

Do we need warm leaders? Exploratory study of the role of voter evaluations of leaders' traits on turnout in seven European countries

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Abstract. Previous research on leader effects has focused exclusively on the impact of voters' evaluations of leaders on vote choice, disregarding possible effects on the prior step of deciding whether or not to turn out to vote. In line with the personalisation of politics thesis, leaders have a higher impact among dealigned voters. Previous studies have demonstrated that leader effects are stronger among voters who voice their dealignment – namely party switchers. However, the potential impact of leaders among those who exited (i.e., who have abstained) is still unstudied. Could leaders have a mobilisation effect and therefore trigger turnout decisions? What characteristics of party leaders are more relevant in this regard? This article is the first comparative study to examine how the evaluation of party leaders' traits influences voter turnout in general elections. The work incorporates data from election studies across seven countries with different social contexts (Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and Hungary). Characteristics of leaders were grouped into two dimensions – competence and warmth – in accordance with the stereotype content model and relevant studies on leaders' traits evaluation. Multiple binary logistic regression models were performed to analyse the predictive power of competence and warmth on turnout, controlling for sociodemographic, political ideology variables and voters' past political behaviour. Results reinforce the personalisation of politics theory, showing the utmost relevance of warmth personality traits of leaders in voter turnout decisions. Competence personality traits were found to be relevant only in some situations. Interaction effects were also demonstrated between warmth evaluations and identifying with a right-wing party as well as past political behaviour with both warmth and competence.

Keywords: turnout; leaders' personality traits; personalisation of politics; dealignment; stereotype content model

Introduction

Party leaders have been playing an increasingly important role in contemporary Western democracies, whether we refer to their centrality as subjects of media attention, their growing power within the party organisation or their impact on voting behaviour (Bittner 2011; Garzia 2012, 2013, 2014; Lobo 2008; Lobo & Curtice 2014). In contrast, political parties have been losing support and their long-term bonds with voters have notoriously weakened (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000). Additionally, this process is no longer exclusive to countries with presidential systems – where leaders have always played an important role, particularly in the United States – with it being argued that it now also extends to parliamentary democracies, in a general trend towards the personalisation of politics.

Existing literature identifies three causal explanations for this phenomenon on the basis of the personalisation of politics. The first explanation concerns the mediatisation process,

first with the proliferation of television and later the Internet and the rise of new media (Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999). These innovations have shifted media political contents from parties to leaders – their visible representatives – and have altered the way in which parties and voters communicate. The second explanation refers to changes in the organisation of political parties that have enhanced the role of the leader within their internal structure. Unconstrained from strong ideological pledges, catch-all and cartel party types, among the most common in contemporary democracies, emphasise the role of the leader at the expense of party members (Lobo 2008). Also, the fact that they mostly use modern campaign strategies elevates the importance of the candidates. Finally, individualisation and the concomitant process of dealignment have undermined the longstanding attachments between voters and parties. Whereas group-based identifications on the basis of social and political cleavages established enduring affective bonds with political parties and structured voting behaviour, more recently voters have become increasingly independent of these structural constraints. Dealignment has thus weakened the role of long-term factors such as the identification with political parties and potentiated short-term determinants such as political leaders (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000).

This article derives from this latter branch of the literature to explore how leader effects relate to turnout, a widely accepted indicator of dealignment. Notwithstanding recent efforts to understand the role of leader effects on voting behaviour, existing research has not yet explored the existence of a relationship between voters' assessments of leaders and turnout. Turnout has been consistently declining in most Western countries (Franklin 2002, 2004) and abstention is considered a political malaise of contemporary democracies. If leaders are found to have an impact on turnout, leader effects can have positive consequences from the normative point of view. Therefore, this article attempts to determine the impact of party leaders on turnout decisions, and to understand the nature of that effect – in other words, which political leaders' traits do voters consider to be most important to determine if they turn out to vote? For that purpose, voters' evaluations of leaders' personality traits in seven European countries (Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and Hungary) were used. These traits were grouped in two key dimensions according to the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al. 2002): warmth and competence.

The article proceeds as follows. In dialogue with previous research, we begin by discussing the implications of using personality traits to study leader effects on voting behaviour and advance our two-dimensional structure of traits based on the warmth and competence dimensions. Next, we present the theoretical argument for the hypothesis that leaders have an impact on turnout according to the theories of dealignment on the origin of the personalisation of politics. This is followed by a methods section where the virtues and limitations of the data are discussed, together with the methodological approach. Finally, we present the results.

Personality traits: A tool for the evaluation of political leaders and their effect on voting behaviour

Studies about leader effects on voting behaviour usually make use of one out of two methodologies: leader evaluation scales, where voters are asked to rate each of the party leaders in a 0–10 like-dislike scale; and personality traits. Concerning the latter, the number

and nature of traits contained in the multiple election studies around the world is obviously extremely diverse. These two conditionings – the fact that studies including personality traits are fewer and the fact that the traits included are not even close to being the same – pose a problem for any attempt to develop a comparative study using this approach.

Despite this disadvantage, the use of personality traits carries a number of positive aspects. In particular, it allows an understanding of what specific aspects of candidates voters value the most when they assess and compare party leaders. This is more informative of the mechanisms through which individuals can be brought to the polls by the actions of political leaders. Furthermore, traits are less prone to be affected by the endogeneity issues associated with leader evaluation scales. They are more exogenous to both partisanship and vote choice and, thus, leader effects are more clearly isolated from spurious variables (Bittner 2011: 57; Fiorina 1981: 154; Johnston 2002: 174; Holian & Prysby 2014). Given that concerns about the endogeneity of leader effects have been frequently engaged with in the literature on the personalisation of politics, we think the use of personality traits makes a more compelling argument for the relationship between leaders and turnout.

In their recent book, Holian and Prysby (2014) present three sets of reasons why voters use traits when evaluating political leaders. First, the authors claim that voters use traits because it is easily accessible information and they can use it as they do in their everyday assessment of other people. Traits are an important feature of routine judgement formations in interpersonal relationships, particularly in contexts of reduced information. Voters apply an identical mechanism to evaluate candidates, even when they have only limited information about them, with the benefit of requiring relatively low effort. Popkin (2001: 61), too, highlights the role of leaders as cognitive shortcuts in contexts of low information:

[V]oters care about the competence of the candidate, not just the candidate's issue positions ... because they care about what the candidate can deliver from government. ... And they worry about the character of the candidate, about his or her sincerity, because they cannot easily read 'true' preferences and because they care about uncertain future situations.

Hence, traits operate as shortcuts to assessments of candidates, providing valuable cues regarding the future job performance of the contenders at low cost, compared to other forms of vote choice decision making. They are heuristics used by voters to make inferences about the leader's character and competence, which then may translate into actual policy inferences.

Second, contemporary political campaigns emphasise candidates rather than parties and, in particular, the importance of such traits for their future job performance. Comparisons of each contender's attributes and flaws have become more frequent in campaigns and are presented as an appropriate tool for assessing their suitability for holding office. This is simultaneously done by the media and candidates themselves. Media increasingly tend to focus on persons instead of platforms, ideologies or issues, as their coverage of candidate-centred campaigns has become increasingly personal, emotion-appealing and superficial. Candidates use it as an electoral strategy, especially when it concerns closely divided issues on which they have little to benefit from by making their own personal stances clear.

Finally, from the voters' perspective, knowing the leaders' personality traits may provide some cues about how they will behave in situations of uncertainty or crisis. Deciding one's voting behaviour on the basis of the issues that are more salient in the campaign, for instance, may seem more rational and normatively desirable. Nonetheless, sometimes these issues end up not being the most important ones during the term, undermining the logical grounds of their initial voting decision. For this reason, traits can be a useful tool to draw out information about how the leader would act in a scenario of changed circumstances. Knowing if the leader is 'deliberative or prone to make snap judgements' (Holian & Prysby 2014: 15) may prove to be valuable information in such contexts.

Hence, there are several reasons to account for why voters use personality traits in their assessments of political leaders. However, there is an extremely vast variety of traits not only among election studies, but also within the same election study across time. Since one of the main arguments to explain why voters use traits is the easy acquisition of low-cost information, it is questionable if voters actually consider a large number of traits. In fact, existing research indicates voters do not actively distinguish between the whole diversity of leaders' personality traits present in election studies (Bean 1993; Bean & Mughan 1989; Holian & Prysby 2014; Johnston 2002; Kinder 1983; Kinder et al. 1979, 1980; Kinder & Fiske 1986; Miller et al. 1986; Stewart & Clarke 1992). Instead, voters seem to consistently focus on specific types of personality traits they consider meaningful and significant. Sociopsychological evidence points to the fact that voters perceive and interpret some traits similarly, suggesting that traits can be clustered into a limited number of key dimensions. The underlying structure of traits is yet a topic of scholarly debate, mainly concerning the nature of these dimensions, their conceptualisation in terms of which traits fit in each dimension, as well as how many dimensions voters consider. For this reason, the number of dimensions present in the literature varies considerably from two (Bean 1993; Bittner 2011; Johnston 2002; Kinder et al. 1979, 1980; Stewart & Clarke 1992) to 12 (Brown et al. 1988). Nevertheless, some common ground appears to have been established by Kinder's (1983) seminal work, whose analysis of close-ended traits pointed to the existence of four main dimensions: competence, leadership, integrity and empathy. A large part of the subsequent literature was greatly influenced by this categorisation as many later studies adopt either the same framework or slightly altered versions by merging some of the four dimensions into two or three (Bruckmüller & Abele 2015; Caprara et al. 2002, 2007; Cuddy et al. 2008: 66; Fiske et al. 2006).

Collapsing personality traits into dimensions is not only theoretically pertinent, but it is also a functional requirement in every effort to develop a comparative study of this kind. Given the described multiplicity of traits existent in election studies, in order to establish comparisons across time and countries, as well as to attain a generalised understanding of the way people vote, researchers must cluster traits into dimensions. Thus, trait dimensions are heuristic from the theoretical point of view but also instrumental for the harmonisation of different election studies.

The selection of the trait dimensions for this article relies on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske et al. 2002). This model provides a framework for social perception based on the two universal dimensions of social cognition for the evaluations of individuals and social groups: warmth and competence. These dimensions' functional significance derives from individuals' need to anticipate others' intentions (warmth), as well as their

capability to pursue such intentions (competence). When using the SCM, ‘actors distinguish individuals and groups according to their likely impact on the self or ingroup as determined by perceived intentions and capabilities’ (Cuddy et al. 2008: 63) and adjust attitudinal and behavioural responses accordingly. This specific two-dimensional structure of traits has been successfully applied in studies of leader effects on voting behaviour, proving itself to be a valid framework to account for voters’ evaluations of candidates’ personality traits (Abelson et al. 1982; Costa & Silva 2015; Kinder et al. 1980; Kinder & Sears 1985; Michel et al. 2013; Todorov et al. 2005; Wojciszke & Klusek 1996). In low-information contexts, such as those in which they know little about the candidates they are evaluating, voters count on the same basic social perception mechanisms, based on stereotyping, which they use routinely in individual interactions.

Whatever the dimensions adopted, the way in which personality traits are ascribed to leaders is not a straightforward procedure since multiple traits can fit more than a single dimension. Given this common overlapping, one frequently notices various conceptualisations in the literature. For instance, specifically in regard to the SCM, Wojciszke and Klusek (1996) include *fair, honest, sincere, righteous, unselfish, modest, pleasant and likeable* in what they name the ‘morality dimension’, which is merely a different label for warmth (Wojciszke et al. 1998; for more examples of different dimension’s labels across studies, see Bittner 2011), and *ingenious, clever, intelligent, foresighted, efficient and good-looking* in the competence dimension. Conversely, Fiske et al. (2006: 77) ascribe *friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness and morality* to the warmth dimension, whereas *ability, intelligence, skill, creativity and efficacy* pertain to competence. Finally, for Cuddy et al. (2008: 65) warmth is comprised of traits such as *good-natured, trustworthy, tolerant, friendly* and *sincere*, while competence encompasses *capable, skillful, intelligent and confident*.

The distinction between the warmth and competence dimensions is also relevant because it enables an understanding of what categories of traits voters consider more crucial in their evaluation of political leaders. While competence is essentially a performance-related category, warmth is more closely related to non-political traits, such as the ability of leaders to create an empathic relationship with the voters, their personal appeal and characteristics. It would be relevant to understand which kind of traits voters value the most when evaluating leaders and if these differ according to political orientation.

The same constructs have also been designated as ‘communion’ and ‘agency’, which they largely resemble; therefore, it is common practice in the literature to treat them similarly as the ‘Big Two’ dimensions (Bruckmüller & Abele 2015; Cuddy et al. 2008: 66; Fiske et al. 2006). A line of research applying this framework to the conceptualisation of leaders’ traits has found consistent evidence across time of the relevance of these ‘Big Two’ fundamental dimensions in voters’ assessments of candidates’ traits across diverse political contexts (Caprara et al. 2002, 2007). A recent study argues in favour of considering warmth and morality as separate sub-dimensions of ‘communion’ (Abele et al. 2016). A study by Cislak and Wojciszke (2006) corroborates the bi-dimensionality of social cognition, while recognising a higher weight of the warmth/communion dimension in the evaluation of politicians. Other studies demonstrate how the two dimensions may vary according to political orientation: left-wing leaders tend to be ranked higher on warmth and right-wing leaders higher on competence (Bittner 2011; Caprara et al. 2006). Thus, just as it happens

with regard to vote choice, we can expect the dimensions to have different impacts on turnout depending on political orientation. Following these studies, the warmth dimension is expected to have a higher impact among left-wing partisans and the competence dimension should be more decisive for right-wing partisans in their turnout decisions.

Dealignment and turnout: What is the role of leaders?

The traditional structure of cleavages put forward by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) has played a major role in explaining voting behaviour throughout most of the twentieth century. From the theoretical point of view, the authors' freezing hypothesis was a cornerstone for political behaviour research. It has also collected wide empirical evidence – for instance, in the patterns of electoral stability that characterised Western democracies up to the end of the century. However, since 'cleavage politics depend for their existence on the loyalty to social groups' (Franklin 2009: 399), the individualisation of society within the process of modernisation has 'led to a loosening of the social structures that used to bind individuals to a preordained set of social and political attitudes and behaviours' (Lobo & Curtice 2014: 2) and altered the existing patterns of voting behaviour. Cleavages lost most of their structuring power as determinants of voting behaviour and, as a consequence, partisan alignments have weakened. Together, individualisation and the erosion of the traditional cleavages operated a shift from group-based to individual-based voting behaviour. That is to say, whereas enduring loyalty bonds between electors and political parties used to guide voters' preferences in a long-term basis, now short-term factors have increased their weight in the voting calculus. In this sense, new elements such as political leaders gain influence over voting decisions.

Essentially, since the last decades of the twentieth century, we have been observing a progressive distancing between voters and the traditional means of political participation and decision making in general. It is in this context of voters' withdrawal from politics that authors such as Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) refer to a pervasive process of dealignment and Mair (2006) to the hollowing of Western democracies. Empirical evidence of these trends can be found in the declining levels of party identification (Dalton 2000), party membership (Mair & Van Biezen 2001; Van Biezen et al. 2012; Scarrow 2000), higher electoral volatility (Dalton et al. 2000; Pedersen 1979) and, above all, decline in voter turnout (Blais 2010; Franklin 2002, 2004; Gray & Caul 2000).

While it is true that several scholars have advanced new cleavage-based propositions – which might potentially correspond to a realignment – in an attempt to provide theoretical alternatives to the traditional cleavages (Dalton et al. 1984; Flanagan & Dalton 1984; Inglehart 1977, 1984; Kriesi et al. 2008), these are still unable to account for the symptoms of dealignment just described, which suggest this is not just an issue of traditional versus new cleavages, but a phenomenon of structural detachment from political parties in general. In explaining this apparent incongruity, perhaps the critical aspect to reflect on is if these new cleavages correspond to the classic definition of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), or if they refer to political divides of another kind (for a more thorough discussion, see Bartolini & Mair 1990: 199–205). In any case, given the inability of the so-called 'new' cleavages to cope with the described trends, their structuring power seems far more limited. For example, as Franklin (2009: 383) notices in his study about electoral change in 16 Western societies, 'in

no country is the decline in the structuring properties of traditional cleavages balanced by increases in the structuring properties of new cleavages’.

Wattenberg (2000) established a clear-cut relationship between dealignment and turnout decline, concluding that there has been a nearly universal turnout decline in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (excluding Scandinavia) since the 1950s. Median values for this decline go as high as 10 per cent. More importantly, he also found this decline to be associated with parties’ failure to effectively mobilise voters. The decline is markedly lower (or, in a couple of cases, there is even an increase) in those counties where party systems remain relatively stable and political parties still play a strong role: ‘party systems that are notoriously weak have seen the most pronounced drops in electoral participation, whereas the presence of strong political parties appears to have dampened the decline of turnout’ (Wattenberg 2000: 71). In fact, as was early noted by Powell (1982: 117), ‘the relationship between participation and strength of alignment is a powerful one’, and the ability of parties to operate as turnout mobilisers depends largely on the strength of the linkages they are able to establish with the groups on the basis of these alignments. In this sense, in a context where collective identities have lost meaningfulness and the importance of the group generally declines, these bonds are compromised. For this reason, ‘even for those who continue to have an identification with a political party, there is still reason to postulate that this identification is less likely to mobilize people as in the past’ (Wattenberg 2000: 66) as voting became more individualised and the identification itself is less structural and thus more permeable to change (Garzia 2014).

Deriving from Hirschman’s (1970) original framework, Dassonneville et al. (2015: 1) point out that in this context of dealignment and ‘with loyalty towards a particular party decreasing, it seems that voters are making use of voice (party switching) and exit (abstaining) options more often’. But what is the role of leaders in this process? Lobo (2014) concludes that leader effects are higher among party switchers compared to loyal voters, indicating leaders can play a role within the voice strategy. However, existing research has not yet studied leaders’ role in avoiding the exit option – that is, in stimulating voting turnout.

In line with the personalisation of politics thesis, leaders should have a higher impact among dealigned voters. Since these voters have opted to exit the party system rather than exercise their discontent within the remaining political options, abstainers are perhaps the most extreme type of dealigned voters. Admittedly, abstainers are a markedly heterogeneous category of voters, containing not only the dealigned, disappointed and discontent voters but also those who could not vote for a variety of conjectural reasons that are not political in their nature. Notwithstanding, it seems reasonable to expect that the majority of these individuals do not vote because they do not find any of the political alternatives attractive enough. Therefore, the theory suggests abstainers to be a segment of the electorate particularly subject to the influence of political leaders. If this is true, leaders should have a twofold effect on voting behaviour: not only do they influence whether individuals vote for a specific party instead of another, they also have the potential to influence whether voters turn out to vote or abstain. In other words, whereas parties fail to mobilise, leaders themselves may succeed.

Contrary to what happens regarding the impact of leaders on vote choice (Bittner 2011; Garzia 2012, 2013, 2014; Lobo 2014), the hypothesis concerning leader effects on turnout has never been tested. A few studies deal with voters who switch from voting to abstention,

but they are always based on the logic that these voters may constitute a sub-group where leader effects are stronger because they lack strong attachments with parties and, therefore, fit within the dealigned category (Lobo 2014). None of the studies assesses the impact leaders may have in triggering that switch (i.e., in prompting individuals to vote rather than abstaining); instead, they deal with vote choice among those who do turn out and not with turnout itself.

If it is demonstrated that leaders can promote voter turnout, they may matter as mobilising agents in a context where parties fail to do so. In such scenarios, the personalisation of politics could be considered to carry some positive implications from the normative point of view. If leaders contribute to reintegrate voters who opted for exiting the party system, their growing importance in contemporary democracies can be considered to be beneficial. This is not the same as to claim that leaders replaced the role of stable partisan alignments in mobilising their supporters. Yet, leaders may be effective channels in re-approximating disengaged voters with parties through their personal appeal. This relationship may then crystallise in more stable attachments leading to consistent turnout behaviour.

This study aims at determining the importance of voters' evaluations of leaders' personality traits on their probability to turn out in general elections based on two fundamental dimensions of personality traits: warmth and competence. Because the structure of the data is not longitudinal, we cannot establish a causal temporal relationship between the process of dealignment and an increased personalisation of politics. Instead, our goal is to demonstrate that, at the cross-sectional level, evaluation of leaders' traits do correlate with turnout decisions and therefore leaders potentially mobilise a dealigned sector of the electorate which has been growing over the last decades.

Furthermore, based on previous studies which found an interaction between voters' dealignment and leader effects on voting behaviour, it is possible that the same kind of relationship also holds for the effect on turnout. Mughan (2009), Gidengil (2011) and Lobo (2014) have demonstrated the possibility of a differentiated effect of leaders according to voters' party identification as a result of the dealignment process. Voters without party identification (i.e., those without a longstanding attachment to a political party) are more susceptible to being influenced by short-term determinants of voting behaviour, such as political leaders. Thus, the possibility of an interaction effect between party identification and leaders' traits on turnout should also be explored. For the same set of reasons, the effect of leaders should be stronger among voters who were already abstainers, as they reflect a more prolonged exit from voting behaviour as a result of a more structural dealignment. Hence, an interaction between turnout in the previous election and each dimension should be regarded.

Following the previously discussed literature on the topic and its contributions to the current understanding of the effects of leaders on voting behaviour, we formulate the research hypotheses as follows:

- H1:* Both warmth and competence have a positive effect on the probability to turn out.
- H2:* Warmth and competence have a differentiated impact depending on the direction of voters' party identification.

H3: Both dimensions have a positive impact on the probability to turn out among voters who abstained in the previous election.

Materials and methods

This article uses data from seven post-electoral national elections surveys: Portugal (two studies in 2009: $N = 1,013$; $N = 1,518$); Spain (2008: $N = 1,200$); Ireland (2002: $N = 2,663$; 2007: $N = 1,435$); Germany (2009: $N = 2,115$); United Kingdom (2005: $N = 4,161$); Italy (2013: $N = 1,508$); and Hungary (2006: $N = 1,989$). The choice of countries was constrained by the number of surveys containing personality traits questions in Europe and language barriers. Given the scarcity of such studies, we tried to maximise the number of studies to be included, thus justifying the wide time-span of the studies in the sample. From a theoretical point of view, we believe these countries are suitable for a cumulated study. Despite the specificities of each country's political system, they are established parliamentary democracies sharing a common supranational framework and subject to the same set of sociopolitical transformations in the origin of the personalisation of politics – rising dealignment, individualisation and mediatisation of politics. All leaders featured in the election studies were considered, despite most of them including just the leaders of the two mainstream parties. Along with other reasons, this discouraged the consideration of an analysis based on party types.

The selected studies were merged into a single database ($N = 17,571$), which required variable recoding to permit some degree of compatibility between different studies.¹ Party identification naturally varies across countries because different parties run for election. When analysing the impact of party identification on turnout it is not of upmost relevance to determine the specific party with which an individual has an identification. Instead, what is relevant is to determine if the voter has any identification at all, since she is expected to turn out to vote regardless of the political party with which she identifies. Due to these reasons, and since a measure of strength of party identification was nonexistent in most of the election studies, two dummy variables were created to measure party identification: *PID_right* (0: does not identify with a right-wing party; 1: identifies with a right-wing party) and *PID_left* (0: does not identify with a left-wing party; 1: identifies with a left-wing party).² Therefore, the only distinction regarding party identification was based on the party's ideology. We chose to take into account a directional component of partisanship due to the already mentioned evidence of differences in the weight of the two dimensions according to partisan stereotypes. With this procedure, comparability between studies was accomplished while still allowing us to search for differences according to parties' ideology. The high prevalence of centre-right and centre-left parties in the sample, and especially the concentration of partisans in these two categories, prevented us from using a more fine-grained ideological typology.

It can be argued that there might be endogeneity between party identification and leaders' traits. Short-term factors such as leader evaluations, economic evaluations or political issues may be associated, to a certain degree, with voters' party attachments. However, since we are testing the dealignment argument that leaders matter especially for the ones who do not have a party identification, we actually believe that positive evaluations of leaders' traits will have a stronger impact precisely when the party does not. In this sense,

concerns about endogeneity may perhaps be relaxed since party identification and leaders are expected to vary in opposite directions. Additionally, traits are arguably less endogenous with partisanship and vote choice than leader evaluation scales, which have been commonly used and accepted in the literature.

The retrospective economic evaluations are not measured in the same way across the electoral studies. Particularly in the Hungarian National Election Study, respondents are asked 'How do you perceive the Hungarian economic situation and its perspectives?', which was used as a proxy of retrospective economic evaluations. The answers (1 Temporally downslide; 2 Crisis with positive perspectives; 3 Crisis with negative perspectives; 4 State default) were recoded to match the standard scale (1 A lot worse; 2 A bit worse; 3 Neither better nor worse; 4 A bit better; 5 A lot better). In the Italian National Election Study (ITANES), there were two questions regarding economic evaluations – one for each of the two biannual governments (Berlusconi's and Monti's) in office since the previous election study. Only the answers related to the latter executive were used, since these are the ones more likely to be in the voters' minds at election time and there are more reasons to believe the latter government will be the one conceived as the incumbent. Since this question used a 10-point scale it was also recoded to match the standard one.

Only participants without any missing information in every relevant variable were included, which resulted in a global sample of 8,188 individuals with a mean age of 50 years ($SD = 16.9$) and of whom 4,275 were females (52.2 per cent; see Online Appendix 3 for more sociodemographics). One constant feature in every country analysed is the observation of higher reported turnout rates than the official ones. This trend is recurrently observed in electoral research. On the one hand, people who vote and who are willing to answer surveys are likely to be correlated, leading to an under-representation of abstainers in surveys. On the other hand, social norms' pressure leads individuals to over-report voting in an attempt to conform to socially desirable behaviour (Silver et al. 1986), particularly when they are asked about voting in a survey. Additionally, similar party supporters were found for left-wing ($n = 2,974$; 36.3 per cent) and right-wing parties ($n = 2,901$; 35.4 per cent).

Regarding the latent factorial structure of the traits, a Confirmatory Factorial Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the validity of the warmth and competence two-dimensional construct.³ The CFA was performed considering two dimensions (warmth and competence). Before applying the CFA, we needed to ensure that the underlying assumption of normality was met by all traits. To test this assumption, we used the following rule of thumb: absolute skewness (Sk) and kurtosis (K) values lower than 3.0 and 8.0, respectively (Kline 2005). The CFA was fitted using maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation. Goodness-of-fit was evaluated using the χ^2 statistics as well as the following descriptive indices: Comparative Fit Index (CFI); and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hu & Bentler 1999; Schermelleh-Engel et al. 2003). Despite a significant χ^2 value, $\chi^2 (33) = 353$, $p < 0.001$, that is naturally related with study sample size, the CFA revealed satisfactory fit indexes: CFI = 0.975, RMSEA (HI90) = 0.037 (0.040). The model revealed a highly positive correlation between the two latent dimensions considered ($r = 0.963$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that, based on the evaluated traits, we could question the bi-dimensionality of the construct. However, since it is not possible to perform a CFA using all items, we decided to maintain the two-dimensional structure based on the theoretical background developed.

The warmth dimension comprises the following traits: *close to my ideas, close to the citizens, good communicator, has charisma, honest, in touch with ordinary people, likable person, pays attention to the problems and opinion of the people, trustworthy, knows the problem of ordinary people*. The competence dimension is composed of the following traits: *able to gather resources, assertive and strong, becomes acquainted with the details of the issues thoroughly before making an important decision, capable of governing the country well, compelling knowledge of economics, defends responsible policies, has authority, has clear political goals, has projects for the country, has sensible ideas about how to manage the economic crisis, is characterised by determined stance and the ability of confrontation, is effective, knows how to strengthen the economy, knows the problems of the country, makes decisions, strong, well prepared, competent, responsive*. An analysis of the inter-item correlations between the traits that compose each dimension was also performed.⁴ In both cases the inter-item correlation of the dimensions was higher than the correlation among traits from both dimensions, supporting the choice for this specific two-dimensional structure.

In spite of the fact that warmth and competence represent a good solution for structuring the set of traits, because they are theoretical constructs they do not fit perfectly with the data as some traits overlap with both dimensions. There are a few cases of competence traits with high correlations with the traits from the warmth dimension – namely ‘having sensible ideas about how to manage the economic crisis’ and being ‘trustworthy’ (0.662) and being ‘close to citizens’ or ‘able to gather resources’ and ‘effective’ (0.652 and .651, respectively). This is common in the literature, as the dimensions are not perfectly isolated constructs and some traits may have ambivalent associations across dimensions (for an example, see Bittner 2011: 44).

Results

Warmth and competence were regressed on turnout through a binary logistic regression in order to test the effect of these political leader’s evaluations on political participation. To cope with multicollinearity issues, for interaction effects analysis, the variables pertaining to both dimensions were mean-centred. The dependent variable was coded 0 if the respondent abstained and 1 if the respondent cast a vote. As control, sociodemographic variables gender, age and education were included; ideology (respondent’s ideological self-placement in a left-right scale); turnout in the previous election; party identification (with left- and right-wing parties); and six (and four) country dummies (Spain was the reference category). Two additional controls were included: retrospective economic evaluations, and the respondent’s attention to the campaign. However, as these two variables were not available in the Hungarian and British election studies, two sets of models were run: Models A, with seven countries (Table 1); and Models B, with five countries (Table 2) and with the two added variables. Each set has three types of models.

The first model tests the impact of the warmth and competence dimensions on turnout, controlling for gender, age, education, ideology, turnout in the previous election, party identification and the seven countries, in Table 1; and the same variables for five countries (Hungary and the United Kingdom were excluded), plus retrospective economic evaluations and the respondent’s attention to the campaign, in Table 2. In the seven-country analysis

Table 1. Models A: Logistic regression analysis of turnout (0: Abstention; 1: Vote) in seven countries

Variables	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI
Gender (female)	0.031	1.031	0.035	1.035	0.908–1.181	0.043	1.044	0.915–1.193
	0.067		0.067			0.068		
Age	0.014	1.014***	0.014	1.014***	1.01–1.019	0.014	1.014***	1.010–1.019
	0.002		0.002			0.002		
Education	–0.158	0.854***	–0.154	0.858***	0.809–0.909	–0.163	0.850***	0.801–0.902
	0.030		0.030			0.030		
Ideology	–0.030	0.971	–0.028	0.972	0.941–1.004	–0.026	0.974	0.943–1.006
	0.016		0.016			0.017		
Turnout previous election	1.752	5.765***	1.752	5.767***	5.016–6.631	1.522	4.583***	3.933–5.340
	0.071		0.071			0.078		
PID_right	0.619	1.856***	0.621	1.861***	1.560–2.223	0.625	1.867***	1.570–2.221
	0.088		0.090			0.089		
PID_left	0.532	1.703***	0.581	1.787***	1.480–2.160	0.567	1.762***	1.476–2.104
	0.088		0.096			0.090		
Portugal	–0.592	0.553**	–0.570	0.565**	0.389–0.821	–0.553	0.575**	0.396–0.837
	0.189		0.190			0.191		
Ireland	–0.456	0.634*	–0.392	0.676*	0.465–0.981	–0.523	0.593**	0.411–0.856
	0.189		0.190			0.188		
Italy	–0.911	0.402***	–0.907	0.404***	0.269–0.605	–1.504	0.222***	0.153–0.323
	0.205		0.207			0.190		

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued

Variables	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI
Germany	-0.872	0.418***	0.289–0.605	-0.849	0.428***	0.295–0.620	-1.914	0.382***	0.263–0.555
	0.189			0.189			0.200		
Hungary	-1.449	0.235***	0.161–0.342	-1.413	0.243***	0.167–0.355	-0.772	0.462***	0.311–0.688
	0.192			0.193			0.203		
United Kingdom	-1.863	0.155***	0.105–0.23	-1.832	0.160***	0.108–0.237	-0.961	0.148***	0.100–0.219
	0.201			0.201			0.190		
Warmth	0.064	1.066*	0.999–1.137	0.110	1.116*	1.011–1.232	0.157	1.169**	1.044–1.309
	0.033			0.050			0.058		
Competence	0.079	1.082*	1.015–1.153	0.045	1.046	0.953–1.147	0.233	1.262***	1.135–1.404
	0.032			0.047			0.054		
PID_right*Warmth				-0.203	0.816**	0.704–0.945			
				0.075					
PID_right*Competence				0.093	1.097	0.958–1.257			
				0.069					
PID_left*Warmth				0.049	1.051	0.897–1.230			
				0.080					
PID_left*Competence				0.006	1.006	0.868–1.165			
				0.075					
Turnout previous*Warmth							-0.145	0.865*	0.757–0.990
							0.069		
Turnout previous*Competence							-0.250	0.779***	0.688–0.882
							0.064		
$\chi^2(15) = 1101; p < 0.001; \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = 0.155$ $\chi^2(19) = 1118; p < 0.001; \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = 0.158$ $\chi^2(19) = 1201; p < 0.001; \text{Nagelkerke } R^2 = 0.169$									

Notes: Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. N = 8,188. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Country dummies' reference category: Spain. Coding: Gender – 0 male, 1 female; Age – numeric; Education – 1 Higher education, 2 Secondary education, 3 Ninth grade, 4 Sixth grade, 5 Primary education, 6 None (can read), 7 None (can't read); Ideology – 0 (Far-left) to 10 (Far-right).

Table 2. Models B: Logistic regression analysis of turnout (0: Abstention; 1: Vote) in five countries

Variables	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI
Gender (female)	0.157	1.170	0.974–1.405	0.160	1.174	0.977–1.411	0.156	1.169	0.971–1.408
	0.093			0.094			0.095		
Age	0.008	1.008**	1.002–1.014	0.008	1.008*	1.002–1.014	0.008	1.008**	1.002–1.014
	0.003			0.003			0.003		
Education	–0.051	0.950	0.876–1.03	–0.045	0.956	0.882–1.037	–0.059	0.943	0.870–1.023
	0.041			0.041			0.042		
Ideology	–0.047	0.954*	0.91–1.000	–0.048	0.953*	0.909–0.999	–0.046	0.955	0.911–1.002
	0.024			0.024			0.024		
Turnout previous election	2.201	9.033***	7.455–10.945	2.202	9.044***	7.455–10.972	1.754	5.776***	4.486–7.437
	0.098			0.099			0.129		
PID_right	0.448	1.566***	1.218–2.013	0.370	1.447*	1.069–1.959	0.457	1.579***	1.224–2.036
	0.128			0.155			0.130		
PID_left	0.297	1.346*	1.067–1.698	0.440	1.552**	1.151–2.093	0.330	1.391**	1.097–1.764
	0.119			0.153			0.121		
Portugal	–0.188	0.829	0.552–1.244	–0.173	0.847	0.564–1.273	–0.280	0.756	0.501–1.138
	0.207			0.207			0.209		
Ireland	–0.051	0.950	0.54–1.673	0.076	1.073	0.605–1.901	–0.261	0.770	0.438–1.355
	0.289			0.291			0.287		
Italy	0.139	1.149	0.709–1.861	0.196	1.152	0.706–1.881	0.256	1.292	0.811–2.056
	0.246			0.254			0.237		

(Continued)

Table 2. Continued

Variables	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI	Coeff.	Odds ratio	Odds ratio 95% CI
Germany	-0.381	0.683	0.456-1.024	-0.363	0.695	0.464-1.041	-0.550	0.577**	0.382-0.872
	0.207			0.206			0.210		
Warmth	0.152	1.165*	1.023-1.326	0.206	1.229*	1.007-1.499	0.322	1.381**	1.126-1.692
	0.066			0.102			0.104		
Competence	0.029	1.029	0.911-1.163	-0.031	0.969	0.807-1.164	0.071	1.074	0.893-1.291
	0.062			0.093			0.094		
Economic evaluations	0.155	1.167**	1.056-1.29	0.156	1.169**	1.052-1.298	0.175	1.191**	1.071-1.324
	0.051			0.051			0.052		
Attention to the campaign	-0.621	0.537***	0.481-0.601	-0.628	0.533***	0.477-0.597	-0.614	0.541***	0.484-0.606
	0.057			0.057			0.058		
PID_right*Warmth				-0.229	0.795	0.583-1.085			
				0.158					
PID_right*Competence				0.077	1.080	0.816-1.429			
				0.143					
PID_left*Warmth				0.008	1.008	0.740-1.372			
				0.157					
PID_left*Competence				0.098	1.103	0.835-1.457			
				0.142					
Turnout previous*Warmth							-0.277	0.758*	0.586-0.982
							0.132		
Turnout previous*Competence							-0.116	0.890	0.704-1.126
							0.120		
$\chi^2(15) = 1092; p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.256$ $\chi^2(19) = 1104; p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.259$ $\chi^2(17) = 1130; p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.265$									

Notes: Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. N = 5,294. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Country dummies' reference category - Spain. Coding: Gender - 0 male, 1 female; Age - numeric; Education - 1 Higher education, 2 Secondary education, 3 Ninth grade, 4 Sixth grade, 5 Primary education, 6 None (can read), 7 None (can't read); Ideology 0 (Far-left) to 10 (Far-right).

both dimensions have a statistically significant impact on turnout, although the effect size is not very large (OR = 1.066 for warmth; OR = 1.082 for competence). Once the two additional controls were included in the model in Table 2 – which are both significant and, particularly draw attention to the campaign, with a strong effect – only the warmth dimension holds significance, with a stronger effect than in the previous model, although still relatively weak (OR = 1.165). This suggests the effect of competence is lost once stronger controls, typical of turnout models, are introduced. However, it could also be the case that this is due to the shrinkage of the sample, especially considering that Hungary and the United Kingdom are the countries which have a bigger effect size in the model in Table 1. In any case, evaluations of warmth personality traits prove to be a relevant predictor of voter turnout. Ideally, we would also include additional controls such as political sophistication and interest in politics. However, these are not available in most of the studies and would carry an undesirable reduction of the sample.

Not having identification with a political party is an important indicator of dealignment. Therefore, it can moderate the effect of leader evaluations on turnout. According to the theory, those without a party identification may be more likely to be impacted by evaluations of leaders' traits. Hence, it seems pertinent to establish an interaction between party identification and the warmth and competence dimensions. A distinction was also established between identifiers with right- and left-wing parties in line with findings from previous studies about the differentiated impact of these dimensions according to political orientation. The results show some evidence confirming this hypothesis. In the seven-country model, there is a negative interaction between identifiers with right-wing parties and warmth evaluations, with a moderate effect size (OR = 0.815), while the warmth dimension variable is also significant. For a one-unit increase in the warmth scale, the chances of voters who do not identify with right-wing parties turning out to vote increases by 22.7 per cent. This result suggests that identifiers with right-wing parties moderate the relationship between warmth leaders' evaluations and turnout. A graphic representation of the interaction effect can be seen in Figure 1, where we can observe a positive slope for non-identifiers with right-wing parties, which represents that higher evaluations on the warmth dimension correspond to higher turnout probability (remaining variables held at their mean values).

Moving to the five-country solution, the interaction effect is no longer present. However, the warmth dimension variable remains statistically significant with a moderate effect size (OR = 1.224), once again signalling the importance of voters' evaluations of leaders' warmth personality traits, even when strong controls are introduced.

Finally, we interacted the two dimensions with the turnout in the previous election on the assumption that individuals who have a repeatedly abstaining behaviour are more prone to be dealigned, and therefore more likely to consider evaluations of political leaders. The last model in Table 1 confirms the existence of a moderate size interaction effect of both warmth (OR = 0.865) and competence (OR = 0.779) with turnout/abstention in the previous election, as demonstrated in Figures 2 and 3. As expected, evaluations of leaders' personality traits have a stronger impact among individuals who did not turn out to vote in the previous election, confirming the theory that leader effects are stronger among the most dealigned. For a one-unit increase in the warmth scale, the chances of those who have not turned out in the previous election, turning out on the later election, increases by 15.6 per cent. With regard

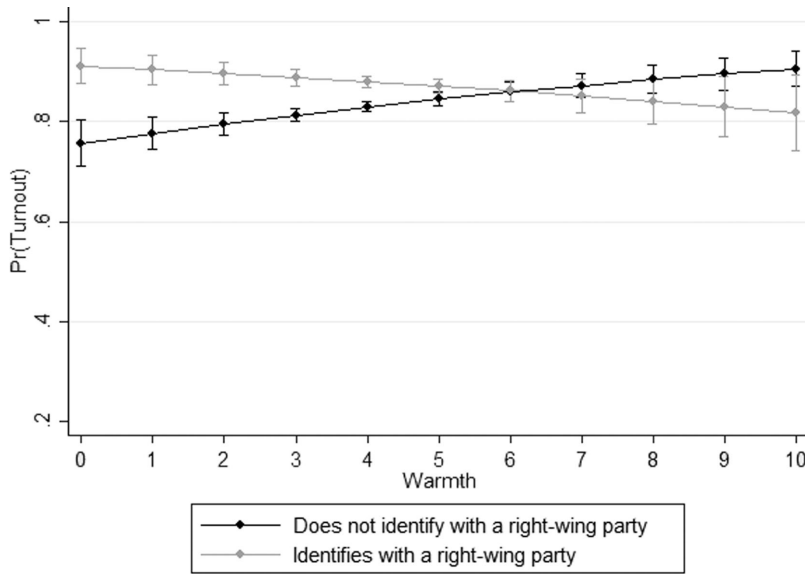


Figure 1. Marginal effects on turnout of the interaction between warmth evaluations and identification with a right-wing party.

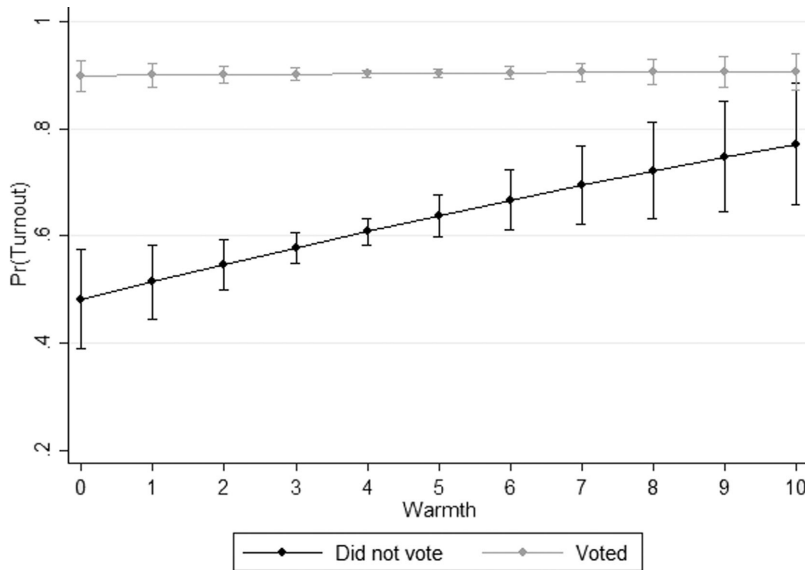


Figure 2. Marginal effects on turnout of the interaction between warmth evaluations and turnout on the previous election.

to the competence dimension, these chances increase by 28.4 per cent. The interaction effect exists even in the full model with five countries (Table 2), although exclusively in regard to the warmth dimension ($OR = 0.758$) which, one more time, proves to be more relevant. In the five-country model, for a one-unit increase in the warmth scale, the chances of those who

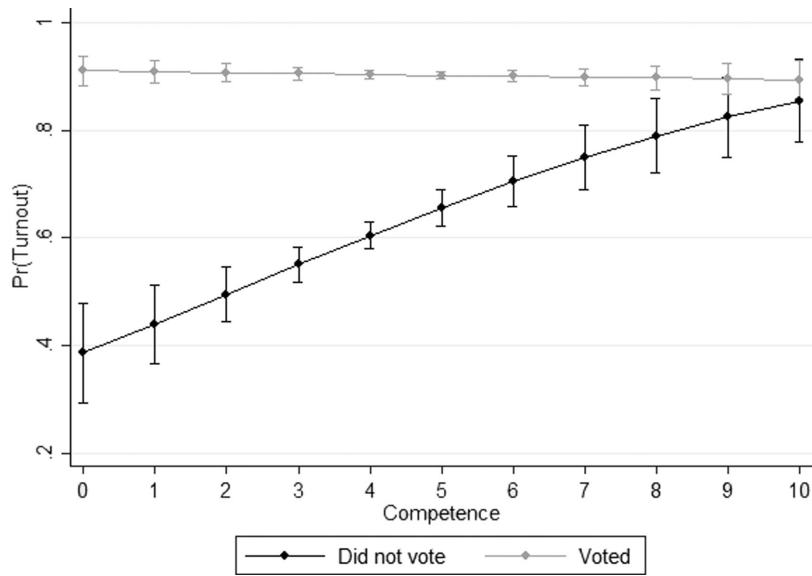


Figure 3. Marginal effects on turnout of the interaction between competence evaluations and turnout on the previous election.

have not turned out in the previous election, turning out on the later election increases by 31.9 per cent.

As a robustness test, we jack-knifed the regressions by country, leaving one country at a time out of the analyses (Online Appendix 6). The impact of the warmth dimension on the seven-country solution still held. All other effects ceased to exist, proving once again the dominant role of the warmth dimension in the evaluation of political leaders.

Given the interrelationship between some of the warmth and competence dimension traits, we have also tested whether the competence dimension becomes significant when included alone in the models after having excluded the warmth dimension. Globally, the results seem to hold: there is no significant interaction between party identification (left or right) and competence, while the interaction between previous turnout and competence remains significant (Online Appendix 7). Rerunning the same test for the five-country model, though, competence turns out as significant in the main effects model and in interaction with turnout on the previous election (Online Appendix 8).

Discussion

In this study we focused on the analysis of the effects of voter evaluations of leaders' traits on turnout in seven European countries. This is a relevant work since, to the best of our knowledge, no other study so far has explored hypotheses concerning leader effects on turnout. Considering existing theories on the decline of political parties, growing disengagement with the politics and the personalisation of politics, the results demonstrate that leaders can play a role in reconnecting citizens with politics through the most elementary mechanism of political participation: turnout. Furthermore, the fact that leaders

have stronger effects among voters who have been abstaining for more than one election is elucidative of their capacity to bring back these voters into being politically active. Hence, in a context of growing dealignment and disenchantment with political parties, leaders can act as important mobilising agents, able to reconnect citizens with politics, provided they have the relevant traits.

Theory-based binary logistic regression models were performed to predict turnout in general elections, considering sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education and country), political variables (ideology and party identification), past election behaviour, and warmth and competence leaders dimensions. Furthermore, other regression models were performed for five countries where economic evaluations and attention to the campaign information were available. The results from this latter solution do not sustain the effect of the competence dimension or the interaction with party identification. Instead, only the warmth dimension has a significant impact on turnout decisions, whether in the main effects model or in interaction with previous turnout. This can be due to the inclusion of the two additional controls but also to the drop in the sample size since the excluded countries – Hungary and the United Kingdom – were precisely those countries where respondents' reported abstention is higher.

In general, in line with what was hypothesised in *H1*, the relevance of warmth and competence was clear in the seven-country models. Warm and competent leaders increase the probability to turn out. Nevertheless, the five-country solution denotes supremacy of warmth evaluations when compared to competence in regarding turnout. Thus, despite competence in the seven-country model also having a relevant impact, overall the warmth dimension has a more robust impact on turnout. This is somewhat in line with previous findings pointing towards a preponderance of the morality/communion dimension *vis-à-vis* competence in the evaluation of politicians (Cislak & Wojciszke 2008; Costa & Silva 2015). It appears, then, that when deciding whether to turn out, instead of being mobilised primarily by the performance-related traits of leaders, empathic relationships towards leaders who are perceived to be warm play a more important role. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as a sign of the depoliticisation of the electorate associated with the personalisation of politics, where voters evaluate candidates based on superficial criteria. On the other hand, inasmuch as warmth traits can be used to evaluate the character of the candidates, they may be meaningful cues for voters to anticipate the behaviour of political leaders in office. Furthermore, particularly with regard to turnout, the potential of candidates to bring voters to the ballot box is arguably very much linked to their ability to mobilise the electorate. Bearing in mind that traits such as being a 'good communicator', 'close to my ideas', 'in touch with ordinary people', 'paying attention to the problems and opinion of the people' and 'knowing the problems of ordinary people' are part of the warmth dimension, the more decisive role this dimension plays in the success of mobilisation efforts by candidates is comprehensible.

In addition to the main effects model, two moderator variables were explored: party identification and past political behaviour. Results showed that party identification was only a significant moderator for right-wing party identifiers in the seven-country model. The negative moderating relationship indicates that non-identifiers with right-wing parties consider warmth evaluations of leaders to increase their voting participation. However, this relationship is not corroborated by a significant positive sign on the interaction between

left partisanship and warmth, which would indicate warmth to be mostly relevant for left identifiers; neither is it confirmed by a negative sign on the same interaction term which, together with the right-wing interaction of the same dimension, would suggest that warmth is particularly important among the non-identifiers. Therefore, although there is a significant interaction term in the seven-country solution between warmth and party identification, for the abovementioned reasons and because it is not replicated in the five country solution, it is insufficient to confirm the hypothesis of a differentiated impact of these dimensions according to the political orientation of voters (*H2*).

The moderator role of past political behaviour was quite remarkable – the probability of turnout was positively related with both leader dimensions, thus confirming *H3*. Therefore, warm and competent leaders appeal in particular to those individuals who had already abstained in the previous election and have a positive impact on turnout. This is true for the seven-country solution. When adding the additional controls in the five-country solution, only the interaction with warmth remains significant. Once again, this reinstates the increased impact of warmth evaluations of leaders on the probability to turn out. The fact that again the warmth dimension is the most relevant, now especially concerning disengaged individuals who had not turned out on the previous election, provides a strong indication of its role in mobilisation efforts.

In addition to the previous section's results, we have explored the possibility of the existence of significant differences on the impact on both warmth and competence on turnout across countries. It could be the case that there are large differences across countries on the impact of the dimensions and that the previous results were being influenced by these discrepancies. To this effect, first we have compared the beta coefficients across countries and plotted them against the mean turnout by country in order to get a visual sense of the differences across countries on the regression coefficients (Online Appendices 10 and 11). Next, we tested the equality of the coefficients by using a Wald test. As in the previous plots, this test was conducted independently for warmth and competence's main effects models. In both cases, we have been able to, indeed, confirm the existence of relatively small but statistically significant differences across countries: Warmth: $F(6, 8168) = 3.38$; $p < 0.005$; Competence: $F(6, 8168) = 4.69$; $p < 0.001$. The United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal and Hungary seem to be the countries where warmth and competence evaluations of leaders have a higher positive impact on turnout.⁵

This study adds to the personalisation of politics literature by demonstrating the existence of an effect of voters' evaluations of leaders' personality traits on turnout. Particularly, traits pertaining to the warmth dimension seem to be impactful on the probability to turnout, whereas the observed effect of competence traits does not hold when stronger controls are introduced and the sample is reduced to five countries. Granted the existence of some limitations such as the unavailability of some controls used in turnout models (perceptions on the quality of democracy, interest in politics or political sophistication) in the election studies which comprise the sample, this is counterbalanced by the inclusion of very strong controls such as the turnout on the previous election and party identification. The first is a powerful predictor on turnout models and the second perhaps the strongest control in leader effects models. Also, retrospective economic evaluations and attention to the campaign were added. Hence, despite not including a wide range of control variables, the models were subjected to a strong test by the strong controls that were actually

included. The fact that leader evaluations still prove to have a significant and relevant impact on turnout provides evidence of the role leaders can play in stimulating voting participation. Specifically, leaders impact turnout not so much through performance-related traits as they do through their ability to establish an emphatic relationship with voters.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher’s web-site:

Table 1. Variable coding

Table 2. Allocation of political parties along the L/R continuum

Table 3. Study population by country, gender, age, education, ideology, turnout in previous election, party identification, warmth, competence and actual turnout

Table 4. Confirmatory Factorial Analysis and traits per dimension and election study

Table 5. Correlations between personality traits and their respective variances-covariances

Table 6. Logistic regression main effects model (seven countries), jackknifed by country

Table 7. Models A – Logistic regression analysis of turnout (0: Abstention; 1: Vote) in SEVEN countries: competence dimension

Table 8. Models B – Logistic regression analysis of turnout (0: Abstention; 1: Vote) in FIVE countries: competence dimension

Table 9. Multilevel models: random slopes for a) warmth and b) competence

Figure 1. Differences across countries: Beta coefficients of warmth evaluations and mean turnout by country.

Figure 2. Differences across countries: Beta coefficients of competence evaluations and mean turnout by country.

Notes

1. For details on variable coding, please see Online Appendix 1.
2. For details on the ideological coding of the parties, please see Online Appendix 2. We avoided as much as possible categorising parties ideologically as ‘centre’. Still, sometimes that was not possible, as was the case of Beppe Grillo’s Five Star Movement. Voters who identified with this party were excluded from the regressions. Because this was one of the most voted for parties in Italy’s 2013 parliamentary elections, this is a constraint to bear in mind regarding the Italian results.
3. For each election study’s traits and information on the traits subjected to CFA, please see Online Appendix 3.

4. For the traits' correlation matrix, please see Online Appendix 4.
5. Before the Wald tests, we also tested two separate random slopes models (each with a random slope for one of the dimensions) in order to look for variation at the country level (Online Appendix 9) – notwithstanding the existence of caveats in the estimation of these models with a small number of second-level units. Both models comprised main effects only. In both models, we found the variance at the country-level to be virtually inexistent (0.00 for warmth and 0.01 for competence). Hence, these results pointed to the relatively homogenous impact of warmth on turnout across countries, and did not anticipate large discrepancies depending on specific countries. Although statistically significant differences across countries were later found through the Wald tests, they were confirmed to be relatively small.

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