2010 2015 2020	1994 1999 2006 2013 2020
Tanzania	2005 2015 2020	2005 2015 2020
Thailand	1976 1983 1986 1988 1992 1995 1996 2011	
The Gambia	1972 1977 1982 1987 1992 1997 2002 2007 2012 2017	1987 1992
Togo	2013 2018	1979 1986 1993 1998 2003 2005 2010 2015 2020
Tunisia	1986 1994 1999 2009 2011	1974 1989 1994 1999 2004 2009
Turkey	1983 1987 2015 2018	2018
Turkmenistan	1980 2016	2012 2017
Uganda	1980 2016	2001 2006 2011 2016
Ukraine	1998 2002 2012 2014 2019	1999 2004 2014 2019
Uruguay	1984	1984
Uzbekistan	2009	2000 2007
Vanuatu	1977	
Venezuela	2005 2010 2015 2020	2006 2012 2013 2018
Yemen	1997 2003	2006 2012
Zambia	1973 1996 2016	1973 1996 2015 2016
Zanzibar	2000 2005 2010 2015	2000 2005 2010 2015 2016 2020
Zimbabwe	1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2008 2013 2018	1996 2002 2008 2013 2018

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A2: Description of Variables

Name	Source	Description	Mean	Median	SD
Suffrage [DV]	VDEM: v2asuffrage	Approximate percentage of *de facto* enfranchised adults above minimal voting age. Expert assessment.	95.64	100.00	20.12
Registry [DV]	VDEM: v2elrgstry	Accuracy of voter registry. Expert assessment.	-0.31	-0.34	0.95
Free and Fair	VDEM: v2elfrfair	The degree to which elections are assessed free and fair. Expert assessment.	-0.80	-0.84	1.02
Margin (lagged)	VDEM: v2elvotlrg v2elvotsml v2ellovtlg v2ellovtsm	The gap between vote shares of the winner in runner-up. Lagged to the previous election. Own calculations.	39.08	29.80	32.02
Ideology	VDEM: v2exl_legitideol	The degree to which the regime promotes a certain ideology. Expert assessment.	0.16	0.10	1.10
Transparent Laws	VDEM: v2cltrnslw	The degree to which laws are assessed is transparent and their enforcement is predictable. Expert assessment.	-0.10	-0.11	1.01
Majoritarian	VDEM: v2elparlel	Dummy Variable for Majoritarian Electoral Systems.			

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A3: Correlation-Matrix [Parliamentary Elections]

	Suffrage [DV]	Registry [DV]	Free and Fair	Margin of Victory	Legitimation
Registry [DV]	-0.04				
Free and Fair	-0.12*	0.64***			
Margin of Victory	0.09	-0.15**	-0.18***		
Legitimation	-0.06	-0.13*	-0.21***	0.00	
Transparency	0.14**	0.44***	0.41***	0.01	-0.22***

Computed correlation used the Pearson method with listwise deletion.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A4: Correlation-Matrix [Presidential Elections]

	Suffrage [DV]	Registry [DV]	Free and Fair	Margin of Victory	Legitimation
Registry [DV]	-0.08				
Free and Fair	-0.09	0.63***			
Margin of Victory	0.10	-0.38***	-0.38***		
Legitimation	0.01	-0.18***	-0.19***	0.10	
Transparency	0.15**	0.38***	0.43***	-0.17**	-0.21***

Computed correlation used the Pearson method with listwise deletion.

Source: Compiled by the author

Table A5: Robustness of Coefficients against the Omission of Single Elections (Jackknife-Resampling)

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B_{min}	B_{mean}	B_{max}	t_{calc}	B_{min}	B_{mean}	B_{max}	t_{calc}
Free and Fair	-0.24	-0.23	-0.19	221.11*	0.51	0.53	0.54	-5135.55*
Margin (lagged)	0.05	0.07	0.09	153.18*	-0.06	-0.05	-0.03	1232.60*
Majoritarian	-0.11	-0.10	-0.08	229.63*	-0.11	-0.10	-0.09	324.85*
Ideology	-0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-138.93*	0.03	0.04	0.06	-940.92*
Transparent Laws	0.17	0.21	0.22	1209.66*	0.21	0.23	0.24	1766.10*
Free and Fair*Margin	0.05	0.07	0.09	-14.61*	0.05	0.06	0.07	132.63*
Margin*Majoritarian	0.00	0.02	0.04	-7.99*	0.04	0.05	0.06	-243.18*
Constant	0.01	0.01	0.03	-660.93*	0.00	0.01	0.01	-791.92*

Note:
Jackknife resampling of Models 1 to 4 omitting elections successively.
* stability of indicator based on $t_{calc} > t_{critical}$ at 0.05% (DF=389)

	Model 3				Model 4			
	B_{min}	B_{mean}	B_{max}	t_{calc}	B_{min}	B_{mean}	B_{max}	t_{calc}
Free and Fair	-0.19	-0.16	-0.12	-102.71	0.47	0.49	0.51	-4105.69
Margin (lagged)	0.06	0.08	0.1	26.51	-0.19	-0.18	-0.16	1870.19
Ideology	0.01	0.03	0.05	-600.05	-0.06	-0.05	-0.03	-125.6
Transparent Laws	0.21	0.24	0.25	1053.38	0.11	0.14	0.15	900.95
Free and Fair*Margin	-0.05	-0.01	0.02	403.3	-0.1	-0.09	-0.08	1187.18
Constant	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	-363.15	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	-246.97

Note:
Jackknife resampling of Models 1 to 4 omitting elections successively.
* stability of indicator based on $t_{calc} > t_{critical}$ at 0.05% (DF=342)

Table A6: Influential Observations

	Model 1	Model2	Model 3	Model 4
Free and Fair	none	none	none	none
Margin (lagged)	Bangladesh (2008) Uruguay (1984) Georgia (1992)	Bangladesh 2008) Uruguay (1984) Georgia (1992)	DR Congo (2006)	none
Majoritarian	Bolivia (1980) Georgia (1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999)	Bolivia (1980) Georgia (1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999)		
Ideology	Bolivia (1980) Pakistan (1977) Georgia (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999) Comoros (2015)	Bolivia (1980) Pakistan (1977) Georgia (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003) Guinea-Bissau (1999) Comoros (2015)	DR Congo (2011)	none
Transparent Laws	none	none	None	none

Note:
Omitted cases causing $p >= 0.1$ for variables significant in the original model
-OR-
Omitted cases causing $p < 0.1$ for variables statistically insignificant in the original model

Changing Incrementally the Academic Publishing Ecosystem: A South-North Collaboration – Reflections from Madagascar

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Abstract

The global academic publishing industry, with its entrenched colonial practices, perpetuates inequality between the Global South and North. In this context, young Malagasy scholars face numerous challenges, including limited academic writing skills and a lack of awareness about international publishing opportunities. Moreover, asymmetric power dynamics, imposed by senior scholars, hinder their ability to publish and promote their work online while language barriers confine them to French-speaking journals, limiting global exposure and collaboration. To address these issues, the Economic Social Research Council-funded project Hybricon organized a publishing workshop during the conference called "Hybriconference" in Madagascar, fostering a unique south-north dialogue. The event brought together global south and north scholars and editors, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange. It served as a model for mutually beneficial partnerships, showcasing the importance of inclusive publication practices. The initiative aims to decolonize the publishing ecosystem, emphasizing equity, diversity, inclusivity, intersectionality, and ethical responsibility.

Keywords

Academic publishing; Decolonizing academia; Diversity; Inclusion; South-North collaboration

The academic publishing industry requires incremental changes to decolonize dominant practices that sustain South-North inequality, promote top-down diffusion of information and knowledge, maintain asymmetric power dynamics, perpetuate unequal access to resources among scholars, uphold centralized and Western-centric academic discourses/discussions, and more. It is crucial to build fair and inclusive spaces within the publishing ecosystem, where scholars from both the Global South and North collaborate to establish a mutually beneficial partnership. This collaborative effort aims to enhance knowledge dissemination in academia, ultimately leading to the decolonization of these spaces.

The journey to publication for young Malagasy scholars is riddled with challenges. For instance, due to insufficient training, they possess limited proficiency in academic writing skills and an incomplete understanding of the publication process for (top) international

journals. Numerous young Malagasy scholars we encountered were unaware of the diverse range of international publishing opportunities beyond what their professors were instructing them about. Frequently, they fall prey to predatory journals that require substantial fees, resulting in articles being published without proper peer review, thus diminishing the quality of their work. These issues collectively emphasize the pressing need to equip local researchers with the necessary skills to effectively share their research on a global scale.

Drawing from past discussions with early-career Malagasy researchers during an academic blogging training in the northern part of the country (in Antsiranana) and in the central part (in Antananarivo), the members of the team of the Malagasy NGO ARAKE have gained insight into some of the challenges they encounter. Many of these researchers experience internal constraints imposed by senior scholars that hinder their ability to publish at both regional and international levels. For instance, they might be prohibited from sharing their work on online platforms like Researchgate and Academia.edu, and some senior scholars might even appropriate/ steal the work of junior researchers. To illustrate, one scholar shared with us that after she defended her thesis, one of the professors who was involved in supervising her research consistently utilized data from her work in his subsequent successful publications, all without obtaining her consent and without including her name in the publication as an author or the owner of the data. We observed a sense of fear among these young scholars, as some of them are still pursuing their PhDs and are concerned that not adhering to their supervisors' instructions could jeopardize their chances of obtaining their degrees. These instances underscore the substantial role asymmetric power dynamics play within the publication processes in the country.

Due to Madagascar's history as a former French colony, language has consistently acted as a barrier, limiting international exposure and outreach. Consequently, most scholars tend to publish in French-speaking journals. Research published in Malagasy journals or written by Malagasy authors tends to garner attention primarily from Francophone scholars. This circumstance hampers Malagasy scholars' access to networks and exposure within the broader publishing industry, particularly among English-speaking audiences. Moreover, this curtails their global impact, preventing the dissemination of their knowledge on an international scale and hindering engagement with a broader audience. This situation stifles the exchange of ideas and confines local scholars to a smaller network. However, some fields of research flourish more effectively in English-speaking contexts. Furthermore, a lack of financial resources obstructs these researchers from attending international conferences,

participating in professional training, and receiving feedback on their papers, all of which could aid in enhancing the quality of their work.

Local journal editors also play a crucial role in the publication ecosystem, but they too face numerous challenges. Many of those editors have received minimal training in utilizing technology, which could be a valuable asset. Regrettably, numerous local editors can only publish their articles on their institutions' websites. Lastly, they do not substantially benefit from funding and grants. All of these issues underscore the necessity for substantial efforts to elevate local outlets to meet international standards and attain recognition and reputation on a global scale.

In this context, as part of the Hybricon project[10], funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and hosted at the University of Reading, we organized a groundbreaking workshop on publishing academic books and articles in Madagascar in July 2023. Known as "Hybriconference,"[11] this event adopted a hybrid format, combining online sessions with in-person discussions in Fenerive-Est, a remote location in Madagascar. The workshop served as a testing ground for a bilingual session conducted in English and French with translation into Malagasy, leveraging technology for communication.

This south-north dialogue and workshop brought together Malagasy scholars from the University of Antananarivo, Institut Superieur de la Technologie Régionale de la Côte Est (ISTRCE), the University of Toamasina, and editors from esteemed academic outlets such as *Politikon: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science* and *Cambridge Review of International Affairs (CRIA)*. This event serves as an exemplary illustration of a mutually beneficial collaboration between scholars from the global South and North, as well as publishers and editors. More than 150 individuals (scholars, students, policy-makers, and Malagasy officials) joined the event, with over 90% of in-person participants taking part in an international conference or a workshop focused on academic publishing for the first time.

As a global South scholar myself, I have experienced limited access to networks in my field. However, having previously published in Global North journals, I found some of those outlets' processes to be highly inclusive. I never experienced fear or apprehension when submitting my manuscript; instead, I felt supported and guided. Language has never posed a barrier in this process. This positive experience led me to confidently reach out to those editors and invite them to participate in Hybricon's event.

[10] University of Reading. 2023. "About HYBRICON." https://research.reading.ac.uk/madagascar-hybricon/abouthybricon/.

[11] University of Reading. 2023. "HYBRICONFERENCE: Piecing the peace together: hybridization processes and the local." https://research.reading.ac.uk/madagascar-hybricon/researchpolicy/hybriconference/.

All participants had the opportunity to learn from one another. While the primary intention was for global South scholars to glean insights and learn from the editors and senior Malagasy scholars, it also provided a chance for global North editors to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by these young individuals. This endeavour aligns with the ethical responsibility and capacity-building efforts of global North journal editors. This facet of the initiative contributes to our vision of decolonizing international publishing and addressing practices that require eradication.

Frequently, global South scholars encounter substantial difficulties when submitting work to prominent journals published by global North institutions. For instance, editors often insist on citing scholars featured in the journal or well-known global North scholars. In other cases, the ideas and arguments put forth by global South scholars in their papers might not align with the perspectives of global North journals, for example when adopting decolonial approaches. Hence, it becomes imperative to embrace paradigms centred around inclusive publication, intersectionality, and a sense of responsibility or duty of care throughout the publication process.

While Hybricon marks a pioneering effort in Madagascar, we are diligently striving to arrange additional sessions and sustain our endeavours. Collaborating with local NGOs and universities, governmental institutions, and local as well as regional and international researchers, we are committed to furthering this initiative and expanding its scope. We aim to extend its reach beyond the island, potentially extending to the African continent as a starting point.

Revitalizing Conferences: Empowering Global Political Science through Inclusiveness

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Abstract

The 2023 IPSA World Congress in Buenos Aires showcased the transformative power of inclusiveness in academic conferences. While online gatherings have broadened access, this in-person event underscored the need for diversity and accessibility. Financial, visa, and language barriers often exclude students, scholars from the Global South, and marginalized voices. To address this, academic associations should actively involve students, provide travel support, and select conference locations thoughtfully. The IPSA Congress exemplified this approach, enabling students to organize panels and aiding Global South scholars through grants and regional collaborations. Such initiatives enhance the discipline's relevance, enriching cross-cultural dialogues and fostering equitable representation in political science.

Keywords

Inclusivity; Academic conferences; Global South scholars; Political Science; Diversity

The World Congress of Political Science, organized by the International Political Science Association (IPSA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 15-19 July 2023, was the first in-person Congress since 2018. For many students and young scholars, it was the first academic conference in their careers. Although the last few years, characterized by upending norms and traditions, proved that online conferences are valuable in making academia more accessible, returning to in-person meetings and presentations was nonetheless welcome. As witnessed at the Congress in Buenos Aires, the convergence of intellectually curious people in one place creates a unique atmosphere where researchers from diverse domains of Political Science can further the horizons of their discipline. However, academic conferences are also an opportunity for Political Science as a discipline to become more inclusive and accessible by encouraging the participation of students and helping academics from the Global South to join discussions. Through this dialogue of researchers from different backgrounds, political science can stay relevant in the ever-changing world.

Importance of Diversity at Academic Conferences

Although the Political Science academia is diverse, Political Science conferences tend not to reflect that diversity due to high entry barriers. Such barriers include financial costs, inaccessible destinations with restrictive visa policies, and language barriers (conferences are conducted primarily in English). These obstacles deter students, scholars from the Global South, and researchers from marginalized backgrounds from attending a conference. As a result, the conference audience is composed primarily of attendees who have the financial means, a privileged passport, and sufficient knowledge of English – which are scholars from the Global North who have access to research grants or university funding. Such an atmosphere is conducive to creating echo chambers attended by people discussing the same ideas. Including students and researchers from the Global South is essential to the relevance of the discipline of political science.

Supporting students to attend academic conferences

Including students in academic conferences benefits all parties – students, academic associations, and established political scientists. Undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students should have a chance to attend professional academic conventions to learn how to present their research, build their network, and expand their knowledge regarding what they want to do in their careers. Students may also bring new perspectives to existing research as they approach solving issues from a different angle than senior scholars. Including students is also beneficial for established academics who can dialogue with the younger generation of political scientists and learn about the issues that matter to them. The intergenerational dialogue in political science is a win-win for both sides of the conversation.

Usually, academic events are formally open to students, but professional associations need to provide more guidance and support in involving students in their conferences. For example, having dedicated conference staff members working on including students in the conference program can help to attract more students to attend their first academic conference. It is also possible to cooperate with student Political Science associations at universities in the city where the conference is being held. There should be opportunities for students to organize entirely student-run panels, where students can experience being a panel chair, discussant, or presenter. Certain conference sessions can choose to reserve a spot for a student presenter and promote it through the conference organizers. As a result of these efforts, conferences can become more inclusive to students, and there will be more interest in pursuing academic careers among undergraduate students, while graduate and postgraduate students will have an easier time launching their careers.

Supporting Global South scholars

The participation of researchers from the Global South is also highly important for the better development of political science. Although access to conferences has been greatly improved through a virtual component used extensively during the COVID-19 pandemic, there should be other options for including academics from the Global South. The in-person conferences provide an excellent venue for networking and presenting one's research. Sometimes, a conference can be the only venue for non-privileged scholars to receive feedback on their work. It is without doubt that the existing model of in-person conferences is far from perfect. However, academic meetings are still one of the primary ways for scholars of Political Science to build their careers. Unfortunately, scholars from the Global South face numerous hidden costs and challenges, be it visa problems, higher costs of inter-continental travelling, restrictions on work hours when staying in country destinations, bureaucratic issues, etc. Such issues pile up and create obstacles in building an academic career. Thus, the measures to counteract difficulties faced by Global South researchers in academic conferences are essential if the scholars of political science desire for their discipline to be equitable and reflect the diversity of issues being researched.

Academic associations can support political science scholars from the Global South in various ways. Those include travel grants, choosing more affordable and less visa-restrictive countries, providing support for obtaining visas by setting early submission deadlines for people in need of a visa, offering discounted registration fees based on a country of residence, and hosting regional conferences in the Global South regions to provide an opportunity for local scholars to present their research. Making academic conferences more inclusive to the attendees from the Global South will bring the perspectives and experiences of researchers from underrepresented countries in academia, which are vital in filling the gaps in knowledge that scholars from the Global North might lack the capacity to bridge. Ultimately, a diverse body of conference attendees fosters a cross-cultural dialogue that improves connections between scholars, universities, and institutions from countries far away from each other.

Improving Student Participation at the IPSA World Congress

The IPSA World Congress in Buenos Aires welcomed student representatives from the International Association for Political Science Students (IAPSS). As is tradition, IAPSS has sent a delegation consisting of Political Science students to participate in student-run panels. Usually, IPSA provides IAPSS with an opportunity to host one panel, but this year,

IAPSS organized two panels. The organization of one of the panels took place in partnership with students from Seoul National University who came to the Congress with their Professor Euiyoung Kim, the Co-Chair of the World Congress Program. The first panel focused on assessing the effect of civic education on civil politics and the quality of democracy. In the second panel, the participants presented their research on political change and democratization in contemporary Latin America. The students took the full initiative in organizing these sessions, formulating the panel themes, and sending invitations to fellow students for paper submissions. Additionally, they assumed the roles of chairs and discussants in the panel discussions.

The experience of attending the IPSA World Congress has proven to be critical for the professional development of political science students who participated at the Congress as part of the IAPSS delegation. Large academic conferences can be intimidating for early-career scholars. The joint opportunity between IPSA and IAPSS gave students an opportunity to practice their research and presentation skills and receive valuable feedback on their work. Moreover, the cooperation between IAPSS members and students from South Korea through a co-organized panel has shown the high-reaching potential of transnational research collaboration when students are given the space to do so. The financial support of IPSA for the IAPSS delegation was done via two approaches: IPSA Travel Grants, and direct financial aid to IAPSS to cover the travel expenses of student representatives. The financial aid has helped bring six students to Congress who would not otherwise be able to travel to the conference. This model of supporting students logistically and financially should serve as an example for academic associations that wish to support the young scholars of their discipline who aspire to build an academic career.

Supporting Researchers from the Global South to Attend IPSA World Congress

For this year's Congress, IPSA has put forth several initiatives to welcome as many Global South scholars as possible. The membership and registration fee structures were redesigned to be based on the country of residence of the Congress delegate, making the event more accessible for attendees from lower-income countries. IPSA has also provided Travel Grants that covered the cost of membership and registration and partially reimbursed the travel expenses. The location of the Congress venue in Argentina was also helpful in being more accessible for delegates from Latin America. Although there is no one effective solution for bringing more scholars from the Global South to academic conferences, the

experience of IPSA shows that many small steps can increase the accessibility of an international academic conference.

The 2023 Congress was organized in partnership with Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político (SAAP), which helped with the event's organization in Buenos Aires. This year the IPSA Congress overlapped with the SAAP National Congress, providing the opportunity for local scholars to attend both events at the same time. In addition, the Local Organizing Committee Session at the IPSA Congress was organized in collaboration with representatives from neighboring countries' political science associations: the Latin American Studies Association (ALACIP), the Mexican Political Science Association, the Colombian Political Science Association, and the Brazilian Political Science Association. As a result, the Congress participants benefited from more than 170 panels on topics related to Latin America.[12] More than 43% of registered participants came from a South American country (38% of onsite participants).[13] The combination of efforts to organize the Congress in an affordable destination and including local researchers in organizing the Congress program resulted in an opportunity for hundreds of scholars based in Latin America to present their research on issues that mattered to them.

Conclusion

Inclusivity, diversity, and equality of opportunity should not be only buzzwords but tangible goals for scholars and practitioners of political science. Although those goals may seem unachievable at times, incremental progress in making political science more accessible is being made through small-scale initiatives to help students, scholars from the Global South, and researchers from marginalized backgrounds, as was done at the 2023 IPSA World Congress. The actions outlined above may not represent the ideal approach for improving diversity at academic conferences. There is a potential to build upon current ideas and allocate more significant resources to improve access opportunities for scholars in the field of political science. As long as a genuine determination in professional political science associations exists to support scholars from less privileged backgrounds, novel concepts, and resources will naturally emerge.

[12] Program Sessions, The 27th World Congress of Political Science, IPSA, 2023. https://wc2023.ipsa.org/wc/sessions

[13] Oñate, P. 2023. Message from the IPSA President, 12 September 2023. https://conta.cc/48c3R4e.

Disclaimer

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