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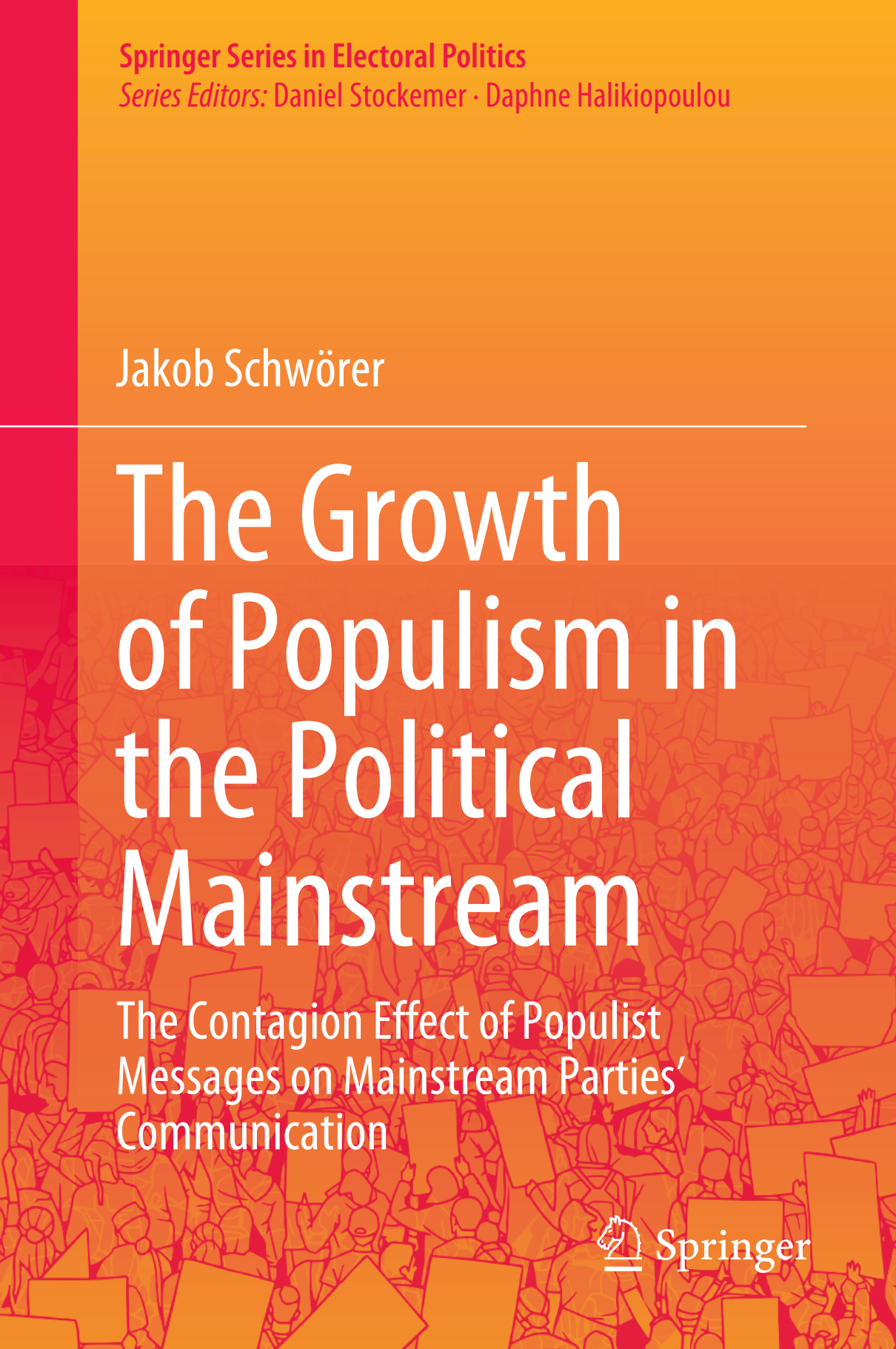
The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream

The Contagion Effect of Populist Messages on Mainstream Parties' Communication



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The Contagion Effect of Populist Messages on Mainstream Parties' Communication

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Jakob Schwörer
Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD)
Leuphana University of Lüneburg
Lüneburg, Germany

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Preface

The present book examines the discursive "populistisation" of mainstream parties in Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain. For a long time, populist and radical right parties have been a main subject of investigation in academic research. Yet, how mainstream parties react to the rise of such actors is less known. Scholars assume a "populist Zeitgeist", a populist contagion claiming that the political mainstream actively engages in populist and nativist discourses. This study tests this widespread assumption analysing whether centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties adopt populist messages as well as content related to the leftist and right-wing host ideologies of populist actors.

Building on recent spatial theory, a variety of variables is identified expected to influence mainstream parties' communication. Conducting a quantitative and qualitative content analysis, it is first assessed how degrees of populist, nativist and leftist messages in mainstream parties' election manifestos shift over time in the face of external pressure. Unlike other studies, the analysis relies on two different types of text sources: election manifestos reflecting the official party discourse and statements on the websites of mainstream parties as a less institutional type of party communication. In addition, previous work has measured populist discourses without considering leftist and nativist discourses, which derive from to the host ideologies of populist actors and might influence mainstream parties' communication as well.

The findings suggest that several mainstream parties become more populist and leftist in their manifestos when respective parties gain electoral success and experience an electoral breakthrough or when shifts in public opinion occur. In sum, public opinion seems to have a crucial impact on mainstream parties' discourses. Yet, the political mainstream is much more prone to adopt *nativist* than populist and leftist messages. In this regard, it seems to be more appropriate to talk about a "nativist" than "populist" Zeitgeist. However, the findings from the online statements deviate from the manifestos' analysis. In this regard, it is argued that party manifestos are more suitable for measures of populist, nativist and leftist content since they are constructed more consciously and strategically than short-lived online messages.

Furthermore, the book explores the quality and content of populist, nativist and leftist discourses in election manifestos. Previous comparative and longitudinal analyses mostly provided quantitative data regarding populist communication of mainstream parties and did not mention the concrete content of these discourses and how it develops over time. This work explores the quality of messages towards the political and economic elite, the people and specific outgroups and immigration and whether mainstream parties talk in a new or different way about these targets in the face of external pressure. The findings reveal that mainstream parties do not only talk more frequently about these targets when they are confronted with external pressure but also introduce distinct discourses about them. Among others, the political mainstream sometimes mentions own past measures it claims to have taken against the political elite, economic actors, outgroups and immigration and for the people when respective competing parties or public moods are on the rise.

Finally, the study analyses the consequences of these "contagions" for liberal democracies. Anti-pluralism and illiberalism are usually considered as the main threats deriving from populist and nativist discourses. Right-wing populists question the legitimacy of the political establishment accusing it of not acting in the (native) people's interest and evaluate the supposed will of the (native) people as more important than unelected institutions and constitutional law. The study shows that illiberal and anti-pluralist messages are linked to nativist rather than populist statements. Mainstream parties' demands towards the political elite and the people do not question the legitimacy of political actors or prioritise a supposed will of the people over constitutional rights. Such messages are only present in mainstream parties' nativist statements. Almost only in Austria, mainstream parties prioritise the will of the "Austrians" over the basic right of asylum and minority rights when external pressure is high. Since it is rather nativism than populism that is adopted by mainstream parties and that communicates illiberal views, this work concludes claiming that the rise of populism is not the main challenge for liberal democracy nowadays but the growth of radical right parties and the behaviour of the (centre-right) political mainstream engaging with discourses once owned by the radical right.

Lüneburg, Germany Jakob Schwörer

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Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
BZÖ	Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (Alliance for the Future of Austria)
CDU/CSU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands/Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria)
CHES	Chapel Hill Expert Survey
C-L	Centre-left
C-R	Centre-right
FI/PdL	Forza Italia/Il Popolo della Libertà (Forward Italy/The People of Freedom)
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Freedom Party of Austria)
IET	Issue evolution theory
IU	Izquierda Unida (United Left)
LN	Lega Nord (Northern League)
LP	Left parties
M5S	Movimento 5 Stelle (Five Star Movement)
NCCR	National Center of Competence in Research
ÖVP	Österreichische Volkspartei (Austrian People's Party)
PD	Partito Democratico (Democratic Party)
PEGIDA	Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident)
Pod	Podemos (We Can)
PP	Partido Popular (People's Party) or Populist Parties [mentioned only in some tables]
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)
RRP	Radical right parties
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SPÖ	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (Social Democratic Party of Austria)
TS	Team Stronach

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Populistisation of Mainstream Parties?

The rise of populist parties in Western Europe has brought about the thesis of the "populist Zeitgeist" (Mudde 2004) in Western democracies. The increasing electoral success of such political actors over the past decades can in fact hardly be denied (Lewis et al. 2018; Fig. 1). Since the 1980s, populists' vote shares increase in a considerable way and almost linearly. The spectrum of populist parties in Western Europe is extremely diversified, including left-wing, far-right and other types of populist parties (Caiani and Graziano 2019). According to most scholars, populism as ideology, set of ideas or type of political communication, consists of two main elements (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Hawkins et al. 2012; Mudde 2004; Rooduijn 2014a; Wolinetz and Zaslove 2018): On the one hand, a rejection and negative evaluation of the political elite, which is portrayed as bad and evil and as not acting in the people's interest. On the other hand, positive references to the common people whose will should guide politics.

Besides highlighting the growing electoral success of populist parties in the last decades, the populist Zeitgeist also refers to a "populistization" (Manucci and Weber 2017, 4) of mainstream parties. In his well-known article from 2004, Mudde claims that by trying to exclude populists from power, mainstream parties increasingly include "populist themes and rhetoric to try and fight off the challenge. This dynamic will bring about a populist Zeitgeist, like the one we are facing today, which will dissipate as soon as the populist challenger seems to be over its top" (p. 563). In a recent article for The Guardian, Mudde (2019) reinforced this assumption: "More and more mainstream politicians are using 'pro-people' and/or 'anti-elite' rhetoric to win voters—in part to fight off electoral challenges from true populist actors". Thus, mainstream parties are expected to include populist elements in their discourses when they are put under pressure—for example, by the success of competing populist parties. This development is referred to as "populist contagion" (Rooduijn et al. 2014). The term contagion in the context of research on populism is usually not clearly operationalised but refers to communicative or programmatic shifts of parties towards more populist discourses or policies due to changes in political surroundings (Rooduijn et al. 2014). In order to strengthen his argument, Mudde (2019) refers to

J. Schwörer, *The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream*, Springer Series in Electoral Politics, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72449-8_1

a study conducted by Team Populism (Hawkins et al. 2019) that classified mainstream leaders such as the former British prime minister Theresa May as "somewhat populist" based on an analysis of public speeches (Lewis et al. 2019b).

The idea of a generalised populist contagion is highly debated: Some scholars argue that mainstream parties do not become thoroughly populist, but adopt a "soft populism", or a "populist rhetoric" in the face of populist pressure (Mudde 2013, 9). Mazzoleni (2008, 57) reiterates the claim that a "populist contamination of mainstream political discourse" can be observed. Analysing a speech of Tony Blair from 1999, Mair (2002, 92) states that "one of the first things this rhetoric reveals is the extent to which a populist language has now become acceptable within what has long been perceived as a decidedly non-populist political culture". Mény and Surel (2002, 13) agree on the fact that "political leaders or parties borrow the political rhetoric of populism for electoral opportunism". Mentioning an example from French politics, they (2002, 13) find it "ironic to listen to Jacques Chirac criticising the French elites of whom he is the epitome". Decker and Lewandowsky (2017) even see it as proven that the established non-populist parties take over (right-wing) populists' appeal to the voter but also their main issues. As an example, they (2017, 22) mention the "aggressive presidential election campaign of Nicolas Sarkozy in 2012 in France". Yet, besides anti-elitist and people-centred demands, Decker and Lewandowsky (2017) claim that elements deriving from the host ideologies of populist actors—mostly issues owned by the far-right—are further adopted by mainstream parties such as anti-Islam positions.

Thus, within the academic literature, we find widespread assumptions about how mainstream parties react to the success of populist parties. Leading scholars assume that traditional parties adopt populist rhetoric as well as issues and demands from populist parties. According to spatial theories of party competition, this is not surprising. This branch of literature pictures political parties as rational vote-seekers attempting to increase their support by adopting strategies, discourses or policies, which seem to be promising. In this sense, parties might copy political competitors or adopt positions, which are popular among the public when they think that this strengthens their electoral appeal (Adams et al. 2004; Downs 1957; Fagerholm 2016; Meguid 2005).

Yet, even though a populistisation of mainstream actors is assumed in academia, this is "rarely investigated empirically" (Manucci and Weber 2017, 1), which is surprising since populism and liberal democracy are mostly considered as "not fully compatible" (Rooduijn 2013, 4) and a supposed contagion of mainstream parties' rhetoric might therefore pose a considerable danger for Western democracies. Indeed, several scholars mention threats that might derive from populist ideas and messages (Abts and Rummens 2007; Canovan 1999; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Müller 2016). First, populists are expected to be anti-pluralist. The populists' critique towards the political elite often questions the legitimacy of the other political actors accusing them of being immoral or of acting against the people's will (Müller 2016). Mudde (2015) explains that as follows:

> As the populists are the vox populi, ie the voice of all the people, anyone with a different view speaks for 'special interests', ie the elite. Given that the key distinction is between the pure people and the corrupt elite, any compromise would lead to the corruption of the people and is therefore rejected.

Second, populist actors are often considered illiberal since they prioritise the will of the people over unelected institutions and constitutional rights (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). Populists reject "all limitations on the expression of the general will, most notably the constitutional protection of minorities and the independence (from politics, and therefore from democratic control) of key state institutions" (Mudde 2004, 561).

However, it should be noted that some scholars refuse the assumption that populism is necessarily linked to illiberalism and anti-pluralism. Akkerman (2017) as well as March and Mudde (2005) claims that left-wing populists in Europe do not pose a danger to liberal democracy unlike radical right parties, which do so due to their nativist and illiberal host ideology. Rydgren (2017) argues in the same way and identifies "ethnic nationalism"—not populism—as the main driver of populist radical right parties. The fact that some populist parties claim, "that they, and they alone, represent the people as a whole" (Müller 2016, 20) is mostly due to ideological elements from the far-right (Rydgren 2017, 492). Nevertheless, investigating a supposed contagion effect of populist discourses and demands on mainstream parties is highly a relevant issue since a large number of scholars evaluate populism as a considerable threat for liberal democracy. As long as populism remains on the fringe of the political spectrum, it "will most likely not be influential enough to affect the functioning of liberal democratic systems" (Rooduijn 2013, 4). However, if it is adopted by mainstream political actors, also illiberal and anti-pluralist narratives might spread and change the political culture or even the liberal character of Western democracies.

So far, only few studies assess the contagious potential of populism on mainstream parties' political communication in a comparative perspective. As shortly mentioned above, the study conducted by Team Populism analyses speeches from *heads of governments* and does not address the question how the rhetoric of these leaders (or of mainstream parties) develops *over time*.[1] Only two studies directly or indirectly touch upon this question and provide a systematic, comparative and longitudinal analysis of mainstream parties' populist communication in election manifestos (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Their focus is the measurement of people-centrism and anti-elitism labelled as the two main features of populism. While these studies can be considered as ground-breaking contributions to the populist contagion thesis, they do not address messages, which derive from the *host ideology* of populist parties and do hardly highlight potential consequences for democracy. As mentioned above, some scholars argue that it is first and foremost nativism (or ethnic nationalism) that characterises most populist parties while populist ideas themselves play only a secondary role (Akkerman 2017; Rydgren

[1] They indeed have a longitudinal approach but they analyse speeches of *different* leaders over time. Accordingly, they do not touch upon the question whether *the same* actors become more populist.

2017). Accordingly, we are confronted with little evidence for a populist contagion so far but it further is to be investigated whether populism or the actual host ideology has a larger impact on mainstream parties' communication and whether the consequences of these contagions pose a threat for democracy.

Hence, focussing exclusively on populist messages might disregard potentially illiberal and anti-pluralist elements within radical-right discourses, which are sometimes seen as the main driver of illiberalism and anti-pluralism. In order to provide a more comprehensive picture of contagion effects and its consequences on mainstream parties, this thesis focuses on both populist and *radical right*—or *nativist*—messages. To complete the picture, it is further assessed whether specific *left-wing populist* messages are adopted by mainstream parties. While populist communication is about criticising the *political* elite, especially populists from the left further attack *economic* elites (Corbetta 2013; Katsambekis 2017; Pauwels 2014; Pelinka 2013; Schwörer 2016).

As mentioned below in more detail, the overarching research interest touches upon the question whether a populist, nativist or leftist contagion occur in west Europen party systems. Therefore, I first trace changes in the *degree* of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages over time starting before the 2008 European economic crisis—leading to the establishment and success of non-right-wing populist parties in southern Europe—until the first election after the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 boosting electoral results of populist radical right parties in Germany and Austria. I observe if centre-right and centre-left parties in Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria use such messages more frequently when respective competing parties'[2] gain electoral success and public opinion shifts towards more anti-elitist, nativist and leftist moods. In a second step, I investigate the *content* of populist, nativist and leftist messages: Does the nature of such messages differ between mainstream and respective *populist, leftist and nativist parties*—which are refered to as *niche parties* in this study?[3] How do mainstream parties talk about the people, the political and

[2]Zulianello (2019) classifies the populist parties in these countries as "non-integrated" or "negatively integrated" populists. According to him, both types are "anti-system" parties in ideological terms since they challenge "constitutional limitations of popular sovereignty and pluralism" (Zulianello 2019, 15). Yet, several scholars doubt that *left-wing* populist parties such as Podemos or Die Linke are illiberal (Akkerman 2015; March 2017; March and Mudde 2005).

[3]Meguid (2005) mentions three characteristics of niche parties. First, these parties "politicize sets of issues which were previously outside the dimension of party competition" (347) such as green issues or immigration (the same is true for the people-elite cleavage). Moreover, "niche parties appeal to groups of voters that may cross-cut traditional partisan allignments" (348) so their issues do not coincide with classical lines of division (e.g. labour and capital). Last, niche parties focus on a smaller number of topics than traditional parties, such as immigration or ecological issues. These characteristics apply to parties with a primarily populist agenda and discourse. Yet, left-wing populists focus on several issues, which coincide with traditional lines of political division such as taxes, global solidarity, anti-capitalism and redistribution. Nevertheless, due to practical reasons, I refer to populist, radical right and left parties as niche parties in this work.

economic elite and cultural outgroups in the face of external pressure[4] and do they introduce new and distinct discourses during such periods? Thus, I do not only focus on the *degree* of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages but also on their concrete *content* and how it develops over time. At this point, the study further addresses the question whether illiberal and anti-pluralist elements can be identified within populist, nativist or leftist communication of mainstream parties and whether they become more salient when external pressure increases.

To sum up, the overarching research question for this study can be summerised as follows:

Are there reasonable indications for a populist, nativist and leftist contagion effect on mainstream parties and does that pose a threat for liberal democracy?

The question will be empirically explored through five more specific questions. First, in order to assess whether the quantity of respective communicative elements increases, it needs to be assessed whether the degree of such elements in mainstream parties' discourses is on the rise. This is done by the following question:

(I) Does the *degree* of populist, nativist and leftist messages increase in mainstream parties' election manifestos and websites' statements when e*xternal pressure increases*?

Second, the overarching research question distinguishes between populist, nativist and leftist contagion effects. Yet, these might not occur to the same extent. Which of these messages are more likely to be adopted by mainstream parties is formulated in the second specific research question.

(II) What seems to be more contagious for mainstream parties: populist, nativist or leftist messages?

Focussing exclusively on mainstream parties might overlook differences in the quality of statements compared to "true" populist or nativist parties. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish, for example, between the concrete content of messages blaming the political establishment raised by mainstream and populist parties. Do mainstream parties use the same kind of discourses as populist parties or do they appear more "soft" (Mudde 2013, 9)? The third specific question is therefore as follows.

(III) How does the *content* of populist, nativist and leftist messages differ between mainstream and respective (populist, radical right, leftist) niche parties? Do they talk in a different way about the people, the elite, outgroups, immigration and economic actors?

Besides observing whether the degree of populist, nativist and leftist messages increases among mainstream parties or to what extent the content of these messages differ between mainstream and populist parties, qualitative changes might also occur

[4]External pressure exists when considerable increases on the scores of the independent variables occur. These are mainly increases in niche parties' vote share (populist, radical right or left ones), the emergence of new relevant niche parties and shifts in public moods.

over time. For instance, mainstream parties might attack political elites in a different way when put under pressure by electorally successful populist parties. How and under what conditions the content of populist, nativist and leftist messages change is covered by the fourth research question.

(IV) Do mainstream parties change the way they talk about their targets—the people, the political and economic elite, outgroups and immigration—when external pressure increases? Do they emphasise different traits, actions and aspects than usual?

Last, the overarching research questions further point towards implications of a supposed populistisation of mainstream parties for liberal democracies. Does that also imply an increase of illiberal and anti-pluralist elements, considered as main threats deriving from populism (Mudde 2015; Müller 2016)? The last specific question touches upon this aspect.

(V) What are the consequences of the populist, nativist and leftist contagion on mainstream parties' discourses in terms of illiberal and anti-pluralist elements? Are the latter part of mainstream parties' populist, nativist or leftist discourses?

As illustrated within the previous paragraphs, the topic of this thesis is highly relevant for academic research. It steps into a research gap investigating mainstream parties' communication in the face of (populist, radical right, leftist) niche parties' successes and shifts in public opinion. It reveals whether potential contagion effects have implications for liberal democracy assessing if populist or nativist (or leftist) messages published by traditional parties communicate illiberal or anti-pluralist views. It further has some political implications for the non-academic field. If not populism but rather nativism threatens liberal democracy, politicians and the media should rather emphasise the radical right than populism when highlighting the rise of illiberal political actors in Western Europe. In summary, my analyses reveal that several mainstream parties become more populist and leftist when external pressure increases but are even more prone to adopt *nativist* messages. Furthermore, while mainstream parties' *populist* as well as *leftist* messages hardly contain illiberal or anti-pluralist discourses, their *nativist* discourses sometimes tansmit illiberal elements. Mainstream parties' messages towards political elites and the people do not question constitutional principles while some nativist statement claims that the *native* people should judge over the rights of refugees and immigrants instead of independent courts deciding on the basis of constitutional law. In this sense, I argue that the main challenge in party politics is not the rise of populism but nativism.

The thesis proceeds as follows. I provide a definition of populism and a conceptualisation of populist, nativist and specific leftist messages directed towards economic actors (Sect. 2.1). Despite the fact that populism has been a contested term for many years among scholars, recently there seems to be at least a common understanding about its main features. Based on these core elements, I provide a first conceptualisation of populist communication. I further explain the main ideological features of the nativist host ideology of radical-right parties and core traits of left-wing populist parties.

Section (2.2) describes the theoretical background of this study. Modified spatial approaches provide explanations for shifts in party behaviour, which can easily be adapted to the purpose of this study, namely explaining shifts in the degrees and content of populist, nativist and leftist communication of mainstream parties. Unlike previous studies concerned with populist contagions or communication (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014), I rely on a variety of explanatory factors discussed in populism and communication studies and spatial theory. Shifts in public opinion in particular are seen as a crucial driver of party behaviour (Fagerholm 2016) but respective data is often difficult to access for periods that lie further in the past. This might be the reason why studies such as Rooduijn et al. (2014) did not include it as independent variable. The subsequent Sect. (2.3) describes the state of research regarding contagion effects of populist, nativist and leftist messages and reveals a considerable research gap regarding the effects of populist and leftist messages on mainstream parties.

Section 3.1 illustrates the research design including case and source selection. In order to identify clues for contagion effects, I rely on a variety of sources as shortly indicated above. Grasping a contagion on the formal or institutional communication of mainstream parties, I analyse 52 election manifestos of 16 different political parties in Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria. The focus is on party manifestos of the mainstream centre-left and centre-right in each country. I expect that the degrees of populist, nativist and leftist messages increase when populist/radical-right/leftist parties gain electoral support (or establish themselves as new relevant competitors), when public opinion shifts in a respective way and when mainstream parties experience several other changes in their surroundings. In order to capture a more informal or public-related type of communication, I rely on a second type of analysis, namely statements from the party websites. While election manifestos are sometimes thought to not appeal to the electorate (Rooduijn et al. 2014), websites' statements could be expected to be directed more explicitly towards an audience, mainly the own followers or the media.

The methodological approach and sources are described in Sect. 3.2. I use a quantitative but not computer-based content analysis in order to trace shifts in the degrees of populist, nativist and leftist messages of political parties in the four countries. All texts are coded manually referring to a codebook created by scholars from the "National Centre of Competence in Research" (NCCR) and to several empirical studies working with it. The codebook provides different subcategories of people-centred and anti-elitist messages. It can further be used for measures of nativist communication and messages towards economic elites since respective categories capture evaluations and demands towards any kind of targets. The subcategories are useful to analyse the meaning of people-centred and anti-elitist communication of mainstream parties. Yet, in order to examine the concrete content of respective messages, I further conduct a more qualitative analysis, which allows inductive category building and captures further dimensions of populist, nativist and leftist messages.

Chapter 4 illustrates the findings of the content analyses for party manifestos and public statements of mainstream parties covering different periods. It should already be made clear at this point that the present study cannot identify any clear

causal relationship but rather good arguments for or against existing assumptions. I observe communicative shifts of mainstream parties over time testing whether common explanations from rational choice approaches are able to explain these shifts. Besides "classical" explanations such as successes of competing niche parties, I also include public opinion as an explanatory variable. In addition, I discuss the findings referring to further explanations from country-specific literature, where necessary. I mainly use descriptive statistics—due to a rather small n—in order to illustrate the connection between shifting degrees of communicative content and the independent variables. It is further attempted to highlight communicative behaviour that cannot be explained by existing approaches. Section 4.1 provides good arguments to assume that a populist contagion is indeed taking place in election manifestos of several mainstream parties. Yet, the political mainstream seems to be more prone to adopt nativist than populist (and leftist) messages. In contrast, the results from the content analysis of the websites' statements (Sect. 4.2) do not indicate a populist contagion but only suggest that mainstream parties sometimes become more nativist when external pressure grows. In the conclusion of the chapter (Sect. 4.3), I emphasise the similarities and differences between the findings for the manifestos' and websites' analysis and argue that election programs are more suitable for measures of populist communication.

Chapter 5 investigates the concrete content of anti-elitist, people-centred, nativist and leftist messages in election manifestos. In a first step, I analyse the main traits of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and left-wing communication comparing the content to respective messages from populist, far-right and left parties. I do so to determine whether mainstream parties and their populist, nativist and leftist niche competitors engage in similar discourses or whether their messages can be distinguished from another in terms of content. According to Mudde (2013), mainstream parties' rhetoric is not identical to that of the populists and can rather be described as "soft populism". Second, I observe what the supposed contagion is about and whether mainstream parties change the way they talk about the political and economic elite, the people, outgroups and immigration when external pressure increases. In sum, I conclude that mainstream parties do not only talk more often about their targets when respective pressure grows but also introduce new and distinctive discourses about them.

In Sect. 5.6, I search for illiberal and anti-pluralist elements within mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages building on the discussion about the consequences of populism and nativism for liberal democracies. After defining illiberal and anti-pluralist elements, I attempt to identify them in anti-elitist, people-centred and nativist statements of the centre-right and centre-left using a qualitative content analysis. Moreover, it is clarified whether illiberalism and anti-pluralism are mainly linked to populist or rather to nativist content. The findings suggest that mainstream parties' anti-elitist and people-centred discourses do not become more illiberal and anti-pluralist and that illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are present in nativist rather than populist messages.

Chapter 6 summarises the findings from the different analytical sections and connects them to broader theoretical and normative debates about populist contagions and their relation to democracy. I refer to the exceptional German case, explain the different findings for the two types of text sources—manifestos and online statements—and the fact that my findings deviate from results of previous studies. The chapter concludes by critically discussing the challenges regarding populist and nativist contagion studies and by giving an outlook for future analyses.

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Chapter 2
Theoretical-Conceptual Framework

This chapter begins with a description and defintion of the concept of populism I refer to in this study and further explains the main ideological and communicative traits of left- and right-wing populists' host ideologies. I move on with the theoretical assumption that underlie this study, mainly from economic (or spatial) theory of party competition. This approach offers hypotheses, which are to be tested empirically in the analytical part of this study. I conclude the chapter by illustrating the state of research regarding populist, nativist and leftist contagion effects on mainstream parties.

2.1 Populism, Populist Communication and Messages

I start with the academic debate about the concept of populism and with my definition of populism as ideology. Since this study attempts to measure populist as well as specific nativist and left-wing *communicative content,* I further mention the core traits of populist political *communication* described in the literature. Specific characteristics of the populist *radical-right* and *left* as well as respective communicative elements are illustrated in order to operationalise them in the methodological chapter.

Populist movements and parties are not a new political phenomenon—at least outside Western Europe. Already at the end of the nineteenth century, respective movements and parties in the USA were able to achieve considerable successes: The Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (also known as "populist party"). As representatives of the farmers' interests, these actors appealed to the ordinary and hard-working man portrayed as oppressed by powerful interests (Canovan 1981; Spier 2006). The people was "seen as a uniform entity that transcended specific classes and other groups" (Rooduijn 2013, 37). The Russian Narodniks—radical intellectuals attempting to find popular support among farmers for their revolutionary ideas (unsuccessfully)—are often considered as another example of an early populist movement. In the 1870s, thousands of young students gave up their lives in

J. Schwörer, *The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream*, Springer Series in Electoral Politics, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72449-8_2

the university cities "going to the people" (Russian: narodnichestvo) (Spier 2006). A third often named historical example of a populist movement is Perón's Justicialist Party in Argentinia (Crassweller 1987). Elected as president in 1946 "Perón strongly emphasised the struggle between the (good) people and the (bad) oligarchy" (Rooduijn 2013, 40). Defining his political ideas as a "third way" besides capitalism and socialism, he forged "a cross-class alliance of supporters—a uniform entity in its opposition against the elite" (Rooduijn 2013, 40).

Despite these (incomplete) historical examples of people-centred and anti-elitist movements and new emerging parties in Western European countries in the 1970s and 1980s—often characterised as "populist"—populism was seen as a contested term in the early Western academic debate and understood above all as a political style implemented in order to catch votes. Scholars stressed the lack of a generally accepted concept of populism in academia. Dubiel (1986, 43) once criticised that "different groups of social scientists with different theoretical backgrounds" speak "on different occasions about different social phenomena". According to Dubiel (1986, 34), it remains "open, what the term ever meant".

Still during the Cold War Ionescu and Gellner (1969, 1) stated,

> A spectre is haunting the world – populism. A decade ago, […] the question that was asked was - how many will go Communist? Today, this question, so plausible then, sounds a little out of date. In as far as the rulers of new states embrace an ideology, it tends more often to have a populist character.

Ionescu and Gellner (1969, 1) raised similar concerns as Dubiel did some decade later:

> There can, at present, be no doubt about the importance of populism. But no one is quite clear just what it is. As a doctrine or as a movement, it is elusive and protean. It bobs up everywhere, but in many and contradictory shapes. Does it have any underlying unity, or does one name cover a multitude of unconnected tendencies?

Canovan (1981, 3) once stated, "although frequently used by historians, social scientists and political commentators, the term [populism] is exceptionally vague and refers in different contexts to a bewildering variety of phenomena". According to her, populism describes "techniques of direct democracy […] but also certain kinds of dictatorships such as that of Peron in Argentina". Still twenty years later, Paul Taggart claimed that populism as a concept "has an essential impalpability, an awkward conceptual slipperiness. For different sets of people, it veers between having great meaning and fundamental vacuousness" (Taggart 2000, 1).

At least since the release of Mudde's "populist Zeitgeist" article in 2004, the debate about what populism actually means has developed considerably. Since then, interest in populism research has increased significantly—together with the rise of populist parties in Western Europe (Fig. 2.1)—which is reflected in the considerable growth of academic publications on populism (Fig. 2.2). Mudde (2004, 543) defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people". In the same article, he clarifies that populism is not a full

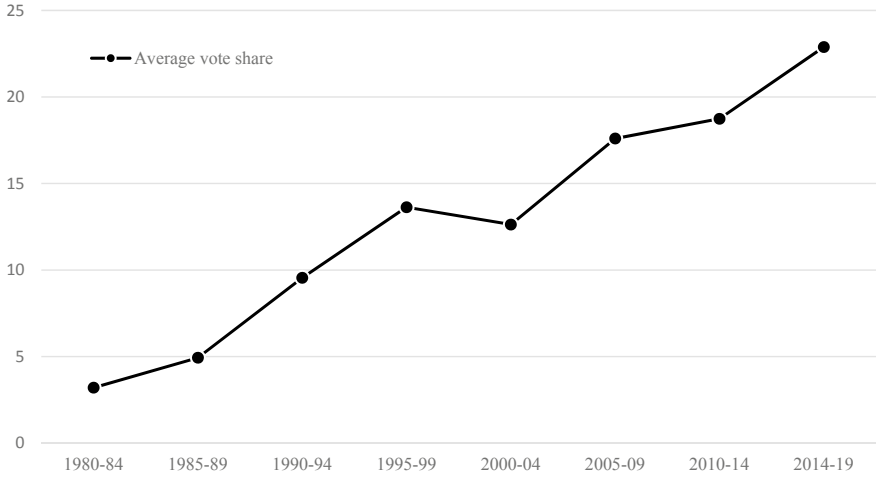

Fig. 2.1 Average vote shares for populist parties in national and European elections in Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. *Note* As at 15/9/2919. Data from ParlGov. Parties characterised as populist according to the "popu-list" (Rooduijn et al. 2019) and "Populismtracker" (https://progressivepost.eu/spotlights/populism-tracker. Last access 29/9/2019.)

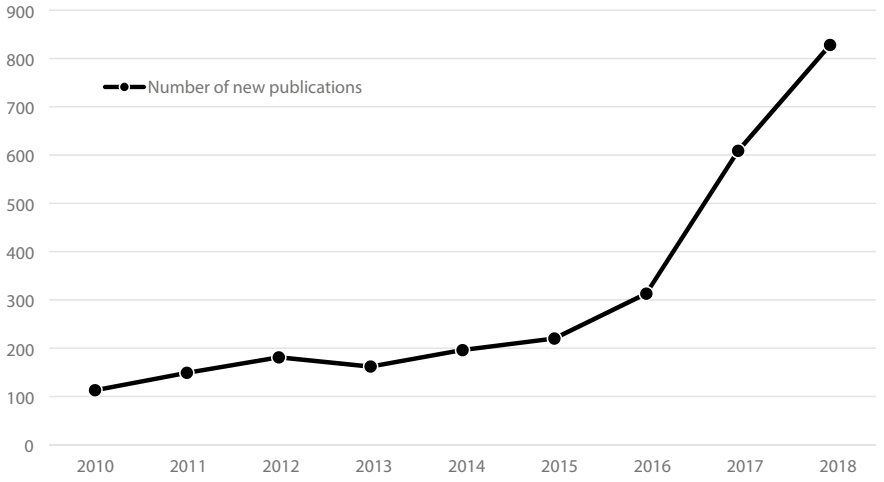

Fig. 2.2 Number of new publications per year containing the term "populis*" (title or abstract) based on the Scopus database

ideology but only "thin-centred" since it does not provide a complete worldview and is rather attached to other political concepts: "As a thin-centred ideology, populism can be easily combined with very different (thin and full) other ideologies, including communism, ecologism, nationalism or socialism" (Mudde 2004, 544).

Besides definitions addressing the ideational dimension of the term, populism has further been used as a word to describe organisational features of political actors and as a linguistic style or language in order to appeal to the people (Rooduijn 2013). Populist parties in Western Europe "have become more or less implicitly framed as 'charismatic parties' with largely authoritarian leadership" (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016, 221). Indeed, a charismatic leader has often been mentioned as a main trait of populist actors in Europe and Latin America (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Di Tella 1997; Taggart 2000; Weyland 2001). Yet, especially the party organisations of new southern European populist actors such as the Italian Five Star Movement (M5S) or the Spanish Podemos differ from traditional charismatic organisations of populist radical right parties since they also implement elements of grassroots and internet democracy (Della Porta et al. 2017). Nevertheless, these parties are also led by individuals who consciously attract media attention and see themselves as the mouthpiece of the people.[1] Populism as a "political style" (Rooduijn 2013, 5) refers to the way populists communicate with the people and to linguistic elements they use (Canovan 1999; Engesser et al. 2017; Ernst et al. 2019). I will address aspects of this understanding of populism later in this chapter.

It should be clearly stated that the different perspectives on populism do not exclude but rather complement each other. Populist parties can be both anti-elitist and people-centred in their discourses and ideas as well as "charismatic" regarding its organisation. Nowadays, there seems to be a "lowest common denominator" (Rooduijn 2014a) regarding the question what populist *ideas and demands* are about. Anti-elitism and people-centrism—rejecting an immoral (political) elite, often accused of not acting in the interest of the people, and praising a good, homogeneous people whose will should guide the political agenda—can be described as main features of populism (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Hawkins et al. 2012; Mudde 2004; Rooduijn 2013; Wolinetz and Zaslove 2018).

We find less consensus regarding the question whether populism actually has ideological components and therefore can be considered a "set of basic assumptions about the world" (Hawkins et al. 2012, 3). Paris Aslanidis is one of the main critics of the ideological approach. He rejects Freeden's (1996) concept of "thin ideologies" which constitutes the basis for Mudde's approach. Referring to Freeden, Aslanidis (2016, 91) states that "almost any political notion can acquire the status of a thin-centred ideology as long as it contains an alleged 'small' number of core concepts that the claimant perceives as being unable to supply a comprehensive package of policy proposals". He proceeds, arguing that "a 'small' set of core attributes is always necessary in order to define something". Taking Freeden's approach seriously even Euroscepticism, anti-neoliberalism, sexism and many other

[1] Especially regarding Beppe Grillo and the M5S, such principles are combined with charismatic and authoritarian elements.

concepts could be considered as ideology. According to Mudde's concept, even elitism and pluralism—prescribed as the two main opposites of populism—could be considered as single ideologies (Aslanidis 2016, 91). It is further criticised what Aslanidis calls "degreeism". Political actors can be *more or less* populist, what contradicts the character of an ideology according to him: "For most people, there is no sense in speaking of 'degrees' of socialism, Marxism or liberalism since the normative political concepts that undergird such ideologies are of a 'take it or leave it' nature" (Aslanidis 2016, 92). Thus, Aslanidis speaks out for rejecting the ideological approach and considers populism rather as a discourse: "populism modestly becomes a discourse, invoking the supremacy of popular sovereignty to claim that corrupt elites are defrauding 'the people' of their rightful political authority" (Aslanidis 2016, 96).

However, as the last citation reveals, even critics of the ideological approach do not question the core features of populism mentioned by Mudde: anti-elitism and people-centrism. Both the advocates of the ideological approach and their opponents agree on a substantial issue: "the communicative, discoursive construction of an aggregate-level ingroup or appeals and references to such a group lie at the very core of populism" (Reinemann et al. 2017, 16).

Accordingly, for the purpose of this book, the ideological debate has only little significance. The study measures communicative elements of populism, which are referred to as "messages" and "communication" (or in terms of Aslanidis "discourses" or "discursive frames"). While I think that such messages derive at least from "a coherent set of basic assumptions about the world and the language that unwittingly expresses them" (Hawkins et al. 2012, 2), the measurement of *populist communication* does not necessarily require such ideological components.

Regardless the fact whether populism is considered an ideology, scholars do not question the fact that populist communicative elements exist and are part of discourses of political actors. This is an important fact and suggests that populist messages can be identified within statements of political parties. Several academics from political and communication sciences have started to focus on populism in regards of its communicative content (Hawkins 2009; Jagers and Walgrave Stefaan 2007; Müller et al. 2017; Reinemann et al. 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014) and created thereby new perspectives for research on populism: "The focus now shifts from what constitutes the ideology of populism to how it is communicated" (De Vreese et al. 2018, 425). Populist ideas must be expressed in order to unfold their desired effect on the audience. Accordingly, populism is "mostly reflected in the oral, written and visual communication of individual politicians, parties and social movements" (Reinemann et al. 2017, 13).

Within communication science, we find three perspectives on populist communication (Engesser et al. 2017). The first one is interested in *why* something is communicated and refers to the speaker. This dimension is not directly related to discourses and the written expression of populist ideas but to the intention and motivations of the actor itself. Since this dimension plays no role in the discussion about a populist contagion effect, it will not be dealt with in this study.

Second, populist communication is about *how* something is communicated and refers to the style and language of communication. This is mostly related to what

Rooduijn (2013, 5)—among others—calls the "political style". So far, there has been only little research in this respect but at least first attempts to measure populist language in a comparative perspective (Ernst et al. 2019; Thiele 2019). Ernst et al. (2019, 4) mention several elements of a "populism-related style": First, negativity: Populists tend to picture the world in black and white (negativism) and use a "crisis rhetoric" referring to exaggerations or an emergency rhetoric. Second, emotionality: Populists' language has an "emotional tone" and expresses positive (e.g. happiness) and negative (e.g. fear and anger) emotions. Populist actors are further expected to use rhetorical "figures of absolutism" by claiming that there is only one conceivable option or solution to a problem. The last emotional element is called "patriotism" and includes discourses that refer to an "idealised and utopic heartland". "Sociability" constitutes the third category and refers to a "simple, dialect, colloquial or vulgar language" (colloquialism) or to "recounting personal and intimate details about personal life" (intimisation). As mentioned in the introductory part, scholars do not primarily assume a contagion effect of specific emotional language but of anti-elitist and people-centred elements in political discourses.[2] I attempt to provide arguments for (or against) the populist Zeitgeist hypothesis—which does not explicitly address stylistic devices—and therefore focus on the third dimension of populist communication.

The third perspective is about the *content* of populist communication. This perspective refers to *what* is communicated. In this respect, the codebook of Wirth et al. (2017, 7) defines populist communication as

> acts of communication aimed at expressing populist ideology[3] by being conflictive toward the elite and advocative toward the people. Specifically, populist communication may be characterised as people-centrist, anti-elitist and aimed at restoring the sovereignty of the people.

These communication acts are always directed towards certain targets—the elite and the people—and can therefore be considered "statements by an actor towards other actors" (Wirth et al. 2017, 3). They either evaluate an actor in a positive (the people) or negative (the elite) way or contain demands for more influence and political rights (the people) or less influence and privileges (elite).

Most of the empirical work deals with the third perspective. In this respect, I mostly use the terms "populist communication", "populist messages" or "populist discourses" in order to refer to negative evaluations and demands towards the political elite and positive evaluations and demands towards the people. Some former studies use the term "communication strategies" (Ernst et al. 2017; Manucci and Weber 2017). However, I only talk about communication and messages because the term strategy implicates a "more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practice […] to achieve a particular social […] or linguistic aim" (Wodak 2001, 73). It is at least debatable if, for example, demands for popular sovereignty necessarily derive from strategic considerations or if they are the true stance of a party.

[2] Although this might be an interesting research project as well.

[3] Again, whether populism is considered an ideology is not the focus of this study. Instead of "ideology" one could also refer to "ideas".

According to Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012, 9) this "is often almost impossible to answer conclusively (without getting into the populist's head)". It depends on the context and on the respective actor but since the term "strategy" rather excludes the option that populist stances are not used for strategic reasons, I reject it in this work.

Differentiation between radical right and left-wing populism

Since this study examines whether mainstream parties adopt populist but also respective elements from their right-wing and leftist host ideologies, we should distinguish between different types of populism. While populist communication is subject of empirical investigation (Ernst et al. 2017; Manucci and Weber 2017; Müller et al. 2017), previous studies did not attempt to measure specific far-right or leftist messages simultaneously. That is surprising since such communication can be found among most populist parties in Western Europe and derived from the "host ideology" of the specific actor (Bakker et al 2016, 304). As indicated in the introduction, several scholars argue that the host ideology is the actual core feature of so-called populist actors while the populist orientation itself can rather be neglected. Besides Akkerman (2017) and Rydgren (2017), several academics emphasise the main role of host ideologies for populist parties (March 2017; Pauwels 2014; Katsambekis 2017): "Given that populism is a thin rather than a full ideology, it is important not to exaggerate the substantive meaning of populism for political parties" (Pauwels 2014, 21). According to Katsambekis (2017, 205), "it is exactly the specific ideology behind targeting an 'elite' and calling upon a 'people' that defines a populist movement's essence and orientation". In accordance with these scholars, I argue that the targets excluded or criticised by populist actors depend on their host ideology. A "pure" or "inclusive" populism—not linked to any host ideology (and empirically hardly existent)—would only blame the *political* elite while praising the people (Schwörer 2016). Besides parties and politicians, no other groups are excluded from the people, because the latter is constructed in an inclusive way (Corbetta 2013; Schwörer 2016). This populist ideal type demands that the "sovereign people" (Corbetta 2013, 200)—disempowered and ignored by the political elites—regains political rights and power or speaking with Canovan (2002, 27):

> The message is, 'this is our polity, in which we, the democratic sovereign, have a right to practise government by the people; but we have been shut out of power by corrupt politicians and an unrepresentative elite who betray our interests, ignore our opinions, and treat us with contempt.'

These narratives are part of discourses among different types of populists. Besides the political elites, right-wing populism further excludes other groups from the people (Mudde 2007; Sauer et al. 2018; Taggart 2000). Populists from the far-right are sometimes called "national populists" (Pauwels 2014) or referred to as the "populist radical right" (Art 2011; Bale 2012; Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2018; Zaslove 2011)[4] and constitute the majority of populist actors in Western Europe. Nativism (Mudde 2007) or

[4]Since the term radical-right seems to be the most common one in academia, I use it in this thesis.

"ethnic nationalism" (Pauwels 2014; Rydgren 2017) is described as the core ideological element of the radical right. Both concepts are defined in a very similar way. Mudde (2007, 19) defines nativism as an ideology "which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state". Pauwels (2014, 25) talks about ethnic nationalism as an "idea that the nation and the state should coincide and that non-national elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally a threat for the homogeneous state". Accordingly, the label "radical right" mostly refers to the cultural dimension of the party's ideology and rather not to its economical stances. Both definitions suggest that the host ideology of radical right parties—referred to as nativism[5] in this book—separates society in two conflicting groups, as populists do. However, while populism does so in a vertical dimension—the ruling politicians vs. the betrayed people—nativism formulates a cleavage in a horizontal way excluding non-powerful cultural, ethnical or religious outgroups from the "good" native society. It is important to highlight that the exclusion of non-native outgroups is a trait of the radical right and not of populism itself: "while exclusionism is a central feature of radical right-wing populism, it is not part of populism per se" (Rooduijn et al. 2014, 564). Nativist or radical-right populist parties support

> an ethnocracy, or ethnic democracy, based on a distinctly ethnic Leitkultur (leading culture) that is above political debate. Yet, this fits perfectly with populism's radical interpretation of majority rule and its negative position on minority rights, which are often denounced as 'special interests'. (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013, 164)

According to Mudde, the populist right is not only nativist, but also radical. He defines radicalism "as opposition to some key features of liberal democracy, most notably political pluralism and the constitutional protection of minorities" (2007, 25). Thus, the radicalism of the populist right is linked to the exclusion of foreigners and specific non-natives (minorities' protection) and the rejection of other political actors (questioning political pluralism). As mentioned above, anti-pluralism is sometimes also described as a main element of populism (Müller 2016). I address the question whether political anti-pluralism is linked to populist or radical right messages in Sect. 5.6.

But what are the core features of left-wing populism? It is often argued that the host ideology of left-wing populist parties is "democratic socialism" (March 2017; Mudde 2004, 549; Pauwels 2014): "Democratic socialists see themselves as to the 'left' of social democracy, accept parliamentary democracy, but retain a radical commitment to systemic transformation, usually through a commitment to grassroots democracy and (especially) through a rejection of capitalism" (March and Mudde 2005, 34). While the populist right is considered "radical", this is not hold true for left populists, which are expected to accept parliamentary rules and are ideologically often closer to social democrats than to radicalism (March and Mudde 2005). Some scholars

[5]For an essay about the reasons why nationalism is no suitable concept for characterising radical right parties in Europe, see i.a. Duyvendak and Kesic (2018).

clearly reject the assumption that left parties in Western Europe are illiberal or anti-pluralist (Akkerman 2017) or see it only as a main trait of the far-right (Rydgren 2017). For that reason, I talk about "the left" in this book and not about the "radical left". Whether messages from left parties contain illiberal or anti-pluralist statements is investigated in Sect. 5.6 as well.

March (2017, 284)—as well as March and Mudde (2005, 35)—argues that newer left-wing or "social" *populist* parties in Western Europe "retain a democratic socialist ideological core, but alongside decreasing Marxist class Weltanschauung, profess to be the vox populi and not the proletarian 'vanguard'". Nevertheless, while left populists might not be fully Marxists, the socialist core determines the selection of their targets excluded from the people. According to Pauwels (2014, 24), left or "social" populists can be clearly distinguished from traditional parties from the far-left by their appeal to the people and negative references to the *economic* and *political* elite: "The difference between democratic socialists and social populists is that the latter have fused democratic socialism with an appeal to the ordinary people […] against economic and political elites who are allegedly in cahoots with each other to push through their 'neoliberal ideas'". While the divisions between the political elite and the people are mainly constructed in cultural terms by radical right populists, the elite criticised by left populists is primarily "defined in socio-economic terms, as a nexus of neoliberal political, economic and media elites, both domestic and international, that favour the interests of the 'few' against the interests of the 'many'" (Katsambekis 2017, 206). Economic actors, such as bankers, managers, private companies and the profiteers of capitalism, are portrayed—besides the political elite—as being a threat for the people and thus are evaluated in a negative way (Pelinka 2013, 7; Wirth et al. 2017, 11). Hence, left-wing populists share the rejection of the political elite and the advocacy for the common people with populists from the radical-right even though they do not accuse the political elite "to be guilty of letting 'foreigners' take over their country [and] to have acted irresponsibly by not protecting the homogeneity and security of the nation" (Katsambekis 2017, 206). However, in contrast to the populist radical right, they do not extend their exclusionary rhetoric to the horizontal dimension. They rather remain committed to their egalitarian principles and appear more liberal or libertarian in value-related issues (Decker 2006; Rensmann 2006). Left-wing or social populists such as Podemos or Syriza "construct 'the people' as a pluralist and heterogeneous collective subject that can include different social classes, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations" (Katsambekis 2017, 205). Thus, "on the cultural axis left-wing populist form the antipole to the populist radical right" (Decker 2006, 23).

Moreover, in contrast to the populist radical-right, which is "right" primarily in cultural terms[6], left-wing populists are left (or progressive) in economic *and* cultural terms but it is their orientation on the socio-economical axis, which determines their critique towards economic actors. Table 2.1 illustrates the targets different

[6]Indeed, radical right populist parties might also criticise economic elites but they are not the main target of their rhetorical attacks.

Table 2.1 Addressees of populist and nativist communication (based on: Schwörer 2016, 16)

	(Pure) populists	Populist radical right	Left-wing populists
Positive evaluations/demands towards the *people*	+	+	+
Negative evaluations/demands towards the *political elite*	+	+	+
Negative evaluations/demands towards *outgroups*	−	+	−
Negative evaluations/demands towards *economic actors*	−	±	+

Note + Mandatory trait; − not mandatory; ± not mandatory but possible

populist actors attack and further mentions the respective type of evaluation (positive/negative). Based on this differentiation, I present a specific content analytical approach that allows measures of populist, leftist and nativist actor-centred evaluations and demands in Sect. 3.2.

2.2 Party Competition and Contagion Effects

How and why parties interact in democracies is subject of numerous empirical studies and scientific debates within the last decades. Probably, the most widespread approach is spatial theories of party competition. A large amount of scholars refer to assumptions from such models in order to collect variables which might affect party behaviour and lead to contagious effects (e.g. Abou-Chadi 2014; Adams et al. 2006; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015; Meguid 2005; Rooduijn et al. 2014; Spoon et al. 2014; Van Spanje 2010). I start this section introducing the classical Downsian spatial theory. Yet, since Downs mostly considered competition in two-party systems, I move on with Sartori who—building on Downs—described the logic of party competition in multiparty systems—i.e. in those systems that are present in most Western European countries. After providing a general picture about the logic of party competition, I argue that contagion effects are likely to occur in multiparty systems. Therefore, I refer to Meguid's modified spatial model. Unlike Downs and Sartori, she emphasises the importance of *issues* for parties and claims that mainstream parties have a strong incentive to adopt issues and positions from competing niche parties. Similar assumption can be found within issue evolution theory (IET), which will be shortly addressed in this chapter as well.

As indicated in the introduction, the term contagion in the context of populism studies is not clearly operationalised (Rooduijn et al. 2014). In the context of shifting positions towards anti-immigration policies, Van Spanje (2010, 564) considers an effect as contagious "if other parties shift to more restrictive immigration policy positions after electoral success of the anti-immigration party". Yet, parties might not only change their policies or discourses due to electoral successes of competing

parties but—as mentioned in what follows—also as a consequence of shifts in public opinion or due to other factors. Widening the concept of contagion effects in this sense might overstretch its original meaning in some way. However, for the purpose of simplicity, this work refers to populist contagion effects as increases of the quantity or quality of populist messages among parties as a supposed consequence of changes in political surroundings such as shifts in public opinion, populist parties' vote share or other factors.

Rational-choice models, in particular the "Economic Theory of Democracy" formulated by Downs (1957), claim that parties as well as voters are rational actors who act according to their own interests. Parties and voters behave like companies and consumers. The main interest of political parties is to maximise their vote share while voters seek to satisfy their rational (often economically defined) interests. In general, political parties strive for three different goals, which were originally formulated by Strøm (1990). Parties attempt to increase their vote share (vote-seeking), their influence and seats in government (office-seeking) or to promote and implement their ideas and policies (policy-seeking). Yet, in order to promote their policies or to enter government, parties also need votes. Even though parties might prioritise one specific goal (Lucardie 2018, 47), these aims are rather interlinked. Speaking with Sartori (2005, 292), "parties do not necessarily formulate policies in order to win elections; nonetheless, it can well be maintained that at elections, parties are vote maximisers". The Downsian theory assumes that parties rather focus on vote-seeking than on policy "purity" and choose certain policy positions to reduce the distance between the party's position and voters' preferences. Traditional spatial theory is mostly concerned with party behaviour in two-party systems. Parties can choose two different options when competing for votes with other parties: They can programmatically or ideologically move away or towards a competing party. According to classical spatial theory, the more promising strategy for political parties (again, in two-party systems) is the latter, since this might "draw voters away from a threatening competitor" (Meguid 2005, 348). The main assumption here is that in a system with two dominant parties, voters are normally distributed among a one-dimensional left–right scale. Parties are therefore interested to catch the median voter in the middle of the spectrum. In multiparty systems however, predictions of party behaviour are much more unclear (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Adams 2001). According to Downs, "parties will strive to distinguish themselves ideologically from each other and maintain the purity of their positions" (Downs 1957, 126).

Building on the assumptions from spatial theory, Sartori (2005) focussed on party competition in systems with more than two parties. In a traditional Downsian thinking, he (2005, 305) expects that

> policies and issues are formulated in such a way as to convey to the electorate at large position-images, and the competitive preoccupation of party leaders bears precisely on the position manoeuvrings that are believed not to disturb the party's identifiers and, at the same time, to attract new voters (or to retain potential defectors).

Yet, the theoretical advance of Sartori's model "lies in its separation between two types of multiparty system in democratic regimes, namely the moderate and polarised

pluralist party system types" (Evans 2002, 156). While Downs described the tendencies of parties in two-party system to move to the centre—adapting to each other programmatically—Sartori mentions the fact that competition in other than two-party systems follows a different logic. Especially in systems with five or more relevant parties, voters are no longer located mainly in the centre of the spectrum but closer to the fringes. This polarised pluralist system consists of a larger amount of parties with considerable ideological distance. Therefore, competition is not about minimising the (programmatic) distance to the centre but often follows a centrifugal logic (Sartori 2005, 311ff). Despite the fact that Sartori expects centrifugal competition mostly in polarised systems including parties on the extreme fringes, he emphasises the possibility that party competition is not necessarily about centre positions but might also include ideological and programmatic rapprochement between centre and fringe parties. This idea is adopted in derivatives of the traditional Downsian model such as in Meguid's issue-based approach illustrated below.

Both, Downs and Sartori mostly assumed that party competition takes place "along a linear, left–right type of space" (Sartori 2005, 304). Even though Sartori does not exclude the possibility that issues and other conflict dimensions might play a role in party politics, this role is considered less important. This holds also true for multiparty systems: "When the voter is confronted with five or more parties, the information costs and the indeterminacies multiply exponentially, and some drastic simplification becomes a sheer necessity" (Sartori 2005, 304). While accepting the notion that "segmented polities surely require a multidimensional explanation for the party identifications", this does not mean that "their competition is multidimensional also" (Sartori 2005, 304).

While building on the rational vote-seeking model of political parties as postulated by Downs and Sartori, Meguid (2005) developed a new and somewhat different model of party competition applicable to multiparty systems. She (2005, 349) stresses the importance of issues for parties and voters, which was already addressed by Sartori, who, however, did not consider it as crucial aspect in election campaigns. She modified the traditional economic theory emphasising that "parties do not compete on all issues in the political space in every election" but more on specific and new issue dimensions.[7] Parties actively decide on which issues they want to compete on and this decision can "shape the importance of policy dimensions" (Meguid 2005, 349). Meguid's assumption contradicts with former approaches of spatial theory which claim that voter behaviour is caused by the ideological proximity to political parties and which does not take into account issue-based voting. Accordingly, many studies following a more traditional spatial approach were based on left–right codings of election programs. However, issue ownership and the "party's issue credibility" (Meguid 2005, 349) may play an important role for voting behaviour. Parties are able to "influence the salience of particular issues" (Van Spanje 2010) which might lead to a reaction among the other parties. At this point, Meguid shifts the perspective away from competition between two equally "strong" parties to "competition between

[7]There have been other scholars before, modifying the main assumptions of Downs: Enelow and Hinich (1990), Merrill and Grofman (1999), Shepsle (1991).

unequals". Parties from the centre are now expected to adopt issues from fringe or niche parties (even though not *extremist* parties) in order to maximise their vote share. Recent studies have therefore focussed on the impact of niche parties that promote a particular issue—such as anti-immigration (Akkerman 2015; Bale et al. 2010; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; van Spanje 2010) or green parties (Abou-Chadi 2014; Meguid 2005)—on mainstream parties' policy positions (Meijers 2017).

In contrast to neo-Downsian approaches, issue evolution theory (IET) focusses not on party position changes, but on the *engagement* in certain issues (Budge and Farlie 1983; Carmines and Stimson 1986; Petrocik 1996; Robertson 1976). Methodologically, it assesses *how frequently* a certain issue is addressed by a party regardless of the position taken on it. Yet, IET shares most arguments from Meguid's modified Downsian approach: It is assumed that party competition is about the question "which political conflicts will be translated into issues on the political agenda" (Meijers 2017). Parties—including niche parties—are able to influence the saliency of issues of competing parties. As Green-Pedersen and Mortensen (2010) and (2015) argue, agenda-setting processes are crucial for issue competition. Actors influence the party system agenda by attempting to gain attention for their main issues. Political parties prefer to focus on specific issues they "own" and which are linked to the party's ideology (Walgrave and Swert 2007). Issue competition means that different parties try "to draw attention to different topics such as conservative parties trying to emphasise issues related to law and order or defence, while left-wing parties prefer issues such as social justice, welfare and education" (Abou-Chadi 2014, 419). Several studies attempted to investigate how and under which conditions parties address new issues. For instance, scholars have analysed how the saliency of issues like health, energy, environment, ecology and immigration changes in the face of party competitors that bring these issues on the agenda (Akkerman 2015; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015; Spoon et al. 2014).

Both studies with a modified Downsian approach as well as those interested in the saliency of issues follow mostly the same assumptions. Among other factors, parties—especially those from the political mainstream—are expected to move in a certain direction when respective competing niche parties gain electoral success and when the ideological distance between the new position/issue and those of the traditional supporters is not too large (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015; Meijers 2017; Spoon et al. 2014; Van Spanje 2010).

This is where contagion theory comes into play. Why should mainstream parties decide to adopt policy positions that are popular among the public or promoted by competing niche parties when they also can ignore it? Specifically, for the purpose of this study, the question arises why we should assume that mainstream parties take over *populist communication.* Indeed, parties might be inclined to ignore issues they do not own and which are not their core concern (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015). However, at the same time, actors are influenced by the issues other political parties promote and can hardly escape them. Meguid (2005) mentions three options mainstream parties can choose in order to increase or retain its electoral success in the face of niche party competitors, which promote certain issues: First, they can

adapt to and copy the policy position promoted by the niche party what is called the "accommodative strategy" (Meguid 2005, 348). Second, they can address the issue by following a different position what Meguid (2005, 347) calls "adversarial strategy" and third, they can choose a "dismissive" strategy "by not taking any position on the niche party's issue". It is important to say that a contagion effect only occurs when parties choose the first strategy that means when they *absorb* the policy position of their competitors (Abou-Chadi 2014; Meguid 2005), and as argued here, discourses perceived as being popular among the public. Meguid (2005, 349) argues that the most promising strategy for mainstream parties in multiparty systems is the accommodative one. According to her, copying the position of the niche party challenges its exclusivity: The mainstream party undermines the issue ownership of its competitor and becomes "the rightful owner of that issue" (Meguid 2005, 349). This is especially the case since the mainstream party can count on "legislative experience and governmental effectiveness" and thereby appear as the more competent choice (Meguid 2005, 349). Moreover, mainstream parties can "sell" its position to a larger voter base than niche parties establishing "name-brand recognition" (Meguid 2005, 349). Within IET studies, similar assumption can be found. While previous theoretical accounts "have had much more to say about ignorance and selective issue emphases than about issue engagement and responsiveness" (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015)—in line with the traditional assumption that parties are conservative organisations that rather resist change (Harmel and Janda 1994; Panebianco 1988)—more recent studies suggest that issue engagement is more the rule than the exception (Abou-Chadi 2014; Akkerman 2015; Hutter and Vliegenthart 2018; Spoon et al. 2014). Even though parties might prefer to ignore certain issues, in reality, they are constraint to address them since institutionalised debates in parliaments pay attention to them and because the media asks for the party's position on the issue (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015). This might change the "party system agenda"—the main issues political actors address in a party system—which depends on the "perceptions across all parties that certain issues are more important than others" (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015, 749). Interestingly, already Sartori (2005, 122) spoke about the "law of contagion" in his well-known work on "Parties and Party Systems" from 1976. Even though this law is not specified and can rather be considered an anecdote in his book, it refers to the supposed fact that larger parties adopt certain behaviours of smaller parties.

Regarding populist ideas and messages, a large number of scholars claim that mainstream parties indeed choose the accommodative strategy in the face of electoral successes of populist parties (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Mair 2002; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde 2004). Furthermore, and as mentioned in detail in Sect. 2.3, several studies concerned with contagious effects of nativist and anti-immigration stances found that mainstream parties indeed copy respective positions and issues promoted by competing right-wing parties. Accordingly, I expect that mainstream parties do not refuse to become more populist and nativist in their election manifestos but introduce respective messages promoted by their competitors or which are popular within society.

To sum up, new spatial approaches and IET address slightly different aspects of shifts in party behaviour but both use mostly the same assumptions and claim that mainstream parties choose accommodative strategies when confronted with agenda setters from the political fringes. In what follows, I formulate more specific hypotheses, which indicate when populist, nativist and left contagion effects are most likely to happen. Yet, first, it should be argued why assumption from spatial approaches focussing on contagion effects of *policy positions* and *issues* should also be valid for *communicative elements* this study attempts to measure.

As mentioned above, studies analysing shifts in party behaviour mostly focus on *issues* or *policy positions.* As explained in the methodological Sect. (3.2), I measure demands and evaluations towards targets—the people, the political and economic elite, outgroups and immigration—which are called *messages*, *communicative content or discourses.* Thus, populist, nativist and leftist messages might contain policy positions when they raise demands (e.g. less power for political parties; expelling immigrants) or characterisations of certain groups (e.g. negative evaluation of the political elite). I see no reason why the main assumptions from spatial theory and IET should not be applied to this communicative content. While demands often represent policy positions, one could argue that evaluating the people or political competitors, economic players or immigration is even less costly than implementing a new policy agenda in election manifestos. Such evaluations might not change the ideological character of a party to the same extend as the introduction of new policy demands do—even though such evaluations might also have some ideological implications: Since the content of communicated statements might raise expectations within society—e.g. a strong focus on anti-outgroup messages might be perceived as hypocritical if this is not reflected in concrete positions—parties might not change their main communicative content daily. It requires some reasons, pressures or incentives. However, it could be assumed that such communicational shifts are at least as likely to occur than shifts in policy positions. Studies investigating the contagion effect of populist messages on mainstream parties such as Rooduijn et al. (2014) explicitly refer to hypotheses from spatial theories.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the same assumptions from spatial theories are also used for analyses of other types of contagion effects. This is particularly true for research on candidate selection and quotas within parties. For example, it is investigated whether political parties change the procedures of candidate selection in the face of external pressure (Cross and Blais 2012; Reiser 2018; Davidson-Schmich 2010). In particular, it is expected that innovations in one party will rise pressure on the others "to mimic them" (Cross and Blais 2012). For example, Pilet and Cross (2014, 7) argue that "once one principal party in a system has democratised its procedures for selecting the leader it becomes more difficult for its competitors to resist similar change, especially when the more inclusive party enjoys electoral success" (see also Scarrow et al. 2001). As shortly mentioned above and further explained below, electoral successes of competing parties is a crucial variable for spatial and issue evolution approaches.

In sum, I assume that assumptions from rational-choice literature can be used in order to explain different types of party behaviour: Shifts in dominant issues and

policies, mechanisms of candidate selection as well as changes in communicative content or discourses of parties.

Hypotheses

But under which specific conditions are parties expected to change their behaviour? Originally developed for candidate selection methods, Barnea and Rahat (2007) provide a three-level approach that enables identifying different influential factors, which are useful in order to structure the following hypotheses among three dimensions. First, parties might react to developments within the *party system* arising from competition and interaction between parties. This dimension includes factors such as electoral successes of competing parties (Hypothesis 1 and 2), ideological orientations of competitors (H4), government participation (H5) or own electoral failure (H6). Second, the *political system level* represents the "general cultural, social and political environment" or "the spirit of the time" (Barnea and Rahat 2007, 378). This is where public opinion comes into play, which is expected to be an important factor that influences party behaviour as well as outbreaks of political crises. These elements are considered in Hypothesis 3 and 7. The last dimension named by Barnea and Rahat (2007, 378) is the "intra-party level", which includes "interactions between individuals, factions" and other groupings. Specific variables deriving from this dimension are difficult to determine and to operationalise if the sample includes a variety of parties from different periods and countries as it is the case in this study. However, as argued below, inner-party changes can also be understood as events caused by external factors such as shifts in public moods and successes of competing parties, which are already captured by the other two dimensions. In what follows, I formulate hypotheses based on the respective variables, which are expected to influence party behaviour by spatial/IET approaches.

First, and starting with the party system level, Meguid emphasises the important role of competing parties in shifting positions of political competitors. In this regard, she speaks out for bringing "parties back into party analysis" (Meguid 2005, 347). There is strong empirical support, that the success of competitor parties causes an absorption of a promoted policy position and/or an engagement in the promoted issue of the rival party (Meijers 2017; Spoon et al. 2014; Van Spanje 2010). The electoral success of niche parties "exerts some pressure on mainstream parties" (Abou-Chadi 2014, 423) and forces them to respond to policy positions of the former. We find particularly strong support for the assumption that mainstream parties adopt nativist or anti-immigration stances from competing parties (Abou-Chadi 2014; Akkerman 2015; Bale et al. 2010; Carvalho 2013; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; Van Spanje 2010; Vrânceanu 2019). The same could be assumed for messages against the political and economic elite: According to Mudde (2004) and several other scholars (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017, 22; Mair 2002, 92; Mazzoleni 2008, 57; Mény and Surel 2002, 13), mainstream political actors do not ignore populist and anti-elitist rhetoric but actively adopt it. Accordingly, centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties might increase their use of populist, nativist and leftist messages

when the respective competing party is gaining success. Therefore, I formulate the first hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Mainstream parties are affected by contagions when respective competing populist, nativist and leftist parties gain electoral support, in particular:
>
> > **H1a**: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more populist messages when competing populist parties gain electoral support.*
> > **H1b**: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more nativist messages when competing far-right parties gain electoral support.*
> > **H1c***:Centre-left and centre-right parties use more messages against economic elites when competing left parties gain electoral support.*

As Chapter 1 indicated and as explained in detail in Sect. 3.1, within the countries selected for this study, new populist actors recently established themselves. One could argue that especially the electoral success of "new" or former unsuccessful political parties should exert pressure on mainstream parties. According to Pallaver et al. (2018, 11), the economic crises in Europe emerging in 2008 as well as the "refugee crisis" in 2015 influenced public opinion and the political landscape and lead to the "third wave of populist parties".[8] Due to an increased influx of refugees since 2015, existing radical-right parties such as the Austrian FPÖ profited in electoral terms from an increased public salience of the immigration issue. Yet, also new actors emerged or transformed themselves like the German AfD, which changed from a Eurosceptical, politically rather irrelevant political actor[9] to a "new" successful nativist party in the end of 2015. On the other hand, the social consequences of the economic crisis in Southern Europe lead to the emergence of new left-wing and anti-austerity movements like Podemos in Spain and the populist (but not clearly left) M5S in Italy (Della Porta et al. 2017).

One could argue that the rise of such new relevant parties—their (expectable) entry in parliament (or electoral breakthrough)—is an extraordinary situation for the party system and might put established parties under pressure. Speaking with Sartori (2005, 108), (new) parties either need to have coalition or blackmail potential in order to be "relevant".[10] However, since there still is to be explored "how parties adjust

[8] According to Pallaver et al. (2018, 11), the first wave occurred in the 1970s due to the emergence of "citizens' protest parties, right-wing and anti-taxation parties" such as the "Swiss People's Party (1971), followed by Front National (1972), the Danish People's Party (1972) and the Norwegian Progress Party (1973) as well as Vlaams Bloc (1979) in Belgium". The second wave emerged in the late 1980s and in the early 1990s with the Sweden Democrats (1988), the German far-right Republicans (1983) and the regionalist Northern League in Italy (1989).

[9] According to opinion polls, the AfD gained only around 4% of the votes shortly before the first Syrian refugees arrived in 2015. Data can be found on URL: https://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/dimap.htm.

[10] As argued on the following pages, I describe the Italian Five Star Movement, the Spanish Podemos, the Alternative for Germany and the Austrian Team Stronach as new relevant parties. While it can be questioned whether these parties had coalition potential from the beginning, their blackmail potential can hardly be denied. Vote shares of at least 10% during the election campaigns (except Team Stronach with about 8,5% according to opinion polls during the 2013 campaign) also had an

their ideologies in response to an alternative type of party behaviour […]: namely, the entry of new parties into the party system" (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009, 842), I can hardly rely on results of former studies. In fact, there seem to be a lack of studies investigating the effect of new challenger parties on traditional political actors. Despite its title, neither the work of Harmel and Svåsand (1997) about "the influence of new parties on old parties' platforms" examines whether parties change due to the establishment of new political actors. Yet, they argue that new formations are a threat for established parties when "there is evidence (i.e. in votes and/or seats) that the threat is real" (Harmel and Svåsand 1997, 317).[11] In a different context, Schwörer and Fernández-García (2020a) found that mainstream parties only react to radical right parties by demonising them when the latter recently experienced an electoral breakthrough. Even though this study did not measure populist discourses, it revealed that new relevant populist radical right parties are considered as a serious competitor by mainstream parties, which actively engage in negative campaigning about these newcomers. In this respect, I assume at least a short-term effect on mainstream parties when new niche parties emerge successfully for the first time:

Hypothesis 2: Mainstream parties are affected by contagions when a new relevant niche party becomes a competitor, in particular:

H2a: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more populist messages when a new relevant populist party becomes a competitor.*
H2b: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more nativist messages when a new relevant far-right party becomes a competitor.*
H2c: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more messages against economic elites when a new relevant left party becomes a competitor.*

Leaving the party system level and moving on with the political system dimension, public opinion is seen as another crucial factor that influences party behaviour in both neo-Downsian approaches and IET: "Of all the factors that possibly affect party policy change, the most thoroughly examined is the expectation that changes in public opinion cause parties to change their positions" (Fagerholm 2016, 505). Stimson et al. (1995) have been one of the first addressing the impact of public opinion on political actors' decisions. They conclude that "national institutions reflect public opinion" because decision makers are responsive to respective moods in society (Stimson et al. 1995, 558). Based on left–right codings of party manifestos and "Eurobarometer surveys of citizens' left–right self-placements", Adams et al. (2004) argue that parties react to public opinion by adjusting their ideological positions "when opinion clearly shifts away from the party" (p. 608). Even though more

impact on potential majorities in each country. Speeking with Sartori (2005, 108), these parties affect "the tactics of party competition" and alter "the direction of the competition—by determining a switch from centripetal to centrifugal competition either leftward, rightward or in both directions"(or towards a more "populist" competition).

[11] Harmel and Svåsand did not measure party positions before *and* after the entry of new niche parties (far-right Norwegian and Danish Progress parties). Hence, the specific effect of the establishment of new parties is not taken into account.

recent studies suggest that *niche parties* change their positions due to opinion shifts within their *own supporter base* rather than due to public opinion in general (Ezrow et al. 2011; Meyer 2013), this is not observed for *mainstream parties*. Mudde (2013) assumes that public opinion even has a stronger impact on parties' policy positions towards immigration than the success of competing radical right parties. He claims that in countries without successful parties from the far-right, the political mainstream still adopted anti-immigration stances due to pressure from public opinion. Hence—as mentioned above—contagion effects might not only refer to the copying of discourses form competing parties but further to the adoption of communicative elements or positions from the public, when they become salient. In sum, previous research suggests that mainstream parties adjust their policy positions to changes in public opinion in order to attract respective voters (Fagerholm 2016).

Regarding populist, nativist and left communication means that parties might use respective messages, when certain populist- and migration-related sentiments as well as "economic" moods increase within societies. Section 3.2 describes the data and operationalisations of these moods in detail. So far, I formulate Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: Mainstream parties are affected by contagions when respective shifts in public opinion occur, in particular:

H3a: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more populist messages when respective populist moods are on the rise.*
H3b: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more nativist messages when respective immigration-related moods are on the rise.*
H3c: *Centre-left and centre-right parties use more messages against economic elites when respective economy-related moods are on the rise.*

Public opinion and pressure from competing niche parties might further account for other explanations for shifts in party behaviour discussed in the literature. In this regard, personal changes within political parties are sometimes considered as a factor that might change the agenda of a party from the "intra-party level" (Barnea and Rahat 2007). Especially when new leaders or ideologically different factions within the party gain power, it can be assumed that this will also be reflected in the policy positions, main issues or communicative content of the party (Meyer 2013). However, so far there is few empirical evidence that confirms this argument (Fagerholm 2016). Harmel et al. 1995 claim that new leaders and dominant factions matter and make a difference. Other studies did not find evidence for that assumption (Bille 1997; Meyer 2013) or do at least conclude, "neither a cohesive dominant faction nor new leadership is, by itself, a necessary condition for substantial party change" (Harmel and Tan 2003, 421). One could rather argue that inner-party ideological shifts might also be a result of other factors such as shifts in public opinion or success of certain competing parties, which put pressure on the political mainstream. Hence, while admitting, that this study does not account directly for changes within the intra-party level, I argue that the nomination of new leaders itself depend on certain factors, which are partially captured by the variables selected for this study. In addition, I analyse party manifestos and websites statements, which are both published as official

documents of the party (or at least in its name) and therefore are not considered to depend on individual traits of leaders to the same extent as, for instance, campaign speeches (Hansen 2008, 203).

Moving again to the party system dimension, ideology is considered of playing a crucial role in changes of party behaviour. Scholars—mostly concerned with the impact of anti-immigration and green parties—found that parties are more responsive to actors from the same ideological family (Abou-Chadi 2014; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015; Spoon et al. 2014). The main argument here is that parties adjust their policies or main issues to competing parties whose voters resemble the own electorate because a radical shift towards a very different position might cause a loss of votes from the core constituency. The issues radical right parties and voters promote and prefer are more similar to what centre-right voters and mainstream parties favour than to the agenda of social democrats (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015; Walgrave and De Swert 2007). I expect that specific nativist parties and public moods might influence mainly the communication of centre-right mainstream parties. Social democratic parties may also become more critical towards immigration (Van Spanje 2010) but to a lower extent due to their solidarity with vulnerable and "less well-to-do" groups like refugees (Hinnfors et al. 2012, 589). On the other hand, messages against the economic elite might be more adopted by centre-left mainstream parties since they—and their voters—are more sceptical towards the power of big enterprises and more in favour of redistribution than the centre-right (Hinnfors et al. 2012; March 2017). Populist communication consisting of people-centred and anti-elitist messages is neither left nor right but applicable to all types of political actors and host ideologies. Therefore, I assume that a contagion effect regarding populist communication affects all mainstream parties, regardless of their ideological affiliation. The following hypotheses refer mostly to mainstream parties within the same party system. Yet, since the same assumptions are made for every country, they should also be valid in a cross-national perspective.

H4a: *Both, centre-right and centre-left parties use and adopt populist messages to a similar extent.*
H4b: *Centre-right mainstream parties use and adopt more nativist messages than the centre-left.*
H4b: *Centre-left mainstream parties use and adopt more messages against economic elites than the centre-right.*

Some scholars further claim that government and opposition status affects party behaviour although empirical research does not provide clear results in this regard. Two different theoretical assumptions can be distinguished. First, one part of the scientific literature argues that opposition parties are less constraint by economic conditions, international commitments or other external factors and can therefore easier respond or adapt to new demands (Hutter and Vliegenthart 2018). In addition, Van Spanje (2010, 568) argues that government parties "have their own track record on the issue" and "their policies are not independent of those of their predecessors". Accordingly, government parties should be less prone to change positions or main issues.

On the other side it is argued that parties in opposition are less inclined to respond to challenger parties than parties in government. Government parties are in the focus of criticism and more forced to respond to external pressure than opposition parties (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010). Furthermore, it is argued that "shifts by government parties are more visible to the electorate because of higher media attention" (Fagerholm 2016, 505) and as a consequence parties in government should be more inclined to shift policy positions (Meyer 2013). Regarding *populist* communication (populist) parties are expected to tone down their radical rhetoric once in government as the inclusion-moderation thesis suggests (Bernhard 2020; Krause and Wagner 2019). Once in government parties are constraint to make compromises and to deliberate—especially in coalition governments like in the four countries under analysis. Portraying the whole political elite as corrupt and not interested in the needs of the population might cause trouble with the coalition partner—even though empirical studies confirming this assumption are still lacking. Thus, despite different point of views on the effect of government participation on parties' discourses and policies, I think it is more reasonable to assume that incumbent parties tame populist elements in their communication. Especially regarding populist communication—aiming at criticising the whole political elite—parties in coalition governments should be more cautious to evaluate all other political actors in a negative way. Similar assumptions could be made for critiques towards economic elites, immigration and outgroups. It might be more difficult for government parties to (rhetorically) attack immigrants or powerful economic actors since such discourses raise expectations for concrete measures. Opposition parties are not in a governing position and therefore not obliged to translate their demands and narratives into laws. Accordingly, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H5: *Mainstream parties in government are less prone to use populist, nativist and leftist messages.*

Additionally, and remaining on the party system level, political parties are sometimes expected to be more prone to change when they are facing an electoral crisis. Abou-Chadi (2014, 424) argues that "winners and losers of elections thus have different incentives to respond to niche party success" and that "parties that have lost votes in a previous election should be more likely to shift their position or contribute to the politicisation of a new issue". Abou-Chadi found different support for this assumption depending on whether immigration or green issues are adopted by mainstream parties. Scholars like Somer-Topcu (2009), Ezrow et al. (2011) and Walgrave and Nuytemans (2009) rather confirm the assumption while others neglect that electoral losses—mostly based on the last election result—are a sufficient condition for party changes (Adams et al. 2006; Janda et al. 1995; Schumacher et al. 2013). Yet, according to Fagerholm (2016, 504) and based on a comprehensive literature review, "there is evidence that parties respond to past (national) elections" but mostly when "this election was held recently and resulted in a considerable electoral loss". Hypothesis 6 considers the electoral success of mainstream parties as a potential explanation in this study. Yet, since parties are expected to react more to recent developments, I observe whether parties use more populist, nativist and leftist messages when they

lost votes *since* the *last election* referring to opinion polls published shortly before the subsequent election.

H6: *Mainstream parties use a higher amount of populist, nativist and leftist messages, when they recently experienced and electoral decline.*

Jumping to the political system level, changing global conditions are sometimes mentioned as factors that influence party behaviour; however, according to Fagerholm (2016, 506), this is mostly due to global economic changes. One main argument here is that economic globalisation constrains political parties—especially centre-left parties—to change their agenda. Since capital is mobile and "globally networked", a left-wing economic agenda based on redistributive taxation and a strong welfare state cannot be maintained (Ward et al. 2011, 510). When national governments force big enterprises to pay higher taxes, the latter "will tend to relocate where tax rates and social costs of production are low" (Ward et al. 2011, 510). Furthermore, due to deregulated financial markets, powerful investors are able to threaten governments they dislike with currency crises. Fagerholm (2016, 506) mentions several scholars who find some evidence that parties react to such global economic processes by adjusting their policy positions (Adams et al. 2009; Haupt 2010; Ward et al. 2011). However, these global changes do hardly occur suddenly, are difficult to operationalise and rather resemble modernisation processes. Unlike crises as a "temporary worsening of the situation",[12] globalisation and modernisation processes are *constantly* ongoing processes of change (Spier 2010, 54) and are therefore not considered in this work.

Yet, besides global processes, sudden events such as economic crises, natural disasters or terrorist attacks—which can be identified and operationalised in an easier way—are considered of having an influence on political discourses as well (Caiani and Graziano 2019; Mader and Schoen 2019). Sudden "external shocks" put certain issues on the agenda or reinforce the saliency of existing topics (Aldrich 2019; Meyer and Schoen 2017). Two particular *events* can be identified within the period of examination, which might have influenced party communication: The European economic crisis and the so-called refugee crisis. However, I argue that it is very unlikely that mainstream parties become more critical towards economic actors (economic crisis) or towards immigration ("refugee crisis") when public opinion is not shifting in a certain way or when competing radical-right parties do not profit in electoral terms. At least there would be no incentive for parties to change its communicative content when voters and citizens do not care. Therefore, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H7: *A simple outbreak of a crisis does not affect communication of mainstream parties when it is not accompanied by respective shift in public opinion (or in niche parties' vote share).*

[12] "vorübergehende Zuspitzung der Lage".

2.3 A Populist Contagion? The State of Research

While the previous chapter formulated hypotheses to explain the communicative shifts of mainstream parties, now we move to the state of research regarding the effect of populist, nativist and leftist communication on the political mainstream. Mudde (2004, 2019) describes the tendency of Western European mainstream parties to increasingly adopt populist messages in their discourses. Rooduijn et al. (2014) refers to this phenomenon using the term "populist contagion" expecting that mainstream parties increase their amount of populist ideas in party documents in the face of pressure from competing populist actors. In general, *contagion* in research on political parties usually describes the fact that parties *absorb* issues, policy positions or communicative content promoted by competing parties (Meguid 2005; Rooduijn et al. 2014; Van Spanje 2010). As the previous chapter has illustrated, besides the adoption of content from political competitors, there is strong evidence that mainstream parties also adopt issues and policy positions, which are particularly salient within the public—although this has not been investigated so far for populist content (Fagerholm 2016). Accordingly, besides the copying of political competitors, responding to public moods by adopting respective policies, issues or discourses which are salient in society is referred to as contagious effect as well in this work.

As explained in detail in the introduction, several scholars in the field of social sciences assume that a populist contagion is taking place. Yet, a very small amount of studies is concerned with this issue.[13] So far, only two longitudinal and comparative studies exist, which analyse whether discourses in election manifestos of mainstream parties become more populist (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Moreover, Stier et al. 2017 provide a longitudinal analysis of Facebook posts published by German mainstream parties investigating whether they emphasise similar issues than the radical right populist AfD and the PEGIDA movement. However, they do not directly assess whether the success of the AfD contributed to a populistisation of mainstream parties' discourses but only if these actors talk about similar issues.

Rooduijn et al. (2014) provide a first comprehensive longitudinal and comparative analysis of mainstream parties' election manifestos assessing whether they become more populist in the face of populist parties' success and due to their own electoral decline. Conducting a quantitative content analysis of 87 manifestos from 33 political parties in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK over four different periods, they could not find support for the contagion thesis. They conclude that mainstream parties' manifestos did not become more populist since the 1980s and electoral success of populist parties as well as own electoral failure had no effect on the degree of populism in these manifestos. Following a very similar approach, Manucci and Weber (2017) analyse 111 party manifestos from Swiss, German, Austrian, Dutch

[13] In general, there are few empirical findings about the consequences of populism. This is true for the effect of populism on policies (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013; Jacobs 2010), on democratic quality (Huber und Schimpf 2016), on the media (Hameleers and Vliegenthart 2019; Manucci and Weber 2017) and on public opinion (Wirz et al. 2018).

and British parties between the 1970s and the 2010s. Selecting one election manifesto per decade for every relevant political party, they examine whether the programs have become more populist since the 1970s. The study builds on the assumption that populist parties gained electoral strength during the period of examination and that their success had an effect on the communication of the established parties. However, they could not find clear support for this assumption and observed different findings for the single countries.

Both of these studies can be considered as pioneer research since they were the first ones measuring explicit *populist* messages over time. Yet, their findings cannot confirm the widespread assumption that populist messages are increasingly adopted by the political mainstream.

We know more about the impact of *radical right* issues on mainstream parties' discourses and policy stances (Abou-Chadi 2014; Akkerman 2015; Bale et al. 2010; Carvalho 2013; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; Van Spanje 2010; Vrânceanu 2019). While longitudinal data regarding *populist messages* in party manifestos is not available in established data archives and therefore needs to be gathered by the researcher, databases such as the manifesto project provide collected data regarding *immigration and left–right* issues and policy positions. Many empirical studies assessing the effect of the radical-right on mainstream parties refer to this data. Abou-Chadi (2014), for example, conducts a longitudinal cross-section analysis for sixteen Western European countries since the 1980s until 2011. Using regression analyses, he concludes that "the success of radical right parties provides an incentive for established parties (especially of the moderate right) to shift their position towards a cultural protectionist profile and to emphasise the immigration issue" (Abou-Chadi 2014, 433). Based on data from the same archive, Wagner and Meyer (2017) examine whether mainstream parties in 17 European countries emphasise on liberal-authoritarianism and move ideologically to the right. They conclude (p. 98), "over time, the mainstream has shifted towards the right and increasingly addressed liberal-authoritarian issues in their party programmes". Yet, they do not explain whether these shifts occur due to the success of competing radical right parties, shifts in public opinion or because of other factors. Based on data from expert surveys on 75 parties in 11 Western European countries, Van Spanje (2010, 578) found evidence that the electoral success of "anti-immigration parties has a contagion effect on the immigration stances of other parties". However, this was found mostly for parties in opposition. Very similar findings are provided by Akkerman (2015). Conducting a content analysis of national election manifestos in seven countries between 1989 and 2011, she concludes "that the electoral success of the radical right has an impact on the policy agenda of mainstream parties. The saliency of immigration and integration issues has significantly increased over the past decades in countries with electorally successful radical right parties" (Akkerman 2015, 62).

Thus, while little research has been conducted regarding the contagious potential of populism on mainstream parties, several studies assessed the impact of the radical right on immigration stances of competing parties. Regarding the third particular message type I attempt to measure—messages against economic elites—no longitudinal or comparative studies are available so far. As mentioned above, those

studies measuring anti-elitist messages focus on messages against the political elite or do not explicitly distinguish between political and economic elites (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Moreover, a considerable amount of literature is concerned with *radical-right parties* and their influence on mainstream parties and a smaller number focusses on the effect of *green parties* on their competitors (Abou-Chadi 2014; Spoon et al. 2014). Yet, much less is known about "the effect of far-left parties on mainstream parties" (Williams and Ishiyama 2018, 445). Those studies observing the effect of left parties do not focus on economic anti-elitism but mostly on euroscepticism (Meijers 2017; Williams and Ishiyama 2018).

Concluding, we know little about mainstream parties' reaction to pressure from populist and leftist parties or to respective shifts in public opinion. Furthermore, while strong evidence has been found that mainstream parties adopt anti-immigration stances in the face of external pressure,[14] we do not know whether populist, nativism or leftist messages have a stronger impact on mainstream parties.

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[14]However, previous research did not apply the same measurements for anti-outgroup and anti-immigration messages as this study attempts to do.

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Chapter 3
Study Design and Analytical Approach

In what follows, I present the cases I attempt to examine as well as the textual sources I analyse according to populist, nativist and leftist criteria. The study is based on a longitudinal design, which further implies cross-country comparisons. I adopt different content analytical approaches in order to measure the quantity and quality of populist, nativist and leftist messages. These methodological aspects are explained in detail in this chapter as well as different categories of the (populist, nativist, leftist) elements to be measured.

3.1 Research Design and Sources

This study attempts to identify populist, nativist and leftist shifts in mainstream parties' communication. In order to evaluate whether a populist, nativist or left contagion is taking place and what that means for mainstream political parties, I first trace changes in the *degree* of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages over time. In a second step, I investigate the *content* of populist, nativist and leftist messages using a more qualitative approach aiming to compare the nature of such messages between mainstream and respective niche parties.[1] Additionally, I assess how the *content* of populist, nativist and leftist messages develops *over time*

[1] Meguid (2005) mentions three characteristics of niche parties. First, these parties "politicize sets of issues which were previously outside the dimension of party competition" (347) such as green issues or immigration (the same is true for the people-elite cleavage). Moreover, "niche parties appeal to groups of voters that may cross-cut traditional partisan alignments" (348), so their issues do not coincide with classical lines of division (e.g. labour and capital). Last, niche parties focus on a smaller number of topics than traditional parties, such as immigration or ecological issues. These characteristics apply to parties with a primarily populist agenda and discourse. Yet, left-wing populists focus on several issues which coincide with traditional lines of political division such as taxes, global solidarity, anti-capitalism and redistribution. Nevertheless, due to practical reasons, I refer to populist, radical right and leftist parties as niche parties in this work.

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and in the face of external pressure.[2] Hence, I focus on both the *degree* of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages and their concrete *content* and evaluate how the latter changes over time. At this point, the study further addresses the question whether illiberal and anti-pluralist elements can be identified within populist, nativist or leftist messages of mainstream parties and whether they increase in periods of external pressure.

Answering these research questions requires a comparative design including several dimensions. First, I compare populist, nativist and leftist messages over different *periods*. This longitudinal analysis allows identifying clues for contagions within the single countries. Moreover, I compare such developments *among different countries* and examine whether the explanations for communicative shifts formulated in Sect. 2.2 account also for observations across countries. Last, I compare the degrees of the *measured content.* More precisely, it is examined whether populist, nativist or leftist messages are primarily adopted by mainstream parties.

Moving on with the cases selected for this study, it first should be noted that Mudde's populist Zeitgeist thesis—which is to be examined in this study—is restricted to Western Europe. Yet, within Western Europe, Mudde portrays a general trend among mainstream parties to adopt populist discourses. Therefore, I do not restrict my analysis to a single country but seek to identify similar developments in several Western European countries. First, I attempt to find indications of populist contagions. This requires a selection of countries where populist parties—independently from their host ideology—are relevant actors (Mudde 2004) since successes of competing populist parties are considered a crucial explanation for populist discursive shifts of mainstream parties. This is the case in almost all Western European party systems. However, I further want to assess whether specific leftist and rightist discourses are adopted by the mainstream. Therefore, I need to select countries where these different types of communication can be expected. This is most likely in party systems containing radical right and leftist parties or, more precisely, niche parties which lead respective discourses. Thus, the parent population covers all Western European party systems with successful populist parties (I) and radical right parties (II) and with those actors excluding economic elites from the people (III). From these populations, samples are to be selected that enable empirical analyses about the contagious effect of populism and the other concepts.

However, before, it should be noted that more practical reasons restrict case selection in a certain way. As mentioned in previous studies (Schwörer and Romero-Vidal 2020; Schwörer and Fernández-García 2020a), the methodological approach illustrated below—a classical content analysis—requires an excellent knowledge of the languages in which the text sources are produced. Since I analyse websites' posts and election manifestos without computer-based approaches, I need to read and code the whole text sample manually. Since I have an excellent knowledge of German, Italian and Spanish but less skills of other languages such as French, Dutch or those from

[2]External pressure exists when considerable increases on the scores of the independent variables occur such as successes of respective niche parties (populist, radical right or leftist) or increases in respective public moods.

Scandinavia, respective countries are excluded from the sample. Nevertheless, the sample selected for this study consists of countries where most criteria for answering the research questions are met. In this sense, parties in Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria are analysed at four (or five regarding the second type of text source described below) different points in time. The first criteria, the existence of successful populist parties is met in all of these countries.[3] Moreover, in Italy, Germany and Austria some populist parties are also nativists (Northern League/Brothers of Italy; Alternative for Germany in Germany; Freedom Party/Alliance for the Future in Austria). In addition, parties attacking economic elites constitute further relevant competitors in all countries except Austria (M5S in Italy; Podemos/Izquierda Unida in Spain; Die Linke in Germany)—even though only since 2013/2015 in Italy and Spain. While the Italian Five Star Movement can hardly be considered a far left party, it declared actors such as banks and powerful economic groups as principal enemies of the nation in 2013 (Schwörer 2016; Corbetta 2013). It is true that the movement became less critical towards economic actors in the following years (Font et al. 2019) but it can be expected that mainstream parties might be affected by the M5S' hostility towards such groups at least in 2013.

While focusing on Western European party systems with relevant populist competitors, the selection of two central and two southern European countries might further reveal specific communicative patterns for southern and central European mainstream parties. In particular, in Southern Europe, the European economic crisis had a strong negative impact on the countries' economies and societies providing opportunities for new populist actors (M5S and Podemos) and discourses against economic elites (Della Porta et al. 2017). While the economic crisis did not affect Austria and Germany to the same extent as Italy and Spain, the so-called refugee crisis had a larger impact on people's attitudes and politics in both central European countries and provided discoursive opportunities for nativist parties (AfD and FPÖ). Annex 1 illustrates that the number of immigrants from non-EU countries increased substantially only in Austria and Germany in 2015. Hence, focusing on central and southern European countries might allow to assess the contribution of crises as external events to shifts in mainstream parties' discourses (Hypothesis 7).

It should be noted that in all four countries *new* populist parties experienced their electoral breakthrough in the face of these emerging "crises" and during the period of examination: Podemos in Spain (left and populist), the Five Star Movement in Italy (neither right nor left but populist), Team Stronach (TS) in Austria (neither right nor left but populist) and the Alternative for Germany (radical right and populist) (Rooduijn et al. 2019). As mentioned in Sect. 2.2, I further observe whether the establishment of these new actors seems to influence mainstream parties' communication. Accordingly, the country sample allows testing Hypothesis 2 (mainstream

[3] Zulianello (2019) classifies the populist parties in these countries as "non-integrated" or "negatively integrated" populists. According to him, both types are "anti-system" parties in ideological terms since they challenge "constitutional limitations of popular sovereignty and pluralism" (Zulianello 2019, 15). Yet, as mentioned above, some scholars doubt that *left-wing* populist parties such as Podemos or Die Linke are illiberal and anti-pluralist (Akkerman 2015; March 2017; March and Mudde 2005).

parties are influenced by new relevant actors) but also assessing whether electoral successes of consolidated "traditional" populist parties (FPÖ; LN; Die Linke) might have an influence on mainstream parties' communication.

One might argue that it could be useful to include a contrast case without new emerging populist parties. However, the given cases also provide sufficient time units without new successful actors. In Germany, for example, there are three periods without a new relevant populist party. Thus, for the German case—but to some extent also in Austria and Italy—it can be observed whether electoral developments of "traditional" populist actors (as well as public moods) might have an influence on mainstream parties' communication without being further affected by new emerging populist parties.

In sum, I rely on a most similar system design focusing on Western European countries with successful populist, left and radical right parties. Moreover, the sample includes "new" niche parties as well as consolidated populist, nativist and leftist actors and countries affected by different types of "crises". Yet, besides theoretical considerations, there are also more practical arguments for choosing Italy, Spain, Austria and Germany as cases. As mentioned above, methodological requirements are one important practical reason. Furthermore, this study includes *public opinion* as an independent variable expected to affect discourses of mainstream parties. Therefore, I need to focus on countries where data regarding populist-, nativist- and economy-related moods is available. Such data is provided by Eurobarometer for countries of the European Union but only since 2005. This excludes countries with a lower number of national elections since then such as France. The availability of textual material regarding the second type of source—official statements on party websites—further restricts case selection. Most of these statements are available only since 2008 or 2009. Yet, as data shows (Lewis et al. 2018), leftist and right-wing populists recently increased their vote shares to a very considerable extent in Europe meaning that significant changes in public support for populist parties are captured by a period starting after 2005. Thus, there is enough variance on the independent variables in order to expect a respective contagion effect on mainstream parties since 2005.

As main text source, I choose election manifestos for national general elections. Overall, 52 election manifestos of 16 different parties/coalitions are coded. Table 3.1 summarises the cases and selected periods. Election manifestos are "the official statements of intended policy issued by political parties at the beginning of election campaigns" (Robertson 2004, 295).[4] They can be considered rather formal, institutionalised discourses of parties but are also used as campaign material by parties and politicians (Eder et al. 2017). As the first pretests revealed, election manifestos also contain communicative elements such as evaluations of political opponents as well as positive and negative references to other groups. To mention only one example, parties sometimes try to gather support for intended policies by emphasising their

[4] An exception seems to be Danish election manifestos at least those coded by the party manifesto project (URL: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/) which are rather "drafts, speeches, local platform or opposition research notes" (Hansen 2008, 215).

Table 3.1 Case selection for election manifestos

Country	Time frame	Parties
Spain	2008; 2011; 2015; 2016	PP (2008; 11; 15); PSOE Podemos (2015; 16); United Left (2008; 11; 15); Ciudadanos (2015; 16)
Italy	2006; 2008; 2013; 2018	Centre-right (FI/PdL; LN; FdI); centre-left (PD + others) M5S (2013; 18)
Germany	2005; 2009; 2013; 2017	CDU/CSU; SPD AfD (2017); Die Linke
Austria	2006; 2008; 2013; 2017	ÖVP; SPÖ; FPÖ; BZÖ (2006; 08); TS (2013)

closeness to the people or by praising the behaviour or character of the population.[5] In addition, election manifestos are one of the few text sources of parties that are comparable and available over time and considered as "the only documents in regionally fragmented party organizations that offer a univocal position" (Manucci and Weber 2017, 4) and "the only authoritative collective statement" of parties (Hansen 2008, 203; see also: Budge 2001, 51). Besides election manifestos, it is very difficult to find representative samples of official texts from political parties that are comparable over a larger period. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter became campaigning tools for political parties only recently and are only available for more recent election campaigns. Speeches might be an alternative text source. However, finding a "representative" sample of speeches for each election campaign resulted as being very difficult to conduct also because there seems to be no comprehensive archive in this respect (Hopmann et al. 2011, 179). Accordingly, "though it is now fairly common to find speeches online, that is not the case if we wish to expand our analysis across time" (Hansen 2008, 214). Studies analysing speeches over time focus on a very limited number of texts (Hawkins et al. 2019; Lewis et al. 2019). Furthermore, speeches and other alternative text sources might not represent the official party position but rather the agenda of the speaker. Party elites or individuals "might not readily be assumed to speak on behalf of the general party" (Hansen 2008, 203). Accordingly, shifting degrees of populism might rather depend on the individual leader than on the party as such.

In Sect. 4.1, I observe how the frequency of populist, nativist and leftist messages in election manifestos changes over time in order to assess if these changes can be explained by the hypotheses formulated in Sect. 2.2. Therefore, I select a longitudinal approach analysing the manifestos in four consecutive election campaigns in order to observe developments within the single countries across time. At least two of these periods are elections free from new successful populist/nativist/leftist competitors. The analysis over four different election periods allows descriptive illustrations of the degrees of populist, nativist and leftist messages on the one side and the development

[5] Section 3.2 mentions these communicative elements in more detail.

of respective public moods, vote shares for competing parties and further variables on the other. Accordingly, it can be observed whether there is a link between the degrees of these messages and the mentioned independent variables.

Even though I argue that election manifestos are appropriate in order to find specific populist, nativist and leftist actor-centred evaluations and demands, some scholars raise concerns in this respect. Rooduijn et al. (2014, 271) explain the fact that they could not find a populist contagion in election manifestos partially by the nature of these documents. They conclude as follows: "We realize that a study of party programmes has its limitations. One could argue that populist statements are not always included in party programmes, because the appeal of these programmes is not particularly great and voters are often not aware of their content". However, even though voters might not read election manifestos, the media reports about them and accordingly parties should be aware that messages in manifestos might find a larger audience. Other scholars assume that "manifestos are used actively in the sense that they are written to a broader audience and are hence very straightforward" (Hansen 2008, 203).

Yet, in order to take the concern of Rooduijn et al. seriously, I provide a first longitudinal analysis of a more informal type of text source that might appeal more directly to an audience than election manifestos. In this regard, I select official statements from political parties published on their websites. These messages can be considered the "news" of the party and sometimes resemble press releases,[6] since they address political issues and developments and evaluate actions from political competitors or the competitor itself. Unlike speeches of leaders, they are published in the name and on the website of the party even though they are mostly written by different individual politicians. Online statements are published frequently up to several times per week in order to provide information for the public and the media. Accordingly, one might argue that they have a larger public appeal than election manifestos since they are shorter, contain *current* positions, opinions and ideas about salient issues or competitors and are often written in a less formal language. Compared to other sources such as speeches, they are easier to access and can be collected in a more systematic way because they are (often) available on the respective websites and ordered by date.

Unfortunately, even statements from party websites are not available for all parties and countries. While the Italian Democratic Party provided access to the data on request, other parties did not—either because they did not reply or because the data was not available any more.[7] In many cases, statements that have not been available on the website could be partially traced using the "Wayback Machine" on archive.org. However, for German and Austrian mainstream parties the statements could not be collected. Yet, German mainstream parties granted me access to press releases from the parliamentary groups, which follow a very similar structure, evaluate current political issues or opponents and are addressed to a larger audience, namely the media.

[6] Official press releases—another text source that might be reasonable to choose—were not available for every period and party.

[7] I tried to reach the parties via email as well as by phone.

Table 3.2 Case selection for websites' statements

Country	Time frame	Parties
Spain	2009(EU); 2011; 2014(EU); 2015; 2016	PP; PSOE Podemos (2015; 16); United Left (2009; 11; 14; 15); Ciudadanos (2015; 16)
Italy	2008; 2009(EU); 2013; 2014(EU); 2018	FI/PdL; PD LN; M5S (2013, 2014, 2018)
Germany	2009I(EU); 2009II; 2013; 2014(EU); 2017	CDU/CSU; SPD AfD (2017); Die Linke

Unfortunately, I could not access similar statements from the Austrian mainstream parties. Nevertheless, the sample of six mainstream parties in three different countries provides sufficient data for a first descriptive analysis of populist, nativist and leftist communicative content in an alternative type of political texts.

I use a systematic random sampling of 30 statements per election campaign. Hardly any party publishes more than 30 messages during election campaigns—which are defined as the four weeks before election day. This period is sometimes considered as the "hot phase" of election campaigns (Schönbach 1996, 101; similar: Thimm et al. 2016, 177). Only the Italian Democratic Party publishes considerably more than 30 statements during these campaigns. Limiting the number of statements up to 30 allows a manageable amount of additional texts besides the coding of election manifestos. Nevertheless, this is still a larger number compared to previous studies that analysed only few speeches per party/politician (Hawkins et al. 2019; Lewis et al. 2019). Accordingly, the amount of 30 can be considered a more "representative" (and systematic) sample of official statements.[8]

Due to the availability of the texts, I rely on a slightly different longitudinal design compared to the manifestos' analysis. I focus on the last three national elections but also on campaigns for European elections. Including the latter, the number of time units increases from three (national elections) to five campaigns for each party and country. Even though European elections are often considered second-order elections,[9] I assume that references to the people and the political elite, as well as attacks towards outgroups and economic actors, play a role in European elections. Table 3.2 illustrates the case selection regarding the analysis of the online statements. Due to time and spatial constraints, I only provide quantitative results in this respect. Hence, I do not assess the concrete content of the websites' statements as I do for the election manifestos in Chap. 5.

I focus on election manifestos and statements from *mainstream parties.* There seems to be no general definition of mainstream parties in the literature. Spoon and Klüver (2019, 17), for example, refer to "Christian-democrat, conservative, social democrat/socialist or liberal party families" when talking about mainstream parties.

[8]For cases with less than 30 statements per campaign, I select all available releases.

[9]However, Hobolt et al. (2011) found that also domestic policies play an important role for voters in European elections.

Also, the definition of the Party Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al. 2016) as well as from other scholars (Abou-Chadi 2014, 424; Manucci and Weber 2017, 11; Rooduijn et al. 2014, 566) focuses on these traditional party families. Meguid (2005, 348) defines mainstream parties "as the electorally dominant actors in the center-left, center, and center-right blocs on the Left–Right political spectrum". Meguid's definition contains a further element missing in many other definitions: the relevance or size of a party. As illustrated in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, I focus on the dominant centre-right and centre-left parties in each country and do not include liberal parties in the sample. This can be justified by the focus of the current academic debate. Scholars claiming that mainstream parties become more populist exclusively present examples and anecdotal evidence from actors from the centre-right (conservative and Christian democratic parties) or centre-left (social democratic parties) but not from liberal parties, which constitute an ideologically different party family (Decker and Lewandowsky 2017; Mair 2002; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde 2004; Mudde 2019). Thus, focusing on the dominant mainstream parties from the centre-right and centre-left seems to be a reasonable approach for the purpose of this study.

It should be noted that election manifestos of Italian mainstream parties differ in a certain way from those from other centre-left and centre-right parties. They are not published by single parties but by electoral *coalitions* involving the respective mainstream parties but also others. The Italian centre-right coalition consists mostly of the centre-right Forza Italia/People of Freedom, the Northern League and a third radical right party (National Alliance/Brothers of Italy). The centre-left coalition includes the centre-left Democratic Party and several smaller parties that only gain few percentages. Since a populist radical right party is involved in the creation of the centre-right manifesto, it should be considered that its impact on the coalitions' manifesto might be larger than in other countries.

3.2 Method and Measurement

In order to provide data about the degree of populist, nativist and leftist messages over time, the different text sources for each party and period need to be coded. I do so by using a non-computer-based ("classical") content analysis which is the most common way to measure populist communication so far (Ernst et al. 2017; Manucci and Weber 2017; Müller et al. 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Content analyses in general represent "a family of methods for systematic text analyses that interpret and evaluate texts in a rule-guided and traceable way" (Ramsenthaler 2013, 23). According to Krippendorff (2004, 18), it "is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts […] to the contexts of their use". Content analyses summarise a text and illustrate its meaning and content in so-called categories. The category system represents the core of every content analysis and can be considered the rules, which guide the analysis of the text material (Mayring 2015, 20).[10] Roughly speaking and

[10]Categories can be developed deductively and inductively.

applied to the measurement of populist messages, these rules decide, for example, whether a sentence should be considered and coded as anti-elitist or not. Regarding populist communication, a codebook that contains suggestions for anti-elitist and people-centred categories recently has been developed by researchers from the Swiss National Centre for Competence in Research (Wirth et al. 2017).

Yet, there are different types of content analyses. First, a distinction is often made between qualitative and quantitative analyses even though several scholars rather reject this distinction (Mayring 2015; Krippendorff 2004). Quantitative analyses always require qualitative groundwork such as creating a category system that guides the coding procedure. As Krippendorff (2004, 87) notes, "text is always qualitative to begin with" and "categorizing textual units is considered the most elementary form of measurement". Nevertheless, it can be stated that qualitative content analysts conduct a "close reading of relatively small amounts of textual matter" and they interpret given texts according to concepts accepted in respective scientific communities (Krippendorff 2004, 17). Qualitative analysis provides an in-depth view into texts focusing on the content and context of discourses and statements. They are concerned, inter alia, with the question how specific phenomena are portrayed in texts (e.g. discourse analysis)—for example, how racism is manifested in the media (Van Dijk and Teun, 1991 and 2000)—how reality—emotions or facts—is constituted or constructed (e.g. social constructivist analyses) and how specific types of argumentation, language and speech acts are represented in texts (e.g. rhetorical analyses) (Krippendorff 2004, 16). This is done by interpreting the written content according to certain concepts from the academic literature, for example, according to the concept of *racism* (Krippendorff 2004, 88f). Yet, qualitative text analysis is "open" in the sense that categories, which capture the meaning of text passages, are often constructed inductively rather than due to uniform standards defined in advance (Mayring 2015, 19). Replicability plays a less important role for qualitative analyses since the captured meaning of a text depends on the interpretation of the researcher. These interpretations are often "multiple" forcing the researcher to consider alternative perspectives and oppositional readings what contradicts the quantitative counting of communicative content according to clear and fix rules (Krippendorff 2004, 88). Since interpretation is subjective, qualitative research mentions respective quotes in order to explain interpretations and categories attributed to the text (Krippendorff 2004, 88).

While qualitative content analysis works with *words* in order to explain the meaning of a text, quantitative analysis primarily uses *numbers*. This is considered the major difference between these two kinds of analyses (Mayring 2015, 17). Quantitative content analyses leave no space for multiple interpretations since the text passages need to be classified according to strict rules in order to be counted and coded. Especially in research on populism, texts are divided into single units, which are analysed separately. These units are called "units of measurement" and might be defined as single sentences or paragraphs (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011).[11] The

[11] Hawkins (2009) uses a holistic approach and attributes numbers to the whole text and not to single passages (units) within the text.

number of units fitting into one category (e.g. people-centrism) needs to be counted, and its share on the whole amount of textual units is calculated in order to get a respective percentage value that can be compared to percentages from other texts.

Besides distinguishing quantitative from qualitative approaches, especially within research on populism another distinction is made. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) present two methods of quantitative content analysis that allow measures of populist messages in texts (see also: Bräuninger et al. 2013). First, a "classical" content analysis conducts a manual coding of texts by the researcher or a team of instructed coders. The text material has to be read entirely and is coded manually according to a category system or codebook.

A dictionary-based approach "in which a computer counts the proportion of words that we consider to be indicators of populism" (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011, 1275) is the second option. The unit of measurement here is the single word, while manual approaches choose paragraphs, sentences or semantical units. Yet, it turned out to be very difficult to measure populism with a dictionary consisting of keyword that catch the populist dimension of discourses since especially words referring to the people (such as "we" or "our") have multiple meanings (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011, 1275).[12] Moreover, the problem with pure dictionary approaches is that they do not assess whether the words are used in a positive or negative way. Therefore, Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011, 1280) suggest a mixed-method approach: first, a dictionary is created including all the words that might refer to the political elite and the people. Second, the text passages where these words appear are coded manually. The promising advantage is that the amount of text to be coded "by hand" decreases significantly since passages without references to the people or the elite do not have to be read. In recent quantitative studies about religious references of political parties, we applied this approach to different kinds of communicative elements what resulted as being less time-consuming (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2020; Schwörer and Romero 2020).

For the purpose of this study, I conduct a quantitative not computer-based content analysis. I attempted to create dictionaries for each language with respective keywords referring to the political elite, the people, outgroups and immigrations and economic actors based on pre-readings of election manifestos in each country. Yet, parties often use terms like "they/them" or "we/us" to refer to their targets. It is true that the meaning of these words can be captured by the manual analysis of the passages where these terms occur. However, since these terms (and others such as the people of different regions) occur very frequently in the texts, it is hardly less time-consuming than coding the whole texts manually. Moreover, even though I included a large amount of keywords in the dictionary, it did not cover the whole range of words linked to the single targets. Accordingly, it would be necessary to read a larger number of texts in advance what eliminates the supposed advantage of dictionary approaches to be less time-consuming. Accordingly, I rely on a classical manual approach working with the software MAXQDA.

[12]However, a recent working paper suggests that more sophisticated dictionary approaches might be able to measure populism (Thiele 2019).

I conduct a quantitative analysis calculating the share of anti-elitist, people-centred, nativist and specific leftist messages in election manifestos in order to provide numeric data for each party manifesto. Gathering this data, it is possible to observe whether such communicative content increases or decreases over time and whether these shifts are linked to changes on the independent variable (e.g. vote shares of competing parties and public opinion).

In order to decide which statements can be classified as populist, nativist and leftist, I rely on a codebook from the "National Centre of Competence in Research" (NCCR) that provides an operationalisation of populist communicative elements (Wirth et al. 2017). I do not code all types of references to the whole people or the whole elite but only specific ways of addressing them. Therefore, the main categories—anti-elitism, people-centrism, nativism and messages against economic actors—need to be further operationalised. As described in Sect. 2.1, I mostly measure evaluations and demands towards targets—the political and economic elite, the people, outgroups and immigration. Submessages such as illustrating closeness to the people, stating a monolithic people and demanding popular sovereignty, can be deduced from the NCCR codebook as it has been done by previous research (Müller et al. 2017; Ernst et al. 2017; Manucci and Weber 2017). However, the first pretests revealed that the categories from the codebook do not catch all dimensions of populist messages. Regarding people-centred communication, parties often portray the people as unfairly or badly treated (as "victim") without explicitly evaluating the people in a positive way. Accordingly, I add the submessage type "people as victim/unfairly treated" to my category system.[13] Only references to the whole people (e.g. the citizens and the population) and the whole political elite (e.g. the parties and the politicians) are coded and not evaluations of certain subgroups within the people (e.g. women and workers) or within the political elite (e.g. specific politicians and certain parties) because criticising single political opponents is not a particular populist trait but a usual aspect of political communication and negative campaigning (Geer 2006; Haselmeyer 2019; Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011).

In sum, I measure *evaluations* and *demands* towards targets. Regarding people-centrism, parties might raise demands for more influence for the people (sovereignty). Conversely, they might question power or privileges of the political elite. Besides demands and explicit negative evaluations of actors (attributing a negative character and behaviour), I measure the portrayal of targets as badly treated or victims (the people) and privileged or preferentially treated (the political elite, outgroups, economic actors). These categories are also suitable for measures of nativist and specific leftist messages since all of these them are addressed towards *actors* or *targets*. As mentioned in Sect. 2.1, besides criticising the political elite, radical right parties further exclude non-native outgroups from the native society while left parties criticise powerful economic actors or the upper class. Radical right or nativist communication portrays and evaluates cultural, religious, ethnical groups and immigrants in a negative way or raises "negative" demands towards them. Regarding the latter, this

[13] I refer to the different dimensions of populist messages in more detail in Chap. 5 where I assess the concrete content of single messages during specific periods.

includes—among others—demands for deporting immigrants or for not accepting certain groups in the "own" country. In this respect, also negative references to *individuals* are coded when certain cultural, religious or ethnical traits are mentioned (Muslim faith, Arab origin) or the status as refugee or immigrant is named. However, the first pretests showed that, besides outgroups, parties also raise demands against immigration without explicitly mentioning concrete groups but the need for deportations or restricting immigration. Therefore, I decide to code negative evaluations of immigration as a non-actor-centred form of nativist critique as well. I create several subcategories of anti-immigration messages inductively.

The final category system contains the different dimensions of populist, nativist and left communication. Regarding the latter, I measure negative evaluations and demands towards economic actors, the rich, the upper class and profiteers of capitalism. Furthermore, I code sentences where economic groups are portrayed as privileged or particularly powerful. References to single enterprises or individuals are not coded but only mentions of at least a *group of actors* (financial industry and bankers). The final category system can be found in the annex (A2) as well as the codebook containing concrete instructions (A12). It is important to stress that positive references to the people or a critique towards political and economic elites are not per se anti-pluralist or illiberal. This would be the case when the supposed will of the people is considered more important than constitutional rights or when the legitimacy of political parties is questioned in principle. Whether this is the case is to be observed in Sect. 5.6.

In Chap. 4, I illustrate the numeric longitudinal data for each message type—anti-elitism, people-centrism, nativism, messages against economic elites. Thus, I do not mention the single subcategories that constitute each message type since I want to observe shifts in the degrees of messages which can be attributed to the main categories. Chapter 5 focuses on the content of populist, nativist and leftist messages by addressing the question how they are compound in detail. In this respect, I use a mixed-method approach. I mention the share and relevance of the respective submessages, which have been constructed deductively. Thus, and in accordance with quantitative analyses, I show numeric information about these communicative elements in order to know which submessages dominate. Yet, in order to provide traceable illustrations, to make the coding procedure more transparent and to give a concrete idea about the communicative content I refer to more qualitative analyses mentioning several example sentences for each subcategory. Besides referring to the subcategories created in advance, I further conduct a more explorative analysis of the coded statements. This is done in order to examine whether mainstream parties and their niche competitors speak in a different way about their targets and whether new and distinct discourses emerge within mainstream parties' manifestos in the face of external pressure. In this regard, I refer to further concepts from the literature not considered in the codebook of the NCCR about populist communication (Mudde 2004; Rooduijn et al. 2014). In concrete terms, I mention two further types of messages, which are not grasped by this codebook: juxtaposing and nicknaming actors. According to Mudde (2004, 543), populism divides society into two antagonistic groups: the people and the elite. Previous studies inferred from this definition

that people-centred and anti-elitist statements cannot stand on their own but need to be interlinked in order to be considered populist. Accordingly, they only classified statements as populist when an "anti-establishment critique is combined with a reference to the people" (Rooduijn et al. 2014, 567). Indeed, the widespread definition of populism considers the antagonism between these groups as essential (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008). Yet, it is further argued by scholars that mainstream parties might not use the same quality of populist statements like *true* populists do but only a "soft populism" (Mudde 2013, 9). For example, populisms lacking an anti-elitist orientation but containing a people-centred dimension are sometimes labelled "empty populism" (Aalberg and De Vreese 2017; Jagers and Walgrave 2007). Instead, "references to the people combined with attacks on elites" is called anti-elitist populism (Aalberg and De Vreese 2017, 15) what so far has mainly been measured by previous studies (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Mainstream parties may use single elements of populist communication—such as a specific critique towards the elite or references towards the people—without opposing the political establishment with the people in the same context. Thus, measuring people-centred and anti-elitist messages independently from each other might overstretch the original concept of populism formulated by Mudde (2004) in a certain way but it allows to identify discursive shifts of mainstream parties, which otherwise would fly under the radar due to their less radical nature. As it can be concluded from existing theoretical reflections (Aalberg and De Vreese 2017; Jagers and Walgrave 2007), subtypes of populist communication exist, which emphasise on *specific* elements of populist messages while abstaining from others such as the construction of antagonisms. The quantitative scores from Chap. 4 should therefore be interpreted in the sense that the values do not necessarily include the equal amount of different populist discursive elements and antagonisms but different degrees of negative and positive evaluations and demands towards respective actors (elites and the people). A further advantage of conducting such a fine-grained measurement of the single elements of discursive populism is that it allows to assess whether mainstream and populist parties talk differently about the people and elites (research question III). Nevertheless, while I argue that criticising the political elite does not necessarily require a reference to the people for mainstream parties, I agree that juxtaposing these groups can be considered a further qualitative trait of populist communication. Therefore, I measure juxtapositions of the political elite (regarding anti-elitism) with positively framed ingroups, such as the people or societal subgroups (e.g. women and workers) as a further category mentioned in the more qualitative analysis from Chap. 5. The same procedure is applied for people-centred messages: I measure statements combining positive references to the whole people with negative evaluations of actors such as single parties, politicians, economic actors, outgroups and others. Furthermore, I observe whether immigration and outgroups—portrayed in a negative way—are opposed to a positive counterpart such as "our people", the public or other (native) actors. The same is done for negative references to economic actors. In accordance with the mixed-method approach, I mention numeric information about these new categories (quantitative) as well as concrete examples of the content (qualitative).

Within Chap. 5 (Sect. 5.6), I finally address the question whether illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are part of mainstream parties' populist and nativist messages. Since such statements appear rather implicitly and leave much space for interpretation, they cannot be captured with pre-created categories. Instead, I chose a purely qualitative approach analysing all coded units. Rather than constructing concrete categories about illiberalism and anti-pluralism in advance, I refer to specific concepts within populism studies, which allow a broader scope for interpretation (Müller 2016; Mudde 2004; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). Since these messages cannot be identified unambiguously, I need to mention several examples of *potentially* illiberal and anti-pluralist messages arguing why they could be interpreted in a respective way. It is observed whether these messages are linked to populist (people-centred and anti-elitist) or nativist messages and whether they primarily emerge in the face of external pressure in order to find clues whether these elements might be a result of contagion effects. In sum, Sect. 5.6 exclusively follows a qualitative approach since numeric data is not provided. The different content analytical approaches are summarised in Table 3.3.

I select the full sentence as unit of measurement for the manifestos' analysis. Rooduijn et al. (2014, 566) criticise this idea "because populist claims are usually presented in multiple sentences". However, in contrast to their approach, the unit of measurement (sentence) does not have to be both people-centred and anti-elitist in order to be coded. The two elements are coded separately, and the pretests revealed

Table 3.3 Content analytical approaches and research questions

Research question	Type of content analysis	Analytical proceeding
(I) Does the *degree* of populist, nativist and leftist messages increase when e*xternal pressure grows*? (II) Are populist, nativist or leftist messages more contagious?	*Manual quantitative* content analysis of election manifestos and website statements	Mainly deductive category building (NCCR codebook) supplemented with few inductively generated categories
(III) Do mainstream and respective niche parties talk in a different way about the people, the elite, outgroups, immigration and economic actors? (IV) Do mainstream parties change the way they talk about their targets when external pressure increases?	*Manual quantitative and qualitative* content analysis of coded statements in election manifestos	Categories from research question I and II supplemented with further deductively and inductively generated categories
(VI) Do mainstream parties adopt illiberal and anti-pluralist element when becoming more populist, nativist or leftist?	*Manual qualitative* content analysis of coded statements in election manifestos	Interpretation of text passages building on concepts from the literature (illiberalism and anti-pluralism)

that people-centred and anti-elitist messages can actually be found in the single sentence. The populism scores in Chap. 4 are calculated by summing the percentages of people-centred and anti-elitist messages for each election manifesto. The same is done for nativist (anti-outgroup and anti-immigration) and leftist messages (against economic elites). Regarding the analysis of statements from party websites, the unit of measurement remains the single sentence while the unit of analysis is the statement. The mean percentage of all statements within one election campaign constitutes the final score.

To assess intercoder reliability, I instructed a second person who coded a sample of sentences from the German election manifestos. The percentage agreement of sentences that have been assigned to the main categories at least by one of the coders is very high.[14] The same is true for Cohen's Kappa, which is almost perfectly consistent (Landis and Koch 1977).[15]

So far, the previous paragraphs mentioned the methodological framework to collect data from election manifestos and parties' online statements. Now the question arises how this data should be evaluated in a second step in order to find clues for contagion effects. In general, there are different theoretical and methodological approaches to trace contagions. First "process-tracing" provides a methodological starting point for discovering causal relationships. It is considered "an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence" (Collier 2011, 824) and aims at revealing the causes for a certain outcome (Beach and Pedersen 2013; Biard 2019.a). According to Biard (2019.a, 5), process-tracing allows "to detect which actors […] intervene when, with which action, and which consequence". Thus, "the presence of influence, the type of influence (direct or indirect) and the way RRPPs [radical-right populist parties] exercise their influence can be verified" (Biard 2019.a, 5). Process-tracing per se is not a concrete method but rather a framework including other methodological approaches such as analyses of documentary sources and conducting interviews (Hampshire and Bale 2015; Tansey 2007). It requires "detective work" in order to reveal causal mechanism and the starting point of a process (Collier 2011, 824).

In recent years, a rather small number of studies concerned with the impact of populist or radical right parties are following this approach. Biard, for example, analysed the influence of radical-right parties over the stripping of citizenship (2019.a) and on law and order policy-making (2019b). Process-tracing requires a set of qualitative methods and is very time-consuming. Accordingly, it is mostly used for single case or country studies in research on populist and radical-right parties (Biard 2019.a and 2019b; Hampshire and Bale 2015). Another and in party research much more widespread theoretical and methodological approaches are rational-choice models, which formulate potential explanations for shifts in party behaviour *ex ante*. These

[14] Anti-elitism: 91.67%, n = 24; people-centrism: 87.23%, n = 94; anti-outgroup messages: 100%, n = 19; anti-immigration messages: 85.71%, n = 29.

[15] Sample of 50% coded and 50% not coded sentences. Anti-elitism: 0.955, n = 44; people-centrism: 0.931, n = 174; anti-outgroup messages: 1.0 (n = 38); anti-immigration messages: 0.885, n = 52.

explanations—or hypotheses—are then tested empirically using regression models or descriptive statistics (see Sect. 2.2).

While I focus on several countries and different points in time, the number of cases is still too small in order to run respective regression analyses, which estimate the impact of the single variables on mainstream parties' communication. On the other hand, the amount of several periods and parties seems much too large for process-tracing analyses. Instead, I mostly refer to descriptive statistics and correlation models in order to identify *links* between the independent and dependent variables and clues for contagion effects. These analyses do not allow identifications of clear causal relationships. However, they reveal how different variables expected to influence party behaviour are *linked* to communicative content of mainstream parties. This procedure allows to deliver *arguments* for or against the populist Zeitgeist thesis for several countries.[16] Regarding unexpected findings, I further refer to country-specific literature, which provides alternative interpretations of the results.

3.2.1 Independent Variables

Several variables, which are expected to influence mainstream parties' communication, need to be operationalised. I start with the electoral success of niche parties. In this regard, I selected the accumulated vote share of all parties labelled as populist, far-right or left in the literature (Rooduijn et al. 2019) for a whole month.[17] This month has been selected according to the following rule: the last day of the month has a distance of at least four weeks to the respective election.[18] This is done because election manifestos are usually published some weeks before elections. I further observed whether the percentages for these niche parties fluctuated considerably in the weeks before data collection since election manifestos might also be constructed earlier. Yet, among all countries, the vote shares of competing parties rather remained stable the weeks/months before national elections. Thus, one could assume that during the creation of mainstream parties' election manifestos the "real" electoral support for respective competing parties is very close to the information used in this study.

[16] It should be noted that even regression models are not per se capable to identify causalities. Among other, this depends on the variables included in the models. Rooduijn et al. (2014), for instance, only assessed the impact of a low number of variables on populist messages of mainstream parties and did not consider alternative explanations such as shifts in public opinion, opposition and government status of parties or external events.

[17] As explained above, the Five Star Movement is also considered leftist in 2013.

[18] I took the mean percentages for the whole month at least four weeks before the respective election. Regarding Italy, data from the "Termometro Politico" is used which calculates the monthly mean of the surveys conducted by leading opinion research centres. Regarding the Spanish parties, data from the leading "Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas" (CIS) is used, for Germany I select data from "Infratest dimap", and for the Austrian parties I refer to the monthly mean of leading opinion polls calculated by the website https://www.strategieanalysen.at/umfragen/.

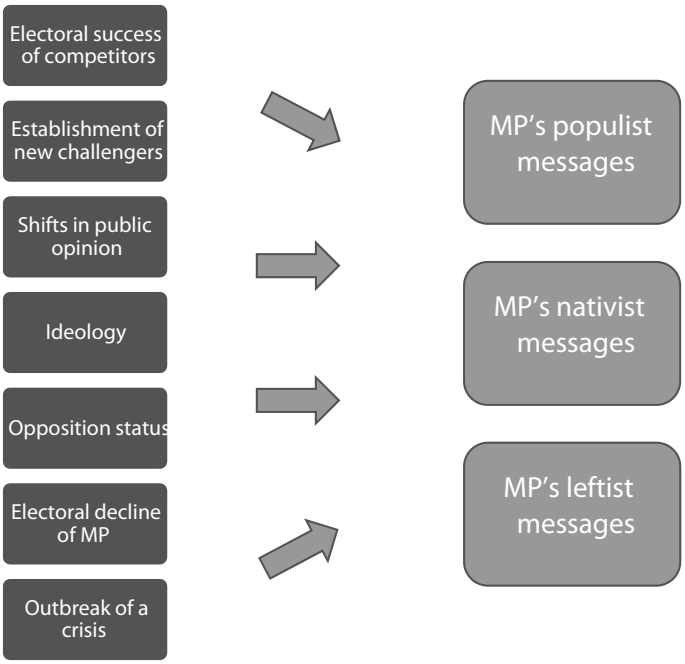
Second, new relevant niche parties (an electoral breakthrough of new challengers) are expected to influence communication of mainstream parties to a considerable extent. Speaking with Sartori, the Italian Five Star Movement (2013), the Spanish Podemos (2015), the Alternative for Germany (2017) and the Austrian Team Stronach (2013) can be considered as new relevant parties. All of these actors have been expected to enter national parliaments during respective election campaigns due to predicted vote share of more than 10% (8.5% for Team Stronach), which indicated considerable blackmail potential. It could be discussed whether the AfD should be considered a new relevant populist actor already in 2013 when it participated for the first time at a national election. Yet, it could not enter parliament as correctly predicted by most opinion polls during the election campaign.

Third, I expect that mainstream parties become more populist, nativist and "leftist" when public opinion shifts in a certain way. In general, data for such public moods is difficult to collect what might explain why previous studies did not consider them (Manucci and Weber 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Regarding populist moods, longitudinal data containing an anti-elitist *and* people-centred dimension is not available. Instead, I refer to Eurobarometer data, which includes questions about political actors and institutions: trust in political parties and the national parliament (used as an average score). I admit that these items do not directly measure evaluations of the political elite. However, the aim of this study is not to assess *which* public mood is most responsible for parties' communicative shifts but rather *if* public opinion matters at all. Therefore, the items from the Eurobarometer can at least be seen as a proxy for anti-elitist moods since hostile attitudes towards political actors and institutions should also be accompanied by distrust towards them. Unlike other data sets—such as the European Social Survey—Eurobarometer collects data twice a year, which means that the data is up to date and covers the period before the respective elections. I select the last gathered data of public moods before national elections—the same is done for "nativist" and "leftist" moods. Regarding nativist attitudes, Eurobarometer provides data regarding the salience of immigration in society (valuated as one of the two most important issues facing the own country at the moment). Even though a high salience of immigration does not necessarily mean a negative evaluation of the issue, it seems to be a good indicator for nativist-related public moods. Mudde (2013, 6), for example, claims, "growing public salience about immigration leads to […] an increase in policy activity on immigration". Hence, public salience of immigration can be considered as an important factor influencing parties' discourses. I further expect that mainstream parties raise demands and negative evaluations towards economic elites when society is more concerned about the behaviour of economic actors. Unfortunately, Eurobarometer does not ask directly about the evaluations of economic groups. Therefore, only the salience of the economic situation of the country (evaluated as one of the two most important issues facing the own country at the moment) could be found as somewhat close to "leftist moods" within the Eurobarometer database. Yet, it could be assumed that the saliency of economic issues in society is also linked to an increased interest in the behaviour of dominating companies, bankers and other economic actors. Thus, the salience of economic issues might at least be considered as a proxy for the presence of critical views on powerful

economic groups. It may be a less convenient variable than respective anti-elitist- and nativist-related moods but, unfortunately, it is the only one available for all countries under analysis. Again, it should be stressed that the variables for public moods do not reveal which type of attitude or sentiments influences political parties since they can be considered proxies for a variety of more specific moods. However, it allows to find first empirical hints regarding the question whether public opinion matters at all and whether parties might be responsive to populist-, nativist- and leftist-related moods.

Fourth, it is expected that the ideology accounts for the degree of nativist and leftist messages adopted by mainstream parties. As described in Sect. 2.2, I expect that populist messages do not require a right- or left-wing ideological background of parties in order to be adopted since anti-elitist and people-centred messages describe a new conflict dimension. Regarding nativist messages, centre-right parties should adopt and use a higher amount than the centre-left while the centre-left can be expected to be more responsive to public "economic moods" and the success of niche parties portraying economic actors as threat for society. Fifth, mainstream parties in government should be less prone to use populist, nativist and leftist messages. For this purpose, I observe for every single mainstream party whether the degrees of populist, nativist and leftist messages are considerably higher when they are on opposition. Furthermore (sixth), parties are expected to be more prone to change when they experienced a significant electoral decline. As explained above, I observe whether parties use more populist, nativist and leftist messages when they lost votes *since* the *last election* referring to opinion polls published shortly before the subsequent election.

Last, it is observed whether a simple outbreak of a crisis affects communication of mainstream parties. I expect that this is only the case when such crises are accompanied by respective shift in public opinion (or in niche parties' vote share). If mainstream parties in Germany and Austria become more nativist in periods after 2015 due to the influx of asylum seekers from Syria without a respective shift in public moods, then the hypothesis should be rejected (Spain and Italy have not been affected by the influx of immigrants from non-EU countries as Annex 1 illustrates). The same is true regarding the European economic crisis, which had tremendous economic consequences especially for southern European countries after 2008: "The Great Financial Crisis hit the world economy in the aftermath of the bankruptcy of the investment bank Lehman in the midst of September 2008. The immediate disastrous aftershock was the most severe fall of real GDP in 2009 among many high income countries" (Funk 2012, 20). Regarding Italy, the crisis broke out after the 2008 election (Caivano et al. 2010). The same is true for Spain, where the crisis "high-lighted the structural weaknesses of the Spanish economy, especially after 2008" (Carballo-Cruz 2011, 309). Also in Germany and Austria—countries not affected to the same extent by the economic crisis as Spain and Italy—the situation was perceived as critical only at the end of 2008 or even afterwards (Franz et al. 2014; Funk 2012). Accordingly, crises may have affected election campaigns especially in Italy and Spain after 2008 (economic crisis/leftist communication) and in Germany and Austria



Graphic 3.1 Potential explanations for mainstream parties' (MP) populist, nativist and leftist communicative shifts

after 2015 ("refugee crisis"/nativist communication). Graphics 3.1 summarises all potential factors that might influence mainstream parties' discourses.

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Chapter 4
Contamination of Mainstream Parties' Messages? Shifting Degrees of Communicative Content

This chapter illustrates the findings of the quantitative content analyses of mainstream parties' communication. It provides longitudinal data regarding the degrees of populist (anti-elitist and people-centred), nativist (anti-outgroups and anti-immigration) and leftist (against economic elites/actors) messages. In what follows, I present the results for the analysis of the election manifestos (4.1) and of the public statements from mainstream parties' websites (4.2). I do so by illustrating the development of populist, nativist and leftist messages over time using descriptive statistics and correlation models. Furthermore, I refer to more qualitative approaches in order to assess, which variables seem to be particular suitable for interpreting the results and for estimating how the different factors might interplay with each other. In this sense, I attempt to provide further insights into the single cases at the end of each subsection. I expect that shifts in the degrees of these messages can be explained by the variables described in Sect. 2.2. and in the chapter.

4.1 Indications of Contagion Effects on Formal and Institutional Party Communication

Table 4.1 illustrates the mean values for all time units and each party. The alleged populist parties (M5S, Podemos, Linke, AfD, FPÖ, BZÖ, TS) are indeed more anti-elitist and people-centred than the competing mainstream parties in their official election manifestos. According to my measurements, the AfD is the most populist of all parties, but what dominates its messages is rather nativist communication.[1] Interestingly, among all parties in Austria except TS—but including the centre-left SPÖ—nativist messages dominate over anti-elitist ones. There are also considerable differences in the degrees of these messages among the different countries. The data

[1]Since the Italian LN is part of the centre-right electoral alliance and does not publish its own election manifesto, the data provides no information about the scores for this party.

J. Schwörer, *The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream*, Springer Series in Electoral Politics, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72449-8_4

Table 4.1 Results from content analysis of election manifestos

	Party/coalition	Anti-elitism	People-centrism	Nativism	Anti-econ. elite
Italy	PD	0.94 (0.92)	0.82 (0.7)	0.47 (0.56)	1.39 (1.52)
	FI/PdL + LN	0.84 (0.68)	2.10 (0.48)	2.27 (1.75)	0.26 (0.52)
	M5S	3.81 (2.72)	1.91 (2.7)	0.94 (1.33)	3.81 (2.72)
Spain	PSOE	0.60 (0.56)	2.00 (0.36)	0.25 (0.4)	1.33 (0.61)
	PP	0.14 (0.13)	1.73 (0.86)	0.45 (0.54)	0.24 (0.16)
	Podemos	2.00 (0.83)	2.06 (0.82)	0	3.96 (1.7)
	United Left	0.31 (0.2)	2.17 (0.21)	0	3.39 (1.57)
	Ciudadanos	1.19 (0.38)	0.64 (0.21)	0	1.23 (0.51)
Germany	SPD	0.07 (0.08)	0.54 (0.24)	0.1 (0.14)	2.16 (0.71)
	CDU/CSU	0.00	0.59 (0.25)	0.6 (0.41)	0.38 (0.24)
	Linke	0.42 (0.15)	1.77 (0.86)	0	6.00 (2.13)
	AfD (2017)	3.88	3.88	10.45	1.72
Austria	SPÖ	0.10 (0.12)	0.57 (0.51)	0.38 (0.43)	1.94 (1.48)
	ÖVP	0.21 (0.22)	1.05 (0.54)	2.12 (1.72)	0.36 (0.26)
	FPÖ	0.35 (0.67)	2.93 (2.56)	11.45 (3.34)	2.89 (3.89)
	BZÖ	1.34 (1.88)	2.50 (2.49)	7.69 (0.4)	2.11 (2.28)
	TS	4.43	3.20	0.58	2.05

Note Mean values for all time units ($n = 52$). Standard deviation in brackets

shows that mainstream parties in Italy are the most anti-elitist ones while the Spanish centre-left and centre-right often refer to the people in their manifestos. In Germany and Austria, anti-elitist communication is on a very low level among mainstream parties. Moreover, the Italian and Austrian centre-right score particularly high on nativism. I proceed with the verification of the hypotheses for each country.

4.1.1 Populist Contagions

In what follows (4.1.1–4.1.3), the degree of populist, nativist and leftist messages is illustrated over time. I aim to explain communicative shifts regarding these messages with hypotheses deriving from modern spatial approaches and IET. I start with populist messages. H1a suggests that mainstream parties use more populist messages when respective populist parties gain electoral success. I expect that the degree of populist messages in election manifestos of the centre-right and centre-left mainstream increases when vote shares for populist parties are on the rise and decreases when populist parties loose electoral support. Figure 4.1 shows the development of populist messages over time in the four countries. The values on the left y-axis reflect the sum of people-centred and anti-elitist messages per manifesto, while the

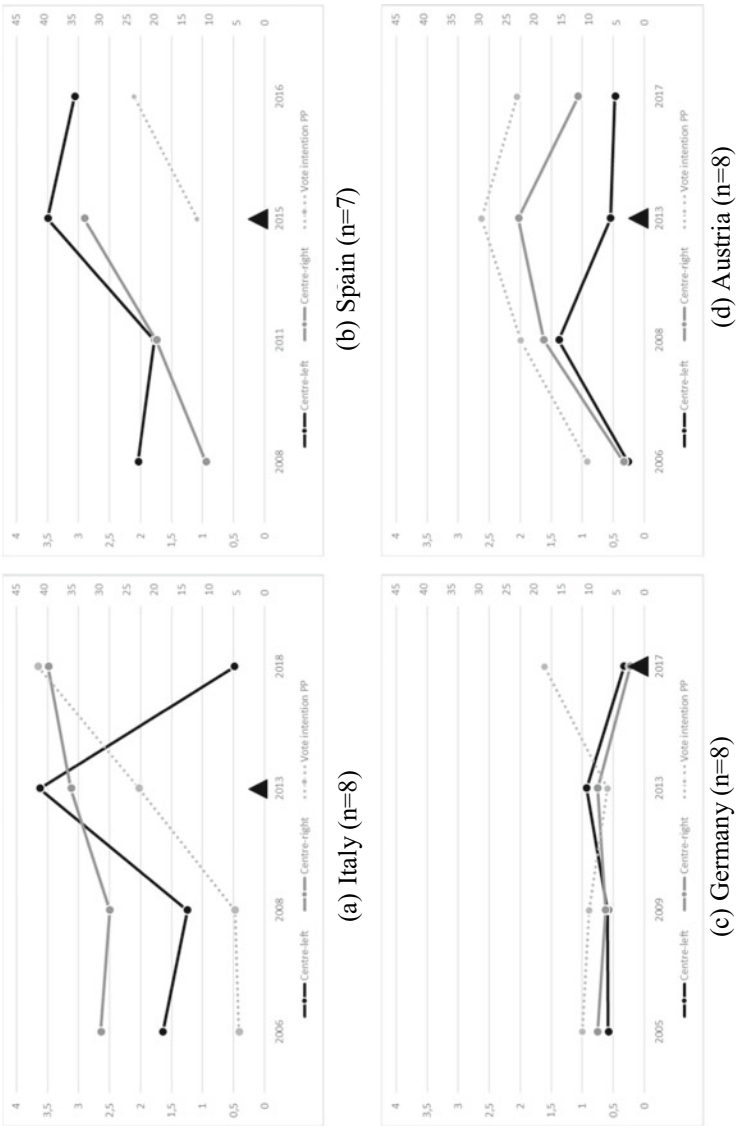


Fig. 4.1 Populist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and vote shares for populist parties (PP)

axis on the right shows the electoral support for populist parties (dotted line). I expect that mainstream parties increase at least one of these communicative contents in the face of rising successes for populist parties since both are core elements of populist communication. Accordingly, the total score of anti-elitist and people-centred communication should increase when populists gain support due to a higher share of either people-centred or anti-elitist messages.

It is mostly the centre-right parties in Italy and Austria, which seem to be responsive to the success of populist parties.[2] In Germany, populist communication develops independently from the electoral success of supposed populist parties.

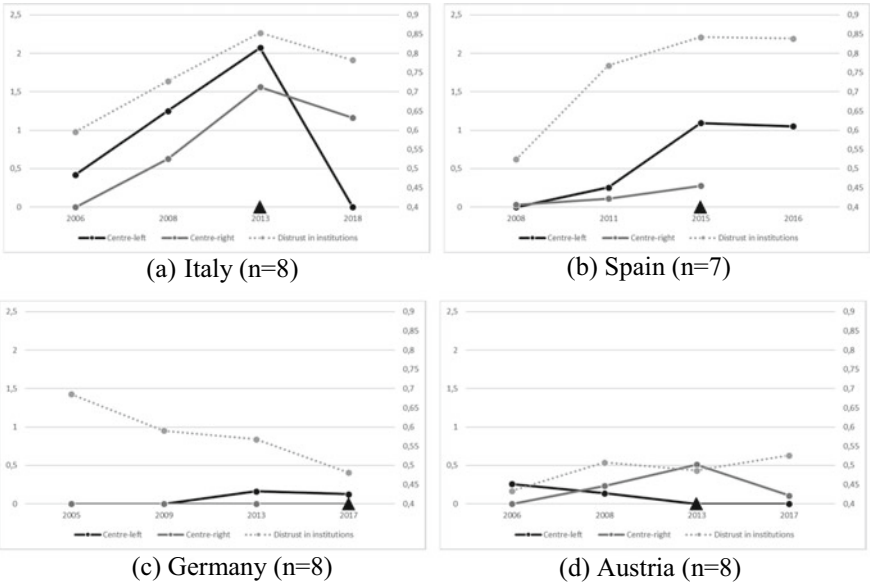
Figure 4.1 also illustrates the period when a new successful populist party (PP)[3] participates for the first time in a national election (black triangle) and is considered a new relevant competitor (H2a). In Italy and Spain, the graphs of both mainstream parties indeed increase during this time unit. Especially, the centre-left makes use of a much higher percentage of populist messages. In Austria, only the centre-right uses more populist messages in 2013 when TS emerges. However, this is accompanied by a general rise in populists' vote shares making it difficult to speculate about the specific impact of TS. The FPÖ sightly increased their support in 2013, while the BZÖ did not compete at the elections. In terms of votes, the absence of the BZÖ was compensated by nearly the same percentage of predicted votes for TS. In Germany, such communicative content even decreases in 2017 when the AfD competes for the first time as a populist actor above 5% (around 10% according to opinion polls). Thus, for the Spanish and Italian case, there are reasons to assume that the entry of a new successful populist party might contribute to a populistisation of (centre-left) mainstream parties' political communication, however, without having a long-term effect. For the German and Austrian case, this hypothesis should be rather rejected.

In general, in all countries except in Germany at least one of the two mainstream parties becomes more populist either when a new populist party becomes a relevant actor or when populists' vote shares increase. The emergence of new populist actors *not coming from the radical right*—Podemos in Spain and the M5S in Italy—is linked to a temporary rise in populist messages among the *centre-left* mainstream. In Austria where populist *radical-right* parties dominate, it is only the *centre-right,* which becomes more populist. This can partially be observed in Italy as well: only the *centre-right* increases populist communication when the populist *radical-right* (LN) gained increasingly success in 2018. Accordingly, the ideological core of populist parties might also determine whether the centre-left or the centre-right mainstream responds to them by adopting populist messages.

Figure 4.1 does not mention whether anti-elitist *or* people-centred messages are increasing in election manifestos. Some parties emphasise negative demands towards parties and politicians and others positive discourses about the people. The Spanish mainstream parties as well as the Italian centre-left use both a higher amount of pro-people and anti-elite statements compared to the years before when a new populist

[2]The Spanish People's Party did not publish a new election manifesto in 2016.

[3]The abbreviation "PP" also refers to the Spanish People's Party. Within the following figures, it stands for *populist parties.*



(a) Italy (n=8) (b) Spain (n=7)

(c) Germany (n=8) (d) Austria (n=8)

Fig. 4.2 Anti-elitist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and public distrust in institutions

actor emerges. The Italian centre-right only increases anti-elitist messages after the electoral breakthrough of the M5S but emphasises exclusively on people-centrism when vote shares for all populist parties increase considerably in 2018. The Austrian ÖVP increases both people-centred and anti-elitist messages when populist parties gain success.[4]

The variable electoral success of competing parties does not or only partially explain the development of populist discourses of certain parties—especially regarding the Italian, Spanish and Austrian centre-left as well as the German mainstream. Moreover, for the Spanish case—lacking a populist actor during the first periods of analysis—this assumption cannot be tested before 2015. One could speculate that the fact that several parties do not become more populist in the face of respective niche parties' success is because these parties do not follow an accommodative strategy but chose to not react discursively to the rise of populism. Yet, there might be other factors influencing mainstream parties' populism degrees. According to Hypothesis 3a, public opinion is such a variable.

I expect that mainstream parties become more populist, when public opinion shifts in a certain "populist" way. As mentioned above, Eurobarometer provides information about distrust in political institutions as a proxy for *anti-elitist* moods without a people-centrism dimension. I therefore focus merely on anti-elitist discourses as a potential consequence of respective anti-elitist moods. Figure 4.2 shows the development of mainstream parties' *anti-elitist*—not people-centred—messages (against

[4]Whether anti-elitist or people-centred communication is primarily adopted by the mainstream is examined in more detail in Chap. 5.

politicians, parties and the political elite in general) and of public distrust in political parties and the national parliament (mean value). In Austria but especially in Germany, distrust in political institutions is less widespread and not at all correlated with respective moods in society. The percentage of anti-elitist sentences in election manifestos is illustrated on the left y-axis, while the axis on the right—and the respective dotted line—reflects the percentage of the population distrusting political parties and parliaments (e.g. 0.9 = 90%). The fact that the German SPD only uses anti-elitist messages in 2013 (and not as expected in 2017) rejects the hypothesis. It could be speculated that the opposition status of the centre-left and the first emergence of the AfD as well as previous regional successes of the Pirate Party might partially explain the anti-elitism score of the SPD in 2013 (see Chap. 5). These explanations are not fully captured by the hypotheses formulated in this study and reveal that some country-specific developments might be important drivers of populist discourses. As mentioned below, another explanation for the German case would be that these parties are simply not responsive to populist moods and parties due to the novelty of populism in this country. In Italy and Spain—where distrust in parties and the parliament is much more widespread—we find a considerable link between anti-elitist messages and shifts in public opinion. Even the Italian centre-left alliance, which does not seem to adopt populist content due to electoral gains of competing parties, emphasises on anti-elitist content in the face of shifts in public opinion. However, the only slight increase of anti-elitist-related public moods in Spain in 2015 does not fully explain the sharp increase of anti-elitist elements, particularly among the centre-left. This could be explained with the establishment of the populist Podemos, appearing to have exercised a considerable influence on mainstream parties. Combining these two variables offers a reasonable explanation for the development of anti-elitist messages in Spain.

Nevertheless, focusing exclusively on anti-elitist messages, public opinion is a much stronger predictor of such discourses than electoral support of populist parties. Annex 3 illustrates the development of anti-elitist communication of mainstream parties and vote shares for populist parties. It is almost only the Austrian ÖVP that seems to react to populist parties' success by increasing anti-elitist messages. It is true that the Italian centre-right's populism score is linked to the success of populist parties, but this does not hold true for anti-elitist messages. A potential explanation could be that parties have several options to react to populist parties' success emphasising *either* people-centred *or* anti-elitist messages. So, the fact that anti-elitist messages do not correlate with the success of populist parties does not necessarily mean that parties are not responsive—but that they rather focus on people-centrism in certain periods. The Italian FI/PdL seems to respond to both, electoral upswings of populist parties (by increasing either people-centred or anti-elitist content) and anti-elitist public opinion (by increasing anti-elitist content). The Austrian centre-right only seems to be responsive to the success of competing populist parties and not to public opinion.

There is even a statistically significant ($r = 0.61$; $p < 0.01$) cross-national relationship as Fig. 4.3 illustrates (including fitted values). This is partially due to the fact that German and Austrian mainstream parties do hardly use anti-elitist messages

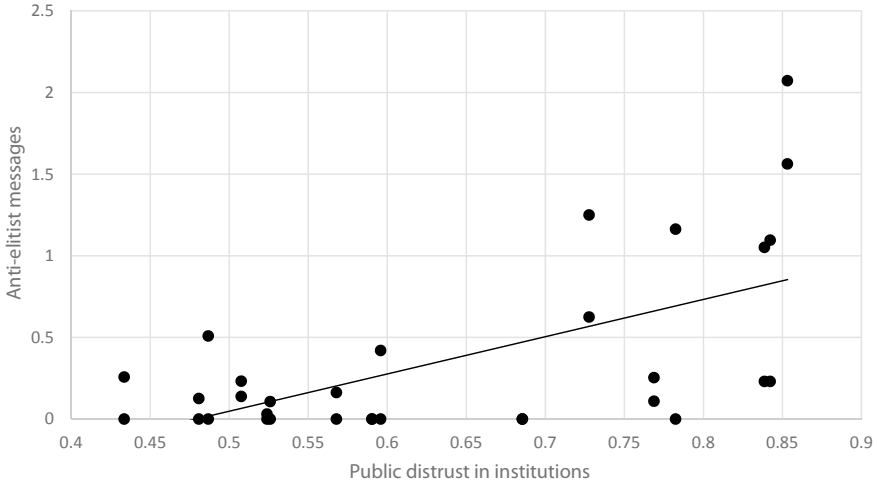


Fig. 4.3 Anti-elitist messages in election manifestos of mainstream parties ($n = 31$) and public moods (cross-national scatterplot)

and that distrust in institutions is less widespread in these societies. Thus, the results from the scatterplot should not be overemphasised but they provide some further arguments to assume that specific public moods trigger anti-elitist messages among mainstream parties.

But are centre-left and centre-right parties both prone to adopt populist messages? H4a states that centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties use populist communication to a similar extent. I focus on two aspects in this respect. First, I compare the mean of populist messages published by centre-right and centre-left parties. This provides information about which mainstream party type is more populist. Second, I observe whether centre-left or centre-right parties seem to be more *responsive* to populist parties' success and public opinion providing information about the role of ideologies in the adaption of populist content.

Table 4.2 illustrates that the average scores for the centre-right and centre-left do not differ considerably. The centre-right is slightly more populist than the centre-left. This is due to the fact that the centre-right refers more often to the people than the

Table 4.2 Populism scores of mainstream parties' election manifestos ($n = 31$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for populist parties (PP) and with public distrust in institutions (cross-national model)

	Mean of populist messages	Pearson vote share PP	Pearson (anti-elitism) distrust in institutions
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	1.65 (SD = 1.07)	0.36	0.56*
Centre-left ($n = 16$)	1.41 (SD = 1.12)	−0.12	0.68**

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

centre-left—except in Spain where PP and PSOE use a rather equal percentage of people-centrism. The centre-left, on the other hand, is slightly more anti-elitist. There are no outliers in this respect except in Austria. Unlike in other countries, the Austrian centre-right is more anti-elitist than the centre-left except for the election in 2006. But are centre-left or centre-right parties more prone to adopt populist messages? I first focus on populists' electoral success as independent variable. Comparing the average populism scores, there is no statistically significant cross-national effect neither among the centre-right nor regarding the centre-left when we calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient for populists' vote share and the populism scores of mainstream parties. Yet, as mentioned above, within the single countries we see that only the centre-right in Italy and Austria becomes more populist in the face of populist parties' success while we see no clear correlation among any of the centre-left parties. We only see that the centre-left in Italy and Spain increases its amount of populist elements substantively in the short-term when new populist actors emerge. In this sense, there might be a stronger link between centre-right parties' populism scores and the success of the populist radical-right (Austria and Italy) and between centre-left's populist messages and the emergence of new non-right-wing populist actors (Italy and Spain) indicating that ideology may play a role.

Last, Table 4.2 illustrates the Pearson correlation coefficient for anti-elitist messages and public distrust in institutions. In a cross-national perspective, the centre-left seems to be slightly more prone to increase anti-elitist messages when respective shifts in public opinion occur. However, within the single countries we find no evidence for that. In Italy and Spain, both centre-left and centre-right parties become more anti-elitist when public distrust in parties and the national parliament increases. In sum, there is no clear tendency that either centre-right or centre-left mainstream parties are more affected by a supposed populist contagion.

Does government participation make a difference? Moving on with Hypothesis 5, mainstream parties in government should be less prone to use populist, nativist and leftist messages. Annex 4 shows that the degree of these messages does not depend considerably on opposition or government status. The table shows that some parties are more anti-elitist in opposition than in government (FI/PdL; PSOE; SPD; SPÖ). Yet, others (PD and PP) are less anti-elitist in opposition. Even parties having—on average—a higher score in opposition sometimes use a similar degree of anti-elitism in specific incumbent periods such as the German SPD in 2017. The fact that anti-elitism scores fluctuate considerably even among parties, which have constantly been in power during the period of analysis—such as the ÖVP—further indicates that opposition status might not play a crucial role. Regarding people-centred messages, four parties use them more frequently in opposition and three in government and accordingly, there seems to be no general trend in government or opposition. Opposition status further does not seem to determine whether parties are prone to adopt anti-elitist content. It is true that the SPÖ was most anti-elitist in 2006 when it was in opposition even though this is a rather marginal difference compared to the score from 2008 when the party was in power. The only case where the argument seems to apply without any restrictions is the Spanish PSOE. The party hardly used anti-elitist elements in government (2008: 0 and 2011: 0.25) but scores much higher in the two

opposition periods (2015: 1.1; 2016: 1.05). The fact that the party was in government in 2011 might explain the only moderate rise of anti-elitist content during this period despite sharp increases of distrust in political institutions among the public. The German SPD used the highest percentage of anti-elitist messages in opposition in 2013 but reached a similar score in 2017 in coalition with the centre-right.

Vote losses (Hypothesis 6) are not linked to specific degrees of populist messages either. There is no single party where a clear correlation between vote losses and increases of populist messages can be observed what seems to be in line with the findings from Rooduijn et al. (2014). The Spanish PP, for example, was confronted with an electoral decline of more than 16% predicted by opinion polls in the 2008 campaign but used the lowest amount of anti-elitist and populist messages. The German SPD is most anti-elitist and people-centred when it experienced a moderate electoral upswing in 2013. The SPÖ even decreased the amount of respective messages considerably when it experienced its most substantial electoral decline in 2008. Table 4.3 provides data for the single countries in this respect. It further contains the findings for pro-people, nativist and leftist messages. It illustrates that there are neither statistically significant correlations nor high coefficients between the degree of such messages and the percentage of lost/gained votes. As indicated above, looking at the single parties confirms this impression. The degree of populist, nativist or leftist messages develops rather independently from electoral success. It is only the Spanish PP, which uses the highest amount of anti-elitist and populist messages when it experienced a vote loss of more than 15% in 2015—simultaneously with the establishment of a new populist actor.

Having a closer look at Fig. 4.1 and 4.2, some interesting cross-national pattern can be identified. In all countries, mainstream parties become more populist or anti-elitist in 2013 (2015 in Spain). This observation could be interpreted as a result of the consequences of the economic crisis, which may have produced a more anti-elitist rhetoric among political actors (Hypothesis 7). However, most of these developments could also be explained by shifts in public opinion or the success of competing parties. At least, there are no hints that the crisis itself—without being accompanied by respective public moods—has caused these shifts in mainstream parties' communication.

Table 4.3 Messages of mainstream parties and vote loss (Pearson correlation for each country)

	Anti-elitism	Pro-people	Nativism	Anti-economic elite
Italy ($n = 8$)	−0.47	0.02	−0.08	−0.27
Spain ($n = 7$)	0.52	0.14	−0.58	0.45
Germany ($n = 8$)	0.18	0.41	0.26	−0.29
Austria ($n = 8$)	0.17	0.01	0.50	−0.25

Negative values indicate that vote losses might be correlated with respective increases of mainstream parties' messages

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

Table 4.4 Summary of explanation for anti-elitist shifts of mainstream parties

	Electoral success	Electoral breakthrough	Public opinion	Elect. success + publ. opinion	Opposition status	Electoral decline
Increase	ÖVP *PP*	PD FI/PdL PSOE PP	PD FI/PdL *PSOE* *PP*	PD FI/PdL PSOE PP ÖVP	*FI/PdL* PSOE *SPD* *SPÖ*	
No increase	PD FI/PdL SPÖ SPD CDU/CSU PSOE	SPD CDU/CSU SPÖ ÖVP	CDU/CSU SPD ÖVP SPÖ	SPÖ SPD CDU/CSU	PD PP CDU/CSU	*PD* *FI* PSOE PP SPD CDU SPÖ ÖVP

Note Names in Italic indicate that it may (not) apply for *some* periods

Concluding, Table 4.4 provides an overview about the different explanations for mainstream parties' anti-elitist shifts. It shows explanations for *anti-elitist* communication of mainstream parties since the effect of public opinion cannot be estimated for *people-centred* communication. The variable "electoral breakthrough" should be considered with caution since it only explains changes in party behaviour for one specific period—when a new populist actor entered the political scene. Furthermore, the explanation "opposition status" does not allow to explain changes in the degree of discourses since it is a binary coded variable. The table shows that electoral success of competing populist parties and public opinion offer potential explanations for about half of the parties. The table further illustrates which findings can be explained by a combination of these two variables.

Electoral support of competing populist parties offers no explanation for most cases. It is only the Austrian ÖVP where a clear link between electoral success of populist parties and the degree of anti-elitism can be identified. For the Spanish PP, no clear conclusion can be drawn: the party becomes more anti-elitist in the face of the electoral breakthrough of Podemos, but whether there is a general link between populist parties' electoral success and anti-elitist discourses cannot be observed since the PP did not publish a manifesto in 2016 and Podemos only emerged in 2015. Also, the Spanish centre-left and both Italian mainstream parties increase anti-elitist elements in their discourses when new populist actors enter the political scene. This cannot be observed among the German and Austrian parties. Regarding the latter, it should be noted, however, that the success of Team Stronach was less considerable than the breakthrough of M5S and Podemos in Italy and Spain.

Combining the variables, electoral success and public opinion could explain five out of eight cases. The reasons why the remaining three actors—SPÖ, SPD and

CDU/CSU—do not become more anti-elitist in the face of changes in the political surrounding remain unclear. This might be due to intra-party developments, country-specific explanations and/or simply because these parties decided not to follow the accommodative strategy. The slight increases of the Spanish parties in 2011 can be explained by respective shifts in public moods—even though a more substantive increase of anti-elitist elements could have been expected. Especially, the communicative behaviour of the Italian parties can be perfectly explained by the development of distrust in political institutions among the public. If we add the opposition status argument, we could further provide potential explanations for the Austrian SPÖ regarding anti-elitist messages.

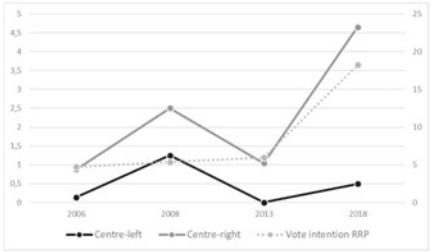
What can be clearly rejected is the assumption that an electoral decline makes parties become more anti-elitist. The mentioning of the PD and FI/PdL in Italic symbolises that for some periods (PD: 2013; FI/PdL: 2013, 2018) an electoral decline is accompanied by considerable increases of anti-elitist communication.

4.1.2 Nativist Contagions

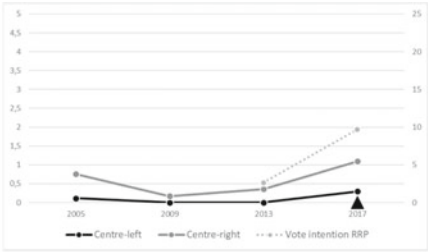
After finding some good arguments that single mainstream parties are contaminated by populist messages due to shifts in public opinion or populist parties' vote share, we now observe if we can make similar observations for nativist messages. Starting again with H1(b), mainstream parties should raise negative demands or evaluations against certain outgroups and immigration more often when far-right parties gain electoral support. Therefore, I collected the vote shares of all radical right parties above 4%. Figure 4.4 illustrates the development of such nativist communication (against outgroups and against immigration) and vote shares for all relevant far-right parties.[5] Again, the left axis illustrates the percentage of nativist sentences in election manifestos and the right axis (dotted line) reflects electoral support for radical right parties.

We see some correlation for the Italian and Austrian centre-right. Especially during the rise of the LN in 2018, the Italian centre-right becomes more critical towards immigration and immigrants. However, unlike in Germany and Austria, the Italian radical right parties are part of the centre-right coalition and might exert an even stronger influence on the electoral coalition and its programme. In Germany, the centre-right and to a smaller extent also the centre-left become more critical towards outgroups/immigration in their manifestos when the AfD was considered a relevant competitor from the far-right in 2017 (H2b; black triangle in Fig. 4.4b). Admittedly, the lack of radical right parties in Spain and Germany (until 2017) restricts the meaningfulness of the results. Nevertheless, the findings provide some indications that the entry or the rise of radical right parties encourages established parties to adjust their communication in this respect.

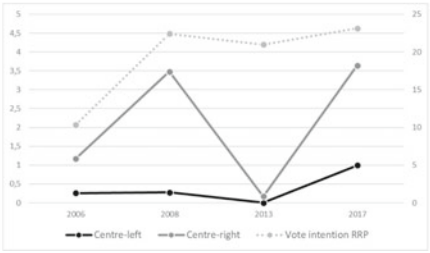
[5] Accumulated for the Italian LN and FdI. In Spain, no far-right party exists within the period of examination.



(a) Italy (n=8)



(b) Germany (n=8)

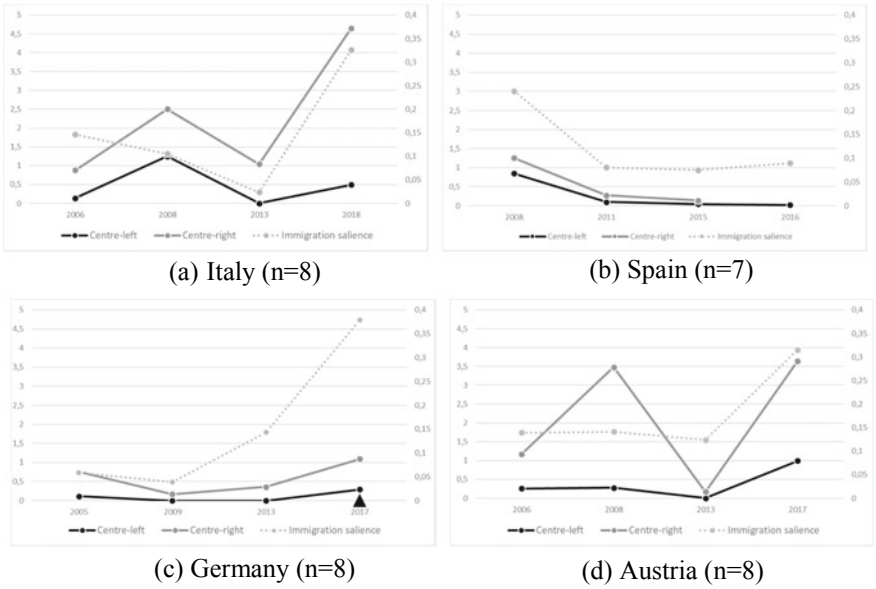


(c) Austria (n=8)

Fig. 4.4 Nativist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and vote shares for radical-right parties (RRP)

While the impact of radical right parties on mainstream parties' nativist discourses cannot be fully estimated for all cases, this can be done for *public opinion*. According to H3b, we can expect a link between public moods and nativist messages. I expect that mainstream parties increase their share of nativist statements when certain nativist-related public moods increase. When such moods decline, mainstream parties are expected to limit their nativist messages.

Figure 4.5 illustrates the development of nativist messages over time and the public salience of the immigration issue (right axis) providing strong hints for Hypothesis 3b. In all countries—and even in Spain where no radical right party exists—mainstream parties (mostly from the centre-right) become more critical towards outgroups and immigration when public opinion shifts in a respective way. In Spain and Germany, the respective increase does not seem to be very considerable at first glance. However, the nativism score of the Spanish PSOE is more than eight times higher in 2008 ($n = 29$, 0.85%) than in 2011 ($n = 2$, 0.1%) and also among the PP the difference is striking (2008: $n = 41$, 1.25%; 2011: $n = 5$, 0.27%). For the German SPD, the picture is similar, scoring 0.29% ($n = 7$) in 2017 and 0.12% ($n = 1$) in 2005 and also the CDU/CSU scores much higher in 2017 ($n = 14$, 0.11%) than in other periods. Rather unexpected appears the comparatively high value for nativist statements in the 2005 manifesto of the German centre-right. The fact that this period represents the only one with the CDU/CSU in opposition might partially explain this. Even though there is very little support that opposition status affects nativist communication of mainstream parties in general—as shown below—it might be true for the CDU/CSU



(a) Italy (n=8) (b) Spain (n=7)

(c) Germany (n=8) (d) Austria (n=8)

Fig. 4.5 Nativist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and public salience of immigration

in this specific period, especially since it is sometimes argued that immigration has been a crucial issue particularly for centre-right parties in Germany even before radical right parties gained success (Bale 2008). Besides the German CDU/CSU in 2005, there are only few periods, which cannot be fully explained by public opinion shifts. This accounts for the rise of nativist statements among Italian parties in 2008 (and the Italian centre-left in 2018) as well as the development of respective messages in manifestos from the Austrian ÖVP in 2008 and 2013.

At this point, a combination of the variables, public opinion and electoral gains of far-right parties, can provide explanations for some of these discursive shifts. Changes in the public salience of immigration and the success of far-right parties should not be considered mutually exclusive explanations for increasing anti-immigration messages. For example, the rise of nativist communication in the manifesto of the Austrian centre-right in 2008—not explained by public opinion shifts—might be due to the strong increase of vote shares for radical-right parties at this time. On the other hand, the communicative shift in 2017 correlates with an increased salience of the immigration issue in society and not so much with the rise of the radical right. Yet for the degree of nativism among the Italian parties in 2006 and the CDU/CSU in 2005, none of these two approaches provide a reasonable explanation.

From a cross-national perspective, we see a statistically significant correlation between public opinion and nativist communication among the centre-right. Figure 4.6 shows the respective scatterplot and fitted values. It can be seen that centre-right mainstream parties tend to use more nativist messages when immigration is a salient topic in society, even though some cases are outlying ($r = 0.564$; $p <$

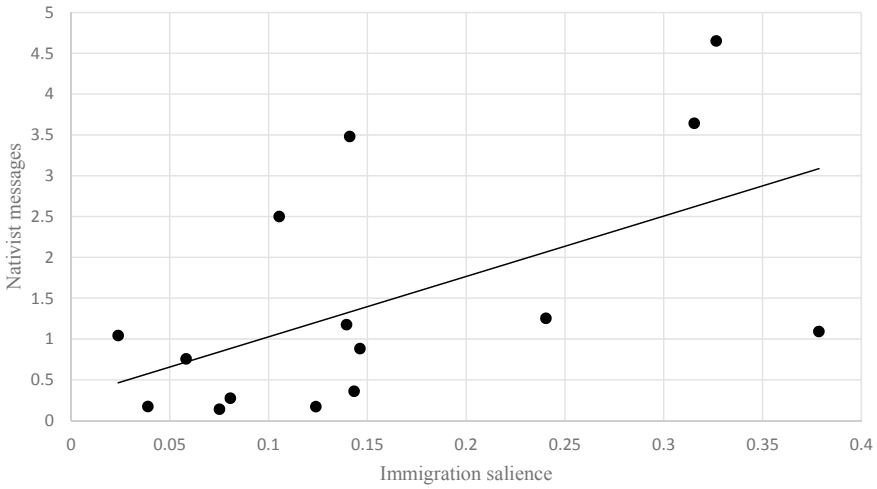


Fig. 4.6 Nativist messages in election manifestos of the centre-right ($n = 15$) and public salience of immigration (cross-national scatterplot)

0.05). This is explained by the fact that parties in the single countries are responsive to public opinion shifts but further indicates that the percentage of nativist messages in general depends on the saliency of the immigration issue in society.

But does ideology play a role? Regarding H4b, it is assumed that centre-right parties use more nativist messages than the centre-left and should be more responsive to respective public moods and to the far-right's electoral support. Table 4.5 can be interpreted in such a way. Unsurprisingly and compared to the centre-left, centre-right mainstream parties use a much higher percentage of nativist messages, which further correlates with "immigration moods" and the electoral success of radical right parties. There is no single centre-left party within the sample that is more nativist than its centre-right competitor in any of the periods under examination (indicated in Fig. 4.5). We see a considerable high correlation between vote shares for the radical right and the percentage of nativist messages of mainstream parties in Table 4.5, which is partially due to the fact that in Spain—where negative demands and evaluations towards immigration and outgroups hardly occur—no radical right party gained

Table 4.5 Nativism scores of mainstream parties' election manifestos ($n = 31$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for radical-right parties (RRP) and with public salience of immigration (cross-national model)

	Mean of nativist messages	Correlation vote share RRP	Correlation public salience immigration
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	1.36 (SD = 1.43)	0.69**	0.56*
Centre-left ($n = 16$)	0.3 (SD = 0.39)	0.26	0.48

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

votes. Accordingly, this high correlation coefficient should not be overemphasised, but it suggests that the existence of a radical right party is a necessary condition for an *emphasis* on nativist messages among the mainstream—even though mainstream parties can be responsive to anti-immigration moods without being pushed by radical right parties. While there is no cross-national trend among the centre-left, a closer look into the single countries reveals that the whole centre-left seems to be responsive to shifts in public opinion—except the Italian PD. Even though this supposed contagion effect occurs with lower degrees of nativism, it suggests that the centre-left does not refrain from adopting nativist discourses due to external pressure. Hence, the nativist contagion occurs not exclusively among centre-right parties as originally assumed but also among social democrats.

Are mainstream parties in power less nativist? Hypothesis 5 states that mainstream parties in opposition are more likely to adopt nativist messages. However, nativist statements do not occur particularly more often when parties are in opposition. Annex 4 illustrates that three parties use a higher percentage of nativist messages in opposition—four do so in government. That does not mean that the degree of messages against outgroups and immigration does not change considerably in manifestos of single parties when they enter government or the opposition. The Italian FI/PdL, for instance, is much more nativist in opposition than in government. The nativism scores from the centre-right can mostly be explained by shifts in public opinion or in radical right parties' vote share as mentioned above. However, this is not true for the rather high value in 2008. The fact that the party went from government (before 2006) to opposition (before 2008) might indeed offer an alternative explanation in this respect.

Mainstream parties do not adopt a higher percentage of nativist messages when they lost electoral support since the last election (Hypothesis 6). As mentioned in Table 4.3, Pearson coefficients do not indicate statistically significant correlations (and neither high coefficients) between the amount of nativist messages and the degree of lost/gained votes. A closer look at the single parties confirms this. In Spain, PSOE and PP are most nativist in 2008 when they lost a considerable amount of votes (PSOE: −11.9%; PP: −16.61%). However, this period also represents the time units with the highest salience of the immigration issue in society. Similar vote losses of the PP in 2015 and of the PSOE in 2011 are not reflected in high degrees of nativist discourses. Neither German parties react to electoral declines by emphasising nativist content. It can be observed that the CDU/CSU is most nativist when it experienced a slight vote loss in 2017 (−3.5%). Yet, this communicative shift rather seems to be a consequence of the rise of nativist parties and respective public opinion. The Austrian ÖVP uses nativist content to the highest degree when experiencing an electoral upswing in 2017. The centre-left does not seem to respond to an electoral decline by becoming more nativist either. Own electoral decline does not provide explanations for degrees of mainstream parties' nativist messages and neither for the few cases, which are not fully explained by shifts in public opinion or success of competing radical right parties—Italian parties in 2006/2008 and the ÖVP in 2013.

The outbreak of a crisis cannot explain these cases either since the "refugee crisis" emerged only in 2015. Yet, as already observed for populist communication and the event of the European economic crisis, this "crisis" in 2015 could be interpreted as a trigger for nativist messages among mainstream parties as Figs. 4.4 and 4.5 indicate for Germany and Austria. Yet, the influx of non-European immigrants is accompanied by respective shifts in public opinion and successes of radical right parties. Therefore, we cannot confirm (but neither negate) that the crisis as such—without being reflected in public opinion—might have had an impact on mainstream parties' communication (Hypothesis 7).

Again, Table 4.6 summarises which factors seem to be particularly good explanations for shifts of nativism degrees among mainstream parties. Electoral success of nativist parties can be tested mostly for Austrian and Italian parties and partially for the German case. In Italy, electoral successes of far-right parties cannot explain the less sharp rise of nativist messages in 2008. In Germany, the increase of nativist messages in 2017 can be interpreted as a consequence of the electoral rise of the AfD, which, however, does not explain why the CDU/CSU also used nativist content in 2005. Moreover, the electoral breakthrough of the AfD in 2017 overlaps with the variable electoral success. Regarding the Austrian centre-right, electoral successes of far-right competitors can explain the development of nativist messages—except the respective sharp drop in 2013. Public opinion further provides a reasonable explanation for the development of the Italian centre-right. Yet, like the variable electoral success, it cannot explain the rise of nativism in 2008. Shifts in public opinion further account for discursive shifts of Spanish parties. The former provide a nearly perfect explanation for the drop of nativist messages among both mainstream parties

Table 4.6 Summary of explanation for nativist shifts of mainstream parties

	Electoral success	Electoral breakthrough	Public opinion	Elect. success + publ. opinion	Opposition status	Electoral decline
Increase	*FI/PdL* SPD *CDU* *ÖVP*	SPD CDU	FI/PdL PSOE PP SPD CDU/CSU SPÖ	*FI/PdL* PSOE PP SPD CDU/CSU SPÖ ÖVP	FI/PdL *CDU/CSU*	
No increase	*PD* *SPÖ*		PD *ÖVP*	*PD*	PD PSOE *PP* SPD SPÖ	PD FI/PdL *PSOE* PP SPD CDU/CSU SPÖ ÖVP

Note Names in Italic indicate that it may (not) apply for *some* periods

after 2008. Moreover, it can explain the increases of the German parties in 2017 and—regarding the centre-right—the tight increase in 2013. Yet, in this respect the increased salience of the immigration issue among the public overlaps with the success of the AfD. Hence, which factor is more decisive cannot be fully estimated. Last, public opinion correlates with the nativism scores of the Austrian centre-left but fails to explain the development of the centre-right in 2008 and 2013. Yet, the variable electoral success at least partially fills this gap. The sharp rise in nativism among the ÖVP in 2008—not accompanied by respective shifts in public opinion—can be reasonably explained by the rise of far-right parties during that time. In sum—and as described above—public opinion seems to be a very good approach to predict nativism scores of mainstream parties except for the Italian centre-left and partially the Austrian ÖVP. Combining both variables—electoral success of competing far-right parties and shifts towards more nativist public moods—we can explain the communicative behaviour of all parties of the sample—except the Italian PD.

Neither opposition status seems to be a good explanatory factor. It is true that the Italian PD is most nativist in opposition in 2008 and also the high nativism score of the Italian centre-right in 2008 and 2018 coincides with opposition periods. Especially for the degrees of nativism in 2008—not explained by any other variable—opposition status offers an alternative explanation. However, hardly any other party communicates in a more nativist way in opposition. Only the moderate level of nativism among the German CDU/CSU in 2005—not been explained by any other variable—could be explained by opposition status. Despite a low saliency of the immigration issue in society, the centre-right reaches its second highest nativism score in that period.

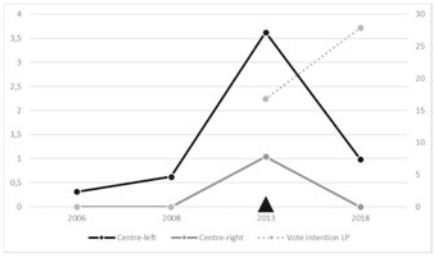
Vote losses do not seem to have any influence on rising degrees of nativist communication. As described above, an electoral decline is hardly ever accompanied by high degrees of nativism. In this respect, Table 4.6 shows no single party in the "increase" column. In sum, public opinion and—as far as it could have been assessed in this study—electoral successes of far-right parties explain almost all communicative behaviour of mainstream parties regarding nativist messages. It is mostly the Italian PD, which does not seem to respond to shifts in political surrounding and therefore might not follow an accommodative strategy. Yet, interestingly, except the Italian PD all other centre-left parties seem to be affected by a nativist contagion. When immigration becomes a more salient topic in society, both centre-right and centre-left parties adopt more nativist discourses.

4.1.3 Leftist Contagions

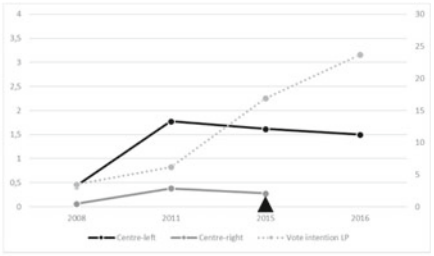
So far, some indications for populist contagion effects could be identified. Nativism seems to be even more contagious for mainstream parties. In the face of far-right parties' success or shifts in public opinion towards a higher saliency of the immigration issue, both centre-right and centre-left parties increasingly adopt nativist discourses. But what about messages against less vulnerable groups—namely economic actors, upper classes or the rich in general? According to H1c, mainstream

parties should evaluate respective actors more often in a negative way when respective left parties gain electoral support. Mainstream parties are expected to decrease the percentage of messages directed towards the economic elite (right y-axis) when left parties loose electoral support (right axis). However, unlike populist and nativist messages, successes from competing niche parties do not seem to have any influence on mainstream parties' leftist communication. No single party seems to be responsive to the success of left-wing parties. The electoral breakthrough of a new actor mobilising against economic elites is accompanied by mainstream parties' messages against upper classes and economic actors only in Italy. In Spain and Germany, mainstream parties adopt discourses against economic elites totally independently from the success or emergence of respective left parties. Accordingly, H1c should rather be rejected and H2c might only be true for the Italian case: competing left parties does not seem to have an influence on the degree of mainstream parties' messages against economic actors. However, the rise of the M5S in Italy is further accompanied by shifts in public opinion towards a higher salience of issues related to the national economy. In this sense, public opinion (H3c) seems to be a much better predictor of mainstream parties' messages against economic elites (Fig. 4.7).

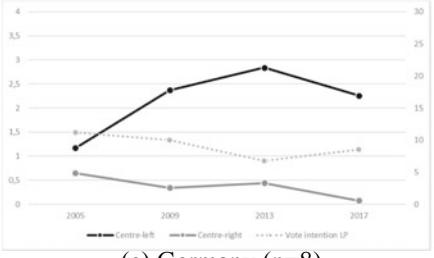
Shifts in public moods offer explanations for communicative shifts of all mainstream parties of the sample, except the German ones and the Austrian centre-right (Fig. 4.8). It is true that public moods cannot fully explain why no sharper drop in leftist messages occurs in Spain in 2015, but except this period, public opinion seems to be a reasonable explanation. One might argue that mainstream parties in Spain did not decrease the degree of messages against economic elites to a considerable extent



(a) Italy (n=8)

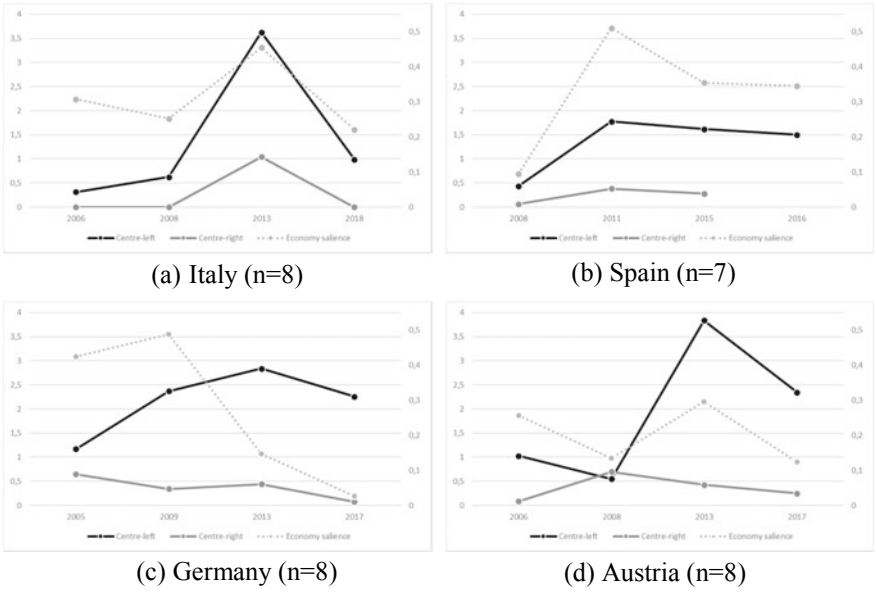


(b) Spain (n=7)



(c) Germany (n=8)

Fig. 4.7 Leftist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and vote shares for left parties (LP)



(a) Italy (n=8) (b) Spain (n=7)

(c) Germany (n=8) (d) Austria (n=8)

Fig. 4.8 Leftist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and public salience of the national economy's situation

in 2015 due to the breakthrough of Podemos, which might have forced the mainstream to remain engaged in economic issues. In this sense, a considerable decrease of "leftist" moods in society coincides with the emergence of new successful left-wing competitor. In sum, especially the centre-left seems to be responsive to public opinion shifts while the centre-right in Austria behaves in a different way. In Spain and Italy, the respective lines from the centre-right and centre-left are mostly parallel and linked to shifts from the dotted line. Thus, public opinion seems to be stronger related to left-wing communication of mainstream parties than shifts in left-wing parties' vote share.

Interestingly, the correlation between leftist moods and mainstream parties' left communication totally disappears if we presume a general cross-national relation between these two variables. This is because in Spain, economy-related issues are salient in society (mean = 0.31) but parties criticise economic actors less often (mean = 0.87). In Germany and Austria, however, such issues are less salient for the population (mean Germany = 0.27; mean Austria = 0.2) but parties use messages against economically powerful groups to a higher degree (mean Germany = 1.27; mean Austria = 1.15).

Undoubtedly, ideology seems to be an important factor explaining degrees of messages against economic actors. Hypothesis 4c can rather be confirmed for all cases: centre-left mainstream parties use negative evaluations and demands towards economic actors much more frequently than the centre-right. Furthermore, as illustrated in Fig. 4.8, the centre-left adopts leftist messages especially when respective

Table 4.7 Left scores of mainstream parties' election manifestos ($n = 31$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for left parties (LP) and with public salience of the economy's situation (cross-national model)

	Mean of leftist messages	Correlation vote share LP	Correlation economy salience
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	0.32 (SD = 0.3)	0.03 (0.91)	0.4 (0.12)
Centre-left ($n = 16$)	1.97 (SD = 1.7)	0.02 (0.94)	0.2 (0.45)

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

shifts in public opinion occur and therefore seem to be more responsive to public moods than the centre-right. Yet, as indicated in Fig. 4.8, also centre-right parties in Italy and Spain become more critical towards economic actors in the face of shifts in public opinion—or when a new respective political actor experiences an electoral breakthrough. Table 4.7 provides an overview over cross-national trends. Unsurprisingly, centre-left parties use a higher percentage of leftist messages than the centre-right. A look into the single countries reveals that this is the case within all party systems only with the exception of the ÖVP in 2008 being slightly more critical towards economic actors than the centre-left. There is no statistically significant cross-national correlation between this communicative content and vote shares for left parties or respective public moods. Yet, as described in detail above, within the single countries we see considerably correlations between leftist messages of (centre-left) mainstream parties and shifts in public moods.

There is no general trend indicating that parties in opposition are more prone to raise demands or negative evaluations towards economic actors (H5). As Annex 4 shows, three parties use a higher amount of such messages when they are in opposition and three when in government.

It is true that the SPD and CDU/CSU score highest on leftist discourses in opposition—the SPD in 2013 and the CDU/CSU in 2005. However, there is still a need for further approaches that explain considerable shifts in degrees of discourses against economic elites during *incumbent* periods. For example, the CDU/CSU uses hardly any respective message in 2017 but it scores much higher in 2013 and 2009—all legislative periods with the centre-right in government. Similar puzzles remain unsolved regarding the SPD and the ÖVP in Austria. However, the latter has not been in parliamentary opposition during the period of analysis. Italian mainstream parties are not particularly hostile towards economic actors in government. The highest scores are reached in 2013 when respective discourses appeared to be particularly sensitive to public opinion and to the electoral breakthrough of the M5S. In 2013, PD and FI/PdL supported the Monti government, before the latter withdrew its support forcing new elections. Even if we consider FI/PdL as opposition actor in 2013, this does not explain why the same party was not engaged in discourses against economic groups five years before, when it was a "real" opposition party. Among the Spanish parties, government participation does not seem to decrease the percentage of messages against upper classes and privileged group either. The PSOE scores

highest in 2011 as incument party. The same can be observed regarding the SPÖ in Austria reaching the highest scores in government (2013 and 2017).

Hypothesis 6 cannot be confirmed either. An electoral decline of mainstream parties is not followed by a higher degree of messages against economic groups as illustrated in Table 4.3 of Sect. 4.1.1. In Italy, the centre-left reaches the highest score in 2013 when opinion polls indicated a similar electoral outcome than 2008 (−0.7%). When the party lost 2.5% in 2018, it became less critical towards economic actors. For the Italian centre-right in 2013, one could indeed speculate that the high percentage of messages against economic groups is—among others—a result from the dramatic electoral decline the party suffered in this period (−21.74%). Yet, as mentioned above, other factors—the electoral breakthrough of the M5S and shift in public opinion—might have had a larger influence on the party. The fact that FI/PdL stopped using respective messages in 2017 when it experienced a further vote loss supports this argument. The Spanish centre-left uses the lowest degree of messages against economic actors when it experienced its most substantial electoral decline in 2008 (−11.59%). The PP scores even highest when it gained votes in 2011 (+2.26%). The same is true for the German SPD (2013: + 2.5%) and the CDU/CSU (2005: + 4.1%; 2013: + 7.7%). SPÖ in Austria—constantly losing electoral support according to opinion polls during the period of analysis—is not more hostile towards economic actors when electoral losses are particularly serious as in 2008. The Austrian centre-right scores highest when experiencing an electoral decline in 2008 (−4.62%) but scores lowest when losing a similar amount of votes in 2006 (−3.55%).

Is there a relation between the outbreak of the economic crisis and the amount of leftist messages? Hypothesis 7 negates that a crisis as such affects mainstream parties' competition when it is not reflected in public moods. Figure 4.8 at least indicates that the first election campaign after 2008 is characterised by particular high degrees of discourses against economic elites (at least regarding the centre-left). Again, these degrees are also accompanied by respective increases in public opinion. While it could be speculated that the outbreak of the crisis has contributed to the salience of economic issues in society, it cannot be observed whether the crisis itself—without being reflected in public moods—is related to discursive shifts of mainstream parties.

Table 4.8 summarises the explanatory power of the single variables. In sum, shifts in public opinion are the most reasonable explanation for an increased emphasis on messages against economic actors. It could further be speculated that the electoral breakthrough of new parties verbally attacking economic elites might further have a short-term effect on communication of the political mainstream. The Italian case might point towards this explanation, and the fact that Spanish parties do not decrease their hostility towards economic actors in 2015—despite a lower saliency of respective topics among the public—could be interpreted in the same way.

Table 4.8 Summary of explanations for leftist shifts of mainstream parties

	Electoral success	Electoral breakthrough	Public opinion	Elect. success + publ. opinion	Opposition status	Electoral decline
Increase		PD FI/PdL	PD FI/PdL *PSOE* *PP* SPÖ	PD FI/PdL PSOE PP SPÖ	*SPD* *CDU/CSU*	*FI/PdL* *ÖVP*
No increase	PD FI/PdL PSOE PP SPD CDU ÖVP SPÖ	PSOE PP	SPD CDU/CSU ÖVP	SPD CDU ÖVP	PD FI/PdL PSOE PP SPÖ	PD *PSOE* PP SPD CDU/CSU SPÖ

Note Names in Italic indicate that it may (not) apply for *some* periods

4.1.3.1 Discussion

Table 4.9 summarises the explanatory power of the three major variables for communicative shifts of mainstream parties. The row belonging to H3 shows numbers in bold. That means that the link between public opinion and respective parties' messages seems to be particularly strong. The table does not illustrate cross-national effects and provides information about *anti-elitist* and not about *populist* (anti-elitism + people-centrism) or people-centred contagious effects since the variable, public opinion, only covers the anti-elitist dimension.

Table 4.9 Summary of tested hypotheses for the quantitative analysis of mainstream parties' election manifestos

	Anti-elitist contagion	Nativist contagion	Leftist contagion
H1. Success of competing party	1/4 AUT (CR)	3/3 IT; GER; AUT	0/3
H2. Electoral breakthrough	2/4 IT; SP	1/1 GER	1/2 IT
H3. Public opinion	2/4 IT; SP	**4/4**	**3/4** IT; SP; AUT (CL)

Note CR = Centre-right, CL = centre-left; numbers in bold = strong support. * = However, centre-left mainstream parties appear to be more responsive to left competitors and the centre-right to nativist actors

The analysis provides support for all countries—except Germany—that election manifestos of at least one mainstream party per country become more anti-elitist either when populist parties gain success/successfully emerge or when public opinion becomes more anti-elitist. However, public opinion only seems to play a role in the two southern European countries where distrust in political parties and the national parliament is much more widespread than in Germany and Austria. The Austrian centre-right instead becomes more populist and anti-elitist when competing (radical-right) populist parties increase their vote share. The Italian FI/PdL increases *populist* messages—either anti-elitist or people-centred discourses—in the face of populist parties' success as well as *anti-elitist* messages when public opinion becomes more critical towards political institutions. Combining the variables, public opinion and electoral success, accounts for anti-elitist shifts for five out of eight parties. Only the SPÖ, SPD and CDU/CSU do not become more anti-elitist in the face of changes in the political surrounding. Whether these parties respond to other developments not covered by the variables of this study or whether they simply choose not to follow the accommodative strategy cannot be estimated with certainty. However, the fact that even other variables such as own electoral failure and opposition status do not indicate respective communicative tendencies indicates that the accommodative strategy may be rejected by these actors.

There are even stronger indicators for a contagion of nativist messages on mainstream parties. This is also illustrated by the numbers in bold in Table 4.9. In all countries—including Germany—there is a particularly strong link between nativist messages of mainstream parties and respective shifts in public opinion. This is particularly true for the centre-right but on a lower level also for centre-left parties in Spain, Germany and Austria. Moreover, even the Spanish political mainstream becomes more nativist when shifts in public opinion occur despite the lack of pressure from competing radical right parties. This observation is in line with the assumption of Mudde (2013, 8) that mainstream parties adopt nativist messages due to shifts in public opinion even when no relevant anti-immigration party exists in the respective party system. Nevertheless, the degrees of nativism are much lower in Spain than in the other countries indicating that far-right parties still make a difference. Combining the variables, public opinion and electoral success of far-right parties, explains the communicative behaviour of all parties of the sample—except the Italian PD, which may not follow an accommodative strategy.

The findings further indicate that mainstream parties criticise economic actors more often when economy-related moods in society increase—and not when competing left-wing populist parties gain success. While electoral success of competing niche parties appears to play a role at least for some mainstream parties regarding populist and nativist messages leftist parties seem to have no influence at all on respective discourses of the political mainstream. Again, Germany is an exception. In all other countries, mainstream parties adopt a higher share of messages against economic actors when public opinion shifts in a certain direction. Accordingly, nativist messages are the only communicative element under examination German mainstream parties seem to adopt in the face of external pressure.

As explained above, the analysis does not reveal clear causal relations between the independent and dependent variables. There might be other factors influencing party behaviour, which are not grasped by the selected variables. Yet, in sum, the results provide good reasons to assume that mainstream parties indeed adjust their communicative content as a reaction to public moods and to a lower extent because of electoral successes of competing niche parties. However, especially the deviation of the German case calls for more specific explanations. Why do centre-right and centre-left parties in Germany refuse to adopt populist messages and statements against economic elites in the face of external pressure? Within country-specific literature, there can be found some arguments that populist communication never played a significant role within the party system and institutional culture of the Federal Republic since—until the emergence of the AfD—populist parties never gained considerable electoral support (Decker 2012). Hence, while the conflict between the political elite and the common people seems to be much more developed in Spain, Italy and even in Austria, such a populist cleavage might not exist (yet) in Germany. Data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) suggests that German parties are the least anti-elitist ones among the countries under examination (Bakker et al. 2015; Polk et al. 2017). My own measurements illustrate that even more clearly: compared to the other countries, German mainstream parties refer less frequently to populist messages (Table 4.1). Furthermore, the AfD might rather be perceived as an anti-immigration or nativist party from the far-right than as a primarily populist party attempting to disempower the political elite. This is also confirmed by my own measurements: the AfD uses much more anti-immigration and anti-outgroup messages in its manifesto than anti-elitist statements (however, this is also true for Austrian far-right parties).

The fact that German parties neither respond to left-moods is more difficult to explain. The centre-left and centre-right mainstream might assume that the public is more sensible for migration-related issues than for economic ones and therefore adopt nativist messages in a more strategical way. In contrast to the southern European countries, Germany was less affected by the European economic crisis. Moreover, during the peak of the economic crisis, resentments against "lazy" southerners (especially Greeks) rather than against banks and powerful economic actors may have increased in Germany due to disrespectful discourses of leading politicians and a respective media coverage—especially from the "scandal sheet" Bild (Faigle 2011; Tschermak 2017).

The history of the GDR associated with persecution and authoritarianism might further prevent parties to consciously adopt a more hostile attitude against upper classes and privileged actors due to shifts in political surroundings (Münkler 2012). According to Münkler, populist and *left-wing* populist parties and discourses can easily be stigmatised in the Federal Republic due to the experience with the GDR and National Socialism. However, he makes a similar argument for *right-wing* populism assuming the Germany is kind of immune to far-right parties and discourses due to "the horror of history" (Münkler 2012, 7). As the establishment of the AfD and the fact that German mainstream parties adopt nativist discourses has shown, this argument might have lost its validity.

One could also speculate that the SPD itself is trying to act as a left agenda setter. Instead of being driven by changing moods in the population, the party itself tries to influence the "party system agenda" through targeted campaigns changing the "perceptions across all parties that certain issues are more important than others" (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2015, 749), thereby affecting public opinion.[6] This argument is based on the observation that the SPD indeed uses messages against economic actors to a considerable extent, which, however, do not correlate with any of the selected variables. In addition, while Germany was not affected substantially by the economic crisis it received the highest number of immigrants in 2015 during the so-called refugee crisis that lead to a high salience of the immigration issue paving the way to the AfD's success in 2017. Some of these factors might at least partially explain the exceptional findings from the German case.

The analysis further revealed that the centre-right is more prone to use nativist communication than the centre-left and the findings indicate that it is also more inclined to adopt such messages when external pressure increases. Additionally, it is true that the mainstream left uses more demands towards economic actors than the centre-right, which are also stronger linked to shifts in public opinion than it is the case among the mainstream right. Populist messages are raised to a similar degree by centre-right and centre-left mainstream parties. Taking a cross-national perspective, centre-right parties are slightly more populist than the centre-left because the former refer more often to the people. However, the single country figures provided good arguments to assume that centre-right parties mostly become more populist when *right-wing* populists gain electoral support and the centre-left when non-right-wing populist competitors are on the rise. Hence, it can be speculated that ideology plays a role regarding the responsiveness of mainstream parties to populist competitors.

Concluding, mainstream parties are more prone to adopt nativist than populist messages or statements against economic elites. In none of the four countries of the sample, both mainstream parties refuse to adopt anti-immigration or anti-outgroup messages when external pressure increases. Thus, the populist contagion does not seem to be the main challenge Western European party systems are facing today but rather the spread of nativist discourses among centre-right parties—at least regarding their election manifestos.

4.2 Indications of Contagion Effects on Informal Party Communication

Since some scholars raise the concern that election manifestos might not be a reliable source for measures of populist communication, I provide a second quantitative analysis of a more informal type of political texts: official statements from political parties

[6] A more recent example is the statement by Kevin Kühnert—chairman of the SPD youth organisation "Jusos" and deputy federal chairman of the party since December 2019—to think about the socialisation of certain companies and industries (Tagesspiegel 2019).

Table 4.10 Results of content analysis of websites' statements (mean values for all time units; $n = 52$)

	Party/coalition	Anti-elitism	People-centrism	Nativism	Anti-econ. elite
Italy	PD	0.37 (0.28)	2.58 (1.46)	0.34 (0.43)	0.59 (0.88)
	FI/PdL	0.57 (1.06)	3.07 (1.06)	2.12 (2.19)	0.41 (0.63)
	LN	1.94 (2.02)	5.89 (3.12)	10.45 (8.04)	3.28 (6.75)
	M5S	4.35 (1.45)	5.17 (0.72)	0	1.84 (0.96)
Spain	PSOE	0.04 (0.09)	4.87 (0.53)	0	0.78 (0.74)
	PP	0.08 (0.11)	8.17 (1.65)	0.17 (0.37)	0.18 (0.26)
	Podemos	4.88 (5.47)	13 (0.07)	0	4.67 (1.48)
	United Left	0.27 (0.54)	6.99 (2.67)	0	10.54 (2.42)
	Ciudadanos	4.35 (0.4)	11.33 (0.12)	0	0
Germany	SPD	0.07 (0.15)	0.69 (0.77)	0	2.98 (1.26)
	CDU/CSU	0	0.52 (0.52)	0.76 (1.21)	0.91 (1.38)
	Linke	1.89 (3.79)	2.15 (1.83)	0	6.93 (1.85)
	AfD (2017)	2.29	7.87	23.63	0.48

Note Standard deviation in brackets

found on their websites. The websites selected for the analysis can be found in the annex (A5). As mentioned in Sect. 3.1, I analyse parties in Italy, Spain and Germany. For the German case, I rely on press releases from the parliamentary groups since websites' statements were not available. The average scores for each party reveal that supposed populist parties—LN,[7] M5S, Podemos, Die Linke and AfD—are indeed more anti-elitist and people-centred in their statements than competing mainstream parties (Table 4.10). However, there are some differences to the manifesto's analysis regarding people-centrism and anti-elitism scores. According to the findings from the manifestos, the Italian centre-left is more anti-elitist than the centre-right. The results for the websites' statements find the opposite. The same is true for the Spanish mainstream parties: unlike in their election manifestos, the centre-left is less anti-elitist than the centre-right in its online releases.

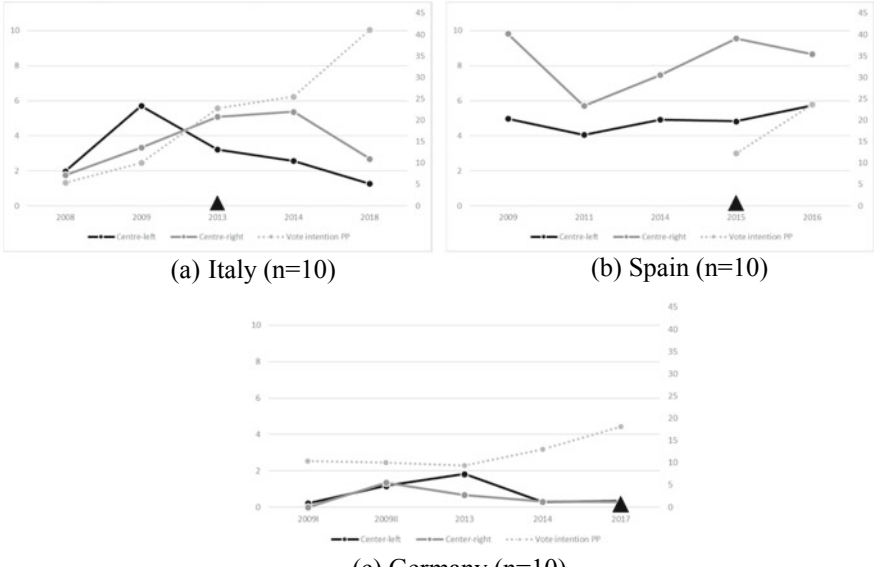
However, it should be noted that anti-elitist messages hardly occur on the parties' websites: in 19 of 30 election campaigns, mainstream parties do not use anti-establishment rhetoric. Moreover, the Spanish centre-right refers much more often to the people than the centre-left. The analysis of the manifestos found the contrary. The same is true for German mainstream parties: in the releases from the parliamentary group, the centre-left raises positive demands and evaluation towards the people more often than the CDU/CSU. In the election manifestos, it is the centre-right emphasising the people. Interestingly, the findings concerning nativist communication and

[7]Interestingly, when the League stopped using regionalist and anti-southern rhetoric in the 2018 campaign it also stopped using anti-elitist messages. This suggests that the anti-elitist orientation of the LN is linked to its regionalist character. Indeed, anti-elitist messages are mostly addressed to the "southern" political elite in Rome.

messages against economic actors do not contradict with those from the manifestos' analysis. Regarding the former, the centre-right talks more often about immigration or outgroups in a negative way while the centre-left criticises more frequently economic actors. Only the fact that the Spanish United Left is more oriented against economic actors than the populist left-wing party Podemos slightly contradicts the findings from the manifestos' analysis. The latter indicate that Podemos criticises economic groups slightly more often.

4.2.1 Populist Contagions

In none of the three countries, there is support for the hypotheses that mainstream parties become more populist in their statements when populist parties gain success (H1a) or more anti-elitist when public opinion shifts in a respective way (H3a). It can only be found that centre-left parties in Italy and Spain increase their populist statements when a new successful populist actor emerges (H2a; the black triangle mentions the establishment of new relevant populist actors). Figure 4.9a, b illustrates these developments for the Italian centre-right and the Spanish centre-left. However, the figures also show similar increases during other periods without new establishing populist actors. Thus, there is little support for a populist contagion due to the success of competing populist actors. The same is true if we only consider

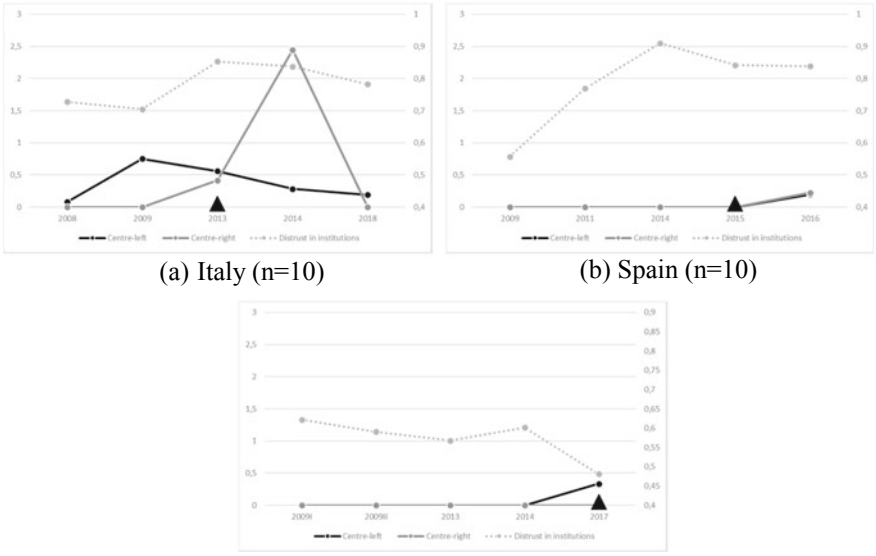


(a) Italy (n=10)

(b) Spain (n=10)

(c) Germany (n=10)

Fig. 4.9 Populist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and vote shares for populist parties (PP)



(a) Italy (n=10)

(b) Spain (n=10)

(c) Germany (n=10)

Fig. 4.10 Anti-elitist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and public distrust in institutions

anti-elitist messages: in none of the three countries, parties increase their share of anti-elitist messages in the face of increased vote shares for populist parties.

Figure 4.10 illustrates the relationship between anti-elitist messages and respective public moods based on data from Eurobarometer (again, distrust in parties and the parliament). There is no support for the assumption that mainstream parties use more anti-elitist messages when shifts in public opinion occur. However, there are some hints that mainstream parties use anti-elitist messages mostly when new successful populist parties are emerging. In Spain and Germany, mainstream parties use anti-elitist messages only when a successful populist party competes for the first or second time at national elections (again mentioned by the black triangle). In this regard, the German SPD demands that deputies should have to report their incomes "to the last cent"[8]. In 2016, the Spanish centre-left wants to oblige "all high-ranking politicians"[9] to publish their patrimony before and after their mandate in order to know if this corresponds to the declared income during their terms of office. Furthermore, a speaker of the Spanish centre-right claims in 2016, "I have demanded from all parties to act in an appropriately as in modern democracies in our surroundings and to respect the citizens".[10] Yet, despite these observations, Fig. 4.10 does not provide

[8] auf Heller und Pfennig.

[9] todos los altos cargos politicos.

[10] he reclamado a todos los partidos, que actúen como ocurre en las democracias modernas de nuestro entorno y respeten a los ciudadanos.

Table 4.11 Populism scores of mainstream parties' online statements ($n = 30$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for populist parties (PP) and with public distrust in institutions (cross-national model)

	Mean of populist messages	Pearson vote share PP	Pearson (anti-elitism) distrust in institutions
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	4.13 (SD = 3.50)	−0.14	0.33
Centre-left ($n = 15$)	2.87 (SD = 2.04)	−0.26	0.16

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

clear arguments for the assumption that anti-elitist statements are strongly linked to the establishment of a new populist party.

According to Hypothesis 4a, centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties use populist messages to a similar extent. At first glance, this cannot be confirmed. Table 4.11 illustrates that centre-right parties are more populist than the centre-left. However, this is mostly due to the fact that the Spanish centre-right refers much more often to the people than any other mainstream party of the sample (while not using anti-elitist messages; Figs. 4.9b and 4.10b). Accordingly, these findings should not be overestimated. Moreover, there is no statistically significant correlation—in a cross-national perspective—between centre-right or centre-left parties' populism (or anti-elitism) scores and the success of populist parties (PP) or shifts in public opinion (distrust in institutions) suggesting that the ideological background of mainstream parties does not explain the intention of parties to adopt populist content in their online statements. A closer look within the single countries confirms that parties do not adopt populist or anti-elitist messages in the face of external pressure—independently from the ideological orientation.

Hypothesis 5 cannot be confirmed. Government and opposition status of mainstream parties does not explain their populist shifts. Three parties use anti-elitist messages more often when in opposition (FI/PdL; PD; PSOE)—two in government (PP and SPD). Yet, even the anti-elitism score of incumbent parties fluctuates considerably. For instance, the PD scores 0.24% in 2008 but 0.48% in 2014—both incumbent periods. The Spanish centre-right only uses anti-elitist messages in government (2015 and 2016) but not in 2014 despite being in power. Similar observations can be made for people-centrist messages: PD, PSOE and SPD refer more often to the people when in opposition, and FI/PdL and PP when in government (Annex 5). Due to the small number of cases, I cannot draw a general conclusion but the findings clearly point towards not considering government participation as a crucial trigger for populist messages of mainstream parties.

An electoral decline of mainstream parties does not trigger anti-elitist and people-centred messages of mainstream parties either (H6). Respective findings in Table 4.12 rather suggest that populist messages are not linked to vote losses. A look at the single parties confirms this: the Italian PD uses its highest share of anti-elitist and people-centred discourses when experiencing its most substantial electoral decline in 2018 (−17.54%). As already observed for the manifestos' analysis, the Italian FI/PdL is most populist and anti-elitist in 2013 when losing nearly 20% of its votes according

Table 4.12 Messages of mainstream parties and vote loss (Pearson correlation for each country)

	Anti-elitism	Pro-people	Nativism	Anti-economic elite
Italy ($n = 8$)	−0.07	−0.36	0.04	−0.04
Spain ($n = 7$)	0.12	0.13	0.39	0.07
Germany ($n = 8$)	−0.33	0.29	0.55	−0.15

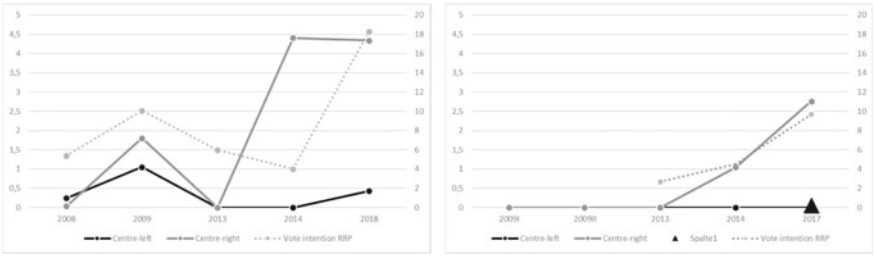
Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

to opinion polls. Yet, this period also coincides with the establishment of the M5S as another potential explanation for the discursive shift. Among no single party of the sample, electoral losses coincide considerably with particular high populism or anti-elitism scores.

Is there a relation between the outbreak of the economic crisis and the amount of populist messages? Figures 4.9 and 4.10 leave room for interpretation. It is true that especially after 2011, we see an increase in populist (mostly people-centred) messages among at least one mainstream party in each country but this is not a very strong argument considering the distinct developments of the lines in each country. Moreover, some anti-elitist content emerges after 2011 as well. Yet, neither this observation does allow clear conclusions but might further be explained by other factors such as the emergence of new populist actors putting mainstream parties under pressure. While a clear conclusion cannot be made in this respect, Hypothesis 7 cannot at least be rejected: a crisis as such is not clearly linked to a rise in populist messages.

4.2.2 Nativist Contagions

There are few hints that mainstream parties adopt nativist messages when far-right competing parties increase their electoral support. Figure 4.11a suggests at least for the Italian centre-left a slight correlation between nativist messages and changes in



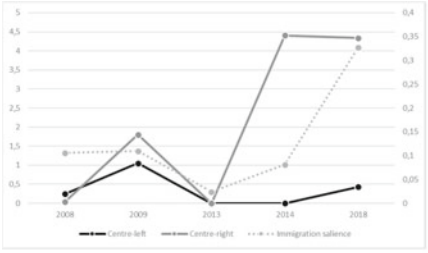
(a) Italy (n=10) (b) Germany (n=10)

Fig. 4.11 Nativist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and vote shares for radical-right parties (RRP)

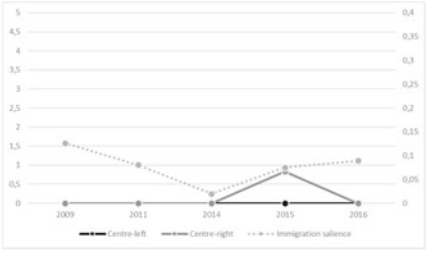
vote shares for radical right parties. Yet, the rise of the radical in Italy in 2018 is hardly reflected in the PD's degree of nativism. Furthermore, electoral support of the far-right does not explain why the Italian centre-right uses a considerable degree of nativist messages in 2014. Since there is no relevant radical right party within the period of investigation in Spain, I proceed with the German case: the centre-right's nativism score correlates with the electoral success of the AfD (Fig. 4.11b). However, while the AfD can clearly be described as a radical right party in 2017, its stances on immigration policies have been much more moderate in 2013 and 2014. Accordingly, while the success and right-wing shift of the AfD in 2017 might account for the percentage of nativist messages of the German centre-right, it might be questioned whether the AfD's moderate successes prior to the 2017 period provide a convincing explanation for the communicative shift of the centre-right in 2014.

Can public opinion explain some of the nativist shifts of mainstream parties? Only partially. Figure 4.12 mentions the nativism indices of mainstream parties and the salience of the immigration issue in society. In Italy, it could be speculated that both mainstream parties consider public opinion towards immigration in order to adapt their communication in this respect. The same could be assumed for the German centre-right.

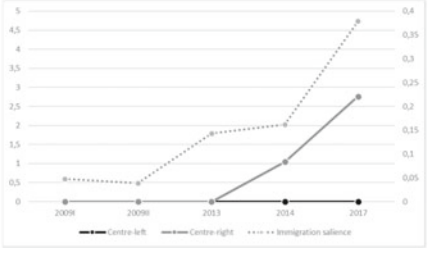
However, the figures leave much more space for interpretation than the results from the manifestos' analysis. In 2015, for example, the Spanish centre-right introduces nativist messages, which corresponds with a respective shift in public opinion but the fact that there are no nativist statements during periods with a higher salience of the



(a) Italy (n=10)



(b) Spain (n=10)



(c) Germany (n=10)

Fig. 4.12 Nativist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and public salience of immigration

Table 4.13 Nativism scores of mainstream parties' online statements ($n = 31$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for radical-right parties (RRP) and with public salience of immigration

	Mean of nativist messages	Correlation vote share RRP	Correlation public salience immigration
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	1.01 (SD = 1.59)	0.72**	0.62*
Centre-left ($n = 15$)	0.12 (SD = 0.29)	0.60*	0.18

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

immigration issue contradicts Hypothesis 3. Regarding the German centre-right, the considerable increase in anti-immigration messages in 2017 is indeed connected to shifts in public opinion. This is also partially true for the increase in 2014. Together with the first emergence of the AfD in 2013/2014, this might indeed offer an explanation for the degree of nativist messages in the CDU/CSU's releases. Nevertheless, the explanations electoral success/breakthrough of far-right parties and public opinion shifts leave us with more questions than answers. In sum, it is almost only the communicative behaviour of the German centre-right that can be explained by these variables.

Hypothesis 4b can rather be confirmed: Table 4.13 illustrates that centre-right parties indeed use more nativist messages than the centre-left. Interestingly, there is a statistically significant correlation between immigration-related moods and the use of nativist communication among the centre-right in a cross-national perspective. Accordingly, it could be speculated that the centre-right is not only more nativist but also more responsive to respective public moods than the centre-left. Moreover, it suggests that public opinion matters to a certain extent (H3): at least a specific level of public interest in the immigration issue might be necessary for the centre-right to adopt respective content. Yet, as mentioned above, a look at the party level reveals that public opinion fails to explain nativist communication of mainstream parties—except the German centre-right. Table 4.13 further indicates an even stronger and more significant correlation between nativist messages of the centre-right and vote shares for RRP. However, this is mostly due to the fact that in Spain nativist statements and radical right actors are absent. This also explains the statistically significant correlation for the centre-left. Notwithstanding, as observed for the analysis of the party manifestos, the existence of a far-right party seems to be a necessary condition for high levels of nativism among mainstream parties. Also, the German centre-right mostly engages in nativist discourses when a new party from the far-right emerged.

Does opposition status provide an explanation for the unsolved puzzles? This should rather be denied as well. Parties in opposition seem not to be more prone to criticise immigration and outgroups than parties in government (H5). Only two parties use nativist messages more often when in opposition (FI/PdL and PD), while

the Spanish PP is more nativist in government (Annex 5). However, it should be reiterated that the number of cases is too small to observe clear trends in this respect.[11]

As illustrated in Table 4.12, we see no significant correlation between vote losses of mainstream parties and the amount of nativist messages published online (Hypothesis 6). It can only be observed that all respective coefficients are positive, suggesting that electoral decline may rather trigger nativist messages than prevent them. Yet, a closer look at the single parties does not strengthen this assumption. It is only the Italian PD that increases its share of nativist messages considerably in the face of an electoral decline (2009: −7.96%; 2018: −17.54%). The Italian FI/PdL even stopped using nativist content in 2013 experiencing its most substantial electoral decline within the period of analysis (−19.62%). The Spanish (2015) and the German centre-right (2017) uses nativist content mostly when they gained votes compared to the previous election.

Last, there are no clear hints that the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 by itself caused nativist communication in Germany. It is true that the centre-right becomes much more nativist in 2017 but this is accompanied by the success of the AfD and an increased salience of the immigration issue in society (Figs. 4.11b and 4.12c). At least it cannot be estimated whether the crisis as such had an impact on parties' nativist communication since it was accompanied by respective shifts in public opinion and the upswing of the far-right AfD.

4.2.3 Leftist Contagions

Last, I focus on messages against economic groups. Can the selected variables explain shifts in the degree of these discourses? Rather not. Mainstream parties do not increase their messages against economic actors in the face of increasing vote shares for left parties as predicted by H1c. No single mainstream party in Spain and Germany—where left parties attract considerable amounts of vote shares—seems to react to the success of leftist parties by attacking powerful economic groups. The respective figures can be found in the annex (A7). Figure 4.13 only suggests that public opinion might play a role (H3c): when the national economy is evaluated as a major problem by citizens, mainstream parties in Italy and Spain criticise economic groups more often. A link between leftist moods and messages can almost only be observed in Spain—yet this link does not seem to be very strong. More striking is that all mainstream parties—except the German centre-left—increase the percentage of messages against economic elites considerably in 2013/2014.

This might be due to the effect of the European economic crisis even though public opinion does not shift in all countries during that time (H7). Regarding Italy, the establishment of the M5S—starting as an actor criticising the power of large companies—might also have contributed to the communicative shift of Italian mainstream

[11] For example, there is only one period with the PD in opposition and one legislature with the FI/PdL in government.

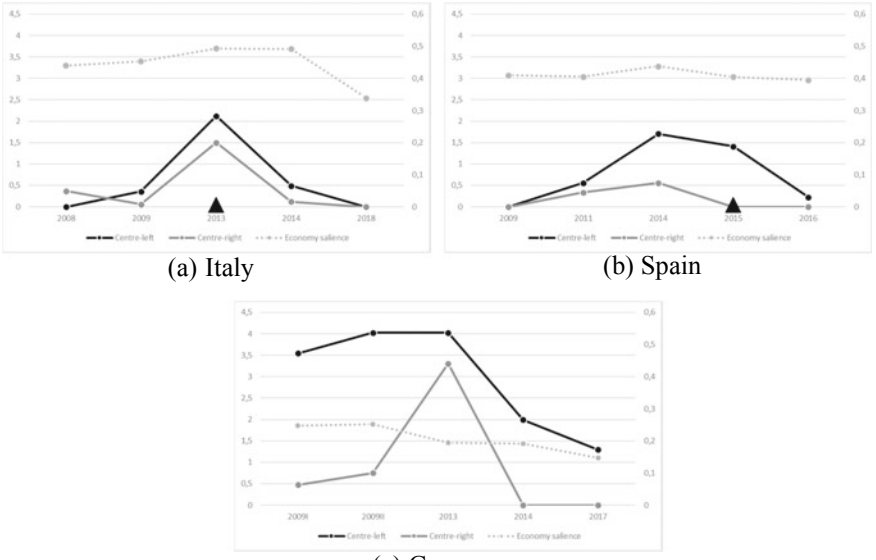


Fig. 4.13 Leftist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and public salience of the national economy's situation

parties (H2c). Notwithstanding, potential consequences of the economic crises offer more reasonable explanations for discursive shifts of mainstream parties than public opinion or successes of left parties so far. However, compared to the findings in Sect. 4.1 (analysis of election manifestos), there are less hints for a leftist contagion.

Does ideology play a role? Is it true that centre-left parties address economic groups more often than the centre-right (H4c)? Table 4.14 clearly confirms this hypothesis. A look at the single parties further reveals that it is only the Italian FI/PdL sometimes using a slightly higher percentages of messages against economic groups than the PD (in 2008 and 2014). In sum, FI/PdL (0.51%; SD = 0.58) and PD (0.5%; SD = 0.57) are more or less equally "leftist" with a slightly higher average score of the centre-right. While in Spain and Germany centre-left parties are more inclined to adopt messages against economic elites, it should rather be denied that the

Table 4.14 Left scores of mainstream parties' online statements ($n = 31$) by party type and Pearson correlations with vote shares for left parties (LP) and with public salience of the economy's situation

	Mean of leftist messages	Correlation vote share LP	Correlation economy salience
Centre-right ($n = 15$)	0.5 (SD = 0.88)	−0.12	−0.23
Centre left ($n = 15$)	1.45 (SD = 1.44)	0.21	−0.58*

Note ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$

centre-left is also more prone to *adopt* leftist messages than the centre-right when *external pressure increases* since there are no statistically significant correlations in this respect (this emerges from Fig. 4.13 as well). Surprisingly, we only find a significant negative correlation between public moods and leftist messages among the centre-left. However, this can be explained by the fact that in Germany, the national economy is not considered a relevant issue in society while the German centre-left addresses economic actors more often than the mainstream left in Italy and Spain. Thus, this finding does not indicate that mainstream centre-left parties stop using left-wing communication when economic issues gain salience, but it rather highlights some particular traits of the *German* centre-left. In sum, mainstream parties are rather not responsive to electoral success of left parties or leftist shifts in public opinion regarding their online communication. On the party level, Fig. 4.13 and Annex 7 show that the ideological orientation hardly plays a role. Even if we consider the 2013/2014 period (consequences of the European economic and financial crisis) as a trigger for leftist messages, it is not particularly the centre-left reacting to it discursively—in Germany, it is only the centre-right increasing its share of messages against economic elites during this time.

Moreover, data does not support the expectation that mainstream parties in opposition are more prone to adopt messages against economic actors as Hypothesis 5 suggests. Three parties are more "leftist" in opposition (PSOE; CDU/CSU; and SPD) and other three in government (PD; PP; and SPD) as Annex 6 illustrates. Even among those parties scoring (on average) higher in opposition, clear trends cannot be observed. The PD is most leftist when tolerating the Monti government in 2013. The Spanish PP does not use any discourse against economic groups in opposition in 2009 but in government in 2014 ($n = 2$; 0.48%). Only the SPD scores particularly higher in opposition than during incumbent periods except in 2009(a) when it uses a similar percentage of leftist discourses in opposition.

Electoral losses cannot be considered as potential explanation for the amount of leftist messages mainstream parties adopt. As Table 4.12 shows, there are no statistically significant correlations for the single countries. The Italian PD uses higher degrees of leftist messages when experiencing electoral upswings (e.g. in 2013: + 6.36%) and stops using respective messages in 2018 when the party experienced its most substantial electoral decline (−17.54%). Similar observations can be made for the Spanish and German centre-left as well as for the centre-right in these countries. It is almost only the Italian FI/PdL that increases the share of messages against economic elites experiencing electoral declines as in 2013 (−19.62%). Thus, Hypothesis 6 should rather be rejected.

As already indicated above, the consequences of the European economic crisis offer an alternative explanation for the development of leftist messages. Figure 4.13 indicates that in all countries discourses against economic actors increase to a very considerable degree in the election campaign after 2011. While this might be explained by the emergence of the M5S for the Italian case, the increase in such messages among Spanish mainstream parties—especially among the centre-left—and among the German centre-right is not linked to the emergence of new actors or shifts in public opinion. Hence, we can speculate that the economic crisis itself

influenced online communication of mainstream parties in all countries and that Hypothesis 7 might be rejected. Yet, as already stressed above, I cannot exclude the possibility that there are other explanations for the development of leftist communication not grasped by the selected variables. Furthermore, it cannot be explained why the share of leftist message among the Spanish centre-right only increases moderately in 2014 and why the German centre-left does not become more leftist in 2013.

4.2.4 Discussion

There are only few arguments for contagion effects in official statements from political parties. It can be observed that some mainstream parties introduce anti-elitist messages when successful populist parties emerge for the first time or shortly after their establishment. The strongest indications for contagion effects can be found regarding nativist communication: in all countries, especially the centre-right frequently increases its share of nativist messages when respective shifts in public opinion occur. This is especially true for the German case where mainstream parties increasingly adopt nativist messages after the establishment of the AfD as new relevant actor from the far-right or when immigration becomes a salient issue in society. Which of these explanatory factors is the main trigger for nativist messages cannot be clearly estimated. Moreover, we further see developments that slightly contradict this assumption—particularly in Spain but also in Italy where clear correlations between public shifts or electoral upswings of radical right parties are not perfectly linked to nativist messages of mainstream parties.

Regarding leftist messages, the selected variables do not explain any shifts towards more hostile discourses against economic groups. Except for the period 2013/2014, there is even less support for the contagion thesis. In 2013 and 2014, mainstream parties criticise economic actors particularly often—not only the centre-left but also the centre-right. It could be speculated that the consequences of the European economic crisis affected parties' communication despite the fact that they are not accompanied by respective shifts in public opinion. Only the German SPD does not increase its messages against economic groups during this period. Thus, the sole outbreak of a crisis might have an effect on mainstream parties' online communication.

In sum, there is some but rather little support that nativism might be contagious for mainstream parties' communication on their websites. There are even less clues that populist messages are adopted by the mainstream in the face of external pressure. Messages against economic actors might increase in the face of sudden events or consequences of economic crises. Concluding, online releases hardly appear to reflect discursive shifts of mainstream parties when political surroundings are changing. In the following section, I provide a possible explanation for that observation.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter found first empirical arguments that populism or anti-elitism might be contagious for some mainstream parties. The results allow us to assume that the populist Zeitgeist hypothesis may be partially right. Speaking with Meguid (2005), several mainstream parties seem to adopt an accommodative strategy, adopting anti-elitist and people-centred messages as a strategy to respond to populist parties' success or respective sentiments in society. However, some mainstream parties do not follow an accommodative approach and do not increase their share of populist messages in the face of external pressure. For the analysis of election manifestos in Germany and among the Austrian centre-left, indications of contagion effects cannot be observed. Regarding nativist communication, the accommodative option seems to be more popular: all mainstream parties—at least regarding the results from the manifestos' analysis—adopt nativist content when put under pressure maybe with the exception of the Italian centre-left. Since mainstream parties are more prone to adopt nativist than populist messages—especially in recent years—it seems to be more appropriate to talk about a "nativist" than a "populist" or "leftist" Zeitgeist. It is true that there are further indications for a leftist contagion. Five out of eight mainstream parties increase their percentage of messages against powerful economic actors in the face of shifts in public opinion. Yet, nativism still seems to have a more contagious potential than discourses against economic elites, comprising almost all parties of the sample. Interestingly, the electoral success of left-wing parties does not seem to produce enough incentives for mainstream parties to adjust their discourses in this respect.

The findings further reveal that election manifestos rather than public statements from political parties reflect those communicative shifts. Clear indications for contagious effects are absent in mainstream parties' online releases. At first glance, this might be surprising since former studies did not find any support for a populist contagion in mainstream parties' *election manifestos*. However, there are several explanations in this respect. One important reason in this respect might be the fact that neither Rooduijn et al. (2014) nor Manucci and Weber (2017) consider public opinion as a factor that influences populist communication. As revealed above, public opinion seems to have a stronger influence than electoral upswings of competing niche parties on mainstream parties' communicative behaviour. Furthermore, former studies did not select consecutive elections, which led to large time intervals between the sample periods. This is particularly true for Manucci and Weber selecting only one election manifesto per decade. Between these election campaigns, parties might have changed due to external factors or personal shifts inside of the party (Fagerholm 2016). This problem might have emerged also in this study, but since only consecutive elections are selected such issues might be less influential. Last, the findings also depend highly on the measurement of populism. I measure anti-elitist and people-centred communication independently from each other, while the two former studies only considered such messages as anti-elitist that also contain a reference to the people. However,

making the political elite responsible for a negative situation or demanding its disempowerment does not necessarily require a reference to the people. Notwithstanding, while my own alternative measurement allows measures of a softer populism—not necessarily anti-pluralist or illiberal—the quality and concrete content of these statements has not been assessed. This will be done in the following chapter in order to know how populist elements from mainstream parties differ compared to those from "true" populist actors.

But what can explain the fact that there are few arguments for contagion effect in websites' statements while election manifestos provide strong hints in this respect (especially regarding the nativist contagion)? As mentioned above, some scholars raise the concern that election manifestos might not appeal directly to the people and accordingly are no appropriate source of people-centred and anti-elitist messages. Undoubtedly, official statements on the websites are addressed directly to an audience, such as the media, voters in general or own followers. I think there are two potential explanations why websites' statements of parties might not reflect communicative contagions. First, the number of statements and the availability of the data could be the problem. As mentioned above, I analysed up to 30 statements per election campaign. One could argue that this number is not a representative sample of websites' publications. However, except the Italian PD, this number contains nearly all traceable statements of mainstream parties. A bigger issue might rather be the availability of the data: in order to gather the statements, I had to rely on an online application that allows the access to past content of party websites. However, it does not allow the access to *all* publications in a respective period. Accordingly, there might be more content that I did not consider since it disappeared from the web.[12]

Yet, I think this is not the main reason explaining the findings of this study. Even though I could not grasp all published statements per period for each party, the sample is much more extensive compared to other studies measuring populist messages (Hawkins et al. 2019; Lewis et al. 2019a). I argue that the findings can rather be explained by the *nature* of the website's statements. Political parties might appeal more directly to an audience on their websites (yet, even this could be questioned), but such statements are made frequently and sometimes up to several publications per day. Election manifestos are the most important party document and are published less frequently what means that parties have much more time to think about the content of the programme. The construction of a party manifesto is mostly "a formal process through which the manifesto is composed and approved: preparation by the leadership, discussion at various levels of the organisation and endorsement by a

[12]One could further argue that manifestos for European elections are not comparable to national elections. However, the respective figures illustrate that there are no particular peaks or lows during campaigns for European elections. The mean populism scores of centre-left (EU election: 3.11 (SD = 2.46); national elections: 2.71 (SD = 1.84)) and centre-right (EU elections: 4.38 (SD = 3.93); national elections: 3.95 (SD = 3.42)) mainstream parties do not fluctuate considerably in this respect. The slightly higher nativism scores during campaigns for European elections (centre-left: 0.18 (SD = 0.43); centre-right: 1.21 (SD = 1.73)) compared to national campaigns (centre-left: 0.08 (SD = 0.16); centre-right: 0.89 (SD = 1.59)) mostly depend on few outliers. Neither leftist messages appear particularly more often during specific election campaigns regarding the centre-left [EU elections: 1.35 (SD = 1.33); national elections: 1.52 (SD = 1.59)] and centre-right (EU elections: 0.2 (SD = 0.25); national elections: 0.7 (SD = 1.1)) mainstream.

representative gathering of the party" (Budge 2001, 51). Parties might reflect about the previous legislature, consider public opinion and recent political developments and accordingly create their manifesto in a more strategic, intentional and conscious way. Even the argument that election manifestos are not considered by the majority of the voters seems to be less convincing on second thought. Since election manifestos are the main party document published only every few years, they attract a large attention in the mass media "from which most voters get their information about party positions" (Schwarzbözl et al. 2019, 1). Previous studies found that especially manifestos from mainstream parties are reported in the media (Schwarzbözl et al. 2019). Furthermore, mainstream parties' demands for popular sovereignty or for cutting privileges for parties and politicians might be even more emphasised by journalists than other stances. In this regard, some scholars argue that issues party do not own and which rather constitute a "surprise element" are more often addressed by the media since they attract the attention of the audience (Helfer and Van Aelst 2016). Thus, it seems that election manifestos are a suitable source for populist communication while statements on party websites appear to be created in a less intentional way and therefore do not reflect external pressure to the same extent.

Last, the question about the implications of these findings arises. Does the fact that mainstream parties become more populist, nativist and hostile towards economic elites—regarding the results of the manifestos' analysis—threaten democracy? This quantitative chapter did not directly touch upon this question. In the following chapter, I provide a closer look into respective discourses published by mainstream parties and assess which types of messages increase in the face of external pressure. This also touches upon the question about the consequences for democracy: in Sect. 5.6, I examine whether illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are part of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages.

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Chapter 5
From Degrees to Content: The Meaning of Communicative Content and New Emerging Discourses

While the former chapter focused on the *frequency* of populist, nativist and specific leftist messages, I now assess the concrete content of these discourses. In this regard, three main questions are to be addressed: first, how differs the content of anti-elitist, people-centred, nativist and leftist statements between respective niche and mainstream parties? Respective categories have been illustrated in the methodological chapter of this study and consist of items from the NCCR codebook and of some further elements including antagonisms and nicknaming actors.

Second, addressing the main research question of this study, I observe whether mainstream parties talk in a different way about their targets when new niche parties emerge and when vote shares for competing parties or certain public moods are on a particularly high level (i.e. in the face of external pressure). Thus, while Chap. 4 addressed the question whether *the degree* of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages correlates with external pressure, this chapter analyses if *the content* of these messages changes over time: does the centre-left and centre-right refer to *new or distinct* discourses when external pressure increases? I mention what these concrete messages are about and attempt to identify similar patterns within and across countries. In order to provide support for the assumption that the emergence of distinct submessages is linked to external pressure, I further observe if such exceptional communicative content appears also during unexpected periods. If new messages occur independently from the success or emergence of competing parties and shifts in public opinion, it would contradict the assumption that mainstream parties change the way they talk about the political and economic elite, the people, outgroups and immigration due to external pressure.

The third question refers to a supposed contagion effect as well but contributes to the debate about the consequences of populism for liberal democracies by assessing potential threats deriving from populist, nativist and specific leftist messages. Within the literature, illiberalism and anti-pluralism are discussed as the main threat deriving from populism and nativism for democracy. As indicated in Sect.3.2, anti-pluralist and illiberal statements are very difficult to identify and leave much space for interpretation. Therefore, I do not mention numeric data in this regard but illustrate several

J. Schwörer, *The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream*, Springer Series in Electoral Politics, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72449-8_5

sentences from election manifestos of populist and mainstream parties offering interpretations about the illiberal and anti-pluralist quality. I further assess if the presence of such statements is related to external pressure. In sum, I focus on the following questions, which already have been presented in Chap. 1:

1. How does the *content* of populist, nativist and leftist messages differ between mainstream and populist, radical right and left parties? Do they talk in a different way about the people, the elite, outgroups, immigration and economic actors?
2. Do mainstream parties change the way they talk about their targets—the people, the political and economic elite, outgroups and immigration—when external pressure increases? Do they emphasise different traits, actions and aspects than usual?
3. What are the consequences of the populist, nativist and leftist contagion on mainstream parties' discourses in terms of illiberal and anti-pluralist elements? Are the latter part of populist, nativist or leftist discourses?

The structure of this chapter is as follows: first, questions I and II are addressed by mentioning the essence of messages against the political and economic elite, towards the people and outgroups and immigration. In a first step, it is examined how the content of each message type differs between respective niche and mainstream parties (question I). In a second step, I investigate whether such content in mainstream parties' manifestos change over time, especially when competing niche parties gain success or when shifts in public opinion occur (question II). Accordingly, I observe whether the political mainstream adopts new ways of talking about their targets when external pressure increases. Last, I address the consequences of supposed contagion effects examining if illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are part of mainstream parties' populist, nativist and leftist messages and whether these elements are linked to external pressure (question III). Should this be the case, it could be seen as a discursive threat to liberal democracy.

5.1 Anti-elitist Messages

5.1.1 Populist and Mainstream Parties' Messages

Table 5.1 reveals that the category "Character"—attributing negative characteristics, interests and intentions to the political elite—is more often addressed by populist than by mainstream parties within election programmes ("% sentences/manifesto").[2]

[2]The content of the following tables needs to be explained in more detail. First, Table 5.1, Table 5.4, Table 5.7, Table 5.8 and Table 5.11 mention the percentage of sentences per manifesto of each party type belonging to one of the subcategories ("% sentences/manifesto"). The scores represent the mean values of all cases. One case reflects one election manifesto of a party, for example the FPÖ in 2006. Accordingly, the whole far-right index consists of the average value of the scores for every single radical-right election manifesto (FPÖ 2006, FPÖ 2008, FPÖ 2013, FPÖ, 2017, BZÖ

Table 5.1 Frequency of anti-elitist submessages in election manifestos

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist ($n = 16$)	Mainstream ($n = 31$)	M5S + TS ($n = 3$)	Far-left ($n = 9$)	Far-right ($n = 7$)	CL ($n = 16$)	CR ($n = 15$)	All[1] ($n = 52$)
Character	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	**0.1** (0.19) **10.56**	0.002 (0.009) 2.03	**0.22** (0.38) **12.5**	0.08 (0.14) **10.39**	0.03 (0.08) 4.55	0.004 (0.01) 2.4	0 0	0.03 (0.11) 5.61
Behaviour	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.32 (0.53) 27.95	0.04 (0.1) 8.78	**0.71** (0.74) **48.44**	0.07 (0.13) 15.58	0.35 (0.61) **34.09**	0.04 (0.13) 6.4	0.03 (0.06) 21.74	0.13 (0.33) 16.58
Privileged	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.15 (0.32) 12.42	0.002 (0.01) 1.35	**0.22** (0.38) 12.5	0.02 (0.03) 3.9	**0.23** (0.42) **25**	0 0	0.005 (0.02) 8.7	0.05 (0.19) 6.63
Demands	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	1.13 (1.38) 65.22	0.32 (0.5) **89.19**	**3.12** (1.73) 59.38	0.59 (0.9) 75.33	0.6 (0.65) 47.73	0.38 (0.51) **92.8**	0.27 (0.49) 69.57	0.6 (0.93) 76.79
Juxtaposing	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	**0.42** (0.68) **32.3**	0.06 (0.2) 25	**1.17** (1.11) **45.31**	0.1 (0.09) 15.58	**0.38** (0.59) **36.36**	0.12 (0.27) 27.2	0.009 (0.019) 13.04	0.18 (0.43) 25.26
Nicknaming	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.09 (0.22) 9.32	0.001 (0.006) 0.68	0.06 (0.1) 3.13	0.04 (0.07) 6.49	**0.12** (0.33) **18.18**	0 0	0.002 (0.009) 4.35	0.03 (0.13) 4.59

(continued)

[1] Including Ciudadanos.

Table 5.1 (continued)

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist (n = 16)	Mainstream (n = 31)	M5S + TS (n = 3)	Far-left (n = 9)	Far-right (n = 7)	CL (n = 16)	CR (n = 15)	All(n = 52)
TOT anti-elitism	% sentences/manifesto	**1.6** (1.78)	0.37 (0.55)	**4.02** (1.96)	0.74 (0.79)	**1.13** (1.53)	0.43 (0.61)	0.31 (0.48)	0.78 (1.2)

Note Average score of every party type (**anti-elitist** categories). Numbers in bold: particularly high values compared to other party types. Standard deviation in brackets. Populists: BZÖ, FPÖ, TS, AfD, Linke, M5S, Pod; far-left: Linke, IU, Pod; far-right: BZÖ, FPÖ, AfD; centre-left: SPÖ, SPD, PD, PSOE; centre-right: ÖVP, CDU/CSU, FI/PdL, PP. Mainstream = mainstream parties; *CL* Centre-left; *CR* Centre-right

TS, for example, states on page 13, "the old-parties' main concern is about retaining power, influence and electoral votes".[3] In total, there are 17 sentences questioning the character and interests of the political elite among manifestos of populist parties. Nearly half of them (eight) can be found in the manifesto of TS and the rest in the programmes of Die Linke (seven in four manifestos) and of the AfD (two in 2017). Austrian radical right parties such as the FPÖ and BZÖ do not use such messages. Among mainstream parties, it is only the centre-left PSOE questioning the character of the political elite in the manifesto of 2015 and 2016. In 2015 (p. 53), for example, it portrays politicians and parties as corrupt: "And it is precisely the corruption of politicians and the corruption of the parties that is one of the main causes of the political disaffection of citizens".[4] About 11% of all anti-elitist statements from populist and only 2% of such messages from mainstream parties contain an attribution of negative characteristics or interests to the political elite. The few mainstream parties' statements are all made by the PSOE. Accordingly, populist parties emphasise the attribution of negative characteristics to the political elite more than mainstream parties do. This is particularly true for the non-right-wing populist parties under investigation.

Populist parties further mention negative actions of politicians and parties (or make them responsible for negative developments) more frequently than mainstream parties. Only Podemos and the FPÖ do not refer to this message type. The AfD[5] for example claims on page nine: "The political class of Germany has exploited and modified the suffrage and the electoral processes more and more sophisticated in the course of time in order to minimise the influence of the people on the selection of

2006, BZÖ 2008, AfD 2017). It should be considered that the total number of far-right cases is seven but the total number of such parties is lower (populists = M5S, Podemos (Pod), Die Linke, AfD, BZÖ, FPÖ, TS ($n = 7$); mainstream = PD, FI/PdL, PSOE, PP, SPD, CDU/CSU, SPÖ, ÖVP (n = 8); centre-left = PD, PSOE, SPD, SPÖ ($n = 4$); centre-right = FI/PdL, PP, CDU/CSU, ÖVP ($n = 4$); far-left = Pod, IU, Die Linke ($n = 3$); far-right = AfD, BZÖ, FPÖ ($n = 3$). Consequently, particularly the scores of the radical right depend strongly on one single party since it includes four election manifestos from the FPÖ but only two from the BZÖ and one from the AfD. Moreover, the large standard deviation in the tables suggests a heterogeneity within the single party groups: while some members of the same group might use specific submessages to a considerable extent, others might hardly refer to them. I handle this issue by mentioning the concrete actors emphasising a specific message type and by providing a look on the party level.

Second, the tables illustrate the percentage of sentences belonging to a subcategory compared to the total amount of sentences belonging to the superordinate category ("% all coded sentences"). For example, the percentage reveals how many anti-elitist statements of a party group contain an attribution of a negative character (first submessage) to the political elite. Accordingly, while the first score ("% sentences/manifesto") illustrates which role a certain evaluation/demand plays within the whole election manifesto, the second one ("% all coded sentences") reveals its salience within all statements directed towards the same target.

[3] Es geht den Alt-parteien vorwiegend um Machterhalt, Einfluss und Wählerstimmen.

[4] Y es precisamente la corrupción de los políticos y la corrupción en los partidos una de las principales causas de la desafección política de la ciudadanía.

[5] When talking about the AfD I refer to the election manifesto of 2017.

candidates".[6] Again, the Austrian TS mentions negative actions of politicians and parties most often. Mainstream parties hardly address negative actions of politicians. Only four of them use this communicative content at least in one of their election manifesto (ÖVP; PD; PP; PSOE). For example, the ÖVP states in 2017 (p. 18, part 3): "The political establishment has failed during the great refugee crisis".[7]

About 30% of all anti-elitist messages of populist parties address negative actions of political elites or make them responsible for negative situations. Regarding mainstream parties, it is only 9%. These findings suggest that criticising actions of politicians and parties plays a more important role for populist parties than for the political mainstream. This is particularly true for the radical-right (AfD and BZÖ) and TS. Among mainstream parties, it is the centre-right emphasising more on negative actions of politicians: five of 23 anti-elitist messages address the behaviour of the political elite—the centre-left mentions negative actions in only eight of 125 statements.

Moreover, populist parties—BZÖ, TS, AfD and Podemos—portray the political elite as privileged or preferentially treated and do so more often than mainstream parties, which hardly refer to such communicative content. However, neither populist parties use this type of submessage frequently but rather parties from the radical right. The BZÖ (2008, p. 5) states for example: "In times when less and less people can afford their daily lives due to rising prices, when inflation is eroding incomes and pensioners are being fed with 1.7% adjustments, it is a sheer mockery that, according to the law on politicians' income, politicians' salaries recently were raised by more than three per cent!"[8] Among mainstream parties, it is only the ÖVP in 2017 that portrays parties and politicians as particularly powerful and privileged (p. 37, part 3: "In Austria we have a system that is particularly strongly dominated by the political parties"[9]). Only 1.35% of all anti-elitist sentences published by mainstream parties can be classified into the subcategory "privileged/preferentially treated". Among populist parties, it is more than 12% due to particular high scores among populist radical-right parties (25%).

Unsurprisingly, also demands towards the political elite are more often raised by populists than by mainstream parties. In general, demands constitute the main anti-elitist subcategory among all party types. This is not surprising since election manifesto represent the political agenda and positions of parties and do necessarily contain political demands. However, there are some differences regarding the relevance of

[6]Die politische Klasse Deutschlands hat das Wahlrecht und die Wahlverfahren im Lauf der Zeit immer perfekter ausgenutzt und angepasst, um den Einfluss des Volkes auf die Bewerberauswahl zu minimieren.

[7]Das politische Establishment hat bei der großen Flüchtlingskrise versagt.

[8]In Zeiten, in denen sich durch die Teuerung immer weniger Menschen das tägliche Leben leisten können, die Inflation die Einkommen auffrisst und Pensionisten mit Anpassungen von 1,7 Prozent abgespeist werden, ist es ein glatter die Politikergehälter heuer um über drei Prozent angehoben wurden!

[9]In Österreich haben wir ein System, das besonders stark von den politischen Parteien dominiert ist.

Table 5.2 Frequency of mainstream parties' anti-elitist demands in election manifestos

Demand	Frequency	Parties (n)
More transparency/control over politicians	64	5/8 ÖVP; SPD; PD; PP; PSOE
More democracy within parties/politics	29	3/8 PD; PP; PSOE
Making parties/politicians responsible	17	3/8 ÖVP; SPD; PSOE
Less privileges for politicians/parties	13	4/8 SPD; PD; PP; PSOE
(Slightly) less power/influence	9	4/8 SPÖ; PD; PP; PSOE
Critical towards party financing	6	3/8 FI/PdL; PP; PSOE
Less costs of politics	6	2/8 FI/PdL; PD
No other income besides politics	5	2/8 PD; PSOE
Limitation/cutting number of politicians	4	2/8 FI/PdL; PD
Parties as tool for the people	1	1/8 PD
Against betraying the people	1	1/8 PSOE

demands for populist and mainstream parties. Nearly, 90% of all anti-elitist statements of the latter are classified as demands towards the political elite—regarding populist parties it is only about 65%. Accordingly, other anti-elitist submessages—attributing a negative character and behaviour to the political elite, portraying politicians as preferentially treated—play a more important role for populists than for mainstream parties. The populist far-right—BZÖ and AfD—use demands towards the elite even less often than other anti-elitist categories. The same is true for the centre-right ÖVP whose share of demands compared to other anti-elitist messages is much more balanced in its election manifestos.

Demands raised by mainstream parties are mentioned in Table 5.2 according to their frequency. Some demands seem to be rather country specific. Calls for more democracy within parties can only be found in manifestos of southern European parties. High costs of politics/parties and a high number of deputies/politicians is an issue only in Italy. Prohibition of other jobs besides politics is demanded only by centre-left parties in Italy and Spain. Annex 8 provides example sentences for each subcategory of demands towards the political elite. Unlike mainstream parties, populists sometimes demand harsh punishments for politicians or support a rebellion against the political elite. At least three populist parties are raising such demands.

First, the AfD states on page 13, "The peoples of Europe will not accept this development uncomplainingly and they will rightly rebel against the political elites".[10] Die Linke (2017, p. 7) claims, "Against the concentrated power of corporations, the rich and their political parties, we need a revolution of social justice".[11] The M5S demands particular harsh punishments for politicians (2013, p. 14): "Introduction of the crime of mass murder for public administrators (ministers, regional presidents, mayors, councillors) for serious and widespread damage caused by local and national politics that involve illnesses and deaths among citizens".[12]

None of these statements is necessarily undemocratic, but they reveal the different quality of anti-elitist demands raised by populist and mainstream parties. The severity of the populists' demands and their use of particular terms ("rebellion"; "revolution"; charging of "mass murder") suggest a strong rejection of the political elite.[13] Such statements are in sharp contrast to mainstream parties' moderate demands for less influence of political parties (SPÖ 2008: "The ORF must remain outside the reach of government and party politics"[14]) or for making politicians responsible for their misdemeanour (ÖVP 2013: "Stricter rules on the loss of mandate and office for politicians"[15]) as illustrated in A8.

Populists further juxtapose the political elite with other actors much more often than mainstream parties do. However, this is mostly observed among populist radical-right parties (BZÖ and AfD) and by TS as Table 5.1 illustrates. In 2.22% of its sentences, TS combines a critique of the political elite with a rather positive reference to other actors (not mentioned in Table 5.1). Besides the Italian and German centre-left, only Spanish mainstream parties do so. The people, "majority" and the public (SPD; PD; PSOE), subgroups within the people (PSOE) and the state (PD; PSOE) are pictured positively when negative demands or evaluations are addressed to the political elite. The PSOE (2015, p. 49) states for example, "*Citizens* have the right to know what each public cent is destined for, taking the concept of 'glass pockets' of *public representatives* and 'glass walls' in public administrations to the extreme".[16] Such juxtapositions do not question the legitimacy of representatives and

[10] Yet, the English translation is somewhat misleading since the term used by the AfD is not "rebellieren" but "auflehnen" which could be considered slightly more moderate but essentially has the same meaning: Die Völker Europas werden diese Entwicklung nicht klaglos hinnehmen und sich zu Recht gegen die politischen Eliten auflehnen.

[11] Gegen die geballte Macht von Unternehmen, Reichen und ihren politischen Parteien brauchen wir eine Revolution der sozialen Gerechtigkeit.

[12] Introduzione del reato di strage per danni sensibili e diffusi causati dalle politiche locali e nazionali che comportano malattie e decessi nei cittadini nei confronti degli amministratori pubblici (ministri, presidenti di Regione, sindaci, assessori).

[13] In contrast to the statements made by the AfD and the M5S, Die Linke appears to be more moderate since it claims a revolution *for* social justice and not explicitly *against* the political elite.

[14] Der ORF muss dem Zugriff von Regierung und Parteipolitik entzogen bleiben.

[15] Strengere Regeln zum Mandats- und Amtsverlust von Politikerinnen und Politikern.

[16] La ciudadanía tiene el derecho a conocer a qué se destina cada céntimo público, llevando al extremo el concepto de "bolsillos de cristal" de los representantes públicos y "paredes de cristal" en las administraciones públicas.

political actors in general, but they emphasise the relation between the elected and the electorate. The PSOE further stresses the relation between political actors and the state ("administrations"): "It is necessary that *administrations* function independently from *the political party* in power and that control systems are established that minimise the risk that public officials can influence and manipulate public tenders, contracts, outsourcing of services, etc" (2016, p. 19).[17]

Populist parties oppose further actors to the political elite such as men (AfD, p. 39: "A specific policy for *men* and fathers has not been adopted by *any party* so far"[18]) or "normal families" (AfD, p. 36: "The dramatic increase in singleness and childlessness and the disappearance of *normal middle-sized families*—already accepted by the *established parties* as without any alternative – are causing a shrinking of our ancestral population"[19]), "pensioners" (BZÖ 2008, p. 5), "experts" (TS 2013, p. 60), "clubs and associations" (TS 2013, p. 13) "workers" (Podemos, Linke and AfD; AfD, p. 10: "*Bundestag members* are currently paying no pension contributions and, after a few years, are already receiving a pension that a *middle-income worker* cannot even reach after 45 years of contributions"[20]) and "our economy" (AfD 2017, p. 42). In sum, populist parties construct respective antagonisms more often than mainstream parties. Moreover, a higher percentage of populists' anti-elitist statements contain such juxtapositions compared to the respective percentage of mainstream parties. This is particularly true for the populist radical right and TS.

The last communicative element mentioned in Table 5.1 is called "nicknaming". Some populist parties—TS, AfD and Die Linke—use certain nicknames or pejorative terms when talking about the other parties: the "political elites" (AfD 2017, p. 13), "established parties" (AfD 2017, p. 9, 36, 42, 49), "political oligarchy" (AfD 2017, p. 7), "the rulers"[21] or "the ruling politics"[22] (e.g. Die Linke 2005, p. 12), "the powerful"[23] (Die Linke 2017, p. 5) and "the old-parties"[24] (TS 2013, p. 13, 21). Among mainstream parties, only the ÖVP refers to nicknames talking about "the political establishment"[25] (2017, part 3, p. 18).

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[17] […] es necesario que las administraciones funcionen con independencia del partido político que haya en el poder y que se establezcan sistemas de control que minimicen el riesgo de que los cargos políticos puedan influir y manipular concursos públicos, contratas, externalización de servicios, etc.

[18] Einer gezielten Politik für Männer und Väter, hat sich bislang keine Partei angenommen.

[19] Die dramatische Zunahme der Ehe- und Kinderlosigkeit und das Verschwinden normaler mittelgroßer Familien – von den etablierten Parteien längst als alternativlos hingenommen – sorgen für eine Schrumpfung unserer angestammten Bevölkerung […].

[20] Bundestagsabgeordnete zahlen derzeit keine Rentenbeiträge und erhalten nach wenigen Jahren bereits eine Altersversorgung, die ein Arbeitnehmer mittleren Einkommens nicht einmal nach 45 Beitragsjahren erreichen kann.

[21] die Herrschenden.

[22] die herrschende Politik.

[23] die Mächtigen.

[24] Alt-Parteien.

[25] Das politische Establishment.

Concluding it can be stated that mainstream parties—especially the centre-left—hardly use any other anti-elitist content than demands when referring to the political elite while (non-leftist) populist parties also use a considerable degree of other communicative elements such as attributing negative actions to parties and politicians and portraying them as privileged or particularly powerful. Moreover, populists from the radical right oppose politicians and parties more often to positively framed ingroups than mainstream parties and sometimes "invent" specific nicknames or negatively connoted terms for the political elite.

5.1.2 Communicative Shifts of Mainstream Parties

In what follows, I analyse the introduction of *new* or *distinct* types of messages against the political elite published by mainstream parties in the face of electoral successes of populist parties or shifts in public opinion towards more distrust in political institutions. As observed within Chap. 4, these variables provide good explanations for communicative shifts in mainstream parties' manifestos. The analysis in this section builds on the populist contagion thesis and examines whether the *quality* of anti-elitist messages changes when external pressure increases. I thereby focus primarily on developments within the single countries but conclude with some comments on common cross-country patterns. As mentioned above, I further observe whether new content appears during *unexpected* periods—i.e. when external pressure is rather low.

Austria

While the Austrian centre-left does not seem to be responsive to anti-elitist moods or the success of populist parties, anti-elitist messages of the ÖVP are strongly linked to external pressure as observed in Sect. 4.1. The latter raises two particular demands when populists' vote share is on the highest level and Team Stronach appears as a new populist competitor (both in 2013): calling for more control and transparency over politicians/parties and speaking out for holding them responsible for certain actions or developments. The party emphasises that it already passed a law obligating politicians and deputies to declare their income and contact with representatives of interest groups (2013, p. 79). Additionally, it demands that politicians should lose their seats easier when involved in corruption scandals (p. 61). Moreover, the ÖVP claims to have facilitated the imposition of sanctions against politicians (p. 79). Besides the specific type of demand, these statements reveal another distinct quality of anti-elitist messages: Only in 2013, the party highlights own implemented measures against politicians. It actively attempts to portray itself as committed on the issue of politicians' misconduct. Moreover, the ÖVP starts portraying politicians as privileged or particularly powerful in 2017 when distrust in political parties reached the highest levels. One of these two statements has already been mentioned above as follows: "In Austria we have a system that is particularly strongly dominated by the political parties" (p. 37, part 3).

As illustrated in Sect. 4.1, the SPÖ does not seem to be responsive to the success of populist parties or anti-elitist-related moods regarding the *frequency* of anti-elitist messages. The only demands towards the political elite are raised once in 2006 (p. 24) and 2008 (p. 35). Both statements speak out for the independence of the public service broadcasting (ORF) from political parties. While in 2008 anti-elitist moods and populists' vote share is on a considerable level, in 2006 both scores reach the lowest percentage. Partially, this might be explained with the opposition status of the SPÖ in 2006 as indicated above. However, the most reasonable explanation seems to be that the SPÖ—unlike the ÖVP—has not yet discovered anti-elite rhetoric for political campaigns. The populist cleavage seems to be relevant primarily for the ÖVP, which might be partially explained by the fact that populism in Austria is part of the radical right and therefore ideologically closer to the centre-right than to the SPÖ (see Chap. 4). Accordingly, the SPÖ might use demands towards political parties not strategically or because of external pressure but simply because it is a part of their agenda.

Germany

As illustrated in Sect. 4.1, there is no support for a contagion of populist or anti-elitist messages in Germany. While mainstream parties do not become more anti-elitist in 2017—as suggested by the hypotheses—interesting developments among the centre-left occur in 2013. For the first time, the SPD adopts anti-elitist messages by formulating certain demands: first, it calls for more transparency/control of the political elite: "We will reform the legal provisions in such a way that all members of parliament have to disclose income from their sideline activities completely for every single euro and cent"[26] (p. 96). Second, the party demands less privileges (or financial contributions) for political parties, speaking out for a ceiling of private contributions for each contributor and year (p. 96). Furthermore, the SPD combines a demand towards the elite with a rather positive reference towards the people/public when talking about transparency (p. 97): "Transparency does not mean transparent politicians, but consistent openness regarding all data, contracts and procedures in which there is a public interest".[27]

Why does such exceptional communicative content only appear in 2013 and not in 2017 as expected? This might partially be explained with the very first emergence of the AfD in 2013. During this year, the party does attract less than 5% of the votes according to opinion polls. However, maybe even those low percentages for a new political party have put some pressure on the mainstream. While the AfD is considered much more moderate in ideological terms during this period, it already raised several demands towards the political elite.[28] Furthermore, in 2012, the Pirate Party

[26] Wir werden die gesetzlichen Bestimmungen so reformieren, dass alle Bundestagsabgeordneten Einkünfte aus ihren Nebentätigkeiten vollständig auf Euro und Cent offen legen müssen.

[27] Transparenz bedeutet dabei nicht gläserne Politiker, sondern konsequente Offenheit bei all jenen Daten, Verträgen und Verfahren, an denen ein öffentliches Interesse besteht.

[28] The scores for the AfD's manifesto from 2013 have not been illustrated so far since they differ significantly from the 2017 manifesto due to the ideological shift of the party. Yet, regarding anti-elitism, the 2013 manifesto scores 5.56% which is even higher than the 2017 program (3.88%).

puts the issue of transparency on the agenda and enters several *Landtage* (Niedermayer 2013). Accordingly, despite lower levels of distrust in parties and institutions in 2013, the issue of transparency and politician's behaviour might have remained salient among the centre-left. As mentioned in Sect. 4.1.1, the fact that the SPD was in opposition in 2013 might further have contributed to more anti-elitist discourses.

Italy

Both centre-left and centre-right mainstream parties increase the share of anti-elitist messages in their manifestos when anti-elitist-related moods are on the rise and largely refrain from anti-elitist content when these moods are decreasing. Accordingly, there are good reasons to assume that an anti-elitist contagion in Italy is indeed taking place.

Especially, when the M5S establishes itself as an electorally successful competitor in 2013, the Italian centre-left becomes increasingly anti-elitist and demands more inner-party democracy for the first time (p. 3). In 2013, the establishment of the M5S coincides with the highest percentage of public distrust in political institutions. It could be assumed that success of the M5S—proclaiming the idea of direct and digital democracy also within parties—has in fact some impact on the centre-left. Furthermore, the 2013 election manifesto of the centre-left is the only one making politics responsible for "perverse costs"[29] (p. 3). In addition, two sentences within this election manifesto oppose political actors with the people. This is the highest percentage—compared to the whole number of published sentences—among all election manifesto of the Italian centre-left. One of these sentences addresses the costs of politics: "We need sober politics because if the Italians have to economise, those who govern them must do even more"[30] (p. 3). The second antagonism refers to inner-party democracy: "A reform of the parties must be approved […] that ensures the democracy of and within the parties, which must be reformed to be an instrument of the citizens and not an opaque place of particular interests"[31] (p. 3). In the 2006 manifesto, there is another distinct demand not appearing in other election manifestos. Within this programme, the centre-left calls for more control or rules for politics and political actors (e.g. p. 23: "controlling the costs of politics"[32]). However, it should be considered that the 2006 manifesto is 281 pages long while the 2013 programme has only eight pages. Thus, it is not surprising that the 2006 manifesto contains more (in absolute terms) and different demands, but the percentage of anti-elitist demands compared to the total amount of published sentences is much lower in 2006 than in 2013.

Among the centre-right, all anti-elitist statements are demands. Only one distinct demand appears in 2013 calling for abolishing public party funding (p. 8). This observation delivers further arguments to assume that a contagion of certain populist

[29] "costi perversi".

[30] Serve una politica sobria perche se gli italiani devono risparmiare, chi li govema deve farlo di piú.

[31] Va approvata una riforma dei partiti […] che assicuri la democrazia dei e nei partiti, che devono riformarsi per essere strumento dei cittadini e non luogo opaco di interessi particolari.

[32] controllare i costi della politica.

demands (or policy positions) is taking place in Italy since the abolition of public financing for political parties is one central request of the M5S in 2013.

Spain

PSOE and PP both seem to be responsive to the establishment of the populist Podemos in 2015. In the respective manifestos, both parties—but especially the centre-left—increase their share of anti-elitist message in a very substantial way. As illustrated above, this coincides with the highest degree of public distrust in political institutions. Yet, the sharp increase of anti-elitist messages among Spanish mainstream parties in 2015 cannot fully be explained by this rather marginal rise of respective public moods.

Regarding the centre-right, three unique demands are emerging in 2015 when Podemos establishes itself as a relevant populist competitor. The PP emphasises own previous measures against the delict of illegal party financing (twice on p. 134). One of these statements highlights a key role the PP claims to have played in prohibiting donations of companies for parties and limiting parties' dependency on financial institutions. Accordingly, the PP questions some (financial) privileges of political parties in 2015. Another distinct type of demand appearing in 2015 calls for more democracy within politics. In this regard, the centre-right states that governments should be more responsive to the people speaking out for implementing "an Open Government […] more accessible in response to the demands of citizens and more sensitive to their needs"[33] (p. 143).

Like the Austrian centre-right, the Spanish PP highlights its own actions against political parties in the face of the establishment of a new populist party. Besides emphasising own measure against party financing (2015, p. 134) the PP further claims to have "made an unprecedented work in terms of democratic regeneration"[34] and highlights its own responsibility for the alleged fact that "today there is more control over political parties and over top positions"[35] (2015, p. 131). In total, the party emphasises previous measures for transparency or stricter rules for political parties four times in 2015. No other election manifesto of the Spanish centre-right mentions previous measurements of the party towards the political elite.

The PSOE introduces several new demands in 2015, which also remain part of the manifesto in 2016. It criticises party financing (p. 53, 54), too much influence of political parties (p. 48) and speaks out against sideline activities or additional incomes for politicians (p. 42, 43). It further introduces new submessages beside demands, addressing negative characteristics and practices of political actors. Stating "it is precisely the corruption of politicians and corruption of the parties that is one of the main causes of the political disaffection of citizens" suggests both—a negative character as well as a bad behaviour of political parties. Moreover, it combines demands against political actors with a reference to the badly treated people. The

[33] […] un Gobierno Abierto […], más accesible en la respuesta a las demandas de los ciudadanos y más sensible con sus necesidades.

[34] Hemos realizado una labor sin precedentes en materia de regeneración democrática.

[35] Hoy hay más control en los partidos políticos y sobre los altos cargos.

political elite and (parts of) the people are most often named in the same context in 2015 (2015: 0.29% ($n = 12$): 2011: 0.1% ($n = 2$); 2008: 0).

The fact that the Spanish parties introduce several new communicative contents in 2015 despite only moderate shifts of public moods strengthens the argument that the emergence of new populist actor contribute considerably to communicative shifts of mainstream parties—as already observed for Italy and Austria.

Discussion

There are some common patterns among several mainstream parties regarding the adoption of *distinct* ore *new* anti-elitist communicative contents. In a cross-national perspective, three parties become more critical towards public party financing but only in Southern Europe where this issue seems to be more salient. Especially, Podemos and the M5S promote alternative models than state funding for political parties (Della Porta et al. 2017). The Italian PD and the Spanish PP both demand more democracy within parties/politics when respective populist parties experience their electoral breakthrough what could further be explained by demands raise by the M5S and Podemos (Della Porta et al. 2017; Schwörer 2016). The ÖVP as well as the SPD calls for more transparency or control over politicians. Regarding the former, this might be due to high vote shares for populist parties and the breakthrough of Team Strohnach. The communicative shift of the SPD could rather be explained by its opposition status, the previous successes of the Pirate Party and the first appearance of the AfD. While nativist messages hardly appear in the AfD's election manifesto from 2013, it already raised demands for inner-party democracy and against sideline activities of politicians.[36] Moreover, SPD and PP speak out for less privileges for politicians/parties. Besides demands, the Spanish and Italian centre-left mention negative actions of parties or make politics responsible for negative developments. A further cross-national finding is that all centre-left parties—except the SPÖ—start naming the political elite and the people/the public in the same context when new successful populist parties emerge, in order to emphasise the relationship between the elected and the electorate. Additionally, centre-right parties in Austria and Spain emphasise own supposed achievements against the political elite. This new communicative content suggests that these parties actively attempt to present themselves as pioneers in the fight against malpractices and abuses of the political establishment.

Many of these new discourses might be explained by the electoral breakthrough of new populist parties (Table 5.3). While I cannot reveal causality in this respect, this observation at least provides good reasons to assume that atypical demands and forms of critique towards the political elite is inspired by messages spread by the new competitors. In Italy, mainstream parties seem to adopt traditional demands from the M5S (abolishing party financing and establishing democracy within parties) and in Spain from Podemos (measures against party financing, more democracy and less

[36] According to the 2013 manifesto, political parties should not "dominate" the political system (p. 2) and direct democracy within political parties should be established so that "the people determine the will of the parties" (p. 2). Moreover, sideline activities for deputies should be prohibited (p. 2).

Table 5.3 Striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties in election manifestos (anti-elitist communication)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
ÖVP	**New successful PP/highest vote share PP:** More transparency/control over politicians; making parties/politicians responsible	**Highest "anti-elitist" moods:** Privileged; preferentially treated; powerful	–	**New successful PP/highest vote share PP:** Mentioning own achievements/measures against the pol. elite	**–**
SPÖ	–	–	–	–	**Low "anti-elitist" moods and vote share for PP** Demanding less influence of political parties
CDU	–	–	–	–	–
SPD	**First emergence of new PP/former agenda-setting by Pirate Party:** More transparency/control over politicians; less privileges	-	**First emergence of PP/first successes Pirate Party:** Juxtaposing the pol. elite and the public	–	–
FI/PdL	**New successful PP:** Abolishing party financing	–	–	–	–
PD	**New successful PP:** More democracy within parties/politics	**New successful PP:** Behaviour ("perverse costs")	**New successful PP:** Juxtaposing the pol. elite and the people (highest percentage)	–	–
PP	**New successful PP:** Questioning party financing; less privileges; more democracy within parties/politics			**New successful PP:** Mentioning own achievements/measures against the pol. elite	–

(continued)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
PSOE	**New successful PP:** Questioning party financing; (slightly) less power/influence	**New successful PP:** Character (corrupt); behaviour (corruption)	**New successful PP:** Juxtaposing the pol. elite and the people (highest percentage)		–

Note PP = Populist parties

power for political parties). Moreover, in Spain, there is hardly any other reasonable explanation for the radical discursive shifts of mainstream parties (especially the centre-left) in 2015 than the breakthrough of Podemos since public moods only slightly change in that period. Similar developments can be observed among the centre-right in Austria, introducing new discursive elements against political elites when TS emerges—even though public distrust in political institutions *decreases* simultaneously. Even the German centre-left introduces new demands for more transparency and less privileges in 2013—positions promoted by the Pirates and AfD in 2013. There are few common communicative patterns within the single countries—except in Spain. When Podemos competes for the first time in a national general election in 2015, both mainstream parties become critical towards public party financing.

New anti-elitist messages are not unexpectedly. This always happens during the rise or emergence of (new) populist parties or when anti-elitist-related moods are particularly widespread. Accordingly, new communicative content is only adopted when it is expected by the hypotheses. In sum, there are strong arguments and no contrary indications for the assumption that mainstream parties adopt atypical anti-elitist messages in the face of external pressure. In addition, the German exceptional case might not be as exceptional as it appeared at first glance even though it still remains rather unclear why public opinion and the increasing successes for populist parties do not influence populist communication of mainstream parties.

5.2 People-Centred Messages

5.2.1 Populist and Mainstream Parties' Messages

Political parties stress a positive character of the people rather rarely (Table 5.4). However, populists—and especially populist radical-right parties—do so more often

Table 5.4 Frequency of people-centred submessages in election manifestos

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist ($n = 16$)	Mainstream ($n = 31$)	M5S + TS ($n = 3$)	Far-left ($n = 9$)	Far-right ($n = 7$)	CL ($n = 16$)	CR ($n = 15$)	All[37] ($n = 52$)
Character	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.16 (0.29) 5.26	0.05 (0.07) 5.09	0.03 (0.05) 2.22	0.08 (0.13) 2.57	**0.26** (0.41) **9.89**	0.04 (0.06) 5	0.05 (0.07) 5.24	0.08 (0.18) 4.51
Behaviour	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.02 (0.06) 0.7	**0.06** (0.07) 5.72	0 0	0.006 (0.02) 0.37	0.05 (0.09) 2.47	**0.06** (0.07) 4.5	**0.06** (0.08) **7.86**	0.04 (0.07) 3.67
Demand	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	**1.43** (0.99) 59.65	0.77 (0.59) 65.02	1.18 (1.29) 35.56	**1.49** (0.59) **73.16**	**1.56** (1.21) 48.15	0.66 (0.64) 66.5	0.89 (0.64) 62.45	1.02 (0.79) 64.94
Monolithic	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.17 (0.22) 7.02	0.18 (0.33) 12.4	0.16 (0.28) **13.33**	0.09 (0.09) 4.78	**0.24** (0.27) 8.64	0.16 (0.15) 12	**0.21** (0.45) **13.1**	0.17 (0.28) 9.96
Closeness	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.15 (0.24) 6.32	0.12 (0.17) **7.15**	0.06 (0.1) 4.44	0.08 (0.01) 4.78	**0.25** (0.35) 3.7	0.1 (0.16) **7**	0.13 (0.19) **7.42**	0.12 (0.19) 6.11
Victim	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	**0.64** (0.73) **24.91**	0.1 (0.14) 11.45	**0.86** (0.75) **40**	0.34 (0.3) 17.65	**0.83** (0.93) **34.57**	0.13 (0.16) 12	0.08 (0.12) 10.48	0.28 (0.4) 16.16

(continued)

[37] Including Ciudadanos.

Table 5.4 (continued)

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist ($n = 16$)	Mainstream ($n = 31$)	M5S + TS ($n = 3$)	Far-left ($n = 9$)	Far-right ($n = 7$)	CL ($n = 16$)	CR ($n = 15$)	All($n = 52$)
Juxtaposing	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	**1.06** (0.97) 39.3	0.48 (0.5) 38.63	1.61 (1.59) 55.56	0.7 (0.38) 36.03	**1.23** (0.98) **45.68**	0.44 (0.46) **45**	0.53 (0.55) 27.51	0.68 (0.71) 39
National people	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.34 (0.63) 8.07	0.15 (0.28) 12.08	0.08 (0.14) 6.67	0.03 (0.07) 0.74	**0.71 (0.84)** **22.22**	0.09 (0.11) 8	0.22 (0.37) **19.21**	0.2 (0.42) 9.4
TOT people-centrism	% sentences/manifesto	**2.43** (1.68)	1.16 (0.78)	2.34 (2.05)	1.97 (0.64)	**2.94** (2.13)	0.98 (0.75)	1.35 (0.78)	1.59 (1.25)

Note Average score of every party type (**people-centrist** categories). Numbers in bold: particularly high values compared to other party types. Standard deviation in brackets. Populists: BZÖ, FPÖ, TS, AfD, Linke, M5S, Pod; Far-left: Linke, IU, Pod; far-right: BZÖ, FPÖ, AfD; centre-left: SPÖ, SPD, PD, PSOE; centre-right: ÖVP, CDU/CSU, FI/PdL, PP. Mainstream = mainstream parties; *CL* Centre-left; *CR* Centre-right

than the political mainstream. Most of such messages come from the 2017 election manifesto of the FPÖ. On page eight,[38] it states for example: "The Austrian population has a gigantic potential of talents, abilities and aptitudes"[39] and is further "characterised by motivation, diligence and great commitment"[40] and "full of confidence and has a fine sense of values such as justice and respect and a keen sense of what is right and wrong for our country".[41] The ÖVP defines people in Austria as "honest and hardworking"[42] (2017, part 1, p. 43) and the SPÖ, inter alia, as "the experts of our country"[43] (2017, p. 196). Except the Italian centre-right coalition, all mainstream parties characterise the people in a positive way—at least in one of their election manifestos. Interestingly, the far-right refers to a positive character of the people within several people-centred statements (about 10%) while the share of such messages among mainstream parties is rather low (about 5% of all people-centred messages).

While populist parties—mostly from the far-right—characterise the people more often in a positive way than mainstream parties, the latter refer more often to supposed positive actions. Even though such messages do not occur frequently, they appear in eleven party manifestos of five mainstream parties. Talking about the achievements of the German state, the CDU/CSU claims for example, "It is and was hard-earned by the citizens of this country"[44] (2017, p. 4) and the Spanish PP states (2015, p. 86), "Without the Spaniards, Spain would not be able to move forward".[45]

Only two populist parties refer to positive actions or achievements of the people and do so by discrediting others. Regarding the FPÖ (2017, p. 27), immigrants are discriminated. The party considers it unfair "that pensions of *hardworking* Austrians are lower than the minimum income for immigrants".[46] The AfD mentions positive actions of the people while criticising the political elite (p. 8): "Contrary to other assertions, citizens decide on vital questions of the nation more clear-sighted and more geared to the common good than professional politicians guided by power and interests".[47] As already indicated, mainstream parties address a supposed positive behaviour of the people more often than populists. Furthermore, the share of such discourses on the total amount of people-centred messages is higher among mainstream parties. About 6% of all people-centred sentences published in mainstream

[38] The pages are not numbered. For those manifestos without numbered pages, I start counting after the title page and the index of content.

[39] Die österreichische Bevölkerung hat ein gigantisches Potential an Talenten, Fähigkeiten und Begabungen.

[40] "zeichnet sich durch Leistungsbereitschaft, Fleiß und großes Engagement aus".

[41] "voller Selbstvertrauen und hat einen feinen Sinn für Werte wie Gerechtigkeit und Respekt und ein ausgeprägtes Gespür dafür, was richtig und falsch für unser Land ist".

[42] "ehrlich und hart arbeitenden Menschen".

[43] "die ExpertInnen unseres Landes".

[44] Es wurde und wird hart erarbeitet von den Bürgerinnen und Bürgern dieses Landes.

[45] sin los españoles, España no sería capaz de salir adelante.

[46] Pensionen hart arbeitender Österreicher geringer sind als die Mindestsicherung für Zuwanderer.

[47] Entgegen anderslautender Behauptungen entscheiden Bürger in Schicksalsfragen der Nation weitsichtiger und gemeinwohlorientierter als macht- und interessengeleitete Berufspolitiker.

Table 5.5 Frequency of mainstream parties' people-centred demands in election manifestos

Demands	Frequency	Parties (n)
More unspecific power	285	8/8
More concrete participation	65	7/8 Except CDU/CSU
More transparency	29	5/8 SPÖ, FI/PdL; PD; PP; PSOE
People as core of politics	35	4/8 ÖVP; SPD; PD; PP; PSOE
More closeness to the people	5	3/8 ÖVP, SPÖ; PSOE

parties' manifestos emphasise a positive behaviour of the people. Even though this is a rather low percentage, among populist parties, it is even lower (about 1%).

People-centred communication consists mostly of demands. Only the CDU/CSU, the SPÖ and two populist parties—FPÖ and TS—use other people-centred categories more often. Demands in favour of the people are raised more frequently by populists than by mainstream parties. However, 65% of mainstream parties' people-centred statements consist of demands. Among populist parties, this percentage is about 5% lower and among non-left-wing populist parties, this is even under 50%. Thus, when talking about the people, mainstream parties mainly use demands while non-leftist populists (TS and the far-right) communicate more often in a different way.

The nature of these demands is similar between populists, centre-left and centre-right parties. Table 5.5 illustrate different types of demands towards the people spread by mainstream parties. Annex 9 shows example sentence for each category. Most often, parties call for more unspecific influence without mentioning concrete ideas about how this should be achieved. Moreover, populist and mainstream parties speak out for more direct participation of the people, more transparency and demand that political actors should be closer to the people. They further state that the people should be the actual core of politics. The populist radical-right party AfD raises one distinct demand stating that the native people should not only be considered more but should actually be *preserved* (p. 36): "The preservation of one's own national people is the primary task of politics and every government".[48]

Surprisingly, mainstream parties do more often refer to a *monolithic* people than populists mentioning supposed common feelings, opinions, desires or needs of the population. However, it is mostly the populist left *not* referring to a homogeneous people. The populist radical-right is doing so even more often than the centre-left and centre-right mainstream. To mention only one example, the BZÖ demands a stricter control of the Austrian border in 2008 (p. 17) referring to the people's interest: "In the security interests of the Austrians, the BZÖ advocates the reestablishment of

[48]Der Erhalt des eigenen Staatsvolks ist vorrangige Aufgabe der Politik und jeder Regierung.

border controls at Austria's borders".[49] Besides the populist radical-right also TS constructs a monolithic people several times (p. 29: "One thing is certain: Citizens know that almost everything is more expensive today than at Schilling times"[50]). While all mainstream parties refer to a homogeneous people at least in one of their manifestos, the populist Podemos and M5S do not.[51] The Italian centre-right argues in its 2006 manifesto that the left took wrong decisions in the 1990s and accordingly, "now they see—people see and feel—the effects of this madness"[52] (p. 4). The PSOE emphasises (2015, p. 237) "an image in which citizens like to see themselves recognised: tolerance, talent, modernity, gender equality, solidarity".[53]

To sum up, mainstream parties refer more often to a monolithic people or speak on behalf of it than populist parties do. Furthermore, the "monolithic" message type plays a more important role for mainstream parties than it does for populist and even for radical-right parties: more than 12% of all people-centred messages published by the centre-right and centre-left can be classified in this category. Among the radical right, this share is below 9% and regarding the populist party group only about 7%. Yet, compared to the total amount of sentences in election manifestos, the radical right emphasises the homogeneity of the people more often than other party types.

Moving on with the next people-centred subcategory, populist parties emphasise slightly more often their closeness to the people than mainstream parties. However, it is indeed only a marginal difference (populists: 0.15%; mainstream: 0.12%). The particular low score for left parties in this regard (Table 5.1) is because the socialist (but not populist) IU never portrays itself as close to the people. This seems to confirm the assumption made by March (2017, 284) that left-wing *populists* see themselves as the vox populi rather than as the 'vanguard' of the working class as traditional socialist and communist parties do, which keep their distance to the common people. Besides the M5S,[54] all populist parties mention their closeness to the people in at least one of their election manifestos. For example, Podemos states (2015, p. 8), "It will not be easy to change the functioning of judiciary, administration and government, but we know that we can achieve it because we have the most powerful ally: the people".[55] Die Linke claims in 2017 (p. 109) to "focus on the interests of the people of Europe, not on the vested interests of individual countries or a monetary system".[56] Regarding mainstream parties' communication, the Spanish PP contends in 2008 (p. 327), "our

[49] Das BZÖ tritt im Sinne der Sicherheit der Österreicherinnen und Österreicher für die Wiedereinführung der Grenzkontrollen an Österreichs Grenzen ein […].

[50] Eines ist sicher: Die Bürger wissen, dass heute fast alles teurer ist als zu Schilling-Zeiten.

[51] However, only two manifestos of Podemos and the M5S have been analysed.

[52] Ora si vedono – li vede e li sente la gente – gli effetti di questa follia.

[53] Una imagen en la que a la ciudadanía le guste verse reconocida: tolerancia, talento, modernidad, igualdad de género, solidaridad.

[54] Yet, within its website 's statements, the M5S claims to belong to the common citizens.

[55] No será fácil cambiar el funcionamiento de la Justicia, de la Administración y del Gobierno, pero sabemos que podemos lograrlo porque contamos con el aliado más poderoso: la gente.

[56] Im Vordergrund stehen für uns die Interessen der Menschen in Europa, nicht Kapitalinteressen einzelner Länder oder ein Währungssystem.

priorities are those of the citizens"[57] and "our interests, those of all Spaniards".[58] The SPÖ portrays itself as part of the common people in 2017 (p. 170): "In our free time, *we Austrians* are always on the move—be it for ourselves or for others".[59] The Italian centre-left is the only mainstream party not demonstrating its closeness to the people.

The sixth category mentioned in Table 5.4 reveals a larger distinction of people-centred content between populist and mainstream parties. Populists portray the people much more often as unfairly treated or as victim—especially TS, M5S (2013), FPÖ (2017) and AfD (2017). Yet, left parties such as Podemos and Die Linke use this type of submessage rather rarely. Nevertheless, all populist and mainstream parties portray the people as unfairly treated in at least one election manifesto—except the Italian centre-right. The M5S states in its 2013 manifesto (p. 2) for example: "The parliament no longer represents the citizens who cannot choose the candidate, but only the symbol of the party".[60] Among many other statements of this kind, the AfD (p. 7) claims, "The German citizens are the paymasters of Europe".[61] Regarding mainstream parties, the SPD (2013, p.13) states, "Conservative and liberal governments like in Germany prefer to protect banks and financial jugglers rather than people from their reckless speculation"[62] and the PSOE (2017, p. 67) argues, "Whenever there is a security problem, the right always poses a false dichotomy between freedom and security reducing the rights of citizens".[63]

A considerable percentage of populists' people-centred messages—especially among the far-right (about 35%) and TS (about 41%)—refers to the people as an unfairly treated actor. Considering mainstream parties, such communicative content is less prominent: only about 11% of people-centred statements portray the people as victim. Thus, especially for non-leftist populist parties, this seems to be a crucial communicative element.

We find two further submessages listed in Table 5.4. First, populist parties—especially those from the far-right, TS and the M5S (2013)—oppose the people with other actors more often than mainstream parties. The counterparts of the people are first and foremost political actors—the whole political elite or single parties/politicians. All populist parties construct this kind of antagonism in at least one of their election manifestos. The FPÖ, for example, criticises the SPÖ and ÖVP in 2013 (p. 8) as follows: "However, the SPÖ and ÖVP exclude the population from direct participation in all

[57] Nuestras prioridades son las de los ciudadanos.

[58] Nuestros intereses, los de todos los españoles.

[59] In der Freizeit sind wir ÖsterreicherInnen immer in Bewegung – sei es für uns selbst, sei es für andere.

[60] Il Parlamento non rappresenta più i cittadini che non possono scegliere il candidato, ma solo il simbolo del partito.

[61] Die deutschen Bürger sind der Zahlmeister Europas.

[62] Konservative und liberale Regierungen wie in Deutschland schützen lieber Banken und Finanzjongleure, als die Menschen vor deren rücksichtslosen Spekulationen.

[63] cada vez que existe un problema de seguridad la derecha siempre plantea una falsa dicotomía entre libertad y seguridad, reduciendo los derechos de la ciudadanía.

really important issues".[64] TS (p. 10) claims, "The problem with most politicians is that they are not telling the truth to the citizens".[65] Besides mentioning the people in context with *single* political actors, all populist parties—except the FPÖ—further juxtapose the people with political parties (or actors) *in general*. The M5S claims in 2013 (p. 2), "*The parties* have replaced the popular will and escaped from its control and judgment"[66] and the AfD calls the political elite an "oligarchy" manipulating the people (p. 7: "This oligarchy has in its hands the levers of state power, political education and informational and media influence over the population"[67]).

Mainstream parties combine references to the people with demands or evaluations towards political actors as well. The CDU/CSU claims (2013, p. 4), for example, "The SPD and the Greens […] want to burden the people"[68] and the Italian centre-left criticises the centre-right government of harming the citizens (2006, p.17: "The victims are the citizens, who see services cut due to the incapacity of the national government"[69]). The *whole* political elite is less often named together with the people. The PSOE for example argues (2015, p. 53), "It is important to open channels of communication between *representatives and represented*, to improve receptivity and accountability, to adapt internal structures and modes of operation to new forms of democratic participation"[70] and the PP demands (2008, p. 46) that "*citizens* have the right that they can trust the *representatives* they have elected".[71] Except the ÖVP, all mainstream parties juxtapose the people with the political establishment in at least one election manifesto, but they do so in a less hostile way. Compared to some statements from populists, mainstream parties do not neglect that political representatives act in the interest of the people. They rather emphasise the importance of the relationship between the elected and the electorate. Only the SPÖ questions implicitly that political actors act in the people's interest (2017, p. 203): "Coalition negotiations and power poker often are more important than voters' will, one gets the impression".[72]

In at least two election manifestos of mainstream parties, the people's counterpart is economic actors (SPD 2013, p. 8: "We will put *citizens'* problems and concerns

[64] SPÖ und ÖVP grenzen die Bevölkerung aber in allen wirklich wichtigen Fragen aus der direkten Mitbestimmung aus.

[65] Das Problem bei den meisten Politikern ist, dass sie den Bürgern nicht die Wahrheit sagen.

[66] I partiti si sono sostituiti alla volontà popolare e sottratti al suo controllo e giudizio.

[67] Diese Oligarchie hat die Schalthebel der staatlichen Macht, der politischen Bildung und des informationellen und medialen Einflusses auf die Bevölkerung in Händen (sic!).

[68] SPD und Grüne […] wollen die Menschen belasten.

[69] le vittime sono i cittadini, che si vedono tagliare i servizi a causa dell'incapacità del governo nazionale.

[70] es importante abrir canales de comunicación entre representantes y representados, mejorar la receptividad y la rendición de cuentas, adecuar las estructuras internas y los modos de funcionamiento a nuevas formas de participación democrática.

[71] Los ciudadanos tienen derecho a poder confiar en los representantes que han elegido.

[72] Koalitionsverhandlungen und Machtpoker gehen da oft vor Wählerwillen, hat man den Eindruck.

back in the centre of politics—not the interests of anonymous *financial markets*"[73]), the European Union (ÖVP 2008, p. 21: "The *EU* must serve *the people*, not vice versa "[74]), the state (ÖVP 2017, part 3, p. 15: "Because *the state* has to be there for *the citizens*—and not vice versa"[75]), corrupts or corruption in general (PSOE 2015, p. 35: "These *corruption cases* make the *Spanish population* fall into deep despair and distrust towards almost all democratic institutions"[76]), jurisdiction (PD 2006, p. 47: "We must move to a new season in which *justice* is administered in the interest of *the citizens*, eliminating corporate resistances wherever they come from"[77]) and terrorism or organised crime (PP 2008, p. 10: "In 2004, *the Spaniards* had made *the terrorists* feel defeated by the rule of law"[78]). The ÖVP further creates a conflict between the Austrian people and other nations (e.g. 2017, part 3, p. 3): "We cannot tolerate *other countries* making direct and indirect politics on the backs of the Austrian state and its *citizens*"[79]). Additionally, it opposes native ingroups (Austrians) with non-native outgroups (2017, part 3, p. 27): "As *Austrians, we* are allowed to pretend *what has room* in our society and what does not".[80] The "what" in this statement refers to "Turkish, Chechen, Afghan and Arab groups", "parallel societies" and Islamic kindergartens as mentioned in the previous sentences of this text passage. No other mainstream party constructs non-native outgroups as the negative counterpart to the (native) people that explicitly. This is rather a communicative element of the radical-right (BZÖ 2008, p. 17; FPÖ 2017, p. 27, 29; AfD 2017, p. 7).

Populists oppose the people with a constructed counterpart more often than mainstream parties do. Yet, both populist and mainstream parties mention the people and certain counterparts in about 39% of their people-centred messages. Accordingly, juxtaposing the people with other groups seems to be similarly important for both party types, but it should be noted that mainstream parties often do so in a less hostile way. Among *non-left* populist parties, a larger percentage of people-centred messages combines a positive reference to the people with rather negative framings of other actors.

The last category mentioned in Table 5.4 refers to the construction of a "national" people. A national people is created by using terms that refer to a native ingroup such as certain pronouns ("our", "us"), adjectives ("Austrian", "national") or simply

[73] Wir werden die Probleme und Sorgen der Bürgerinnen und Bürger wieder in den Mittelpunkt der Politik stellen – und nicht die Interessen anonymer Finanzmärkte.

[74] Die EU muss den Menschen dienen, nicht umgekehrt.

[75] Denn der Staat hat wieder für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger da zu sein – und nicht umgekehrt.

[76] Estos casos de corrupción están sumiendo a la población española en una profunda desesperanza y en desconfianza hacia casi todas las instituciones democráticas.

[77] si deve passare ad una nuova stagione nella quale la giustizia sia amministrata nell'interesse dei cittadini, eliminando resistenze corporative da qualunque parte provengano.

[78] En 2004, los españoles habíamos conseguido que los terroristas se sintieran derrotados por el Estado de Derecho.

[79] Wir können nicht dulden, dass andere Länder direkt und indirekt Politik auf dem Rücken des österreichischen Staates und seiner Bürgerinnen und Bürger machen.

[80] Wir dürfen als Österreicherinnen und Österreicher vorgeben, was Platz in unserer Gesellschaft hat und was nicht.

nouns ("Austrians"). Since populist radical-right parties' host ideology is nativism—which is based on the construction of native in- and non-native outgroups—it can be expected that these parties refer more often to a native people than others. However, when talking about the people, the far-right does not refer particularly more often to a national people than centre-right parties. Twenty-two percentage of the radical right's people-centred sentences contain a reference to a native people. Among the centre-right, the respective percentage is only slightly lower (about 19%). The Italian centre-right (2006) and the Spanish PP (2008 and 2011) refer particularly often to a native people while only one of eight mainstream manifestos in Germany contains such a reference (CDU/CSU 2013). Even the radical-right AfD refers only three times to a national people what equals 8% of all people-centred statements. This is the lowest value among all far-right parties. Accordingly, country-specific factors related to a particular political culture seem to be highly influential. In particular, the German National Socialist past might be one explanation why German parties rather refuse to refer to a national people (Münkler 2012).

Concluding, the main people-centred message type used by political parties is demands. However, populist and mainstream parties—but especially the former—use further communicative contents when referring to the people. Mainstream parties portray the people as a monolithic actor, sometimes emphasise the party's own closeness to the people and describe citizens as unfairly treated. However, portraying the people as unfairly treated and victim is a more crucial communicative element for (non-leftist) populist parties. In addition, mainstream and populist parties mention the people frequently with a supposed counterpart. Every fourth people-centred statement published by mainstream parties contains such a juxtaposition. Among populist parties (especially from the radical right), this occurs even more often and in a more hostile way.

5.2.2 Communicative Shifts of Mainstream Parties

In Austria, the centre-right increases its share of people-centred messages when populist parties gain electoral support. The SPÖ does not become more people-centred in the face of external pressure. The ÖVP does not introduce new or distinct messages when the establishment or successes of competing parties put it under pressure. However, it uses a new communicative element in 2017 when distrust in political actors (parties and parliament) reaches the highest level.[81] The ÖVP portrays the people several times as victims or unfairly treated (e.g. 2017, part 3, p. 25: "We cannot tolerate other countries making direct and indirect politics on the backs of the Austrian state and its citizens"). Moreover, in 2017—when immigration-related moods are particularly widespread—the party juxtaposes a native people with non-native groups ("As Austrians, we are allowed to pretend what has room in our society

[81] Since data regarding people-centred moods were not available, I rely on the anti-elitist item in this section.

and what does not"). It should be noted however, that the 2017 manifesto of the ÖVP is the most extensive one of the party. It contains about 2800 sentences while previous manifestos are considerably shorter (2006: 1200; 2008: 420; 2013: 1200). Thus, the fact that specific communicative elements only appear in 2017 might also be due to the length of the programme.

While the Austrian centre-left does not increase the *quantity* of people-centred messages when external pressure increases, it does adopt *distinct discourses* about the people. In 2013 (electoral breakthrough of TS and high vote shares for populist parties) and in 2017 (highest distrust in parties and parliament), the SPÖ refers to two particular submessages. It points out that the European financial and economic crisis did not affect Austria to a considerable extent thanks to the great *character* and *behaviour* of the Austrian people (2013, p. 6): "This is due to the diligence, the efficiency and the innovative strength of the Austrians and due to responsible, social-democratic politics that has led Austria safely through stormy times".[82] In the consecutive election manifesto, the party (2017, p. 196) further highlights that the Austrians "are the experts of our country"[83] and that "the citizens know where the shoe pinches—because they wear it".[84] Additionally, when vote shares of populist parties reaches the highest values in 2013, the SPÖ (p. 7) emphasises its own achievements for the people, claiming to have included the citizens in decision-making processes of the own party: "In a broad process, we caught up with the suggestions of the Austrians and subsequently invited them to "Citizens' Dialogues" in the area of education, women, health and work".[85] Unlike in election manifestos of the ÖVP, we see also unexpected developments in the centre-left's manifestos suggesting that the SPÖ does not change the way of talking about the people only due to the mentioned explanations. When populists' vote shares were on a low level in 2006, the party uses demands and references to a monolithic people more often than in 2013 or 2017 when these shares (and distrust in parties and parliament) were much higher. The same is true for statements portraying the party as close to the people or the latter as unfairly treated. However, such messages do also appear in 2013 and 2017 even though to a smaller extent. *New distinct* discourses about the people are not introduced randomly but only when it can be explained by external pressure.

Germany

As we already observed for anti-elitist messages, German mainstream parties mostly use people-centred messages in *2013*. In addition, certain submessages only appear in the 2013 manifestos. Again, this might partially be explained by the first emergence of the AfD, which demanded more decision-making power for the people in

[82] Das ist dem Fleiß, der Tüchtigkeit und der Innovationskraft der Österreicherinnen und Österreicher zu verdanken und einer verantwortungsvollen, sozialdemokratischen Politik, die Österreich mit sicherer Hand durch stürmische Zeiten geführt hat.

[83] Sie sind die ExpertInnen unseres Landes.

[84] Die BürgerInnen wissen, wo der Schuh drückt – weil sie ihn anhaben.

[85] Wir haben in einem breiten Prozess die Anregungen der Österreicherinnen und Österreicher eingeholt und in weiterer Folge zu den Bereichen Bildung, Frauen, Gesundheit sowie Arbeit zu „BürgerInnendialogen " eingeladen.

2013[86] and the previous successes of the Pirates calling for more direct democracy. The CDU/CSU opposes the people with parts of the political elite only in 2013[87] (p. 4): While the Christian democrats claim to relieve the citizens, "the SPD and the Greens, on the other hand, want to burden the people".[88] Furthermore, only in 2013, the German centre-right mentions own previous achievements for the population (p. 108). It highlights the crucial role of the people in politics and claims, "CDU and CSU have therefore ensured a better involvement of the citizens".[89] There are only few particular developments in other "unexpected" periods such as the high percentage of sentences attributing a positive character and behaviour to the people in 2009.

The SPD attributes a positive character to the people in 2013 (p. 33) while other election manifestos from the centre-left are free from these discourses. It maintains, "We rely on the sense of responsibility and the expertise of the citizens and want to integrate it into the planning processes earlier and more strongly".[90] Accordingly, within manifestos of German mainstream parties, new communication practices emerge only in 2013 and not as initially expected in 2017. This goes in line with the findings regarding new emerging anti-elitist messages. However, the SPD mentions positive actions of the people most frequently in 2009 and further portrays itself particularly often as close to the citizens. This is a rather unexpected finding. Yet, neither the centre-left nor the centre-right introduces *new* or *distinct* ways of talking about the people in 2009.

Italy

The Italian centre-right does not increase its share of people-centred statements in the face of external pressure. The empirical findings suggest that it only increases anti-elitist messages during such periods. When the M5S established itself in 2013, the centre-right coalition mainly increases its messages towards politicians and parties and introduces only one new demand for more people's participation. The coalition calls for a popular vote regarding the election of the Italian president (p. 7) and of the president of the European Commission (p. 9). When populist parties have not been particularly successful in 2008, the coalition further speaks out for more transparency for the citizens (p. 5: "Citizens access to public offices electronically, greater transparency and certainty of procedures"[91]). Moreover, only in 2006—when vote shares for populist parties are on the lowest level—the centre-right refers to a

[86] According to my measurements, the 2013 manifesto of the AfD is even more people-centred than the 2017 program (2013: 9.72%; 2017: 3.88% of all sentences).

[87] It should be noted that the 2009–2013 legislature was the only one without a governing grand coalition, which might have facilitated this severe accusation towards the centre-left competitor.

[88] SPD und Grüne dagegen wollen die Menschen belasten.

[89] CDU und CSU haben daher für eine bessere Einbindung der Bürger gesorgt.

[90] Wir setzen auf das Verantwortungsbewusstsein und den Sachverstand der Bürgerinnen und Bürger und wollen ihn in die Planungsprozesse früher und stärker einbinden.

[91] accesso dei cittadini agli uffici pubblici per via telematica, maggiore trasparenza e certezza delle procedure.

monolithic people and opposes the people with the left. Highlighting the coalition's own closeness to the people occurs only in 2006 and 2008.

Neither the Italian centre-left seems to react to the rise of populist parties by referring more often to the people. Only in 2013, we see a considerable increase of people-centred messages correlating with the establishment of the M5S—but not in 2018 when vote shares for populist parties reach the highest level. The centre-left postulates exclusively in 2013 (p. 3) that people must be at the core of politics (parties "must be reformed to be an instrument of the citizens and not an opaque place of particular interests"). The centre-left further combines references to the people with rather negative evaluations of political actors/the state more often in 2013 than the years before. However, this cannot be considered a *new* communicative element, given that already in 2006 the people were sometimes opposed to political actors. Similar to the centre-right coalition, the centre-left uses a specific type of demand rather unexpectedly. In 2006—when populist parties have not been successful in Italy—it speaks out for more transparency (p. 22: "Costs [of politics] must be transparent and controllable and the community must know them clearly"[92]). However, this might again be explained by the fact that the 2006 manifesto is much longer in terms of pages and sentences than any other manifesto that has been published within the period of examination. The length of the programme might further explain the fact that only in 2006 the centre-left attributes a positive character and behaviour to the people and portrays it as victim.

Spain

The populistisation of the PP mostly consists of an increasing percentage of *demands* towards the political elite and towards the people. Besides demands, two other people-centred submessages increase in 2015 when Podemos established itself as new relevant competitor. First, the PP describes much more often positive actions of the people by making the Spaniards responsible for positive developments. As indicated above, the party maintains, "Without the Spaniards, Spain would not be able to move forward" and "Thanks to the efforts of the Spaniards, today we are the fourth largest economy in the euro zone and the fourteenth in the world"[93] (2015, p. 207). Moreover, the PP portrays the people much more frequently as a monolithic actor in 2015 (e.g. p. 96): "We, the Spaniards are increasingly concerned about our health..[94] Besides a common feeling ("concerned about health") the statement further suggests that the speaker sees himself as part of the people.[95] However, such sentence structure is widespread within Spanish election manifestos and can rather be explained by specific characteristics of the Spanish language than by increasing

[92] i costi devono essere trasparenti e controllabili e la collettività deve conoscerli con chiarezza.

[93] Gracias a los esfuerzos de los españoles, hoy somos la cuarta economía de la zona euro y la decimocuarta del mundo.

[94] A los españoles cada vez nos preocupa más nuestra salud.

[95] The translation from Spanish to English is problematic because such sentence structures do not exist in English. Literally, the translation would be "*The Spaniards* are increasingly concerned about *our* health".

populist moods. We find another reference to a monolithic people on page 150. A reform of the public administration is justified by claiming, "the citizens demanded it".[96] However, it should be noted that *new* categories or demands are not emerging in 2015 with only one exception. For the first time, the PP mentions previous achievements for the people for example by maintaining that it created "a much more modern, close and flexible administration, which works for and which is at the forefront of the needs of society, citizens and enterprises"[97] (p. 149). Rather unexpectedly, the 2008 manifesto contains the highest percentage of sentences portraying the people as unfairly treated. However, all types of demands or messages from the 2008 manifesto also appear in 2015—even though sometimes to a lower extent.

Like the PP, the Spanish centre-left uses the highest percentage of people-centred messages in 2015. Within the respective programme, the PSOE calls for direct participation of citizens more often than in other manifestos. Also, the category "victim/unfairly treated" is used more frequently in 2015 and 2016 (in 2008: 0.03%; in 2011: 0.1%; in 2015: 0.38%; in 2016: 0.29% of all sentences). Unlike the centre-right, the PSOE combines positive references to the people with rather negative evaluations of other groups most often in 2015 (and 2016). Furthermore, it opposes single political actors (the Spanish centre-right) for the first time with the people (e.g. p. 69), maintaining, "Whenever there is a security problem, the right always poses a false dichotomy between freedom and security, reducing the rights of citizens". Additionally, the judiciary or administration of justice is named together with the people in 2015 and 2016, even though in a little hostile tone (more "active participation of citizens in the administration of Justice",[98] p. 67). The PSOE further highlights own actions for the people in 2015. We can observe this subcategory also in the 2008 manifesto, but there is a significant difference. In the legislature 2011–2015, the PSOE was in opposition and could not pass laws. Accordingly, it seems even more striking that the PSOE mentions previous achievements for the people from periods when it was not in government. In this regard, it maintains that it gave people more influence within *the own party organisation*: "We initiate the way, we introduce the mechanisms of participation in our organisation, […] contributing to the development of our exclusively representative democracy towards a "participative democracy" where the direct political participation of the citizen is balanced with the representative one"[99] (p. 40). Interestingly, it was Podemos that advocated grassroots elements in party organisations and implemented them in its own organisation from the beginning (Della Porta et al. 2017). One specific demand calling for more closeness to the citizens emerges rather unexpectedly. The PSOE states in 2008 (p. 210)—when no populist party exists yet—"Our objective in politics must

[96] Lo demandaban los ciudadanos […].

[97] una Administración mucho más moderna, cercana y flexible, que funciona y que se sitúa a la vanguardia de las necesidades de la sociedad, los ciudadanos y las empresas.

[98] participación activa de la ciudadanía en la administración de Justicia.

[99] Nosotros iniciamos el camino, introducimos los mecanismos de participación en nuestra organización, […] contribuyendo al desarrollo de nuestra democracia exclusivamente de carácter representativo hacia una "democracia participativa" donde la participación política directa del ciudadano se equilibre con la representative.

be to serve the people, but also to respect and listen to them, and that they are the ones who define politics".[100]

Discussion

Table 5.6 summarises the findings regarding a supposed contagion of pro-people content. Five mainstream parties use *new* or *distinct* submessages when populist parties gain success or anti-elitist-related moods increase. Regarding German mainstream parties, we see that a communicative turning point is reached in 2013 rather than in 2017 when it was expected. This might be explained by the first emergence of the AfD and former successes of the Pirate Party both demanding more direct democracy. Such external pressure is strongly linked to new discourses of mainstream parties' such as portraying the people as victims or unfairly treated (ÖVP; PP; PSOE[101]) and attributing a positive behaviour (SPÖ; SPD) or character (SPÖ) to the citizens. Moreover, three mainstream parties combine a positive reference to the people with a rather negative evaluation of other targets they usually do not mention in this context: competing parties (CDU/CSU; PSOE) and the state (PD). Four parties emphasise own achievements for the people. Three of them (SPÖ; CDU/CSU; PP) highlight previous actions they took in order to give the people a voice. The same is true for the PSOE, which claims to have included the people in inner-party decision making processes. A closer look at the single countries reveals that especially the Spanish parties behave in a similar manner: both mention own past measures for the people when Podemos established itself as a new populist actor. However, the qualitative analysis further reveals that some communicative shifts occur rather unexpectedly. Mostly—but not only—those parties not being responsive to external pressure introduce distinct discourses about the people when it is not expected. This is true for Italian mainstream parties and the Austrian centre-left. Compared to new anti-elitist discourses, which can always be explained by external pressure, this is particularly striking. The fact that some parties adopt people-centred content rather randomly might be explained by the fact that references to the people constitute a more important element of mainstream parties' political communication than discourses about elites as Table 5 clearly indicates. Parties shift the content and degree of people-centred discourses at least not only as a reaction to populist upswings but also because such statements constitute a usual communicative feature in democracies and might therefore be adopted less intentionally. Moreover, due to the lack of people-centrist public moods, I cannot claim that people-centred discourses of mainstream parties do not result from public opinion shifts. Since such data is not available, it remains still open for discussions where people-centred discourses derive from. In this sense, anti-elitist-related public moods might not be the right proxy for people-centred public opinion.

Nevertheless, in Spain and Austria (especially regarding the centre-right), the findings provide support that mainstream parties introduce new ways of talking about

[100]Nuestro objetivo en política debe ser servir a las personas, pero también que se las respete y escuche, y que sean ellas quienes definan la política.

[101]PSOE uses this communicative element also in other manifestos but to a much smaller degree.

Table 5.6 Striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties in election manifestos (people-centred communication)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
ÖVP	–	**Highest "anti-elitist" moods:** Unfairly treated	–	–	–
SPÖ	–	**New relevant PP/highest vote share PP:** Positive character; behaviour	–	**New relevant PP/highest vote share PP:** Mentioning own achievements/ measures for the people	**Low percentages for PP (2006)** Demands (high percentage); monolithic people (high percentage); closeness; unfairly treated (highest percentage); juxtaposing the people and the centre-right
CDU	–	–	**First emergence of PP/First successes Pirate Party:** Juxtaposing the people and other parties	**First emergence of PP/Former agenda-setting by Pirate Party:** Mentioning own achievements/ measures for the people	**Low percentages for PP (2009)** Character (highest percentage); behaviour (highest percentages)
SPD	–	**First emergence of new PP/Former agenda-setting by Pirate Party:** Positive behaviour	–	–	**Low percentages for PP (2009)** Behaviour (highest percentage); closeness (highest percentage)

(continued)

Table 5.6 (continued)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
FI/PdL	**New relevant PP:** More concrete participation	–	–	–	**Low percentages for PP (2006)** Monolithic people; closeness (high percentage); juxtaposing the people and the left **Low percentages for PP (2008)** Demanding transparency
PD	**New relevant PP:** People as core of politics	–	**New relevant PP:** Juxtaposing the people and political actors/the state (highest percentage)	–	**Low percentages for PP (2006)** Demanding transparency; character; behaviour; unfairly treated; juxtaposing the people and the right; juxtaposing the people and economic actors
PP				**New relevant PP** Mentioning own achievements/ measures for the people	**Absence of PP (2008)** Unfairly treated (highest percentage)
PSOE	**New relevant PP:** Concrete participation (highest percentage)	**New relevant PP:** Unfairly treated (highest percentage)	**New relevant PP:** Juxtaposing the people and the centre-right	**New relevant PP** Mentioning own organisational changes in favour of the citizens	**Absence of PP (2008)** Demanding closeness to the people (highest percentage)

Note PP Populist parties

Table 5.7 Frequency of anti-outgroup submessages in election manifestos

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist ($n = 16$)	Mainstream ($n = 31$)	M5S + TS ($n = 3$)	Far-left ($n = 9$)	Far-right ($n = 7$)	CL ($n = 16$)	CR ($n = 15$)	All[102] ($n = 52$)
Character	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.36 (0.74) 15.96	0.06 (0.23) 14.73	0 0	0 0	**0.83** (0.97) 16.39	0.005 (0.02) 9.09	0.13 (0.32) 15.89	0.15 (0.46) 15.46
Behaviour	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.26 (0.55) 13.83	0.03 (0.08) 14.73	0 0	0 0	**0.58** (0.74) 14.21	0.002 (0.009) 4.55	0.07 (0.11) **16.82**	0.1 (0.32) 14.2
Pref. treated	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.18 (0.4) 7.98	0.02 (0.07) 8.53	0 0	0 0	**0.4** (0.55) 8.2	0.002 (0.009) 4.55	0.04 (0.1) **9.35**	0.07 (0.24) 8.2
Demands	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	2.42 (3.2) 72.87	0.3 (0.51) 77.52	0.74 (1.01) **100**	0 0	**5.2** (3) 72.13	0.07 (0.12) **100**	0.53 (0.66) 72.9	0.92 (2.05) 74.76
Juxtaposing	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.6 (1.14) 25.53	0.04 (0.1) 20.16	0.03 (0.05) 20	0 0	**1.37** (1.42) 25.68	0.02 (0.04) 27.27	0.05 (0.13) 18.69	0.21 (0.68) 23.34
Nicknaming	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.08 (0.22) 2.66	0.04 (0.21) 0.78	0 0	0 0	**0.18** (0.31) **2.73**	0 0	0.08 (0.3) 0.94	0.05 (0.2) 1.89
TOT outgroups	% sentences/manifesto	3.1 (3.7)	0.34 (0.58)	0.74 (1.01)	0	**6.78** (2.39)	0.07 (0.12)	0.63 (0.74)	1.16 (2.44)

Note Average score of every party type (anti-outgroups categories). Numbers in bold: Particularly high values compared to other party types. Standard deviation in brackets. Populists: BZÖ, FPÖ, TS, AfD, Linke, M5S, Pod; Far-left: Linke, IU, Pod; Far-right: BZÖ, FPÖ, AfD; Centre-left: SPÖ, SPD, PD, PSOE; Centre-right: ÖVP, CDU/CSU, FI/PdL, PP. Mainstream = Mainstream parties; CL = Centre-left; CR = Centre-right

[102]Including Ciudadanos.

Table 5.8 Frequency of mainstream parties' demands against outgroups in election manifestos

Demands	Frequency	Parties (n)
No entry/deportation	46	7/8 Except PD
Better behaviour in general	28	5/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; CDU/CSU; FI/PdL; PP
Should adjust, integrate themselves	26	5/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; CDU/CSU; FI/PdL; PP
Stricter punishments/making responsible	16	5/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; CDU/CSU; PP; PSOE
Less preferential treatment/less rights	16	3/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; CDU/CSU
Financial contribution; less financial benefits	8	1/8 ÖVP
Should speak out against terror/crime	2	1/8 CDU/CSU
Against help	1	1/8 PSOE

the people when populist parties establish themselves or increase their vote share. In these countries, we find only few hints that such communicative shifts appear "by accident" because they mostly take place when populist actors are particularly successful. This holds also true for the German case when the communicative shifts of mainstream parties in 2013 is explained by the emergence of the AfD and the past successes of the Pirate Party.

5.3 Anti-outgroups Messages

5.3.1 Radical-Right and Mainstream Parties' Messages

Table 5.7 illustrates the frequency of anti-outgroup submessages. Negative characteristics are mostly attributed to outgroups by far-right parties while left parties—and neither the populist left—do not use any negative reference. Among mainstream parties, only the ÖVP and SPÖ (both in 2017) and the CDU/CSU (2005) refer to the character or capabilities of outgroups in a negative way. That does not mean that parties explicitly portray immigrants as criminal, lazy or not willing to work. They restrict their accusations to certain types of immigrants or Muslims and mention statistical numbers in order to illustrate that a large part of these groups have undesirable opinions, values or are just criminal, unemployed or a financial burden for society.

CDU/CSU, ÖVP and SPÖ for example portray certain outgroups as not willing to work, unemployed and not educated (CDU/CSU 2005, p. 34: "Far above-average unemployment rates, many immigrant children without school qualifications, ghettos and a development of parallel societies and an often self-chosen demarcation of foreign adolescents from German society are alarm signals for social peace in the country"[103]). Moreover CDU/CSU and ÖVP highlight supposed values and norms of outgroups that conflict with those of the native society or portray groups of immigrants as not able or willing to integrate (CDU/CSU 2005, p. 34: "But there are also immigrants from foreign cultures with considerable integration deficits"[104]). Talking about people coming from "different cultures", the ÖVP also emphasises supposed misogynistic attitudes of outgroups in its 2017 manifesto. Women "but also children are often considered as property; Unfortunately, phenomena such as domestic violence, forced marriages or genital mutilation are sometimes commonplace"[105] (p. 53, part 3).

Furthermore, the ÖVP illustrates immigrants in a criminal context in the first part of its 2017 manifesto (p. 46: "More than half of the inmates in Austrian prisons do not have Austrian citizenship"[106]) and portrays Muslims as a threat for the country by mentioning statistical information exclusively regarding negative attitudes of Muslims (part 3, p. 24: "One third of the interviewed Muslim adolescents are at risk of radicalisation; 47% of the respondents said they had a negative attitude towards Jews"[107]). The SPÖ questions the motivation of immigrants arriving in Italy by boat claiming (2017, p. 188), "In contrast to 2016, a larger amount are people who have not left their country for reasons protected by the Geneva Refugee Convention".[108] Parties from the far-right share these accusations and assumptions towards outgroups but they make use of them more frequently. Furthermore, the AfD assumes that foreign doctors, therapists or nurses often have "language deficits" and are therefore not suitable for these jobs in Germany (p. 60).

The far-right mentions *negative actions* of outgroups much more often than any other party group. Among mainstream parties, the centre-right emphasises negative actions of outgroups more frequently than the centre-left. Certain accusations of the radical-right towards outgroups are also shared by the mainstream—especially in the 2017 manifesto of the ÖVP. Both, the radical-right and the ÖVP accuse foreigners

[103] Weit überdurchschnittliche Arbeitslosenquoten, viele Migrantenkinder ohne schulischen Abschluss, Ghettobildung und eine Entwicklung von Parallelgesellschaften und eine häufig selbst gewählte Abgrenzung ausländischer Jugendlicher von der deutschen Gesellschaft sind Alarmsignale für den sozialen Frieden im Land.

[104] Es gibt aber auch Zuwanderer aus fremden Kulturkreisen mit erheblichen Integrationsdefiziten.

[105] Vielfach werden sie, aber auch Kinder als Eigentum betrachtet; Phänomene wie häusliche Gewalt, Zwangsheiraten oder Genitalverstümmelung sind leider teilweise gang und gäbe.

[106] Mehr als die Hälfte der Insassen in österreichischen Gefängnissen haben nicht die österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft.

[107] [dass] ein Drittel der befragten muslimischen Jugendlichen radikalisierungsgefährdet ist; 47% der Befragten gaben an, eine negative Einstellung gegenüber Juden zu haben.

[108] Im Unterschied zu 2016 handelt es sich also zu größeren Teilen um Personen, die nicht aus von der Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention geschützten Gründen ihr Land verlassen haben.

of entering the country only for social benefits (e.g. AfD, p. 29: "The high level of German social benefits attracts numerous poverty immigrants from other EU states as well as from third countries"[109]; ÖVP 2017, p. 13 (part 1): "But our generous social system also attracts people who want to settle with us, because the social benefits in Austria far exceed what they would get in their home country"[110]). Moreover, mainstream and radical-right parties make foreigners or cultural groups responsible for crime, violence or chaos (FPÖ 2017, p. 10: "In the course of the illegal mass migration, the influx of economic refugees and bogus asylum seekers […] Austria has a massive problem with foreigner crime, which is also reflected in completely new threat scenarios such as Islamic terrorism"[111]; ÖVP 2017, p. 23 (part 3): "In several countries around the world, Muslims are waging wars against people of other faiths, but there are also tensions between different types of Islam in some countries"[112]) or for discrimination and violence against women (FPÖ 2017, p. 23: "The immigration of people from patriarchal cultures leads to new discrimination against women"[113]; ÖVP 2017, p 53 (part 3): "Phenomena such as domestic violence, forced marriages or genital mutilation are sometimes commonplace"). In addition, outgroups are accused by mainstream and far-right parties of illegal activities. The Spanish PP (2008, p. 218) claims for example that there are "people who want to enter irregularly"[114] and the ÖVP criticises in 2008 (p. 18) "that foreign criminals escape every compensation and punishment".[115] Centre-right parties further state that outgroups isolate themselves from the native society. This is done by the ÖVP and—as already mentioned above—by the CDU/CSU, which criticises (2005, p. 34) "an often self-chosen demarcation of foreign adolescents from German society". Moreover, ÖVP and CDU/CSU speak out against supposed isolation practices of cultural groups (CDU/CSU 2013, p. 66: "We are firmly opposed to the isolation in parallel societies and special Islamic tribunals outside our legal system"[116]). Yet, in general, mainstream parties hardly mention negative actions of immigrants. On average, less than 0.03% of *sentences* in election programmes contain such submessages—among the centre-right this is a slightly

[109]Das hohe Niveau der deutschen Sozialleistungen zieht sowohl aus anderen EU-Staaten als auch aus Drittstaaten zahlreiche Armutszuwanderer an.

[110]Unser großzügiges Sozialsystem zieht aber auch Menschen an, die sich bei uns niederlassen wollen, weil die sozialen Leistungen in Österreich bei Weitem das überschreiten, was sie in ihrem Heimatland bekommen würden.

[111]Im Zuge der Illegalen Massenmigration, des Zustromes an Wirtschaftsflüchtlingen und Scheinasylanten […] hat Österreich ein massives Problem mit der Ausländerkriminalität, das sich auch In völlig neuen Bedrohungsszenarien wie dem Islamischen Terrorismus zeigt.

[112]In einigen Ländern auf der Welt führen Musliminnen und Muslime Kriege gegen Andersgläubige, aber auch untereinander gibt es in Ländern Spannungen zwischen verschiedenen Richtungen des Islam.

[113]durch die Einwanderung von Menschen aus patriarchalen Kulturen eine neue Frauendiskriminierung stattfindet.

[114]personas que quieren entrar irregularmente.

[115]dass ausländische Kriminelle sich jeder Entschädigung und Strafe entziehen.

[116]Der Abschottung in Parallelgesellschaften und islamischen Sondergerichten außerhalb unserer Rechtsordnung treten wir entschieden entgegen.

higher percentage. However, compared to the total amount of *anti-outgroup messages* published by the centre-right, the percentage is much higher. Seventeen percentage of all messages against outgroups addresses their behaviour. This is an even higher percentage than among the radical-right (about 14%). Accordingly, mentioning negative actions of outgroups or making them responsible for negative developments is a common form of critique towards non-natives for centre-right mainstream parties.

While mainstream parties sometimes mention negative actions of outgroups, they hardly portray them as preferentially treated. This is mostly done by far-right parties. Among mainstream parties, it is only the ÖVP and SPÖ using this type of message. The radical-right and the ÖVP argue that especially immigrants receive financial benefits from the state (AfD 2017, p. 30: "The majority of these people [asylum seekers] will live permanently on social benefits"[117]; ÖVP 2017, p. 46 (part 1): "More than half of the social benefits' recipients in Vienna are meanwhile foreign nationals"[118]) and that jurisdiction treats them well (FPÖ 2017, p. 46: "The often relatively low punishment of violent and sexual offenders shakes the trust in the judiciary especially when the suspicion of a consideration for the cultural background of offenders of foreign origin comes up"[119]; ÖVP 2017, p. 24 (part 3): "In the UK, for example, there are now at least 85 Sharia courts that exist in parallel with the British legal system"[120]). Furthermore, the AfD and the SPÖ claim that immigrants are allowed to come or stay in the country even when they have no right to do so (AfD 2017, p. 31: "The recognition rate for asylum seekers has risen from less than 30 per cent since 2014 to currently almost 70 per cent, although very few come from war zones and all enter via safe third countries"[121]; SPÖ 2017, p. 190: "In 2015, 31,800 repatriation decisions against Moroccan citizens are confronted with only 8,600 repatriations"[122]). Unlike radical-right parties, the ÖVP even criticises that Muslims spread over the country and diffuse their way of live. Talking about Islam and the Muslim population the ÖVP states (2017, part 3, p. 26) for example, "Supermarkets and other services are only available on an ethnic basis in whole neighbourhoods"[123] and according to predictions, "Muslims would become the largest religious group

[117]Die Mehrheit dieser Menschen wird mit hoher Sicherheit dauerhaft von Sozialleistungen leben.

[118]Mehr als die Hälfte der Mindestsicherungsbezieher in Wien sind mittlerweile ausländische Staatsbürgerinnen und Staatsbürger.

[119]Die oftmals verhältnismäßig geringe Bestrafung von Gewalt- und Sexualstraftätern erschüttert das Vertrauen in die Justiz, insbesondere wenn der Hintergrund von Straftätern ausländischer Herkunft laut wird.

[120]In Großbritannien gibt es beispielsweise mittlerweile mindestens 85 Scharia-Gerichte, die parallel zum britischen Rechtssystem existieren.

[121]Die Anerkennungsquote für Asylbewerber ist seit 2014 von unter 30 Prozent auf aktuell fast 70 Prozent angestiegen, obwohl die wenigsten aus Kriegsgebieten kommen und alle über sichere Drittstaaten einreisen.

[122]2015 standen 31.800 Rückführungsentscheidungen gegen marokkanische Staatsbürger nur 8.600 Rückführungen gegenüber.

[123][wenn] in ganzen Vierteln Supermärkte und andere Dienstleistungen nur mehr auf ethnischer Basis vorhanden sind.

in Vienna"[124] (p. 22). Indeed, portraying outgroups as a privileged or preferentially treated group is an important communicative element for the ÖVP in 2017. More than 17% (9 of 52) of anti-outgroups messages can be classified according to this category. However, besides the SPÖ in 2017, no other mainstream party uses such communicative content.

When talking about outgroups, radical-right and mainstream parties use mostly demands. More than 72% of all messages against outgroups published by radical-right and centre-right parties are demands—among the centre-left even 100%. One specific demand is raised only by radical-right parties and the ÖVP, which call for less financial benefits for immigrants: "For those entitled to asylum, we want to reduce the benefits to a 'minimum income light' to a maximum of 560 Euro"[125] (ÖVP 2017, part 3, p. 64). Some mainstream parties further speak out against particular rights or supposed privileges for outgroups. As mentioned above, the CDU/CSU (2013) speaks out against "the isolation in parallel societies and special Islamic tribunals outside our legal system". Similar demands are made by the SPÖ and ÖVP and in every election manifesto of radical-right parties (e.g. BZÖ 2008, p. 10: "In addition to a ban on building mosques and minarets, the BZÖ calls for a further step to ban Islamic body veiling"[126]). Except in Germany and Italy, mainstream parties demand stricter punishments for (or more control over) certain outgroups or speak out for making them responsible for certain actions. The PSOE (2008, p. 41) for example wants "to intensify controls and sanctions against those who promote the irregular stay of their relatives".[127] Respectively, the radical-right AfD calls for "compulsory age checks"[128] for immigrants and "the suspension of family reunion".[129] The different types of demands raised by mainstream parties are illustrated in Table 5.8 (example sentences are illustrated in Annex 10).

All mainstream parties except the centre-left in Italy, Spain and Germany demand that immigrants should adapt to the native society, values or norms. The Italian centre-right (2006, p. 9) for example calls for a "Commitment to respect our culture by those who enter"[130] and the Spanish PP wants "immigrants to share the common values of Spanish society"[131] (2008, p. 216). Except the Italian centre-left, all mainstream and radical-right parties call for expulsions of immigrants or for a restriction of their influx. To give just one example for each demand, the Spanish PP calls for expelling certain foreigners (2008, p. 218: "Rapid return of foreigners in an irregular

[124] Muslime würden damit zur größten religiösen Gruppe in Wien anwachsen.

[125] Für Asylberechtigte wollen wir die Leistungen auf eine "Mindestsicherung light" in der Höhe von maximal 560 Euro reduzieren.

[126] Neben einem Bauverbot für Moscheen und Minarette fordert das BZÖ als weiteren Schritt ein Verbot für die islamische Ganzkörperverschleierung.

[127] a intensificar los controles y las sanciones frente a quienes promueven la estancia irregular de sus familiares.

[128] obligatorische Altersuntersuchungen.

[129] den Ausschluss von Familiennachzug.

[130] l'impegno a rispettare la nostra civiltà da parte di chi entra.

[131] Queremos que los inmigrantes compartan los valores comunes de la sociedad española.

situation"[132]) and the CDU/CSU for not letting them enter by "Creating opportunities, to prevent migrants without protection claim from crossing to Europe"[133] (2017, p. 62f). Among all demands, those calls for restrictions or deportations are most widespread.

Furthermore, all centre-right parties (and the SPÖ) demand that immigrants should behave in an "appropriate" way or contribute something to the native society. The ÖVP argues in 2017 (p. 21, part 3): "In accordance with the principle of 'service and return service', they [asylum seekers] will also make a contribution in the future (e.g. the preservation and maintenance of their tax-financed neighbourhoods, community involvement, etc.)".[134] The AfD states that even more explicitly (p. 31): "Every migrant or immigrant, to whom we grant a permanent right of residence, has a duty to adapt to his new homeland and the German Leitkultur, not the other way around".[135] Furthermore, PSOE and AfD speak out against helping immigrants. The AfD demands (p. 29) that "the European border protection agency Frontex and the German Armed Forces have to end their trafficking services in the Mediterranean and bring all refugee boats back to their starting point instead of transporting the passengers to Europe".[136] The PSOE (2008, p. 40) is in favour of "strengthening the rules and sanctions against employers hiring foreigners who have no legal status in Spain".[137]

The Austrian far-right (BZÖ and FPÖ) further calls for a lower number of foreigners in school classes. In 2008, the BZÖ states (p. 10): "Austria to the Austrians also means for us that the educational development of our children should not be hampered by a too high share of foreigners in our schools".[138] Moreover, radical-right parties often combine a negative reference to outgroups with a rather positive evaluation of other targets. On average, about 1.4% of sentences in election manifestos mention outgroups together with a positive counterpart. Regarding mainstream parties, it is only 0.04%. About 26% of anti-outgroup messages from radical-right parties contain such antagonisms—among mainstream parties this is about 20% (but 27% among the centre-left mainstream). At least two mainstream parties mention the following actors as positive counterpart to immigrants or Muslims: the (national)

[132]Retorno rápido de los extranjeros en situación irregular.

[133]Möglichkeiten schaffen, dass Migranten ohne Schutzanspruch von der Überfahrt nach Europa abgehalten werden.

[134]Gemäß dem Grundsatz „Leistung für Gegenleistung " sollen sie in Zukunft auch einen Beitrag erbringen (z.B. die Erhaltung und Pflege ihrer mit Steuergeld finanzierten Quartiere, Mitarbeit in der Gemeinde etc.).

[135]Jeder Migrant oder Einwanderer, dem wir ein dauerhaftes Bleiberecht zugestehen, hat eine Bringschuld, sich seiner neuen Heimat und der deutschen Leitkultur anzupassen, nicht umgekehrt.

[136]Die europäische Grenzschutzagentur Frontex und die Bundeswehr müssen ihre Schlepper-Hilfsdienste auf dem Mittelmeer beenden und alle Flüchtlingsboote an ihre Ausgangsorte zurückbringen, anstatt die Passagiere nach Europa zu befördern.

[137]Endurecer las normas y las sanciones contra los empresarios y empleadores que contraten a extranjeros que no se hallen en situación legal en España.

[138]Österreich den Österreichern heißt für uns auch, dass die schulische Entwicklung unserer Kinder nicht durch einen zu hohen Ausländeranteil an unseren Schulen behindert werden darf.

people (PP 2008, p. 219: "The immigrant will commit to comply with the laws and respect the principles, values and customs of the *Spaniards*"[139]; ÖVP 2017, p. 65 (part 1): "While the number of *Austrian recipients* [of social welfare] declined slightly, it rose sharply among non-Austrians"[140]) and subgroups within the people—women, children and native workers—(ÖVP 2017: "[*Women*] but also *children* are often considered as property; Unfortunately, phenomena such as domestic violence, forced marriages or genital mutilation are sometimes commonplace"; SPÖ 2017, p. 29: "Only if there is no suitable *native unemployed person* for a job, it can be awarded without any restrictions to new coming or commuting people"[141]).

Except in Germany, all centre-right parties further mention a native culture or respective values in the context of outgroups' evaluations. This is also done by the Austrian centre-left. Some examples already have been mentioned above (PP 2008: "The immigrant will commit to comply with the laws and respect the principles, *values and customs of the Spaniards*"). To mention a further example, the ÖVP demands in 2006 (p. 84), "Those who refuse to conform to *Austrian democratic and social values* […] have no place in our country".[142]

Also, the far-right parties BZÖ and AfD combine a rather negative evaluation of outgroups with references to native values and culture (BZÖ 2008, p. 10: "Those who come to us also have to learn our language and *adapt to our culture*"[143]) sometimes by describing the "others" explicitly as a threat for the native values (AfD 2017, p. 33: "In the spread of Islam and the presence of more than 5 million Muslims, whose numbers are constantly growing, the AfD sees a great *threat for our state, our society and our value system*"[144]).

Austrian mainstream parties and the PSOE further oppose state actors—public order, law, state institutions, welfare systems or labour markets—with outgroups. The PSOE (2008, p. 40) speaks out for expelling immigrants, "especially those who commit a crime or maintain antisocial behaviour or affect *public order and public security*".[145] The SPÖ (2008, p. 32) demands "from all immigrants a clear commitment to the European basic values and to the *Austrian legal order*".[146] The

[139] el inmigrante se comprometerá a cumplir las leyes y a respetar los principios, valores y costumbres de los españoles.

[140] während die Zahl der österreichischen Bezieherinnen und Bezieher leicht zurückging, stieg sie bei Nichtösterreicherinnen und Nichtösterreichern stark an.

[141] Nur wenn sich für eine Stelle kein geeigneter Arbeitsloser im Inland findet, kann sie ohne Einschränkungen an neu Zuziehende oder Einpendelnde vergeben werden.

[142] Wer sich weigert, sich den österreichischen demokratischen und gesellschaftlichen Grundwerten anzupassen […] hat keinen Platz in unserem Land.

[143] Wer zu uns kommt, hat zudem unsere Sprache zu lernen und sich unserer Kultur anzupassen.

[144] In der Ausbreitung des Islam und der Präsenz von über 5 Millionen Muslimen, deren Zahl ständig wächst, sieht die AfD eine große Gefahr für unseren Staat, unsere Gesellschaft und unsere Werteordnung.

[145] especialmente los que delincan o mantengan conductas antisociales o alteren el orden y la seguridad pública.

[146] Wir verlangen von allen Zuwanderinnen und Zuwanderern ein eindeutiges Bekenntnis zu den europäischen Grundwerten und zur österreichischen Rechtsordnung.

latter statement further contains a reference to Europe shared by the ÖVP, which mentions Europe and immigrants in the same context (2017, part 3, p. 55): "We had to pay the price in 2015/2016, when 1.7 million illegal immigrants passed through *whole Europe* organised by smugglers and the *European states* watched helplessly"[147]). Even the Eurosceptic AfD speaks out against "a further destruction of *European values*"[148] by the "Islam as a doctrine of salvation and bearer of unintegratable cultural traditions and legal commandments".[149] However, far-right parties (AfD and FPÖ) usually refer to the "own" national state. The AfD juxtaposes German Basic Law ("Grundgesetz") and supposed contradicting values of Muslims (p. 34): "The guaranteed equal rights of women and men in the *Basic Law* […] contradicts the headscarf as a religious-political symbol of the subordination of Muslim women to men".[150]

Some parties further mention outgroups using references to "natives". Native actors are people, the state, order, values, culture or institutions, which are stressed with a "native additive" such as "our", "Austrian", "native" or just "we". Three mainstream parties juxtapose such native actors with non-natives: ÖVP, SPÖ and the Spanish PP. Some examples have already been illustrated on the previous pages. A further reference can be found among the ÖVP (2017, part 3, p. 21): "Those who immigrate to Austria must clearly know that there are cultural imprints, values and rules about which *we* do not negotiate and which *we* expect to be fully respected".[151]

The last communicative element in Table 5.7 refers to "nicknames" or pejorative terms. Besides the term "illegal migrant", the Italian centre-right, for example, uses to the term "economic migrants" in order to justify the expulsion of immigrants (2018, p. 6). The far-right FPÖ uses more contested nicknames such as "criminal tourists"[152] (e.g. FPÖ 2017, p. 10, 11) and "bogus asylum seekers"[153] (e.g. FPÖ 2017, p. 3, 10).

[147] Den Preis mussten wir 2015/2016 zahlen, als 1,7 Millionen illegale Einwanderer von Schleppern organisiert quer durch ganz Europa gezogen sind und die europäischen Staaten hilflos zugesehen haben.

[148] eine weitere Zerstörung der europäischen Werte.

[149] Islam als Heilslehre und Träger von nicht integrierbaren kulturellen Traditionen und Rechtsgeboten.

[150] Der im Grundgesetz garantierten Gleichberechtigung von Frauen und Männern […] widerspricht das Kopftuch als religiös-politisches Zeichen der Unterordnung von Muslimas unter den Mann.

[151] Wer nach Österreich zuwandert, muss ganz klar wissen, dass es kulturelle Prägungen, Werte und Regeln gibt, über die wir nicht verhandeln und von denen wir erwarten, dass sie uneingeschränkt respektiert werden.

[152] Kriminaltouristen.

[153] Scheinasylanten.

5.3.2 Communicative Shifts of Mainstream Parties

Austria

The ÖVP increases the share of messages against outgroups when external pressure increases. When immigration-related moods and vote shares of radical-right parties reach the highest level (2017), the ÖVP starts characterising outgroups in a negative way. This is mostly done by naming numbers of outgroups, which are supposed to be criminal (e.g. part 1, p. 46), unemployed, lazy or not able/willing to work (e.g. part 1, p. 13), poorly educated (e.g. part 2, p. 50), have a negative image of women (part 3, p. 53) and are not able/willing to integrate in the native society or have distinct (negative) values. Regarding the latter, the ÖVP (2017, part 3, p. 24) states for example: "Several studies show that for up to 40% of Muslims, the laws of religion are superior to those of the state in which they live".[154] The centre-right further addresses a supposed lower educational level of asylum seeker (part 3, p. 19): "A large part [of asylum seekers] has only a compulsory school leaving certificate from the respective home country and 9% had no education at all".[155] Moreover, we see that outgroups are more often made responsible for negative actions and situations in 2017. Respective examples have already been illustrated in the former section (e.g. claiming that women and children are considered as property by Muslims). Outgroups are further accused of isolating themselves from the Austrian society (part 3, p. 26), of causing financial problems (e.g. part 1, p. 46), unemployment or of taking social welfare benefits (e.g. part 1, p. 13).

The ÖVP also uses *new or distinct demands* in the election manifesto of 2017 by speaking out for cutting financial benefits for asylum seekers (part 1, p. 64). Besides evaluating outgroups in a negative way and raising demands towards them, the ÖVP also juxtaposes outgroups with elements of the native society most frequently in 2017 (2006: 0.17%, $n = 2$; 2008: 0; 2013: 0.09%, $n = 1$; 2017: 0.5%, $n = 14$). For the first time, the party combines negative references to outgroups with rather positive evaluations of the native people (part 1, p. 65: "For example, in Vienna in May 2017, for the first time, more foreigners received the minimum income than *Austrians*"[156]), Europe/the West (part 3, p. 53: "Unfortunately, women of different cultures often only dream of the degree of self-determination and equality that is taken for granted by women in our *Western world*"[157]) and refers most often to the state/law/public order when talking about "non-natives". Regarding the latter, the ÖVP states (part 3, p. 24) that "Muslims must adhere to the *Austrian legal system*

[154]Mehrere Studien belegen, dass für bis zu 40% der Musliminnen und Muslime die Rechtsvorschriften der Religion über denen des Staates stehen, in dem sie leben.

[155]Ein Großteil hat nur einen Pflichtschulabschluss aus dem jeweiligen Heimatland vorzuweisen und 9% hatten überhaupt keine Schulbildung.

[156]So haben zum Beispiel in Wien im Mai 2017 zum ersten Mal mehr Ausländer die Mindestsicherung bezogen als Österreicher.

[157]Von dem Grad an Selbstbestimmung und Gleichberechtigung, der für Frauen in unserer westlichen Welt selbstverständlich ist, können Frauen anders geprägter Kulturen leider oft nur träumen.

and only to that one".[158] Eight similar references to outgroups and the state can be found in the ÖVP's 2017 manifesto.

The SPÖ does hardly increase the share of messages directed against outgroups in the face of external pressure. It rather raises statements against *immigration* when radical-right parties gain support or immigration becomes a more salient issue in society (see Sect. 5.4). Yet, like the ÖVP, the SPÖ stresses negative characteristics or capabilities of outgroups for the first time in 2017 by questioning the need of migrants to stay in Austria (p. 188) or by assuming that people coming to Austria will end up in unemployment. Regarding the latter, the party claims (p. 146), "Due to the fleeing situation in 2015, a rising number of asylum-seekers registered as unemployed is to be expected". Furthermore, only in 2017, the party mentions alleged negative actions of non-natives, criticising (p. 190), "Europe-wide, in 2015, only 36% of the people against whom decisions for repatriation were taken actually left the EU".[159] The party further implies that laws are not applied against certain outgroups suggesting a preferential treatment. In this respect, the party expresses discontent about the supposed fact that "in 2015, 31,800 repatriation decisions against Moroccan citizens are confronted with only 8,600 repatriations" (p. 190).

We can further observe new and distinct types of demands towards non-natives in 2017. In this regard, the SPÖ speaks out for cutting rights for non-Austrian Europeans (p. 29): "Only if there is no suitable native unemployed person for a job, it can be awarded without any restrictions to new coming or commuting people". This goes against the right of non-Austrian EU-citizens to choose their workplace within EU-member states without being discriminated on the respective labour market. Furthermore, the SPÖ demands compulsory measures for refugees in 2017 (p. 146: "Compulsory year of integration for persons entitled to asylum and asylum seekers"[160]).

Besides demands and negative evaluations towards non-natives, the SPÖ also highlights own achievements stressing that the compulsory year of integration for refugees and asylum seekers has been put on the agenda by the SPÖ itself (p. 146: "We have successfully enforced this"[161]). In addition—and as already mentioned in the previous paragraph—the Austrian centre-left opposes native actors and foreigners (p. 29): "native unemployed persons" are preferred over EU-immigrants. Yet, even more interesting seems to be the fact that the 2017 manifesto combines a positive reference to a native *we/our,* with a rather negative mentioning of a non-native *they/them*. There are two examples in this regard (p. 144). The party demands, "*Who comes*, must follow *our* rules, learn German, accept the values"[162] and "*Anyone who*

[158] Musliminnen und Muslime müssen sich an die österreichische Rechtsordnung und nur an diese halten.

[159] 2015 haben europaweit nur 36% der Personen, gegen die Rückführungsentscheidungen getroffen wurden, tatsächlich die EU verlassen.

[160] Verpflichtendes Integrationsjahr für Asylberechtigte und AsylwerberInnen.

[161] Das haben wir erfolgreich durchgesetzt.

[162] Wer kommt, muss sich an unsere Regeln halten, Deutsch lernen, die Werte akzeptieren.

believes that he can use *our* wealth, *our* security and *our* tolerance to build a non-free, unjust and unequal parallel society must also leave right away".[163] Thus, the SPÖ clearly constructs in- and outgroups in its 2017 manifesto and is doing so even more often than the ÖVP.

Germany

The centre-right's share of anti-outgroup messages in strongly linked to the salience of the immigration issue in German society. An exception is the manifesto of 2005: while immigration is not evaluated as an important issue by Germans, the CDU/CSU uses several messages against immigrants. As indicated in Chap. 4, this might partially be explained by the fact that during that time the coalition was in opposition.

Unlike in previous years, the centre-right does not characterise certain outgroups in a negative way or mentions supposed negative actions in 2017. This seems surprising since the total amount of anti-outgroup messages is the highest in 2017. Instead, the character and capabilities of immigrants are questioned in 2005 (p. 34): "But there are also immigrants from foreign cultures with considerable integration deficits". The centre-right also addresses a supposed negative behaviour of immigrants in 2005. As indicated above, the coalition assumes that "ghettos and a development of parallel societies and an often self-chosen demarcation of foreign adolescents from German society are alarm signals for social peace in the country". In 2017, messages appear in a very different manner suggesting that the party introduced a different discourse on immigrants. Seven of nine statements against outgroups are new demands for deporting foreigners or for not letting them become a member of society. For example, the CDU/CSU states (p. 62), "We are stepping up our efforts to repatriate and, if necessary, deport those whose applications for asylum are legally rejected". It further demands (p. 74), "Anyone who refuses to integrate and disregards our legal system must expect consequences that can go as far as losing the residence permit".[164] This statement further implies a demand for stricter punishments and politics of law and order. However, while the percentage of law and order messages is higher in 2017 (0.325%; $n = 4$), they also occur in the 2013 manifesto (0.12%; $n = 3$).

Besides new demands towards non-natives, the CDU/CSU further highlights own achievements at the expense of immigrants only in 2017 (p. 62: "We have effectively reduced the number of those who have no right to stay"[165]; p. 62: "We have declared Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia Montenegro and Serbia

[163] Wer glaubt, unseren Wohlstand, unsere Sicherheit, unsere Toleranz zum Aufbau einer unfreien, ungerechten und ungleichen Parallelgesellschaft zu nutzen, der muss auch wieder gehen.

[164] Wer sich der Integration verweigert und unsere Rechtsordnung missachtet, muss mit Konsequenzen rechnen, die bis zum Verlust der Aufenthaltsberechtigung reichen können.

[165] Wir haben die Zahl derer, die kein Bleiberecht haben, wirksam reduziert.

to be safe countries of origin, which has significantly reduced the number of asylum seekers"[166]; p. 60: "We have facilitated the deportation of offenders"[167]).

Regarding the SPD, the 2017 manifesto is the only one including messages against outgroups. All of these messages ($n = 3$) contain demands towards immigrants calling for their expulsion. The party states for example (p. 58), "We will integrate the recognised refugees better and return the rejected refugees more consistently to their countries of origin".[168] Like the CDU/CSU, the SPD further highlights own actions against outgroups (p. 54): "We have already facilitated the possibility to deport convicted foreigners".[169]

Italy

The Italian centre-left does not refer to outgroups in a negative way in any of its election manifestos. In contrast, the centre-right coalition seems to respond to external pressure by using messages against immigrants. In 2018, when immigration moods and vote shares for radical-right parties are on the highest level, the coalition uses the term "economic migrants" in order to justify expulsions (p. 6). The term suggests that these people do not have a comprehensible reason to come to Italy and implies a negative characterisation. In contrast to previous election manifestos of the centre-right, the coalition speaks out for the expulsion of immigrants only in 2018 for example by calling for a "repatriation of all illegal immigrants"[170] (p. 6).

We also see some unexpected findings. The centre-right calls for a "commitment to respect our culture by those who enter"[171] in 2006. Besides demanding an assimilation to the Italian culture, this statement further implies a juxtaposition of *them* and *us*. Both are unique communicative elements not appearing in other manifestos of the coalition. Since radical right parties are not particularly successful and immigration is no salient issue for Italians in 2006, this statement occurs rather unexpectedly.

Spain

The Spanish centre-right seems to respond to the public salience of the immigration issue by including a higher percentage of anti-outgroup messages in its election manifesto. In 2008—when immigration moods are on the highest level—we find the highest degree of demands towards outgroups. One of these demands does not appear in any other manifesto of the party and calls for a stricter control over immigrants (p. 76): "We will favour the interconnection between all the databases of control of the entrances and exits in the Schengen area, detecting those who remain illegally

[166]Wir haben Albanien, Bosnien-Herzegowina, Kosovo, Mazedonien Montenegro und Serbien zu sicheren Herkunftsländern erklärt und so die Asylbewerberzahlen wesentlich senken können.

[167]Wir haben die Abschiebung von Straftätern erleichtert.

[168]Die anerkannten Flüchtlinge werden wir besser integrieren und die abgelehnten Flüchtlinge konsequenter in ihre Herkunftsländer zurückführen.

[169]Die Möglichkeit zur Abschiebung straffälliger Ausländerinnen und Ausländer haben wir bereits erleichtert.

[170]Rimpatrio di tutti i clandestine.

[171]l'impegno a rispettare la nostra civiltà da parte di chi entra.

in European territory after the expiration date of their permit".[172] Furthermore, the party juxtaposes immigrants and Spaniards/Spanish values in 2008 (p. 216: "We want immigrants to share the common values of the Spanish society"; p. 219: "In the Integration Contract the immigrant will commit to comply with the laws and respect the principles, values and customs of the Spaniards"[173]).

The centre-left PSOE uses anti-outgroup messages only in 2008 when immigration is a particularly salient issue. All of these messages are demands. One sentence is about preventing employers to help "illegal" immigrants by offering them jobs ("Strengthening the rules and sanctions against employers who hire foreigners who have no legal status in Spain"). Furthermore, the party calls for stricter punishments/rules or speaks out for holding immigrants accountable for certain actions or developments (p. 41): "We pledge to intensify controls and sanctions against those who promote the irregular stay of their relatives". Yet, most discourses in 2008 are about expelling immigrants or not letting them enter the country ($n = 7$). The party wants to "promote and improve the procedures for the expulsion and deportation of irregular immigrants"[174] (p. 38). Moreover, the PSOE speaks out for restricting immigration and questions the right of non-Spanish EU-citizens not to be discriminated on the EU-wide labour market (p. 41): "We will continue to meet the stable needs of the labour market, allowing the entry of new workers from abroad only when there are not enough of them available in Spain".[175] (p. 41). The same kind of statement is made by the Austrian centre-left in 2017.

Similar to the Spanish centre-right, the PSOE mentions in- and outgroups in the same context in 2008 opposing criminal and "anti-social" foreigners on the one hand with public order on the other. In this regard, the party demands (p. 40), "Expedite procedures for the expulsion of foreigners from Spanish territory who are in an irregular situation, especially those who commit a crime or maintain anti-social behaviour or affect *public order* and *public security*".[176] In addition, and as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the party opposes Spanish workers/the labour market and "workers from abroad" exclusively in 2008.

Discussion

Table 5.9 summarises the communicative shifts of mainstream parties regarding messages against outgroups. Nearly, all mainstream parties introduce distinct demands when radical right parties' vote share or certain immigration-related moods are increasing. Four of eight mainstream parties start demanding the deportation

[172] Propiciaremos la interconexión entre todas las bases de datos de control de las entradas y salidas en el espacio Schengen, detectando a aquellos que permanecen ilegalmente en territorio europeo después de la fecha de caducidad de su permiso.

[173] En el Contrato de Integración el inmigrante se comprometerá a cumplir las leyes y a respetar los principios, valores y costumbres de los españoles.

[174] Impulsar y mejorar los procedimientos de expulsión y devolución de inmigrantes irregulares.

[175] Seguiremos atendiendo las necesidades estables del mercado laboral, posibilitando la entrada de nuevos trabajadores desde el extranjero, sólo cuando no existan suficientes y disponibles en España.

[176] Agilizar los procedimientos de expulsión del territorio español de aquellos extranjeros que se encuentren en situación irregular, especialmente los que delincan o mantengan conductas antisociales o alteren el orden y la seguridad pública.

Table 5.9 Striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties in election manifestos (messages against outgroups)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
ÖVP	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Cutting financial benefits	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Character (criminal; unemployed/not able to work; poorly educated; negative image of women; not able/willing to integrate); behaviour/responsible for negative situation (highest percentage)	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing outgroups and the whole (Austrian) people; Europe/the West; state/law/public order		
SPÖ	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Reducing rights of other EU-citizens; compulsory measures for asylum seekers	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Character (no need to migrate; unemployed); behaviour (Do not leave the own country); preferentially treated (are not being deported)	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing "native unemployed persons" and EU-citizens; we/our and they/them	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Mentioning own achievements/measures against outgroups/foreigners	**Low immigration salience (2008)** Juxtaposing outgroups and European values/Austrian law
CDU	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Deportation of immigrants; not letting them enter/become a member of society			**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Mentioning own achievements/measures against outgroups/foreigners	**Low immigration salience and non-existence of RRP** Character/capabilities; behaviour

(continued)

Table 5.9 (continued)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
SPD	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Deportation of immigrants			**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Mentioning own achievements/measures against outgroups/foreigners	
FI/PdL	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Deportation of immigrants	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods** Character (no need to migrate)		**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Nicknaming immigrants ("economic migrants")	**Low vote share RRP and "immigration moods" (2006)** Demands; juxtaposing "us" and "them"
PD					
PP	**Highest "immigration moods"** More control over immigrants		**Highest "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing outgroups and Spanish values		
PSOE	**Highest "immigration moods"** Deportation of immigrants; not letting them enter; measures against helpers of outgroups; stricter punishments/rules; reducing rights of other EU-citizens	**Highest "immigration moods"** Demands	**Highest "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing outgroups and public order; outgroups (foreign workers) and Spanish workers		

Note RRP Radical right parties

of immigrants in the face of external pressure. However, there are only few more cross-national common patterns.

Regarding developments within the single countries, the Austrian centre-left and centre-right start employing negative attitudes to outgroups and make them more often responsible for negative developments. For example, ÖVP and SPÖ portray non-natives as unemployed in 2017. They further juxtapose them with native groups by referring in a positive way to the own Austrian people and negatively to others (ÖVP) or to "us" and "them" (SPÖ). Especially, regarding the ÖVP, the findings are in line with results from a previous study (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2020) finding that the Austrian centre-right is one of the few West European mainstream parties negatively evaluating moderate Muslims.

Like in Austria, German mainstream parties demand deportations for the first time in 2017. Furthermore, they highlight own past measures directed against outgroups in order to emphasise their awareness of supposed problems related to immigrants and outgroups. This is also done by the Austrian centre-left in 2017. The fact that the German centre-right questions the character and behaviour of outgroups when external pressure is low is the only contradicting finding in this respect. As mentioned above, this might be due to the opposition status of the CDU/CSU in 2005, which is sometimes associated with more radical standpoints. In Italy, there is no common pattern regarding the question how mainstream parties react to external pressure since the centre-left PD does not use any message against outgroups. As expected, the Italian centre-right demands measures against outgroups most frequently in 2018. However, it also juxtaposes in- and outgroups in 2006 when external pressure is low what slightly contradicts the original assumption. Spanish parties mention specific ingroups in the context of rather negative evaluations of non-natives when immigration-related moods are on its peak (PP: outgroups and Spanish values; PSOE: outgroups and public order/Spanish workers).

Concluding, we see only few arguments against the assumption that mainstream parties use distinct or new communicative elements when talking about outgroups in the face of external pressure. These discourses could often be considered particularly severe, such as the construction of native in- in non-native outgroups. Thus, instead of resorting to familiar discourses about immigrants, parties change their behaviour and adapt new negative content.

5.4 Anti-immigration Messages

5.4.1 Radical-Right and Mainstream Parties' Messages

Anti-outgroup messages overlap to some extent with negative demands and evaluations towards *immigration*: when a party speaks out for deporting immigrants, this is coded as both, anti-immigration (demands for deportation) and anti-outgroup (no entry/deportation) message. The difference is that anti-immigration messages do not

necessarily contain references to outgroups but to migration, boarders, asylum or related terms. Most messages directed against immigration are demands either for restricting immigration or for deportations (Table 5.10). Some mainstream parties further evaluate immigration in a negative way or mention supposed negative consequences. Table 5.11 illustrates the frequency of the respective subcategories (Annex 10 mentions example sentences).

Immigration is evaluated in a negative way almost exclusively by radical-right parties, which explicitly mention supposed negative aspects of immigration (AfD 2017, p. 20: "Mass immigration increases the instability of Germany and Europe"[178]) or operate with negative connoted terms implying a negative evaluation. Among mainstream parties, especially the ÖVP (mostly in 2017) adopts specific contested terms, which refer to large numbers or chaotic developments: "illegal migration" (e.g. part 3, p. 18 and 20), "disordered mass migration"[179] (part 3, p. 58), "migratory pressure"[180] (part 1, p. 116), "migration wave"[181] (part 1, p. 117), "refugee streams"[182] (part 3, p. 18), "big refugee crisis"[183] (part 3, p. 18), "the catastrophic year 2015" (referring to the influx of immigrants; part 3, p. 21) and "immigration into the social security system"[184] (part 3, p. 46; part 1, p. 45 and 46).

Besides far-right parties and the ÖVP, the SPÖ (2017, p. 29: "enormous immigration"[185]) the Italian centre-left (2018, p. 9: "migration problem"[186]) and the Spanish PP (2008, p. 66: "massive illegal entry"[187]) are using negative connoted expressions, which evaluate immigration in a rather negative way. However, such evaluations are not widespread among mainstream parties. While far-right parties evaluate immigration negatively—for example by using negative terms—in about 19% of their anti-immigration statements, this share is lower than 10% among mainstream parties (among the centre-right it is slightly higher). In addition, it is almost only the ÖVP in its 2017 manifesto evaluating immigration in a negative way (18 out of 57 anti-immigration messages can be classified in this category).

Proceeding with the different categories of anti-immigration messages, mainstream parties do rarely illustrate supposed negative consequences of immigration what is done primarily by far-right parties. The latter mention such consequences in about 23% of their anti-immigration statements. Mainstream parties do so in only about 8%. Thus, drawing threat scenarios or mentioning supposed negative impacts of immigration seems to be an important communicative content only for the radical-right. Negative consequences mentioned by mainstream parties are the following

[178] Durch Massenzuwanderung wird die Instabilität Deutschlands und Europas verstärkt.

[179] ungeordnete Massenmigration.

[180] Migrationsdruck.

[181] Migrationswelle.

[182] Flüchtlingsströme.

[183] große(n) Flüchtlingskrise.

[184] Zuwanderung ins Sozialsystem.

[185] enormer Zuzug.

[186] problema della migrazione.

[187] masiva entrada ilegal.

Table 5.10 Frequency of anti-immigration submessages in election manifestos

Subcategory	Type of percentages	Populist ($n = 16$)	Mainstream ($n = 31$)	M5S + TS ($n = 3$)	Far-left ($n = 9$)	Far-right ($n = 7$)	CL ($n = 16$)	CR ($n = 15$)	All[177] ($n = 52$)
Neg. evaluation	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.49 (0.86) 17.86	0.06 (0.16) 8.68	0 0	0 0	**1.11** (1.03) **18.79**	0.04 (0.12) 4.22	0.09 (0.2) 14.84	0.17 (0.53) 13.25
Neg. consequences	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.54 (0.8) 19.64	0.04 (0.12) 8.41	0 0	0 0	**1.24** (0.78) **23.03**	0.01 (0.05) 7.04	0.07 (0.17) 9.03	0.19 (0.5) 14.25
Restricting	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	1.21 (1.61) 41.96	0.37 (0.51) 67.26	0.08 (0.14) 60	0 0	**2.73** (1.29) 41.82	0.19 (0.34) **70.42**	0.56 (0.6) 65.81	0.65 (1.07) 56.75
Deporting	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	1.07 (1.27) 36.61	0.26 (0.67) 23.01	0.66 (1.07) 40	0 0	**2.17** (1.02) **32.12**	0.04 (0.07) 22.54	0.5 (0.91) 23.23	0.5 (0.96) 27.25
Juxtaposing	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.14 (0.25) 4.46	0.06 (0.21) 3.1	0 0	0 0	**0.33** (0.29) 3.64	0.004 (0.01) 2.82	0.11 (0.3) 3.23	0.08 (0.22) 3.25
Nicknaming	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.35 (0.6) 13.53	0.035 (0.09) 7.97	0 0	0 0	**0.8** (0.68) **13.94**	0.01 (0.03) 8.45	0.06 (0.12) 7.74	0.13 (0.36) 11
TOT immigration	% sentences/manifesto	2.96 (3.47)	0.72 (1.18)	0.74 (1)	0	**6.45** (2.07)	0.27 (0.38)	1.21 (1.53)	1.34 (2.36)

Note Average score of every party type (anti-immigration categories). Numbers in bold: Particularly high values compared to other party types. Standard deviation in brackets. Populists: BZÖ, FPÖ, TS, AfD, Linke, M5S, Pod; Far-left: Linke, IU, Pod; Far-right: BZÖ, FPÖ, AfD; Centre-left: SPÖ, SPD, PD, PSOE; Centre-right: ÖVP, CDU/CSU, FI/PdL, PP. Mainstream = Mainstream parties; CL = Centre-left; CR = Centre-right

[177] Including Ciudadanos.

Table 5.11 Frequency of mainstream parties' anti-immigration messages in election manifestos

Demands	Frequency	Parties (n)
Demands for restricting immigration	152	8/8
Demands for deportations	52	8/8
Negative evaluation of immigration	22	4/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; PD; PP
Negative consequences of immigration	19	4/8 ÖVP; SPÖ; CDU/CSU; FI/PdL

ones: first, it is argued that migration causes social and security problems (or crime). The Italian centre-right for example equates crime and "illegal immigration" in its 2013 manifesto (p. 31) demanding an "enhancement of the struggle for legality, to combat the phenomena of illegal immigration, of predatory crime".[188] Second, mainstream parties (ÖVP, SPÖ and CDU/CSU) argue that migration causes financial or employment problems (SPÖ 2017, p. 29: "The consequences [of immigration]: rising unemployment, rising burden on social budgets and pressure on the domestic wage level"[189]) and that it affects native values in a negative way (SPÖ 2017, p. 188: "When Europe is faced with migration that goes beyond this manageable level, our values come under pressure"[190]). Lastly, Austrian mainstream (and far-right) parties stress a supposed extraordinary rate of immigration. The ÖVP (2017, part 1, p. 117) states for example, "Demographic change in Africa in particular—the population will double to more than 2 billion by 2050 and quadruple to at least 4 billion by the end of the century—will lead to migratory pressures that Europe cannot cope with today's policies".[191] The AfD (2017, p. 27) uses specific terms to emphasise the supposed extent to which Europe is going to suffer under immigration by talking about "a migration pressure that has dimensions of a *migration of nations*".[192] The FPÖ further mentions negative consequences for women in 2008 and 2013. As already mentioned above, the party states, "that the immigration of people from patriarchal cultures leads to new discrimination against women".

Most messages against immigration are *demands* for expulsions or for limiting immigration. There is no single mainstream party that avoids such messages in its

[188]Incremento della lotta per la legalità, per il contrasto ai fenomeni della immigrazione clandestina,della criminalità predatoria.

[189]Die Folgen: steigende Arbeitslosigkeit, steigende Belastung für die Sozialbudgets und Druck auf das heimische Lohnniveau.

[190]Wenn Europa mit Migration konfrontiert ist, die über dieses integrierbare Maß hinausgeht, geraten unsere Werte unter Druck.

[191]vor allem die demografische Entwicklung in Afrika - bis 2050 wird sich die Bevölkerung auf über 2 Mrd. Menschen verdoppeln und bis zum Ende des Jahrhunderts zumindest auf 4 Mrd. vervierfachen - wird zu einem Migrationsdruck führen, den Europa mit der gegenwärtigen Politik nicht bewältigen wird können.

[192]ein Wanderungsdruck, der Dimensionen einer Völkerwanderung hat.

election manifestos. About 67% of anti-immigration messages demand a restriction of immigration, for example by not letting ("illegal") migrants enter the country. Among radical-right parties, this percentage is lower (about 42%) but still the highest compared to other anti-immigration submessages.

The second most used demand calls for deportations. About 32% of the far right's anti-immigration messages can be classified according to that subcategory. Among mainstream parties, it is about 23%. Most parties demand the expulsion of "illegal" immigrants, of criminals and of those "who refuse integration"[193] (CDU/CSU 2017, p. 74). Radical-right parties even speak out for expelling recognised refugees when their home country is considered a safe place. The AfD states for example, "Schooling for school-age asylum seekers must aim to prepare them for life after their return to their country of origin and to bridge the time until their return in a meaningful way".[194] Immigration is further juxtaposed with certain actors. These actors are mostly those mentioned in the previous pages about anti-outgroup messages. Mainstream parties—especially the ÖVP—oppose immigration with public order, law, state institutions, welfare systems and labour markets (ÖVP 2017; CDU/CSU 2005; PSOE 2008), with subgroups within the people (SPÖ 2017: unemployed people; PSOE 2008: workers) with Europe or the West (ÖVP 2017; CDU/CSU 2017; PSOE 2008) or with native actors framed as "our", "Austrian", "native" or "we" (ÖVP 2006, 2008, 2017; PSOE 2008). Unlike mainstream parties, all far-right parties combine a negative reference to immigration with a rather positive evaluation of the *whole native people* such as the FPÖ in 2013 (p. 9): "We stop the asylum abuse and thus protect *the Austrians* and those who are really persecuted".[195]

The last communicative element mentioned in Table 5.10 is "nicknaming". Several parties do not simply talk about "immigration", "borders" or "asylum" but create specific negative connoted words. This is very common among all far-right parties of the sample—but even some mainstream parties do so (ÖVP, SPD, PP, PSOE). For example, Spanish mainstream parties talk about "flows of immigration" (e.g. PP 2008, p. 66; PSOE 2008, p. 38) what suggests a large amount of immigrants. However, while "flows" still is a rather moderate term, the ÖVP uses the more threatening expression "disordered mass migration"[196] in 2017 (part 3, p. 58) talking about the influx of migrants in 2015. We further find the term "crisis" often linked to immigration. The PP, for example, talks about "migration crises"[197] (2015, p. 210) and the ÖVP (2017, part 3, p. 18, 21) about the "great refugee crisis".[198] Especially, the

[193] Wer sich der Integration verweigert.

[194] Ziel der Beschulung schulpflichtiger Asylbewerber muss es sein, diese auf das Leben nach der Rückkehr in ihr Herkunftsland vorzubereiten und die Zeit bis zur Rückkehr sinnvoll zu überbrücken.

[195] Wir stoppen den Asylmissbrauch und schützen so die Österreicher und jene, die wirklich verfolgt werden.

[196] ungeordnete Massenmigration.

[197] crisis migratorias.

[198] große(n) Flüchtlingskrise.

Austrian centre-right uses several contested expressions when talking about immigration. Like the German AfD, it demands zero tolerance for "asylum abuse"[199] (2008, p. 16), talks about "asylum and visa-shopping"[200] (2006, p. 85) and immigration "under the guise of asylum"[201] (2008, p. 19). We can find words such as "catastrophic year"[202] (2017, part 3, p. 21) referring to the influx of refugees in 2015 and a supposed increase in applications for asylum is called "explosive" (2017, part 3, p. 18). The Spanish PSOE (2015, p. 257) criticises the expression "open borders" as a "demagogic"[203] term. Radical right parties use further negative connoted expressions such as "migration of nations"[204] (AfD 2017), "islamisation"[205] (BZÖ 2008, p. 10), "criminal tourism"[206] (FPÖ 2017, p. 11), "asylum industry"[207] (FPÖ 2017, p. 3)—referring to non-governmental organisations helping refugees—and "minimum deporting quota"[208] (AfD 2017, p. 28).

Concluding, most anti-immigration messages of mainstream parties are about restricting immigration. Furthermore, a considerable amount demands deportations (of criminals, "illegals" or those who "refuse" to integrate). Only very few manifestos of mainstream parties directly evaluate immigration in a negative way or mention supposed negative consequences for the native society. Most of these messages derive from the ÖVP manifesto in 2017. Far-right parties do so much more often. A high percentage of sentences in their election manifestos rejects immigration in a certain way or mentions supposed negative impacts for society.

5.4.2 Communicative Shifts of Mainstream Parties

Austria

The Austrian centre-right increases its share of anti-immigration messages in the face of external pressure. However, the highest percentage of such sentences can be observed in 2008 and not as expected in 2017 when public salience of the immigration issue reaches the highest level.[209] Yet, the vote share for radical-right parties is very high in 2008—as high as in 2017—what might partially explain this development. While the share of anti-immigration messages is slightly higher in 2008, the ÖVP

[199] Asyl-Missbrauch.

[200] Asyl- und Visa-„Shopping ".

[201] Zuwanderung unter dem Deckmantel Asyl.

[202] Katastrophenjahr.

[203] demagógico[s].

[204] es entsteht ein Wanderungsdruck, der Dimensionen einer Völkerwanderung hat.

[205] Islamisierung.

[206] Kriminaltourismus.

[207] Asylindustrie.

[208] Mindestabschiebequote.

[209] Yet, the percentage of messages against *outgroups* is highest in 2017.

introduces *new* or *exceptional* discourses only in 2017—when "immigration moods" are on the highest level. This might also be due to the mentioned length of the programme: the manifesto from 2008 is the shortest and consists only of about 420 sentences while the 2017 programme has about 2800 sentences.

Interestingly, it is not primarily the "restricting" or "deportation" category that increases in 2017 but rather the two other submessage types. This cannot only be explained by the length of the manifesto since the share of these new messages is considerably high: 32% of all anti-immigration messages published in 2017 contains a negative evaluation ($n = 18$) and about 21% mentions supposed negative consequences of immigration ($n = 12$). The ÖVP would have needed few of these messages in 2008 in order to reach the same percentage. However, there are only two negative evaluations in 2006 and 2008 and no mentioning of supposed negative consequences. This suggests that the party indeed changes the way it talks about immigration in 2017 evaluating immigration in a negative way by framing it as a "problem" or "crisis" and by mentioning it together with negative connoted words such as "pressure", "uncontrolled", "explosion" or "illegal". The ÖVP states for example (p. 18, part 3): "Due to wave-through politics, the number of asylum applications has increased explosively up to almost 90,000".[210]

Among alleged negative consequences of immigration, the party mentions financial and security issues (exclusively) in 2017: "If we continue to allow illegal migration to Austria, we must expect more and more costs in this field—not only in the area of social assistance, but also in education, health and other fields"[211] (part 1, p. 46). In addition, due to the so-called refugee crisis, "both, the social order and social life as well as ultimately the question of identity have been massively shaken"[212] (part 3, p. 21). Hence, according to the centre-right, immigration not only produces negative financial but also cultural consequences, which threaten native values or the Austrian "identity". The ÖVP also combines negative references to immigration with rather positive evaluations of other actors in 2017. "Natives" opposed to immigration are "our country" (part 3, p. 58), "our social systems, integration efforts and our public order"[213] (part 3, p. 18) and "we" (part 3, p. 21). These "actors" are threatened by a "disordered mass migration"[214] (part 3, p. 58), a "refugee crisis" (part 3, p. 21) or just by migration in general (part 3, p. 18). Furthermore, the party mentions *Europe* as being in danger (part 3, p. 117): "Wars and crisis-prone conditions in the Middle East and North Africa have been causing a wave of migration for several years, pushing

[210] Durch die Politik des Weiterwinkens hat sich die Anzahl der Asylanträge explosionsartig auf fast 90.000 erhöht.

[211] Wenn wir weiterhin illegale Migration nach Österreich zulassen, müssen wir in diesem Bereich mit immer höheren Kosten rechnen - nicht nur im Bereich der Sozialhilfe, sondern auch in der Bildung, im Gesundheitswesen und anderen Bereichen.

[212] sind sowohl die soziale Ordnung und das gesellschaftliche Leben als auch letztlich die Frage von Identität massiv erschüttert worden.

[213] unserer Sozialsysteme, Integrationsbemühungen und unserer öffentlichen Ordnung.

[214] ungeordnete Massenmigration.

Europe to a breaking point, especially since 2015".[215] Moreover, the ÖVP emphasises own measures against immigration in 2017. It claims (part 3, p. 18,) to have "single-handedly organised the closure of the Balkan route with our neighbouring states".[216]

Last, the ÖVP constructs new negative connoted terms for "immigration" almost only in 2017. Already in the 2006 and 2008 manifestos, we find pejorative expressions but only very few ($n = 2$) while in 2017 this can be observed 17 times. Accordingly, the share of anti-immigration messages containing such terms is the highest in 2017. As mentioned above, the ÖVP introduces terms such as "illegal migration" (e.g. part 3, p. 18 and 20), "disordered mass migration" (part 3, p. 58,), "migratory pressure" (part 1, p. 116), "migration wave" (part 1, p. 117), "refugee streams" (part 3, p. 18), "big refugee crisis" (part 3, p. 18), "the catastrophic year 2015" (part 3, p. 21) and "immigration into the social security system"[217] (part 3, p. 46; part 1, p. 45, 46). Hence, immigration is portrayed as something uncontrollable that causes chaos and danger for public order.

There are no striking contradictory developments in manifestos of the ÖVP. In 2006, the party opposes immigration with native interests despite rather low levels of external pressure. In this sense, it demands a "purposeful management of immigration of foreigners through a model that secures *Austrian* interests".[218] As already indicated, the percentage of demands for deportations and for restricting immigration is also slightly higher in 2008 when immigration is a less salient issue within society (but vote shares of radical right parties are high). Yet, that rather underlines the communicative shift of the ÖVP. Once, it "only" spoke out for restricting the influx of immigrants. Nowadays, evaluating immigration negatively and portraying supposed negative consequences for society have become a further important communicative element of the Austrian centre-right.

The SPÖ becomes much more sceptical towards immigration when respective shifts in public opinion and in radical-right parties' vote share take place. We find the highest amount of such messages in 2017 when external pressure is particularly high while in former years the party hardly ever uses anti-immigration contents. Additionally, the party refers to negative connoted terms by talking about "illegal migration" (p. 191) only in 2017, which further can be interpreted as a negative evaluation of immigration. Accordingly, like the ÖVP, the SPÖ evaluates immigration in a negative way only in 2017 and mentions supposed negative consequences: among others, immigration is made responsible for "rising unemployment, rising burden on social budgets and pressure on domestic wage levels"[219] (p. 29). As observed for the

[215] Kriege und krisenhafte Zustände im Nahen Osten und Nordafrika führen seit einigen Jahren zu einer Migrationswelle, die Europa besonders seit 2015 an die Belastungsgrenze führt.

[216] im Alleingang die Schließung der Balkanroute mit unseren Nachbarstaaten organisiert.

[217] Zuwanderung ins Sozialsystem.

[218] Zweckgerichtete Steuerung des Zuzugs von Ausländern durch ein Modell, das die österreichischen Interessen sichert.

[219] steigende Arbeitslosigkeit, steigende Belastung für die Sozialbudgets und Druck auf das heimische Lohnniveau.

ÖVP, also the Austrian centre-left pictures immigration not only as a financial but even as a cultural threat: "When Europe is faced with migration that goes beyond this manageable level, our values come under pressure" (p. 188). In addition, the party demands the expulsion of immigrants and foreigners only in 2017 for example by complaining that "the actual repatriations are disproportionate to the negative decisions in the asylum procedure"[220] (p. 190). Furthermore, the SPÖ names immigration and the *Austrian people* in the same context in 2017. It states that people in Austria are unemployed also due to the influx of people from other countries (p. 24) and—as mentioned above—opposes immigration with Austrian values (p. 188).

It should be noted that the election manifesto of the SPÖ—like the manifesto of the ÖVP—in 2017 is much longer in terms of sentences than manifestos from the former years. However, the considerable share of messages mentioning negative consequences of immigration, demanding a restriction and deportations suggest that they appear not "randomly". In previous programmes, the SPÖ only refers once to anti-immigration rhetoric (in 2008) which is a very low number even when the respective length of the programme is taken into account.

Germany

Anti-immigration messages of the CDU/CSU are strongly connected to external pressure. Only the score for the 2005 manifesto cannot fully be explained by shifts in public opinion. Although the German centre-right increases its share of anti-immigration messages when the AfD establishes itself as a radical right competitor and when immigration becomes a particularly salient issue in society, it uses only few *new* communicative elements in 2017. The coalition simply increases the number of demands for restricting immigration and for deportations to a very substantial extent.[221] Yet, like Austrian mainstream parties, the CDU/CSU introduces the term "illegal migration" only in 2017 (p. 12, 56) and mentions own measures it claims to have taken in order to fight off immigration. While such a statement is already present in the 2009 manifesto, we find three of them in 2017 (p. 62: "We have declared Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia Montenegro and Serbia to be safe countries of origin, which has significantly reduced the number of asylum seekers"[222]; p. 62: "We have effectively reduced the number of those who have no right to stay"[223]; p. 60: "We have facilitated the deportation of criminals"[224]). There are few contradicting findings. Only in 2005 when no radical right party exists and immigration is no salient issue, the CDU/CSU mentions supposed negative consequences of

[220]Die tatsächlichen Rückführungen stehen in keinem Verhältnis zu den negativen Entscheidungen in den Asylverfahren.

[221]The highest share of sentences containing demands for restricting immigration before 2017 is 0.12% in 2009 ($n = 2$). In 2017 it is 0.47% ($n = 6$). The highest percentage of sentences containing demands for deportation before 2017 is 0.11% in 2005 ($n = 1$). In 2017 it is 0.47% ($n = 6$).

[222]Wir haben Albanien, Bosnien-Herzegowina, Kosovo, Mazedonien Montenegro und Serbien zu sicheren Herkunftsländern erklärt und so die Asylbewerberzahlen wesentlich senken können.

[223]Wir haben die Zahl derer, die kein Bleiberecht haben, wirksam reduziert.

[224]Wir haben die Abschiebung von Straftätern erleichtert.

immigration (p. 34): "Far above-average unemployment rates, many immigrant children without school qualifications, ghettos and a development of parallel societies and an often self-chosen demarcation of foreign adolescents from German society are alarm signals for social peace in the country".

The SPD uses the highest share of anti-immigration messages in 2017. Accordingly, there are good reasons to assume that the party responds the success of the radical right AfD and/or the increase of respective moods. However, like it was observed for the centre-right competitor CDU/CSU, we find anti-immigration messages also in 2005 when external pressure is rather low. Yet, the SPD demands *repatriations* only in 2017: "Delinquent foreigners"[225] (p. 54) and "rejected refugees"[226] (p. 59) should be deported "immediately"[227] (p. 54) and "more rigorously"[228] (p. 58). Moreover, the SPD speaks out most often for restricting immigration in 2017 even though this is not a new type of discourse. Like the CDU/CSU and mainstream parties in Austria, the German centre-left further uses terms relating to *illegality* exclusively in 2017: "illegal migration" (twice on page 59) and "illegal border crossing" (p. 58). Last, the SPD highlights own measures against immigration in 2017 and behaves similarly to the CDU/CSU in this respect (p. 54: "We have already facilitated the possibility to deport convicted foreigners").

Italy

The Italian centre-right increases its anti-immigration messages to a very substantial extent in 2018 when radical right parties (especially the League) and immigration-related moods are on the rise. Only the high share of anti-immigration statements in 2008 cannot be explained by respective external pressure. However, compared to the percentage in 2018 (5.8%), the respective share still remains at a lower level in 2008 (2.5%).

The high degree of anti-immigration messages of the centre-right in 2018 is mostly due to a great share of demands for restricting immigration (3.49%, $n = 3$) and deportations (2.33%, $n = 2$). The coalition does not introduce *new* anti-immigration discourses in 2018. A rather unexpected finding is that the coalition mentions negative consequences of immigration in 2013—when external pressure is rather low—equating "illegal immigration" with "predatory crime" (p. 31).

The centre-left does not respond to immigration-related moods or the success of radical-right parties by increasing its share of anti-immigration messages. However, in 2018, it evaluates immigration for the first time in a negative way by framing immigration as a "problem" (p. 9). Demands for deportations or restricting immigration are only made in 2006 (restricting and deporting) and 2008 (restricting) when external pressure is low.

Spain

[225] Straffällige(r) Ausländerinnen und Ausländer.

[226] Abgelehnte(n) Flüchtlinge.

[227] Unverzüglich.

[228] Konsequenter.

Mainstream parties' anti-immigration messages are strongly linked to shifts in public opinion in Spain. Unlike in the other countries, the issue of immigration is most salient in 2008. The PP demands expulsions, for example of so-called illegals (p. 218) or of "any foreigner who commits a misdemeanour"[229] (p. 71) exclusively in 2008. Besides speaking out more often for restricting immigration in 2008, the centre-right evaluates immigration in a negative way using the negative connoted expression "massive illegal entry"[230] (p. 66). We find even more nouns and adjectives referring to *illegality* within anti-immigration messages in the 2008 manifesto (e.g. p. 216: "illegal migration"; e.g. p. 16: "illegal entry"). However, besides the expression "*massive* illegal entry", those expressions also appear in other manifestos of the party.

Like the PP, the Spanish centre-left speaks out for deportations only in 2008. Illegal ("irregular") immigrants (p. 38, 40) or "foreigners condemned with a final judgment as perpetrators of a crime of gender violence"[231] (p. 225) should be repatriated. Demands for *restricting* immigration occur much more often in 2008 than in any other year. In addition, the PSOE opposes immigration to national security, welfare and the European Union only in 2008 (p. 39): "Migratory flows whose control and regulation have obvious and very important implications for the national security and welfare of Spain and the Union".[232] The centre-left further opposes immigration and Spanish workers in 2008 (p. 41): "We will continue to address the stable needs of the labour market, allowing the entry of new workers from abroad, only when there are not enough available in Spain". As a common behaviour with the centre-right party, the centre-left refers to "illegal" (or "irregular") immigration exclusively in 2008 ($n = 12$). Yet, unlike the PP, it further stresses own previous actions against immigration portraying itself as actively engaged in the issue (p. 39): "Thanks to that effort of the socialist government, we have achieved that the control of irregular migration flows, on a global scale, is definitely a priority for the European Union".[233]

Discussion

Within the single countries, there are very similar patterns among centre-right and centre-left parties in responding to external pressure. In Austria, SPÖ and ÖVP evaluate immigration in a negative way and mention negative consequences of immigration when vote shares of the far-right and immigration moods are on the highest level. Moreover, both oppose immigration with certain actors and use pejorative terms such as "illegal migration" and "mass/enormous migration" which portray migration in a rather negative light. Furthermore, both parties start to see migration

[229] Todo extranjero que comenta [sic!] un delito menor.

[230] masiva entrada ilegal.

[231] los extranjeros condenados con sentencia firme como autores de un delito de violencia de género.

[232] Flujos migratorios de cuyo control y regulación se derivan obvias e importantísimas implicaciones para la seguridad nacional y el bienestar de España y de la Unión.

[233] Gracias a ese esfuerzo del Gobierno socialista, hemos logrado que el control de los flujos irregulares de inmigración, a escala global, constituya definitivamente una prioridad para la Unión Europea.

not only as a financial problem but also as a cultural threat for the native society in 2017. As I explain in Chap. 6, the fact that Austrian mainstream parties adopt a specific quality of messages against immigration and outgroups could be due to historical reasons. Unlike in Germany, Austrian parties hardly ever demonised the fascist past and respective radical right tendencies in society and politics and might therefore have less fear of contact with radical right content (Art 2006). Like in Austria, mainstream parties in Germany use the term "illegal migration" for the first time in 2017—when the AfD became relevant and respective public moods were on their peak. Both SPD and CDU/CSU highlight own past measures against immigration in order to emphasise their active engagement in this issue. In Italy, mainstream parties respond differently to external pressure while the Spanish centre-left and centre-right both call for deportations only when immigration is a salient issue. Like in Austria and Germany, mainstream parties in Spain use the term "illegal migration" for the first time during this period. Accordingly, we find also a cross-national common pattern with the exception of Italy: only when immigration is a salient issue mainstream parties frame immigration as something "illegal". Moreover, both mainstream parties in Germany, the Austrian centre-right and the Spanish centre-left stress own measures they claim to have taken in order to restrict immigration in the face of external pressure. The striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties are summarised in Table 5.12.

Concluding, the findings provide strong arguments for the assumption that mainstream parties adopt distinct anti-immigration messages when external pressure increases. The large amount of specific messages appearing only during such times prevails over the rather low number of statements emerging rather unexpectedly.

5.5 Messages Against Economic Actors

5.5.1 Leftist and Mainstream Parties' Messages

Leftist parties—Podemos, IU, Die Linke—characterise economic actors more frequently in a negative way than mainstream parties (and radical-right parties) (Table 5.13). However, that does not mean that left parties use such messages particularly often. Only about 3% of their messages directed towards economic actors can be classified as negative characterisations. Economic actors are characterised by mentioning supposed negative intentions and aims, by explicitly criticising traits, questioning their ideas or their ethics. The SPD (2017, p. 75) for example questions the intentions of companies that move to other countries: "What they are aiming for here are only lower labour costs and less employee protection".[235] The SPÖ (2017, p. 186)

[235]Was sie hiermit bezwecken, sind lediglich geringere Lohnkosten und geringerer Arbeitnehmerschutz.

Table 5.12 Striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties in election manifestos (messages against immigration)

	New categories	New opposed targets	New "pejorative" term	Other new discourses	Unexpected developments
ÖVP	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Evaluation (highest percentage); consequences	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing immigration and "we/us/our" (country; social system; public order); Europe	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Illegal migration; disordered mass migration; migratory pressure; migration wave; refugee streams; big refugee crisis; the catastrophic year 2015; immigration into the social security system	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Immigration as a financial *and cultural* threat Mentioning own measures against immigration	**Low level of vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing immigration and Austrian interests
SPÖ	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Evaluation; consequences; deportations	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing immigration and unemployed Austrians; "our values"	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Illegal migration; enormous immigration	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Immigration as a financial *and cultural* threat	–
CDU	–	–	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Illegal migration	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Mentioning own measures against immigration (highest percentage)	**Non-existing RRP and low "immigration moods" (2005)** Consequences; juxtaposing immigration with own country's interests

(continued)

Table 5.12 (continued)

	New categories	New opposed targets	New "pejorative" term	Other new discourses	Unexpected developments
SPD	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Deportations	–	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Illegal migration; illegal border crossing	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Mentioning own measures against immigration	–
FI/PdL	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Restricting immigration (highest percentage); deportation (highest percentage)	–	–	–	**Low level of vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Consequences
PD	**Highest vote share RRP and "immigration moods"** Evaluation	–	–	–	**Low level of vote share RRP and "immigration moods" (2008)** Restricting immigration
PP	**Highest "immigration moods"** Deportations	–	**Highest "immigration moods"** Massive illegal entry; illegal immigration		
PSOE	**Highest "immigration moods"** Deportations; restricting immigration (highest percentage)	**Highest "immigration moods"** Juxtaposing immigration and national security; welfare; European Union; Spanish workers	**Highest "immigration moods"** Illegal immigration	**Highest "immigration moods"** Mentioning own measures against immigration	–

Note RRP Radical right parties

Table 5.13 Frequency of left-wing submessages in election manifestos

Subcategory	Type of percentage	Populist (n = 16)	Mainstream (n = 31)	M5S + TS (n = 3)	Far-left (n = 9)	Far-right (n = 7)	CL (n = 16)	CR (n = 15)	All[234] (n = 52)
Character	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.07 (0.1) 2.77	0.03 (0.06) 2.99	0.03 (0.05) 2.86	**0.14** (0.1) 3.24	0.03 (0.08) 2.13	0.04 (0.07) 2.93	0.006 (0.02) 3.51	0.04 (0.08) 2.98
Behaviour	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.41 (0.34) 12.17	0.12 (0.18) 11.78	0.4 (0.35) **22.86**	**0.49** (0.28) 11.49	0.31 (0.37) 12.77	0.21 (0.21) 11.72	0.03 (0.07) 12.28	0.23 (0.27) 12.29
Pref. treated	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.84 (0.99) 23.89	0.14 (0.24) 12.71	0.25 (0.43) 25.71	0.91 (0.75) 22.97	**0.99** (1.23) **34.04**	0.25 (0.3) 13.81	0.01 (0.03) 3.51	0.39 (0.67) 19.53
Demands	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	2.61 (1.94) 67.95	0.83 (0.81) **80**	**2.79** (2.62) 54.29	**3.4** (1.46) 70	1.43 (1.53) 61.7	1.34 (0.81) **79.29**	0.28 (0.3) **85.97**	1.47 (1.51) 73.01
Juxtaposing	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	1.06 (0.78) 30.51	0.4 (0.37) 33.27	0.6 (0.58) 42.86	**1.36** (0.69) **48.97**	0.98 (0.82) **48.92**	0.64 (0.34) 33.05	0.14 (0.17) 35.09	0.65 (0.63) 32.17

(continued)

[234]Including Ciudadanos.

Table 5.13 (continued)

Subcategory	Type of percentage	Populist (n = 16)	Mainstream (n = 31)	M5S + TS (n = 3)	Far-left (n = 9)	Far-right (n = 7)	CL (n = 16)	CR (n = 15)	All(n = 52)
Nicknaming	% sentences/manifesto % all *coded* sentences	0.26 (0.45) 2.47	0.02 (0.1) 1.12	0.03 (0.05) 2.86	0.15 (0.17) **14.89**	**0.46** (0.62) **14.89**	0.01 (0.03) 1.05	0.04 (0.14) 1.75	0.1 (0.28) 2.13
TOT left	% sentences/manifesto	3.69 (2.71)	1.03 (1.07)	3.22 (2.17)	**4.68** (2.08)	2.5 (2.95)	1.71 (1.1)	0.32 (0.3)	2 (2.12)

Note Average score of every party type (left-wing categories). Numbers in bold: particularly high values compared to other party types. Standard deviation in brackets. Populists: BZÖ, FPÖ, TS, AfD, Linke, M5S, Pod; far-left: Linke, IU, Pod; far-right: BZÖ, FPÖ, AfD; centre-left: SPÖ, SPD, PD, PSOE; centre-right: ÖVP, CDU/CSU, FI/PdL, PP. Mainstream = mainstream parties; *CL* Centre-left; *CR* Centre-right

characterises certain "companies and temporary work agencies" as "ruthless"[236] and rejects specific employers' demands or mentions supposed questionable aims (2017, p. 34: "»Working time flexibilisation now!« it sounds from the management of some companies and interest groups"[237]; 2017, p. 53: "The lobby of the top earners wants an automatic indexation of the tax rate with the average inflation"[238]). Left parties use such messages more often and mostly in a stricter tone like the Spanish IU (2011, p. 62), which criticises the exploitation of immigrants by "ruthless entrepreneurs, who see in this situation the possibility of providing cheap and docile labour".[239]

A negative behaviour of economic elites is most often addressed by left parties and Team Stronach. Also, radical-right parties make economic groups more often responsible for negative developments than mainstream parties. Among the latter, the centre-left criticises companies or the rich more often than the centre-right. For example, centre-left parties in all countries (as well as the German CDU/CSU) claim that economic actors act against (parts of) the people or harm them. The PSOE (2011, p. 45) makes financial institutions co-responsible for such damages: "The excessive indebtedness that many families have incurred is also due to insufficient and deficient information from financial institutions".[240] We find similar allegations among leftist parties such as the Spanish IU (2015, p. 11) using a more emotional or explicit language: "In Europe, we must reverse the control of the oligarchies, mainly financial ones, who have assigned our people a subsidiary role in the services sector and as cheap labour".[241]

Moreover, all mainstream parties—except the Italian centre-right—mention negative business-related practices of economic actors. The Italian centre-left (2018, p. 3) for example talks about "wage dumping of companies working outside Italy".[242] Also, Die Linke criticises practices of "the richest"[243] which "promote free trade, environmental destruction and competition and wars that lead to flight and expulsion"[244] (2017, p. 4). PSOE and CDU/CSU further mention negative actions of economic actors that are not directly business-related and which do not explicitly go

[236]Die Gewinner sind skrupellose Unternehmen und Leiharbeitsfirmen, die das derzeitige System der Freizügigkeit in der EU ausnützen.

[237]«Arbeitszeitflexibilisierung jetzt!» tönt es aus den Chefetagen mancher Unternehmen und Interessenverbände.

[238]Die Lobby der TopverdienerInnen verlangt eine automatische Indexierung des Steuertarifs mit der Durchschnittsinflation.

[239]empresarios sin escrúpulos, que ven en esta situación la posibilidad de proveerse de mano de obra barata y dócil.

[240]El endeudamiento excesivo en que han incurrido muchas familias también obedece a la insuficiente y deficiente información par parte de las entidades financieras.

[241]En Europa, hay que revertir el control de las oligarquías, fundamentalmente financieras, que han asignado a nuestro pueblo un papel subsidiario en el sector de servicios y como mano de obra barata.

[242]dumping salariale di aziende che lavorano fuori dall'Italia.

[243][der] Reichsten.

[244]befördern Freihandel, Umweltzerstörung und Konkurrenz und Kriege, die zu Flucht und Vertreibung führen.

to the expense of the economy or less well-to-do groups. For instance, the CDU/CSU (2005, p. 14) states, "Individual management decisions have shaken confidence in the growing social partnership of capital and labour".[245]

Only parties from the left make economic actors responsible for developments that do not exclusively concern the own country. Die Linke and IU criticise supposed actions of companies affecting the human race in general or other countries. Die Linke (2017, p. 6) for example maintains that "powerful corporate interests prevent environmental degradation and climate change from being stopped"[246] and IU claims that "the interests of the Spanish multinationals in Latin America […], thanks to neoliberal policies have in some cases carried out a true 'recolonisation' of key economic sectors".[247]

Not surprisingly, left-wing parties portray economic groups more often as preferentially treated, privileged or particularly powerful than mainstream parties do. However, while the centre-right hardly uses such communicative content (except the Spanish and German centre-right), the centre-left does so more regularly. Surprisingly, it is the radical right, which portrays economic actors and the rich most often as privileged (on average about 1% of the manifestos' sentences). About 34% of all radical right parties' messages directed towards economic groups can be classified according to that subcategory. Among the left, this percentage is about 23 and among the centre-left about 14.

Mainstream parties portray economic actors as financially privileged (SPD 2017, p. 40f: "Many managers earn 50 or 100 times more than their employees"[248]) and as acting under particular favourable conditions speaking out against "the monopoly positions and protections enjoyed by many sectors, from the professions to energy"[249] (PD 2006, p. 114). Furthermore, centre-left mainstream parties portray certain economic actors as particular powerful such as the SPD (2017, p. 85), which criticises an "increasing monopolisation of seed trade by a few agro-business corporations".[250] Left parties use similar messages referring to the privileged position of certain economic groups, but they sometimes do so by using a more straightforward and simple language (IU 2008, p. 4: "the poor poorer, rich richer"[251]), impressive examples or by illustrating the supposed other side of the coin (Die Linke 2009, p. 1: "That's why millions of people are starving even more, and their hunger makes tens

[245]Einzelne Managemententscheidungen haben das Vertrauen in die gewachsene Sozialpartnerschaft von Kapital und Arbeit erschüttert.

[246]Mächtige Konzerninteressen verhindern, dass Umweltzerstörung und Klimawandel gestoppt werden.

[247]los intereses de las multinacionales españolas en América Latina [..], gracias a las políticas neoliberales han llevado a cabo en algunas ocasiones una verdadera "recolonización" de sectores económicos claves.

[248]Tatsächlich verdienen viele Manager das 50 oder gar 100-fache ihrer Beschäftigten.

[249]abolire le posizioni di monopolio e le protezioni di cui godono molti settori, dalle professioni, all'energia.

[250]zunehmende Monopolisierung des Saatguthandels durch einige wenige Agro-Business-Konzerne.

[251]pobres más pobres, ricos más ricos.

Table 5.14 Frequency of mainstream parties' demands against economic actors in election manifestos

Demands	Frequency	Parties (n)
More rules for/control over economic actors	252	8/8
Financial demands	99	6/8 Except PP; FI/PdL
More rights workers/consumers/people	95	8/8
Against power/ interests	50	7/8 Except PP
Defining functions of economic actors	10	4/8 CDU/CSU; SPD; PSOE; PD
Emancipation of women in companies	8	4/8 SPÖ; CDU/CSU; SPD; PSOE

of thousands of speculators rich"[252]; p. 2: "Increasing dividends are accompanied by mass layoffs and tax donations to the representatives of the big capital"[253]).

Unsurprisingly, *demands* against economic groups are mostly raised by the left followed by the far-right. However, among the centre-right and centre-left we find a higher percentage of messages against economic actors classified as demands. Eighty percentage of mainstream parties' statements directed towards economic elites are demands; among the far-left, it is 70% and among the far-right only about 62%. Accordingly, other ways of talking about the rich—especially portraying them as privileged and making them responsible for negative actions—play a more crucial role for the left (and particularly the far-right) than for mainstream parties. The different types of demands raised by mainstream parties are illustrated in Table 5.14 (example sentences are in Annex 12).

All mainstream parties ask for stricter rules for private companies by making concrete demands or by defining what economic actors should and should not do. The SPÖ states for example (2013, p. 18), "we want credit rating agencies, which were significantly involved in the intensification of the financial crisis, to be stricter regulated".[254] Additionally, mainstream parties call for more influence, rights or transparency for workers or consumers in private enterprises (PD 2013, p. 4: "We cannot allow the arbitrary conduct of companies that discriminate against workers to continue, nor can we allow trade union representation that does not depend on

[252]Deshalb hungern Millionen Menschen noch mehr, und ihr Hunger macht zehntausende Spekulanten reich.

[253]Steigende Dividenden gehen einher mit Massenentlassungen und Steuergeschenken an die Vertreter des großen Kapitals.

[254][Darüber hinaus] wollen wir, dass auch Ratingagenturen, die wesentlich an der Verschärfung der Finanzkrise beteiligt waren, stärker reguliert werden.

the workers' vote"[255]). At least some mainstream parties—mostly from the centre-left—call for more financial contributions or less financial means for the rich or for companies (PSOE 2011, p. 16: "Create a tax on the profits of financial institutions"[256]) and for less power, influence or privileges for economic actors (SPÖ 2017, p. 14: "This also means that we will not agree to possible special rights of action for large corporations under trade agreements"[257]). In addition, (centre-left) mainstream parties sometimes define the general function and role of private economic actors (PSOE 2011, p. 11: "Financial institutions must be solvent, sustainable, healthy and profitable in order to ensure that they operate properly, and that they do not place a burden on either states or citizens"[258]) or demand more rights and positions for women in companies (SPÖ 2013, p. 16: "Fair career prospects for women are guaranteed by quota regulations in boards and supervisory boards, also in the private sector"[259]).

One difference between demands made by the mainstream and the left seems particularly striking. Regarding demands for less power, influence or privileges for companies, only the left speaks out for nationalisations like Die Linke in 2009 (p. 7): "Nationalise private banks".[260] The mainstream centre-left demands more control, rules or transparency for banks and companies but do not call for their disempowerment by transferring enterprises into public ownership.

The left also creates antagonisms between economic actors and other groups more often than the centre-left. All mainstream parties except the Italian and Spanish centre-right sometimes combine a reference to economic actors with a rather positive evaluation of workers. This does not necessarily mean that mainstream parties create a great conflict between these groups, but it illustrates the conflicting nature of the relationship between employees and employers. The SPD for example states in 2009 (p. 39) that "in many cases, a works council is desired by employees but blocked by the company"[261] and criticises (p. 72) that "companies are collecting more and more personal information from their customers and employees".[262] Less often, centre-left parties (and once the Spanish centre-right) mention particular vulnerable groups such as pensioners, unemployed and disabled persons or poor and elderly people together

[255]Non possiamo consentire ne che si continui con l'arbitrio della condotta di aziende che discriminano i lavoratori, ne che ci sia una rappresentanza sindacale che prescinda dal voto dei lavoratori sui contratti.

[256]Crear un impuesto sobre los beneficios de las instituciones financieras.

[257]Das heißt auch, dass wir möglichen Sonderklagsrechten von Großkonzernen im Rahmen von Handelsabkommen nicht zustimmen werden.

[258]Las entidades financieras deben ser solventes, sostenibles, sanas y rentables para poder garantizar su correcto funcionamiento, y que no supongan una carga ni para los Estados ni para los ciudadanos.

[259]Faire Aufstiegschancen für Frauen garantieren Quotenregelungen in Vorständen und Aufsichtsräten auch in der Privatwirtschaft.

[260]private Banken vergesellschaften.

[261]In vielen Fällen wird ein Betriebsrat von den Beschäftigten gewünscht, aber vom Unternehmen blockiert.

[262]Unternehmen sammeln immer mehr persönliche Daten ihrer Kundinnen und Kunden und Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter.

with more powerful and rich ones. The SPÖ maintains for example (2017, p. 142f), "Private residential investors are interested in high returns and therefore prefer to rent expensive flats, while younger and socially disadvantaged tenants are looking for affordable flats".[263] The centre-left parties SPD, SPÖ and PSOE (and once the PP) also juxtapose the state or related targets—public order, law, state institutions, welfare systems—with economic actors (e.g. SPD 2013, p. 16: "No bank is allowed to drag whole states into the vortex"[264]). Interestingly, all mainstream parties—except the German and Italian centre-right—sometimes oppose economic actors with other (less powerful) *economic groups*, such as small and medium-sized or domestic enterprises. The PSOE (2015, p. 167) speaks out for "facing oligopolies, privileges and corporatism, to allow access to the wealth of a majority of citizens and companies".[265] Moreover, all centre-left parties (and the CDU/CSU in 2013) combine a reference to economic actors with a rather positive mentioning of the *whole* people (or the majority) in at least one of their election manifestos. The SPD for example maintains (2013, p. 8), "We will put citizens' problems and concerns back in the centre of politics—not the interests of anonymous financial markets".[266] However, rather than the whole people, certain subgroups—workers, vulnerable groups, smaller or local enterprises, women, families, consumers, tax payers or farmers—are more frequently mentioned together with economic actors (SPÖ 2017, p. 54: "Starbucks is just one of many examples of a multinational corporation that does not pay taxes where profits are earned—as our innkeeper does[267]).

Last, some mainstream parties refer to "native" or national actors and targets when talking about (foreign) economic groups or the upper class by using terms such as "our" or "native". We can observe that in manifestos from the ÖVP, SPÖ and PSOE. The ÖVP, for example, juxtaposes "our native innkeepers and coffee houses"[268] with "international competitors"[269] and the SPÖ (2017, p. 44) talks about "our companies"[270] on the one side and "major international corporations"[271] on the other. Austrian mainstream parties—as well as the SPD—further use references to the country or the general public (without mentioning directly the people) when talking about economic groups. Among others, we find references to "the country" or the "community". In this regard, the SPD states for example (2009, p. 17), "Salary

[263] Private Wohnbauinvestoren haben ein Interesse an hohen Renditen und möchten daher vor allem teure Wohnungen vermieten, während jüngere und sozial schwächere MieterInnen vor allem leistbare Wohnungen suchen.

[264] Keine Bank darf ganze Staaten mit in den Strudel ziehen.

[265] enfrentando a los oligopolios, privilegios y corporativismos, para permitir el acceso a la riqueza de una mayoría de la ciudadanía y empresas.

[266] Wir werden die Probleme und Sorgen der Bürgerinnen und Bürger wieder in den Mittelpunkt der Politik stellen – und nicht die Interessen anonymer Finanzmärkte.

[267] Starbucks ist nur eines von vielen Beispielen für einen multinationalen Konzern, der Gewinne nicht dort versteuert, wo sie erwirtschaftet werden – wie es unser Wirt tut.

[268] unsere heimischen Wirte und Kaffeehäuser.

[269] Internationale Konkurrenz.

[270] unsere Unternehmer-Innen.

[271] Internationale[n] Großkonzerne[n].

excesses and golden handshakes for incompetent managers must not be co-financed by the general public".[272]

The last subcategory mentioned in Table 5.13 is "nicknaming". Yet, mainstream parties hardly invent nicknames or pejorative terms for economic actors. The SPÖ (2017, p. 55) uses the term "tax hustler",[273] the SPD (2013, p. 16, 105) "speculators"[274] and "financial jugglers"[275] (p. 13) and the PSOE (2015, p. 176) as well as the Italian centre-right (2013, p. 23) "oligopolies".[276] Left parties use respective nicknames more frequently but the highest percentage in this regard can be observed among the radical right. Besides "speculators" and "oligarchs" (or "oligarchies") left, radical-right and populist parties use the following expressions: "speculator banks"[277] (FPÖ 2013, p. 6), "bankrupt managers"[278] (FPÖ 2013, p. 6), "system of bureaucrats and speculators"[279] (TS 2013, p. 30), "radical free-market ghost drivers"[280] (Die Linke 2009, p. 1), "gamblers" (Die Linke 2009, p. 2), "casinos"[281] (Die Linke 2013, p. 51), "tax refugees"[282] (Die Linke 2017, p. 68), "oligarchic financial system"[283] (IU 2015, p. 58) and "oligarchies and plutocracies"[284] (IU 2015, p. 15). It is striking that with the emergence of Podemos in 2015—which introduces the term "caste" in order to talk about the political class—its left competitor IU starts using the term "oligarchy" referring to the economic elite. This suggests that not only mainstream parties are affected by the establishment of a new populist actor but also niche parties from the left. In Germany, Die Linke talks about a "parallel society of the rich and tax refugees"[285] referring to terms (parallel society; refugees) usually related to migration topics and used by the radical-right. By giving these words a new meaning, the left might aspire to shift the dominant discourse in Germany from immigration to economic issues.

Concluding, mainstream parties mainly demand moderate measures against the rich, companies, banks or other economically powerful actors. They hardly ever refer to supposed negative characteristics of these groups and only slightly more often to negative actions and privileges. The main difference between the mainstream centre-right and centre-left is that the former hardly uses any other category than demands

[272] Gehaltsexzesse und goldene Handschläge für unfähige Manager dürfen nicht von der Allgemeinheit mitfinanziert werden.

[273] Steuertrickser.

[274] Spekulanten.

[275] Finanzjongleure.

[276] oligopolios/oligopoli.

[277] Spekulationsbanken.

[278] Pleitemanager.

[279] System der Bürokraten und Spekulanten.

[280] marktradikale[n] Geisterfahrer.

[281] Spielbanken.

[282] Steuerflüchtlinge.

[283] sistema financiero oligárquico.

[284] oligarquías y plutocracias.

[285] Parallelgesellschaft der Reichen und Steuerflüchtlinge.

when talking about economic groups while the latter at least sometimes portrays them as powerful, privileged or makes them responsible for negative developments. Left parties refer more often to negative actions of economic actors even though only in less than 12% of their messages against economic elites. Among mainstream parties, this is nearly the same percentage. Furthermore, left parties portray economic groups much more often as privileged and preferentially treated than the mainstream centre-left (and centre-right). Yet, we also see more surprising findings: it is the radical right portraying economic groups most frequently as preferentially treated or privileged. This is true compared to both the *total amount of sentences per election manifesto* (on average about 1%) and to the *total amount of messages against economic actors* (about 34%). The far-right further uses pejorative terms or nicknames much more frequently than any other party type—including the left—when talking about economic elites.

5.5.2 Communicative Shifts of Mainstream Parties

Austria

The Austrian centre-right does not increase its messages against economic actors when public opinion becomes more concerned about the economic situation. We cannot observe any particular communicative shift in 2006 or 2013, when the economic situation was most salient for the Austrians. Instead, the ÖVP uses the highest percentage of demands towards economic actors in 2008 when respective moods are on a low level.

Regarding the centre-left, there are good arguments to assume that the SPÖ responds to economic moods by criticising powerful economic actors. Especially, in 2013—when the economic situation is most salient—the percentage of demands towards economic actor increases. However, we can only identify one new or distinct demand in 2013 (p. 16: "Quota regulations in executive and supervisory boards guarantee fair career opportunities for women, also in the private sector"[286]). Moreover, in 2013, economic actors are mentioned more often together with rather positive evaluated groups. *The state* is opposed to economic actors exclusively in this period. Banks and the rich are named together with welfare state, public purse and tax money (e.g. p. 17: "In order to be able to further reduce the taxes on earned income, we want to introduce a millionaire tax (wealth, inheritance and gift tax) for the richest in Austria, because they should make a contribution to the welfare state as well"[287]).

Yet, the SPÖ mentions supposed *negative characteristics* or *actions* of economic actors most often in 2017 when it is not expected. The same is true regarding the

[286]Faire Aufstiegschancen für Frauen garantieren Quotenregelungen in Vorständen und Aufsichtsräten auch in der Privatwirtschaft.

[287]Um die Steuern auf Arbeitseinkommen weiter reduzieren zu können, wollen wir eine Millionärssteuer (Vermögens-, Erbschafts- und Schenkungssteuer) für die Reichsten in Österreich einführen, denn auch sie sollen einen Beitrag für den Wohlfahrtsstaat leisten.

portrayal of economic groups as privileged or preferentially treated. Accordingly, the party speaks in a slightly different way about economic elites mostly in 2017 what rather contradicts the assumption that communicative shifts occur in 2013. Nevertheless, besides some particular accusations—having negative intentions and ideas (e.g. p. 34), acting against tenants (p. 142), raising negative demands (e.g. p. 53)—we see no *new* message type emerging in 2017. The party simply uses certain messages more often in 2017 than the years before.

Germany

Unlike mainstream parties in other countries, neither the German centre-right nor the centre-left seems to be responsive to public economic moods. Messages against economic actors do not increase when economic issues gain salience in society or when Die Linke experiences electoral upswings. However, among the SPD, it can be observed that the party juxtaposes economic actors and societal groups/the state much more often in 2009 (when such moods reach the highest level) than in manifestos from other elections (2005: $0.35\%/n = 3$; 2009: $1.01\%/n = 17$; 2013: $0.53\%/n = 13$; 2017: $0.46\%/n = 11$). Only in 2009, economic actors are opposed with the society or a general good. The SPD maintains for example (p. 47), "While the causes of the crisis lie primarily in the irresponsible actions of the financial managers and the wealthy have benefited from this misconduct, the public has to bear the costs".[288] A similar argumentation can be found on page 15: "Financial services providers must find their way back again to serving the society and the real economy and take more responsibility for the risks".[289] Moreover, the centre-left mentions the rich together with children in 2009 demanding that the former should contribute more financial resources (p. 45): "Those who benefit from high incomes and wealth must provide a stronger solidarity contribution, above all, to finance childcare and education".[290]

In addition, the 2009 manifesto is the only one containing a reference to former achievements of the party for workers and against economic actors (p. 85): "In the last century, the SPD and trade unions in Germany have proven that it is possible to civilise capitalism through participation in enterprises and companies".[291] Accordingly, while a contagion of messages against economic groups cannot be observed in *quantitative terms* in Germany, a more in-depth analysis of these messages reveals exceptional discourses of the centre-left and their connection to external pressure.

Unlike the SPD, the German centre-right uses more messages directed against the rich or economic groups in 2005 when vote shares for Die Linke (PDS) are on

[288] Während die Ursachen der Krise in erster Linie im unverantwortlichen Handeln der Finanzmanager liegen und die Vermögenden von diesem Fehlverhalten profitiert haben, hat die Allgemeinheit die Kosten zu tragen.

[289] Die Finanzdienstleister müssen wieder zu ihrer dienenden Funktion für die Gesellschaft und die Realwirtschaft zurückfinden und mehr Verantwortung für die Risiken übernehmen.

[290] Wer durch hohe Einkommen und Vermögen Vorteile genießt, muss einen stärkeren Solidarbeitrag vor allem zur Finanzierung von Kinderbetreuung und Bildung leisten.

[291] Im letzten Jahrhundert haben SPD und Gewerkschaften in Deutschland bewiesen, dass es möglich ist, den Kapitalismus zu zivilisieren durch Mitbestimmung in Betrieb und Unternehmen.

the highest level (yet, only 1.2% higher than in 2009). Only in 2005, the centre-right makes economic actors responsible for negative developments or mentions supposed negative actions assuming (p. 14), "Individual management decisions have shaken confidence in the long-standing social partnership of capital and labour". Moreover, the coalition claims (p. 14), "Inadequate redundancy payments of the management on the one hand and collective redundancies of workers on the other do not match"[292] portraying economic actors as privileged or preferentially treated. These exceptional discourses might further be explained by the opposition status of the CDU/CSU during the 2005 election campaign. In addition, the CDU/CSU stresses own achievements against economic actors in 2005 claiming to have obligated managers to publish their salary (p. 15): "In addition to the single reporting requirement for executive board salaries of listed companies that has already been decided on, this includes the definition of a framework for executive board salaries including stock options by resolution of the general meeting".[293]

Yet, the CDU/CDU raises three specific demands towards economic groups rather unexpectedly in 2013. During this period, vote shares for Die Linke and respective economic moods are on a rather low level. The coalition demands quotas for women in quoted companies (p. 63), questions the influence of certain powerful groups (p. 94: "We reject an agriculture dominated by capital investors"[294]), and it defines the function for economic actors (p. 29) by demanding that financial markets need to serve the people.

Italy

Discourses from the centre-right against economic actors seem to be linked to economic moods in society. Only in 2013, when the country's economic situation is evaluated as a salient issue—and the M5S established itself criticising powerful companies and banks—the coalition uses messages against economic actors. It calls for actions against the power of certain actors (p. 23: "counteract the oligopolies"[295]), and for protecting savers from banks (p. 15): "Any bank bailouts must only be done for the protection of savers and not for the controlling shareholders".[296] The latter statement further combines a reference to economic actors ("controlling shareholders") with a positive demand towards parts of the people ("savers"). In addition, the centre-right introduces certain "nicknames" for economic actors in 2013 ("oligopolies").

Likewise, the centre-left uses the highest percentage of messages against economic groups in 2013. This supports the assumption that the coalition responds

[292]Unangemessene Abfindungen des Managements auf der einen Seite und Massenentlassungen von Arbeitnehmern auf der anderen Seite passen nicht zusammen.

[293]Dazu gehört neben der bereits beschlossenen Einzelveröffentlichungspflicht von Vorstandsgehältern bei börsennotierten Unternehmen die Festlegung eines Rahmens für Vorstandsgehälter inklusive Aktienoptionen durch Beschluss der Hauptversammlung.

[294]Eine von Kapitalinvestoren bestimmte Landwirtschaft lehnen wir ab.

[295]contrastare gli oligopoli.

[296]Eventuali salvataggi bancari devono essere solo a tutela dei risparmiatori e non degli azionisti di controllo.

to external pressure by criticising companies or the upper class. We find the highest percentage of demands towards economic actors and of statements portraying them as privileged or preferentially treated in 2013. The same holds true for juxtapositions of economic actors with other positively framed groups. However, there are no *new or distinct* types of submessages emerging in 2013. Only in 2006—when the economic situation of the country is not a particularly salient issue in society—the centre-left raises two specific demands not occurring in other manifestos: it questions the influence of powerful telecommunication providers (p. 262) and defines the function for banking institutions (p. 239). Yet, this seems to be an unexpected development only at first glance. First, these demands do not seem to be very particular or severe. Second, given the particular length of the 2006 manifesto, it is also more likely that distinct types of messages appear in it.

Spain

Both mainstream parties in Spain use the highest degree of leftist messages when respective public moods reach their peak in 2011 and not in 2015 when Podemos establishes itself and vote shares for left parties are on the highest level. The rising salience of economic issues in society coincides with the emergence of the "Indignados Movement" protesting against the political and economic situation in 2011 (Resina 2014). As reservations about the economic situation increase, the PP adopts certain discourses against powerful economic actors. For example, it addresses negative actions of the financial system but in a very moderate language (p. 33): "The financial system is not adequately fulfilling its function of channelling savings towards investment".[297] However, this type of submessage exclusively emerges in 2011 whereas in 2015—when vote shares for left parties are on the highest level and Podemos established itself—the centre-right also introduces messages that can be interpreted as negative characterisations/evaluations of economic actors (e.g. p. 40: "The banking situation thus imposed an unassuming risk for public sector financing"[298]; p. 40: "the negative drift of the financial sector threatened to drag the economy as a whole and could cause serious damage to Spanish savers"[299]). The party further portrays certain actors as privileged in 2015. It states (p. 123): "Taking 2004 INE data, 20% of the richest Spaniards earned 5.2 times more than the poorest 20%".[300] Additionally, while the PP does not juxtapose economic actors with other groups in 2008, it does so in 2011 and more frequently in 2015. In the latter period, "new" groups are opposed to economic actors. The financial system is mentioned together with Spanish savers (p. 40), the rich with the poor (p. 123) and banks

[297]El sistema financiero no está cumpliendo adecuadamente su función de canalización del ahorro hacia la inversión.

[298]La situación bancaria imponía así un riesgo inasumible para la financiación del sector público.

[299]la deriva negativa del sector financiero amenazaba con arrastrar al conjunto de la economía y podría suponer un grave perjuicio para los ahorradores españoles.

[300]Tomando datos del INE de 2004, el 20% de los españoles más ricos ganaba 5,2 veces más que el 20% más pobre.

with the public sector (p. 40). Last, in 2015 (p. 40) the PP highlights own achievements against economic actors claiming that "an important restructuring process was launched, based on an unprecedented transparency practice that analysed in depth the balance sheets of banking institutions".[301]

Likewise, the Spanish centre-left refers most often to messages against economic groups in 2011. Furthermore, the PSOE *characterises* economic targets as part of the problem exclusively in this period (p. 12): "Therefore, a central element of our electoral program is to establish the conditions so that, in the face of the crisis, the financial system ceases to be part of the problem of the current crisis and becomes part of the solution".[302] The party also raises a larger percentage of demands towards economic actors in 2011 and mentions supposed negative actions more frequently. Additionally, economic groups are opposed to other actors most often in 2011. Yet, there is only one "new" actor opposed to private enterprises, namely other *countries* (p. 12): "International financial deregulation for more than two decades has favoured the irresponsible assumption of risks by financial institutions and their spread to countries and people that did not cause it". Thus, while the percentage of certain submessages is highest in 2011, there are only very few communicative elements which are unique in 2011. Instead, the PSOE introduces a new negative connoted expression—"oligopolies"—in 2015 when Podemos emerges as a new left actor and vote shares for left parties are the highest (p. 167: "A more inclusive and successful economy must […] face oligopolies, privileges and corporatism, to allow access to the wealth of a majority of citizens and businesses"[303]). The term "oligopolies" is used frequently by the Spanish United Left in 2015 (e.g. p. 33, 36 and 82).

Discussion

Table 5.15 shows the communicative shifts of mainstream parties. Most parties respond to external pressure by juxtaposing "new" positively framed actors to economic targets (except ÖVP, CDU and PD). However, besides that common pattern mainstream parties respond rather individually mostly by making specific demands or by using new types of allegations towards economic actors. Interestingly, even centre-right parties adopt new and distinct communicative content when talking about private companies or the upper class when external pressure is highest. The Italian centre-right coalition only speaks out against economic actors in 2013 when economic issues were most salient in society and when the M5S emerges questioning the power of multinationals and large companies. Accordingly, criticising the power of economic actors is a very unusual type of discourse for the Italian centre-right and only seems to occur when pressure is high enough. In Germany, mainstream parties do not become more leftist in the face of external pressure. However, both SPD and

[301] Se puso en marcha un importante proceso de reestructuración, partiendo de un ejercicio de transparencia sin precedentes que analizó en profundidad los balances de las instituciones bancarias.

[302] Por ello, un elemento central de nuestro programa electoral es establecer las condiciones para que, ante la crisis, el sistema financiero deje de ser parte del problema de la crisis actual y se convierta en parte de la solución.

[303] Una economía más inclusiva y exitosa debe […] enfrentando a los oligopolios, privilegios y corporativismos, para permitir el acceso a la riqueza de una mayoría de la ciudadanía y empresas.

CDU/CSU highlight own past measures or policies against economic players when left parties are most successful or when respective moods are on the highest level. Thus, while we cannot find hints for a contagion in *quantitative* terms, a deeper look into the German manifestos reveals that the *quality* of statements against economic actors seems to change when pressure is increasing.

Table 5.15 Striking communicative shifts of mainstream parties in election manifestos (messages against economic actors)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
ÖVP					**Low level of economy salience (2008)** Demands (highest percentage)
SPÖ	**Highest economy salience** Emancipation of women		**Highest economy salience** Juxtaposing economic actors and the state		**Low level of economy salience (2017)** Character (highest percentage); behaviour (highest percentage); preferentially treated (highest percentage)
CDU		**Highest vote share LP** Behaviour (shake confidence; collective redundancies); preferentially treated/privileged		**Highest vote share LP** Mentioning own achievements/ measures regarding economic actors	**Low level of economy salience and LP vote share (2013)** Demands (highest percentage): Demanding emancipation of women in companies; against power; defining the function of economic actors

(continued)

Table 5.15 (continued)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
SPD			**Highest economy salience** Juxtaposing economic actors and society/general good; economic actors and childcare	**Highest economy salience** Mentioning own achievements/ measures regarding economic actors	
FI/PdL	**Highest economy salience/new relevant LP** Against power; protecting savers instead of economic actors; rules	**Highest economy salience/ new relevant LP** Demands	**Highest economy salience/ new relevant LP** Juxtaposing economic actors and savers	**Highest economy salience/ new relevant LP** Nicknaming economic actors (oligopolies)	
PD					**Low level of economy salience (2006)**[304] Demanding less influence; defining the function of economic actors
PP		**Highest economy salience** Behaviour (financial system is not acting as it should) **Highest vote share LP/ new relevant LP** Character (banks are a risk/threat); preferentially treated	**Highest vote share left parties/ new relevant LP** Juxtaposing economic actors and savers; the rich and the poor; economic actors and the public sector	**Highest vote share LP/ new relevant LP** Mentioning own achievements/ measures regarding economic actors	

(continued)

[304]Given the particular length of the manifesto (281 pages) compared to the other programs of the Italian centre-left (28 pages on average) these findings should not be overestimated.

Table 5.15 (continued)

	New demands	New categories	New opposed targets	Other new discourses	Contradictory developments
PSOE		**Highest economy salience** Character (financial system as part of the problem)	**Highest economy salience** Juxtaposing economic actors and other countries	**Highest vote share LP/ new relevant LP** Nicknaming economic actors (oligopolies)	

Note LP Left parties

It should be noted that some parties also introduce specific ways of talking about economic actors when it is not expected. Nevertheless, there is strong support for the assumption that mainstream parties are more likely to adopt a distinct way of talking about economic elites when pressure is high. The contradicting findings seem to be rather exceptional. Nevertheless, messages against economic targets published by mainstream parties appear to be of a moderate nature. Neither the centre-right nor the centre-left raise severe or "radical" demands that question the legitimacy of economic actors or call for nationalisations of enterprises and banks. The latter is only done by left parties such as IU in Spain and Die Linke in Germany.

5.6 Consequences for Democracy: Indications of Illiberal and Anti-Pluralist Contagions?

So far, we found good arguments to assume that mainstream parties become more populist, nativist and sceptical towards economic actors in the face of external pressure. But what are the implications of these findings? Do respective communicative shifts of the centre-right and centre-left pose a threat to democracy? This question is to be addressed in this section.

Müller (2016) and Mudde (2004)—among others—identify illiberalism as a main threat deriving from populism and populist actors. According to Mudde (2004, 561), populism "rejects all limitations on the expression of the general will, most notably the constitutional protection of minorities and the independence (from politics, and therefore from democratic control) of key state institutions (e.g. the judiciary, the central bank)". Populists argue, "that ultimate political authority is vested in 'the people' and not in unelected bodies" and accordingly "tends to distrust any unelected institution that limits the power of the *demos*" and therefore "can develop into a form of democratic extremism or, better said, of illiberal democracy" (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 82).

Besides illiberalism, anti-pluralism is considered a second threat to democracy that stems from the populists' view on politics. Anti-pluralists question the legitimacy

of other political actors and "treat cleavages as well as opposition to their own political programme as illegitimate" (Rydgren 2017, 490). Accordingly, "populists claim that they, and they alone, represent the people" often by portraying "their political competitors as part of the immoral, corrupt elite" (Müller 2016, 3). Speaking with Mudde (2015), "the main bad is that populism is a monist and moralist ideology, which denies the existence of divisions of interests and opinions within 'the people' and rejects the legitimacy of political opponents". Since populists assume a general will of the people and consider themselves as the only ones representing it, "anyone with a different view speaks for 'special interests'" and thus, cannot be considered a legitimate political actor (Mudde 2015).

Yet, according to Rydgren (2017, 492), anti-pluralism is not a decisive element of populist actors or discourses but "it reads more like a (partial) definition of radical right-wing parties than of populism generally". He argues that the radical and nativist (according to Rydgren "ethnic nationalist") orientation of the far-right accounts for their anti-pluralist stances (Rydgren 2017, 490). Even Mudde himself (2007, 25) defines radicalism as opposition to political pluralism and liberalism (especially against the protection of minorities). In addition, nativism or ethnic nationalism is considered to be directly linked to the exclusion of divergent *political opinions* and *actors*. Nativism demands a culturally homogeneous nation and rejects non-native elements. For the radical right, "this principle is sacred because the nation can achieve its destiny only through a state that represents and ultimately favours the dominant ethnic group. To advance a liberal multicultural perspective is to be a 'traitor' to one's people and the single nation, argue ethnic nationalists" (Bar-on 2017, 21). Thus, it is not only because of the *radical* orientation of the far-right that the legitimacy of other parties is questioned but also due to its *nativist* stances, which are expected to produce severe moral accusations towards all non-nativist actors.

Populists from the left mostly dispose of a (democratic) socialist ideological core—at least in Western Europe. These parties are not considered radical, illiberal or anti-pluralist in large parts of the literature (Akkerman 2017; March 2017; March and Mudde 2005). Orthodox Marxist and Leninist elements are not part of their ideology, and they therefore do not aim for a violent class struggle against capitalists and parliamentary democracy (March 2017; March and Mudde 2005).[305]

This section investigates whether populist, nativist and specific leftist messages transmit illiberal and anti-pluralist elements. I address two main questions in this regard: first, do mainstream parties become more illiberal and anti-pluralist when they increasingly adopt populist, nativist and leftist messages? Second, are illiberal and anti-pluralist elements primarily communicated via populist (anti-elitist and people-centred) or rather via nativist messages?

Admittedly, illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are difficult to find in election manifestos—especially from mainstream parties—because political parties do not explicitly deny the legitimacy of all other political actors (anti-pluralism) or question

[305]The left but not populist Communist Party of Greece (KKE) is an exception in this regard. It disposes of an orthodox Marxist ideology and rejects other political actors (Charalambous 2013, 59ff).

checks and balances and minority rights (illiberalism). Therefore, and as mentioned in the methodological chapter, I do not mention *numeric* data about the degree of such elements in election manifestos but quotations of sentences, which could be interpreted in a respective way.

I analyse all sentences, which have been classified as anti-elitist, people-centred, directed towards outgroups, immigration and economic actors observing if such messages contain illiberal or anti-pluralist elements. It should be noted, that illiberal and anti-pluralist statements might also appear independently from these contexts. Nevertheless, since illiberalism and anti-pluralism is expected of being linked to populist or nativist messages it can be assumed that those elements can primarily be found within this context. Moreover, since this section addresses the question whether *populism* or *nativism* is a threat for liberal democracy, it also requires an analysis of primarily *populist* and *nativist* content.

Populists' illiberalism mostly derives from the idea that the will of the true people should be the only guide for politics and accordingly non-elected institutions such as the judicial system or public service broadcasting might be rejected. The same is true for constitutional rights : minority rights could be rejected if they are perceived as conflicting with the interest of the *true people* (populist explanation) or if minorities are simply not considered worth protecting since they do not fit in the concept of an ethnically homogeneous nation (nativist explanation). (Vertical) anti-pluralist elements, which question the legitimacy of other political actors should be found primarily in anti-elitist statements directed towards all political competitors. The same might be true for nativist statements, which are expected to contain moral accusations towards other non-nativist political parties portraying them as "traitors" of the native society.

I proceed as follows: I first mention potentially *illiberal* examples from populist parties' manifestos. Subsequently, I observe if similar statements appear in programmes of mainstream parties and whether those messages occur in periods of external pressure. The same procedure is selected for the illustration of anti-pluralist elements and their development within mainstream parties' manifestos. Last, I discuss if illiberal and anti-pluralist elements are primarily communicated via populist or nativist messages.

5.6.1 Illiberal Elements

Within the sample of statements, no messages explicitly speak out against checks and balances or constitutional rights. Only few sentences might be interpreted as *implicitly* questioning the principle of checks and balances. In this respect, Podemos (2015, p. 175f) demands "the direct election of the fifteen members of the CGPJ

[General Council of the Judiciary] by the citizens".[306] We could interpret this statement to mean that the will of the people should influence judiciary, thus calling into question the independence of the judiciary. However, Podemos also mentions specific procedures, which should be guaranteed. The members "will be selected among judges and magistrates, prosecutors, judicial secretaries and jurists of recognised prestige with at least ten years of professional experience and which further have been endorsed by associations, unions or citizen platforms".[307] In the same manifesto, the party demands that judiciary should be more close to the citizens. Yet, this is a very general statement without concrete recommended actions. Podemos states (p. 176), "We will create a judicial office equipped with the necessary means to develop a performance that is more effective and closer to citizens and which will materialise a true service to the citizen".[308]

The FPÖ refers to public media in a negative way. In its 2017 manifesto (p. 5), it claims implicitly that the media is not acting for the people by criticising it as unfair "that state-subsidised media misuse press freedom for deliberately influencing citizens in a certain political direction".[309] While Podemos explicitly demands more (unspecific) influence for the people by demanding changes within the justice system, the FPÖ portrays the people as helpless victim of the media. None of these statements reveals a clear illiberal standpoint, but especially FPÖ's moral critique towards the media could be interpreted in such a way. The supposed fact that public broadcasting does not act in the people's interest overstretching the principle of press freedom requires certain action that might come to the expense of liberal rights. Yet, since the FPÖ does not mention concrete proposals about how to deal with this "misconduct" this statement remains rather implicit.

Team Stronach makes a more explicit demand that questions the independency of judiciary (p. 27): "The supreme judges and controlling bodies of the republic are to be elected directly by the people".[310] Yet, it is not mentioned whether the people should also decide about the persons who candidate for these positions and whether certain competences are required. Again, this demand remains vague and does not explicitly articulate direct control by the people over the judicial system.

Within messages directed against outgroups and immigration, we find more statements, which seem to question certain basic constitutional rights. However, it is not directly argued that the people need to decide whether certain groups should be protected or not. It is rather the demand of radical right parties for closing boarders

[306] elección directa por parte de la ciudadanía de los quince miembros del CGPJ [Consejo General del Poder Judicial].

[307] serán elegidos entre jueces y magistrados, fiscales, secretarios judiciales y juristas de reconocido prestigio con al menos diez años de experiencia profesional y que, asimismo, hayan sido avalados por asociaciones, sindicatos o plataformas ciudadanas.

[308] crearemos una oficina judicial dotada de los medios necesarios para desarrollar una actuación más eficaz y cercana a la ciudadanía, que materialice un verdadero servicio al ciudadano.

[309] Dass staatlich subventionierte Medien die Pressefreiheit für die gezielte Beeinflussung der Bürger in einer bestimmten politischen Richtung missbrauchen.

[310] die obersten Richter und Kontrollorgane der Republik sollen direkt vom Volk gewählt werden.

and abolishing or reforming "the outdated Geneva Convention on Refugees"[311] (AfD 2017, p. 29), which could be interpreted in that way. Since asylum is a basic human right and constitutionally guaranteed, closing all boarders and ignoring the Geneva Convention can be considered as illiberal. Such demands occur among all radical-right parties under investigation (e.g. BZÖ 2006, p. 7: "We will also work on the international level in order to ensure that the Geneva Refugee Convention is adapted to the challenges of mass migration"[312]). The same is true for the withdrawal of citizenship for citizens with a migrant background demanded by the AfD (2017, p. 22) for criminals and those engaged in organisations labelled as terrorist. According to the party, people should lose their citizenship even when the consequence would be statelessness.

We find several other demands that question basic rights implicitly. The AfD (p. 29) for example proposes that people should apply for Asylum in non-European states before they go on the run to Europe. It further demands "an annual minimum expulsion rate"[313] (p. 28) independently from the actual number of people not allowed to stay in the country. The FPÖ (2006, p. 4) wants to prohibit "political agitation"[314] for non-Austrians undermining the right to freedom of demonstration and expression for non-natives. Other statements call for a rejection of Islam, the Minaret and Muezzin calls (e.g. AfD, p. 34), the imprisonment of immigrants in pre-expulsion detention centres also for "unclear cases"[315] (FPÖ 2006, p. 4), the obligation that "sermons in mosques in Germany are to be held in German"[316] (AfD, p. 34)—questioning freedom of religion—or the "preferential treatment for Austrian citizens in the housing allocation"[317] (FPÖ 2017, p. 29). The fact that supposed illiberal statements are made rather by radical-right than by non-right-wing populist parties suggests that it is first and foremost the nativist ideology which produces illiberal stances.

But do mainstream parties become more illiberal when they adopt nativist content? Explicit statements can hardly be found among the centre-right and centre-left. When anti-elitist, immigration-related moods and vote shares for radical-right parties reach the highest level in Austria (2017), the ÖVP (part 3, p. 20) states, "We ourselves decide who we get into the EU as a refugee or as an immigrant".[318] This position looks somewhat illiberal since the interest of the native people or receiving countries are considered more important than the human right to asylum. Accordingly, not the constitution, independent judges or agencies should decide about who is entitled to Asylum but the people. On page 21 (part 3), the ÖVP communicates this position even

[311] die veraltete Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention.

[312] Wir werden uns auch auf internationaler Ebene dafür einsetzen, dass die Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention an die Herausforderungen der Massenwanderung angepasst wird.

[313] eine jährliche Mindestabschiebequote.

[314] Politische Agitation.

[315] Unklare Fälle.

[316] Predigten in Moscheen in Deutschland sollen in deutscher Sprache gehalten werden.

[317] Bevorzugung österreichischer Staatsbürger bei der Wohnungsvergabe.

[318] wir selber entscheiden, wen wir als Flüchtling bzw. als Zuwanderer in die EU holen.

more explicitly: "Immigration must be in the interest of the state and its citizens".[319] The will of the people beats the constitutional principle and basic rights or speaking with Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017, 82) "ultimate political authority is vested in 'the people' and not in unelected bodies". In the same manifesto, the ÖVP even explicitly names the empowered ingroup, which should decide about the rights of non-natives (part 3, p. 27): "As *Austrians*, we are allowed to pretend what has room in our society and what does not".[320] One might argue that the illiberal shift of the ÖVP in 2017 might be due to the new leadership of Sebastian Kurz propagating an anti-immigration agenda and questioned the legitimacy of decisions taken by the national parliament (Löffler 2020). However, the SPÖ raises very similar demands in 2017 like on page 144 of its manifesto: "We have to limit immigration and have to be in control of who comes to us".[321] Again, according to the centre-left the ingroup should decide about who is allowed to enter the country and who is not. One might argue that the SPÖ does not directly reject the basic right of asylum since it is not clarified which groups of immigrants are affected by its statement. At least theoretically, the party could talk about labour migration and not about refugees, which, however, is a very well-meaning interpretation.

There is hardly any potentially illiberal statement not linked to the immigration issue. One example can be found within the 2006 manifesto of the SPÖ (p. 20). It calls for "prison sentences, if they are factually necessary and in the interest of the citizens"[322] suggesting that court's decisions should depend on the will of the people. Yet, the party does not explicitly mention what is meant by "interest of the citizens". Whatever the interpretation of that statement, it cannot be evaluated as a consequence of the rise of populism since populist parties and respective moods are on the lowest level in 2006. We could further speculate about demands made by Spanish mainstream parties. The PP for example wants to "promote a judicature according to the reality of the twenty-first century, which strengthens it as a quality public service oriented to the needs of citizens"[323] (2015, p. 155) and the PSOE (2015, p. 67) aims to promote "the active participation of citizens in the administration of Justice".[324] Interestingly, such messages appear when Podemos emerges in 2015. As mentioned above, Podemos raises very similar demands in 2015.

In Italy, the centre-left publishes similar statements in 2006 when the centre-right coalition under Berlusconi ruled the country. It calls for (p. 47) a "new season in which justice is administered in the interest of citizens, eliminating corporate resistance

[319] Zuwanderung hat im Interesse des Staates und seiner Bürger zu erfolgen.

[320] Wir dürfen als Österreicherinnen und Österreicher vorgeben, was Platz in unserer Gesellschaft hat und was nicht.

[321] Wir müssen Zuwanderung begrenzen und die Kontrolle darüber haben, wer zu uns kommt.

[322] Gefängnisstrafen dann, wenn sie sachlich geboten und im Interesse der BürgerInnen sind.

[323] promover una Justicia acorde a la realidad del siglo XXI, que la fortalezca como servicio público de calidad orientado a las necesidades de los ciudadanos.

[324] la participación activa de la ciudadanía en la administración de Justicia.

wherever it comes from"[325] and for (p. 67) "an enhancement of the juvenile judicial culture and bringing it closer to the values of the ordinary people".[326] Again, none of these statements clearly demands that a supposed people's will should decide about levels of penalties but they leave much space for interpretation. How the "judicial culture" should adapt to the people's values remains unclear. Moreover, it is unlikely that such demands are caused by the success of populist parties because populists' vote shares—as well as anti-elitist moods—are on the lowest level in 2006. A very far-reaching interpretation would be that Berlusconi's Forza Italia can be considered an illiberal party in 2006 since it passed laws that directly affected the independence of judges and the judicial system (Heber 2012) and thereby might have "contaminated" the centre-left.

Concluding, no explicit illiberal statements emerge in the face of populists' success or shifts in public opinion among mainstream parties' people-centred and anti-elitist messages. Most potentially illiberal messages are linked to the immigration issue and can be found in nativist sentences of Austrian mainstream parties—both in those from the centre-right and centre-left. It further is worth noting that messages directed towards economic actors are free from illiberal elements.

5.6.2 Anti-pluralist Elements

Populist parties especially from the far-right severely criticise and almost demonise the political elite. Several messages could be interpreted as anti-pluralist because they implicitly question the legitimacy of competing political actors. According to Müller (2016, 3) "the claim to exclusive representation is not an empirical one; it is always distinctly moral. When running for office, populists portray their political competitors as part of the immoral, corrupt elite".

Several populist parties portray the political elite as particular evil. The AfD (2017, p. 8) maintains, "The omnipotence of the parties and their exploitation of the state endanger our democracy"[327] and claims, "A political class has emerged whose primary interest is its power, status and material well-being"[328] (p. 7). It further states in a conspiracy theoretical manner, "Secret sovereign in Germany is a small, powerful political oligarchy that has been trained in existing political parties"[329] and which "has in its hands the levers of state power, political education and informational and

[325] una nuova stagione nella quale la giustizia sia amministrata nell'interesse dei cittadini, eliminando resistenze corporative.

[326] una valorizzazione della cultura giudiziaria minorile e l'avvicinamento della stessa ai valori della gente comune.

[327] Die Allmacht der Parteien und deren Ausbeutung des Staates gefährden unsere Demokratie.

[328] Es hat sich eine politische Klasse herausgebildet, deren vordringliches Interesse ihrer Macht, ihrem Status und ihrem materiellen Wohlergehen gilt.

[329] Heimlicher Souverän in Deutschland ist eine kleine, machtvolle politische Oligarchie, die sich in den bestehenden politischen Parteien ausgebildet hat.

media influence over the population".[330] Moral accusations are also made by Die Linke for example in its 2013 manifesto (p. 58: "Human rights must not be used as a tactical maneuvering tool to justify the use of the military—as all other parties do"[331]) and by TS claiming, "The old-parties' main concern is about retaining power, influence and electoral votes"[332] (p. 13) and maintaining "We have to understand that politicians are doing everything they can to stay in power"[333] (p. 18).

The Italian M5S accuses the political elite of a democratic mortal sin in 2013 (p. 2) stating, "The parties have replaced the popular will and escaped from its control and judgment". Moreover, populist parties claim to be the only actor able to solve certain problems or willing to govern in the interest of society. In this sense, Die Linke (2009, p. 12) states, "DIE LINKE is the only party that supports the aim of ensuring equal living conditions in the regions"[334] and "Together with the trade unions, social associations and social movements, DIE LINKE is the only party that campaigns for the social protection of the majority of society"[335] (p. 2). However, usually populist parties hardly highlight explicitly that only they behave *morally* or in the interest of the people, but they rather accuse the elite of not doing so. Moreover, it is worth noting that these messages are not linked to a critique towards the *economic* but only towards the *political* elite.

Last—and as already mentioned above—some populist parties demand (or support) a rebellion or harsh punishments against the whole political elite. The AfD (p. 13) claims, "The peoples of Europe will not accept this development uncomplainingly and they will rightly rebel against the political elites". The M5S (2013, p. 14) demands the introduction of severe criminal offences for politicians: "Introduction of the crime of mass murder for public administrators (ministers, regional presidents, mayors, councillors)".[336] Even though, these statements do not explicitly question the legitimacy of all political competitors, they demand or support particularly severe measures against politicians and thereby demonise the latter. In general, populist parties do not explicitly demand the disempowerment of all other parties in manifestos due to their "evilness" and statements often leave space for interpretation.

But what about mainstream parties? Can we identify anti-pluralist elements in their statements as well? The Austrian ÖVP maintains, "The People's Party is the only party that confidently and seriously represents Austria's interests in Europe

[330] [Diese Oligarchie] hat die Schalthebel der staatlichen Macht, der politischen Bildung und des informationellen und medialen Einflusses auf die Bevölkerung in Händen (sic!).

[331] Menschenrechte dürfen nicht als taktische Manövriermasse genutzt werden, um den Einsatz von Militär zu rechtfertigen – so wie es alle anderen Parteien tun.

[332] Es geht den Alt-parteien vorwiegend um Machterhalt, Einfluss und Wählerstimmen.

[333] Man muss verstehen, dass die Politiker alles tun, um an der Macht zu bleiben.

[334] Als einzige Partei unterstützt DIE LINKE das Ziel, für gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse in den Regionen zu sorgen.

[335] Gemeinsam mit den Gewerkschaften, Sozialverbänden und sozialen Bewegungen ist DIE LINKE die einzige Partei, die sich für den sozialen Schutz der Mehrheit der Gesellschaft einsetzt.

[336] Introduzione del reato di strage per danni sensibili e diffusi causati dalle politiche locali e nazionali che comportano malattie e decessi nei cittadini nei confronti degli amministratori.
pubblici (ministri, presidenti di Regione, sindaci, assessori).

"[337] (2008, p. 21), and it claims, "The ÖVP is the only party in Austria that ensures orderly finances "[338] (2013, p. 81). Talking about more rights and more freedom for citizens, the PSOE (2008, p. 209) argues, "The citizens know that only we have the convictions and courage to carry it out".[339] None of these statements is truly anti-pluralist in the sense that the other parties are demonised and deprived of their legitimacy. They rather reject the competitor parties' competence in a *certain* policy field. Only the Spanish PP claims to be the only party acting for the people (2008, p. 327): "Nowadays, we are the only political formation that defends equality and solidarity among all Spaniards".[340] However, the question if a contagion of anti-pluralist messages occurs due to the success of populist parties or the rise of anti-elitist moods should be rather denied. Those statements containing these potentially anti-pluralist elements do not emerge when populist parties are on the rise or anti-elitist moods are particularly widespread.

5.6.3 Discussion

Explicitly illiberal and anti-pluralist statements hardly occur in election manifestos. With few exceptions, neither populist parties openly speak out for putting the people's will above checks and balances or minority right (illiberalism). Yet, several populist parties question the legitimacy of all other political actors by making "evil" allegations. Parties in general are perceived of not acting in the interest of the people or of causing harm to the population. Even though, populist parties do not explicitly demand the liquidation of other political actors, their demonising discourses can be interpreted in an anti-pluralist way (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2020).

Among mainstream parties, illiberal and anti-pluralist content is hardly existent. Those statements containing slightly illiberal or anti-pluralist elements do rather not emerge when populist parties are particularly strong in terms of votes or when anti-elitist moods are widespread. Furthermore, only the Austrian centre-right and centre-left make potentially illiberal statements prioritising a supposed will of the native population over the basic right of asylum and competences of judicial bodies. This is done when immigration is a salient issue and radical-right parties are on the rise (2017) suggesting that the "nativistisation" of the Austrian mainstream is also accompanied by illiberal discourses. It is particularly striking that the illiberal shift in Austria does not only affect the centre-right but also the centre-left. Both parties increasingly adopt nativist content, which sometimes drifts towards illiberalism.

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[337] Die Volkspartei ist die einzige Partei, die selbstbewusst und seriös die Interessen Österreichs in Europa vertritt.

[338] Die ÖVP ist die einzige Partei in Österreich, die für geordnete Finanzen sorgt.

[339] la ciudadanía sabe que sólo nosotros tenemos las convicciones y el coraje para realizarla.

[340] Hoy somos la única formación política que defiende la igualdad y la solidaridad entre todos los españoles.

In Spain, the PSOE seems to adopt positions from Podemos (2015) demanding that the judicial system should act in the people's interest. However, these discourses can hardly be interpreted in the sense that the will of the people should substitute the legal system. Such demands remain of a rather vague nature and are much more implicit than the illiberal discourses raised by the Austrian mainstream. Accordingly, among mainstream parties, a contagion of illiberal or anti-pluralist messages can hardly be observed. The only exception in this respect might be the Austrian mainstream parties due to their nativist orientation in 2017.

5.7 Summary: The Content of Mainstream Parties' Populist, Nativist and Leftist Messages

Sections 4.1 (and 4.2) has illustrated how mainstream parties adjust their degree of populist, nativist and leftist messages when they are put under pressure. This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of the communicative content of mainstream parties. We have seen how ideologically different party types use populist, nativist and leftist messages and what these discourses consist of.

While mainstream parties mostly raise demands towards parties and politicians, populist parties further criticise their behaviour or make them responsible for negative developments. In many ways, the radical right is outstanding. It portrays their targets most often as privileged or preferentially treated—be it the political elite, outgroups, immigration, or economic actors. On the other hand, it appears consistent that nativists further picture the people most often as unfairly treated or as victim. Accordingly, the construction of unprivileged and innocent victims (the native people or parts of it) and privileged well-to-do groups is a general communicative element of the far-right—regardless of whether political, economic or cultural groups are attacked. Left (populist) parties use such discourses to a lower extent. The same is true regarding nicknaming actors (or using pejorative terms). Among all party types, radical-right parties use negative connoted terms most frequently when talking about their targets—the political elite, outgroups, immigration and economic groups.

The far-right further opposes all of these targets—except economic actors—most often with a positive counterpart such as the people, the state, institutions or other native groups. Interestingly, references to a native or national people seem to be a country-specific phenomenon. German parties—including the AfD—hardly use such framings, while for the Spanish and Italian centre-right these references are part of their political communication. On average, the radical right constructs a nationally defined people most frequently, but the centre-right does so only slightly less often.

While left parties sometimes speak out for nationalisations of certain companies, banks or industries, the centre-left (and centre-right) does not. Accordingly, demands towards economic actors made by mainstream parties are rather moderate. The findings even suggest that mainstream parties raise severer demands against vulnerable individuals (e.g. immigrants which should be deported, monitored, have

fewer rights) than towards powerful economic actors whose legitimacy and property is not questioned in principle.

Again, the results from the in-depth analysis should not be generalised. As mentioned above, the standard deviation within the cases of each party type is considerably high meaning that not all parties of one party family use respective submessages to the same extent. The fact that the amount of election manifestos varies within the populist, left and radical-right party group is a further aspect that should be considered. Regarding the far-right group, I analysed four manifestos from the FPÖ but only one from the AfD and two from the BZÖ. Accordingly, the average score of this party group depends strongly on the FPÖ.

This chapter further focused on new emerging communicative content of mainstream parties during periods of external pressure. The findings strengthen the contagion thesis in some respect. They provide evidence that new or distinct discourses about targets are connected to niche parties' success/emergence or shifts in public opinion. New communicative content emerges often in the face of an electoral breakthrough of new niche parties. The assumption that new relevant parties influence communication of mainstream parties has recently been confirmed in a different context. In order to explain why some centre-left parties demonise radical right competitors while others do not, Schwörer and Fernández-García (2020) conclude that recent electoral breakthroughs of new far-right parties might play a crucial role (in combination with a fascist past of the country).

In the context of this study, mainstream parties start to highlight own past measures against their targets (or for the people) to emphasise that issues related to the political elite, outgroups, immigration and economic actors have always been taken seriously. In general, it is difficult to draw a common picture for all countries and mainstream parties involved since they often choose different communicative content to address their targets. Many parties raise new demands—but they often differ in their content. Others introduce new submessages such as portraying elites and immigrants as preferentially treated, having a negative character or behaving in a negative way.

However, mentioning own measures against/for certain targets can indeed be considered a common trait of mainstream parties—except for the Italian case (Table 5.16). This discursive novelty can be interpreted as a reaction to pressure from competing parties or public opinion and does not appear unexpectedly. Most often own measures against *immigration* or *outgroups* are highlighted by the mainstream (five of eight mainstream parties do so). It is true that there are contradictory developments regarding certain parties. However, those parties, which seem to be responsive to external pressure, hardly behave in an unexpected way. This is especially true for Spanish mainstream parties. Except people-centred messages, the PP and PSOE introduce new or distinct communicative elements only when it can be explained by the explanatory variables.

Regarding anti-elitist communication, we see no unexpected developments among those five (including the German SPD even six) parties, whose messages against parties and politicians are linked to respective external pressure. Two out of six parties appearing to be responsive to immigration moods or radical-right parties' successes introduce new anti-outgroup discourses during rather unexpected times. Regarding

Table 5.16 Emphasising own actions towards targets as new communicative content in election manifestos

	Against pol. elite	Pro-people	Against outgroups	Against immigration	Against econ. elite
ÖVP	+			+	
SPÖ		+	+		
CDU/CSU		+	+	+	+
SPD			+	+	+
FI/PdL					
PD					
PP	+	+			+
PSOE		+		+	

Note +Party emphasises own measures/achievements towards target

anti-immigration messages, this is true for three out of seven parties. Among those mainstream parties, which seem to be responsive to leftist parties' success or public moods, two out of five use certain messages against economic actors *more regularly* during unusual times. However, they do not raise *new* demands when it is unexpected.

Table 5.17 shows parties for which there are good reasons to assume that they react to external pressure. It further illustrates which of them introduce a distinct way of talking about their targets—the political and economic elite, the people, outgroups and immigration—during such times (expected) and mentions those parties behaving in an unexpected way, introducing new communicative elements when surrounding conditions are rather not favourable (unexpected). The slashes indicate that parties are not responsive to external pressure and accordingly are not considered in the table. The numbers reflect the quantity of new introduced messages based on the categories mentioned in the different tables in this chapter.[341] Accordingly, numbers can have the maximum value of four. High numbers for unexpected messages would provide arguments against the assumption that the introduction of distinct communicative content is linked to external pressure (contagion effect).

All five parties whose anti-elitist messages are related to external pressure (six including the SPD) introduce new message towards the political elite when it is expected—not any of them behaves in an unexpected manner. Table 5.17 further reveals that parties rather increase their share of anti-elitist than people-centred message when competing populist parties gain success. Those parties whose people-centred content is linked to external pressure also introduce new forms of talking about the people. Again, there is little evidence that this happens by coincidence since new messages are mostly adopted in expected periods. The same is true for discourses against outgroups. All mainstream parties—except the SPÖ and PD—frame immigrants or Muslims in a specific negative way when vote shares for radical

[341] New demands; new categories; juxtaposing; others. Regarding anti-immigration messages: new categories; juxtaposing; new pejorative terms; others.

Table 5.17 New communicative content in election manifestos

Party	Against pol. elite		Pro-people		Against outgroups		Against immigration		Against econ. actors	
	Exp	Unexp	Exp	Unexp	Exp	Unexp	Exp	Unexp	Exp	Unexp
ÖVP	3	0	1	0	3	0	4	1	/	/
SPÖ	/	/	/	/	/	/	4	0	2	0
CDU/CSU	/	/	2[a]	0[a]	2	1	2	2	/	/
SPD	2[a]	0[a]	1[a]	0[a]	2	0	3	0	/	/
FI/PdL	1	0	/	/	3	2	1	1	4	0
PD	2	0	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	1
PP	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	0
PSOE	2	0	2	1	3	0	4	0	3	0

Note /= Party is not responsive. Number indicate the amount of new submessages emerging in expected (high external pressure) and unexpected (low external pressure) periods

*The behaviour of German parties is not linked to anti-elitist moods or parties. However, assuming that German mainstream parties are expected to raise new messages against the political elite and for the people in 2013 (and not in 2017), the SPD and CDU indeed behave as predicted.

right parties or respective public moods reach a high level. Among those parties behaving as predicted, only the German and Italian centre-right introduces distinct messages against outgroups when it cannot be explained by the variables. However, even regarding the German and Italian centre-right, the number of new messages in expected periods is higher.

A very similar picture arises for anti-immigration contents. While the Italian centre-left adjusts neither anti-outgroup nor anti-immigration messages in the face of external pressure, all other mainstream parties adopt anti-immigration content. Only the Italian and German centre-right lead new discourses at unexpected times. Regarding messages against economic actors, we find no contrary evidence to the main assumption—with the exception of the Italian centre-left introducing a distinct message type when economy-related moods are not particularly widespread. However, this might be also due to the particular length of the respective manifesto (2006).

Concluding, there are good arguments for assuming that mainstream parties do not only refer *more frequently* to political and economic elites, the people, outgroups and immigration in the face of external pressure, but that they further introduce *new discourses* about these targets. While they often do so in an individual manner, we also see similar cross-national communicative patterns.

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Chapter 6
Conclusion

This study provided a comprehensive approach to measure populist, nativist and leftist messages in political texts of parties. Unlike previous studies, I could illustrate that there is support for the "populist Zeitgeist" thesis formulated by Cas Mudde regarding communication in election manifestos of mainstream parties. Many of these programs indeed become more populist when populist parties gain electoral support, recently became new relevant competitors or when public opinion shifts in a more "populist" direction. Even though this study could not identify causal mechanism, it could provide good arguments for assuming that mainstream parties become more populist in the face of external pressure.

Especially in Southern Europe (Italy and Spain)—where distrust in political parties and parliaments is more widespread than in Germany and Austria—mainstream parties seem to respond to public anti-elitist-related moods by increasing their share of anti-elitist messages in their manifestos. In Austria, the centre-right adopts populist discourses mainly when competing populist parties gain success. Interestingly, the findings indicate that centre-left parties are responsive to non-right-wing populist parties while the success of right-wing populists in Italy and Austria is only linked to a populistisation of the centre-right. Thus, also the adoption of populist content by mainstream parties seems to depend on the host ideology of competing populist parties. However, mainstream parties seem to be more prone to adopt nativist messages against immigration and outgroups than populist or leftist discourses against political and economic elites. All mainstream parties of the sample except the Italian centre-left become more nativist in the face of far-right parties' successes or when public opinion shifts in a respective way. This suggests that the spread of nativist messages is the main challenge party politics is facing today and that it might be more appropriate to talk about a *nativist* instead of a *populist* Zeitgeist.

In general, shifts in public opinion and to a lower extent successes of competing niche parties seem to be a good predictors for shifts in the degree of anti-elitist/populist and nativist messages. Interestingly, the success of competing *left* parties is not linked to mainstream parties' messages *against economic elites.* This leads me to the following interpretation: While mainstream parties may be responsive

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to the success of radical right parties, they are not so much concerned about electoral successes of the left but only about respective "leftist" sentiments in society. In contrast, successes of competing radical right parties and "nativist" moods in society both offer explanations for mainstream parties' right-wing shifts and complement each other: The few cases where public opinion does not seem to account for nativist shifts of the political mainstream can partially be explained by the success of respective competing parties.

Regarding the German case, the independent variables do not explain mainstream parties' behaviour sufficiently. While German parties become more nativist during periods of external pressure, they do not increase their amount of populist and leftist messages. The peak of populist discourses in 2013 could rather be explained by country specific developments. Neither leftist messages from German mainstream parties are linked to external pressure. While especially the centre-left criticises economic elites frequently, this critique does not depend on the selected external factors but might rather become salient in the face of inner-party changes or other events not grasped by the independent variables of this study.

Besides election manifestos, I conducted a systematic analysis of an alternative type of text source, namely public statements from parties' websites. Since election manifestos are sometimes considered as rather institutional or formal documents not explicitly referring to the people, I focussed on public statements which are mainly directed towards own followers and the media. Yet, it seems that these statements are created in a less intentional and strategic way than election manifestos and accordingly do not provide good arguments for the contagion thesis. The findings suggest that some mainstream parties adopt anti-immigration discourses and messages against non-native outgroups when public opinion shifts and/or radical right parties gain success. Messages directed towards the people, the political and economic elite do not correlate with external pressure. Only in 2013/2014, mainstream parties in all countries become particularly more sceptical about economic actors. This might be partially explained by the consequences of the European economic crisis and the malpractices of economic actors involved, which became visible in 2013. Even though public opinion does not shift in a respective direction during that time, there seems to be a cross-national reason for the increase in statements against economic elites.

We only find few common patterns from the manifestos' and websites' analyses. Yet, both studies suggest that nativism rather than populism is primarily adopted by mainstream parties. Moreover, the existence of a relevant radical right party appears to be an important condition for widespread nativist discourses among the centre-right and centre-left: Among both text sources, the Spanish mainstream—not in competition with right-wing actors—uses a very low percentage of nativist messages—even though this low degree increases in election manifestos when public opinion is shifting. The same is true for German mainstream parties until the emergence of the AfD.

Nevertheless, hints for contagion effects could not be found in parties' online statements. In this regard, I argue that election manifestos are the most important party document representing policy positions but also evaluations of political and

other actors. Manifestos are not only constructed in order to provide a programmatic agenda for the party itself but also in order to appeal to an audience, voters or the media. The production process of manifestos allows deeper evaluations of the respective political situation than the publication of "short lived" online statements. Thus, election manifestos still should be considered as crucial source for measures of policy positions and certain types of political communication.

While the findings from the manifestos' analysis rather support the populist contagion thesis, previous studies did not find any hints in this respect. This might be due to the research design and methodological approach selected by Rooduijn et al. (2014) and Manucci and Weber (2017). In particular, these studies do not consider public opinion as an independent variable and only measure messages, which contain both references to the elite and to the people. Especially mainstream parties are not expected to adopt a "full" but rather a "soft populism" (Mudde 2004) emphasising certain populist elements without creating a new cleavage between the good people and the bad elite. In this sense, parties might praise the people without excluding politicians and parties in the same context. On the other hand, a critique towards the political elite should not be expected to portray the people as its counterpart at the same time. Therefore, discourses that contain one crucial element of populism (anti-elitism / people-centrism) have been considered by this study as well.

Though previous studies focussed on shifting degrees of populist messages—thus, on numeric data—they could not contribute to a deeper understanding of these discourses. I further evaluated the content and meaning of populist, nativist and specific leftist messages finding that the political mainstream mostly raises *demands* (or policy positions) against outgroups, political and economic elites requesting less influence, privileges and more transparency or control mechanisms. They also raise demands towards the people speaking out for more political influence and for considering the citizens in political decision making processes. While direct negative (elites and outgroups) or positive (the people) evaluations of targets can also be observed within mainstream parties' election manifestos, these communicative contents are used less frequently than demands. In general, mainstream parties' demands towards political and economic elites are of a moderate nature. Constructing antagonisms between corrupt political elites and an honest people is not part of mainstream parties' soft populism. *Populist* parties further criticise the *behaviour* of political elites or make them responsible for negative developments. Yet, it is especially the radical right, which constitutes an exceptional case using distinctive discourses about their "enemies" portraying them frequently as privileged or preferentially treated—be it the political elite, outgroups or economic actors. On the other hand, the people are frequently pictured as unfairly treated or as victim by the radical right. Accordingly, the construction of unprivileged and abused ingroups and privileged well-to-do outgroups is a general communicative element of the far-right parties of the sample rather than of populists per se. The same is true regarding the use of pejorative terms or nicknames. It is the radical right rather than the populist left referring to such communicative elements to exclude the political and economic elite as well as non-native outgroups. These findings suggest that discourses of populist parties also depend strongly on their host ideology: Due to their nativist orientation, right-wing

populists may criticise their "enemies" in a different way than non-nativist populist actors.

In addition, Chapter 5 revealed that the centre-right and centre-left not only increases the *number* of their messages towards political and economic elites, outgroups and immigration but also introduces *new ways of talking* about these targets when external pressure increases. In this regard, there is also a common cross-national pattern: Mainstream parties in all countries—except Italy—emphasise own measures they claim to have taken against at least two of their targets: outgroups and immigration (against), the political or economic elite (against) or the people (in favour). Thus, the findings from Chapter 5 strengthen the argument from the quantitative analysis that mainstream parties' manifestos are "contaminated" by populist, nativist and leftist messages and that the meaning of these discourses change when external pressure increases.

Last, I assessed whether populist, nativist and leftist contagions constitute a threat for liberal democracy. Illiberalism and anti-pluralism are considered the main threats deriving from populism and nativism. Yet, people-centred and anti-elitist messages of mainstream parties hardly contain illiberal and anti-pluralist elements. Mainstream parties do not question the legitimacy of other political actors or the principle of checks and balances and constitutional rights when referring to the political elite or the people. The same is true for messages against economic actors, which are rather of a moderate nature. Not any mainstream party calls for sever measures against the power of big enterprises or the rich. It seems that mainstream parties' critique towards immigration and less well-to-do groups is much stricter than towards powerful political and economic actors. Thus, the populist and leftist contagion is evaluated in this study as a minor threat for liberal democracies. The Austrian mainstream parties—both the centre-right and centre-left—appear to be a particular case since they adopt messages that can be interpreted as illiberal. Those potentially illiberal elements are always linked to nativist content. Both ÖVP and SPÖ demand that the native people should decide whether non-natives have the right to stay in the country—instead of constitutional law and independent courts. Thus, illiberal elements are rather not related to populist or leftist messages but to *nativist* content. The fact that such content only emerges in Austria cannot be fully explained by the specific agenda of the centre-right under its new leader Sebastian Kurz since also the SPÖ adopts illiberal discourses. There might be rather country-specific historical reasons: Unlike in Germany, Austrian elites and relevant parts of the media failed in clearly distancing themselves from right-wing radicalism and the Nazi past. Right-wing populist movements and their standpoints were not combated and marginalised in Austria but have largely been accepted as legitimate political forces and positions (Art 2006). Accordingly, the lack of taboos regarding radical right discourses may be a crucial argument in explaining the adoption of illiberal and nativist messages by Austrian mainstream parties.

Moreover, while mainstream parties do not question the legitimacy of all other political actors (vertical anti-pluralism), they seem to increasingly exclude religious groups or immigrants from society—not only in Austria but also in other countries. This *horizontal* form of anti-pluralism derives from nativism and not from

populism. Portraying immigration and outgroups increasingly as a problem for the native society can be considered as a threat for liberal democracy. Recent research has shown that such discourses also affect public opinion (Wirz et al. 2018). Matthes and Schmuck (2017, 571) found, for example, that populist ads invoke "intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes". Likewise, Hameleers and Schmuck (2017) provide evidence that messages blaming immigrants bolstered citizens' negative attitudes towards them, even though "only for those who supported the source of the message" (p. 1425). While hostile attitudes towards outgroups might not necessarily lead to violent attacks towards them (Ravndal 2019), it may create a hostile atmosphere for people whose appearance does not meet the nativists' requirements for belonging to the ingroup. Discourses provoking such an atmosphere might still be condemned by the majority of the population. Yet, this could change if nativist messages no longer remain on the political fringes but are tolerated or even actively adopted by the political mainstream.

In sum, the findings of this study support the assumption made by Akkerman (2017) and Rydgren (2017) that the actual challenge for liberal democracy is not populism but rather nativism (or ethnic nationalism). However, while this study found that the populistisation of mainstream parties does not include illiberal and anti-pluralist elements, it is not said that this is also true for the future. In contrast to cultural and economic conflicts, populism is a rather new phenomenon in Western Europe—in particular in Germany and Spain—meaning that the populist cleavage between the political elite and the people might not be considered yet a relevant conflict dimension by all mainstream parties. However, when populism remains a salient issue and populist actors continue to emphasise pro-people and anti-elite rhetoric, such narratives might be more reflected in mainstream parties' communication in the future—not only in form of a soft populism. Consequently, also illiberal and anti-pluralist elements could become more relevant for the political mainstream negatively affecting political culture and citizens' attitudes towards political decision makers. In this regard, scholars found support for the assumption that hostile messages towards the political elite distributed by politicians increased populist blame attributions among supporters of the messenger (Hameleers and Schmuck 2017). One might speculate that the same could be true for illiberal and anti-pluralist messages, which question constitutional rights and deny the legitimacy of other political actors.

Yet, the fact that "more and more mainstream politicians are using 'pro-people' and/or 'anti-elite' rhetoric" (Mudde 2019) does not necessarily indicate that liberal democracy is under attack as this study has shown. So far, mainstream parties only adopt a "soft populism" (Mudde 2013, 9) demanding more transparency and control over the political elite and more influence for the people without using anti-pluralist and illiberal narratives. Thus, one might also draw a different normative conclusion: The fact that mainstream parties become more critical towards political elites and criticise supposed malpractices could be considered as an opportunity for democracy "improving democratic quality with regard to transparency" (Huber and Schimpf 2016). The same is true for the increasing number of statements speaking out for taking people's demands seriously or for broadening the political influence of the people. Based on theory of recognition formulated by Axel Honneth (1992), some

scholars identify a lack of recognition towards the people as a crucial cause of radical right populists' successes (Hillebrand 2015). In this sense, highlighting positive actions and characteristics of the people is considered a promising counter-measure against populist and radical-right voting (Hillebrand 2015). Moreover, portraying the people as the ultimate sovereign in democracy might also offer opportunities for a general debate about democracy. Even though demands for more direct democracy can be evaluated as both positive and negative depending on the respective vision of democracy, "the initiation of a discourse on how democracy should function must ultimately be considered as positive, especially as this discussion taps into the dimension of effective participation" (Huber and Schimpf 2016, 109). Emphasising malpractices of politicians, democratic deficits and people's sovereignty, the political mainstream might indeed become rhetorically more populist but might also become more sensible to "the painful but real problems of society" (Mudde 2015).

It could further be discussed whether mainstream parties' people-centred discourses and demands towards political elites should indeed be labelled as "soft populism". This study is based on the concept of Mudde describing populist ideology (or discourses) as people-centred and anti-elitist. In this sense, it is reasonable to call mainstream parties' messages soft populist. While Mudde argues that populists tend to be anti-pluralist as well, this is no decisive part of his definition. Yet, others claim that anti-pluralism itself is the essence of populism: By accusing other actors of not acting in the interest of the people, populists question the legitimacy of politicians and parties (Müller 2016). Thus, referring to the definition of Müller (2016), a populistisation of mainstream parties' discourses is not taking place since these discourses do not become more anti-pluralist. It is this disagreement about the nature of populism that raises the question whether populist actors can in principle be pluralists by demanding less privileges and influence for politicians and more popular sovereignty but accepting the plurality of opinions. The fact that mainstream parties do not adopt anti-pluralist and illiberal discourses does not mean that "true" populist actors are necessarily pluralist and liberal. However, it might be reasonable to further distinguish between anti-pluralist and pluralist populist parties. Some scholars already classify left-wing populists such as Podemos according to the second type (Akkerman 2017).

Coming back to mainstream parties' strategies towards niche parties, Meguid mentioned three options mainstream parties can choose as a reaction to their competitors: They can adapt to the issues and positions of their competitors ("accommodative strategy"), address their issues by taking a different position ("adversarial strategy") or simply ignore them (Meguid 2005, 347f). This study provided good arguments to assume that mainstream parties adopt similar discourses as their competitors or introduce messages, which seem to fall on fertile ground in increasing parts of the population. Accordingly, several mainstream parties seem to choose the accommodative strategy and thereby accept a discursive contagion, while fewer parties seem to adopt the dismissive approach. Yet, it should be noted that mainstream parties can also choose different strategies at the same time. They might speak out for institutional reforms and less privileges for politicians on the one hand (accommodative strategy) highlighting the important role political parties play in democracies on

the other (adversarial strategy). Since I did not measure *positive* references to the political elite, I cannot directly contribute to the question whether this is the case. However, after manually coding 31 election manifestos of mainstream parties and numerous online statements, such content has at least not stuck in my memory.

Moreover, while the accommodative strategy can be observed among content in mainstream parties' election manifestos, it is not said that parties behave in a similar way on other communication channels. In this regard, social media accounts could be an appropriate text source for further longitudinal analyses since they are important campaigning tools for political parties and easy to access. Whether messages on such platforms are indeed more consciously and strategically constructed than parties' websites' statements remains to be seen. The main issue here is the availability of the data since parties started using social networks only recently and accordingly there are only few election campaigns available since the age of social media (by November 2019). Thus, we need to be patient in order to investigate whether other online communication channels of political parties are affected by populist, nativist or other types of messages.

As indicated above, this work was not able to identify causal relationships: While I provided some arguments for populist, nativist and leftist contagions, we still need to examine which factors actually influence parties' populist communication in more detail. Regression models with a larger number of cases might be a useful approach in this regard. Therefore, it could be worth continuing the search for computer-based approached for measures of populist communication in order to analyse a larger number of texts (Thiele 2019). Yet, regression analyses may also risk of overlooking the origin of certain variables and how the latter actually affect other political actors. Accordingly, despite the disadvantage of being restricted to a smalln, process tracing may be a useful tool in order to identify the concrete circumstances, "critical junctures" and influential factors of communicative shifts by diving deeper into the cases.

Another deep research gap opens up if we focus on linguistic-stylistic aspects of populist communication. While the content of populist communication has been observed by a large number of scholars, this is not true when we focus on a certain type of emotional language as transmitter of populist content. First studies attempted to conceptualise, operationalise and measure populism-related style elements (Ernst et al. 2019) but the question whether they are also adopted by mainstream parties in the face of external pressure still is to be explored.

Last, it should be noted that this study only investigated the effect of populism, nativism and leftist messages on *party behaviour*. There are several other dimensions of Western European politics that could be influenced by populist and radical right actors such as people's attitudes and public opinion, policies or politics and political systems (Mudde 2013). Moreover, inner-party organisations and the media might also be affected by the rise of populist actors. Some findings already exist regarding the effect of populism on these dimensions (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013; Hameleers and Schmuck 2017; Hameleers and Vliegenthart 2019; Huber and Schimpf 2016; Manucci and Weber 2017) but there are still enough unresolved puzzles in this respect.

Concluding, many questions still are left open for future analyses regarding the consequences of populism. Notwithstanding, the question arises whether populist actors and narratives are indeed the dominant threat to liberal democracies nowadays. As this study has argued, it seems appropriate to focus more on radical right actors and discourses since elements that threaten democracy tend to emanate from them. Should we therefore state that populist communication is an overrated concept? The results of this study might point towards this direction but cannot provide a definitive answer to this question—also due to the small sample of parties and countries. Much more work about the discursive threats from populism and nativism needs to be conducted in order to construct a more comprehensive empirical fundament for respective conclusions.

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Annex

Table A.1 Numbers of immigrants from non-EU countries arriving per year based on data from Eurostat

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Germany	283.575	406.103	1.045.634	505.015	398.906	380.308
Austria	34.354	41.943	90.142	57.861	40.613	33.881
Spain	178.523	192.748	222.665	286.605	382.110	491.704
Italy	215.495	198.394	206.322	225.718	268.573	259.575

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Table A.2 Category system for measures of anti-elitist, people-centred, anti-outgroup, left and anti-immigration messages

Category	Subcategory	Operationalisation	Example sentences
People-centrism	Positive character	People are morally sublime, intelligent; have good intentions	We rely on the sense of responsibility and expertise of the *citizens* […]. (SPD 2013)
	Positive behaviour	People behave in a good manner; is responsible for positive/not responsible for negative developments	Every *Austrian* has made a contribution in the past to make Austria a country that has a future. (ÖVP 2013)
	Portrayed as victims/unfairly treated	People is treated badly, is betrayed or not taken into account	Conservative and liberal governments like in Germany prefer to protect banks and financial jugglers rather than *people* from their reckless speculation. (SPD 2013)
	Stating a monolithic people	People share common feelings, desires, opinion	In the memory of the *Spaniards*, the great educational reforms in Spain are associated with the PSOE. (PSOE 2016)
	Demonstrating closeness to the people	Speaker trusts the people; acts in its interest, knows its will/desires; belongs to it	We trust *the people*. (PP 2011)
	Demands for influence/control/respecting people's will	More influence on decision-making processes and control over the political elite; the people's will should be taken into account by politics	Direct and *popular election* of the President of the Republic. (FI/PdL 2013)

(continued)

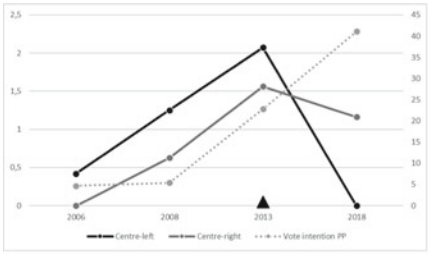
Table A.2 (continued)

Category	Subcategory	Operationalisation	Example sentences
Messages against (1) *The political elite* (2) *Non-native outroups* (3) *Economic actors*	Negative character	Actors are evil, criminal, lazy, undemocratic, stupid, etc.	(1) And it is precisely the corruption *of politicians* and corruption *of the parties* that is one of the main causes of the political disaffection of citizens. (PSOE 2015) (2) A large part [of *asylum seekers*] has only a compulsory school leaving certificate from the respective home country and 9% had no education at all. (ÖVP 2017) (3) Through their greed and irresponsible speculation, they [*financial markets*] have led Europe to the brink of the abyss. (SPD 2017)
	Negative behaviour	Actors are responsible for negative/not responsible for positive developments/actions	(1) The *political establishment* has failed during the great refugee crisis. (ÖVP 2017) (2) Many *immigrant children* without school qualifications […] and an often self-chosen demarcation of *foreign adolescents* from German society are alarm signals for social peace in the country. (CDU/CSU 2005) (3) Individual *management decisions* have shaken confidence in the growing social partnership of capital and labour
	Privileged, powerful, preferentially treated	Actors are too rich, too powerful or get everything they want	(1) In Austria, we have a system that is particularly strongly dominated by *the political parties.* (ÖVP 2017) (2) *Asylum seekers* receive a wide range of benefits as part of their basic services. (ÖVP 2017) (3) Conservative and liberal governments like in Germany prefer to protect *banks and financial jugglers* rather than people from their reckless speculation. (SPD 2013)

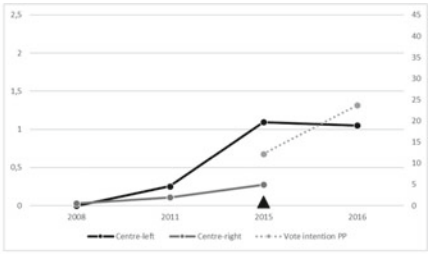
(continued)

Table A.2 (continued)

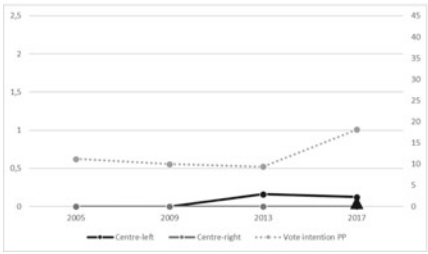
Category	Subcategory	Operationalisation	Example sentences
	Demands for less power/ privileges; more control/better behaviour	Less rights, decision-making powers and privileges; demands for disempowerment, removal/deportations, better behaviour	(1) And for that we need to face the evil of corruption, with measures of transparency inside and outside *the parties*. (PSOE 2016) (2) *Who comes*, must follow our rules, learn German, accept the values. (SPÖ 2017) (3) Limitation of *managerial* salaries. (SPÖ 2017)
Anti-immigration messages	Negative evaluation of immigration	Immigration described as a problem; named with negative connoted words ("invasion", "explosion")	Due to wave-through politics, the number of *asylum applications* has increased *explosively* up to almost 90,000. (ÖVP 2017)
	Negative (current/future) consequences	Immigration leads to criminality, financial problems, terrorism, chaos, etc.	But in particular the demographic change in Africa […] will lead to *migratory pressures* that Europe will not be able to cope with today's politics. (ÖVP 2017)
	Restricting immigration	Speaker claims that immigration should be restricted by controlling or closing the boarders, not accepting immigrants, not providing residence permits, etc.	We will implement a comprehensive information system to strengthen the *control at all borders*. (PP 2008)
	Deportation	Speaker is in favour of deportations and sending foreigners out of the country	Anyone who believes that he can use our wealth, our security and our tolerance to build a non-free, unjust and unequal parallel society *must leave*. (SPÖ 2017)



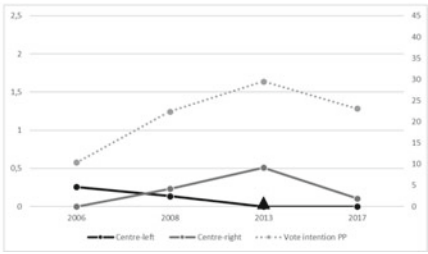
Italy (black triangle = new emerging populist party)



Spain



Germany



Austria

Fig. A.1 Anti-elitist messages in mainstream parties' manifestos and accumulated vote shares for populist parties (PP)

A12. Codebook: Measuring Populist, Nativist and Leftist Communication in Political Texts

A12a. Political Anti-elitism

General rule

- Statements without negative evaluations are not coded *(e.g. "they increased the taxes")*
- The actors have to be named in the sentence (e.g. "*parties"; "politicians"; "they")*
  - Exception: "*We are the only party* that respect the citizens"
- Quotations from other actors are not coded: "According to XY, all parties are corrupt"
- Only a critique or demand towards the whole political elite is coded *(*e.g. not coded: *"party X"; "the government"*)

Terms likely to refer to the whole political elite (selection):

- Parties; politicians; candidates; parliamentarians; deputies; politics; the party system; representatives; political class; regime; ministers
- The parties in the state of Lombardy; the politicians in Sicily (*elite in a certain area*)
- "Those" who destroyed the country (*when referred to all political actors*)
- "Rome" (*in case of the Northern League when referred to the political class*)

Table A.3 Messages of mainstream parties in election manifestos and opposition status (mean value for each party and all time units)

		Opposition	Government	Tolerance
FI/PdL	Anti-elite	0.89 (0.38) [$n = 2$]	0 [$n = 1$]	1.56 [$n = 1$]
	Pro-people	2.1 (0.32) [$n = 2$]	2.64 [$n = 1$]	1.56 [$n = 1$]
	Nativism	3.58 (1.52) [$n = 2$]	0.88 [$n = 1$]	1.04 [$n = 1$]
	Anti-econ	0 [$n = 2$]	0 [$n = 1$]	1.04 [$n = 1$]
PD	Anti-elite	0.42 [$n = 1$]	0.63 (0.88) [$n = 2$]	2.07 [$n = 1$]
	Pro-people	1.23 [$n = 1$]	0.25 (0.35) [$n = 2$]	1.55 [$n = 1$]
	Nativism	0.14 [$n = 1$]	0.87 (0.54) [$n = 2$]	0 [$n = 1$]
	Anti-econ	0.32 [$n = 1$]	0.81 (0.26) [$n = 2$]	3.63 [$n = 1$]
PP	Anti-elite	0.07 (0.06) [$n = 2$]	0.28 [$n = 1$]	–
	Pro-people	1.28 (0.51) [$n = 2$]	2.63 [$n = 1$]	–
	Nativism	0.76 (0.69) [$n = 2$]	0.14 [$n = 1$]	–
	Anti-econ	0.22 (0.23) [$n = 2$]	0.28 [$n = 1$]	–
PSOE	Anti-elite	1.07 (0.03) [$n = 2$]	0.13 (0.18) [$n = 2$]	–
	Pro-people	2.21 (0.28) [$n = 2$]	1.78 (0.37) [$n = 2$]	–
	Nativism	0.04 (0.02) [$n = 2$]	0.47 (0.53) [$n = 2$]	–
	Anti-econ	1.56 (0.09) [$n = 2$]	1.11 (0.95) [$n = 2$]	–
CDU/CSU	Anti-elite	0	0	–
	Pro-people	0.76 [$n = 1$]	0.54 (0.27) [$n = 3$]	–
	Nativism	0.76 [$n = 1$]	0.54 (0.49) [$n = 3$]	–
	Anti-econ	0.65 [$n = 1$]	0.29 (0.19) [$n = 3$]	–
SPD	Anti-elite	0.16 [$n = 1$]	0.04 (0.07) [$n = 3$]	–
	Pro-people	0.77 [$n = 1$]	0.46 (0.22) [$n = 3$]	–
	Nativism	0 [$n = 1$]	0.14 (0.15) [$n = 3$]	–
	Anti-econ	2.84 [$n = 1$]	1.93 (0.66) [$n = 3$]	–
ÖVP	Anti-elite	–	0.21 (0.22) [$n = 4$]	–
	Pro-people	–	1.05 (0.54) [$n = 4$]	–
	Nativism	–	2.12 (1.72) [$n = 4$]	–
	Anti-econ	–	0.36 (0.26) [$n = 4$]	–
SPÖ	Anti-elite	0.26 [$n = 1$]	0.05 (0.08) [$n = 3$]	–
	Pro-people	0.01 [$n = 1$]	0.76 (0.42) [$n = 3$]	–
	Nativism	0.26 [$n = 1$]	0.42 (0.51) [$n = 3$]	–
	Anti-econ	1.03 [$n = 1$]	2.25 (1.65) [$n = 3$]	–

Note I: "Tolerance" = Not in power but tolerating the government
Note II: Standard deviation in parenthesis; number of time units in square brackets

Table A.4 Selected websites of mainstream parties for Sect. 4.2

Party	Website	Statements traced from
PD	https://www.partitodemocratico.it/	Older statements provided by the party (contact: Marco Bloemendal)
FI/PDL	http://forzaitalia.it/ (2008; 2014; 2018) https://www.ilpopolodellaliberta.it/ (2009; 2013)	Older statements accessed via https://archive.org/web/
PSOE	https://www.psoe.es/	Official archive on the website (https://www.psoe.es/actualidad/noticias-actualidad/)
PP	http://www.pp.es/	Official archive on the website (http://www.pp.es/actualidad/noticias)
SPD	https://www.spdfraktion.de/	Statements (press releases from the parliamentary group) provided by the party (contact: Annemarie Kiehl)
CDU(CSU)	https://www.cducsu.de/	Statements (press releases from the parliamentary group) provided by the party (contact: Ulrike Nüchel)

- You (*when referred to the political elite*)

Terms not to be coded

- Vague/ambiguous words; institutions: Parliament; public administration; direction; officials; institutions

Categories

- *Negative characteristics including capabilities/intentions/way of thinking/ "nicknaming"*
  They are corrupt/criminal…; They are characterised by…; The dishonesty of the political class is…; You cannot trust the politicians; How can you believe these parties?; They are used to lie; There is no democracy within these parties; They represent the rich; There closeness to the Mafia is obvious; They don't know how to work; They have forgotten what it's like…; They are not even able to speak to the people; They want to destroy the country; The caste (*nickname*).
- *Negative actions/behaviour; making the elite responsible for negative things*
  They did bad things…; They lie/steal/commit crimes; abuse…; They started betraying…; They try to evade their responsibilities; They did not help the victims; A big mistake of the political class was doing…; Their propaganda is…; The insults of the politicians…; They are responsible for…; Thanks to the parties the country is collapsing.
- *Portraying parties/politicians as privileged; preferentially treated; too powerful*
  The politicians don't have to pay taxes; They never have been held accountable for their mistakes; This all has been done for the benefit of the politicians; They get more and more money and we have to suffer; They get thousands of euros; Their privileges are not justified; They control the media.
- *Demands / statements against political actors; advices*

Table A.5 Messages of mainstream parties on their websites and opposition status (mean value for each party and all time units)

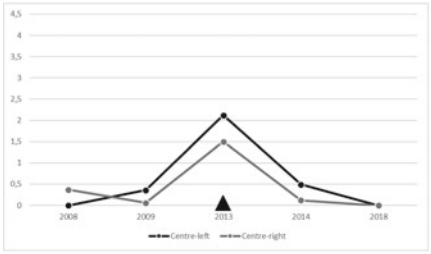
		Opposition	Government	Tolerance
FI/PdL	Anti-elite	0.82 (1.41) [$n = 3$]	0 [$n = 1$]	0.42 [$n = 1$]
	Pro-people	2.45 (0.62) [$n = 3$]	3.33 [$n = 1$]	4.67 [$n = 1$]
	Nativism	2.93 (2.51) [$n = 3$]	1.8 [$n = 1$]	0 [$n = 1$]
	Anti-econ	0.16 (0.19) [$n = 3$]	0.06 [$n = 1$]	1.5 [$n = 1$]
PD	Anti-elite	0.75 [$n = 1$]	0.185 (0.1) [$n = 3$]	0.56 [$n = 1$]
	Pro-people	4.96 [$n = 1$]	1.75 (0.62) [$n = 3$]	2.66 [$n = 1$]
	Nativism	1.05 [$n = 1$]	0.25 (0.22) [$n = 3$]	0 [$n = 1$]
	Anti-econ	0.36 [$n = 1$]	0.16 (0.28) [$n = 3$]	2.12 [$n = 1$]
PP	Anti-elite	0 [$n = 2$]	0.07 (0.13) [$n = 3$]	–
	Pro-people	7.77 (2.91) [$n = 2$]	8.43 (0.96) [$n = 3$]	–
	Nativism	0 [$n = 2$]	0.28 (0.48) [$n = 3$]	–
	Anti-econ	0.17 (0.24) [$n = 2$]	0.19 (0.32) [$n = 3$]	–
PSOE	Anti-elite	0.07 (0.11) [$n = 3$]	0 [$n = 2$]	–
	Pro-people	5.1 (0.39) [$n = 3$]	4.52 (0.66) [$n = 2$]	–
	Nativism	0 [$n = 3$]	0 [$n = 2$]	–
	Anti-econ	1.11 (0.78) [$n = 3$]	0.28 (0.39) [$n = 2$]	–
CDU/CSU	Anti-elite	–	0 [$n = 5$]	–
	Pro-people	–	0.52 (0.52) [$n = 5$]	–
	Nativism	–	0.76 (1.21) [$n = 5$]	–
	Anti-econ	–	0.91 (1.38) [$n = 5$]	–
SPD	Anti-elite	0 [$n = 2$]	0.11 (0.19) [$n = 3$]	–
	Pro-people	1.49 (0.46) [$n = 2$]	0.16 (0.15) [$n = 3$]	–
	Nativism	0 [$n = 2$]	0 [$n = 3$]	–
	Anti-econ	4.03 (0.002) [$n = 2$]	2.28 (1.15) [$n = 3$]	–

Note I: "Tolerance" = Not in power but tolerating the government
Note II: Standard deviation in parenthesis; number of time units in square brackets

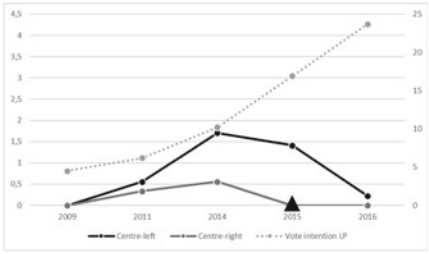
They should all resign; We want to be independent from the caste; The salary of politicians has to be reduced; The number of deputies should be reduced; They should represent the people; The costs of politics has to be reduced; The should apologise to the people; I advice you to leave the country; We demand that the parties should respect the people.

A12b. People-Centrism

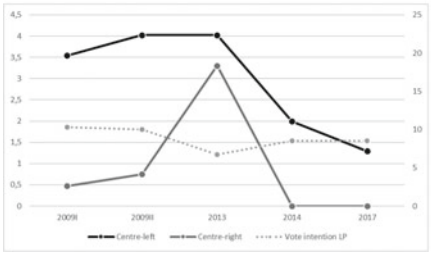
- **General rule**
- An evaluation of the people has to be *positive*
- References towards single groups within the people are not coded *(e.g. "the workers"; "our women")*



Italy (black triangle = new emerging "left" party)



Spain (black triangle = new emerging left party)



Germany

Fig. A.2 Leftist messages in mainstream parties' online statements and vote shares for left parties (LP)

- The actors have to be named in the sentence (*Our people; population; they…*)
  - Demands for more direct democracy without mentioning the people are not coded
- Quotations from other actors are not coded

Terms likely to refer to the whole people (selection):

- The people; population; citizens; voters; electorate; the honest people; the 99%; the will of the people; all (*when clearly referred to the people*); The romans (*all inhabitants of a certain area*)

Terms not to be coded

- Country names: Our country; Italy/Germany/Spain; Territory; Sicily
- People in a certain role: Consumers; tax payers; savers
- Broader terms that might include further actors: Community; society

Categories

I. *Positive characteristics including capabilities/intentions/way of thinking*
They are honest/smart; Our people has high values; The people is able to decide what is wrong and right; The citizens only want the best for our country; The

Table A.6 Mainstream parties' anti-elitist demands in election manifestos

Demand	Example sentence
More transparency/control over politicians	Greater transparency also means that all members of parliament have to disclose income from their sideline activities completely for every single euro and cent[a] (SPD 2017, p. 63)
More democracy within parties/politics	A reform of the parties must be approved […] that ensures the democracy of and within the parties, which must be reformed to be an instrument of the citizens and not an opaque place of particular interests[b] (PD 2013, p. 3)
Making parties/politicians responsible	Stricter rules on the loss of mandate and office for politicians[c] (ÖVP 2013, p. 62)
Less privileges for politicians/parties	Limiting privileges of parliamentarians and members of the Government to those cases related to the exercise of their office[d] (PSOE 2016, p. 383)
(Slightly) less power/influence	The ORF must remain outside the reach of government and party politics.[e] (SPÖ 2008, p. 35)
Critical towards party financing	Abolish the public financing of parties (no public funds for parties)[f] (FI/PdL 2013, p. 8)
Less costs of politics	We need sober politics because if the Italians have to economise, those who govern them must do even more[g] (PD 2013, p. 3)
No other income besides politics	Those who combine a public office with a responsibility in their party only receive one salary[h] (PSOE 2015, p. 42)
Limitation/cutting number of politicians	Reduction of the number of parliamentarians[i] (FI/PdL 2018, p. 10)
Parties as tool for the people	A reform of the parties must be approved […] that ensures the democracy of and within the parties, which must be reformed to be an instrument of the citizens and not an opaque place of particular interests[j] (PD 2013, p. 3)
Against betraying the people	Critical citizens will make it difficult for politicians to deviate from the commitments made to the electorate[k] (PSOE 2016, p. 18)

[a]Mehr Transparenz heißt auch, dass alle Bundestagsabgeordneten ihre Einkünfte aus Nebentätigkeiten vollständig auf Euro und Cent offenlegen sollen
[b]Va approvata una riforma dei partiti […] che assicuri la democrazia dei e nei partiti, che devono riformarsi per essere strumento dei cittadini e non luogo opaco di interessi particolari
[c]Strengere Regeln zum Mandats- und Amtsverlust von Politikerinnen und Politikern
[d]Limitar el aforamiento de parlamentarios y miembros del Gobierno a los supuestos relacionados con el ejercicio de su cargo
[e]Der ORF muss dem Zugriff von Regierung und Parteipolitik entzogen bleiben
[f]Abolire il finanziamento pubblico dei partiti (nessun fondo pubblico ai partiti)
[g]Serve una politica sobria perche se gli italiani devono risparmiare, chi li govema deve farlo di piú
[h]Quienes compatibilicen un cargo público con una responsabilidad en su partido solo reciban un sueldo
[i]Riduzione del numero di parlamentari
[j]Va approvata una riforma dei partiti […] che assicuri la democrazia dei e nei partiti, che devono riformarsi per essere strumento dei cittadini e non luogo opaco di interessi particolari
[k]Una ciudadanía crítica dificultará que los políticos se desvíen de los compromisos adquiridos ante el electorado

Table A.7 Mainstream parties' people-centred demands in election manifestos

Demands	Example sentence
More unspecific power	We want a strong and citizen-friendly Europe[a] (CDU/CSU 2009, 10)
More concrete participation	Direct and popular election of the President of the Republic[b] (FI/PdL 2013, 7)
More transparency	Everything remains under the magnifying glass of the citizens so that they know and control the destiny of the money of their taxes[c] (PP 2015, 134)
People as core of politics	But for democracies to be effective […], they must also be legitimised in origin, through processes of shaping the will of the people[d] (PSOE 2011, 115)
More closeness to the people	Because the state has to be there for the citizens—and not vice versa[e] (ÖVP 2017, 15; part 3)

[a]Wir wollen ein starkes und bürgernahes Europa
[b]Elezione diretta e popolare del Presidente della Repubblica
[c]Todo queda bajo la lupa de los ciudadanos para que conozcan y controlen el destino del dinero de sus impuestos
[d]Pero para que las democracias puedan ser eficaces […], tienen que estar, también, legitimadas en origen, a través de los procesos de conformación de la voluntad popular
[e]Denn der Staat hat wieder für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger da zu sein – und nicht umgekehrt

Italians did that because of their sense of responsibility…; The people deserve to know the truth; Our citizens are important

II. *Positive actions/behaviours; making the people responsible for positive issues*
The people built this country with hard work; The citizens work with high values; Thanks to the population…

III. *The people illustrated as badly treated or victims*
This was done at the expense of the people; The citizens don't get anything; He acts in the interest of the banks not of the people; The population does not want to get screwed any more (*implies that they are getting betrayed*); They are convinced to change the people's opinion through the media; Stop treating the people like fools; They should apologise to the voters; Accept the will of the voters! (*implies that they are not considered*)

IV. *Demands/statements for more power; impact; control; information; considering the will of the people*
The voters have a right to know…; The will of the people has to be implemented; They should listen to the citizens; The citizens has to be in the centre of politics; We want more direct democracy for the people; In a democracy the people has the power; The CDU has to accept the will of the voters; E-democracy is necessary in order to give the people more power; Those who love the people should rule

V. *People as a monolithic actor: homogeneous desires; thoughts; needs*

Table A.8 Mainstream parties' demands towards outgroups in election manifestos

Demands	Example sentence
No entry/deportation	We are stepping up our efforts to repatriate and, if necessary, deport those whose applications for asylum are legally rejected[a] (CDU/CSU 2017, 62)
Better behaviour in general	Who gets asylum in Austria, must know that he cannot do whatever he wants to do[b] (ÖVP 2008, 19)
Should adjust, integrate themselves	In the Integration Contract the immigrant will commit to comply with the laws and respect the principles, values and customs of the Spaniards, to learn the language, to pay their taxes and contributions, to work actively to integrate himself, and to return to their country if after some time he lacks employment and financial resources[c] (PP 2008, 219)
Stricter punishments/making responsible	However, anyone who illegally owns another citizenship should be punished and social benefits for him should be deleted[d] (ÖVP 2017, 28 (part 3))
Less preferential treatment/less rights	We are firmly opposed to the isolation in parallel societies and special Islamic tribunals outside our legal system[e] (CDU 2013, 66)
Financial contribution; less financial benefits	For those entitled to asylum, we want to reduce the benefits to a "minimum income light" to a maximum of 560 Euro[f] (ÖVP 2017, 64 (part3))
Should speak out against terror/crime	We also expect a more recognisable countermeasure from the Muslim associations [against parallel societies] (CDU/CSU 2013, 66)
Against help	Strengthen the rules and sanctions against employers who hire foreigners who have no legal status in Spain[g] (PSOE 2008, 40)

[a]Wir verstärken unsere Bemühungen, diejenigen zurückzuführen und gegebenenfalls abzuschieben, deren Anträge auf Asyl rechtskräftig abgelehnt werden
[b]Wer in Österreich Asyl bekommt, muss wissen, dass er nicht tun und lassen kann, was er will
[c]En el Contrato de Integración el inmigrante se comprometerá a cumplir las leyes y a respetar los principios, valores y costumbres de los españoles, a aprender la lengua, a pagar sus impuestos y cotizaciones, trabajar activamente para integrarse, y a retornar a su país si durante un tiempo carece de empleo y de medios
[d]Wer allerdings illegal eine andere Staatsbürgerschaft besitzt, sollte bestraft und die Sozialleistungen für ihn sollten gestrichen werden
[e]Der Abschottung in Parallelgesellschaften und islamischen Sondergerichten außerhalb unserer Rechtsordnung treten wir entschieden entgegen
[f]Für Asylberechtigte wollen wir die Leistungen auf eine „Mindestsicherung light" in der Höhe von maximal 560 Euro reduzieren
[g]Endurecer las normas y las sanciones contra los empresarios y empleadores que contraten a extranjeros que no se hallen en situación legal en España.

The voters don't want higher taxes; People need a new government; This is in the interest of all citizens; The Italians agree with me; For the Sicilians this is a big problem; They are concerned about…

VI. *Demonstrating closeness to the people*

We represent you; I always respected the preferences of the voters; I want to solve the problems of the Italians; We did that for the Italians; In order to respect the will of the population, we will increase the taxes; We consulted the citizens for the creation

Table A.9 Mainstream parties' messages against immigration in election manifestos

Demands	Example sentence
Demands for restricting immigration	Stop illegal migration, in particular by closing the Mediterranean route, stop the evils of human trafficking[a] (ÖVP 2017)
Demands for deportations	Any foreigner who commits a misdemeanour must be expelled immediately […][b] (PP 2008)
Negative evaluation of immigration	We will develop greater control of our borders to avoid the massive illegal entry […][c] (PP 2008)
Negative consequences of immigration	Due to the migration situation in 2015, a rising number of asylum seekers registered as unemployed is to be expected[d] (SPÖ 2017)

[a]Stopp der illegalen Migration, insbesondere durch Schließen der Mittelmeer-Route, Schlepperunwesen unterbinden
[b]Todo extranjero que comenta [sic!] un delito menor deberá ser expulsado de inmediato […]
[c]Desarrollaremos un mayor control de nuestras fronteras para evitar la masiva entrada ilegal […]
[d]Durch die Fluchtsituation im Jahr 2015 ist mit einer steigenden Anzahl arbeitslos gemeldeter Asylberechtigter zu rechnen

of our program; We will not take money from the people (*Speaker declares not to treat the people badly*); We are citizens; I talk a lot with the citizens; I know what the Romans want; The people agree with me;

A12c. Messages Against Outgroups

General rule

- An evaluation has to be *negative*
- Negative evaluations of groups or individuals when cultural, religious, ethnical traits or status as immigrant, stranger or refugee is mentioned
- Actors have to be named in the sentence (e.g. *"Muslims"; "immigrants"; "they")*
- Quotations from other actors are not coded.

Terms likely to refer to non-native outgroups (selection):

- Refugees; Immigrants; Africans; Muslims; Islam/Mosques (*no actor but refers to a religious group*); Illegals

Categories

I. *Negative characteristics including capabilities/intentions/way of thinking/"nicknaming"*
They are dangerous; Muslims are often misogynistic; They are not able to speak our language; None of this Africans have a high school diploma; They want to build a new caliphate in our country

II. *Negative actions/behaviour; making outgroups responsible for negative things*
A group of refugees attacked the police yesterday; They take the jobs from the native workers; Due to the influx of immigrants the crime rate increased

Table A.10 Mainstream parties' demands towards economic actors in election manifestos

Demands	Examply sentence
More rules for/control over economic actors	Financial services providers must find their way back again to serving the society and the real economy and take more responsibility for the risks[a] (SPD 2009, 15)
Financial demands	Limitation of managerial salaries[b] (SPÖ 2017, 53)
More rights workers/ consumers/people	Private companies must also participate in a much more responsible way in solving certain problems regarding people's health, especially those affected by the deterioration of the environment[c] (PSOE 2016, 284)
Against power/ interests	[…] we will have to rule out that the dominant telecommunications and broadcasting operators can control newspapers[d] (PD 2006, 262)
Defining functions of economic actors	The economy and the financial markets must serve society, not the other way around[e] (SPD 2009, 79)
Emancipation of women in companies	At the same time, we will regulate by law that, as of 2020, a fixed quota of 30% will apply to women in supervisory board mandates of listed companies and in those that are subject to full codetermination[f] (CDU/CSU 2013, 63)

[a]Die Finanzdienstleister müssen wieder zu ihrer dienenden Funktion für die Gesellschaft und die Realwirtschaft zurückfinden und mehr Verantwortung für die Risiken übernehmen
[b]Begrenzung der ManagerInnengehälter
[c]Asimismo las empresas privadas deberán participar de forma mucho más responsable en ciertos problemas en la salud de las personas, especialmente afectada por el deterioro del medio ambiente
[d][…] dovremo escludere che gli operatori dominanti delle telecomunicazioni e del comparto radiotelevisivo possano controllare quotidiani
[e]Die Wirtschaft und die Finanzmärkte müssen der Gesellschaft dienen, nicht umgekehrt
[f]Zugleich werden wir gesetzlich regeln, dass ab dem Jahr 2020 eine feste Quote von 30 Prozent für Frauen in Aufsichtsratsmandaten von voll mitbestimmungspflichtigen und börsennotierten Unternehmen gilt

III. *Portraying outgroups as privileged; preferentially treated or influential*
Refugees get everything they want; The parties support these immigrants; Foreigners get more than a Austrian pensioner; In some parts of the country there are whole streets full of Arabic supermarkets
IV. *Demands/statements against cultural, religious, ethnical groups/migrants*

Let's close the mosques; We want to reduce the benefits for refugees to a minimum income; We expect that those who come here accept our norms; Illegal immigrants should be deported.

A12d. Messages Against Immigration
General rule

- Negative evaluations of the phenomenon immigration; positive evaluations of deportations/limiting immigration
- No actors have to be named but terms referring to immigration
- General demands for "managing" immigration is not sufficient
- Quotations from other actors are not coded.

Terms likely to refer to immigration:
Deportation; Limitation; Boarder control; Asylum; influx
Categories

I. *Negative evaluation of current/previous migration; nicknames or pejorative terms*
Immigration is bad for our country; It is not possible to manage these amounts of immigrants; Immigration means emergency; The Invasion; The risk of immigration; The problem of immigration; Massive immigration; Illegal immigration

II. *Describing supposed (current/previous/future) negative consequences of immigration*
The people pay every year billions of euros for hosting refugees; The communes cannot deal with this huge amount of refugees anymore; Immigration causes problems; Immigrants cost us billions of euros every year; We will soon have thousands of new illegal immigrants here

III. *Demands for/positive evaluation of restricting immigration*
We are against welcoming refugees; The massive immigration has to be stopped; We are against granting the status of refugee to everyone who is coming; The boarders have to be closed; We need more police in order to save our boarders; We say stop to illegality; Closing boarders is an act of humanity

IV. *Demands for/positive evaluation of deportation*
Deportations have to be conducted as soon as possible; The expulsion of illegals is also in their own interest; We send them back to their countries; Due to an increased number of expulsions our country is save

A3e. Messages Against Economic Actors
General rule

- An evaluation has to be *negative*
- No critique towards single actors *(e.g. "the bank Santander…")* but towards at least a group of actors or a specific field of industry (e.g. *"food industry"; "managers"*)
- The actors have to be named in the sentence (e.g. *"managers"; "capitalists"; "they")*
- Quotations from other actors are not coded

Terms likely to refer to economic actors/elites as a whole (selection):

- The banks; Financial industry; Private enterprises; Those who earn millions; The Managers; The privileged; Multinationals; The capitalists; Foreign enterprises; Oligarchy; The enterprises which destroy our environment (*since it is not a single actor but a larger group*); The Shareholders; The 1%; Tax evaders; Major powers; Those who take the money out of our country; The *financial* market/economy; the *big* markets.

Terms not to be coded

- Public companies and single enterprises
- Non-actors: Speculation; property; richness
- The economy; market (*only when specific markets e.g. "food industry"*); Economic system (*only when specific systems e.g. the "financial system"*).

Categories

I. *Negative characteristics including capabilities/intentions/way of thinking/ "nicknaming"*
They are dangerous/greedy…; They are characterised by…; The greed of the bankers…; They have become…; You cannot trust the financial industry; The managers are not able to guide a company; The financial industry wants to enslave us

II. *Negative actions/behaviour; Making economic elites responsible for negative issues*
The banks betrayed the small savers; They lie/steal/commit crimes…; They try to evade their responsibilities; The financial industry is responsible for our misery…;

III. *Economic actors as privileged; preferentially treated; too powerful*
The multinationals do not have to pay taxes; They never have been held accountable for their mistakes; This all has been done for the benefit of the rich; They gave the bankers our money; The financial industry controls the whole government; They get money, and the people is suffering; The poor become poorer, the rich become richer

IV. *Demands/statements against economic actors; advices*

They should pay taxes; The salary of top-managers has to be reduced; We have to force the banks to buy government bonds; We will never pay for their debts; Our party is against the banks and manager; Those who earn more should also contribute more

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