

Supplementary Material for

# Let's Talk Populist? A Survey Experiment on Effects of (Non-) Populist Discourse on Vote Choice

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## A Deviations from the Pre-Analysis Plan

This study deviates from the pre-analysis plan in three main ways, which I detail below. First, it shifted its preliminary focus from language complexity and its effect in political messages to the interplay of. As such, hypotheses H1 and H2 have been combined and are now resembled in the Simple-Language-Hypothesis (H3) of Chapter 3. Hypothesis H3 listed in the pre-analysis plan is not part of the analysis any more. Thus, I do not specifically test for the effect of simple language among right-wing and left-wing populist people. These changes are due to the surprising results of no effect or a negative effect of simple language on vote choice. Secondly, all hypotheses listed under H2 got newly added to the analysis in Chapter 3. All hypotheses listed under H2 look at blame attribution, namely the Politician-Hypothesis (H2A), the Migration-Hypothesis (H2b) and the Economic-Elite-Hypothesis (H2c). They seem to drive results on vote choice the most and are therefore important findings of this survey experiment. They are theoretically justified and are therefore important parts of the analysis presented in Chapter 3. And finally, the exploratory hypothesis H5 is resembled in the People-Centrism-Hypothesis (H1) of Chapter 3. These changes are made due to thorough theoretical considerations and based on unexpected results of the survey experiment. All changes are listed in footnotes in the main part of the analysis and are explained and justified in more detail here.

## B Real World Examples – Populist Statements

Excerpt of two speeches in the German *Bundestag* on a draft bill to reorganise the immigration of qualified skilled workers:

**Gottfried Curio, MP for the AfD in the German *Bundestag* on 22. November 2017:**

“[...]Die Flutung mit Geringqualifizierten plus geplantem Familiennachzug stabilisiert nicht Arbeitsmarkt und Rentensystem, sondern erhöht Arbeitslosigkeit und Sozialleistungsbezug, noch dazu in einer zunehmend digitalisierten Arbeitswelt. Zielführend wäre die Erhöhung der Geburtenrate. Eine aktivierende Familienpolitik, wie von uns gefordert, wäre vorrangig, statt das eigene Volk auszutauschen. Das heißt: Milliarden für unsere Familien statt für Alimentation und Integration erst nicht bleibeberechtigter oder jetzt nicht vermittelbarer Migranten.[...].”

**English Translation:** “[...]The influx with low-skilled individuals plus planned family reunification does not stabilise the labour market and pension system; instead, it increases unemployment and reliance on social benefits, especially in an increasingly digitised working world. The goal should be to increase the birth rate. An activating family policy, as demanded by us, would take priority instead of replacing our own people. This means Billions for our families instead of alimentation and integration for non-permanent or currently difficult placeable migrants [...]”

**Zaklin Nastic, MP for the Left in the German *Bundestag* on 22. November 2017:**

“[...]Wer Herz und Verstand für arme Menschen hat, fordert eine gerechte Weltwirtschaftsordnung und formuliert nicht die Interessen des sogenannten deutschen Arbeitsmarktes als Ziel. Deutsche und ausländische Arbeitnehmer sollen in Konkurrenz um Billiglöhne und prekäre Berufsperspektiven gegeneinander ausgespielt werden. Das ist entwürdigend, und das machen wir als Linke nicht mit.[...].”

**English Translation:** “[...]Anyone with a heart and mind for poor people demands a fair world economic order and does not formulate the interests of the so-called German labour market as a goal. German and foreign workers are to be played off against each other in competition for low wages and precarious job prospects. This is degrading and we on the left will not go along with it.[...].”

## C Full Questionnaire – English Version

*Note: The shown version of the questionnaire is translated from German to English. The original German version of the questionnaire is available on request. German treatment statements are presented as well below in section D – Treatment Combination of Candidate Statements – German Version*

### Questions about personal characteristics:

First of all, I am going to ask you a few questions about your personal characteristics and living conditions.

**female:** Are you..?

- female
- male
- diverse

**age\_group:** To which age group do you belong?

- 18 to 34 years
- 35 to 54 years
- Over 55 years

**birthyear:** What is your year of birth? [birth year]

**occupation:** What is your current work situation? Are you...

- self-employed
- employed
- in education
- working in the household
- retired
- unemployed

**region:** In which region do you currently have your primary residence?

- Bremen, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein
- Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen-Anhalt
- Sachsen, Thüringen
- Nordrhein-Westfalen
- Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland

- Baden-Württemberg
- Bayern Inhalt...

**education\_group:** In which category would you place your current highest level of education?

- Basic school leaving certificate, secondary school leaving certificate or equivalent
- (Technical) high school diploma, completed training or equivalent
- Completed (technical) university studies, doctorate or comparable degree
- Still in education

**education\_age:** How old were you when you stopped your school or university education? [Age in years]

In the further course, various statements about politics and society in general are listed. Please indicate in each case how much you agree or disagree with a statement.

**Thin and Thick Populist attitudes (see Akkerman, Mudde and Zaslove (2014); ?):**

### **Block 1**

**thin\_1:** “Important questions should not be decided by parliament but by popular referendums.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thin\_2:** “The people are often in agreement but the politicians pursue quite different goals.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thin\_3:** “I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.”

- Fully agree

- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thin\_4:** “Political parties only want peoples’ votes, they do not care about their opinions.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**control\_question:** Please click here “no answer”.

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

## **Block 2:**

**thin\_5:** “The politicians in the Bundestag<sup>1</sup> need to follow the will of the people.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thin\_6:** “The people in Germany agree, on principle, about what should happen politically.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree

- No answer

**thin\_7:** “The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thin\_8:** “What people call “compromise” in politics is really just selling out on one’s principles.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thick\_6:** “The rich should contribute more to the financing of the state.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

### **Block 3:**

**thick\_1:** “For Germany, membership in the European Union is a good thing.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thick\_2:** “European integration has gone too far in the past – in the future I rather wish for “less” than “more” Europe.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thick\_3:** “Globalization is not a threat but a chance.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thick\_4:** “Germany should not accept any further refugees from conflict areas.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

**thick\_5:** “Immigrants should be required to adapt to German culture.”

- Fully agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Fully disagree
- No answer

## Questions on political attitudes (based on the European Social Survey 2019)

**political\_interest:** How interested are you in politics?

- Very interested
- Quite interested

- Hardly interested
- Not at all interested

**ideological\_position:** In politics people sometimes talk of 'left' and 'right'. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

- Scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right)

**affiliation:** Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?

- Yes
- No

**affiliation\_party:** if yes, which one?

- CDU/CSU
- SPD
- Die Linke
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
- FDP
- AfD
- Other
- No answer

**affiliation\_proximity:** How close do you feel to this party? Do you feel that you are ...

- Very close
- Quite close
- Not close
- Not at all close

## Treatment/Stimulus Material for the 2021 Federal Election

### **Introduction:**

Next fall (2021), Germany will hold its next federal election. In the Bundestag election you can cast two votes: the first vote is for a candidate in your constituency, the second vote is for a party. The candidate with the most votes in your constituency will definitely become a member of the Bundestag. Below I present you three times two potential candidates and ask you to compare the two candidates. For each candidate, you will see a short statement on the current labor market situation in Germany. I would then like you to tell me which candidate you would be more likely to vote for.

Please remember: I am interested in your personal opinion. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

Please read the statements of the two candidates carefully. Then indicate which of the two candidates you would be more likely to vote for in the 2021 federal election.

**Treatment:**

Candidate A

– randomly drawn statement from the treatment categories presented below

Candidate B

– randomly drawn statement from the treatment categories presented below

**preference:** If you had to choose between these two candidates in the federal election in fall 2021, who would you vote for? If neither of the two candidates appeals to you, please still indicate who you would be more likely to vote for.

- Candidate A
- Candidate B

**proximity\_to\_candidate\_A:** How much can you imagine giving your vote to candidate A? Please indicate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 means "I can't imagine at all" and 7 means "I can imagine very much".

- 1) I can imagine very much
- 2) ...
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...
- 6) ...
- 7) I can't imagine at all

**proximity\_to\_candidate\_B:** And how about Candidate B. How much can you see yourself voting for Candidate B?

- 1) I can imagine very much
- 2) ...
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...
- 6) ...
- 7) I can't imagine at all

I would also like you to indicate whether you feel emotionally affected by the comments.

**emotions\_A:** How do you feel about the statement of Candidate A? (You can choose several options.)

- sad
- angry

- fearful
- joyful
- excited
- hopeful
- proud
- disgusted
- none of the above

**emotions \_ B:** F How do you feel about the statement of Candidate B? (You can choose several options.)

- sad
- angry
- fearful
- joyful
- excited
- hopeful
- proud
- disgusted
- none of the above

### Comprehension questions:

Now I would like to ask you to remember again the two statements.

**blame \_ attributed \_ answer \_ A:** Who did Candidate A blame for the fact that the labor market situation in Germany has deteriorated?

- Leading politicians
- Refugees
- Wealthy/rich
- No one

**blame \_ attributed \_ answer \_ B:** Who did Candidate B blame for the fact that the labor market situation in Germany has deteriorated?

- Leading politicians
- Refugees
- Wealthy/rich
- No one

## C.1 Treatment Combination of Candidate Statements

### 1. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame politicians

Our labour market situation has worsened in the last few months and leaders are doing nothing to help our citizens return to a good standard of living. Many have lost their jobs and it is the current politicians who are responsible for the current situation. They are too far removed from ordinary citizens, mainly because they have become more and more short-sighted in recent years. Our leaders spend a lot of time talking, but real action to reduce the unemployment rate is missing. We must act now to secure our future jobs and protect our citizens.

### 2. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites

Our labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and the wealthiest in our country are preventing our citizens from returning to a good standard of living. Many have lost their jobs and it is the current richest people in our country who are responsible for the current situation. They are only interested in themselves and want to increase their own wealth. The rich have become more and more selfish, corrupt and self-serving in recent years. We must act now to secure our future jobs and protect our citizens.

### 3. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees

Our labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and refugees in our country are preventing our citizens from returning to a good standard of living. Many have lost their jobs and it is the refugees in our country who are responsible for the current situation. They are difficult to integrate, far too demanding and are harming the current labour market by taking away the few jobs that are currently still available for our citizens. We must act now to secure our future jobs and protect our citizens.

### 4. average language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution

Our labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and our citizens cannot return to a good standard of living. Many have lost their jobs and the current situation is worrying. But the unemployment rate must be reduced and we must find solutions to ease this situation for our citizens. We must act now to secure our future jobs and protect our citizens.

### 5. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame politicians

Our labour market situation has worsened. Leaders are doing nothing. Our citizens are not being helped at the moment. Many have lost their jobs. The politicians are to blame. They are too far away from the citizens. In recent years they have become more and more short-sighted. Our current politicians talk a lot and act little. But we have to act now. We need to secure our future jobs. Our citizens must be protected.

## **6. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites**

Our labour market situation has deteriorated. The rich are preventing our citizens from having a good life again. Many have lost their jobs. The rich are to blame. They only care about themselves. They only want to increase their wealth. They are selfish and corrupt. We have to act now. We must protect our future jobs. Our citizens must be protected.

## **7. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees**

Our labour market situation has deteriorated. Refugees are preventing our citizens from having a good life again. Many have lost their jobs. The refugees are to blame. They are difficult to integrate. They demand too much. And they are taking away the jobs that are still available for our citizens. We have to act now. We have to secure our future jobs. Our citizens must be protected.

## **8. simple language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution**

Our labour market situation has deteriorated. Our citizens cannot return to a good life. Many have lost their jobs. The current situation is frightening. The unemployment rate must be reduced again. We have to find solutions. We have to act now. We have to secure our future jobs. Our citizens must be protected.

## **9. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians**

The labour market situation has worsened in recent months and the leaders are doing nothing to help people get back to a good standard of living. Many people have lost their jobs and it is the leaders who are responsible for the current situation as they have become more and more short-sighted in recent years. Leaders spend a lot of time talking but real action to reduce the unemployment rate is missing. Action must be taken now to secure future jobs.

## **10. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites**

The labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and the wealthiest are preventing people from returning to a good standard of living. Many people have lost their jobs and it is the current wealthiest people who are responsible for the current situation. They are only interested in themselves and want to increase their own wealth. The rich have become increasingly selfish, corrupt and self-serving in recent years. Action must be taken now to secure future jobs.

## **11. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame refugees**

The labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and refugees are preventing people from returning to a good standard of living. Many people have lost their jobs and it is the refugees who are responsible for the current situation. They are difficult to integrate, far too demanding and are damaging the current labour market by taking away the few jobs that are currently still available. Action must be taken now to secure

future jobs.

## **12. average language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution**

The labour market situation has deteriorated in recent months and people cannot return to a good standard of living. Many people have lost their jobs and the current situation is worrying. The unemployment rate must be reduced and solutions must be found to improve the situation. Action must be taken now to secure future jobs.

## **13. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians**

The labour market situation has worsened. Leaders are doing nothing. Many have lost their jobs. The politicians are to blame. They are only interested in themselves. The leaders talk a lot and act little. Action must be taken now. Future jobs must be secured.

## **14. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites**

The labour market situation has worsened. The rich are preventing people from having a good life again. Many have lost their jobs. The rich are to blame. They only want to increase their wealth. They are selfish and corrupt. Action must be taken now. Future jobs must be secured.

## **15. simple language complexity no people-centrism, blame refugees**

The labour market situation has deteriorated. Refugees are preventing people from having a good life again. Many have lost their jobs. The refugees are to blame. They are difficult to integrate. They demand too much. And they take away the few jobs that are still there. Action must be taken now. Future jobs must be secured.

## **16. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution**

The labour market situation has deteriorated. People cannot return to a good life. Many have lost their jobs. The current situation is worrying. The unemployment rate must be reduced again. Action must be taken now. Future jobs must be secured.

### **Vote decisions:**

**vote\_decision\_2017:** Some people don't go to the polls these days for various reasons. What about you? Did you vote in the last federal election in September 2017?

- Yes
- No

**vote\_1\_2017:** To which party did the candidate belong that you voted for with your first vote in the last Bundestag election?

- CDU/CSU
- SPD
- Die Linke
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
- FDP
- AfD
- other
- No answer

**vote\_2\_2017:** And which party did you give your secondary vote to?

- CDU/CSU
- SPD
- Die Linke
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
- FDP
- AfD
- other
- No answer

**vote\_1\_today:** If a federal election were held today, who would you give your first vote to?

- CDU/CSU
- SPD
- Die Linke
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

- FDP
- AfD
- other
- No answer

**vote \_ 2 \_ today:** And who would you give your secondary vote to?

- CDU/CSU
- SPD
- Die Linke
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
- FDP
- AfD
- other
- No answer

### **Debriefing**

Finally, I would like to remind you that the statements of the political candidates you have compared in this questionnaire are fictitious. These candidates will not participate in the 2021 federal election.

### **Closing remarks:**

If you have any comments on this questionnaire or if you noticed anything that was not understandable, I would like you to write it down here. Thank you very much!

## D Treatment Combination of Candidate Statements – German Version with Screenshot from the original Experiment

### 1. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame politicians

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die führenden Politiker unternehmen nichts, damit unsere Bürger wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren, und es sind die derzeitigen Politiker, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie sind zu weit entfernt von den einfachen Bürgern, vor allem, weil sie in den letzten Jahren immer kurzsichtiger geworden sind. Unsere führenden Politiker verbringen viel Zeit mit Reden, aber richtige Taten, um die Arbeitslosenquote zu reduzieren, fehlen. Wir müssen jetzt handeln, um unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze zu sichern und unsere Bürger zu schützen.

### 2. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert, und die Wohlhabendsten in unserem Land verhindern, dass unsere Bürger wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die derzeitig reichsten Menschen in unserem Lande, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie interessieren sich nur für sich selbst und wollen ihren eigenen Reichtum vergrößern. Die Reichen sind in den letzten Jahren immer egoistischer, korrupter und selbstsüchtiger geworden. Wir müssen jetzt handeln, um unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze zu sichern und unsere Bürger zu schützen.

### 3. average language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die Flüchtlinge in unserem Land verhindern, dass unsere Bürger wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die Flüchtlinge in unserem Lande, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie sind schwer zu integrieren, viel zufordernd und schaden dem derzeitigen Arbeitsmarkt, da sie unseren Bürgern die wenigen Arbeitsstellen wegnehmen, die es derzeit noch gibt. Wir müssen jetzt handeln, um unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze zu sichern und unsere Bürger zu schützen.

### 4. average language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und unsere Bürger können nicht zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und die derzeitige Situation ist besorgniserregend. Aber die Arbeitslosenquote muss reduziert werden und wir müssen Lösungen finden, um diese Situation für unsere Bürger zu erleichtern. Wir müssen jetzt handeln, um unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze zu sichern und unsere Bürger zu schützen.

## **5. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame politicians**

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die führenden Politiker unternehmen Nichts. Unseren Bürgern wird derzeit nicht geholfen. Viele haben Ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Politiker sind schuld daran. Sie sind zu weit entfernt von den Bürgern. In den letzten Jahren wurden sie Immer kurzsichtiger. Unsere derzeitigen Politiker reden viel und handeln wenig. Aber wir müssen jetzt handeln. Wir müssen unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze sichern. Unsere Bürger müssen geschützt werden.

## **6. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites**

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Reichen verhindern, dass unsere Bürger wieder ein gutes Leben haben. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Reichen sind schuld daran. Sie interessieren sich nur für sich selbst. Sie wollen nur ihren Reichtum vergrößern. Sie sind egoistisch und korrupt. Wir müssen jetzt handeln. Wir müssen unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze sichern. Unsere Bürger müssen geschützt werden.

## **7. simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees**

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Flüchtlinge verhindern, dass unsere Bürger wieder ein gutes Leben haben. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Flüchtlinge sind schuld daran. Sie sind schwer zu integrieren. Sie fordern zu viel. Und sie nehmen unseren Bürgern die Arbeitsplätze weg, die es noch gibt. Wir müssen jetzt handeln. Wir müssen unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze sichern. Unsere Bürger müssen geschützt werden.

## **8. simple language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution**

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Unsere Bürger können nicht zu einem guten Leben zurückkehren. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die derzeitige Situation ist beängstigend. Die Arbeitslosenzahl muss wieder kleiner werden. Wir müssen Lösungen finden. Wir müssen jetzt handeln. Wir müssen unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze sichern. Unsere Bürger müssen geschützt werden.

## **9. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die führenden Politiker unternehmen Nichts, damit die Menschen wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele Menschen haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die führenden Politiker, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind, da sie in den letzten Jahren immer kurzsichtiger geworden sind. Die führenden Politiker verbringen viel Zeit damit zu reden, aber richtige Taten, um die Arbeitslosenquote zu reduzieren, fehlen. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden, um zukünftige Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

## **10. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die Wohlhabendsten verhindern, dass die Menschen wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele Menschen haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die derzeitig wohlhabendsten Menschen, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie interessieren sich nur für sich selbst und wollen ihren eigenen Reichtum vergrößern. Die Reichen sind in den letzten Jahren immer egoistischer, korrupter und selbstsüchtiger geworden. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden, um zukünftige Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

## **11. average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame refugees**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die Flüchtlinge verhindern, dass die Menschen wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele Menschen haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die Flüchtlinge, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie sind schwer zu integrieren, viel zu fordernd und schaden dem derzeitigen Arbeitsmarkt, da sie den Menschen die wenigen Arbeitsstellen wegnehmen, die es derzeit noch gibt. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden, um zukünftige Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

## **12. average language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert, und die Menschen können nicht zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren. Viele Menschen haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und die derzeitige Situation ist besorgniserregend. Die Arbeitslosenquote muss reduziert werden und es müssen Lösungen gefunden werden, um die Situation zu verbessern. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden, um zukünftige Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

## **13. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die führenden Politiker unternehmen nichts. Viele haben Ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Politiker sind schuld daran. Sie interessieren sich nur für sich selbst. Die führenden Politiker reden viel und handeln wenig. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden. Zukünftige Arbeitsplätze müssen gesichert werden.

## **14. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Reichen verhindern, dass die Menschen wieder ein gutes Leben haben. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Reichen sind schuld daran. Sie wollen nur ihren Reichtum vergrößern. Sie sind egoistisch und korrupt. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden. Zukünftige Arbeitsplätze müssen gesichert werden.

## **15. simple language complexity no people-centrism, blame refugees**

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Flüchtlinge verhindern, dass die Menschen wieder ein gutes Leben haben. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Flüchtlinge sind schuld daran. Sie sind schwer zu integrieren. Sie fordern zu viel. Und

sie nehmen die wenigen Arbeitsplätze weg, die es noch gibt. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden. Zukünftige Arbeitsplätze müssen gesichert werden.

## 16. simple language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Menschen können nicht zu einem guten Leben zurückkehren. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die derzeitige Situation ist besorgniserregend. Die Arbeitslosenzahl muss wieder kleiner werden. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden. Zukünftige Arbeitsplätze müssen gesichert werden.

### Screenshot of the original German questionnaire:

Figure 1: German candidate choice question (dependent variable) as presented to the respondent in the survey, Statement 6 (left-hand side) and Statement 11 (right-hand side) in Appendix C.1.

Wenn Sie sich bei der Bundestagswahl im Herbst 2021 zwischen diesen beiden Kandidaten entscheiden müssten, wem würden Sie Ihre Stimmen geben?

*Falls Ihnen keiner der beiden Kandidaten zusagt, geben Sie bitte trotzdem an, wen Sie eher wählen würden.*

#### Kandidat A

Unsere Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich verschlechtert. Die Reichen verhindern, dass unsere Bürger wieder ein gutes Leben haben. Viele haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren. Die Reichen sind schuld daran. Sie interessieren sich nur für sich selbst. Sie wollen nur ihren Reichtum vergrößern. Sie sind egoistisch und korrupt. Wir müssen jetzt handeln. Wir müssen unsere zukünftigen Arbeitsplätze sichern. Unsere Bürger müssen geschützt werden.

#### Kandidat B

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation hat sich in den letzten Monaten verschlechtert und die Flüchtlinge verhindern, dass die Menschen wieder zu einem guten Lebensstandard zurückkehren können. Viele Menschen haben ihre Arbeitsstelle verloren und es sind die Flüchtlinge, die für die aktuelle Situation verantwortlich sind. Sie sind schwer zu integrieren, viel zu fordernd und schaden dem derzeitigen Arbeitsmarkt, da sie den Menschen die wenigen Arbeitsstellen wegnehmen, die es derzeit noch gibt. Es muss jetzt gehandelt werden, um zukünftige Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

Kandidat A



Kandidat B



## E Readability Scores

Table 1: Readability Scores According to Treatment-Vignette

No	Statement Specification	LIX	Flesch-Kincaid	SMOG
1.	average language complexity, people-centrism, blame politician	49.83	14.81	10.73
2.	average language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites	50.87	13.18	9.75
3.	average language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees	54.77	14.69	11.13
4.	average language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution	43.59	13.51	9.62
5.	simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame politicians	32.24	7.63	4.61
6.	simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame economic elites	26.75	6.12	3.74
7.	simple language complexity, people-centrism, blame refugees	26.04	5.60	3.74
8.	simple language complexity, people-centrism, no blame attribution	27.00	6.85	4.06
9.	average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians	55.11	15.52	10.25
10.	average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites	51.49	12.55	8.68
11.	average language complexity, no people-centrism, blame refugees	54.62	13.25	9.29
12.	average language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution	47.68	13.03	8.61

Note: Lower numbers indicate lower readability scores for all three measures. The LIX score is developed by Björnsson (1968). The Flesch-Kincaid Score is based on Flesch (1948), and transformed to grade levels. The SMOG score is developed by McLaughlin (1969).

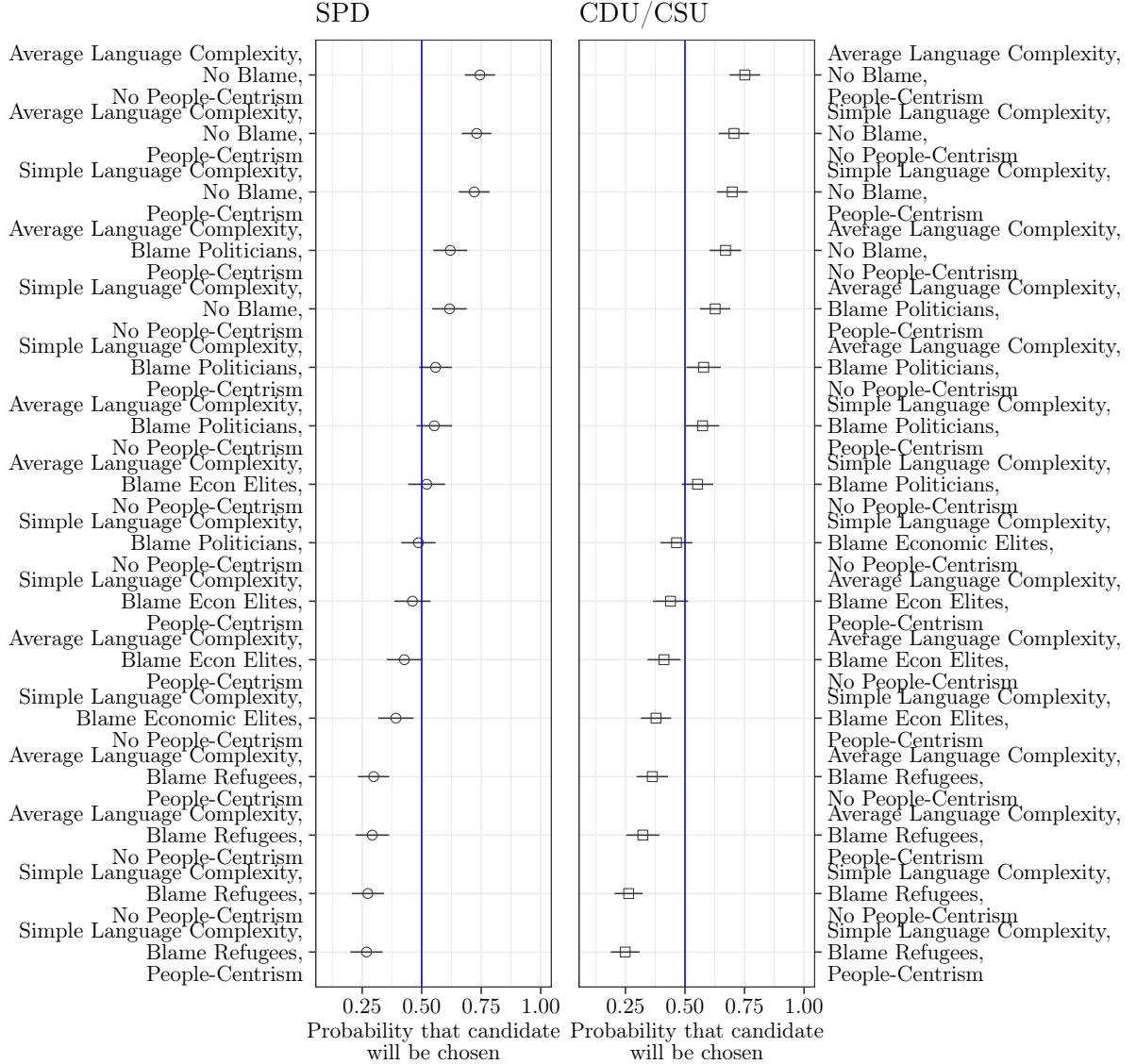
Table 2: Readability Scores According to Treatment-Vignette

No	Statement Specification	LIX	Flesch-Kincaid	SMOG
13.	simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame politicians	33.44	8.10	4.42
14.	simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame economic elites	32.00	6.95	3.48
15.	simple language complexity, no people-centrism, blame refugees	29.61	6.10	3.48
16.	simple language complexity, no people-centrism, no blame attribution	35.14	9.14	4.55
<p>Note: Lower numbers indicate lower readability scores for all three measures. The LIX score is developed by Björnsson (1968). The Flesch-Kincaid Score is based on Flesch (1948), and transformed to grade levels. The SMOG score is developed by McLaughlin (1969).</p>				

## F Full Results of Interaction Levels

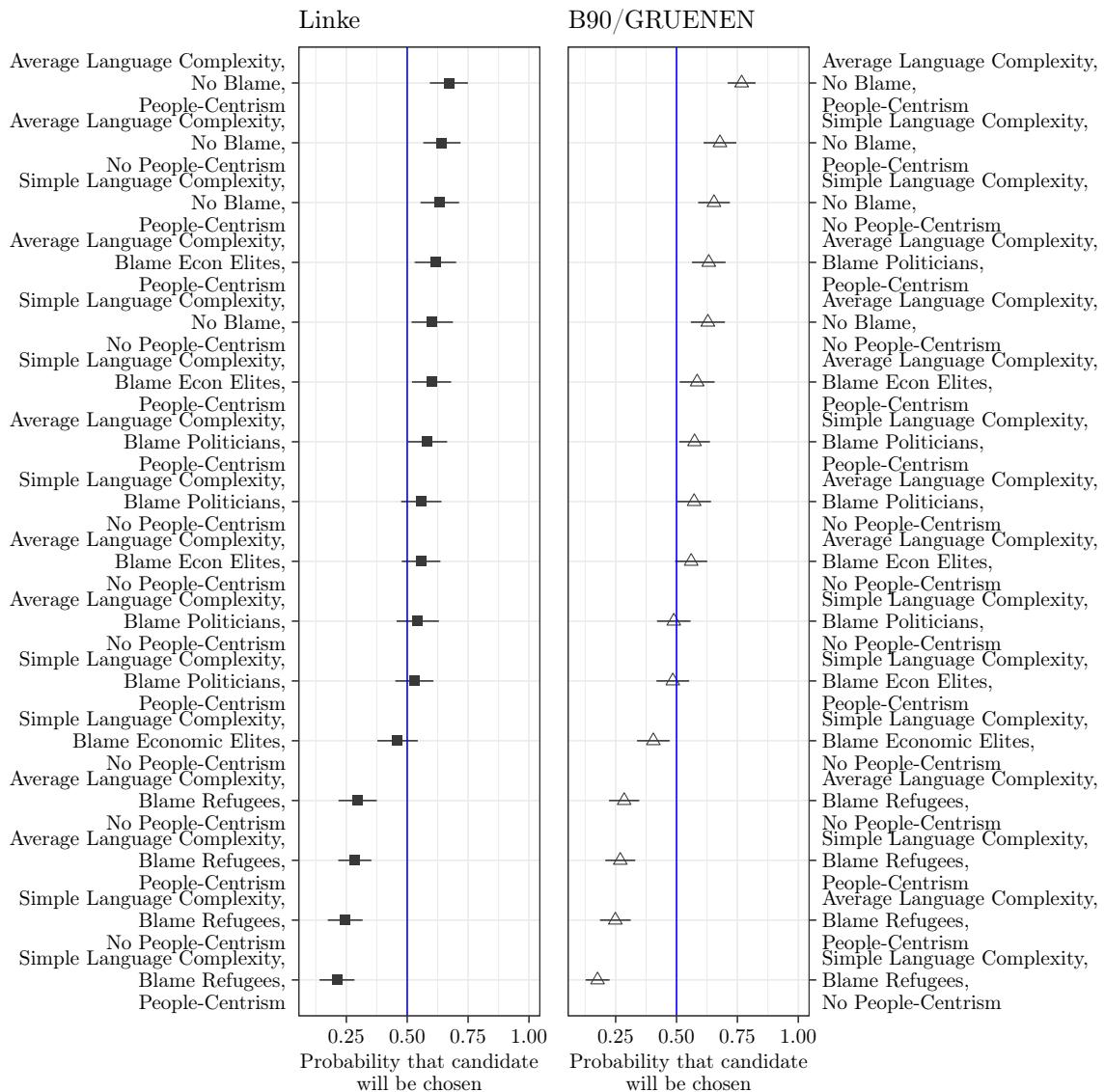
While I look at the results of populist statements only including people-centric language in the main analysis (Figure 5 to Figure 7), I report here the full list of ordered interaction levels. These show which rhetorical combinations rank highest for which voter group (ordered by parties).

Figure 2: Interactions of Attribute Levels: Marginal Means by Parties, SPD and CDU/CSU in Comparison



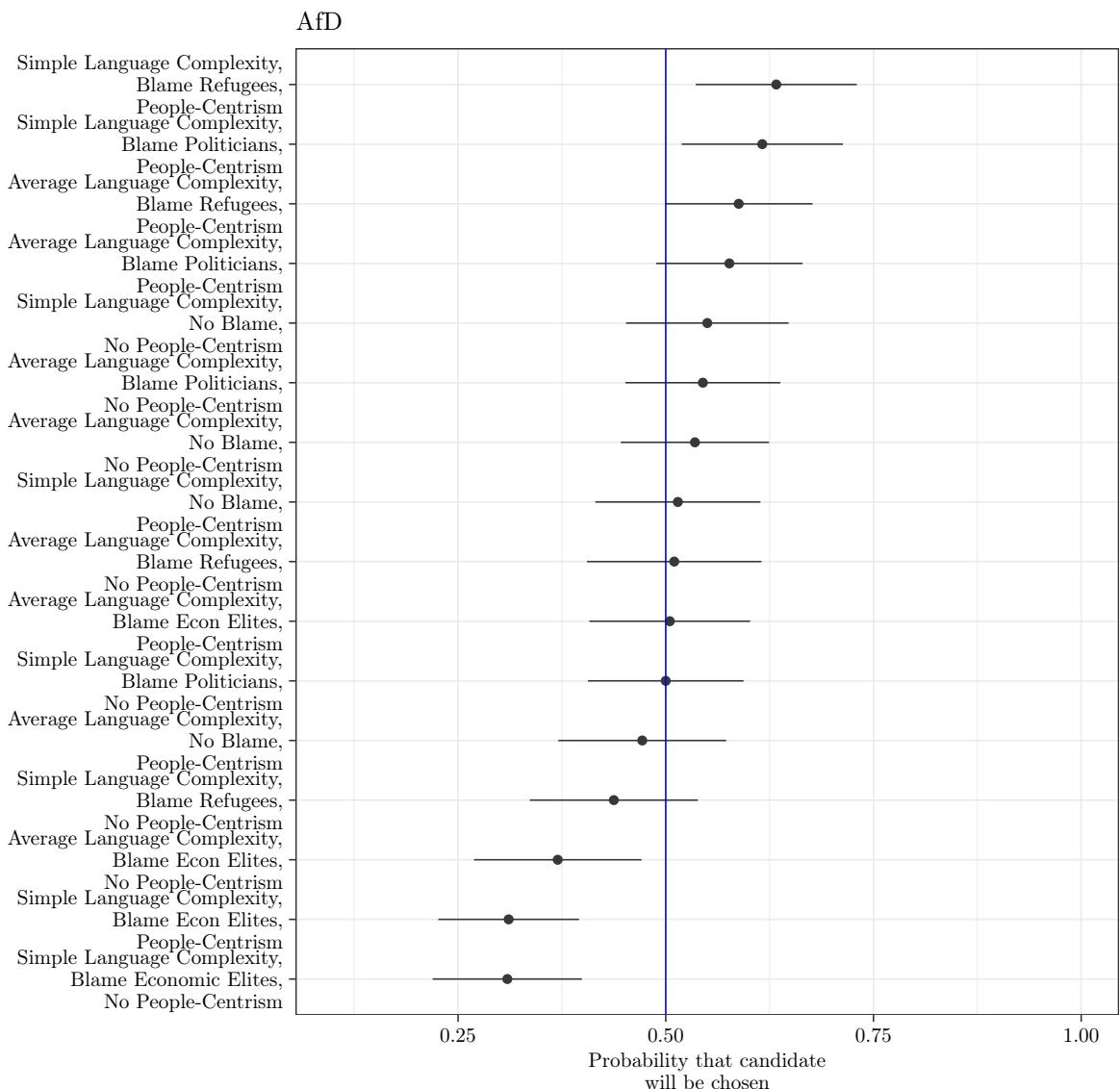
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 3: Interactions of Attribute Levels: Marginal Means by Parties, Linke and B90/GRUENEN in Comparison



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 4: Interactions of Attribute Levels: Marginal Means by Parties, AfD

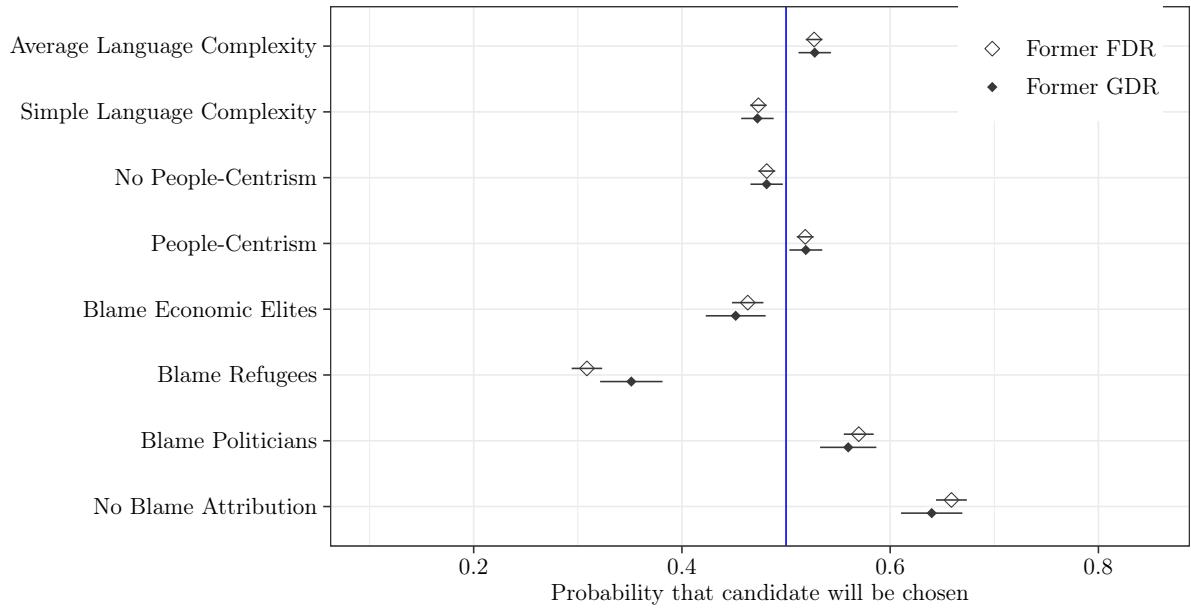


*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

## G Robustness Checks

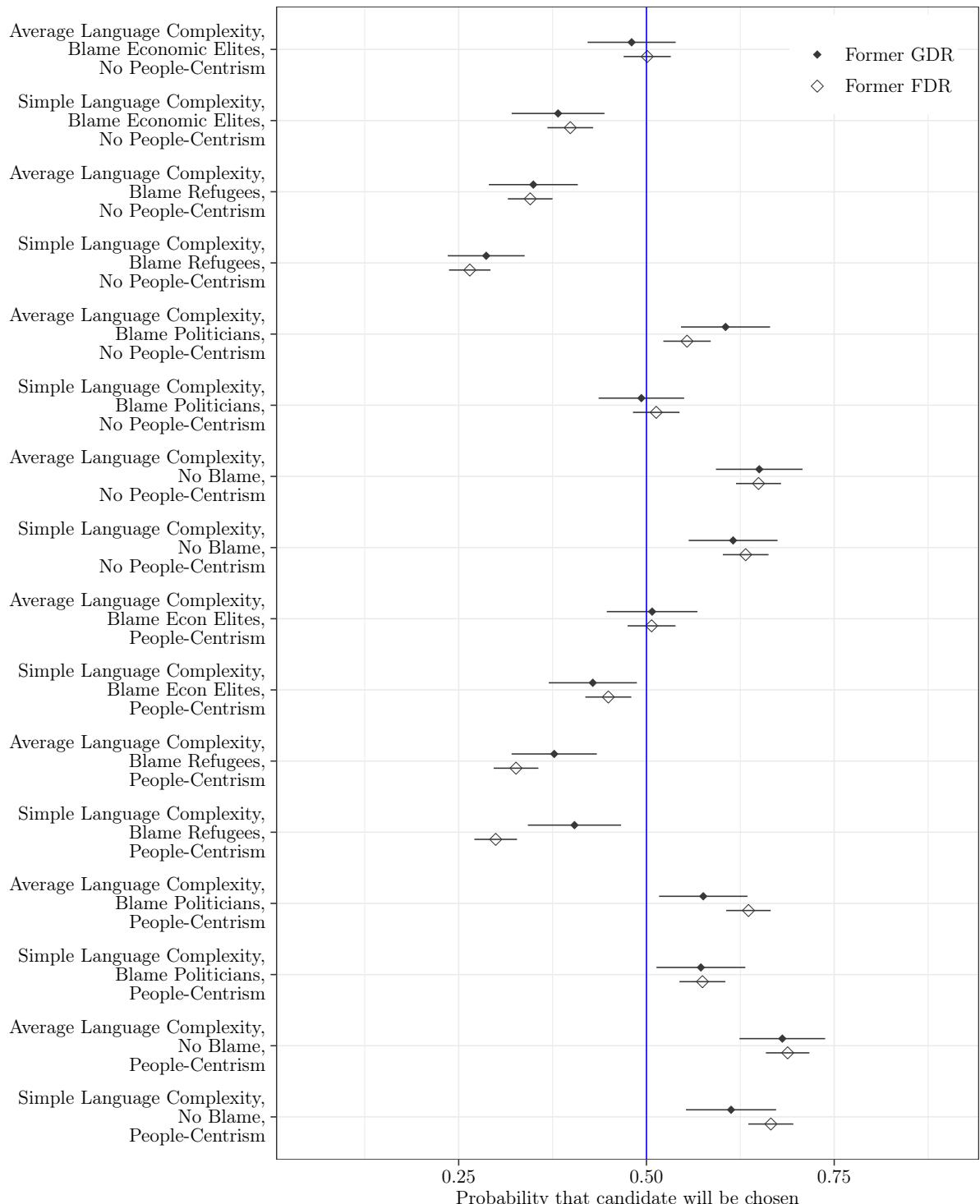
### Regional Differences

Figure 5: Marginal Means for Citizens Living in the Former GDR vs. Citizens Living in the Former FDR



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

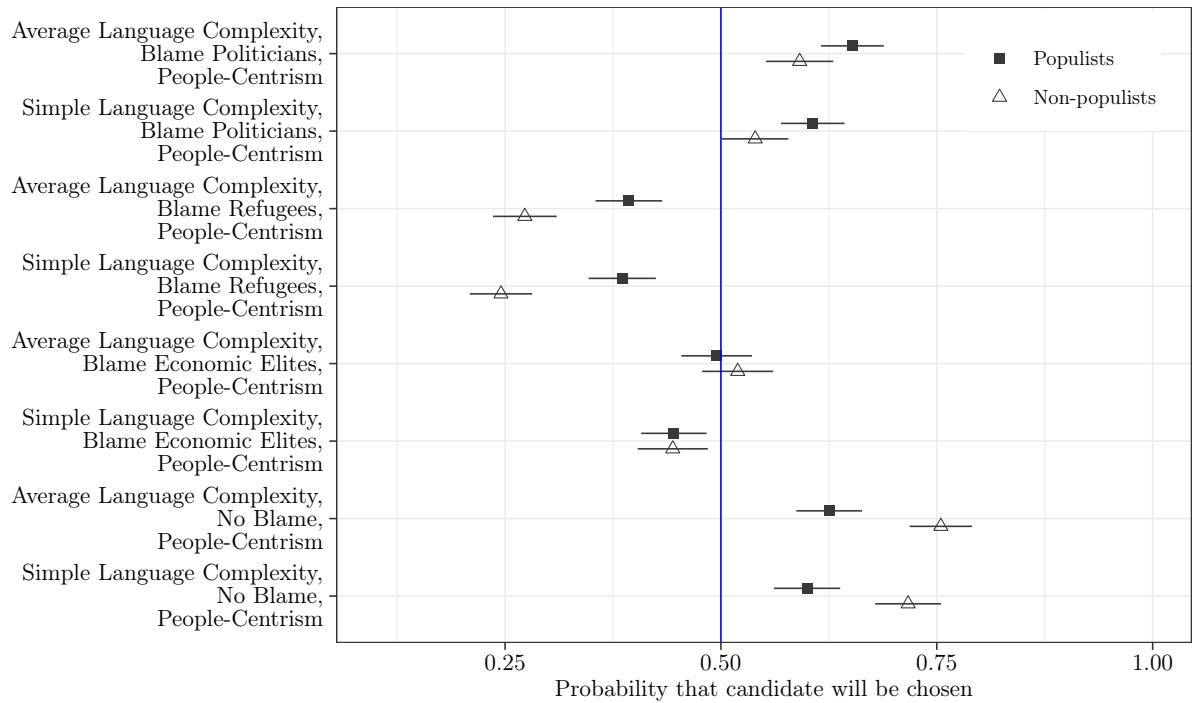
Figure 6: Interaction of Attribute Levels: Marginal Means for Citizens Living in the Former GDR vs. Citizens Living in the Former FDR



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

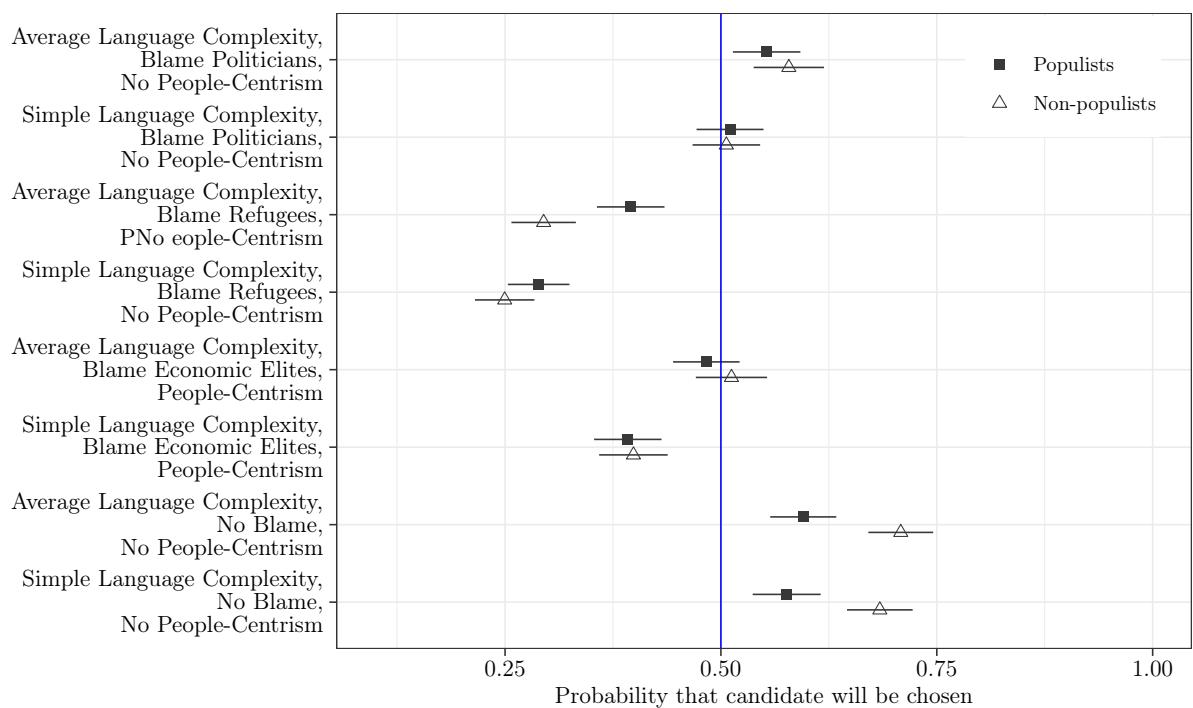
## Thin and Thick Populist Attitude Measures

Figure 7: Interactions of Attribute Levels (only Statements with People-Centric Rhetoric): Marginal Means for Populists and Non-Populists



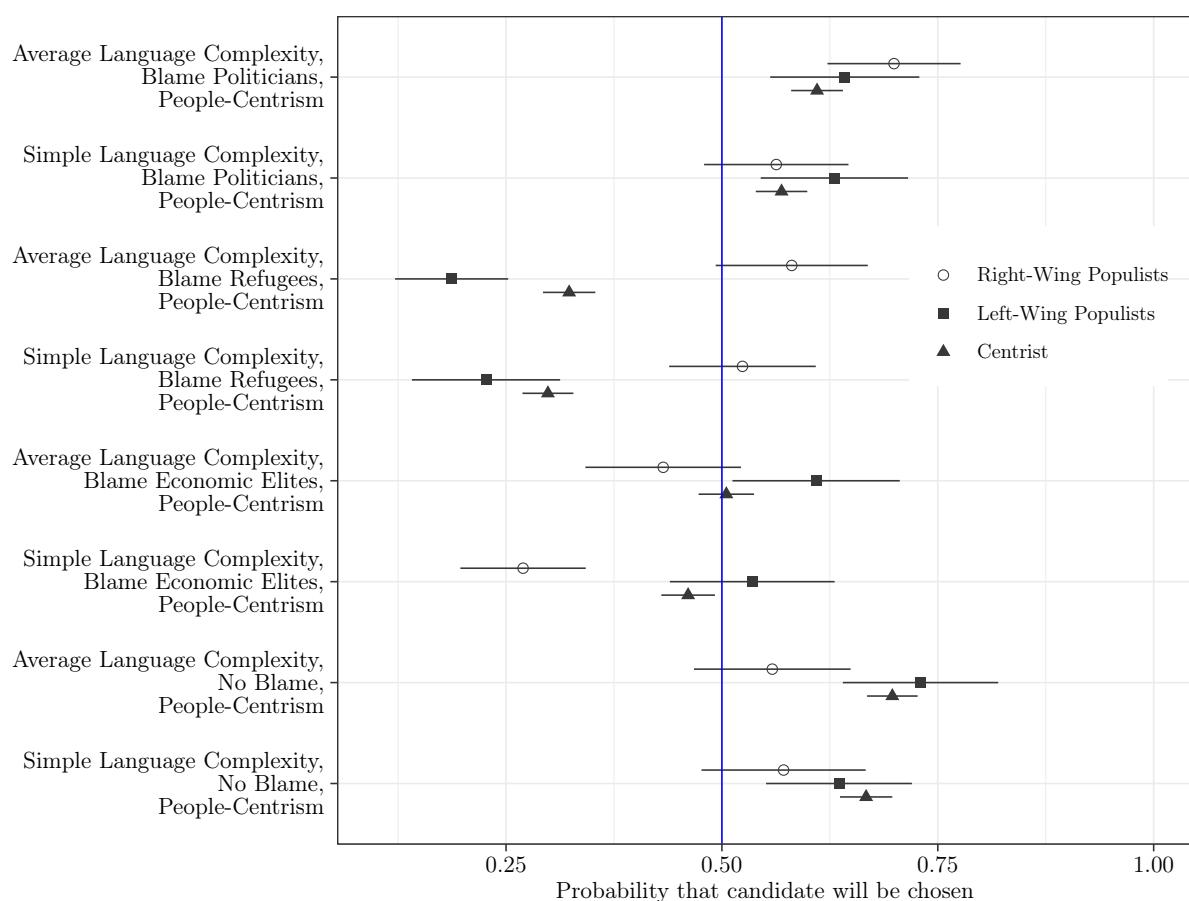
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 8: Interactions of Attribute Levels (only Statements Without People-Centric Rhetoric): Marginal Means for Populists and Non-Populists



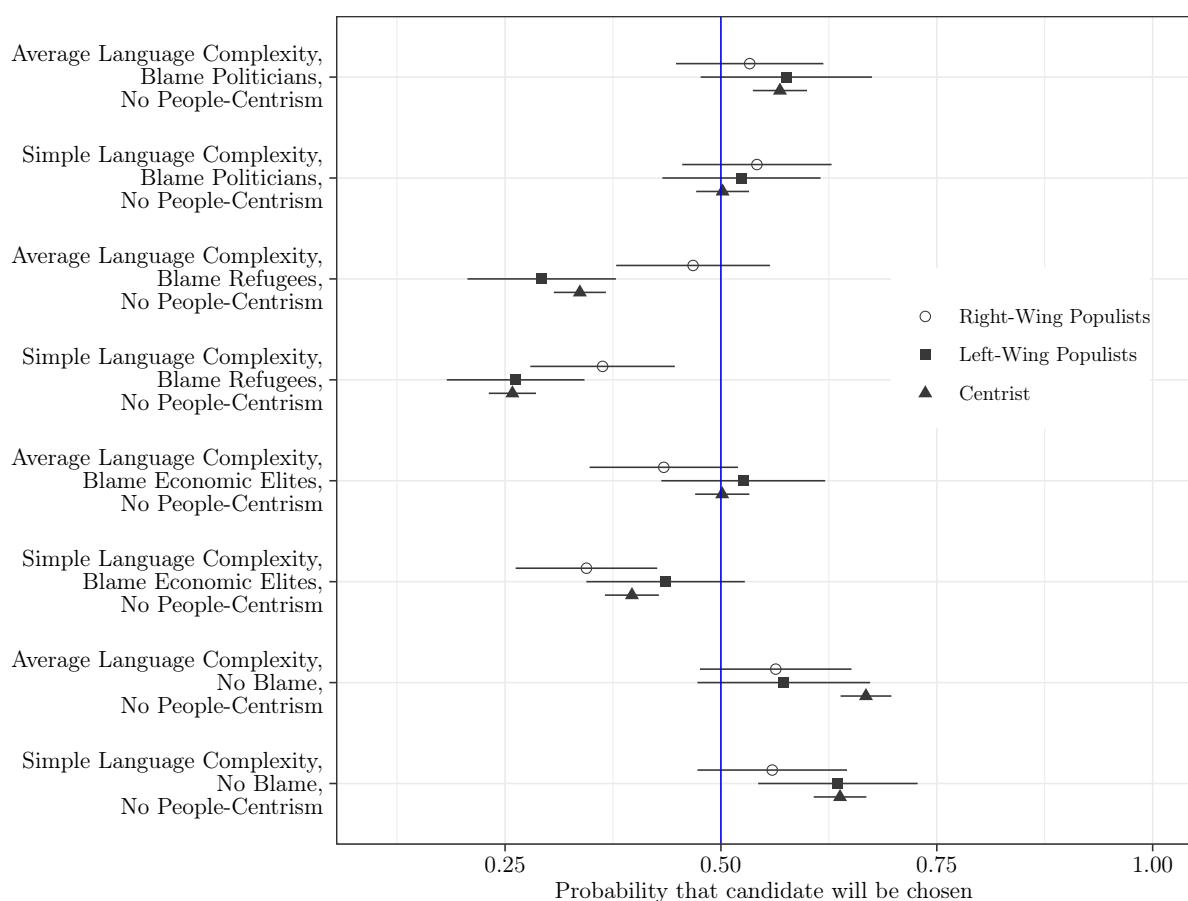
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 9: Interactions of Attribute Levels (only Statements with People-Centric Rhetoric): Marginal Means for Left-Wing Populists, Right-Wing Populists and Non-Populists



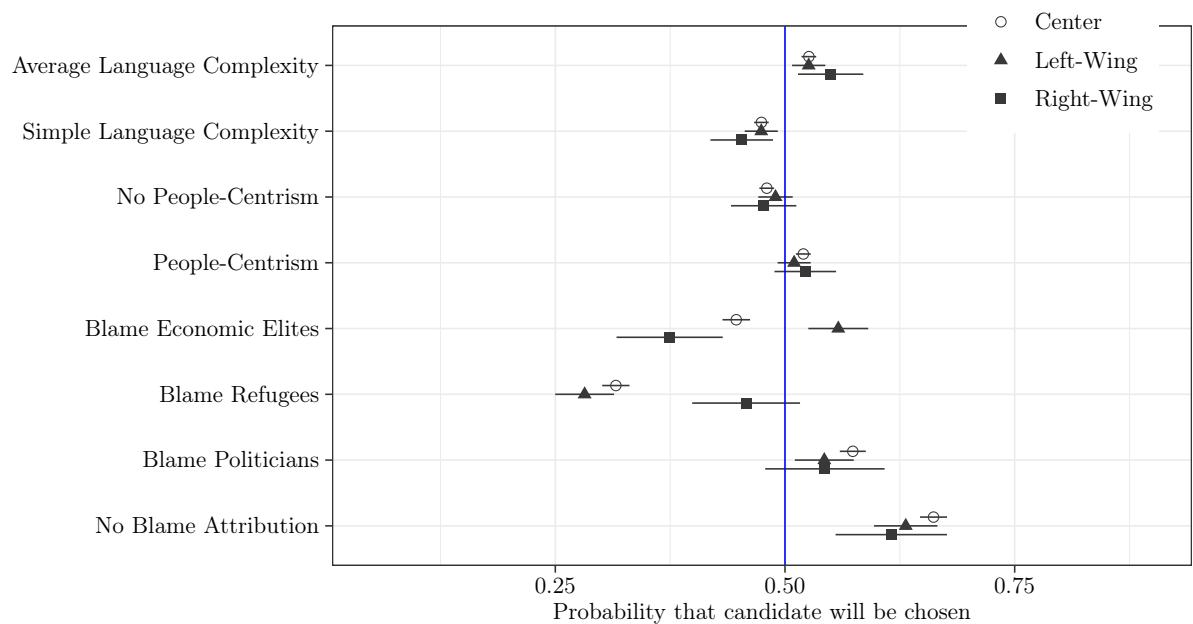
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 10: Interactions of Attribute Levels (only Statements without People-Centric Rhetoric): Marginal Means for Left-Wing Populists, Right-Wing Populists and Non-Populists



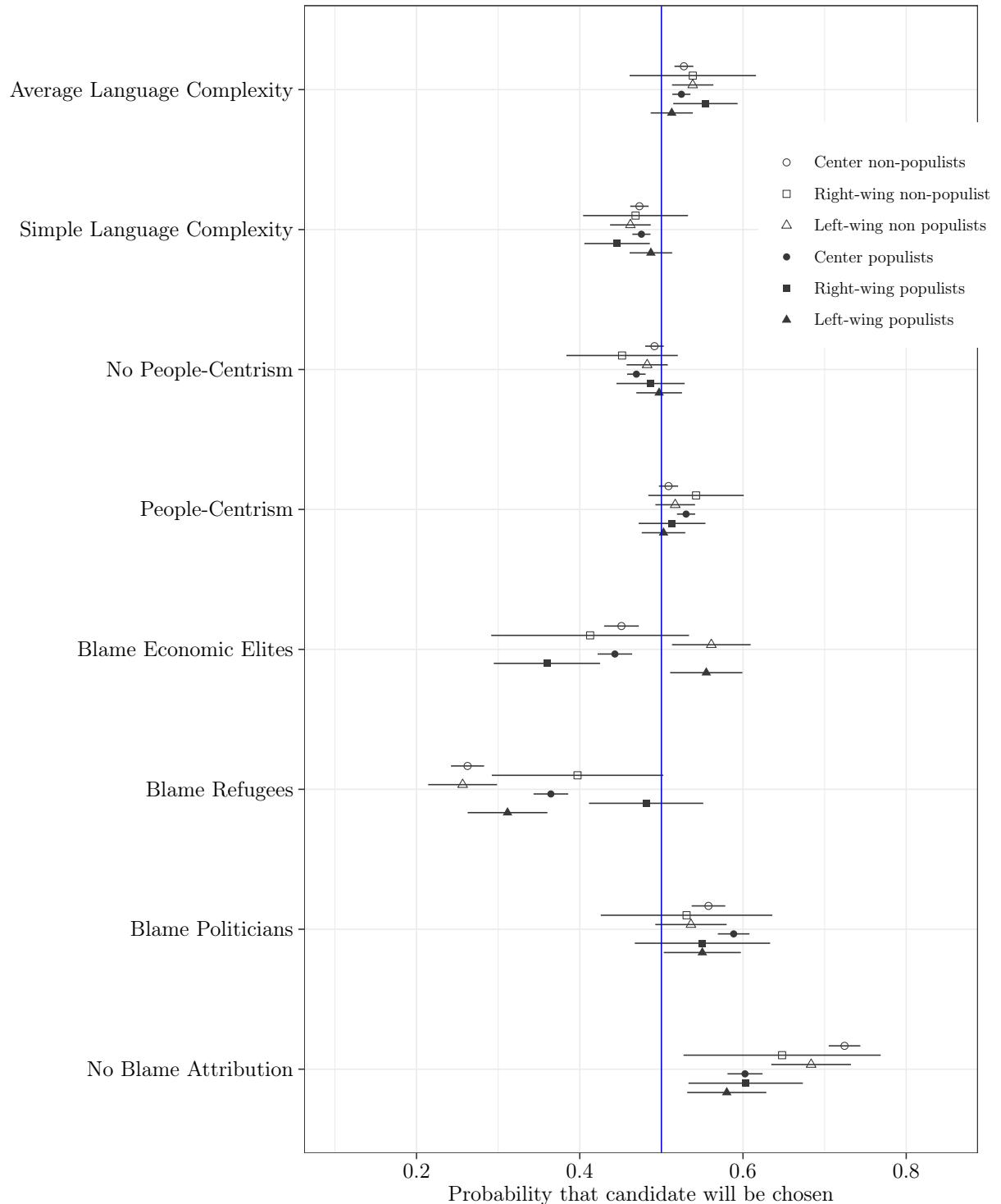
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 11: Marginal Means by Ideology Grouping (without controlling for populism)



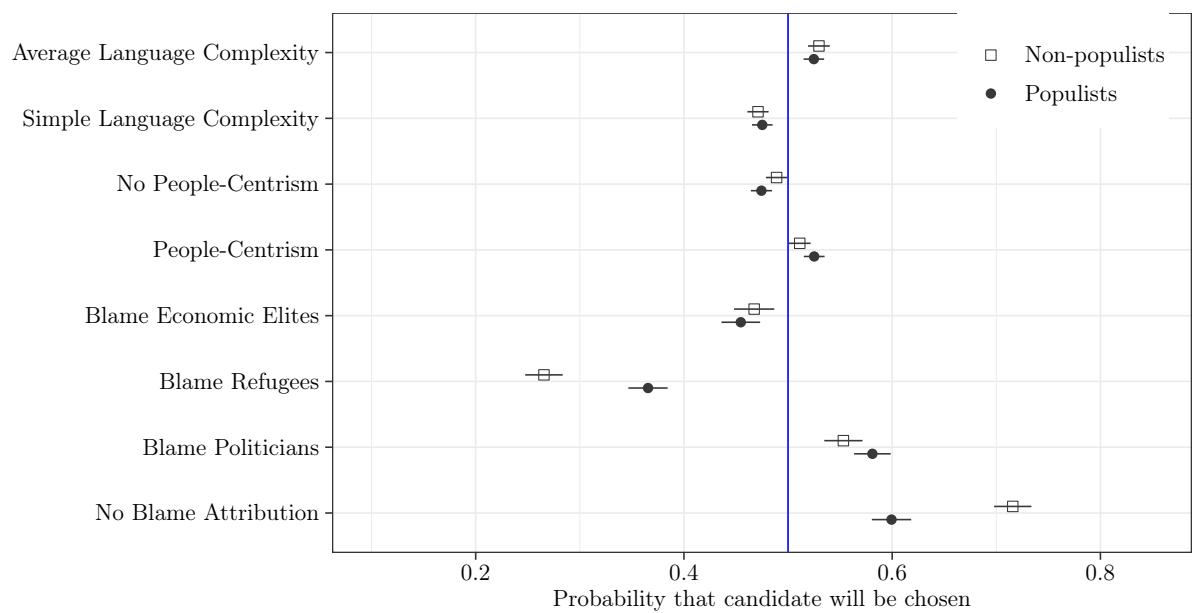
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 12: Marginal Means by Populists and Non-Populists Groups



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 13: Marginal Means for Populists and Non-Populists



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

## H Results: Exploratory Hypotheses

### Explanatory Hypotheses:

Next to the confirmatory hypothesis, I also include the following exploratory hypotheses in the pre-analysis plan.

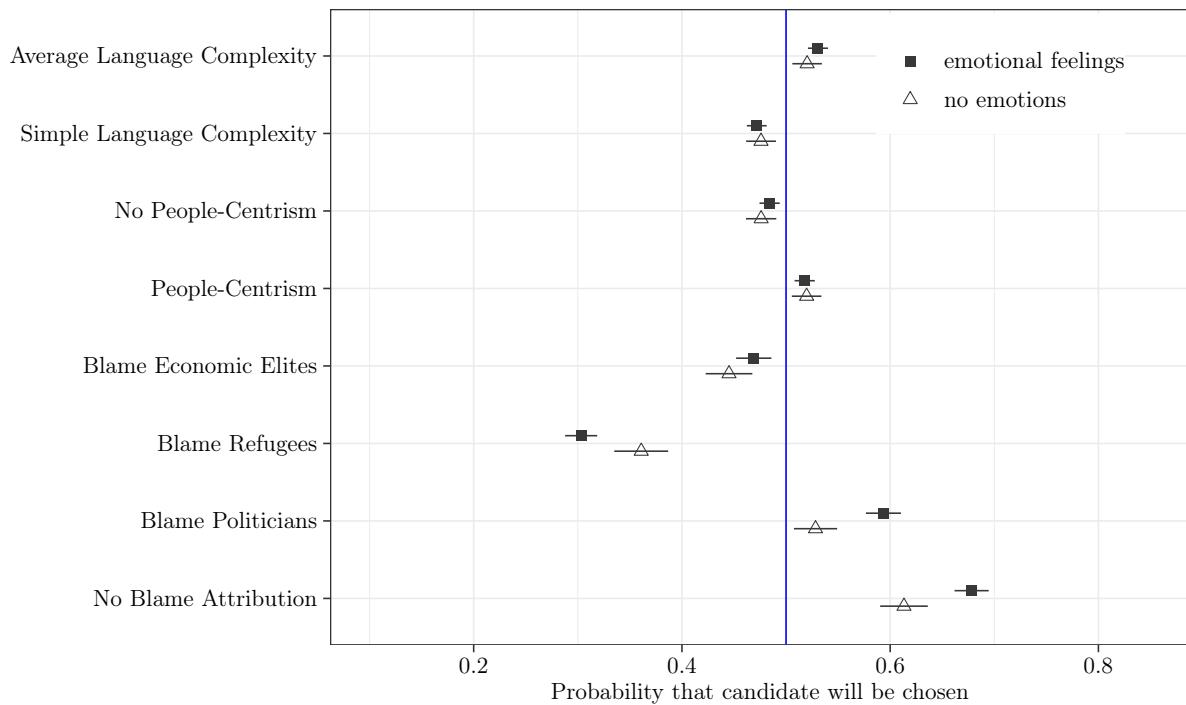
*Hypothesis 4a (H4a):* Simple language has a larger effect on citizens that feel emotional appealed by a statement.

*Hypothesis 4b (H4b):* Negative emotions towards a statement increase the effect of simple language on citizens.

*Hypothesis 5 (H5):* In general, people-centric language appeals more to people irrespective of their underlying populist attitudes.

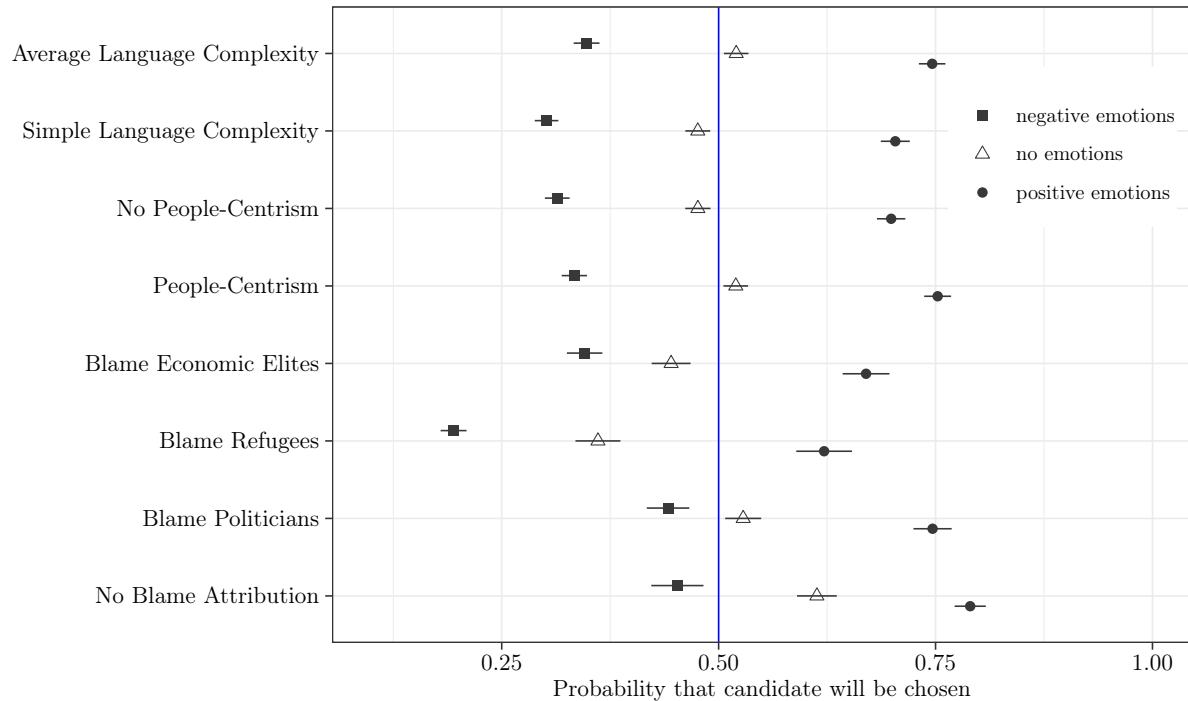
*Hypothesis 6 (H6):* In general, lower educated people respond more to simpler language.

Figure 14: Marginal Means for Emotions vs. No Emotions



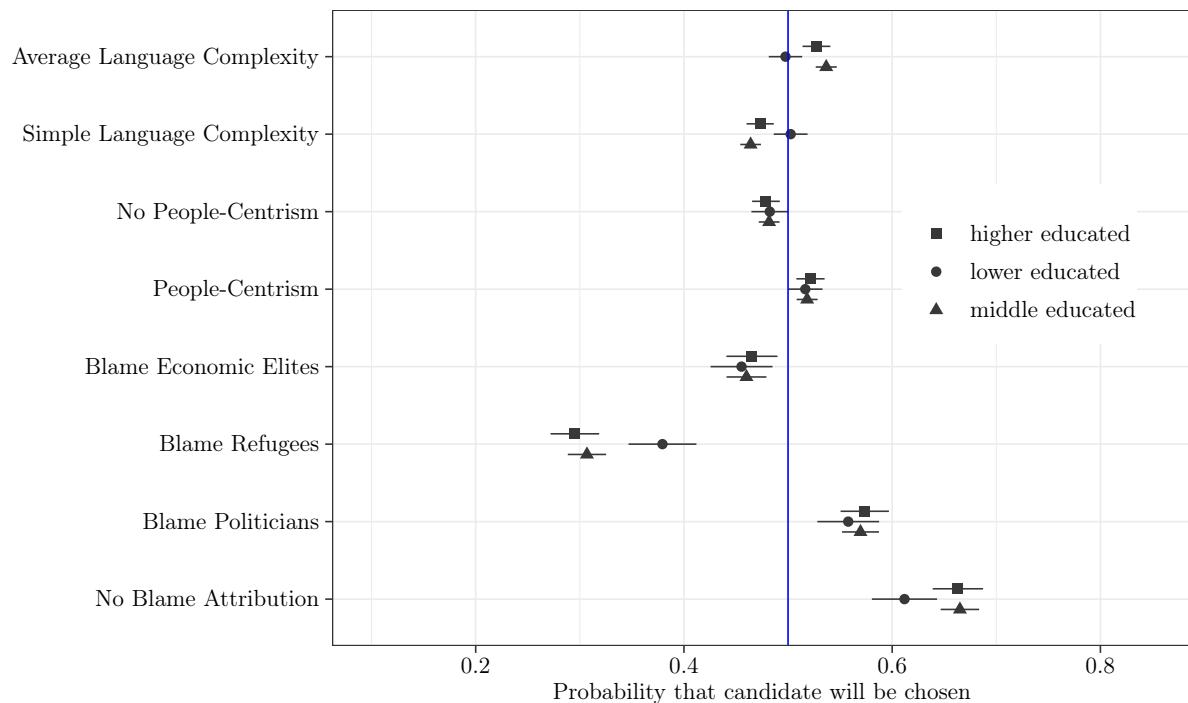
*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 15: Marginal Means by Emotional Feelings



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

Figure 16: Marginal Means by Education Groups



*Note: Marginal Means are displayed with 95 percent confidence intervals.*

## References

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