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Motivational and Affective Drivers of Right-Wing Populism Support: Insights From an Austrian Presidential Election

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Supplementary Materials: Data, Materials [see [Index of Supplementary Materials](#)]



Abstract

Research has identified political disenchantment as an important driver for the recent spread of right-wing populism. The cultural backlash approach explains this relationship as a counter response to progressive socio-political developments in Western societies. Drawing on previous work, the present research examines motivational and affective factors underlying the support of right-wing populist parties. We hypothesize that a perceived alienation from the symbolic architecture of a society may decrease levels of psychological need satisfaction, which may catalyze into anxiety and anger. As the “political system” represents an important reflective surface for the socio-political status quo, we expected lower levels of need satisfaction and its resulting affective consequences to help explain the relationship between political disenchantment and right-wing populist support. We tested these tenets based on data from the 2016 Austrian presidential election ($n = 626$). The results of a structural equation model corroborated our predictions with some exceptions. Data indicated a negative relationship between political disenchantment and need satisfaction. Moreover, decreased need satisfaction was associated with increased self-reported anxiety and anger. Political disenchantment indirectly predicted support for a right-wing populist presidential candidate through decreased need satisfaction and anger, thus corroborating the role of anger as an important driver underlying right-wing populism support. Counterintuitively, the data indicated a negative relationship between anxiety and right-wing support. We discuss theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations stemming from sample characteristics and the employed cross-sectional design.



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Keywords

political disenchantment, right-wing populism, populist support, psychological needs, anger, anxiety

Highlights

- A structural equation model examines mechanism underlying the relationship between political disenchantment and right-wing populist support.
- Data indicate a negative relationship between political disenchantment and psychological need satisfaction.
- Dissatisfied needs relate to increased anger and anxiety.
- Anger seems to be an important driver of right-wing populist support.
- Anger might be fueled by “blame” narratives.

Right-wing populist parties (RWPP) present themselves as an alternative to a self-serving political establishment that is locked in an antagonistic relationship with an unfairly deprived majority of “ordinary citizens” (Mudde, 2007). The cultural backlash approach (Inglehart, 2015) complements this view and emphasizes the relevance of symbolic elements to explain the rise of RWPP in contemporary Western societies. The backlash approach understands the increased public support of RWPP as a countermovement to progressive cultural shifts in politics and society, which have challenged the traditional socio-political order and alienated parts of society from the socio-political status quo. International challenges like the global financial crisis, large-scale migration, and terrorism may have fuelled backlash tendencies within societies, with the consequence that RWPP increased their political influence within and beyond Europe (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

On an intrapsychic dimension, backward sentiments have been attributed to feelings of personal and symbolic frustration, paired with mistrust and resentment towards politics and institutions (Capelos & Katsanidou, 2018). The present research seeks to complement previous work and employs an intrapsychic focus to explain the relationship between political disenchantment and RWPP support. Precisely, we focus on motivational orientations towards psychological need maintenance and on affective consequences of need deprivation.

Political Disenchantment and Psychological Needs

The growing body of literature on populism phenomena offers different explanations as to why people are disenchanted with established political institutions and embrace populist ideologies (e.g., Eder, Mochmann, & Quandt, 2015; Mudde, 2007; Spruyt, Keppens, & Van Droogenbroeck, 2016). Without being able to provide an exhaustive overview here, researchers have emphasized the importance of symbolic factors if one seeks to understand the gap between political institutions and certain parts of society. Societies

are organized based on shared worldviews, values, and beliefs that inform citizens about who they are and how to navigate life (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Koole, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2006). Within the symbolic architecture of a society, people find strategies to pursue important life goals and develop, evaluate, and express their identity. Moreover, sharing a common understanding of reality and a common set of norms, helps people regulate their social relationships and let them perceive their environment as predictable and stable (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). In short, the symbolic organization of a society plays an important role in conferring psychological needs in personal, social, and epistemic domains.

System Justification Theory (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2005) emphasizes the importance of need maintenance as a motivational underpinning to explain why people seek to legitimize and preserve the socio-political status quo. Drawing on this tradition, scholars widely attributed system change to liberal attempts to gravitate society towards more open and egalitarian standards, hereby considering need maintenance primarily as an inhibitor of social change (Jost, Becker, Osborne, & Badaan, 2017). There is, however, evidence indicating that system dissatisfaction increases system change support for different socio-political topics on different sides of the ideological aisle (Proch, Elad-Strenger, & Kessler, 2019, see also Azevedo, Jost, & Rothmund, 2017). Accordingly, in a recent theoretical contribution, Becker (2020) proposes a distinction between *progressive* and *reactionary* social change as a function of people's ideological orientation.

It seems plausible to expect that people who struggle with progressive socio-political developments also find it more difficult to confer psychological needs, as their goals and self-regulation mechanism are oriented towards security and tradition. At the same time, a disrupted perception of a shared reality might foster experiences of social isolation and epistemic uncertainty. RWPP may remedy such perceptions, by presenting themselves as defenders of a "silent majority" whose worldviews have been threatened by a political and liberal "elite" that favors "cultural outsiders" such as immigrants over the "native majority" (Mols & Jetten, 2014). In populist narratives, the political system with its institutions and representatives thus becomes a major reflective surface for a socio-political status quo that fails to satisfy peoples' psychological demands. Accordingly, we expect that focusing on decreased levels of need satisfaction can inform the relationship between political disenchantment and RWPP support. We operationalize political disenchantment as a latent factor stemming from low levels of satisfaction and identification with the political system along with feelings of distance and mistrust. Notably, although we expect that lower levels of need satisfaction provide a fertile ground for populist ideologies, research has shown that the capital of RWPP lies particularly in the emotional manifestation of peoples' frustration (Demertzis, 2013; Rico, Guinjoan, & Anduiza, 2017). To account for these findings, we include negative affective outcomes of lowered need satisfaction in our theoretical model.

Psychological Needs and Affect

The present research relies on the anxiety-to-approach model (Jonas et al., 2014) to describe potential affective consequences of decreased need satisfaction and their impact on RWPP support. The anxiety-to-approach model suggests that disrupted need pursuit temporally activate the behavioral inhibition system (BIS), a neural network sensitive to detected goal conflicts (Gray, 1990). BIS activation assumingly raises anxiety, avoidance motivation, and behavioral inhibition, along with a heightened vigilance for potential danger and protection cues in attempts to avoid harm. Such danger cues may be searched outside of oneself, for example, in other people who could threaten one's safe and good life. Accordingly, researchers found that both thwarted needs and anxiety increase selective processing of information, which reinforces threatening perceptions of cultural others (Gadarian & Albertson, 2014; Lueders, Prentice, & Jonas, 2019). Additionally, researchers related anxiety-associated avoidance tendencies with a heightened appeal of policies that promise individual security, socio-political stability, and ingroup homogeneity (Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003).

The anxiety-to-approach model proposes a motivational dynamic claiming that people seek to regulate BIS mediated anxious inhibition and restore approach motivation. Assumingly, anger may fulfil such a function. Emotion researchers conceptualized anger as an approach-oriented state motivating people to act towards the source of a given conflict (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Harmon-Jones, 2003). When translating these assumptions to political behavior, one may assume that although reduced need satisfaction may increase both, anxiety and anger, the latter should be a stronger predictor for RWPP support as mean to fight an undesirable status quo.

Blaming External Targets

If one assumes that anxiety and anger can follow a temporal dynamic, then it seems important to extract factors that foster the transition from one state to the other. Research has shown that anger increases if people feel impeded from goal pursuit due to external targets (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). Blaming external targets (e.g., outgroups) may thus help people catalyze anxiety and frustration into action-oriented anger. Political narratives of RWPP, which not only stir up anxiety but also depict certain groups and institutions as enemies to a victimized ingroup may therefore fuel the emergence of anger (see also Salmela & von Scheve, 2017). In attempts to shed light on such potential effects, we explore how external attribution processes relate to experienced anxiety and anger.

Present Research

The present research was conducted in the context of the 13th nationwide Austrian federal presidential election, which was held in December 2016. Data was collected

briefly before the final ballot of the election. Around 6.5 million Austrian citizens who were at least 16 years old on the day of the actual election could directly vote for one of the two remaining candidates. The voter turnout in this run-off was 74.2% with 96.8% valid votes (Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2016). One of the two candidates was Alexander Van der Bellen, a former leader of the Austrian Green Party who, however, applied as an independent candidate for the federal presidential position. Van der Bellen's campaign strategy was based on cosmopolitical values and contained slogans such as "moving bravely into the future." The right-wing populist Austrian freedom party (FPÖ) nominated the second candidate Norbert Hofer. Hofer's campaign strategy focused on the defence of traditional Austrian values and worked with anti-elite, and nativist slogans such as "power needs control" and "your homeland, your president." Notably, after Hofer won the first round of the presidential election before second placed candidate Van der Bellen, Van der Bellen received cross-party support from many political leaders in the final ballot. Eventually, Van der Bellen won the election against Hofer with 53.8 to 46.2% (Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2016).¹

Hypotheses

H1: In accordance with the cultural backlash approach, we predict a positive relationship between political disenchantment and RWPP support.

H2: Conceptualizing political disenchantment as partially stemming from symbolic frustration, we predict a negative relationship between political disenchantment and need satisfaction.

H3: Following the tenets of the anxiety-to-approach model, we predict a negative relationship between need satisfaction and anxiety and anger, respectively.

H4: Conceptualizing anger as an approach-oriented state, we expect anger to best predict RWPP support.

Exploratory Relationships: We assume that attribution processes may influence affective experiences in political contexts. We therefore explore relationships between external attribution processes and affective experiences.

1) The reported figures relate to the repeated final ballot. Van der Bellen's win after the first final ballot was annulled by the constitutional court after a successful court action from the Austrian Freedom Party.

Method

Participants

We recruited 630 participants in cooperation with the online media platform Vice Austria. We excluded four participants from the analysis who were either younger than 16 years old and hence not allowed to vote, or refused to indicate their age. Our final sample therefore included 626 participants ($Min_{Age} = 16$; $Max_{Age} = 78$; $M_{Age} = 25.9$; $SD_{Age} = 8.78$; Females = 55.4%; Males = 43.8%; missing = 0.8%). Based on responses to an open question, participants were categorized as workers (45.9%), students (40.3%), pupils (10.2%), military or communal servants (2.4%), pensioners (0.8%), and unemployed persons (0.5%). Thirty-five participants (5.6%) refused to indicate their job status or provided unclear responses.

Procedure

The survey was distributed via the Facebook channel of Vice Austria nine days before the presidential election. The posting asked online readers to participate in a collaborative project between Vice Austria and the University of Salzburg that sought to examine relationships between personal wishes and concerns and voting intentions in the upcoming presidential election. After accepting the invitation to participate, participants were guided to a page that informed them about their rights and duties and provided them with the researchers' contact information.

Measures

If not otherwise mentioned, continuous items were measured with scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*fully*). We based our model on latent variables. Composite means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviation of the Reported Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Political Disenchantment		-.22***	.13***	.20***	.16***	.33***
2. Need Satisfaction	–		-.35***	-.31***	-.10	-.02
3. Anxiety	–	–		.68***	.18***	.06
4. Anger	–	–	–		.23***	.16***
5. External Attribution	–	–	–	–		.22***
6. RWPP Support	–	–	–	–	–	
<i>M</i>	4.14	5.60	2.36	1.99	4.07	1.95
<i>SD</i>	1.30	0.78	1.22	1.26	1.04	2.39

Note. RWPP = Right-wing populist parties.

*** $p < .001$.

Political Disenchantment

We measured political disenchantment with four self-generated items (i.e., “How much do you trust the political system in Austria?”, “How much do you identify with the political system in Austria?”, “How satisfied are you with the political system in Austria?”, and “How close do you feel to the political system in Austria?”). We recoded all items so that higher values indicate higher levels of political disenchantment. Standardized factor loadings of all items ranged between .67 and .85.

Need Satisfaction

We developed a 13-item measure to assess *general need satisfaction* broadly based on existential concerns outlined by Koole et al. (2006). The items were either self-generated or borrowed from existing need scales (see [Supplementary Materials](#)). For instance, our measure included items concerning participants’ identity needs (e.g., “I feel a sense of continuity between past, present, and future in my life”), and perceptions of autonomy (e.g., “I feel like I can pretty much be myself in my daily situations”), and social consensus (e.g., “I usually feel that people share my outlook of life”).

To confirm the suggested unidimensional structure of the scale, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis based on maximum likelihood estimation. We removed one item, which did not significantly load on the construct, as well as two reverse coded items that showed poor factor loadings ($< .40$).² Standardized factor loadings of the remaining 10 items ranged between .42 and .74. With exception from the sample size sensitive χ^2 test, fit indices indicated acceptable model fit, $\chi^2(35) = 161.64$, $p < .001$, CFI = .930, RMSEA = .076. It should be noted that the final scale version mainly corresponded to personal needs.

Affect

We measured anxiety with an anxious inhibition scale proposed by Agroskin, Jonas, Klackl, and Prentice (2016). The scale included five items (i.e., “Anxious,” “Bothered,” “Nervous,” “Concerned,” “Inhibited”). Higher values indicated higher anxiety levels. Standardized factor loadings ranged between .64 and .79.

Anger was measured using three self-generated items (i.e., “Angry,” “Upset,” “Irritable”). Higher values indicated higher levels of anger. Standardized factor loadings ranged between .80 and .84.

External Attribution

We introduced participants to a self-generated external attribution measure by asking them “If you could change something to reduce your concerns and foster your desires, where

2) Including the items did not change the overall pattern of results but diminished the model fit.

should this change take place?” Participants then indicated the extent to which they seek changes within their external environment (i.e., “*At the people around me*,” “*At the general situation in Austria*”), or within themselves (i.e., “*At myself*”). The last item was reverse coded. Hence, higher levels indicated higher levels of external attribution. Standardized factor loadings ranged between .34 and .98. We included the reversed item despite its poor factor loading because of the low number of measurement indicators. Excluding the item did not influence the result pattern.

RWPP Support

A 9-point single item asked participants to indicate how likely it was that they would give their vote to one of the two candidates on a range from 25 to 100%. The item followed the bipolar structure of a standard political orientation measure: The left pole of the scale indicated maximum support for the RWPP opponent, whereas the right pole indicated maximum support for the RWPP candidate. Support for the RWPP opponent was indicated by scale responses below the scale midpoint (1 = 100% to 4 = 25%). The scale midpoint of five indicated undecidedness between the candidates. Values above the scale midpoint indicated support for the RWPP candidate (6 = 25% to 9 = 100%). Higher values therefore indicated higher levels of RWPP support.

Results

Analytical Strategy

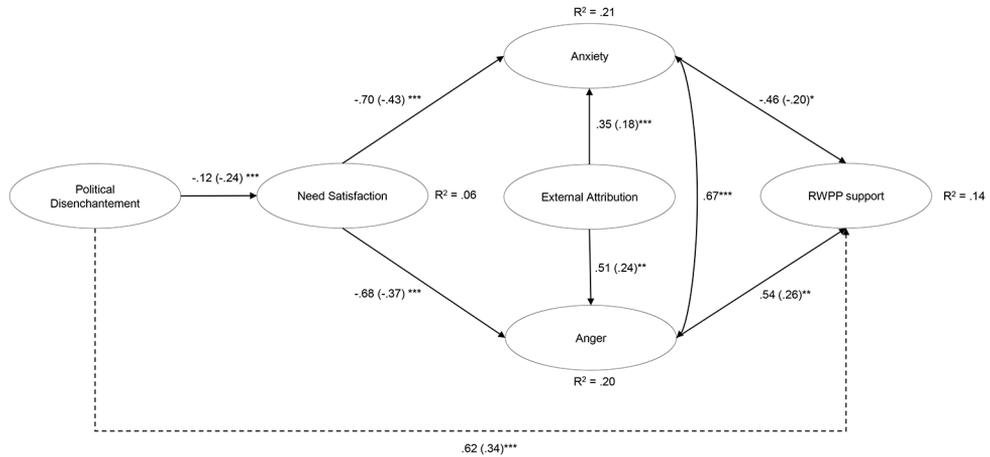
We used SPSS AMOS Version 25 to analyze the proposed structural equation model. Parameters were estimated via the maximum likelihood method. Indirect effects were calculated with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. We correlated indicators of measurement errors between the two latent variables *anxiety* and *anger* due to their conceptual closeness. In accordance with common standards (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999), the tested model indicated satisfactory data fit, $\chi^2(291) = 755.07$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .051; CFI = .924; SRMR = .057. An overview of the model is provided in Figure 1.

The results supported the proposed *H1* by indicating that political disenchantment was positively related to RWPP support, $b = 0.62$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$. As formulated in *H2*, political disenchantment was negatively related to need satisfaction, $b = -0.12$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .001$. Consistent with *H3*, need satisfaction was negatively related to anxiety, $b = -0.70$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$, and anger, $b = -0.68$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$. In accordance, with *H4*, anger was positively related to RWPP support, $b = 0.54$, $SE = 0.18$, $p = .002$. Unexpectedly, the results revealed a significant negative relationship between anxiety and RWPP support, $b = -0.46$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = .018$. Exploratory testing indicated that

attributing sources of need deprivation to external targets was positively related to anger, $b = 0.51$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .001$, as well as to anxiety, $b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$.

Figure 1

Conceptual Representation of the Tested Structural Equation Model



Note. Significant paths are indicated by unstandardized regression coefficients (standardized regression coefficients in brackets).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Finally, we tested the indirect effects of political disenchantment on RWPP support through decreased need satisfaction and anger and anxiety, respectively. Results indicated that the relationship between political disenchantment and RWPP support could be partially explained through decreased need satisfaction and increased anger, $b = 0.042$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [0.106; 0.011]. The indirect effect of political disenchantment on RWPP support via decreased need satisfaction and anxiety was also significant, $b = -0.037$, $p = .016$, 95% CI [-0.006; -0.093]. Counterintuitively, the indirect path indicated that higher anxiety levels stemming from decreased need satisfaction counteract the effect of political disenchantment on RWPP support.

Discussion

The cultural backlash approach understands the success of RWPP as a countermovement to progressive value shifts in politics and society. We interpret our data as consistent with such backlash tendencies, which might have been fuelled by prevalent concerns associated with mass migration and terrorism during data collection (European

Commission, 2016). However, although the current RWPP seem to flourish from their image as an opposing force against progressive socio-political developments, we do not claim that RWPP support reflects an exclusive or inevitable consequence of political disenchantment. It is possible, that in different contexts disenchanted citizens might gravitate towards other populist or non-populist ideologies or withdraw from politics altogether. Future research might thus seek to predict different responses of political disenchantment based on contextual differences (e.g., different socio-political climates, threat levels) and individual factors (e.g., core values) that were not part of the present research.

Detrimental Effects of Political Disenchantment on Need Satisfaction

Political decisions shape the symbolic architecture of a society, which confers citizens' personal, social, and epistemic needs. Conversely, feeling alienated from such processes may foster psychological insecurity. The present research tested this tenet and predicted a negative relationship between political disenchantment and psychological need satisfaction. The data supported the proposed pattern. We believe that this is not a trivial observation, as it provides information about the motivational orientations underlying RWPP ideologies. Previous research demonstrated that exclusionary and extreme ideologies provide a buffer against deeply rooted psychological threats (e.g., Hogg, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Maher, Igou, & van Tilburg, 2018; Williams, Hales, & Michels, 2019). Based on such insights one may speculate that decreased need satisfaction makes people prone to RWPP narratives that emphasize the cohesion and superiority of a native ingroup and derogate supposed enemies. In a similar vein, dissatisfied needs may increase the appeal of simple socio-political narratives that clearly inform about "who is the good and who is the bad" within complex realities (Gruendl & Aichholzer, 2020).

The idea that political disenchantment is negatively related to need satisfaction may complement previous theorizing and stimulate future research avenues. Most notably in this context, system justification theory emphasizes the role of system defence as a potential resource against psychological threat. Examining need dissatisfaction as a potential consequence of a perceived disenchantment from important system facets (e.g., the political system) may thus provide new insights into the motivational underpinnings of system change (c.f. Cichocka, Górska, Jost, Sutton, & Bilewicz, 2018; Osborne, Jost, Becker, Badaan, & Sibley, 2019).

Finally, future research may employ research designs to provide a better understanding of the causality underlying the relationship between political disenchantment and need satisfaction. The present research conceptualized need dissatisfaction as a potential consequence of political disenchantment, hereby using the latter as a proxy for generic dissatisfaction with the socio-political status quo. It seems however reasonable to expect a reciprocal relationship between these factors, as dissatisfied citizens may fuel their

perception of disenchantment through system blaming. In addition to the already outlined causality concerns, it could be promising to compare different elements of political disenchantment to examine the potential specific effects on certain need dimensions and vice versa. This point is particularly relevant as the employed measure of need satisfaction was imbalanced as most of the employed items concerned self-related needs.

Affective Consequences of Reduced Need Satisfaction and Their Effects on RWPP Support

In the present results, lower levels of need satisfaction were associated with increased levels of anxiety and anger. The anxiety-to-approach model discriminates between anxiety as an avoidance-oriented and anger as an approach-oriented state. The model considers anxiety as a proximal response to potential goal conflict. Anger on the other hand may serve as a distal mechanism that can help people combat their anxiety by addressing the source of a conflict. Research suggests, however, that approach motivation may also arise immediately, for example, in the form of experienced reactance (Muehlberger, Klackl, Sittenthaler, & Jonas, 2019). While the cross-sectional nature of our data prohibits us from making clear statements about such fine-grained temporal processes, the strong relationship between anxiety and anger (indicating a co-experience) challenges their proposed distinction as outlined in the anxiety-to-approach model. A similar pattern has been reported in previous research (Vasilopoulos, Marcus, Valentino, & Foucault, 2019b) and a rather simple explanation could be that our items could not adequately discriminate between different affective states. The fact that anxiety and anger hold different relationships with RWPP support despite their strong intercorrelation, however, seems to support their conceptual distinction.

In accordance with our assumptions, anger was positively related to RWPP support. Notably, a significant indirect effect of political disenchantment on RWPP support through decreased need satisfaction and increased anger corroborated our overall model. Counterintuitively, the present data also indicated a negative relationship between anxiety and RWPP support. This pattern corresponds to an ongoing discussion concerning the role of anger and anxiety on RWPP support (Jost, 2019; Vasilopoulos, Marcus, Valentino, & Foucault, 2019a, 2019b). Contrary to the stable relationship between anger and RWPP support, the present data support different interpretations on the role of anxiety (see [Supplementary Materials](#) for additional analysis). In light of these inconsistencies, we prefer not to draw conclusions on weak grounds about anxiety effects on RWPP support. We hope that future research will take up that puzzle and employ experimental techniques, which are more appropriate for drawing causal conclusions.

Attribution Processes and Affect

We explored how the extent to which participants attributed felt discomfort to external targets would relate to self-reported levels of anxiety and anger. External attribution was significantly and positively related to both affective indicators. The relative difference of the two unstandardized regression coefficients, however, indicated a stronger relationship between external attribution and anger. This pattern is in line with appraisal theories outlining blaming as an important precedent of anger (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). It is possible that the observed differences in relationship strengths would be even more pronounced if we had explicitly asked participants about the targets they *blame* for their felt discomfort, rather than asking them in which domains they would *seek change*. What appears most notable to us, however, is the possibility RWPP may mobilize their supporters by fuelling negative feelings (and anger in particular) through hate narratives that depict external targets as enemies of the native majority. RWPP supporters perceive their ingroup in vertical opposition to “the elite” and in horizontal opposition to “cultural others” such as immigrants (Staerklé & Green, 2018). Scholars suggests that RWPP may induce feelings of relative deprivation between these different groups to mobilize their supporters (Jetten, Ryan, & Mols, 2017; Mols & Jetten, 2014). Accordingly, group relative deprivation has been found to be an important predictor of RWPP support (Urbanska & Guimond, 2018). Additionally, research on populist communication indicates that populist messages persuade citizens through their emotion-eliciting character (Wirz, 2018). Considering the assumption that anger can help people overcome anxious inhibition and get back into action-orientation, future research could examine whether factors like political disenchantment, dissatisfied needs, or anxiety increase the appeal of anger-inducing narratives.

Limitations and Conclusion

The present research contributes to the understanding of RWPP phenomena by simultaneously taking into account motivational, affective, and cognitive factors relevant to RWPP support. However, the following limitations must be considered when interpreting the outlined findings. A first set of limitations concerns the collected data and the employed design. The observed sample was highly skewed in favor of the progressive candidate. Our dependent measure therefore rather reflects participants’ rejection of a progressive candidate than support of a RWPP candidate. This is an important point, given that rejection of progressivism also reflects an important facet underlying conservative ideologies (Jost et al., 2003). Concerning the validity of our key measure, we believe, however, that the presented data benefited from the particular context of the final ballot situation. The particular context in which we collected our data (i.e., a ballot between a RWPP candidate and an independent progressive candidate who was eventually backed by the “political establishment”) allowed us to operationalize support

for progressivism or right-wing populism on a single continuous measure. To better prevent potential confounds between different ideologies, future research should include factors that help distinguish RWPP support from other ideologies, especially in contexts in which voters can select between multiple parties (for a deeper discussion, see, e.g., Capelos & Demertzis, 2018).

A theoretical point which needs to be addressed concerns potential remedying effects of variables like anger or RWPP voting on the experience of anxiety. By incorporating different psychological “defence theories,” the anxiety-to-approach model claims that bolstering approach-oriented domains helps people regulate conflict induced anxiety. The observed intercorrelations between the different variables in our model can be interpreted as questioning the validity of such regulatory effects. We agree that future experimental research is needed to test the stability and relevance of such anxiety-regulating processes in practical contexts. Regarding the described RWPP effects, we would not expect angry RWPP supporters to find themselves in a state of overall psychological satisfaction. Yet, they might gain some temporal remedy from conflict perceptions by feeling mobilized and able to act against an unpleasant socio-political status quo. This argument seems to be in line with the conception of populism by Spruyt et al. (2016) as a political phenomenon that is driven by the hope that things will become better rather than by mere frustration.

Finally, it is important to note that our model only partially explained the relationship between political disenchantment and RWPP support. Considering the complexity of the topic and the amount of potential motives that may motivate citizens to vote for a certain party or candidate, this finding does not necessarily come as a surprise. We hence offer our research as a potential contribution to the broad field of populist research, hoping that future research might take up some of the present ideas to integrate them into a set of factors that help explain contemporary right-wing populist phenomena.

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Ethics Approval: The authors confirm that the manuscript adheres to ethical guidelines specified in the APA Code of Conduct as well as authors’ national ethics guidelines.

Data Availability: For this article, two datasets are freely available (Lüders, Mühlberger, & Jonas, 2020).

Supplementary Materials

The supplementary includes the data used for this study, additional analyses, an overview of the materials, as well as data and descriptions of a follow up study (for access see Index of [Supplementary Materials](#) below).

Index of Supplementary Materials

Lüders, A., Mühlberger, C., & Jonas, E. (2020). *Supplementary materials to "Motivational and affective drivers of right-wing populism support: Insights from an Austrian presidential election"* [Data and materials]. OSF. <https://osf.io/7kaet>

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