

## Owning protest but sharing distrust? Confidence in the political system and anti-political-establishment party choice in the Finnish 2011 parliamentary elections

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In this study we explore to what extent did anti-political-establishment voting mobilized manifest political distrust in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections. In particular, we seek to determine whether the channels of manifest political distrust vary for different forms of political trust. Individual-level data from the Finnish National Election Study (FNES 2011, N = 1,268) is analyzed by applying multinomial logistic regressions. The results show that anti-political-establishment voting effectively channels both specific and diffuse political distrust, but this dissatisfaction is not reflected as anti-incumbency voting. Furthermore, it seems that a significant amount of latent political distrust, which is not explicitly expressed by party preference at electoral polls, exists in the electorates of several governmental and opposition parties.

**Keywords:** Political trust, anti-establishment party, protest party, vote choice, Finland

### Introduction

In general, politically dissatisfied citizens have three options in terms of manifesting (expressing) their political distrust at the ballot box. First, they may demonstrate their distrust against all political institutions and actors by voting for an anti-political-establishment party. Second, they may vote against the current office holders by casting a ballot for an opposition party (anti-incumbent vote). Third, they may abstain from voting altogether. While all these three forms of political participation provide a channel for manifest political distrust, latent (silent) political distrust may exist in the electorates of all parties without ever getting a political expression in terms of party choice (or abstention). Therefore, a dissatisfied citizen may opt for party loyalty despite their political malcontent (Hirschman 1970).

In this article we set out to explore *to what extent manifest political distrust was channelled through the anti-political-establishment vote in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections*. While it is easy to presume that distrust is simply expressed by voting for anti-political-establishment parties, we want to present a more detailed picture by also examining *alternative manners to express dissatisfaction, i.e. anti-incumbency voting and abstention*. In particular, we seek to determine whether the channels of manifest political distrust vary when the concept of political trust is further divided into its sub-indicators: trust in political actors (i.e. political parties and politicians), trust in national and European political institutions (i.e. parliament, government and the European

Union), and satisfaction with democracy, representing both specific and diffuse sides of political support. The underlying rationale behind these questions stems from the broader literature in which it is argued that distrust in political actors and institutions is not necessarily harmful for the political system or democracy (Norris 1999; Cook & Gronke 2005; Geissel 2008) and that it is important to distinguish between possible objects of the feelings of distrust (Marien & Hooghe 2011, 270). As noted by Marien and Hooghe (2011), there is need for more empirical research on the consequences of political trust. Moreover, by allowing other parties than the most obvious one (in this case the Finns Party) to be possible beneficiaries of distrust, we hope to give a more nuanced picture of the linkages between confidence in the political system, anti-political-establishment voting, and party choice.

The research questions are examined in the political context of Finland, which in 2011 experienced its most volatile parliamentary elections in 66 years. This exceptional result was due to the rise of the nationalist and EU-critical Finns party (PS), which emerged as the major electoral winner by advancing 15 percentage points (from 4.1 to 19.1 per cent of the votes cast) compared to the previous parliamentary elections in 2007. Already in the 2008 municipal elections and the 2009 European Parliament elections, the Finns gained 5.4 % and 9.8 % of the total vote, which anticipated the electoral breakthrough of the party in Finnish politics. Despite coming third in the elections in terms of votes, disagreements on the composition of the government coalition and programme - particularly on EU policy - led to the decision of the Finns party to withdraw from the exceptionally long government negotiations (for detailed electoral results, see Statistics Finland 2012). However, the landslide victory emphasized the fact that after 2011 there has been a third way of expressing political dissatisfaction in Finland - through a significant anti-establishment party alternative.

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The structure of the paper is as follows. We start by outlining the theoretical discussion around the concepts of political support, trust, and protest. The task ahead is three-fold: first, there is a need to differentiate between different levels of trust and their importance for the political system. Second, we discuss the difference between anti-incumbent and anti-political-establishment voting and third, we present a number of hypotheses deriving from the ideas about specific and diffuse support in relation to distrust and voting. Also, the context for the study is set by discussing the changes in political trust and anti-political-establishment party alternatives in Finland. In the empirical part we focus on the predictors of our model and present our data and the variables, followed by the main results of the analyses. The final part provides the discussion and concluding remarks.

The study shows that there is a significant amount of latent political distrust in the electorates of several Finnish parties, which is not premeditated by party preference at the electoral polls. This distrust is also unrelated to the governmental status of the party. Because the distrust in political actors did not clearly benefit the main opposition parties, the results imply that despite their anti-political-establishment sentiments, the Finns party may play an important role as a pro-system party actor, absorbing the political discontent of the citizens to the democratic system.

### Political support, trust, and protest

A bulk of the political science literature is concerned with the topic of political trust and its varying political outcomes. While the conventional wisdom seems to hold that "the more trust, the better for democracy" (Almond & Verba 1963; Dalton 2008), some amount of distrust or cynicism may also be beneficial for democracy as it may lead to required changes in a political system (Miller 1974). Easton's (1965; 1975) approach to the analysis of political support includes the idea that while political trust is a demonstration of *specific* support for the system, that is to say, citizens' object-specific evaluations of the performance of particular political authorities, institutions or the implementation of policy outputs (Miller 1974, cf. Citrin 1974) *diffuse* support of the political system "refers to evaluations of what an object is or represents – to the general meaning it has for a person – not what it does", thus encompassing the affect it has on the entire political system and its fundamental arrangements (Easton 1975, 444; see also Iyengar 1980, 249; Dalton 2008, 251).

The lack of diffuse and specific political support has varying implications on voting behaviour and party preference. Criticism of the political system can also be seen as 'informed scepticism', i.e. (a) conscious demonstration(s) by the citizens that they are not satisfied with the performance of the government or public authorities (Miller 1974). Consequently, a lack of specific political support may manifest itself in votes for all opposition parties, independent of the ideology, that are not under the direct influence of the incumbent government. In two-party systems, the relationship between the dissatisfaction with incumbent political actors and insti-

tutions (specific support) and party preference is evidently far more straightforward than in a multi-party system, where the shared accountability in government coalitions makes the targeted expression of dissatisfaction towards government policy far more complex (Hooghe et al. 2011).

Hence, when evaluating the impact of political distrust on party choice, the anti-incumbent vote should be kept conceptually separate from the anti-political-establishment vote. An anti-incumbent vote is an integral part of democratic governance and a possibility for a voter to demonstrate a lack of specific support for those in power. The main idea of an anti-incumbent vote is to 'throw the rascals out' and vote for an alternative government composition. An anti-political-establishment vote is often institutionalized in the form of a political party: here the rationale is to vote against the political elite and all established parties. In addition, the concepts of anti-political establishment voting and protest voting are often used interchangeably, while it is open to debate whether these two concepts indicate the lack of *specific* support for the incumbent actors or the lack of *diffuse* support for the more permanent arrangements of the political system. According to Schedler (1996), anti-political establishment parties set the political elite against the people, and the political elite against themselves. Simultaneously, they reject the traditional setting of government and opposition, clustering their adversaries together to one homogeneous political class. As a consequence, the anti-political-establishment parties tend to concentrate less on issues related to traditional socio-economic left-right cleavages and more on the political system and its malfunctions. This is not to say that anti-political-establishment parties are anti-democratic, in the sense that they oppose participation in the institutions of the representative democracy (Schedler 1996; Arter 2010). Because the distrust of the electorate of anti-political-establishment parties is often directed against the ruling elite, the dissatisfaction with democracy is more related to the unresponsiveness of the system, i.e. the ineffectiveness of the political arrangements (independent of their governmental status) to respond to the needs of the citizens.

The key question from a citizen's perspective is whether their political dissatisfaction is latent or manifest, i.e. whether they intentionally want to express their distrust by casting a ballot to an opposition party or, more strongly perhaps, to an anti-political-establishment party (either as the only motivation of party choice or in addition to the ideological preferences). Anti-incumbent voting and anti-political-establishment voting are, however, driven by different political motivations. While the former is based on the evaluation on the performance of incumbent office holders, and often has its roots in the traditional left-right cleavage, the latter is based on the rejection of the whole political class which is presented as incompetent, immoral and insincere by anti-political-establishment parties. Furthermore, in terms of party strategy, while an opposition party should represent itself as a clear alternative to the incumbent government, an anti-political-establishment party should perceive itself as an alternative to the entire political establishment and emphasize the fundamental divide between political class and the

people. It should also challenge the status quo in terms of major policy issues (Schedler 1996; Abedi 2002, 556-7). To put it bluntly, the citizen's vote against the entire political system and its actors will go to waste if a party does not enjoy the status of being an anti-political-establishment party in the political system, or does not identify itself as one in order to make strategic electoral choices to attract the electorate.

It is important to note, however, that anti-political-establishment voting does not necessarily exclude the possibility of ideological voting, because a citizen may cast an anti-political-establishment vote while simultaneously voting rationally according to (ideological) policy preferences (Eatwell 2000, 419; c.f. Kitschelt 1997; Norris 2005). For instance, while admitting their willingness to protest and transform the party system, the Finns party electorate seem to support single policy issues driven by the party (e.g. in EU and immigration policies) as well as the party's conservative ideology (e.g. restoration of traditional moral values).

The division into specific and diffuse support will serve as a foundation for our hypotheses and analyses. A few more notes should, however, be made on the two concepts. Defining diffuse support has proven to be both theoretically and operationally challenging. The major undertaking, it seems, is concerned with the question of how to construct a measure of diffuse support that is not affected by the opinions of the current incumbents, recent government policies or other factors that may be seen as indicators of specific support (Iyengar 1980, 249). A characteristic for diffuse support is also that it tends to be quite stable. The government and its actors cannot possibly meet all of the citizens' expectations and the system will, in order to outlast periods of public malcontent, need some of the diffuse support that is not immediately connected to policy outputs (Dalton 2008, 251). However, the lack of specific support may also ultimately lead to distancing from the political institutions and actors and erode the diffuse support. Simultaneously, as Hetherington (1998, 792) concludes, if a political system does not enjoy legitimacy, it will be hard for the government to marshal resources and remain effective.

Our approach and hypotheses will be derived from the traditional literature and research on political trust maintaining that political trust is multi-dimensional and should be studied as such. Norris (1999, 2) argues that rather than talking about political trust, it is crucial to be specific about its object. She further claims that much of the confusion surrounding the topic of political trust is a result from neglecting the different distinctions of the concept (see also Grönlund & Setälä 2007; Fischer et al. 2010; cf. Hooghe 2011).

There has furthermore been disagreement on whether the commonly used survey item measuring "satisfaction with democracy" should be regarded as an indicator of specific or diffuse support (Grönlund & Setälä 2007). One could, on the one hand, assume that the question is intended to measure an overall sentiment of satisfaction regarding the norms and principles that the democratic decision-making system relies on. On the other hand, the answers to the survey question may absorb interpretations of the 'output' side as well, including evaluations of regime performance and policy out-

comes. We concur with Grönlund and Setälä (2007, 400), who argue that "questions of trust refer to the extent to which institutions fulfil people's normative expectations, whereas questions of satisfaction with institutions pertain to the satisfaction with policy outputs". Naturally, a citizen may have normative expectations with regard to policy outputs, for instance in social policy and taxation. Furthermore, as Borre (2000) argues, distrust in politicians and dissatisfaction with how democracy is working may concentrate on policy positions that are opposed to government policy on a critical set of issues, particularly in cases where public opinion strongly deviates from government policy.

In sum, we identify trust in politicians and parties representing the specific side of political support, whereas trust in national and European political institutions as well as satisfaction with democracy, would fall on the diffuse side. Nevertheless, we recognize the complexity of the concepts of trust and satisfaction, as well as potential overlapping when it comes to interpretations of survey measures. The relationship between citizens and political actors is to a certain degree also interpersonal and there may thus be other than institutional bases of trust, such as familiarity or personal characteristics. However, while it seems theoretically appropriate to differentiate between trust in politicians and trust in institutions, it is likely that empirical correlations can be found between the two (Grönlund & Setälä 2007, 405). In this article, we will by political trust refer to both specific and diffuse support for the political system. We also agree with Fuchs and colleagues who argue that 'the important question is whether or not the indicator refers to a generalized attitude towards the political system'. It is support, after all, which is decisive when it comes to maintaining the democratic system (Fuchs et al. 1995, 330-2). Fuchs and colleagues also find sufficient evidence for the validity of the survey item as an indicator of 'support for the democratic system'.

Instead of casting an anti-incumbent or an anti-political-establishment vote, a citizen may also demonstrate distrust towards the political system by abstaining, i.e. by choosing an 'exit option'. Indeed, the decline in turnout and the eroding of political trust have gone hand in hand during the past 30 years (e.g. Franklin 2004). The empirical findings on the influence of political trust on electoral turnout have, however, been rather weak (Citrin 1974; Hetherington 1998), although Grönlund and Setälä (2007), for instance, have found a positive relationship between high turnout and trust in parliament, as well as satisfaction with democracy.

Based on the theoretical discussion above, we set two main and four additional hypotheses:

### *Main hypotheses*

- H1. *If the specific political support of a respondent is low, the likelihood of an anti-political-establishment vote increases.* Low trust in political actors increases the probability of voting for the Finns party over other political parties.
- H2. *If the diffuse political support of a respondent is low, the likelihood of an anti-political-establishment vote increases.* Low trust in national political institutions and the

EU as well as dissatisfaction with democracy increases the probability of voting for the Finns party over other political parties.

### *Additional hypotheses*

- H3. *If the specific political support of a respondent is low, the likelihood of an anti-incumbent vote increases.* Low trust in political actors should increase the probability of voting for the opposition parties (The Social Democratic Party - SDP, The Christian Democrats - KD, The Left Alliance - VAS and The Finns Party - PS) over the main incumbent parties (The Centre party - KESK, The National Coalition Party - KOK).
- H4. *The low diffuse support of a respondent does not affect the likelihood of anti-incumbency voting.* Low trust in national political institutions and the EU as well as dissatisfaction with democracy should neither increase nor decrease the probability of voting for the opposition parties (SDP, KD, VAS and PS) over the main incumbent parties (KESK, KOK).
- H5. *If the specific political support of a respondent is low, the likelihood of abstention increases.* Low trust in political actors increases the probability of abstaining in the elections.
- H6. *If the diffuse political support of a respondent is low, the likelihood of abstention increases.* Low trust in national political institutions and the EU, as well as dissatisfaction with democracy increases the probability of abstaining in the elections.

### **Political trust and anti-political-establishment party alternatives in Finland**

In general, Finnish citizens display a fairly high level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country (Paloheimo 2006, 137-8), even though it seems that confidence in the political institutions and especially in politicians, political parties, and the European parliament has decreased to a certain degree. The economic depression at the beginning of the 1990s naturally eroded the political trust of the Finns, but a slight increase of trust was observed again at the beginning of the millennium (Mattila & Sankiäho 2005, 82-7; Newton & Norris 2000, 56). Moreover, a comparison of several European countries shows that an average Finn trusts the institutions slightly more than an average European, and is somewhat more satisfied with governmental policies. They do, however, display relatively negative views of the political elite (Kestilä 2006). Nevertheless, trust in political parties is the second highest in Finland after Denmark when 17 European Social Survey (2004) countries are compared (Paloheimo 2006, 144-5).

Already before the 2011 'earthquake' elections, the issues of political trust received notable media coverage. This had much to do with the scandal of electoral funding after the 2007 parliamentary elections. Several candidates did not report their sources of funding in time, which was required if the funding from a single donor reached the limit of 1,700

Euros. In particular, it turned out that several known politicians of governmental parties received funding from the interest group *Kehittyvien maakuntien Suomi* (KMS), which is often considered as the lobbying organisation of three influential businessmen. This led to several charges for both donors and politicians; especially the Centre Party, the National Coalition Party, and to a certain degree the Social Democratic Party suffered from the scandal. It is important to note, however, that in 2011 only 38 % of Finns party voters and 26.6 % of abstainers responded that the electoral funding scandal was a quite significant or a very significant reason for their electoral choice.

The other issue eroding the political support of the Finns party for the incumbent office holders was the economic crisis which, after a long period of steady economic growth, hit Finland hard in 2007-2009. This was illustrated particularly by falling production numbers as well as a decrease in private investments (17 % in 2009) and exports (20 % in 2009) (Freystätter & Mattila 2011). Hence, the top five issues of the Finnish electorate in the 2011 parliamentary elections were related to handling and/or mishandling of the economy and most specifically to the financial support for the PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain), stability funds, employment, public economy, social inequality, and income disparities.

Consequently, although it seems that no significant changes have occurred in the level of diffuse support for the political system over the past 20 years, the specific support for the incumbent office holders was put under rigorous test in the 2011 parliamentary elections as a result of the scandals and the financial crisis. Furthermore, as indicated by the massive electoral support for the Finns party, a more general anti-elite sentiment seems to be on the rise.

The Finns party was not a newcomer to the Finnish political field. It was founded already in 1995 as a successor party of the Finnish Rural Party (SMP). Political scientists have disagreed on the placement of the Finns party (PS) in the ideological spectrum of both Finland and Western Europe. According to Arter (2010), the Finns party should be classified as a populist radical right-wing party that combines traditional conservatism (socio-cultural authoritarianism) with ethno-nationalism (nativism). In contrast, Paloheimo (2011) argues that the Finns party should be classified as a centre-based populist party. Raunio (2012) concludes that while the anti-EU discourse of the party resembles that of other European radical right or populist parties, the contextual factors have moderated their argumentation.

First and foremost, the Finns party has inherited both anti-elitism and anti-intellectualism from its predecessor (Arter 2010, 488-9). Despite its current strong position in the party system, the anti-political-establishment tag of the party has hardly vanished. Besides the fact that the party's main contenders and media tend to label it as an anti-political-establishment or protest party in public discussion, over 43 % of the Finns party voters in the Finnish Electoral Survey 2011 (FNES 2011, see Borg & Grönlund 2011) replied that the willingness to cast a protest vote influenced their party preference quite a lot or significantly, and for over 80 % of



the voters it was important to shake up the frozen party system through their vote. To put these numbers into context, only 28.7 % of those who abstained reported that their choice was influenced by a willingness to protest against politics and politicians.<sup>1</sup>

In the 2011 parliamentary elections the Finns party had a dual role. On the one hand, it was an opposition party capable of gathering anti-incumbent votes, and the electoral success predicted by opinion polls made it a serious challenger to office holders. On the other hand, it was the only party enjoying the status of an anti-political-establishment party. This argument comes, however, with a few reservations. First, it could be argued that the rhetoric of the Left Alliance, founded in 1990 as a successor party of the communist Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL), approaches that of an anti-political-establishment party. Indeed, typical of anti-political-establishment parties, the Left Alliance often sets the political and economic elite against the people, and differentiates itself from the former. In general, however, it more easily conforms to the traditional setting of government versus opposition (Schedler 1996), despite the fact that the party in the 2012 local elections directed its electoral campaign against the Conservatives, a fellow government coalition partner. Furthermore, the Left Alliance positions itself strongly on the left-right axis, deriving its electoral themes from income disparities and, to some extent, from class cleavages. Second, in the Finnish parliamentary elections, the open-list proportional representation encourages candidate-based voting, which allows voters to pick an 'anti-political-establishment candidate', despite the fact that a party that the candidate represents would not fulfil the criteria of an anti-political-establishment party above. Third, there were nine marginal parties competing in the 2011 parliamentary elections, which together received only 2 % of the votes cast. While most of these parties can be considered as having an anti-political-establishment ideology, their emphases on issues vary significantly (e.g. the Pirate Party of Finland, the Senior Citizens Party, the Independence Party) and they can be considered rather loose gatherings, changing from one election to the next.

### Research design, data and method

The study employs individual-level opinions as survey items, measured in the Finnish National Election Study (FNES) 2011, which is a nationally representative survey conducted in connection with the parliamentary elections in Finland (Borg & Grönlund 2011). The total number of respondents in the data is 1,298, which is slightly reduced in the analyses because only those cases with complete data for the dependent variable and the predictors are included. The data are weighted to match the actual voting behaviour in the elections. In the survey data, the abstainers are heavily underrepresented, whereas voters of the Swedish People's Party (RKP) and the Social Democratic Party are overrepresented.

The study at hand measures the effect of different sub-indicators of political trust on party choice, particularly fo-

cusing on anti-political-establishment voting, and controlling for the effect of other important predictors. Because the dependent variable (party choice) is not continuous, we estimated four multinomial logistic regression models. The eight largest parties were included in the analysis, and the marginal parties in the category of 'other party' were recoded as missing because only 17 respondents replied that they had voted for a candidate in this category.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a ninth category, 'abstention' was added to the party choice variable by combining information from a variable measuring voting vs. abstention.

The incumbent government coalition in the 2011 parliamentary elections was formed by the Centre Party, the National Coalition Party, the Swedish People's Party, and the Green League (VIHR). In Finland, however, two large parties typically form the core of a government coalition. The Centre Party and the National Coalition Party were the leading partners in the government of Matti Vanhanen (2007-2010) and later in the government of Mari Kiviniemi (2010-2011). In both governments, the minister of finance came from the National Coalition Party. The Centre Party had 25.5 % of the parliamentary seats while the National Coalition Party held 25 %. Thus, the analysis was conducted so that the reference category in each sub-analysis was first the Centre Party (i.e. the main incumbent party), and then the National Coalition Party (i.e. the second incumbent party).<sup>3</sup> We argue that voters are able to identify who has the most power (and responsibility) within the government. As is the case in many other political systems, in Finland these are the prime-ministerial and finance-ministerial parties (Duch and Stevenson 2008). Consequently, we find it important not to choose one (main) party as a reference category over another.

In FNES 2011, political trust was mainly operationalized by asking the respondents how much trust they had in the President of the Republic, political parties, the parliament, the national government, politicians, and the European Union.<sup>4</sup> The respondent's satisfaction with democracy was asked in a Likert scale of four values: *On the whole, are you*

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that amongst those who abstained, the majority would have chosen to vote for the Finns party in the event that they *would have* voted (23.8 %) rather than the Social Democrats (15 %). Because the number of respondents for this particular question is quite low (N = 160) no far-reaching conclusions can be drawn from the party preference of abstainers.

<sup>2</sup> Because it is highly possible that the voters of marginal parties may be willing to express their political distrust through their party choice, we repeated the analysis by combining the Finns party voters to voters of marginal parties and compared the levels of political distrust of this group to the level of political distrust of a main incumbent party. As expected, however, the original results did not change, whether the category 'others' is included in the analysis or not.

<sup>3</sup> The other two governmental parties, the Swedish People's Party and the Green League were included in the analysis but not as a reference group due to their small number of seat shares in the parliament (with 7.5 % and 4.5 %, respectively).

<sup>4</sup> In the FNES 2011 the question was as follows: *To what extent do you trust or do not trust in the following actors and institutions?*

*very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Finland?*

In the empirical part, three levels of trust with possibly different outcomes for party choice are of interest: trust in political actors (politicians and parties), trust in political institutions (parliament, government and the European Union), and satisfaction with democracy. These three levels are seen as sub-indicators of political trust and due to their different theoretical implications presented above, four separate analyses are conducted. National political institutions are further separated from the European Union. We conducted a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) on all five trust items (trust in politicians, parties, parliament, government and the EU). The empirical analysis supported our theoretical view: trust in politicians and parties loaded clearly into one principal component, whereas trust in national government and parliament loaded into another. Trust in the European Union loaded into a third principal component. In statistical terms, the differences between the dimensions are not striking, but we find it theoretically important to separate them in the analysis. As the analysis below reveals, they also have significantly different impacts on party choice.

Because the multinomial logistic regression model is sensitive to missing information and blank cells, the trust variables are recoded into three categories, and dummies are used in the further analyses to improve the estimation precision of the parameters. The variable *trust in political actors* is created as an additive scale, combining *trust in political parties* and *trust in politicians* (Cronbach's alpha 0.84), and the variable *trust in political institutions* as an additive scale combining *trust in parliament* and *trust in the government of Finland* (Cronbach's alpha 0.89). The values of both sum variables range from 0 to 20 (0-8 = low, 9-12 = medium, 13-20 = high). As a single item, the original scale for *trust in the European Union* ranges from 0 to 10. This variable is further divided into three categories (0-3 = low, 4-6 = medium, 7-10 = high). The four values of *satisfaction with democracy* are recoded into two categories (category 'very/somewhat dissatisfied' as a reference).

Deriving from previous studies (e.g. Paloheimo & Sundberg 2005), we control for socioeconomic and demographic background, i.e. gender, age (18-34, 35-54, over 55 years), education (university/polytechnic degree (high), occupational education (middle), no occupational education (lower), religiosity (religious vs. non-religious), and place of residence (countryside/small town vs. city/suburb). The overall model fits for the four regressions are over 0.30 (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) which is satisfactory considering the restricted number of variables.

An important note should be made here: Is the (possible) correlation between different indicators of political trust and anti-establishment voting causal in the first place, or is it spurious in a sense that both distrust and anti-establishment voting are related to a certain constellation of values and issue positions that the established parties have failed to represent?<sup>5</sup> Controlling for issue positions and value orientations that might have an effect both on anti-establishment party choice and political trust (for instance attitudes towards im-

migration, the European Union, income distribution and welfare chauvinism etc.) would definitely complete the model.

A problem with the data, however, exists in this regard. In the Finnish National Election Study 2011, the best data available on the electoral behaviour of the Finnish citizens, the questions concerning the issue positions and value orientations are in the follow-up questionnaire. When adding the controls, the number of respondents falls in the model to slightly over 650. In particular, the number of respondents of small parties drops to such an extent that making reliable inference from multinomial regression is not possible. Furthermore, the loss of the data is not random – particularly the voters of the Greens, Swedish People's party, and the True Finns were not as active as voters of other parties in responding to the follow-up, nor were the abstainers.

We reran the analysis, however, by adding two controls available in the follow-up questionnaire: attitudes towards immigration (negative – neutral – positive)<sup>6</sup> and attitudes towards the membership in the European Union (positive – negative).<sup>7</sup> The results of the analyses (when these two new controls are included) show that although some original control variables lose their statistical significance, the main results remain. Particularly the link between low trust and voting for the Left Alliance and the True Finns gains support. The most significant changes in statistical significance concern the Greens but it should be noted that only half of the green respondents (27) filled the follow-up questionnaire: also for some other parties standard errors grow significantly due to a small-N problem. Overall, as an individual question, a negative attitude towards the European Union membership increases the likelihood of voting for the True Finns over the National Coalition Party and the Centre Party while the attitude towards immigration was only significant in a model measuring the connection of satisfaction with democracy and party choice. The results of these analyses are not reported in this article but are available upon request.

## Results

The descriptive statistics reveal some general patterns regarding the party choice of those possessing low political trust. For the sake of easier comparison, we have here rescaled the sum variables 'trust in political actors' and 'trust in political institutions' to their original scale ranging from

*Evaluate each actor or institution on a scale ranging from 0 to 10 where 0 means "I do not trust at all" and 10 "I totally trust".*

<sup>5</sup> We would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out in his criticism.

<sup>6</sup> The respondent's attitude was asked to the following statement: "(Do you prefer) Finland, where immigration would be more large-scale than currently?" Original scale 0-10 (0 = very bad proposition, 10 = very good proposition), recoded in three categories, negative (0-3), neutral (4-6) and positive (7-10).

<sup>7</sup> The respondent's attitude was asked regarding the following statement: "Overall, membership in the European Union has been a positive thing." Original scale 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), which was recoded in two categories (negative (1-2), positive (4-5), missing (3)).

Table 1  
Trust in political actors, political institutions and the European Union. Mean values by party choice.

	Political actors (0-20)	Political institutions (0-20)	The European Union (0-10)
SDP	6.00	6.62	5.14
KESK	6.30	7.21	5.49
KOK	6.03	7.17	5.86
RKP	5.99	6.88	5.50
KD	5.67	6.74	4.40
VIHR	5.78	6.56	5.98
VAS	4.99	5.58	4.12
PS	5.14	6.01	3.78
Abstainers	4.85	5.66	5.18
Total	5.65	6.50	5.06

Source: FNES 2011.

Table 2  
Satisfaction with democracy (dummy) (%) and party choice. Cross tabulation.

	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Total
SDP	19.7	80.3	100
KESK	12.1	87.9	100
KOK	7.2	92.8	100
RKP	21.4	78.6	100
KD	17.9	82.1	100
VIHR	24.0	76.0	100
VAS	34.8	65.2	100
PS	40.2	59.8	100
Abstainers	31.3	69.7	100

Source: FNES 2011.

0 to 10. When comparing mean trust in political actors and institutions, the voters of the Left Alliance, the Finns party as well as the abstainers seem to be, on average, the most distrustful. The European Union evoked the least sympathies among the electorates of the Christian Democrats the Left Alliance and the Finns party (see Table 2 for further details). When asked about how democracy currently works in Finland, the shares of dissatisfied respondents was notably large among the electorates of the Left Alliance (34.8 %), the Finns party (40.2 %) and the abstainers (31.3 %) (see Table 3).

In order to control for other theoretically relevant variables that may have influenced the voter's party choice or the decision to abstain, four multinomial regression models were run, with trust in political actors, political institutions, the European Union and satisfaction with democracy alternating as predictors. The descriptive statistics reveal some general patterns regarding the party choice of those possessing low political trust. For the sake of easier comparison, we have here re-scaled the sum variables 'trust in political actors' and

'trust in political institutions' to their original scale ranging from 0 to 10. When comparing mean trust in political actors and institutions, the voters of the Left Alliance, the Finns party as well as the abstainers seem to be, on average, the most distrustful. The European Union evoked the least sympathies among the electorates of the Christian Democrats the Left Alliance and the Finns party (see Table 2 for further details). When asked about how democracy currently works in Finland, the shares of dissatisfied respondents was notably large among the electorates of the Left Alliance (34.8 %), the Finns party (40.2 %) and the abstainers (31.3 %) (see Table 3).

In line with our hypotheses, and confirming the initial results of the descriptive analysis, the multivariate analysis shows that low trust in political actors had no effect on the vote choice of three of the four incumbent parties (KESK, KOK and RKP). In other words, a respondent's low trust in politicians and political parties did not increase the likelihood of choosing one incumbent party over another (see Table 4). Diverging from this pattern, however, low trust in political actors affected the probability of choosing the Green League over the Centre Party (OR = 3.065). No uniform pattern was found among the opposition parties. While low trust in political actors did not differentiate the electorates of the main opposition party (SDP) and the main incumbent parties, it did increase the likelihood of choosing the Left Alliance over the Centre Party almost nine-fold (OR = 8.791) and of choosing the Left Alliance over the National Coalition Party almost six-fold (OR = 5.769). The same held true for the Finns party (OR = 7.159 and OR = 4.697, respectively). For abstainers, the figures correspond to those of the Left Alliance (OR = 9.259 and OR = 6.075).

Regarding trust in the national political institutions, i.e. the parliament and the government, the level of trust did not seem to influence the likelihood of choosing one incumbent party over another, with the exception of choosing the Green League over the Centre Party (OR = 3.793) (see Table 5). Accordingly, low institutional trust significantly increased the probability of voting for the Left Alliance (OR = 13.617) and the Finns party (OR = 7.634) over the Centre Party, as well as the likelihood of casting a ballot for the Left Alliance (OR = 8.455) and the Finns party (OR = 4.740) over the National Coalition Party. Corresponding figures are found among abstainers: low trust significantly increased the likelihood of abstaining (instead of choosing KESK or KOK). As for the other opposition parties (SDP and KD), low trust in the political institutions did not seem to be a significant factor when choosing these parties over the incumbent ones.

Accordingly, the respondents that were the most dissatisfied with the democracy in Finland were more likely to choose the Green League, the Left Alliance, the Finns party, or to abstain, over the main incumbent parties. The probability was the highest for the Finns party: for those dissatisfied with the democracy in Finland, the likelihood of casting an anti-political-establishment vote over the Centre Party was almost fivefold (OR = 4.985) and over the National Coalition Party over eight-fold (OR = 8.509) (see Table 6). As the cross-tabulation in Table 3 shows, 92.8 % of the voters

Table 3  
*Trust in political actors. The probability of choosing a party or abstaining over the Centre Party (KESK) or the National Coalition Party (KOK) (main incumbent parties, ref.)*

			Vote Choice								
			SDP	KESK	KOK	RKP	KD	VIHR	VAS	PS	Abstainers
Trust in political act. (ref. high 13-20)	Low trust (0-8)	KESK	1.440	-	1.524	2.058	3.754*	3.065*	8.791***	7.159***	9.259***
		KOK	0.945	0.656	-	1.351	2.463	2.011	5.769***	4.697***	6.075***
	Median trust (9-12)	KESK	1.737*	-	1.882**	1.569	3.123**	3.542***	3.027**	3.592***	2.573**
		KOK	0.923	0.531**	-	0.834	1.659	1.882*	1.608	1.908**	1.367
Gender (ref. male)	Female	KESK	0.964	-	0.943	1.574	2.079	1.890*	1.619	0.825	1.469
		KOK	1.023	1.061	-	1.669	2.205*	2.005*	1.717*	0.875	1.558
Age (ref. 55 +)	Young (18-34)	KESK	0.596	-	0.680	0.618	0.312	6.731***	1.009	1.233	5.208***
		KOK	0.876	1.470	-	0.908	0.458	9.892***	1.483	1.813*	7.653***
	Middle (35-54)	KESK	0.977	-	0.647	0.774	1.425	3.858**	0.846	1.593	2.341**
		KOK	1.512	1.547	-	1.196	2.205*	5.967***	1.309	2.464**	3.620***
Education (ref. high)	Lower	KESK	2.036*	-	0.328***	0.648	1.001	0.519	1.698	2.511**	6.309***
		KOK	6.218***	3.053***	-	1.979	3.056*	1.584	5.186***	7.666***	19.263***
	Middle	KESK	2.069*	-	0.756	1.065	0.933	1.147	1.805	2.699**	3.534**
		KOK	2.736***	1.323	-	1.409	1.235	1.517	2.388*	3.571***	4.675***
Religiosity (ref. religious)	Non-religious	KESK	1.849*	-	1.388	2.983**	0.204*	1.973*	4.140***	1.404	1.676*
		KOK	1.332	0.720	-	2.149*	0.147**	1.421	2.982***	1.011	1.207
Place of residence (ref. city/suburb)	Countryside/small town	KESK	0.261***	-	0.352***	0.527	0.273**	0.184***	0.373**	0.467**	0.393***
		KOK	0.742	2.841***	-	1.497	0.775	0.522	1.058	1.326	1.117
N			1143								
Nagelkerke R2			0.356								

Source: FNES 2011; Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



Table 4

Trust in political institutions. The probability of choosing a party or abstaining over the Centre Party (KESK) or the National Coalition Party (KOK) (main incumbent parties, ref.)

			Vote Choice								
			SDP	KESK	KOK	RKP	KD	VIHR	VAS	PS	Abstainers
Trust in political institutions (ref. high 13-20)	Low trust (0-8)	KESK	2.789	-	1.611	1.554	3.238	3.793*	13.617***	7.634***	9.391***
		KOK	1.732	0.621	-	0.965	2.011	2.355	8.455***	4.740***	5.831***
	Median trust (9-12)	KESK	1.997*	-	1.587	2.255	1.217	3.031**	4.293***	4.007***	3.464***
		KOK	1.258	0.630	-	1.421	0.767	1.910*	2.705**	2.525***	2.183**
Gender (ref. male)	Female	KESK	0.926	-	0.950	1.550	2.100	1.804	1.437	0.742	1.354
		KOK	0.975	1.053	-	1.632	2.211	1.899*	1.513	0.781	1.426
Age (ref. 55 +)	Young (18-34)	KESK	0.586	-	0.639	0.607	0.272	5.895***	0.809	0.988	4.167***
		KOK	0.917	1.565	-	0.950	0.426	9.225***	1.266	1.546	6.521***
	Middle (35-54)	KESK	0.977	-	0.634	0.748	1.465	3.797**	0.830	1.533	2.283**
		KOK	1.541	1.577	-	1.179	2.310*	6.989***	1.310	2.418**	3.601***
Education (ref. high)	Lower	KESK	1.861*	-	0.306***	0.657	0.881	0.450*	1.313	2.017*	4.785***
		KOK	6.087***	3.272***	-	2.149	2.882*	1.473	4.296***	6.599***	15.654***
	Middle	KESK	1.906*	-	0.683	0.946	0.788	0.950	1.429	2.033*	2.588*
		KOK	2.792***	1.465	-	1.385	1.155	1.392	2.094*	2.979***	3.792***
Religiosity (ref. religious)	Non-religious	KESK	1.781*	-	1.422	3.223**	0.217*	2.089*	4.529***	1.516	1.813*
Place of residence (ref. city/suburb)	Countryside/small town	KOK	1.253	0.703	-	2.267*	0.152**	1.469	3.185***	1.066	1.275
		KESK	0.276***	-	0.373***	0.553	0.318**	0.208***	0.410**	0.502**	0.267
N			0.741	2.684***	-	1.483	0.852	0.557	1.099	1.346	1.173
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.341								

Source: FNES 2011; Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

of the National Coalition Party were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with how democracy worked in Finland, compared for instance to the 80.3 % of the voters of the Social Democratic Party and 78.6 % of the voters of the Swedish People's Party. The multivariate analysis confirms this finding: those who were dissatisfied with the democracy in Finland were over three times more likely to cast a ballot for SDP (OR = 3.004), or the Swedish People's Party (OR = 3.254) than the National Coalition Party. When compared to the Centre Party, however, no differences emerge.

Not surprisingly, the probability of choosing the Finns party over the main incumbent parties increased significantly for respondents with low confidence in the European Union: the likelihood was over eleven-fold compared to the National Coalition Party (OR = 11.656) and over seven-fold compared to the Centre Party (OR = 7.412) (see Table A1 in Appendix). The analysis reveals, however, that the criticism towards the European Union did not necessarily turn into an anti-political-establishment vote. It was equally likely that distrust towards the EU would be channelled by choosing the Left Alliance (OR = 9.849 and OR = 6.263, respectively) or another opposition party. No significant differences emerged between the incumbent parties. However, low trust in the EU increased the probability of choosing the Social Democratic Party over the National Coalition Party (OR = 2.090) and the likelihood of choosing the Christian Democrats over the National Coalition Party and Centre Party (OR = 6.287 and OR = 3.998, respectively). Low trust in the EU did not increase the likelihood of abstaining (over voting for the Centre Party). In this respect, however, the abstainers differed significantly from those who chose the National Coalition party.

### Discussion and concluding remarks

The empirical analyses indicate that the distrust towards the incumbent office holders and their policies, as well as towards the political institutions, and dissatisfaction with democracy, are quite effectively channelled through the anti-political-establishment vote. However, keeping in mind the dual role of the Finns party as both an opposition party and an anti-political-establishment party, is it possible to tell if the distrust was mediated through an anti-political-establishment vote or can it be regarded as normal anti-incumbency voting? Although it is impossible to reach the voters' minds, two empirical observations support the idea of anti-political-establishment voting. First, 12.4 % of the Finns party voters identified with the Social Democratic Party. Thus, in case a voter wanted to cast an anti-incumbent vote, it would seem much more likely that they would vote for the main opposition party that they identify more strongly with. Second, giving support to our first and second hypothesis, the lack of both specific and diffuse support increases the likelihood of voting for the Finns party over the main incumbent parties and most opposition parties. Unsurprisingly, the probability is at its highest regarding trust in the European Union, which is probably due to the issue ownership that the Finns party hold in EU criticism. Thus, though not necessarily being

against the norms and principles of the democratic regime, those who turn to the Finns party at the ballot box seem to critically evaluate the regime performance and policy outcomes as a whole, including its actors and institutions.

While the overall conclusion is that H1 and H2 are supported by the empirical evidence, there is one notable exception. Political distrust seems to increase the probability of a citizen voting for the Left Alliance as much as for the Finns party. Indeed, in the event that a citizen lacks political trust in actors and institutions, the probability of voting for the Left Alliance is even higher than for voting for the Finns party. We find two possible explanations. First, the incumbent government in the 2011 elections was centre-right-wing, which may explain the weak specific support of the leftist voters. Second, the Left Alliance suffered from a long opposition period (2003-2011). Thus, the distrust of the voters of the Left Alliance may be more policy-based and directed to office holders.

For those with a low trust in the European Union and low satisfaction with democracy, the Left Alliance is almost an equally probable party choice as the Finns party. Interestingly however, the two electorates differ in the data set also in terms of perceptions of system responsiveness. While 66.7 % of the Finns party electorate completely or partially agreed with the statement that 'parties are only interested in people's votes and not their opinions', the corresponding share of the voters of the Left Alliance was 52.2 %. As for the statement that 'politicians do not care about ordinary people's opinions', 71 % of the Finns party voters and 58.1 % of the Left Alliance voters somewhat or completely agreed. On a more ideological level, the discontent with how democracy works in Finland could be explained by expectations that the electorate of the Left Alliance may have for the system. The Left Alliance, together with the Green League, is the most prominent bearer of post-materialist values, including strong support for participatory democracy and alternative ways of political participation (Inglehart 1977; Mickelsson 2007).

Thus, perhaps not surprisingly - and deviating from other governmental parties - dissatisfaction with how the democracy was working significantly increased the likelihood of a Green League vote. All in all, regardless of the similar patterns in the relationship between political trust and party choice among the voters of the Left Alliance and the Finns party, the issues of interest and the conceptualizations of different aspects of the political system may vary due to ideological disparities. Although the Finns party also set the 'good civil society' against 'bad politics' (Schedler 1996, 297), their discussion on democracy seems to be based more on the fundamental divide between the elite and the people in the framework of representational democracy and the transparency of democratic governance, than on the ideal of participatory or deliberative democracy.

The empirical analysis also indicates that the lack of political trust in Finland does not follow the traditional patterns of anti-incumbency voting, whereby the dissatisfied electorate critically evaluates the office holders and votes against the government. The probability of voting for the main opposition party (SDP) was not significantly higher than the prob-

Table 5

*Satisfaction with democracy. The probability of choosing a party or abstaining over the Centre Party (KESK) or the National Coalition Party (KOK) (main incumbent parties, ref.)*

			Vote Choice								
			SDP	KESK	KOK	RKP	KD	VIHR	VAS	PS	Abstainers
<i>Satisfaction with dem</i>	Not satisfied	KESK	1.760	-	0.586	1.906	1.502	2.593*	3.555***	4.985***	3.119***
<i>(ref. satisfied)</i>		KOK	3.004**	1.707	-	3.254*	2.564	4.435***	6.067***	8.509***	5.323***
<i>Gender (ref. male)</i>	Female	KESK	0.955	-	0.996	1.447	2.162*	1.841*	1.526	0.727	1.413
		KOK	0.959	1.004	-	1.452	2.170*	1.847*	1.531	0.730	1.418
<i>Age (ref. 55 +)</i>	Young (18-34)	KESK	0.589	-	0.643	0.652	0.284	6.281***	0.884	1.111	4.225***
		KOK	0.916	1.556	-	1.015	0.441	9.772***	1.376	1.728	6.573***
	Middle (35-54)	KESK	1.011	-	0.628	0.803	1.508	4.153**	0.892	1.754*	2.365**
		KOK	1.609	1.591	-	1.278	2.399*	6.608***	1.419	2.791***	3.763***
<i>Education (ref. high)</i>	Lower	KESK	1.953*	-	0.321***	0.676	1.005	0.498	1.641	2.230**	5.265***
		KOK	6.088***	3.117***	-	2.106	3.133*	1.552	5.116***	6.952***	16.414***
	Middle	KESK	1.969*	-	0.717	0.996	0.848	1.001	1.424	2.096*	2.593*
		KOK	2.746***	1.395	-	1.389	1.183	1.396	1.987	2.923***	3.617***
<i>Religiosity</i>	Non-religious	KESK	1.809*	-	1.446	2.975**	0.217*	2.090*	4.750***	1.476	1.869*
<i>(ref. religious)</i>		KOK	1.251	0.692	-	2.058*	0.150**	1.446	3.286***	1.021	1.293
<i>Place of residence</i>	Countryside/small town	KESK	0.282***	-	0.381***	0.570	0.309**	0.206***	0.403**	0.475**	0.412***
<i>(ref. city/suburb)</i>		KOK	0.740	2.625***	-	1.497	0.812	0.542	1.057	1.246	1.080
N			1146								
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.33								

Source: FNES 2011; Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 6  
*Trust in the European Union. The probability of choosing a party or abstaining over the Centre Party (KESK) or the National Coalition Party (KOK) (main incumbent parties, ref.)*

incumbent parties, ref.)			Vote Choice								
			SDP	KESK	KOK	RKP	KD	VIHR	VAS	PS	Abstainers
Trust in European Union (ref. high 7-10)	Low trust (0-3)	KESK	1.329	-	0.636	0.785	3.998**	0.789	6.263***	7.412***	1.887
		KOK	2.090*	1.572	-	1.235	6.287**	1.241	9.849***	11.656***	2.967**
	Median trust (4-6)	KESK	1.210	-	0.791	1.096	2.197	1.210	3.804**	3.034***	1.190
		KOK	1.529	1.264	-	1.385	2.776*	1.529	4.806***	3.834***	1.503
Gender (ref. male)	Female	KESK	0.995	-	0.961	1.508	2.232*	1.937*	1.702	0.816	1.452
		KOK	1.036	1.041	-	1.570	2.323*	2.016*	1.772*	0.849	1.512
Age (ref. 55 +)	Young (18-34)	KESK	0.597	-	0.609	0.640	0.310	5.438***	1.017	1.292	5.045***
		KOK	0.980	1.641	-	1.050	0.508	8.923***	1.669	2.120*	8.278***
	Middle (35-54)	KESK	0.981	-	0.644	0.812	1.445	3.837**	0.864	1.599	2.572**
		KOK	1.524	1.553	-	1.262	2.244*	5.958***	1.342	2.482***	3.994***
Education (ref. high)	Lower	KESK	1.930*	-	0.309***	0.729	1.011	0.524	1.608	2.144*	6.042***
		KOK	6.238***	3.233***	-	2.355	3.267**	1.693	5.198***	6.932***	19.532***
	Middle	KESK	2.053*	-	0.726	0.964	0.906	1.058	1.653	2.374**	3.010**
		KOK	2.829***	1.378	-	1.328	1.249	1.457	2.277*	3.271***	4.148***
Religiosity (ref. religious)	Non-religious	KESK	1.821*	-	1.494	3.103**	0.211*	2.187*	4.566***	1.446	1.814*
		KOK	1.219	0.668	-	2.077*	0.141**	1.464	3.056***	0.968	1.214
Place of residence (ref. city/suburb)	Countryside/small town	KESK	0.292***	-	0.403***	0.592	0.347**	0.200***	0.405**	0.497**	0.449**
		KOK	0.724	2.483***	-	1.469	0.863	0.496	1.006	1.235	1.114
N			1139								
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.349								

Source: FNES 2011; Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

ability of voting for the office holders even if a citizen possessed low specific trust. In contrast, low trust in political actors even increased the likelihood of voting for one incumbent governmental party, namely the Green League. This finding could partly be explained by the controversial decision, opposed by the Greens, on the building of a fifth nuclear power plant during the government's term in office. Thus, neither H3 nor H4 receive strong empirical support. In contrast, and against our hypotheses, the data reveal a significant government-opposition divide regarding trust in the European Union: the lower the trust, the higher the likelihood of voting for all opposition parties. We therefore strongly question whether trust in the European Union represents diffuse support for the political system or if it (in Easton's terms) falls somewhere under the 'input'-side at an intermediate level. Indeed, in the national political debate, the European Union is often presented as an independent political actor in its own right, shaping political situations or issues in Finland. Furthermore, given the electoral context in 2011, the respondents' evaluations of the trust in the European Union probably strongly overlapped with the measures of trust in the national government and the European Commission in handling the financial crisis. Accordingly, low trust in the European Union seems to increase the probability of abstaining. The expectations surrounding H5 and H6 also receive empirical support.

The analysis indicates that a significant amount of latent political distrust, which is not explicitly expressed by party preference at the electoral polls, exists in the electorates of several Finnish parties, and this distrust is unrelated to the governmental status of the party.<sup>8</sup> Because distrust in the political actors did not strongly benefit the main opposition parties, the results imply that although being against the political establishment, the Finns party has an increasing and perhaps even an important role as a pro-system party actor, which absorbs the political malcontent of the citizens to the democratic system.

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<sup>8</sup> As mentioned above, adding issue positions and value orientations is important in future research if more appropriate data is available, in order to obtain a more nuanced picture of the causal mechanism of political trust and party choice.



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## APPENDIX

Table A1. Trust in the political actors, national political institutions and the European Union and the satisfaction with democracy. The probability of abstaining.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Trust in political actors (ref. high 13-20)				
Low trust (0-8)	3.07***	-	-	-
Median trust (9-12)	1.21***	-	-	-
Trust in political institutions (ref. high 13-20)				
Low trust (0-8)	-	2.46***	-	-
Median trust (9-12)	-	1.43*	-	-
Satisfaction with democracy (ref. satisfied)				
Dissatisfied	-	-	1.38*	-
Trust in the EU (ref. high 13-20)				
Low trust (0-8)	-	-	-	1.09
Median trust (9-12)	-	-	-	0.85
Gender (ref. male)				
Female	0.97	0.94	0.98	0.96
Age (ref. 55 +)				
Young (18-34)	5.53***	4.97***	4.78***	5.64***
Middle (35-54)	2.09***	2.08***	1.97***	2.27***
Education (ref. high)				
Lower	4.59***	4.08***	4.09***	4.69***
Middle	3.71***	3.23***	3.25***	3.56***
Religiosity (ref. religious)				
Non-religious	0.98	1.00	1.05	1.02
Place of residence (ref. city/suburb)				
Countryside/small town	0.90	0.97	0.93	0.98
N	1262	1262	1267	1254

Source: FNES 2011; Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

