

Losers' Consent and Democratic Stability: Experimental Evidence from Chile and Estonia

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- Research has looked into “losers’ consent,” focusing on satisfaction, trust, and efficacy.
- Still, we know little about voters’ “systemic support” when they lose elections (Easton, 1965).



Voters' Commitment:

Electoral Losses and Institutional Heterogeneities

- We analyze the level of system support among electoral “losers” using novel data from a conjoint experiment in Chile (N=811) and Estonia (N=639).
- We exploit institutional heterogeneities in presidential and parliamentary systems, which effectively shift the *costs* of losing/winning an election.
- We pre-registered the following hypotheses: [▶ link](#)
 - H1 Electoral “losers” favor candidates endorsing anti-systemic actions more than “winners.”
 - H2 This tendency is stronger in presidential versus parliamentary systems.

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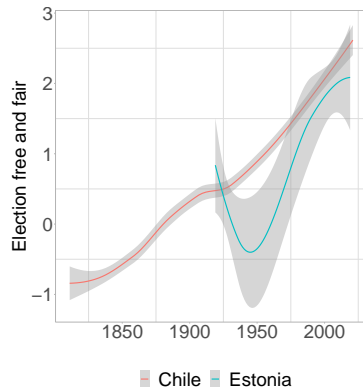
1. Citizens' support for violent protests varies between electoral winners and losers.
 - *"Angry" losers* might be more willing to support anti-systemic politicians (Bowler, Donovan, and Karp 2007).
 - Winners should oppose politicians supporting anti-systemic actions.
2. Institutional setting should affect differently the costs of losing an election (Lijphart, 2012).
 - **Presidential:** losers have little input outside of the electoral cycle.
 - **Parliamentary:** losers' interests can be represented through a variety of power sharing institutions.

Losers' Consent and Democratic Stability

- Collected novel data from Chile (N=811) and Estonia (N=639) with gender and party sample quotas.
- **Most dissimilar cases:** maximize variance regarding government system (Presidential and Parliamentary).
- **Most similar cases:** minimize variance regarding critical V-Dem variables.

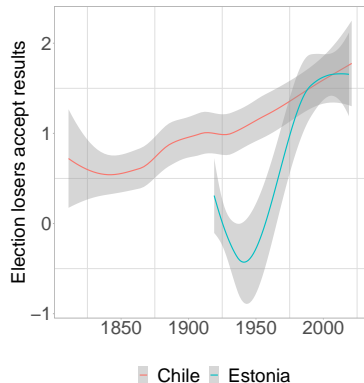
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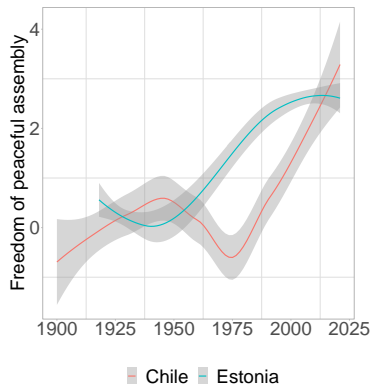
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Conjoint Experiment

- Designed an unconstrained, fully randomized conjoint experiment.
- We depart from standard AMCE analyses (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto [2014](#)) and instead compute **subgroup marginal means** (Leeper, Hobolt, and Tilley [2020](#)).

Dimension	Attribute Set
Gender	Male, Female.
Age	Younger than 35, Between 35-50, Over 50.
Protest	The candidate OPPOSES anti-government protest that will seek to de-stabilize the current government, The candidate SUPPORTS anti-government protest that will seek to de-stabilize the current government
Pensions	The candidate OPPOSES increases in pensions for the elderly, The candidate SUPPORTS increases in pensions for the elderly

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Additional Questions

- Included questions on socio-demographics and support for democracy.
- **Losers/Winners:** asked who respondents voted for.
 - **Chile:** *“Which candidate did you vote for in the 2nd round of the December 2021 presidential election?”*
Kast, Boric, Others (Blank/Spoiled, I did not vote, Prefer not to say).
 - **Estonia:** *“Which political party did you vote for in the last elections?”*
List of Estonian political parties that participated in the March 2023 parliamentary election.

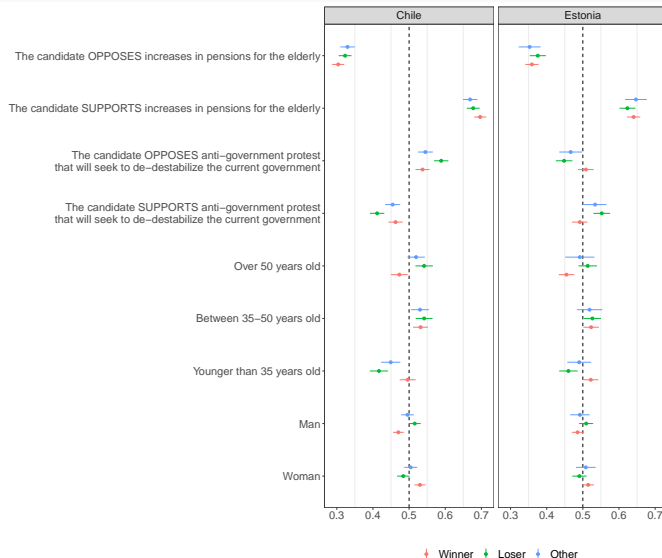
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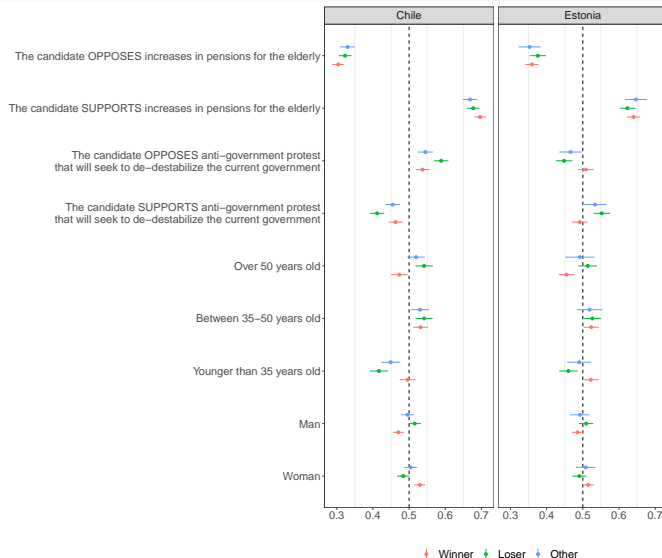
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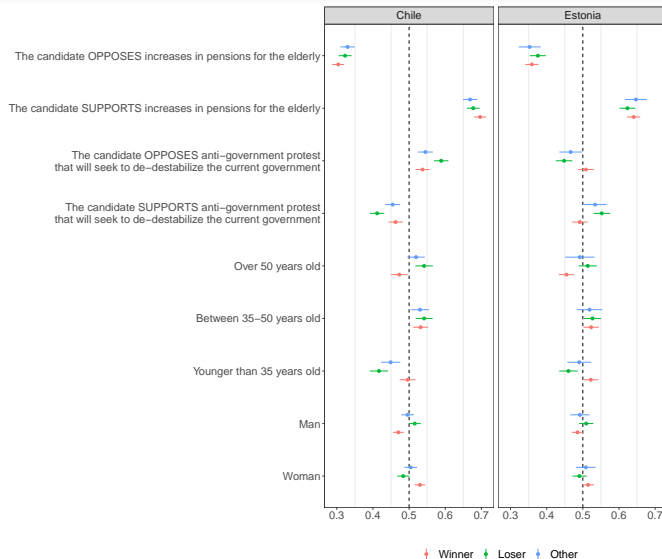
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- **Losers (Kast)** show even **stronger disapproval** of such candidates.
- Effects might be driven by the legacies of the 2019–20 protests (*Estallido Social*)?
- **Estonia**: results support H1.



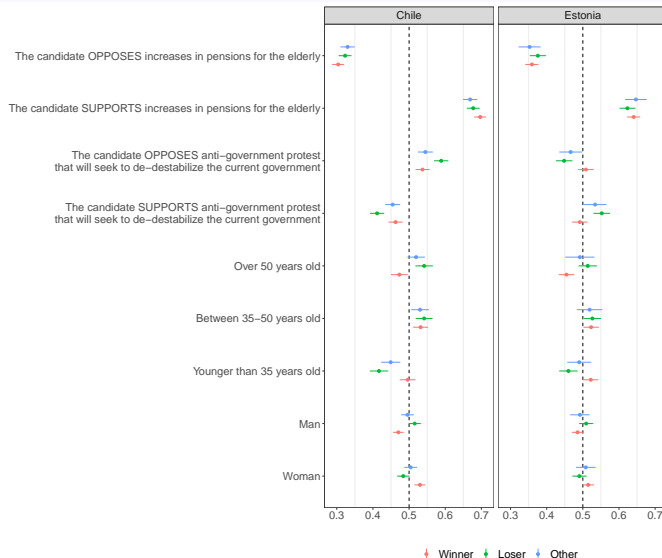
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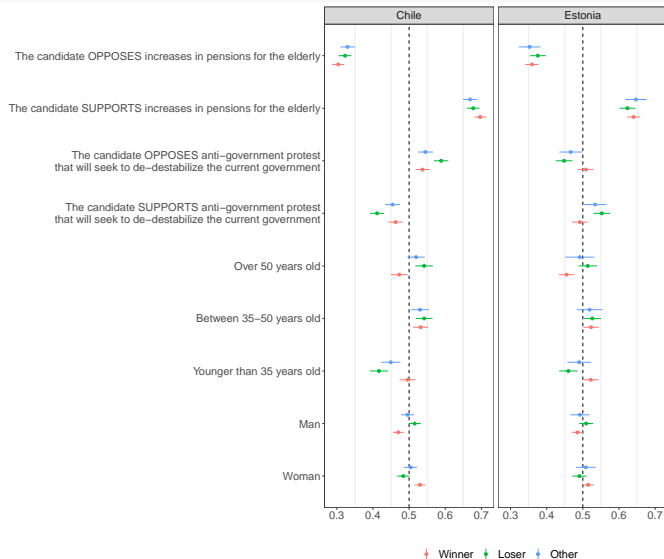
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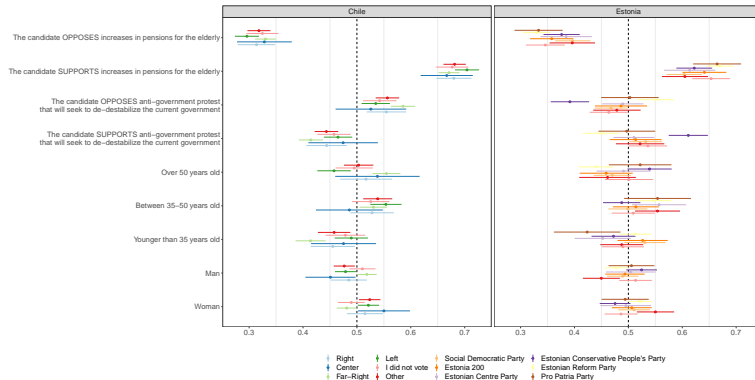


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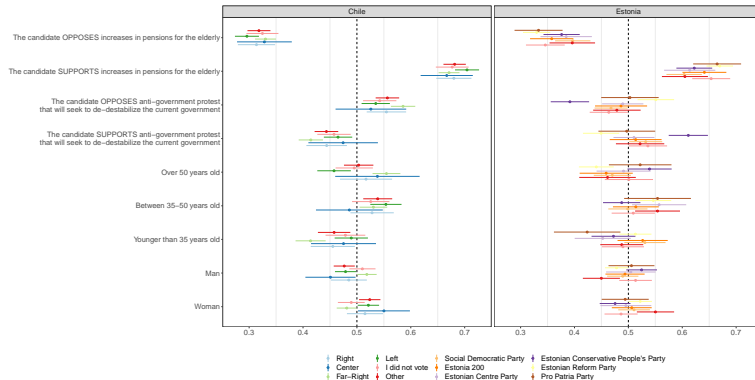
Subgroup Marginal Means (MM): Partisanship/Ideology

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- Extreme right voters (*Rep. Party*) are especially likely to reject candidates associated with anti-systemic protest.
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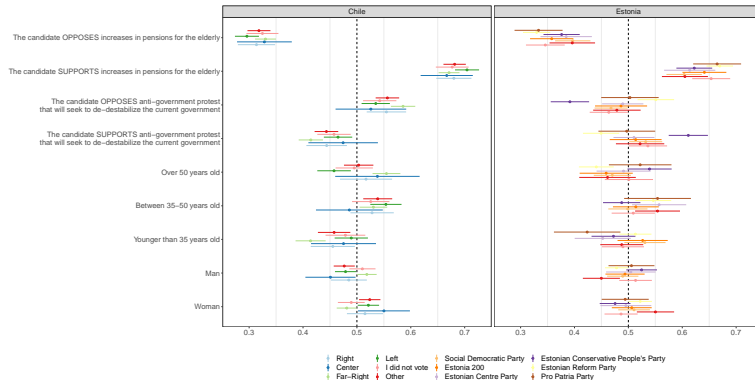
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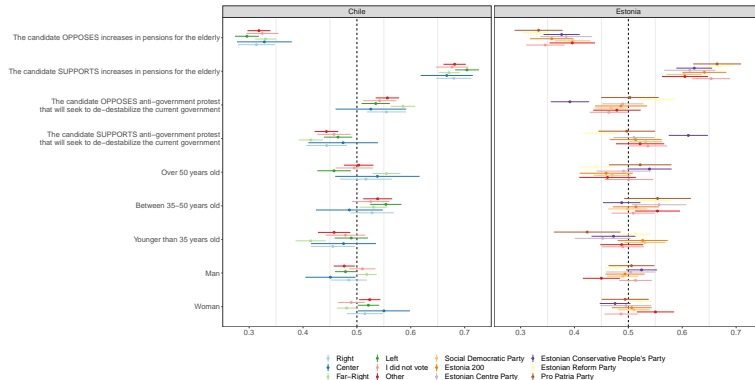
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More Questions Than Answers

- We hypothesized (and pre-registered) that:
 - H1 *Electoral losers* were *more* willing to support anti-systemic protests.
 - H2 This effect would be *stronger* in Presidential systems
(because of its zero-sum power sharing structure, **losses are more catastrophic**).
- While we did not find support in favor of our hypotheses, we still found some other interesting results.
 - **Chile:** **Extreme-right** supporters are **less** likely to support extreme anti-system protests.
 - **Estonia:** the **loser effects** are mainly **driven by extreme-right** supporters.
- Did we make a mistake to think that, **in Chile (!)**, right-wing losers were going to **protests (!)**? **Let me know what you think.**

Thank you



to check updates on this project.