**Online Appendix**

**Table A1.** Detailed original coding scheme

**Table A2.** Summary statistics continuous variables

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min.  | Max. |
| Political interest | 26515 | 2.13 | 0.70 | 0 | 3 |
| Media consumption | 26621 | 2.10 | 0.91 | 0 | 3 |
| Personal relevance of issue | 25803 | 5.85 | 2.92 | 0 | 10 |
| Polarization | 26621 | 84.01 | 9.49 | 53 | 99 |
| Campaign intensity | 26621 | 3.28 | 1.49 | 0.00 | 5.61 |
| Issue complexity | 26621 | 0.26 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.47 |

**Table A3.** Summary statistics categorical variables

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | N | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Education  |  26,496 | 5.81 | 46.03 | 48.16 |
| Language  | 26,621 | 60.93 | 27.15 | 11.92 |
| Gender (male=1) | 26,621 | 51.47 | 48.53 |  |
| Pro / Con (pro=1) | 22,773 | 53.94 | 46.06 |  |

***Note***: Education: 0=below secondary / 1=secondary / 2=tertiary; Language: German=0 / French=1 / Italian=2

**Table A4.** Summary statistics pragmatic vs. principled arguments by issue domain

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **N issues** | **Argument type** | **Total**  | **Campaign Argument** |
|  |  | per cent principle | per cent pragmatic | per cent | number pragmatic |
| institutions | 3 | 54.96 | 45.04 | 100 | 1 |
| fiscal | 4 | 46.74 | 53.26 | 100 | 3 |
| culture/education/law | 7 | 52.01 | 47.99 | 100 | 4 |
| foreign-peace | 4 | 48.32 | 51.68 | 100 | 4 |
| immigration | 4 | 54.49 | 45.51 | 100 | 3 |
| social | 11 | 42.77 | 57.23 | 100 | 6 |
| ecology | 1 | 35.69 | 64.31 | 100 | 1 |
| Total | 34 | 47.4 | 52.6 | 100 | 22 |

**Table A5.** Number and type of arguments mentioned

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Frequency | Percent |
| mentioned only 1 argument | 15,196 | 85.32 |
| mentioned 2 pragmatic arguments | 796 | 4.47 |
| mentioned 2 principled arguments | 361 | 2.03 |
| mentioned two different arguments | 1,458 | 8.19 |
| Total | 17,811 | 100 |

**Table A6.** Chronological list of propositions with policy domain (titles translated from German)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Title | Policy domain |
| 01.06.2008 | Popular initiative ‘For democratic naturalizations’ | immigration |
| 01.06.2008 | Popular initiative ‘Popular Sovereignty instead of official propaganda’ | institutions |
| 01.06.2008 | Constitutional provision ‘For quality and rentability in health insurance’  | social |
| 30.11.2008 | Popular initiative 'For exemption from the statute of limitation of pornographic crimes with minors’ | cult-ed-law |
| 30.11.2008 | Popular initiative ‘For a flexible retirement age’ | social |
| 30.11.2008 | Popular initiative ‘Right of appeal for associations: stop the politics of hindrance’ | institutions |
| 30.11.2008 | Popular initiative ‘For a reasonable cannabis regulation with effective youth protection’ | cult-ed-law |
| 30.11.2008 | Federal law on narcotics and psychotropic substances | cult-ed-law |
| 08.02.2009 | Federal provision to extend free movement of people to Rumania and Bulgaria | foreign-peace |
| 17.05.2009 | Constitutional provision ‚The future of alternative medicine‘ | social |
| 17.05.2009 | Federal provision on biometrical passports | foreign-peace |
| 27.09.2009 | Federal provision on a temporary front-end financing of disability insurance | social |
| 27.09.2009 | Federal provision on renouncing to introduce the general popular initiative | institutions |
| 29.11.2009 | Federal provision on a special financing of air traffic | cult-ed-law |
| 29.11.2009 | Popular initiative ‘For a ban on weapons exports’ | foreign-peace |
| 29.11.2009 | Popular initiative ‘Against the construction of minarets’ | immigration |
| 07.03.2010 | Constitutional provision on research on humans | cult-ed-law |
| 07.03.2010 | Popular initiative ‘Agains animal abuse and for legal protection of animals’ | ecology |
| 07.03.2010 | Federal law on occupational pension schemes | social |
| 26.09.2010 | Federal law on unemployment insurance | social |
| 28.11.2010 | Popular initiative ‘For the deportation of criminal foreigners’ | immigration |
| 28.11.2010 | Counterproposal to the deportation initiative | immigration |
| 28.11.2010 | Popular initiative ‘For fair taxes. Stopp tax fraud‘ | fiscal |
| 11.03.2012 | Popular initiative ‘Stop the boundless construction of second homes’ | cult-ed-law |
| 11.03.2012 | Popular initiative ‘For tax-incentivised building savings‘' | social |
| 11.03.2012 | Volksinitiative '6 Wochen Ferien für alle' | social |
| 11.03.2012 | Federal provision on gambling regulation in favour of non-profit purposes | fiscal |
| 11.03.2012 | Federal law on book price regulation | fiscal |
| 17.06.2012 | Popular initiative ‘Your own home thanks to building savings’ | social |
| 17.06.2012 | Popular initiative ‘For strengthening popular rights in foreign policy’  | foreign-peace |
| 17.06.2012 | Revision of the federal law on health insurance (Managed Care) | social |
| 23.09.2012 | Federal provision on supporting youth music lessons | cult-ed-law |
| 23.09.2012 | Popular initiative ‘Safe housing at old age’  | fiscal |
| 23.09.2012 | Popular initiative ‚Protection from passive smoking’ | social |

**Table A7.** Robustness checks: Regression of reasoning type (pragmatic = 1) on individual- and proposition-level predictors using alternative variables

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Model A1 | Model A2 | Model A3 | Model A4 | Model A5 |
| **Individual Level Predictors** |  |  |
| *educational attainment (mandatory school)* |  |  |  |  |
| secondary edu | 0.063 | 0.097 | -0.083 | -0.031 | 0.034 |
|  | (0.090) | (0.089) | (0.106) | (0.118) | (0.100) |
| tertiary edu | 0.072 | 0.090 | -0.096 | -0.078 | 0.055 |
|  | (0.091) | (0.090) | (0.107) | (0.119) | (0.101) |
| political interest | 0.022 | -0.031 | 0.042 | 0.019 | 0.009 |
|  | (0.029) | (0.029) | (0.034) | (0.037) | (0.032) |
| accepted | -0.503 | -0.299 | -0.396 | -0.212 | -0.259 |
|  | (0.041)\*\*\* | (0.041)\*\*\* | (0.045)\*\*\* | (0.048)\*\*\* | (0.044)\*\*\* |
| personal relevance | -0.053 | -0.037 | -0.036 | -0.021 | -0.051 |
|  | (0.007)\*\*\* | (0.007)\*\*\* | (0.008)\*\*\* | (0.009)\* | (0.008)\*\*\* |
| left-right ideology | 0.099 | 0.080 |  |  | 0.080 |
|  | (0.009)\*\*\* | (0.009)\*\*\* |  |  | (0.010)\*\*\* |
| *party preference (other = reference)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| right-wing party |  |  | **0.182** | 0.186 |  |
|  |  |  | **(0.059)\*\*** | (0.065)\*\* |  |
| left-wing party |  |  | **-0.271** | -0.357 |  |
|  |  |  | **(0.061)\*\*\*** | (0.067)\*\*\* |  |
| middle party |  |  | **0.010** | 0.053 |  |
|  |  |  | **(0.078)** | (0.086) |  |
| age | -0.004 | -0.004 | **-0.004** | -0.002 | -0.005 |
|  | (0.001)\*\* | (0.001)\*\* | (0.001)\*\* | (0.001) | (0.001)\*\*\* |
| male | 0.185 | 0.125 | 0.133 | 0.132 | 0.116 |
|  | (0.038)\*\*\* | (0.037)\*\*\* | (0.042)\*\* | (0.046)\*\* | (0.041)\*\* |
| *language* |  |  |  |  |  |
| French | -0.187 | -0.207 | -0.191 | -0.223 | -0.206 |
|  | (0.043)\*\*\* | (0.043)\*\*\* | (0.049)\*\*\* | (0.054)\*\*\* | (0.048)\*\*\* |
| Italian | -0.081 | -0.043 | -0.044 | -0.106 | -0.038 |
|  | (0.064) | (0.063) | (0.072) | (0.080) | (0.069) |
| **Context Level Predictors** |  |  |
| *policy domain (ref. immigration)* |  |  |  |  |
| institutional | 0.926 | 0.533 | 0.765 | 0.128 |  |
|  | (0.697) | (0.786) | (0.732) | (0.837) |  |
| fiscal | 0.426 | 1.114 | 0.818 | 1.020 |  |
|  | (0.674) | (0.769) | (0.684) | (0.734) |  |
| cult-ed-law  | -0.134 | 0.637 | 0.332 | 0.469 |  |
|  | (0.559) | (0.633) | (0.569) | (0.869) |  |
| foreign-peace | 0.573 | -0.248 | 0.266 | -0.106 |  |
|  | (0.632) | (0.715) | (0.631) | (0.693) |  |
| social | 0.121 | 0.514 | 0.744 | 0.630 |  |
|  | (0.504) | (0.572) | (0.519) | (0.549) |  |
| ecology | -0.167 | 0.416 | 0.380 |  |  |
|  | (1.004) | (1.139) | (0.989) |  |  |
| economic vs. social issues |  |  |  |  | **0.225** |
|  |  |  |  |  | **(0.414)** |
| complexity | 0.877 | 0.107 | 0.656 | -2.573 | 0.953 |
|  | (1.917) | (2.172) | (1.919) | (2.577) | (1.886) |
| strongest argument | 1.325 | 1.273 | 1.345 | **1.042** | 1.358 |
|  | (0.347)\*\*\* | (0.392)\*\* | (0.347)\*\*\* | **(0.466)\*** | (0.331)\*\*\* |
| constant | -0.694 | -0.842 | -0.840 | 0.356 | -0.718 |
|  | (0.647) | (0.729) | (0.713) | (0.761) | (0.556) |
| **Random effects**: context level variance | -0.322 | -0.068 | -0.323 | -0.174 | -0.374 |
|  | (0.258) | (0.260) | (0.256) | (0.289) | (0.278) |
| N (level 2) | 15,673 | 15,673 | 12,406 | 10,069 | 12,885 |

Notes. Random-intercept logit coefficients with standandard errors in parentheses; Dependent variable = type of answer (1=pragmatic / 0=principled); † p<0.01; \* *p*<0.05; \*\* *p*<0.01; \*\*\* *p*<0.001; **Model A1** categorizes institutional arguments as pragmatic**; Model A2** categorizes specific principles as pragmatic. **Model A3** includes party preference instead of left-right self-placement; left-wing parties = GPS, SP, PdA; right-wing parties = FDP, SVP, BDP, EDU, Lega; middle parties = CVP, CSP, EDU, GLP; **Model A4** uses an alternative variable for the strongest campaign argument, based on pre-ballot polls. **Model A5** groups the different policy domains into two dimensions: economic (fiscal, institutional) versus social-cultural (social, cultural, immigration), ecology and foreign policy were coded as missing.