Government-Party Evaluations and The Cost of Governing for Far-Right Parties

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Abstract

Executive-serving parties typically experience a "cost of governing" — support attrition following a party's service as a member of a governing coalition. Not all parties experience these costs equally; the far-right experiencing higher governing costs than other parties. Theories that attempt to explain this discrepancy assume that far-right voters more harshly evaluate their government and party when it serves in the executive than other party supporters. I challenge this conventional wisdom using data from nine waves of the European Social Survey (ESS). I show that on average, far-right party supporters are dissatisfied with government and feel less close to their party while in opposition, but become *more* satisfied and more attached to their party than most other party supporters once they enter the executive. The far-right's high governing costs are inversely related to evaluations of the government and party attachment, confronting our beliefs on how parties incur governing costs.

Keywords: far-right, populism, cost of governing, executive participation, coalition
formation, government satisfaction, party closeness

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1   Introduction

Far-right parties have become increasingly involved in national executive politics over the last 30 years. We should expect that voters whose preferred party enters government are happier with the way democracy functions (Anderson and Guillory, 1997) and with general life (Patkós and Farkas, 2020) when compared to those in opposition. Following this, we should expect that executive participation positively influences feelings of satisfaction among incumbent supporters and for the parties that constitute the government.

However, parties often experience a "cost of governing" — a level of support attrition that occurs during a party's tenure as a member of a governing coalition (Paldam and Skott, 1997; Nannestad and Paldam, 2002). A decrease in vote share following executive participation is a common outcome in subsequent elections for many parties. These costs do not apply to all parties equally. Far-right parties experience greater support attrition in a subsequent election following executive participation than other parties (van Spanje, 2011; Akkerman and de Lange, 2012). Theories that attempt to explain why the far-right experiences these greater costs assume that a discrepancy exists between voters' expectations of policy deliverance and what their governments produce (see van Spanje, 2011; Nannestad and Paldam, 2002). In other words, the causal pathway leading from executive participation to governing costs in future elections relies on voter evaluations of their party and government during executive service.

If this is true, then there should be observable differences in far-right party supporter opinions of government performance in instances where the far-right serves in the executive, and when it remains in opposition. These evaluations should also affect attitudes toward the party itself. However, existing empirical tests tying executive participation to governing costs do not factor in voter perceptions of party and government performance in a meaningful way, thus skipping an important link in the causal chain. I offer the first test of this part of the causal pathway by examining if the public's evaluations of government performance and likelihood of reporting feeling close to their party change with executive participation.

The two most prominent theories, coalition-of-minorities and the grievance-asymmetry, fail to account for positive incumbency effects that we observe during executive service. I argue that neither theory is sufficient in explaining why a) political parties experience a penalty for serving in government, and b) why some parties appear to experience harsher incumbency effects than others. Despite the far-right experiencing higher governing costs than other parties, I find that its supporters experience greater satisfaction with government and feel closer to their party following executive participation. More so, this boost in satisfaction is *greater* among far-right supporters than any other party family. Feelings of party closeness improve following executive participation only among far-right and communist supporters. This suggests that the high cost of governing experienced by the far-right is less of a result of government performance than previously expected. I also find evidence of a "honeymoon" effect that suggests that far-right supporters are initially enthusiastic about executive participation, but the improvements in satisfaction and party closeness that they experience reduce over time in comparison with other voters.

This study makes two main contributions. First, I link public opinion to the cost of governing literature. Empirical work that examines the cost of governing and how it relates to far-right parties have identified that far-right parties experience greater incumbency costs

than other parties through analysis of aggregate vote share (van Spanje, 2011) or policy deliverance (Akkerman and de Lange, 2012). These major papers in the subject are now over a decade old, despite major developments in far-right party success during this time. This project contributes to a growing literature giving attention to how executive incumbency influences attitudes among the far-right in recent years (see Haugsgjerd, 2019).

Second, I challenge the assumption that the cost of governing is a result of negative government and party evaluations. If far-right voters become more satisfied and more attached to their party following executive incumbency, then this raises important questions about what else is unique about far-right party supporters that explains this electoral volatility. Parties at the extremes of the political spectrum join government less frequently than their moderate counterparts, are typically distrustful of elites and democratic institutions, and often perceive themselves as a discriminated and marginalized social group (Doerschler and Jackson, 2018). It follows that these voters perceive executive incumbency differently than other voters.

2 Far-Right Parties and the Electoral Costs of Executive Participation

I adopt the definition and case-selection criteria for far-right parties from Mudde (2007). Mudde specifically classifies far-right parties along three dimensions: populism, nativism, and authoritarianism. Since populism is a "thin" ideology that maps onto other ideological frameworks (Dai and Kustov, Forthcoming), and is often a strategic platform to attract votes, it should be noted that not all far-right parties are equally populist, nor do they employ populist rhetoric at all times. Populist parties exist on the left as well. Therefore, populism serves as a selection criteria only when it is observed in conjunction with nativism and authoritarianism.

Another common trait among far-right parties is a volatile voter base that withdraws support after they serve in government — a phenomenon known as the cost of governing. Most parties in multiparty systems experience some cost of governing, which Cuzán (2015) calls the "law of shrinking support". This cost occurs regardless of the ideology of the party, yet distinct party families experience these costs differently. Van Spanje (2011) finds that anti-establishment parties experience greater costs than moderate "pro-establishment" parties. This work suggests that far-right party supporters punish their incumbents after executive participation more harshly than supporters of other parties. Akkerman and de Lange (2012) observe some parties experiencing a cost as high as 16% of the vote following executive participation, like in the case of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) in 2003.[1]

Two theories that attempt to explain observable governing costs are popular: coalition-of-minorities and grievance-asymmetry (see Nannestad and Paldam, 2002). Under the coalition-of-minorities theory, individual parties campaign normally pre-election, attracting their spe-

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[1] To validate the claim that the far-right experiences a higher average cost of governing than other parties made by van Spanje (2011) and Akkerman and de Lange (2012), I run a simple OLS regression with country fixed effects using data from the ParlGov database by Döring and Manow (2021). The dependent variable is a party's vote share during an election. The explanatory variables are an interaction between far-right party status and *previous* executive participation during the term of office prior to the election under observation. I find that as executive status moves from nonmembership to membership, incumbency negatively affects vote-share for far-right parties when compared with other parties. See Appendix A2 for further details.

cific support base. Once in office, coalition partners have to compromise with each other, which to a voter might look like the party is failing to deliver on its campaign promises (Nannestad and Paldam, 2002; Hjermitslev, 2020). This might explain why junior coalition partners experience high governing costs, but in places like Poland and Hungary where the far-right are among the most successful parties, this does not explain why they might experience governing costs. Alternatively, the grievance-asymmetry theory suggests that retrospective voters punish more harshly for subpar government performance than they reward for acceptable performance (Nannestad and Paldam, 2002; Hjermitslev, 2020). If reward and punishment were equal, we should expect that a party that is able to deliver on all its promises should receive roughly the same number of votes as in previous elections. This asymmetry should be more pronounced in the context of radical parties, where policy expectations may involve unrealistic overhauls to a state's immigration, security, and economic policies.

Some examinations of public attitudes regarding executive participation show that perceptions are altered by the role a party plays in government. Cohen (2019) suggests that politically dissatisfied voters are more likely to vote for a far-right party *unless* that party has served in a coalition.[2] At the same time, there is competing empirical evidence that suggests that voters do, in fact, want their preferred party to enter government and become more satisfied with the democratic process once the party joins the executive. Anderson and Guillory (1997) note that in multiparty systems, supporters of parties that are invited to participate in government are more satisfied with democracy than supporters of parties that are left out in the cold. Far-right supporters should be just as satisfied with their government as any other voter when their party serves in the executive, so long as they are able to deliver on campaign promises. Perhaps more so, if we consider that the far-right has been traditionally viewed as risky coalition partners and thus typically excluded from executive politics. Another notable case comes from Haugsgjerd (2019), who finds that far-right supporters of the Norwegian Progress Party (FrP) more positively evaluate democracy following executive incumbency.

This presents an important empirical puzzle. If far-right voters perceive executive participation differently than other voters, then this may explain why the far-right experiences higher governing costs. However, if far-right voters more positively evaluate their government and party following executive participation, then the underlying assumptions about dissatisfaction and vote choice must be reevaluated. Therefore, it is important to test how executive participation influences not just perceptions of the government's effectiveness, but also attachment to the parties that form that government.

3   How Executive Incumbency Influences Government Satisfaction and Party Closeness

Assumptions about government and party satisfaction declining following executive incumbency provide several testable hypotheses. If far-right voters evaluate government and party performance negatively following executive participation then we should expect that gov-

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[2] Knigge (1998) also argues that dissatisfied voters are more likely to flock to the far-right in general, though Knigge does not account for coalition status.

ernment satisfaction and party closeness are lower among far-right supporters than other supporters. The expected satisfaction and party closeness of a far-right voter whose party serves in government is less than the expected values for a non far-right voter whose party serves in government.

> **H1: Compared with other incumbent party supporters, far-right voters' evaluations of their government and party will decrease following executive participation.**

If the far-right attracts dissatisfied individuals, then we should expect that government satisfaction is lower among far-right supporters whose party remains in opposition compared with other supporters. It follows that party closeness should be higher among the far-right in opposition than other voters in opposition. The expected satisfaction of a far-right voter whose party serves in opposition is less than the expected values for a non far-right voter whose party is also in opposition, while the expected party closeness of a far-right voter whose party serves in the opposition should be *greater* than supporters of other opposition parties. Since the far-right experiences higher governing costs than other party families, we should expect that the *magnitude* of the effect of executive participation on government satisfaction and party closeness to be greatest among far-right voters. Therefore, the differences between far-right party supporters and other voters following executive incumbency should be greater. Executive participation should decrease government satisfaction and party closeness for far-right party voters more so than others.

> **H2: The differences of government and party evaluations between far-right party supporters and other voters will be greater following executive incumbency.**

4   Case Selection

I focus on seven countries in Europe: Austria, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Switzerland[3]. Studies that examine far-right party behavior in the executive, namely Akkerman and de Lange (2012) and Cohen (2019), typically exclude Hungary's Fidesz party led by Viktor Orbán and the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland. The reasons for their exclusion are likely related to the ideological shift to the right that both parties have experienced. Orbán's government has pushed for nativist and anti-immigrant policies, has challenged media freedoms, and has reduced checks on the executive with the adoption of a new constitution in 2012. PiS has attacked judicial independence and emphasized a nativist protection of the national culture in recent years. While both parties are typically coded as conservative in databases like ParlGov (Döring and Manow, 2021), the shift to the right of

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[3] Switzerland presents a unique case, as it is not governed by legislative coalitions in the same way as the other parliamentary democracies in the sample. The Swiss Federal Council is a seven-member administrative unit that makes up the presidency and cabinet. The far-right Swiss People's Party (SVP) serves frequently on this council and thus counts as a far-right party serving in an executive. The SVP has also been included in other studies focusing on far-right parties in the executive (see de Lange, 2012; Akkerman and de Lange, 2012), warranting its inclusion.

these parties over time warrants a re-examination of their party family classification. I code the second, third, and fourth Fidesz-led governments beginning in 2010, but not its first tenure in the 1990's, as cases when a far-right party has served in the executive. I follow a similar strategy to justify the inclusion of the PiS. I track each party's respective shifts to the right based on data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (Lehmann et al., 2022). Traits identified in the manifestos related to left-right dimensionality, reverence for political authority and law and order, and attitudes toward multiculturalism and nationalism are tracked between 1990 and 2019. Details in Appendix A4 show that both parties have shifted far enough to the right to warrant their inclusion as far-right parties in recent years.

Table 1 collects the far-right parties and their periods of executive participation under observation. Since the late 1990's[4], far-right parties have become more successful in national elections. This project focuses only on how executive participation affects public evaluations of government, thus I limit the scope to include just cases where a far-right party has participated in the executive.

Tab. 1: Far-Right Parties in the Executive

	Years	*Far-Right Parties*
Austria	2000-03, 2003-06, 2017-19	FPÖ, BZÖ
Hungary	2010-2019	Fidesz
Italy	2001-06, 2018-19	LN
Netherlands	2002-03	LPF
Norway	2001-05, 2013-2019	FrP
Poland	2015-2019	PiS
Switzerland	2000-07, 2011-15	SVP

5   Methods

5.1   Data

Far-right supporters are difficult to sample for surveys. Large-N surveys of far-right supporters do not exist, so researchers have to rely on broad sampling strategies that target all voters with the hopes of capturing at least a few far-right supporters (Jäger, 2017). Further,

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[4] The ESS begins in 2002, meaning a handful of cases of far-right executive participation are not under observation. No survey took place during the first few years of the FPÖ, LN, FrP, and SVP terms in the executive. Note that the BZÖ in Austria only served in coalition from 2005-2006.

due to the protest-nature of many far-right parties, the willingness of their supporters to participate in representative surveys may differ from other voters (see Pirro and Gattinara, 2018; Mudde, 2007). Skepticism of journalists and researchers makes individual-level data from far-right supporters difficult to come by. With this in mind, I focus on a cross-national analysis that aggregates the far-right into a single party family.

I rely on nine waves of the European Social Survey (ESS), taking place between 2002 and 2019. The ESS conducts face-to-face interviews every two years in 40 countries, including non-EU states like Switzerland and Norway. I include only the seven countries that have had a far-right party serve in the executive within the scope of the ESS survey.

Election result data, executive participation indicators, and party family variables come from the ParlGov database from Döring and Manow (2021).[5] The database collects election result and party ideology information from nearly 1700 parties across 37 countries. It also groups each party along ideological criteria[6], providing a party family variable. Nonvoters are removed from the sample, leaving a total of 34,672 survey respondents from 2002-2019. 6,756 (19.5%) of these respondents reported voting for a far-right party in the most recent election.

5.2   Variables

I operationalize government and party evaluations in two ways. First, I use the following ESS question for government satisfaction:

> "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?"

This ***Satisfaction with Government*** question serves as the first dependent variable, and varies from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied). Second, I create a ***Party Closeness*** variable using two ESS variables. The first asks respondents to report which party they supported during the most recent national elections. The second variable asks if respondents *currently* feel close to a party, and if so, which one. ***Party Closeness*** equals 1 if the respondent reports feeling attached to the same party that they supported in the previous national election, and 0 otherwise. This serves as the second dependent variable. The main independent variable is a binary ***Government*** variable that equals 1 if a survey respondent's preferred party (as indicated by their vote choice in the previous general election) is currently participating in the executive (defined as serving as a member of an executive cabinet) at the time of the survey, and 0 otherwise. The executive participation variable is taken from the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow, 2021). The second main independent variable is a categorical party family variable that is dummied out in the main analysis, consisting of communist, social democratic, liberal, Christian Democratic, conservative, and far-right voters.[7]

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[5] The party family variable is summarized in A3.

[6] For almost all cases, I rely on the coding provided by Döring and Manow (2021). Exceptions are detailed in A6.

[7] Greens, special issue, and agrarian parties are excluded form the analysis either due to a low response rate among voters or because the party family has never entered the executive.

We also see varying levels of involvement in executive politics among the parties. In many cases, far-right parties serve as junior coalition partners, like the former Lega Nord in Italy. However, we also see far-right parties winning majority support (e.g. Hungary's Fidesz since 2010) or plurality support (e.g. Poland's PiS in 2015 and 2019). Cohen (2019) argues that the effect that dissatisfaction has on a party's ability to attract votes depends in part on the party's previous legislative strength. Stronger parties (those that win higher seat shares), are better able to attract politically dissatisfied voters than weaker parties. I include a **Seat Share** control variable that accounts for the legislative strength of a party following an election, and also perform a robustness check excluding these strong parties.

I include a battery of demographic control variables that have been shown to be individual-level determinants of far-right voter behavior.[8] These variables include: age, years of education (Stockemer, 2012), gender (Immerzeel, Coffé and Van Der Lippe, 2015), household income (Jackman and Volpert, 1996), union membership (Rydgren, 2009), self-placement on a left-right scale, and a binary indicator for ethnic minority status.[9]

5.3   Empirical Strategy

To test hypotheses with the **Satisfaction with Government** dependent variable, I utilize Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis with interaction terms.[10] The **Government** and **Party Family** variables are interacted. The models use far-right party supporters as a reference category, thus making all coefficients interpretable as how more or less satisfied with government a party family is on average in comparison to far-right supporters. I use two-way fixed effects (2FE) to account for unobserved country-specific and time-specific confounders simultaneously.[11] This approach allows for me to address differences in political systems between countries. Robust standard errors are reported.

I use logistic regression to test the likelihood that respondents feel close to the same party that they voted for in the previous election for models with the **Party Closeness** dependent variable. Since the timing of the ESS always places a respondent in some time period following the previous election, this tests whether something changed in the time period following the last election that would change how they feel about their preferred party[12]. I then compare respondent-level conditional effects based on an individual's party family and that party's government status for both sets of models.

Next, I consider within-party effects following executive incumbency. The coalition-of-

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[8] See Appendix A3 for summary statistics for control variables.

[9] While Jackman and Volpert (1996) focus on unemployment, a similar case can be made to include household income as a control.

[10] All analyses are conducted in R version 4.3

[11] Recent work by Imai and Kim (2021) has cast doubt on the use of two-way fixed effects in regression analysis. They find that the validity of the 2FE estimator rests on the linear additive effects assumption. I have no reason to doubt that the assumption holds, yet it is important to note that these design shortcomings exist.

[12] It should be acknowledged that this does not account for strategic voting. However, I expect strategic voting to work in the opposite direction, meaning individuals who cast protest votes for far-right parties would likely not report feeling close to them. This approach thus allows me to identify far-right voters who report voting for and feeling close to far-right parties, as well as those who reported voting for the far-right previously but do not feel close to them now.

minorities and the grievance-asymmetry theories suggest that voters become less satisfied following executive incumbency. Far-right voters are more distrustful of the so-called "establishment" (Pirro and Gattinara, 2018; Mudde, 2007). Betz (1993) calls this pattern the "new politics of resentment"; far-right voters are attracted to parties that rally against political and social institutions that are perceived to be eroding personal agency and are protecting corrupt elites. So if far-right voters negatively value their party participating in these distrusted institutions, we should expect negative correlations between executive service and government satisfaction and party closeness. If the cost of governing exists for all parties, then we should also expect declining satisfaction and party closeness among other parties. I compare the within-party effects of executive service between party families to better understand the magnitude of the effects.

Finally, I include several robustness checks. The length of time that a party serves in the executive may influence the interactive effect of executive participation and party family. I calculate a continuous **Months Since Last Election** variable that exploits variation in the timing of the surveys. Some respondents take the survey within a month of their national elections (n = 843), while some take it up to five years after the election (n = 200). Most respondents take the survey between 12 and 36 months after an election.[13] I rerun OLS and logistic regressions with a triple interaction term including **Months Since Last Election** as an additional interaction.

In another set of robustness checks, I exclude Switzerland, Hungary, and Poland from the analyses. Since Switzerland is governed by a seven-member Federal Council, and not by a governing coalition based on proportional representation, including the Swiss People's Party (SVP) as a far-right party serving in the executive may bias results. Hungary and Poland are also unique cases in that the Fidesz and Law and Justice parties have shifted further to the right in recent years and enjoy legislative majorities/pluralities. By examining the results without these cases I can better make claims based on similar cases.[14]

6   Results and Discussion

H1 predicts that far-right voters will feel less satisfied with government following executive participation than other voters, and similarly predicts that the far-right will be less satisfied with government than other voters while in opposition. Table 2 reports the results from an interactive OLS regression with **Satisfaction with Government** as the dependent variable, and **Government** and **Party Family** as the primary independent variables. Model 1 excludes control variables and 2FE, model 2 excludes 2FE only, and model 3 reports the full results. The negative coefficients on the interaction terms indicate that voters whose party serves in government are less satisfied with government than far-right voters whose party serves in government. This means that, compared with any other party family, far-right supporters experience *greater* improvements in satisfaction with government following

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[13] See Appendix A3 for the distribution of the **Months Since Last Election** variable.

[14] There may be additional concerns about quality of governance and general political interest To account for this, I conduct an additional robustness check relying on the World Bank's **Government Effectiveness** measure and the **Political Interest** variable from the ESS. There are some concerns about **Government Effectiveness** and **Political Interest** and post-treatment bias, therefore they are only included as robustness checks and not in the main analysis. See Appendix A7 for results.

executive incumbency. These results do not support **H1**, instead reporting the opposite effect.

Tab. 2: The Effect of Executive Participation on Government Satisfaction by Party Family

	Dependent variable:		
	Satisfaction with Government		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Government	2.294***	2.489***	1.926***
	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.068)
Conservative	−0.327***	−0.304***	0.164***
	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.061)
Christian Dem.	1.812***	1.789***	1.463***
	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.072)
Liberal	1.668***	1.730***	1.534***
	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.067)
Social Dem.	0.387***	0.988***	0.643***
	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.059)
Communist	0.819***	1.308***	1.007***
	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.067)
Government × Conservative	−0.175**	−0.311***	−0.284***
	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.085)
Government × Christian Dem.	−1.961***	−1.947***	−1.481***
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.090)
Government × Liberal	−1.658***	−1.969***	−1.932***
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Government × Social Dem.	−1.247***	−1.426***	−0.909***
	(0.072)	(0.076)	(0.080)
Government × Communist	−1.134***	−1.313***	−0.718***
	(0.125)	(0.129)	(0.131)
Constant	3.583***	1.546***	0.623***
	(0.043)	(0.093)	(0.114)
N	34,660	34,652	34,629
Adj. R-squared	0.149	0.1772	0.2579
F-statistic	553	394.1	287.9
Control Variables		✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects			✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A5 for details. Dependent variable: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status.

The positive coefficients on the constituent terms indicate that while in opposition, these party families have voters that are more satisfied with government than the far-right on average.[15] These results indicate that far-right voters are the least satisfied group of voters while they remain in opposition.

Full effects for individual party families can be calculated by adding the coefficient value of the interaction term to the value for **Government**. For most party families, this effect is positive, meaning that most voters feel more satisfied with government following their party's service in the executive. The exception is the liberal party family which reports a slightly

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[15] The sign on Conservatives flips from negative to positive from models 1 and 2 to 3. This suggests that the far-right and conservative party families may have similar attitudes while in opposition, but after accounting for country and year-specific effects in addition to demographic controls I can assume that conservatives are more satisfied with government than far-right voters in opposition.

negative, yet statistically indistinct, full effect (see Figure 1). This is unsupportive of claims that executive incumbency negatively affects voter evaluations of their government. Quite the opposite; most voters become more satisfied with government after executive service.

H1 suggests that the far-right feels less close to their party following executive participation than other parties, and feel closer to their party while in opposition. Table 3 reports results from a logistic regression with ***Party Closeness*** as the dependent variable and following the same right-hand side specification as the models in Table 2. The negative coefficients on the interaction terms similarly suggest that serving in government reduces the likelihood that a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in a previous election when compared with far-right voters. The exception is the communist party family, which have a slightly positive, yet not statistically significant effect. Far-right voters are similarly likely to report feeling close to their party as those on the far-left following executive participation. The far-right is generally more (or similarly, in the comparison with communists) likely to report feeling close to the same party they voted for following executive service.

Positive values on constituent terms in Table 3 also suggest that most party families are more likely than the far-right to report feeling close to their party while in opposition. The exception here is the liberal party family, which is less likely than the far-right to report closeness. Generally, this also fails to reject the null for *H1*. These results follow a similar pattern to those reported in Table 2: the far-right feels less close to their party while in opposition than other parties, but is more likely to report feeling close to their party than almost all other party families while in government.

Tab. 3: The Effect of Executive Participation on Party Closeness

| | *Dependent variable:* | | |
| | Party Closeness | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Government	0.424***	0.418***	0.209***
	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.063)
Conservative	−0.149***	−0.137***	0.112**
	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.057)
Christian Dem.	0.551***	0.523***	0.473***
	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.079)
Liberal	−0.175***	−0.130*	−0.156**
	(0.064)	(0.067)	(0.069)
Social Dem.	0.415***	0.589***	0.413***
	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.058)
Communist	0.128**	0.372***	0.250***
	(0.058)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Government × Conservative	−0.449***	−0.483***	−0.406***
	(0.072)	(0.074)	(0.082)
Government × Christian Dem.	−0.782***	−0.751***	−0.780***
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.095)
Government × Liberal	−0.166**	−0.272***	−0.233***
	(0.081)	(0.084)	(0.087)
Government × Social Dem.	−0.714***	−0.685***	−0.579***
	(0.066)	(0.070)	(0.074)
Government × Communist	−0.083	−0.052	0.133
	(0.125)	(0.134)	(0.139)
Constant	0.107***	−1.559***	9.456*
	(0.039)	(0.087)	(4.927)
Observations	34,672	34,672	34,672
Log Likelihood	−23,566.09	−23,128.31	−22,786
Control Variables		✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects			✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A5 for details. Dependent variable: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status.

Figure 1 compares the predicted values of government satisfaction and likelihood of party closeness, conditional on government status with 95% CI's from model 3 in Tables 2 and 3. These comparisons visualize the full effects from these models, providing a more useful interpretation than relying on tables alone. Far-right and conservative voters experience large improvements in government satisfaction following executive incumbency. Christian Democrats and social democrats experience a decreased likelihood in reporting feeling close to their party. Conservatives and liberals experience this decrease as well, but these differences are not statistically distinct. Only those parties on the furthest ends of the political spectrum report a positive and statistically significant change in the likelihood of feeling close to their party while serving in government.
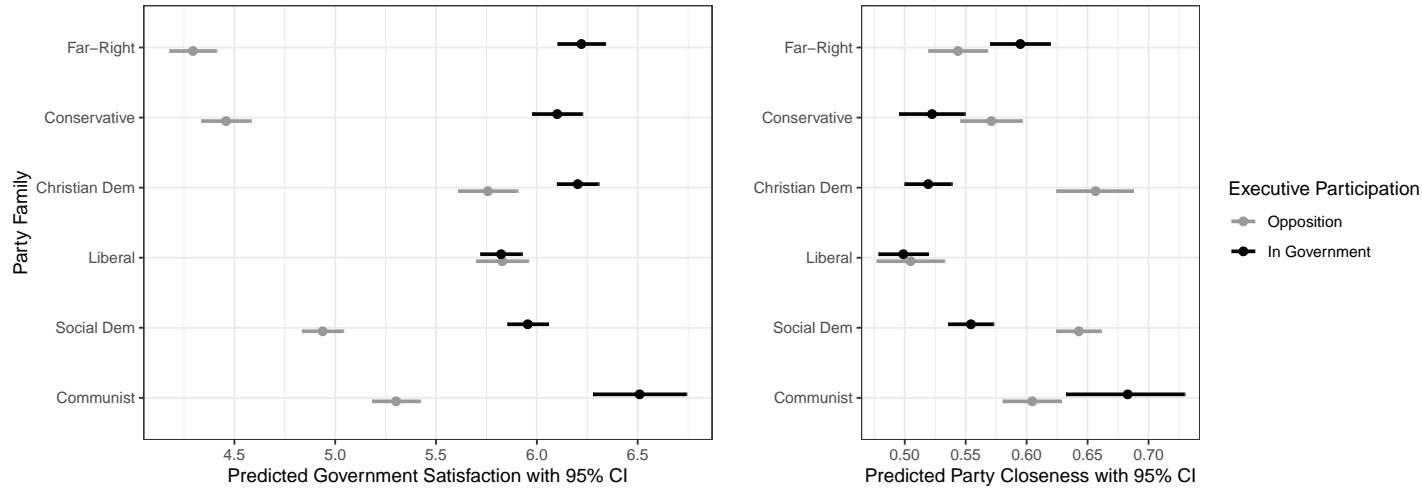
Fig. 1: Conditional Effects of Executive Participation on Government Satisfaction and Party
Closeness

Figure 2 compares the first differences between the far-right and all other party families
in the sample, from model 3 in Tables 2 and 3. Negative values represent instances where
the average far-right voter is comparatively *less* satisfied or close than the comparison party,
accounting for government status. In all comparisons, the far-right is less satisfied with
government than other party families while it remains in opposition. In three comparisons
— with conservatives, liberals, and social democrats — the far-right is more satisfied than
these voters following executive service.[16] Only in the comparison with communists is the
far-right less satisfied regardless of government status.

When comparing party families and the likelihood of feeling close to the same party a
respondent voted for, the far-right is less satisfied than conservatives, Christian Democrats,
social democrats, and communists while in opposition. This gives additional evidence failing
to reject the null for **H1**. After serving in government, far-right voters are more likely to
report closeness than conservatives, Christian Democrats, liberals, and social democrats.
Again, when comparing communists with far-right voters, we see that communists are on
average more likely to report closeness with their previous vote choice than the far-right.

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[16] The comparison with conservatives does not technically cross the null threshold, though it is near to
enough to suggest that far-right and conservative voters are similarly satisfied with government following
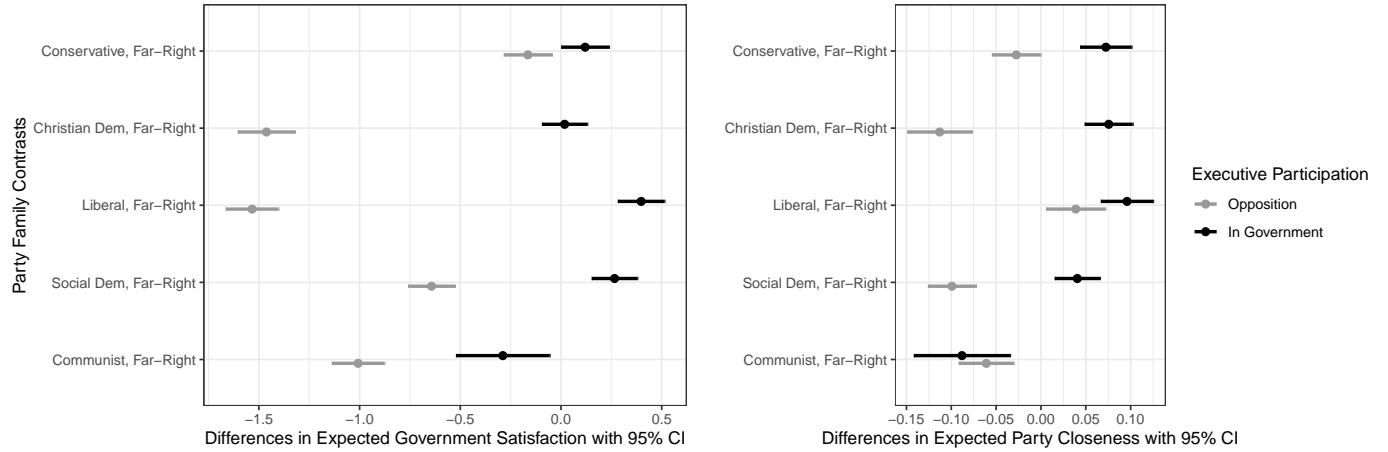executive incumbency.

Fig. 2: Comparison of First Differences Between Far-Right and Other Party Families, Conditional on Government Status

Next I compare within-party differences in satisfaction and party closeness following executive service. **H1** predicts that both far-right and non far-right voters experience a negative incumbency effect on government satisfaction and party closeness. Comparing the full effects in model 3 of Tables 2 and 3 tests these hypotheses. Figure 3 models the within-party effects of the interaction terms. Comparing the full effects between party families suggests that only communists and far-right voters become more likely to report closeness to their party after executive service. Parties at the extremes of the political spectrum appear to solidify feelings of party closeness while executive service has the opposite effect for those in the middle.
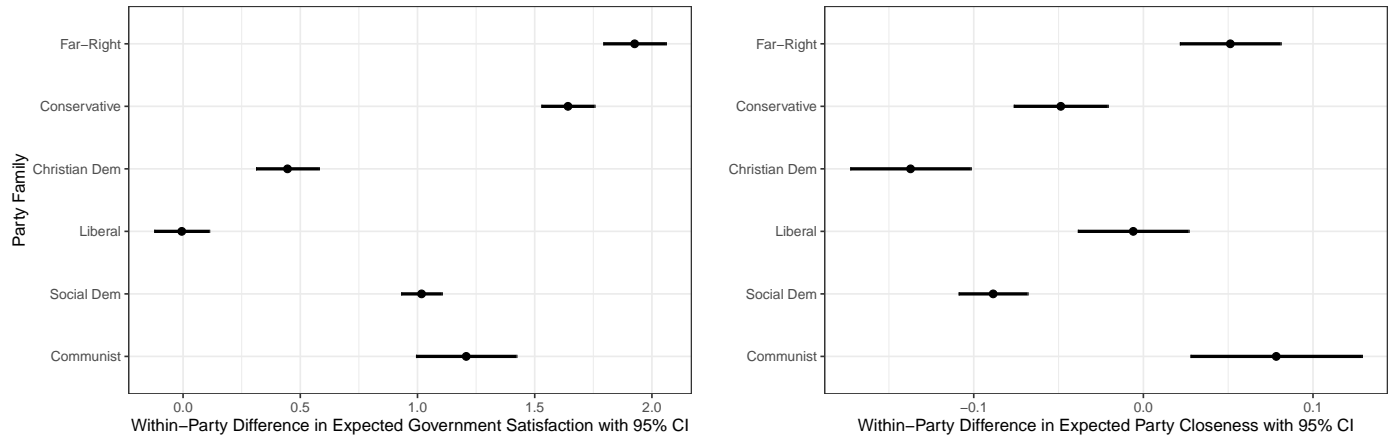
Fig. 3: Full Effects of Executive Participation on Government Satisfaction and Party Closeness

The results from Table 2 and Figure 3 provide overwhelming evidence that voters are generally more satisfied with government after incumbency. The results from Table 3 and Figure 3 show that far-right voters are more likely to feel close to their party after serving in the executive. Christian Democrats and social democrats are less likely to report feeling

close to their party after government service, while conservatives and liberals also report a slight negative, yet not statistically significant effect.

Further, these findings suggest that the far-right experiences the greatest increase in government satisfaction and likelihood of party closeness following executive service. To test if this is indeed the case, I report the second difference in expected government satisfaction and party closeness likelihood between the far-right and all other party families in Figure 4. The far-right clearly experiences the largest increase in government satisfaction among all party families. Despite the fact that communists become the most satisfied party family on average in the aggregate, the far-right still experiences the greatest incumbency effect on government satisfaction. This is not true for the likelihood of reporting feeling close to the same party that a respondent voted for, with communists and far-right voters experiencing a similar, statistically indistinct, incumbency effect. Comparisons with all other party families yields similar results for party closeness; the far-right experiences larger incumbency effects than other voters. These results support rejecting the null hypothesis for *H2* for most party families. The differences reported in Figure 4 are indeed greater when comparing the far-right with other party families.
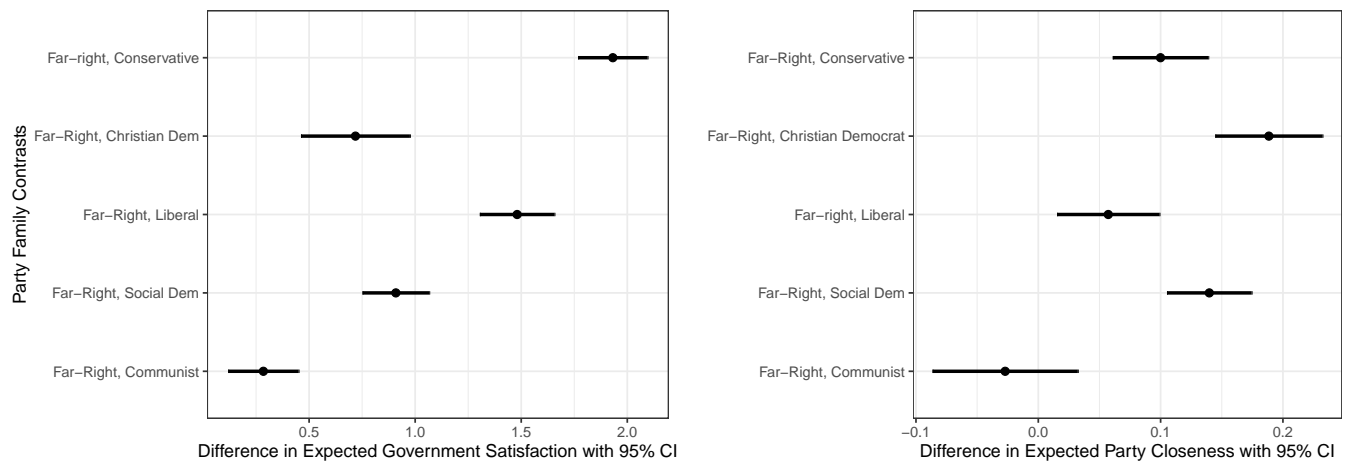
Fig. 4: Comparison of Second Differences Between Far-Right and Other Party Families

7 Robustness Checks

Supporters of far-right parties, while historically excluded from executive politics, may be initially excited that their party garnered enough support to first clear legislative thresholds, and then join (or become) government. This "honeymoon" period (see Patkós and Farkas, 2020) may decay more rapidly when comparing supporters of different cabinets. The longer a party serves in office, the more votes they bleed in subsequent elections (Cuzán, 2015). The results so far show that most parties experience a positive incumbency effect on government satisfaction and party closeness, yet there may be variation within a government's term of service. If the threat of losing votes increases the longer a party serves in office, it follows that this loss of support should be reflected in a voter's reported levels of government satisfaction and party closeness. Taking advantage of varying survey dates, I test if longer executive

tenures negatively effect the average far-right supporter's satisfaction levels and likelihood of reporting closeness by adding the **Months Since Last Election** variable to the interaction between **Government** and **Party Family**. I replicate the results from model 3 in Tables 2 and 3, adding the triple interaction. Results are reported in Table 4.

Tab. 4: Effect of Time on Party Family Evaluations of Executive Participation

	Dependent variable:	
	Satisfaction with Government	Party Closeness
	OLS	Logistic
	(1)	(2)
Government	2.213***	0.309***
	(0.121)	(0.111)
Conservative	0.046	0.202*
	(0.122)	(0.113)
Christian Dem.	1.234***	0.666***
	(0.139)	(0.153)
Liberal	1.420***	0.091
	(0.121)	(0.126)
Social Dem	0.652***	0.333***
	(0.105)	(0.101)
Communist	0.675***	0.306**
	(0.124)	(0.123)
Months	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Government × Conservative	−0.596***	−0.762***
	(0.168)	(0.159)
Government × Christian Dem.	−1.612***	−1.086***
	(0.171)	(0.179)
Government × Liberal	−2.153***	−0.395**
	(0.154)	(0.161)
Government × Social Dem	−1.476***	−0.461***
	(0.147)	(0.138)
Government × Communist	−0.373	−0.271
	(0.233)	(0.242)
Government × Months	−0.014***	−0.007*
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Conservative × Months	0.004	−0.003
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Christian Dem. × Months	0.008*	−0.007
	(0.004)	(0.005)
Liberal × Months	0.004	−0.010**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Social Dem. × Months	−0.001	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.003)
Communist × Months	0.013***	−0.002
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Government × Conservative × Months	0.015**	0.016***
	(0.006)	(0.005)
Government × Christian Dem. × Months	0.008	0.014**
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Government × Liberal × Months	0.011**	0.009
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Government × Social Dem. × Months	0.025***	−0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Government × Communist × Months	−0.013	0.020**
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Constant	0.679***	6.004
	(0.135)	(4.973)
N	34,617	34,672
Adj. R-squared	0.2592	
F-statistic	225.6	
Log Likelihood		−22,747.740
Control Variables	✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A6 for details. Dependent variable in model 1: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Dependent variable in model 2: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status.

When I allow the interactive effect that executive participation has on a party family's satisfaction with government to vary across time, I find the existence of a honeymoon effect. In model 1 of Table 4, positive coefficients on the triple interaction terms for conservatives, liberals, and social democrats are all significant at least at the 0.05 level, indicating that the interactive effect of party family and government status improves government satisfaction for these voters the longer their party serves in the executive when compared with far-right voters. The coefficient on the triple interaction term for Christian Democrats is also positive, but is substantively small and not statistically significant. The coefficient for the triple interaction term for communists is also not statistically significant.

The triple interaction terms in model 2 for conservatives, Christian Democrats, and communists are positive and statistically significant minimally at the 0.05 level. This shows that these party families become more likely to report feeling close to the same party they voted for in the previous election than far-right voters the longer their party serves in the executive. Together with the results from model 1, these findings suggest that a decay function exists for far-right voters whose party serves in government. While the far-right experiences the greatest boost in government satisfaction compared with all other parties, this boost diminishes over time when compared with other party families. This is further evidenced by the $\textbf{\textit{Government}} \times \textbf{\textit{Months}}$ interaction, which reports the effect of executive participation for the far-right at the maximum value of $\textbf{\textit{Months}}$. In both models, the effect is negative and statistically significant.

Adding a triple interaction term yields additional interesting comparisons. The constituent terms for individual party families show the effect of partisanship on government satisfaction and party closeness when the party serves in opposition and, correctly, when the length of governmental service of that party equals 0 when compared with the far-right base category. Most party families are more satisfied with government and are more likely to report being close to their party than the far-right while in opposition (exceptions being conservatives in model 1 and liberals in model 2). These results continue to support the findings in Tables 2 and 3. Further, the $\textbf{\textit{Government}} \times \textbf{\textit{Party Family}}$ interactions report the effect of executive participation for these parties when they are freshly elected. The substantively large, negative, and statistically significant coefficients for all party families aside from communists show that these parties are *less* satisfied and are *less* likely to report closeness than the far-right at the very beginning of executive service.

The cross-national nature of the analyses performed here naturally raises concerns of the similarities between parties within the same party family and about the effective sample (see Aronow and Samii, 2016). While controlling for legislative strength with $\textbf{\textit{Seat Share}}$ accounts for varying influence within the executive, there may still be concerns about how the inclusion of states like Poland or Hungary, or unique cases like the Federal Council of Switzerland, may be driving results. I therefore rerun analyses from the full models of Tables 2 and 3, omitting observations from these potentially problematic cases in an attempt to demonstrate that these results are indeed generalizable across the countries in this sample. Table 5 reports the analysis for the $\textbf{\textit{Satisfaction with Government}}$ dependent variable, Table 6 reports the results for $\textbf{\textit{Party Closeness}}$. The first column omits observations from Switzerland, the second omits observations from Hungary and Poland, and the third column excludes all three, leaving Austria, Italy, Netherlands, and Norway.

Tab. 5: Reanalysis of Government Satisfaction, Excluding Problematic Cases

	Dependent variable:		
	Satisfaction with Government		
	Excl. Switzerland	Excl. Hungary and Poland	Excl. Switz., Hun., Pol.
Government	2.521***	1.305***	2.120***
	(0.074)	(0.079)	(0.095)
Conservative	0.177***	0.868***	0.799***
	(0.061)	(0.077)	(0.079)
Christian Dem.	1.331***	1.511***	1.554***
	(0.074)	(0.076)	(0.078)
Liberal	1.454***	1.574***	1.622***
	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.072)
Social Dem.	0.659***	0.706***	0.553***
	(0.060)	(0.069)	(0.071)
Communist	0.697***	0.931***	0.673***
	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.073)
Government × Conservative	−0.842***	−0.194*	−1.004***
	(0.089)	(0.107)	(0.121)
Government × Christian Dem.	−2.027***	−0.898***	−1.916***
	(0.098)	(0.100)	(0.122)
Government × Liberal	−2.601***	−1.300***	−2.351***
	(0.090)	(0.094)	(0.115)
Government × Social Dem.	−1.513***	−0.308***	−1.075***
	(0.087)	(0.094)	(0.111)
Government × Communist	−1.051***	−0.051	−0.534***
	(0.135)	(0.139)	(0.149)
Constant	0.602***	1.263***	0.943***
	(0.117)	(0.125)	(0.130)
N	31,087	26,544	23,002
Adj. R-squared	0.2715	0.1847	0.1957
F-statistic	283.9	151.6	144.8
Control Variables	✓	✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A6 for details. Dependent variable: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status. Model 1 excludes respondents from Switzerland, model 2 excludes respondents from Hungary and Poland, model 3 excludes respondents from Switzerland, Hungary, and Poland.

Tab. 6: Reanalysis of Party Closeness, Excluding Problematic Cases

	Dependent variable:		
	Party Closeness		
	Excl. Switzerland	Excl. Hungary and Poland	Excl. Switz., Hun., Pol.
Government	0.199***	0.308***	0.261***
	(0.067)	(0.074)	(0.088)
Conservative	0.105*	0.126*	0.116
	(0.057)	(0.075)	(0.077)
Christian Dem.	0.500***	0.692***	0.738***
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.088)
Liberal	−0.114	0.013	0.059
	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.075)
Social Dem.	0.411***	0.449***	0.425***
	(0.057)	(0.066)	(0.068)
Communist	0.210***	0.504***	0.495***
	(0.068)	(0.071)	(0.076)
Government × Conservative	−0.406***	−0.456***	−0.430***
	(0.085)	(0.107)	(0.119)
Government × Christian Dem.	−0.777***	−0.948***	−0.937***
	(0.102)	(0.106)	(0.124)
Government × Liberal	−0.244***	−0.335***	−0.326***
	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.115)
Government × Social Dem.	−0.626***	−0.603***	−0.608***
	(0.078)	(0.087)	(0.100)
Government × Communist	0.197	−0.236*	−0.163
	(0.137)	(0.143)	(0.150)
Constant	11.502**	11.149**	11.146*
	(5.247)	(5.602)	(6.052)
Observations	31,129	26,585	23,042
Log Likelihood	−20,507.170	−17,537.050	−15,268.880

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A6 for details. Dependent variable: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status. Model 1 excludes respondents from Switzerland, model 2 excludes respondents from Hungary and Poland, model 3 excludes respondents from Switzerland, Hungary, and Poland.

Results are generally consistent with those reported in Tables 2 and 3. The exceptions are communists when we exclude Hungary and Poland. The second column of Table 5 reports that communists are not statistically different from far-right voters in terms of government satisfaction, though the coefficient is still negative. However, removing Switzerland in addition to Poland and Hungary returns the interaction term for communists to statistical significance. In Table 6, the coefficients for the conservative and liberal voters constituent terms lose statistical significance, suggesting that far-right voters feel similarly close to their party as conservatives and liberals while in opposition, but only if we restrict the sample to Austria, Italy, Netherlands, and Norway. The results for the interaction terms are consistent with model 3 of Table 3, except by excluding Poland and Hungary the coefficient for communists becomes statistically significant and consistent with the results of the other party families. This means that once the far-right enters the executive, it still becomes the party family most likely to feel close to the same party that they voted for in the previous election, exempting communists yet again.

These robustness checks largely continue to support the main findings, yet they also reinforce that executive participation affects communist voter government satisfaction and

party closeness in similar ways as with the far-right. It appears as those on the furthest ends of the left-right spectrum become similarly satisfied and close to their party. The evidence presented in Figure 1 shows that, despite these similar effects, those on the left have a higher baseline level of satisfaction while in opposition. Perhaps the high cost of governing that the far-right experiences is a partly function of initial dissatisfaction with government coupled with an immense, but decaying, increase in satisfaction after joining the executive.

8   Conclusion

The far-right incurs higher costs of governing than other party families. Voters withdraw support following executive participation, but prior research has not explored how this withdrawal is tied to satisfaction or party evaluations. Work by Akkerman and de Lange (2012) and van Spanje (2011) began the dialogue about coalition formation involving the far-right, and its cost of governing, by looking at structural, institutional determinants. I bring the voter back into the analysis to surprising results. I show that satisfaction with government actually *increases* with executive participation, as does the likelihood of reporting closeness with a respondent's vote choice, despite a subsequent decline in vote share. I further show that initial satisfaction and closeness are low when far-right parties are in opposition, consistent with the argument that far-right voters perceive political elites and institutions as corrupt. Far-right party voters are initially less satisfied with government and are less likely to report feeling close to the same party they voted for than other voters, but once their preferred party actually serves in the executive this skepticism yields to satisfaction and intensified closeness.

The two leading theories explaining why the cost of governing occurs, the coalition-of-minorities and the grievance-asymmetry hypotheses, are unsatisfactory explanations for why parties experience penalties for serving in the executive. Both theories assume that retrospective voters are negatively evaluating government and party performance, yet the evidence presented here suggests otherwise. The failure to reject the null hypotheses for most predictions made here, derived from the assumptions made by preceding empirical and theoretical work, suggests that the cost of governing that far-right parties experience is less a result of negative government and party evaluations than previously expected. In fact, the far-right typically experiences rather robust improvements in these areas while their party serves in the executive. To be the party family that experiences the greatest governing costs and the greatest boosts in satisfaction and party closeness simultaneously presents an important puzzle. Why do far-right voters, seemingly more satisfied than most following executive participation, withdraw support in greater magnitudes than other supporters? If voters become more satisfied once their party is in office, then electoral volatility would not be predicted by these findings. It appears as though dissatisfaction is not what drives the steep decline in vote share experienced by the far-right after a turn in the executive. It may simply be the fact that the initial skepticism of government is a hurdle that far-right parties have to face every election, and these parties are generally ineffective at translating satisfaction into votes. It may also be the case that disillusionment with the government-serving party occurs more rapidly for far-right voters.

Examining the temporal effects of executive participation may point to an answer. The

longer a government serves in office, the more opportunities that government has to fail to deliver on campaign promises or fail to live up to expectations. If disaffected voters are more attracted to parties at the extremes of the political spectrum, they seem to experience large boosts in satisfaction and party closeness. At the same time, the rate of change that this boost brings decays for far-right voters in comparison with other party families over time. Improving our understanding of the unique relationship that the far-right has with the executive will allow researchers to make sense of electoral volatility and policy expectations among increasingly popular right-wing ideologies.

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A   Appendix

A.1   Ethics Statement and Financial Disclosure

Despite this article being "desk research", it is important to address any potential impact this research may have on survey respondents (Green and Cohen, 2021). The ESS maintains an ethics board since 2018 and subscribes to the International Statistical Institute's Declaration on Professional Ethics[17]. The author is confident that the ESS has followed research ethics guidelines throughout the data collection period. Survey data from the ESS is deidentified. This feature makes it difficult to personally identify subjects. Risk to subjects is small, given that survey respondents are given a privacy statement with a disclosure of the use of their data at the time of the interview. Further, ESS participants have the right to remove their responses from the data at any time. Respondents give express consent to have their data included in publicly-accessible datasets used for research purposes. The ParlGov database does not supply individual-level data, and instead relies on either objective election result data or on pre-existing variables on party ideology that come from academic sources.

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

A.2   Validating the Claim that Far-Right Parties Experience a Higher Cost of Governing

To validate the claim that the far-right experiences a higher average cost of governing than other parties, I run a simple OLS regression with two-way fixed effects[18] of the interactive effect of far-right party family status and previous executive participation status on vote-share in a national election. The purpose of the regression is simply to demonstrate a negative correlation between incumbency and subsequent election vote-shares for the far-right. See van Spanje (2011) and Akkerman and de Lange (2012) for in-depth analysis of the existence of a higher cost of governing for the far-right when compared with other parties. This study takes the presence of a negative incumbency effect as an assumption based on their findings. To further link these results with the claims made in this article, I include only election years and countries that are under observation in the main analysis[19]. The unit of observation is party-election. The ***Far-Right*** indicator variable is coded as 1 if a party is identified as a member of the far-right party family, and 0 otherwise. The ***Previous Executive Participation*** indicator variable is coded as 1 if the party served in government or otherwise supported the executive during the term of office *prior* to the election under observation, and 0 otherwise. The base category is a non far-right, non-participating party. Data comes from the ParlGov database by Döring and Manow (2021). Results are reported in Table 7. Far-right, non-participating (represented by the ***Far-Right*** constituent term in Table 7) have roughly 10% higher vote shares than non far-right, non-participating members.

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[17] More information on the ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics can be found here: `https://www.isi-web.org/files/docs/declaration-on-professional-ethics_2010.pdf`.

[18] Two-way fixed effects control for unobserved confounders across time and space (years and countries in this case).

[19] I include Austria, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Switzerland from 2002 to 2019.

This effect is likely the result of numerous small parties that make up the base category. Non far-right executive participants (represented by the ***Previous Executive Participation*** constituent term) achieve roughly 10% higher vote shares than those parties who had not participated in the executive during the previous term of office.

Tab. 7: The Cost of Governing for Far-Right Parties

	Dependent variable:	
	Vote Share	
	1	2
	(1)	(2)
Previous Coalition Membership	9.970***	9.969***
	(0.000)	(0.010)
Far-Right	11.489***	10.116***
	(0.000)	(0.428)
Previous Coalition Membership × Far-Right	−11.285***	−9.955***
	(0.000)	(0.078)
Constant	6.493***	10.061***
	(0.000)	(3.242)
N	363	357
Adj. R-squared	0.1867	0.2404
F-statistic	29.01	13.87
Fixed Effects		✓

Clustered standard errors in parentheses   *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

A.3 Summary Statistics

Table 8 contains summary statistics for the continuous control variables by executive participation.

Tab. 8: Control Variable Summary and Balance Statistics

Government Status	Mean(Age)	SD(Age)	Mean(Education)	SD(Education)	Mean(Income)	SD(Income)	Mean(Left-Right)	SD(Left-Right)
Opposition	50.53373	16.49724	13.29154	3.879647	6.115415	2.679313	5.100521	2.326122
In Government	51.81685	16.61905	13.01173	3.803597	6.278680	2.690793	5.622893	2.166053

Table 9 breaks down which ESS waves are represented in the sample. The largest gap is Italy, which missed four of the nine waves. Waves 1 and 3 are the only waves where more than one country is missing from the analysis.

Tab. 9: ESS Waves Represented in the Sample

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
Austria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Hungary		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Italy	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
Netherlands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Norway	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 10 shows the disaggregated party family variable. Social democrats and the far-right make up the two largest families represented in the data. The Family ID column relates back to the original party family coding from (Döring and Manow, 2021). Some parties are recoded, such as Fidesz, Law and Justice, and the Swiss People's Party. Appendix A5 validates the recoding of these parties.

Tab. 10: Party Families

	N	Family ID
Christian Democrats	5,183	3
Liberal	4,421	6
Social Democrats	9,737	11
Communists	2,565	14
Conservative	6,010	26
Far-Right	6,756	40
Total	40,014	

Figure 6 plots the distribution of the timing variable used to test **Hypothesis 3**. Most respondents take the ESS at the one-year or three-year mark of an executive's term of office.

Fig. 5: Histogram of Months Since Last Election Variable
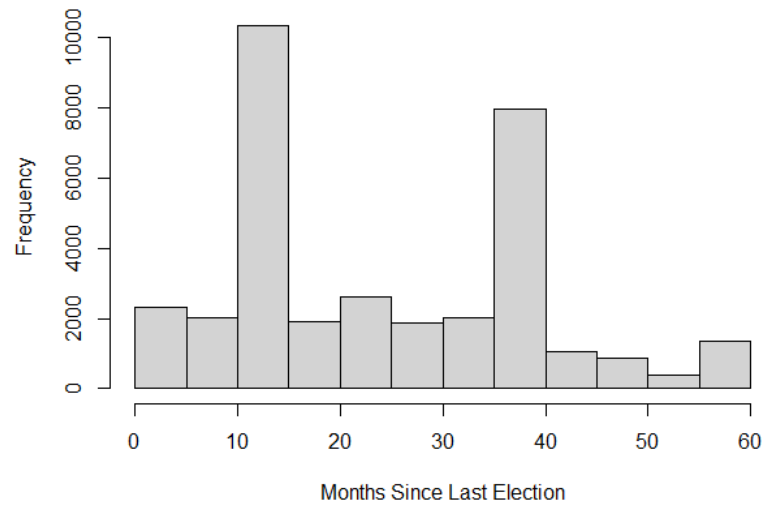
Figure 7 plots the distribution of the dependent variable, **Satisfaction with Government**

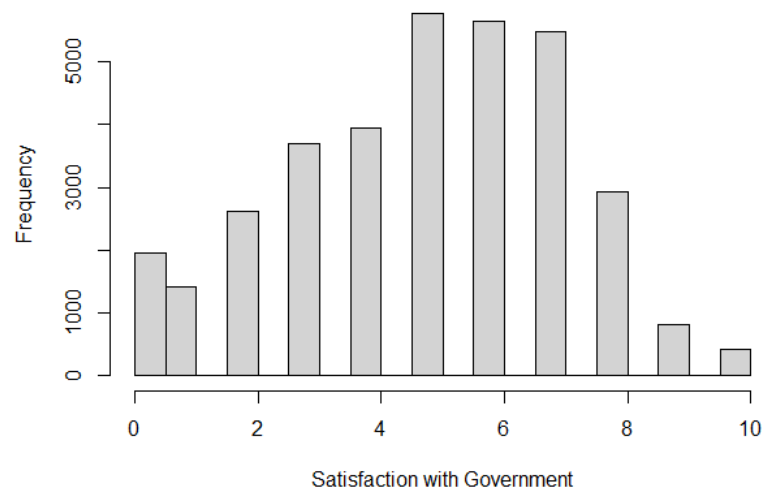

Fig. 6: Histogram of Satisfaction with Government Variable

A.4   A Case for Fidesz and PiS

Many cross national studies that examine far-right party behavior in the executive, such as Akkerman and de Lange (2012) and Cohen (2019), typically exclude Hungary's Fidesz party

lead by Viktor Orbán and the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland. Studies conducted before 2010 have a reasonable explanation for this omission: we likely could not classify either Fidesz nor the PiS as a far-right party at that time. The shift to the right of these parties over time warrants a re-examination of their party family classification.

The most widely used databases that include a party family variable, ParlGov (Döring and Manow, 2021) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., 2022), only include a static ideological grouping variable[20]. The party family grouping is only assigned once at the time the party enters the sample. Therefore, when a party undergoes a considerable ideological shift, but does not splinter, it retains its original party family grouping throughout. This presents an issue when looking at party families generally, and the far-right specifically. The inclusion of additional parties beyond those identified by the popular databases requires substantive knowledge and a clear delimitation at the point of entry for the party. I justify the inclusion of Fidesz and the PiS in this project first through a brief historical overview of each party and their respective shifts to the right. Essentially, both parties are best classified as conservative in early years, then as far-right in later years. I also validate this claim through a comparison of several of the Manifesto Project's measures related to the populist, nativist, and authoritarian traits identified by Mudde (2007).

During the early transition period in the 1990's, Fidesz began steadily moving to right. Beginning first as a center-left party, it began adopting increasingly conservative policies that distinguished itself apart from liberals within the party, who later left to other liberal parties. It served sporadically in and out of government until a series of audio recordings from socialist party prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány leaked to public in which Gyurcsány admitted to his party lying about government performance to win the 2006 election (BBC, 2006). The public outcry and riots that followed paved the way for a populist reorientation of Fidesz, which in 2010 translated to landslide victory in which it received roughly two-thirds of the popular vote. During this election cycle, Orbán made a point to iterate political divisions between the nation and a political elite (Kim, 2021). Over the course of its first two years in the executive, Fidesz promoted and adopted a new constitution that went into effect in 2012. With the adoption of the new constitution, Fidesz has pushed for nativist, anti-immigrant policies which also reduced domestic protections for sexual orientation and reduced checks on the executive. Later amendments to the constitution further limited the independence of the judicial system. This shift to the right in recent years justifies Fidesz's inclusion as a far-right party. I therefore code the second, third, and fourth Fidesz-led governments beginning in 2010, but not its first tenure in the 1990's, as including a far-right party.

Similar to the Hungarian case, the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) party is not typically included as a far-right party. Recent attacks on the judiciary during the second PiS government beginning in 2015 suggest that the party's increasingly nativist policies justify its inclusion as a far-right party. Prior to 2015, PiS had only served in one coalition government from 2005 to 2007. This first term in government was cut short by corruption scandals that triggered snap elections (Reuters, 2007). While fiscally and socially conservative, this first

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[20] Both ParlGov and the Comparative Manifesto Project include a dynamic ideology variable that scales parties along a left-right dimension. While useful, there is no clear score that separates far-right parties from conservatives. Therefore it is more useful to identify far-right parties according to observable traits, like those outlined in Mudde (2007).

term lacked the authoritarian policies required to label it as a far-right party. After the 2007 elections, PiS remained in opposition until 2015, when Jaroslav Kaczyński, twin brother of the now deceased Lech Kaczyński who served as the head of the PiS until his death in 2010, cultivated populist sentiments and was chosen as prime minister. The party then began implementing authoritarian reforms around the judiciary that expanded executive control (Kim, 2021). This, coupled with Kaczyński's continued push for upholding traditional values and the party's protectionism over the national culture, suggest that the PiS has adopted the populist, nativist, and authoritarian elements necessary to classify it as a far-right party.

To further validate the inclusion of Fidesz and the PiS in the sample, i turn to the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) and several of its measures that relate to Mudde's (2007) classifications. First, the CMP uses a left-right dimension score known as RILE, scored between -100 and 100. The more negative a score, the further left the party's manifesto is; the more positive, the more right the party's manifesto is. Nativist items include 1) statements in the party's manifesto that view multiculturalism in a negative light; 2) positive mentions of underprivileged minorities (or lack thereof); and 3) general positivity about the "national way of life", including appeals to nationalism, patriotism, and established national ideas. Authoritarian items include 1) positive views of political authority; and 2) positive mentions of law and order, including increasing support for the police and adopting harsher attitudes in courts.
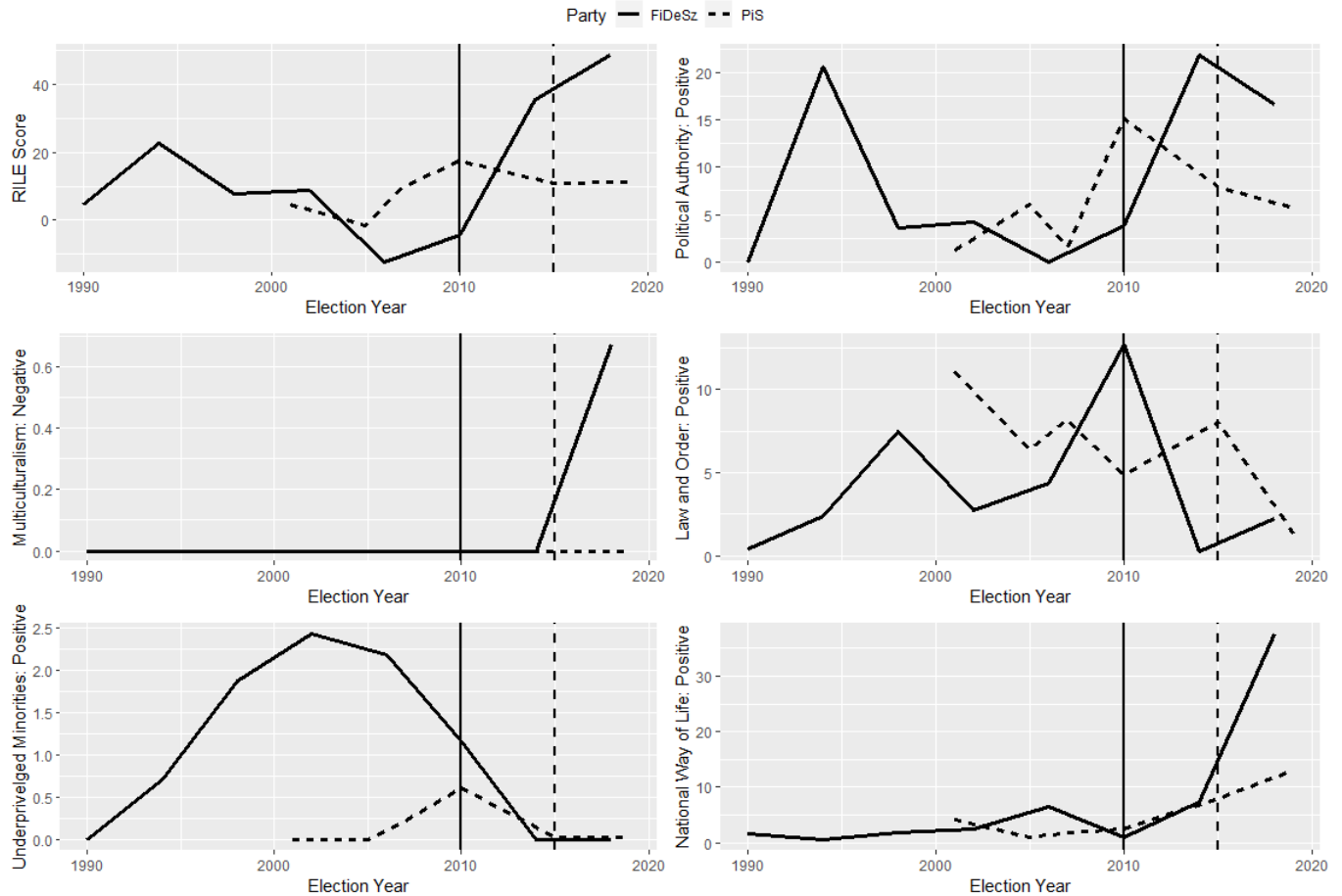
Fig. 7: Evidence of Far-Right Attitudes in Fidesz and PiS Manifestos

Figure 8 plots these six variables across all available election years for both parties. The solid vertical line indicates the 2010 Hungarian election when Fidesz enters the government and begins drafting the new constitution. The dotted vertical line indicates the 2015 Polish election when the PiS begins implementing judicial reforms that limit court independence. Again, there is no clear measure for identifying a far-right party, but Figure 1 demonstrates that both Fidesz and the PiS move progressively to the right, and each does so in different ways. RILE scores spike for Fidesz after the 2010 election, but remain relatively stable for the PiS. Fidesz adopts strong, negative views on multiculturalism while the PiS has no mentions of it in its manifesto. Both parties contained positive mentions of underprivileged minorities *until* their return to the executive, after which these views taper off and disappear entirely. Both parties see spikes in positive views of authority, while Fidesz sees a larger increase particularly after the 2010 election, PiS spikes before its return to the executive and decreases slightly after. Positive mentions of law and order spike in the years both parties returned to the executive. Finally, appeals toward patriotism and nationalism and the general national way of life increase for both parties after they return to the executive, with Fidesz exhibiting more appeals. Together, these indicators suggest that both Fidesz and the PiS shift their platforms further to the right, and adopt increasingly nativist and authoritarian attitudes in their manifestos, justifying their inclusion. To ensure robustness

of the results, I conduct additional tests of the interaction between party family and coalition status on government satisfaction excluding Switzerland, Hungary, and Poland in Appendix A5. The only significant change comes when excluding both Hungary and Poland, and only in terms of making far-right voters less distinguishable from far-left voters while in coalition. Far-right voters in opposition remain less satisfied with government when compared with other parties.

A.5   Regression full results

Table 11 reports the full results from Table 2 in the main text (the OLS with Satisfaction with Government as the dependent variable), including all control variable outputs, while still excluding fixed-effects output for space considerations. Table 12 reports the full output from Table 3 (the logit with Party Closeness as the dependent variable)

Tab. 11: The Effect of Executive Participation on Government Satisfaction by Party Family

	Dependent variable:		
	Satisfaction with Government		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Government	2.294***	2.489***	1.926***
	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.068)
Christian Dem.	1.812***	1.789***	1.463***
	(0.073)	(0.075)	(0.072)
Communist	0.819***	1.308***	1.007***
	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.067)
Conservative	−0.327***	−0.304***	0.164***
	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.061)
Liberal	1.668***	1.730***	1.534***
	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.067)
Social Dem.	0.387***	0.988***	0.643***
	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.059)
Age		0.008***	0.004***
		(0.001)	(0.001)
Minority Status		0.180**	0.072
		(0.073)	(0.070)
Yrs. Education		0.031***	0.014***
		(0.003)	(0.003)
Gender		−0.070***	−0.041*
		(0.023)	(0.022)
Household Income		0.044***	0.043***
		(0.005)	(0.005)
Left-Right Scale		0.180***	0.157***
		(0.007)	(0.007)
Union Membership		−0.062**	−0.048*
		(0.024)	(0.025)
Seat Share		−0.921***	1.376***
		(0.099)	(0.118)
Government × Christian Dem.	−1.961***	−1.947***	−1.481***
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.090)
Government × Communist	−1.134***	−1.313***	−0.718***
	(0.125)	(0.129)	(0.131)
Government × Conservative	−0.175**	−0.311***	−0.284***
	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.085)
Government × Liberal	−1.658***	−1.969***	−1.932***
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Government × Social Dem	−1.247***	−1.426***	−0.909***
	(0.072)	(0.076)	(0.080)
Constant	3.583***	1.546***	0.623***
	(0.043)	(0.093)	(0.114)
N	34,660	34,652	34,629
Adj. R-squared	0.149	0.1772	0.2579
F-statistic	553	394.1	287.9
Control Variables		✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects			✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Fixed-effects output omitted. Dependent variable: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status.

Tab. 12: The Effect of Executive Participation on Party Closeness by Party Family

	Dependent variable:		
	Party Closeness		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Government	0.424***	0.418***	0.209***
	(0.050)	(0.057)	(0.063)
Christian Dem.	0.551***	0.523***	0.473***
	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.079)
Communist	0.128**	0.372***	0.250***
	(0.058)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Conservative	−0.149***	−0.137***	0.112**
	(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.057)
Liberal	−0.175***	−0.130*	−0.156**
	(0.064)	(0.067)	(0.069)
Social Dem.	0.415***	0.589***	0.413***
	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.058)
Age		0.014***	0.014***
		(0.001)	(0.001)
Minority Status		−0.086	−0.118*
		(0.066)	(0.067)
Yrs. Education		0.011***	0.018***
		(0.003)	(0.003)
Gender		−0.158***	−0.150***
		(0.022)	(0.023)
Household Income		0.047***	0.028***
		(0.004)	(0.005)
Left-Right Scale		0.082***	0.072***
		(0.006)	(0.006)
Union Membership		0.157***	0.106***
		(0.023)	(0.025)
Seat Share		−0.055	0.925***
		(0.092)	(0.106)
Government × Christian Dem.	−0.782***	−0.751***	−0.780***
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.095)
Government × Communist	−0.083	−0.052	0.133
	(0.125)	(0.134)	(0.139)
Government × Conservative	−0.449***	−0.483***	−0.406***
	(0.072)	(0.074)	(0.082)
Government × Liberal	−0.166**	−0.272***	−0.233***
	(0.081)	(0.084)	(0.087)
Government × Social Dem.	−0.714***	−0.685***	−0.579***
	(0.066)	(0.070)	(0.074)
Constant	0.107***	−1.559***	9.456*
	(0.039)	(0.087)	(4.927)
Observations	34,672	34,672	34,672
Log Likelihood	−23,566.09	−23,128.31	−22,786
Control Variables		✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects			✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of fixed-effects omit-
ted. Dependent variable: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling
close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise.
Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time
of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party
supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the
respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender,
household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale,
and ethnic minority status.

A.6   Robustness Full Results

Tables 13 and 14 (continued in Table 15) report the full regression output including control variables and excluding fixed-effects output (for space considerations) from Tables 4 and 5 in the main text. These include the control variable outputs for the robustness check models.

Tab. 13: Effect of Time on Party Family Evaluations of Executive Participation

	Dependent variable:	
	Satisfaction with Government	Party Closeness
	coefficient test	*logistic*
	(1)	(2)
Government	2.213***	0.309***
	(0.121)	(0.111)
Conservative	0.046	0.202*
	(0.122)	(0.113)
Christian Dem.	1.234***	0.666***
	(0.139)	(0.153)
Liberal	1.420***	0.091
	(0.121)	(0.126)
Social Dem	0.652***	0.333***
	(0.105)	(0.101)
Communist	0.675***	0.306**
	(0.124)	(0.123)
Months	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Age	0.004***	0.015***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Minority Status	0.074	−0.116*
	(0.070)	(0.067)
Yrs. Education	0.014***	0.018***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Gender	−0.040*	−0.150***
	(0.022)	(0.023)
Household Income	0.043***	0.028***
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Left-Right Scale	0.156***	0.073***
	(0.007)	(0.006)
Union Mebership	−0.049**	0.103***
	(0.025)	(0.025)
Seat Share	1.352***	0.972***
	(0.120)	(0.107)

Tab. 14: Effect of Time on Party Family Evaluations of Executive Participation (continued)

	Dependent variable:	
	Satisfaction with Government	Party Closeness
	coefficient test	*logistic*
	(1)	(2)
Government × Conservative	−0.596*** (0.168)	−0.762*** (0.159)
Government × Christian Dem.	−1.612*** (0.171)	−1.086*** (0.179)
Government × Liberal	−2.153*** (0.154)	−0.395** (0.161)
Government × Social Dem	−1.476*** (0.147)	−0.461*** (0.138)
Government × Communist	−0.373 (0.233)	−0.271 (0.242)
Government × Months	−0.014*** (0.004)	−0.007* (0.004)
Conservative × Months	0.004 (0.004)	−0.003 (0.004)
Christian Dem. × Months	0.008* (0.004)	−0.007 (0.005)
Liberal × Months	0.004 (0.004)	−0.010** (0.004)
Social Dem. × Months	−0.001 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)
Communist × Months	0.013*** (0.004)	−0.002 (0.004)
Government × Conservative × Months	0.015** (0.006)	0.016*** (0.005)
Government × Christian Dem. × Months	0.008 (0.006)	0.014** (0.006)
Government × Liberal × Months	0.011** (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)
Government × Social Dem. × Months	0.025*** (0.005)	−0.001 (0.005)
Government × Communist × Months	−0.013 (0.008)	0.020** (0.008)
Constant	0.679*** (0.135)	6.004 (4.973)
N	34,617	34,672
Adj. R-squared	0.2592	
F-statistic	225.6	
Log Likelihood		−22,747.740
Control Variables	✓	✓
Country-Year Fixed Effects	✓	✓

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Fixed-effects output omitted. Dependent variable in model 1: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Dependent variable in model 2: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status.

Tab. 15: Reanalysis of Party Closeness, Excluding Problematic Cases

	Dependent variable:		
	Party Closeness		
	Excl. Switzerland	Excl. Hungary and Poland	Excl. Switz., Hun., Pol.
Government	0.199***	0.308***	0.261***
	(0.067)	(0.074)	(0.088)
Conservative	0.105*	0.126*	0.116
	(0.057)	(0.075)	(0.077)
Christian Dem.	0.500***	0.692***	0.738***
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.088)
Liberal	−0.114	0.013	0.059
	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.075)
Social Dem.	0.411***	0.449***	0.425***
	(0.057)	(0.066)	(0.068)
Communist	0.210***	0.504***	0.495***
	(0.068)	(0.071)	(0.076)
Age	0.005***	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Minority Status	0.068	0.132*	0.169**
	(0.073)	(0.078)	(0.084)
Yrs. Education	0.016***	0.015***	0.019***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Gender	−0.053**	−0.092***	−0.096***
	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Household Income	0.050***	0.025***	0.036***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Left-Right Scale	0.160***	0.137***	0.142***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Union Membership	−0.050*	−0.069**	−0.075***
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Seat Share	1.239***	0.885***	2.137***
	(0.123)	(0.166)	(0.190)
Government × Conservative	−0.406***	−0.456***	−0.430***
	(0.085)	(0.107)	(0.119)
Government × Christian Dem.	−0.777***	−0.948***	−0.937***
	(0.102)	(0.106)	(0.124)
Government × Liberal	−0.244***	−0.335***	−0.326***
	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.115)
Government × Social Dem.	−0.626***	−0.603***	−0.608***
	(0.078)	(0.087)	(0.100)
Government × Communist	0.197	−0.236*	−0.163
	(0.137)	(0.143)	(0.150)
Constant	11.502**	11.149**	11.146*
	(5.247)	(5.602)	(6.052)
Observations	31,129	26,585	23,042
Log Likelihood	−20,507.170	−17,537.050	−15,268.880

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Fixed-effects output omitted. Dependent variable:Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status. Model 1 excludes respondents from Switzerland, model 2 excludes respondents from Hungary and Poland, model 3 excludes respondents from Switzerland, Hungary, and Poland.

A.7   Additional Robustness Check

I also consider the quality of government and individual political interest. Just because a respondent's party is serving in the executive does not mean they are satisfied with the government as an institution nor its outputs. To account for this, I rely on the World

Bank's **Government Effectiveness** measure, which captures an array of opinions on the public goods delivery, corruption control, and general administrative function. I use the **Political Interest** variable from the ESS to measure the respondents' general attention paid to politics. There are some concerns about **Government Effectiveness** and **Political Interest** and post-treatment bias, therefore they are only included as robustness checks and not in the main analysis.

Table 16 reports the full results. Including measures of government effectiveness and political interest do not change the interpretation of the results from the main text for the satisfaction dependent variable. The only change is in model 2, where the constituent term on conservatives loses statistical significance. Since it was only significant at 0.1 level previously, this is not surprising and does not change the broader interpretation of the results.

Tab. 16:

	Dependent variable:	
	Satisfaction with Government	Party Closeness
	OLS	*Logistic*
	(1)	(2)
Government	1.887***	0.212***
	(0.068)	(0.064)
Conservative	0.149**	0.068
	(0.061)	(0.057)
Christian Dem.	1.451***	0.442***
	(0.072)	(0.081)
Liberal	1.490***	−0.231***
	(0.067)	(0.070)
Social Dem.	0.599***	0.368***
	(0.060)	(0.058)
Communist	0.986***	0.161**
	(0.067)	(0.066)
Government × Conservative	−0.261***	−0.390***
	(0.085)	(0.083)
Government × Christian Dem.	−1.463***	−0.787***
	(0.090)	(0.097)
Government × Liberal	−1.868***	−0.231***
	(0.084)	(0.089)
Government × Social Dem.	−0.860***	−0.566***
	(0.081)	(0.075)
Government × Communist	−0.680***	0.135
	(0.131)	(0.139)
Govt. Effectiveness	−0.869***	0.388***
	(0.143)	(0.117)
Political Interest	−0.079***	−0.422***
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Constant	2.230***	2.313
	(0.255)	(5.393)

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Full output of control variables omitted, see Appendix A7 for details. Dependent variable in model 1: "Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are with the way it is doing its job?" measured 1 (low) - 10 (high). Dependent variable in model 2: Party closeness = 1 if a respondent reports feeling close to the same party they voted for in the most recent election, 0 otherwise. Government = 1 if respondent's preferred party serves in government at time of survey, 0 otherwise. Party family categorical variable with Far-right party supporters as the base category. Control variables include: seat-share of the respondent's preferred party at time of survey, age, years of education, gender, household income bracket, union membership, self-placement on left-right scale, and ethnic minority status. Government effectiveness measured on scale 0 - 3. Political interest: "How interested would you say you are in politics?" measured 1 (high) - 4 (low). Increases in political interest variable reflect *declining* political interest.