Having Their Say: Authority, Voice, and Satisfaction with Democracy

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As studies using macrolevel evidence have shown, citizens are more satisfied with democracy when they feel that their instrumental preferences are represented in government, and this feeling is more likely in nonmajoritarian institutional contexts. Scholars have given less attention to whether such institutions also increase satisfaction by providing more inclusive political discourse. Citizens may value having their voice represented in politics, regardless of the resulting authority. This article presents the first microlevel evidence of this mechanism by having subjects experience a simulated election campaign that manipulates both the political discourse and the outcome independently. We find that subjects were less satisfied with democracy when their party lost the election, but this effect disappeared when the campaign discourse featured thorough discussion of an issue that they felt was important. The findings suggest that institutions and party systems that provide more diverse voices may soften the blow of losing elections.

What makes a good democracy? What makes democracy good? A genuinely democratic answer to these questions looks to citizens themselves for answers. It turns out that citizens' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way their democracy functions is based on multiple, sometimes conflicting considerations. Macro-oriented scholars have enumerated many of these features (Diamond 2005), and macromeasurement at the country level is now very rich (e.g., Bühlmann et al. 2012). We know much about the institutional and contextual influences on citizens' responses to the "satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country" survey question (Anderson et al. 2005). Yet most evidence is at the aggregate level and has a "black box" quality. This is true even of studies where individual-level data are used, because the macro factors of interest for scholars, by definition, do not vary within a country.[1] More microlevel evidence is needed on the mechanisms that transmit institutional and contextual factors through to citizens' satisfaction. The present article speaks to the effect of the character of political discourse on satisfaction with democracy.

Scholars have been curious about the institutional and contextual influences on satisfaction with democracy partly because some of these influences may be manipulated by constitutional, political, or even social means but also because satisfaction with democracy is commonly taken as one measure of the quality of a democracy. However, one individual-level attribute relating individuals to their political context dominates the literature: supporting a party or candidate that wins the election, which creates Anderson et al.'s (2005) "winner-loser gap" in satisfaction with democracy (see also Berggren et al. 2004; Bernauer and Vatter 2011; Curini et al. 2012). The power of this variable is intuitive, as citizens naturally prefer governments that share their preferences. Singh, Karakoç, and Blais conclude that the "inclusion of

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1. There are a few notable exceptions to be discussed (see Chang, Chu, and Wu 2014; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012, 2015; Singh 2014).

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one's selected party in government is the most important factor for satisfaction with democracy, which attests to the importance of policy considerations in engendering satisfaction" (2012, 201).

It is not surprising then that the dominant focus of the literature has been on how "consensus institutions" (ones that promote governments composed of multiple parties commanding majorities of the popular vote) and other factors that temper the power of a one-party majority (which we call "nonmajoritarian institutions") can cushion the blow of losing and produce electoral losers who are less dissatisfied relative to winners (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Banducci and Karp 2003; Bernauer and Vatter 2011; Blais and Gélineau 2007; Esaiasson 2011; Henderson 2008). The most obvious reason for this is that the losing voters in these systems expect policy to be closer to their preferences than do losing voters in majoritarian polities. Research establishing the microlevel mechanisms that link nonmajoritarian institutional forms to satisfaction with democracy has been limited, but key findings have emerged that highlight the importance of ideological congruence between citizens and governments (Curini et al. 2012, 2015) and strategic voting (Singh 2014) in determining the extent of the winner-loser gap.[2]

Evidence also points to important nonpolicy considerations that affect the winner-loser gap, such as the emotional effects of one's party losing repeatedly or perpetually (Chang et al. 2014; Curini et al. 2012, 2015). One other possible nonpolicy mechanism to shrink the winner-loser gap may involve features of nonmajoritarian institutions that are valued by many normative theorists—the richer, more inclusive political dialogue in countries with nonmajoritarian institutions. The idea is that when more, often smaller parties are involved, a larger number of issues relevant to a greater proportion of the populace get discussed. Could it be then that citizens value certain features of political dialogue independent of policy considerations?

In this article, we provide the first experimental, microlevel evidence of a key nonpolicy mechanism that may help explain why losers in consensus or nonmajoritarian democracies are more satisfied with democracy than their majoritarian counterparts. To be clear, ours is a test of a plausible mechanism for a link between institutions and satisfaction with democracy; we take from the literature that such a link exists and do nothing to test it. We use an experimental design to examine the effect of merely hearing one's position on important issues articulated on satisfaction with democracy, independent of winning and losing. We hypothesize that whatever the outcome of an election and the identity of the resulting government authority, when citizens hear elite, mediated political discussion reflecting their positions on issues they care about, they will be more satisfied with the way that democracy works than when there is silence on that issue. If we can show this, and it is accepted that consensus institutions have a more wide-ranging and inclusive political dialogue, then we will have established one important way in which institutions affect satisfaction with democracy. In addition, our results imply that other institutions that affect the inclusiveness of political discourse—not just electoral systems—may also have important effects on satisfaction with democracy.

The article begins by summarizing the relevant theory and findings in the literature and focusing our theoretical lens on the distinction between "voice" and "authority." Then we describe the experimental design and provide the results from two very different sets of subjects. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings, which strikingly reinforce what has been found in cross-national survey research.

AUTHORITY, VOICE, AND DEMOCRATIC SATISFACTION

Theorists have drawn attention to authority and voice as key concepts in their efforts to describe and understand democratic representation (Warren 1996). It is natural to think that these might be two key mechanisms through which the context of elections and political discourse can influence citizens' judgments of the quality of their democracy.

Citizens are concerned that their preferences are represented in the formal process through which authoritative decisions are made. It follows that authority is one important dimension that produces the winner-loser gap in voters' satisfaction with democracy (Anderson et al. 2005; Han and Chang 2016; Singh et al. 2012). Individual citizens will be more satisfied when the electoral process results in the installation of those who share their policy preferences in positions of authority. The extensive literature linking winning and losing to citizens' satisfaction shows that voters who supported the winning party or candidate are more satisfied than those who supported the losers and that the latter are comparatively more satisfied in consensus and nonmajoritarian systems. The typical explanation for both findings is that in each case they reflect greater satisfaction resulting from lesser distances between citizens' policy positions and the governments' (e.g., Curini et al. 2012; Ezrow 2007; Singh et al. 2012), although there may be nonpolicy reasons as well (Chang et al. 2014; Curini et al. 2012, 2015). Our first hypothesis, then, is that all

2. Golder and Stramski (2010) find that nonmajoritarian systems only outperform majoritarian systems in congruence between legislatures and citizens, but not between governments and citizens, suggesting that the strictly instrumental policy-distance minimization mechanism may not entirely explain higher levels of satisfaction in nonmajoritarian systems.

else equal, election winners will be more satisfied than election losers:

> **H1 (Authority).** Citizens whose preferred party or candidate wins an election will be more satisfied with democracy than candidates whose party or candidate loses, all else equal.

However, if authority and its policy outputs were all that mattered to citizens, many institutional and cultural features of democracies might have little or no effect on satisfaction or thus on the quality of democracy. Only those institutions that affected the composition, duration, and policy products of governments would affect satisfaction. But normative theorists and social commentators have long advocated various discourse-based solutions to citizens' dissatisfaction with their democratic system (Chambers 2003; Cohen 1989; Habermas 1996). In the most recent summative work in democratic theory, Warren argues that "empowered inclusion" and "collective agenda and will formation" join "collective decision-making" as "functions necessary for a political system to work democratically" (2017, 46). He identifies "recognition," "deliberation," and "representation" as among the "generic practices that serve democratic functions." We suggest that in mass democracies with a complex field of electoral and nonelectoral representation (Kuyper 2016), the voicing of political positions and agenda-preferences, as well as "representative claims" (Saward 2006) by many actors in the system, all contribute to a citizen's evaluation of the degree and quality of recognition, deliberation, and representation in the polity.

One component of an empirical theory corresponding to some of this normative work would be that the more wide-ranging (in terms of issues) and more inclusive (in terms of actors) political discourse is in a polity, the more citizens will feel that their claims are being made. Because of this, they will feel adequately represented and will judge their democracy more positively. Importantly, this mechanism from discourse to democratic satisfaction can operate independently of the distribution of influence on collective decision making.[3] And this is the mechanism that is the subject of this study: are citizens who are exposed to a more diverse and inclusive elite political dialogue more satisfied with the system overall? If we show this, then scholars who show more diverse, inclusive dialogue in different political systems can more confidently link this institutional variation to citizen satisfaction and democratic quality.

Legislatures in democratic systems fall short of deliberative democratic ideals with respect to the inclusiveness of their discourse. The political discourse carried in the mass media, particularly at election time, is likely to fall even further short. Reasonable counterarguments, signals of mutual respect, and efforts at consensus building rarely survive the conflict and drama-laden biases of parties and the press (Bennett 1988). But there are strong theoretical reasons to suspect that the media tend to reflect the general parameters of elite debate (Althaus 1996) and that this debate is richer in less majoritarian systems (Steiner et al. 2005). More relevant for our purposes, such debate is likely to be more inclusive. Majoritarian electoral systems tend to produce two major brokerage parties and, only sometimes, third or fourth minor parties that get much less media coverage (Lijphart 1999). By contrast, nonmajoritarian systems (because they usually feature more parties that are given a voice by the mass media) are more likely to feature prominent issue-specific or niche parties that can more credibly speak to their issues than can brokerage parties in majoritarian systems (Nyblade 2004; Stoll 2008).

But it is not just electoral systems that have implications for voice. Other variations in institutions and laws within both majoritarian and nonmajoritarian settings also matter. For one, institutional reforms that facilitate the election of women or racial and ethnic minorities can presumably lead to more vocal substantive representation of historically disadvantaged groups, including in electoral discourse (Preuhs and Juenke 2011; Washington 2012). For another, changes to party nomination processes have been essential to getting more women elected to public office, and some evidence suggests that female legislators more actively take up women's issues (Celis 2006). Nonelectoral institutions and laws can be just as important. Campaign finance laws may have considerable influence on patterns of interest group politics. If such laws are too tight, they may crowd out the influence of third parties on elections that can provide essential voices to groups and interests not adequately represented by traditional political parties. If too loose, they may allow already dominant voices, like those of the wealthy and corporate interests, to drown out those of disadvantaged groups (Gilens 2015). A wide array of institutions have implications for voice, so we should learn more about how citizens react to more or fewer voices in political discourse.

So we add to "authority" a second possible mechanism that connects political context to democratic satisfaction: "voice." The concept of voice has been largely glossed over in previous empirical literature on satisfaction with democracy. For Mark Warren, and for our purposes here, voice exists when individuals have "authoritative standing as speakers in deliberative contexts" and are owed responses to their claims

3. However, we acknowledge that the two can be positively correlated such that louder, privileged voices can wield undue influence on decisions.

and arguments (1996, 50).[4] Of course, in a mass democracy, most citizens do not expect to be heard and acknowledged personally in political discourse, but they may desire their voice to be represented in these ways.[5] That is, we may expect a citizen to be more satisfied with democracy to the extent that political actors articulate her positions on issues she thinks are important and that those positions are taken seriously by other players in the political process.[6] In short, citizens want to be heard, even if it is usually others who do the talking on their behalf (Saward 2006). Our experiments speak specifically to these ideas about mediated expression of demands in contrast to tangible forms of representation in government authority. This forms the basis of our second hypothesis:

> **H2 (Voice).** Citizens will be more satisfied with democracy when their positions on issues that they care about are articulated in political discourse.

To be sure, scholars have suggested that voice may matter, but the distinction between voice and authority is rarely made clearly in the literature on democratic satisfaction. The seminal piece in the satisfaction literature, by Anderson and Guillory, argued that the effects they observed were a result of opportunities for voice and policy making, bound together: "given that consensual systems provide the political minority with a voice in the decision-making process, we expect that the more consensual the set of political institutions in a country, the greater is the extent to which negative consequences of losing elections are muted" (1997, 68). Voice as conceived here is not mere voice, independent of authority, but rather a voice in authoritative decisions; this is consistent with much democratic theory as well (Dryzek 2010; Fung and Wright 2003).

Given the theory cited above, however, it is plausible that citizens are concerned with having their voice heard regardless of their relationship with the current government and that this may well matter more for supporters of parties out of government. Winners, after all, are reasonably confident their voice will matter in government. Consistent with this conceptualization of voice, Anderson et al. (2005) and Ezrow and Xezonakis (2011) point to the importance of opportunities for voice for losers, both electoral and representational. Anderson eventually came to argue, years later, that "a more numerous and differentiated [electoral] supply reduces the negative impact losing has on system attitudes because it provides the next best thing to winning outright: having one's political voice articulated clearly and visibly" (2012, 13). There is also indirect evidence for the importance of voice in Aarts and Thomasson's (2008) finding that citizens' views on the quality of representation are a more powerful determinant of democratic satisfaction than their views about whether voting "makes a difference." For their part, Ezrow and Xezonakis also suggest that voice is important even in the absence of authority. They find that "diversity of party alternatives" is positively linked to democratic satisfaction because parties "voice citizen demands for policy" (2011, 1153). Ezrow and Xezonakis quote Sartori to the effect that "parties are channels of expression. . . . They are an instrument, or an agency, for representing the people by expressing their demands" (1976, 27). This leads to our third hypothesis:

> **H3 (Voice × Authority).** The effect of hearing issues citizens care about articulated in political discourse will be greater for those whose preferred parties fail to win positions of authority than for those citizens whose parties win authority.

STUDY DESIGN AND PROTOCOL

We conducted web-based experiments on two sets of subjects where the manipulation involved the presentation of a simulated election campaign with important differences in the issue content and the identity of the actors articulating those issues across conditions. Our experiments were conducted in Canada, which couples a Westminster parliamentary democracy with a single member plurality (SMP) electoral system. Although such a system is broadly majoritarian, Canada's relatively decentralized federalism with variation in party

4. As Warren (1996, 2017) notes, for people to have voice it is not sufficient for their representatives to simply exist and voice their concerns; these concerns and arguments have to be acknowledged by other actors in a deliberative setting. Although political discourse in the media is far from deliberative, there is variation on the degree to which issue representatives can effectively shape elite debate. This is addressed in our experimental design by having the key issue important to subjects appearing at the center of inter-party debate during the course of the simulated election.

5. Recent work by Reher (2014) has shown that issue salience congruence between citizens and elites is related to satisfaction with democracy. We suspect this is likely the case, particularly on performance-based issues. But for a citizen's voice to be heard on many of the directional issues that dominate policy, it requires more than salience alone; their issue position needs to be reflected as well. It is likely not always sufficient for representatives to simply bring issues to public attention for citizens to feel like they have voice.

6. Some actors will more credibly speak to certain issue positions than others. For example, we know that political parties "own" issues based on their respective voter coalitions (see Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003). Citizens will only feel like their voice is adequately represented on an issue if that representative has credibility on an issue, such as parties that stake their reputation on advancing certain issues or interest and advocacy groups dedicated in their mission to advance certain causes. In this way, they can effectively guard against "cheap talk." We ensure this condition is met in our design by having issue positions represented by either interest groups or political parties explicitly dedicated to the issue.

systems across provinces may provide more avenues for voice than otherwise comparable centralized systems. Most importantly for our study design, Canada is one place where we can add voices and parties as manipulations that will be credible to experimental subject-voters. The simulated election was described as occurring not in the Canadian subjects' own province but rather in another province—Manitoba—that few, if any, subjects would follow in the news.[7]

The experimental protocol was as follows. First, each subject completed a pretreatment questionnaire including demographics and general political attitudes. Subjects were then given a preamble, explaining that they would read news articles about an election campaign in Manitoba, would be asked some questions about it, and would be able to cast a vote for their preferred party.

Second, subjects read eight newspaper articles in a set sequence. Articles were carefully formatted to look like actual newspaper articles. They were written by a former political journalist using real Manitoba election articles as a model. An example can be found in figure 1, and the text of the others are in the appendix (available online). Five articles covered events or appearances in which party leaders, candidates, and other actors expressed policy positions on one of four issues: work for welfare, the minimum wage, crime, and (depending on the condition) either the treatment issue or the control issue. Policy positions were quite specific, reflecting the content of the real articles on which they were modeled. A critical feature of the development of these materials was the formulation of policy positions reflecting the appropriate ideological locations of the parties for the given treatment shown in figure A15 (figs. A1–A21 are available online). For example, in the environmentalist three-party condition, each article needed a left-wing (advocacy groups), center-left (New Democrat), center-right (Liberal), and right-wing (Conservative) policy position. The two final campaign articles summarized the parties' policy differences, one reporting on a party leaders' debate, the other giving a preelection summary of the campaign. Subjects then indicated how they would vote in this election and received an article that informed them of the election result.

Finally, after reading the articles and voting, subjects completed a posttreatment questionnaire in which we measured attention to the campaign, recall of the policy promises in the campaign, the success of our manipulations, and our dependent variable, satisfaction with democracy. Our question is identical to the question used in many cross-national surveys: "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada?" (dichotomized in the analysis, with 1 = satisfied with democracy).

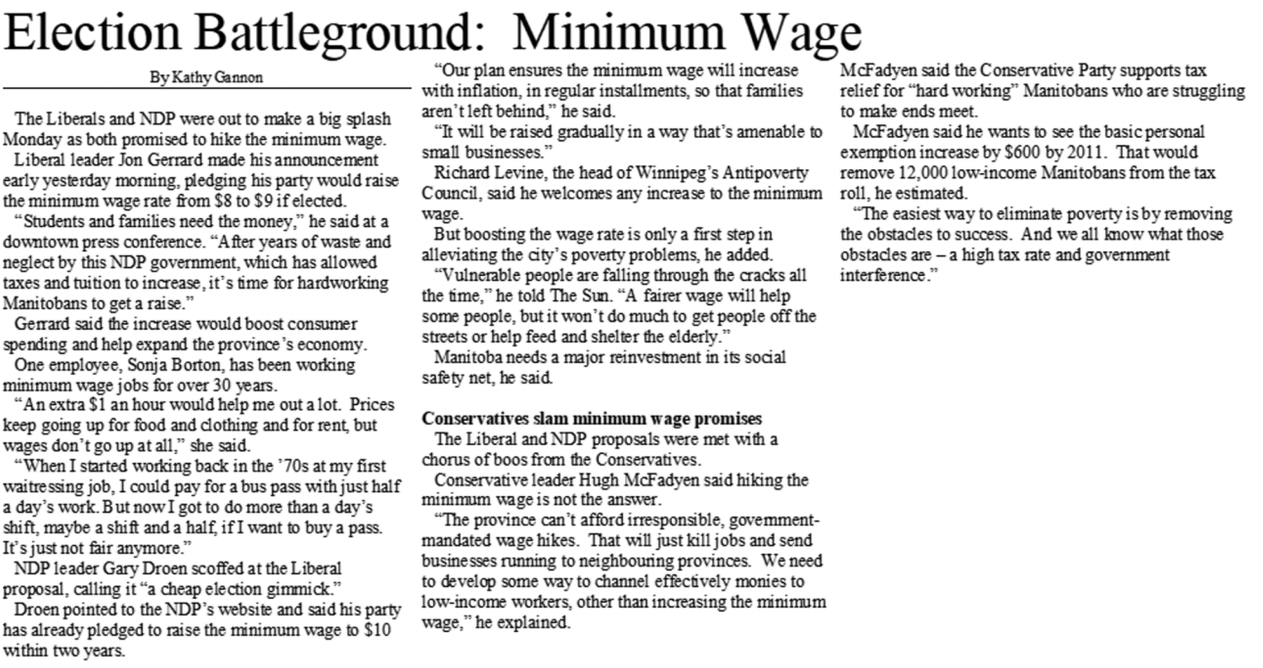
The experimental manipulation follows a 3 × 4 factorial design where we presented the same information—the entire set of news articles—to all subjects in the same sequence with two exceptions. First, we manipulated the result of the election so that either the center-left New Democratic Party (NDP) or the center-right Liberal Party won a majority or minority government. From this manipulation we can create measures for election winners and losers. We expect subjects who won the simulated campaign (*winners*), based on their vote choice, to be more satisfied with democracy after controlling for their pretreatment characteristics if our authority hypothesis is supported (hypothesis 1).

Second, we manipulated whether the environment was discussed as an issue in the campaign. As an experiment conducted in a single national setting, we cannot manipulate system-level variables like institutions. So we manipulate a mechanism—the presence of voice as operationalized by discussion in the course of the campaign of an issue our respondents care about. The voice of these subjects was represented in coverage by either environmental advocacy groups or the Green Party, depending on the condition. These political actors were selected because it is likely that citizens only feel that their voice on issues is adequately represented when the voice-representatives are ones that would face significant costs for deviating from their preferences. In this case, Green Party and environment groups stake their credibility on their articulation of environmental concerns and their pursuit of pro-environment public policy unlike other political actors. Our design includes conditions that distinguish between interest group and political party voices to enable us to assess whether effects of voice require a party with seats in the legislature. This assures us that our findings speak broadly to the effect of voice on satisfaction with democracy and are not merely function of the number of parties. This led to the randomized presentation of three distinct campaigns:

1. A four-party campaign with the Conservative, Liberal, NDP, and Green parties taking policy positions that correspond to their real-world locations.[8] We call this the "Green Party" condition. Policy issues raised in this condition were law and order, workfare, the minimum wage, and the environment.

7. We excluded respondents who had lived there in the past 20 years. These were 1% of our student subjects and 3.4% of our environmentalist subjects.

8. We carefully validated the party placements with another set of subjects. This indicated that our articles were indeed communicating policy differences on a left-right spectrum as we intended. Details are available upon request.



Election Battleground: Minimum Wage

By Kathy Gannon

The Liberals and NDP were out to make a big splash Monday as both promised to hike the minimum wage.

Liberal leader Jon Gerrard made his announcement early yesterday morning, pledging his party would raise the minimum wage rate from $8 to $9 if elected.

"Students and families need the money," he said at a downtown press conference. "After years of waste and neglect by this NDP government, which has allowed taxes and tuition to increase, it's time for hardworking Manitobans to get a raise."

Gerrard said the increase would boost consumer spending and help expand the province's economy.

One employee, Sonja Borton, has been working minimum wage jobs for over 30 years.

"An extra $1 an hour would help me out a lot. Prices keep going up for food and clothing and for rent, but wages don't go up at all," she said.

"When I started working back in the '70s at my first waitressing job, I could pay for a bus pass with just half a day's work. But now I got to do more than a day's shift, maybe a shift and a half, if I want to buy a pass. It's just not fair anymore."

NDP leader Gary Droen scoffed at the Liberal proposal, calling it "a cheap election gimmick."

Droen pointed to the NDP's website and said his party has already pledged to raise the minimum wage to $10 within two years.

"Our plan ensures the minimum wage will increase with inflation, in regular installments, so that families aren't left behind," he said.

"It will be raised gradually in a way that's amenable to small businesses."

Richard Levine, the head of Winnipeg's Antipoverty Council, said he welcomes any increase to the minimum wage.

But boosting the wage rate is only a first step in alleviating the city's poverty problems, he added.

"Vulnerable people are falling through the cracks all the time," he told The Sun. "A fairer wage will help some people, but it won't do much to get people off the streets or help feed and shelter the elderly."

Manitoba needs a major reinvestment in its social safety net, he said.

Conservatives slam minimum wage promises

The Liberal and NDP proposals were met with a chorus of boos from the Conservatives.

Conservative leader Hugh McFadyen said hiking the minimum wage is not the answer.

"The province can't afford irresponsible, government-mandated wage hikes. That will just kill jobs and send businesses running to neighbouring provinces. We need to develop some way to channel effectively monies to low-income workers, other than increasing the minimum wage," he explained.

McFadyen said the Conservative Party supports tax relief for "hard working" Manitobans who are struggling to make ends meet.

McFadyen said he wants to see the basic personal exemption increase by $600 by 2011. That would remove 12,000 low-income Manitobans from the tax roll, he estimated.

"The easiest way to eliminate poverty is by removing the obstacles to success. And we all know what those obstacles are – a high tax rate and government interference."

Figure 1. Example campaign article

2. A three-party campaign identical to the one in the Green Party condition but without the Green Party. Instead, various interest groups, especially environmental ones, expressed the same points of view—usually in the same language—as the Green Party in the four-party campaign. We call this the "environmentalist" condition.
3. A three-party campaign where environmental issues were not discussed and the two explicitly environmental articles were replaced with two articles on the issue of support for culture and the arts. This is the "control" condition.

The experimental conditions are shown in table 1. We expect subjects to be more satisfied with democracy in the Environmentalist and Green Party conditions if our voice hypothesis is supported (hypothesis 2). Our primary interest is whether discourse can improve democratic satisfaction; we do not have strong expectations about whether the effect of discourse on satisfaction with democracy would matter more when issue concerns are represented by a political party. If subjects derive satisfaction from hearing their voice represented in discourse, it follows that institutions that facilitate voice, like electoral systems, the media, regulation of the media, interest group access to political elites, and campaign finance law may have important effects on satisfaction with democracy independent of policy outcomes. This finding would have implications that stretch beyond explaining cross-system differences in satisfaction with democracy. Finally, we also expect the importance of voice to be conditional on authority (hypothesis 3). That is, we expect stronger effects of voice among election losers if hearing one's issues discussed is less important for citizens that vote for the party that forms the government.

The design has two distinctive and related features that combine to provide, in our view, an exceptional degree of correspondence with the real-world conditions pertinent to the subjects—a property that has major benefits with respect to external validity (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2006). First, taking advantage of some relatively distinctive features of Canadian elections and party systems, we presented campaigns that featured different subsets of the same parties that the subjects engage with in their real-world lives as citizens. Fortunately, most Canadians in a given province do not closely follow politics in other provinces, especially the smaller provinces. Yet they are exposed to occasional news from other

Table 1. Experimental Conditions

	Election Result			
Issue Representation	NDP		Liberal	
Control (Arts)	Majority	Minority	Minority	Majority
Environmentalist	Majority	Minority	Minority	Majority
Green Party	Majority	Minority	Minority	Majority

Note. NDP = New Democratic Party.

provinces, with enough variation in electorally competitive parties to make any subset of the four parties plausible as a general matter. Our manipulation of the presence of the environment as an issue and the Green Party in the campaign are both plausible for Canadians facing a simulated election in another province since the Green Party has been very inconsistently present in provincial politics over the last two decades, while discussion of environmental issues has waxed and waned over the last three decades. We were thus able to manipulate basic features of the party system and election discourse while keeping the elections, from a subject's standpoint, completely realistic.

Second, we assiduously maintained this realism in the presentation of policy positions and other information from the campaign. Many election experiments present brief, stylized, and highly simplified representations of political actors' policy or ideological positions—making a vivid impression of their differences essentially inescapable for subjects. Although these designs have advantages, any expectations of external validity require strong assumptions about which features of campaign activity capture voters' attention and affect decisions. In contrast, our design presents subjects with a series of full-length newspaper stories that include rich detail on campaign events and rigorously realistic statements of issue positions.

The use of simulated campaign materials that closely resemble real media coverage has significant implications for this study. On one hand, it should promote greater engagement by subjects and lead them to respond much as they would to a real-world campaign. On the other hand, this design dilutes the influence of our treatments by exposing subjects to extensive, potentially distracting "filler" material that is identical across treatments. Thus, the impact of the manipulations of policy in the campaign depends, as in real-world politics, on the efforts and ability of people to notice them, amid the complexities of concrete issues and the cacophony of a campaign.

Our concerns are therefore the opposite of those frequently considered in political psychology where the artificial treatments are often so strong as to have dubious external validity. Here our belief is that the simulated campaign is sufficiently realistic, with so much information distracting from the treatments, that observing significant effects would be strong evidence that these attitudes are indeed affected by the character of political dialogue.

Further, our focus on realism ensures that campaign discourse is far from the deliberative democratic ideal. Justifications are rather superficial, little mutual respect is signaled, and the competitive nature of the campaign ensures that there is no consensus building. This will limit the degree to which subjects view their voice as affecting democratic practice, as per Warren (1996). Any treatment effects found in this context can be seen as conservative estimates of the possible gains in democratic satisfaction that a deeper and more inclusive discourse could provide.

Because the study is situated in the Canadian context, we cannot manipulate system-level variables, of course. Instead, as we suggested above, we seek to establish a mechanism that may link electoral systems (and other institutions with implications for voice) to democratic satisfaction. So we manipulate the number and political identities of voices presented in the media's coverage of a campaign. We do not have strong expectations about whether treatments similar to ours would have similar effects in nonmajoritarian systems. We might expect similar findings because the simulated campaign divorces the treatments from policy implications. There is also little reason to expect variation in the treatment effect across electoral systems caused by the existence or nonexistence of a nonelectoral actor like interest groups articulating a position. And if there are cross-system differences in treatment effects, it is not clear in which direction they would fall. On the one hand, the higher stakes of SMP systems may swamp the influence of voice. On the other hand, if postelection dialogue and governance is more inclusive in nonmajoritarian systems owing to coalition dynamics, perhaps subjects in these contexts would be less responsive to the campaign-related discourse featured in these experiments.

More fundamentally, we really aim only to show that when there is variation in the breadth and inclusiveness of voices, citizens are more satisfied. Since, as democratic theorists have shown, voice and representation are essential components of a healthy democracy, we expect that there is variance in voice within systems for various reasons—including simple temporal variation—so the effect that we demonstrate is important within polities as well as across them.

DATA

Our experiments were conducted on two distinct samples. Because it would be impractical to present experimental manipulations of the prominence of issues for many different issues, we required a set of subjects who could be assumed to care strongly about one particular issue. The issue chosen was the environment, and we went looking for groups who would likely care strongly whether this issue, and their policy preferences on it, got a hearing in an election campaign. In other words, we targeted the environmentalist issue public (Converse 1964). We have little reason to expect that our findings would not apply to other issue publics as well.

In the first study, conducted in 2015, subjects were undergraduate students enrolled in political science classes at

the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, who participated in exchange for course credit. We are confident that students care enough about the environment to be considered part of its broader issue public. In similar undergraduate student subject pools used for different studies, the environment, on average, was ranked the most important issue out of a list of ten salient topics in Canadian politics, such as security and terrorism, debt and deficits, immigration and refugees, and electoral reform. The relatively high salience of the topic is combined with a distinctive set of preferences that are similar to those of environmentalists. When asked to provide their preferred rate for a tax on carbon dioxide, on a scale of $0 to $100, only 3% of the sample opposed a tax outright, with a median value of $40 per ton.[9]

Nevertheless, we were not confident that the students we surveyed exhibited the same intensity on environmental issues as an issue public more narrowly conceived, so our second study involves the same experiment run on card-carrying environmentalists. To do this we collaborated with the Sierra Club of Canada (SCC), a prominent, membership-based organization focused specifically on environmental issues. SCC members were invited to do our survey through the organization's email newsletter, with a direct appeal from the director. The incentive was collective: they were told that if we received 500 valid responses, the SCC would receive a payment of $3,000, so subjects were not personally rewarded for participation. In the end, we received 1,474 valid responses from SCC members. We are confident that these subjects do care strongly about the environment. The mean Green Party feeling thermometer in the SCC subjects is 74, whereas it is 55 among the student subjects and only 44 for respondents to the Canadian Election Study in the same year (2015). Further, much like our student sample, only 4% of the SCC sample opposed a price on carbon, but the median preferred tax was modestly higher ($50 per ton).

Our hypotheses also depend on the assumption that the environment is more important to the subjects than arts and culture. For the second set of subjects, members of the Sierra Club of Canada, this is unproblematic. For the students, we know from close proximity that political science undergraduates are generally much more concerned with environmental issues than with government support for arts and culture. But we made sure by giving a list of 14 issues and asking the student subjects to drag the ones that they "care about strongly" into a box and then rank them. Environment was selected by 62%, while arts and culture was picked by 34%. Only 6% chose arts and culture but not environment. The environment appeared in the top four issues for 51% of those who chose it, while it was only in the top four issues for 7.6% of those that said they cared about arts and culture. We are confident that, in the aggregate, our student subjects care much more about discussion of environmental issues than discussion of support for arts and culture. In total, our experiments were run on 456 undergraduate students and 1,474 members of the Sierra Club of Canada who gave a valid answer to the satisfaction with democracy question.

We must have confidence that subjects attended to the series of news articles in a manner broadly comparable to that of actual voters in real elections in order to generalize from our findings to the effects of party systems in real-world election campaigns. After the campaign we presented subjects with a screen showing 16 issues and asked them to click all the issues that were discussed in the campaign. By this measure, the manipulations were extremely successful. For issues that were not varied by condition there are no significant differences across a comparison of the control versus the environmental conditions. For arts and culture, which replaced the environment articles in the control condition, 88% of those in that condition said it was discussed, as compared with just 1% in the other two conditions. In the environmental conditions, by contrast, 91% said the environment was discussed, as compared with 24% in the nonenvironment condition. For climate change the difference was 61% to 8%. Based on these variables, we defined a measure indicating successful treatment—having noticed that the environment was an issue discussed in the campaign—which identified 86% of students as being correctly treated, and 93% in the Sierra Club sample.

Second, we wanted to know if subjects had noticed the election result. We asked at the end how much influence each party would have on policies until the next election, measured on a 0–4 scale. Among student subjects, the mean expected Liberal influence across the Liberal majority, Liberal minority, NDP minority, and NDP majority conditions was 3.2, 2.9, 2.2, and 2.1 and almost exactly the same means in reverse order for the NDP. The Conservatives, appropriately, had greater expected influence in both minority-government conditions, and the Greens were expected to have much more influence in the NDP minority condition than any other. Clearly, these subjects had noticed, in the last of eight full-length newspaper articles, which party had won. The same pattern holds with the Sierra Club sample with a mean Liberal influence of 3.4, 3.1, 2.1, and 2.[10]

9. As points of comparison, in 2016 Canada set a national target of $10 per ton to rise to $50 per ton by 2022, and British Columbia's pioneering carbon tax is currently set at a rate of $30 per ton.

10. In the Sierra Club study we used two screener questions as recommended by Berinsky, Margolis, and Sances (2014). Over three-quarters

Subjects also engaged at a gut level with the campaign. We asked subjects: "How do you think you would feel if you had been through this campaign and gone out and voted for real?" In the student study, among those who voted for the party that won the election, only 6% were on the dissatisfied side, while among everyone else fully 54% were dissatisfied. The same pattern held in the Sierra Club sample, where only 10% of election winners were dissatisfied with the campaign, compared with 68% for everyone else. We are confident that the subjects in both samples took the treatment and, in a very realistic sense, experienced this campaign.

Importantly, our dependent variable, the satisfaction with democracy question, does not reference Manitoba or the simulated election; it is a general question about satisfaction with how democracy works in Canada. Our expectation, put simply, is that when these subjects hear environmental issues discussed, they will be more positive about democracy than when that same fraction of campaign time is spent discussing government support for arts and culture.

RESULTS

We treat the three hypotheses in order. Were winners, even in this simulated campaign, more satisfied than losers, as we expect in hypothesis 1? If they were not, our ability to generalize from these findings would be weak. Because the election result—a Liberal or NDP win—was varied independently of the voicing of issues, we define winners as those subjects who got an election result where the party that they voted for won either a majority or a minority government. Respondents who were undecided were removed from the analyses.

Election winners were indeed more satisfied with democracy in both samples. Among students, 76% of subjects who lost the simulated campaign said that they were satisfied with Canadian democracy, versus 87% of winners.[11] This difference of 11 points is impressive and significant ($p < .01$). Among Sierra Club members, 18% of subjects who lost the election were satisfied with democracy, compared with 23% of those who won. This difference of 5 points is also significant ($p \sim .04$). While the differences on hypothesis 1 are fairly modest, recall that this is a simulated campaign over a roughly 20-minute experiment in a province the respondents do not reside in. We take this as good evidence that some of the winner-loser gap in observational studies does derive from the feeling of being on the winning side, since these subjects are fully aware that the simulated election has no consequences for policy.

Hypothesis 2 expects satisfaction to be lower in the control than in the environmental issue conditions.[12] Students have much higher overall levels of satisfaction than Sierra Club members, but the difference between the control and environmental issue conditions is slight. Seventy-seven percent of students are satisfied with democracy in the control condition, compared with 79% in the environmental issue conditions, which is not statistically significant ($p \sim .48$). There is more evidence of a difference between conditions among environmentalists; 18% of environmentalists are satisfied with democracy in the control condition versus 23% in the environmental issue conditions ($p \sim .04$). In at least the Sierra Club sample, satisfaction with democracy is higher when issues that subjects value are part of political discourse—even after mere exposure to a simulated campaign from another province.

The most important finding of this study, however, is in support for hypothesis 3. We have to account for the fact that we do not technically manipulate winning and losing the election—we manipulate the result. Our moderating variable is thus, in part, observational. Losing our simulated campaign is correlated with other factors that may also be related to one's satisfaction with democracy, such as voting for the Green Party. The nature of our manipulation ensures that Conservatives always lose the simulated election, and Greens always lose in the Green Party condition. This latter point is particularly problematic in the Sierra Club sample with its unusually high proportion of Green partisans (32%), who have lower levels of pretreatment efficacy than other respondents. Once they go from being a mix of winners and losers in the control and environmentalist conditions to automatically losers in the Green Party condition, it may create an abnormally low satisfaction score in the Green Party condition among losers, and a high satisfaction score among winners in the same condition. This suggests the need to control for party identification and ideology. It is also possible that people who lose the simulated campaign may be systematically less efficacious before treatment. We thus control for pretreatment efficacy that is measured with a question asking respondents whether they believe their views are represented in politics on a four-point scale.

We thus estimate three models for each sample using logistic regression. The first model estimates the effects of

of subjects passed both tests, and only 6% failed both. Results are not materially different when excluding subjects who failed the screener tests.

11. Plots of the unconditional proportions of subjects satisfied with democracy in each condition can be found in figs. A16–A18.

12. There were no significant differences in treatment effects between the two variants of the environmental condition. Analyses using each condition separately can be found in table A1 (tables A1–A3 are available online).

our environmental issue conditions and winning the election on satisfaction with democracy. The second model adds in controls for party identification, ideology, and pretreatment efficacy. The third model adds an interaction between the election result and the environmental issue conditions, as per hypothesis 3. The results are shown in table 2.

Model 1 shows that among students election winners are significantly more satisfied with democracy than losers (*winner*, $p \sim .01$). However, there is no significant difference in satisfaction between those exposed to the environmental issue conditions and those in the control condition (*environmental treatment*, $p \sim .67$). These results remain after adding control variables in model 2. We can calculate predicted probabilities from the estimates of model 2 to provide a more substantive interpretation of these results. Those who won the election are 9 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy than losers (86%/77%). In contrast, subjects exposed to the environmental issue treatments are expected only to be 2 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy than those in the control condition (81%/79%).

A different picture emerges when considering the moderating (interactive) influence of the election result in model 3. We see now that our environmental issue treatments have an effect in the expected (positive) direction but only among election losers (*environmental treatment*, $p \sim .09$). In contrast, the environmental issue conditions are associated with slightly lower satisfaction with democracy scores among election winners, but this is not statistically significant ($p \sim .14$). The key indicator is that the interaction term is significant (*treatment* × *winner*, $p \sim .03$), indicating that the winner-loser gap shrinks when the campaign deals with issues that our subjects care about. Predicted probabilities are displayed in the left panel of figure 2 to more clearly illustrate the effects. The estimates from model 3 suggest that among losers, subjects in the environmental issue conditions were 11 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy compared with those in the control condition (80%/69%). This narrowed the winner-loser gap in satisfaction with democracy, which declined from 23 points (92%/69%) in the control condition to 2 points (82%/80%) in the environmental issue conditions.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Estimates

	Students			Sierra Club		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Environment treatment	.12	.16	.66*	.30*	.34*	.66**
	(.28)	(.32)	(.39)	(.15)	(.18)	(.26)
Winner	.75***	.61*	1.68***	.32**	.44***	.88***
	(.29)	(.33)	(.62)	(.14)	(.17)	(.30)
Treatment × winner			−1.59**			−.64*
			(.73)			(.36)
Conservative PID		−.04	−.02		−.15	−.16
		(.55)	(.55)		(.46)	(.47)
NDP PID		−.72**	−.69		−.20	−.19
		(.36)	(.36)		(.22)	(.22)
Green PID		.96	1.03		−.88***	−.92***
		(1.15)	(1.15)		(.25)	(.25)
No PID		−.10	.01		−.83***	−.85***
		(.52)	(.52)		(.31)	(.32)
Ideology		.09	.11		.27***	.28***
		(.09)	(.09)		(.05)	(.05)
Efficacy, pretreat		.88***	.92***		.52***	.52***
		(.25)	(.26)		(.11)	(.11)
Constant	1.08***	−.56	−1.09	−1.69***	−2.77***	−3.00***
Pseudo R^2	.03	.08	.10	.02	.10	.11
N	373	321	321	1,249	1,049	1,049

Note. Logit coefficients, standard errors in parentheses. NDP = New Democratic Party. PID = Party identification.
* $p < .1$.
** $p < .05$.
*** $p < .01$.

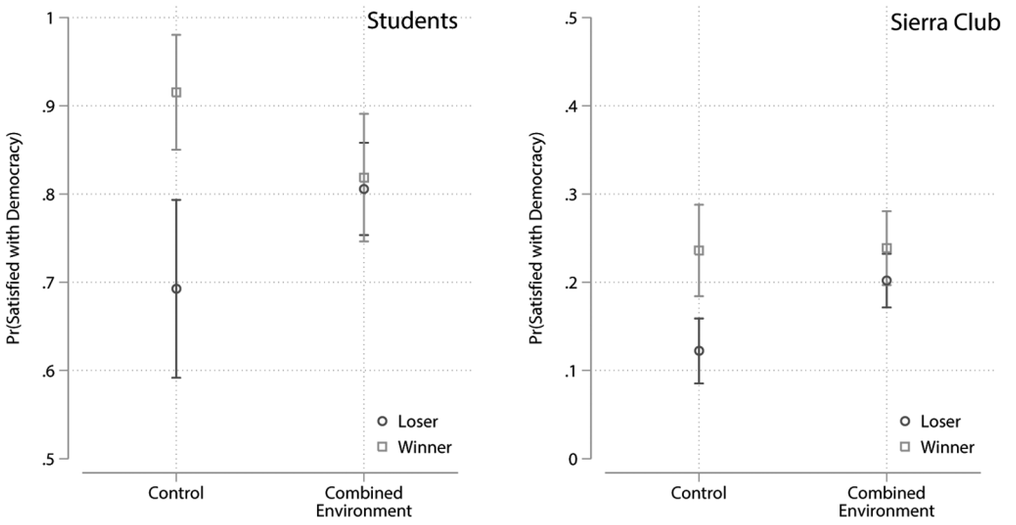


Figure 2. Predicted probabilities for model 3 in the student (*left*) and Sierra Club (*right*) samples. Error bars reflect 90% confidence intervals

Hearing about an issue our subjects care about leads to a convergence in satisfaction with democracy between election losers and winners, just as the macrolevel observational literature shows. And recall that the dependent variable is general satisfaction with democracy; the question was not about this campaign or this election or democracy in Manitoba.

Results are clearer for Sierra Club members, as we should expect because of greater concern for the issue. Model 4 shows that election winners are significantly more satisfied with democracy than losers (*winner*, $p \sim .02$). Additionally, those in the environmental issue conditions were more satisfied with democracy than those in the control condition (*environmental treatment*, $p \sim .05$). Effects are modestly stronger when controls are added in model 5 ($p < .01$ and $p \sim .06$). Predicted probabilities were generated based on the estimates for model 5. Election winners were 6 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy than losers (24%/18%), and those in the environmental issue conditions were 5 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy (22%/17%).

Model 6 shows an interactive effect similar to the student sample. The environmental issue treatment effects are only significant for those who lost the election (*environmental treatment*, $p \sim .01$). There is no such relationship among election winners. The interaction term is significant (*treatment* × *winner*, $p \sim .08$), indicating that the gap between winners and losers shrinks when exposed to environmental discussion. The predicted probabilities in the right panel of figure 2 more clearly illustrate the effects. The estimates from model 6 suggest that among election losers, subjects in the environmental issue conditions were 8 points more likely to be satisfied with democracy compared to those in the control condition (20%/12%). This reduced the winner-loser satisfaction with democracy gap from 12 points in the control condition (24%/12%) to 4 points in the environmental issue conditions (24%/20%). The story, much like for the student sample, is that hearing about the environment in the treatment conditions leads to convergence in satisfaction with democracy between winners and losers.[13]

The generalizability of these findings is bolstered by the fact that these effects are present among relatively satisfied students and among environmentalists who are sour on Canadian democracy. These latter people are, in general, left-leaning, affluent, educated citizens, and yet they are by and large dissatisfied with Canadian democracy. Most likely, they were fed up with the Conservative government that had been in office for nine years at the time of the experiment. So, even among these hard cases, as long as they see their concerns articulated in a simulated provincial election campaign, and despite their preferred party losing that election, they are significantly less dissatisfied with democracy when that issue is discussed.

13. We might expect to find a stronger distinction between winners and losers in majority government conditions. Minority governments rarely last a full legislative term and they tend to be characterized by cooperation between the government and one or more opposition parties. This may cushion the effect of losing and limit the interactive effect found. Analysis presented in the appendix shows that the majority-minority difference only inconsistently manifests itself. In our student sample, there was no difference. Among environmentalists the effects were slightly stronger in the minority condition. Results can be found in table A2, and marginal effects are presented in figs. A20 and A21.

DISCUSSION

There is undoubtedly more to citizen satisfaction with democracy than the ephemeral feeling of winning or losing. Citizens do, of course, feel better about how their democracy works when their preferred party or candidate is in office. Some of the winner-loser gap in satisfaction must be emotional, as our results for hypothesis 1 suggest, and some of it surely reflects instrumental concerns for policy close to one's ideal point. But the balance of these factors probably matters little because concerns about the health of democracy focus instead on electoral losers: those who may feel inadequately represented and who get policies that they oppose. Naturally, then, scholars have wondered whether there are institutional factors—electoral systems, number of parties in government, alternation in power, and so on—that can dampen losers' dissatisfaction with the system. In broad strokes, scholars have found that institutions associated with nonmajoritarian democracy have this effect, in contrast to the institutions of more majoritarian systems (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Lijphart 1999). But it is not yet clear which of the many differences between these systems causes the observed differences in satisfaction between them. By implication, it is not clear what citizens value about their democracies.

We find that even a very general system-level attitude like "satisfaction with how democracy works" is amenable to experimental manipulation. We emphasize that although the experimental treatment effects in this article are not large, the experiments that we report are not typical in political science where artificially strong treatments are often used with few or no potential distractions and with dependent variables tied closely to the treatments. Instead, our treatments were realistically complicated and diffuse, while our dependent variable asked about democracy in general, not about the simulated campaign to which subjects were exposed.[14]

Our finding in this experiment is that when citizens believe that their positions on issues that are important to them are being discussed—merely discussed—they are modestly more positive about the entire democratic political system. When their issues are ignored, they become more dissatisfied. Furthermore, the presence of dialogue on salient issues affects satisfaction more strongly among election losers. The clear implication (but one that we do not test in any way in the present article) is that consensus and nonmajoritarian democracies may help close the winner-loser gap with more inclusive and wide-ranging political dialogue, as might other institutions within any of these political systems.

Our findings that show the importance of voice or dialogue are all the more credible because they align so closely with the conclusions of the many observational studies. To some extent, it is something about the political discourse—the voices—in more consensual or nonmajoritarian systems that affect satisfaction with democracy, not just the larger proportion of winners or the greater number of voters included in the governing coalitions. Sartori (1976) and other scholars may have been right when they suggested that a number-of-parties effect was, in fact, about the airing of concerns.

We started our experiments with an undergraduate student sample with the expectation that the environment is an important issue for most of them. We were correct but lacked confidence in generalizing these findings to more typical issue publics in the general population. So we surveyed environmentalists as well. We see no reason to expect that our findings would not travel to other issue publics. Because the environment receives frequent media coverage, if anything we may expect even stronger effects for issues that are regularly ignored but are important to certain groups of voters.

Finally, as noted above, we did not believe that these treatment effects would vary much across electoral system contexts; two findings reinforce this judgment. First, the treatment condition featuring environmentalists worked as well as, if not better than, the condition featuring the Green Party (see table A1 and fig. A19 for these analyses). There is clearly something about voice itself that matters to respondents. It is not clear why we would expect subjects in nonmajoritarian systems to respond differently to the media presence of interest groups that they are aligned with. Second, the environmental issue treatment effects were not stronger among those in the majority outcome condition, and if anything, they were weaker in our sample of environmentalists. The more inclusive cooperation among parties that sometimes (but not always) characterizes minority governments and their coalition government counterparts in nonmajoritarian settings did not diminish the effects of issue inclusion on satisfaction with democracy.

The evidence provided by our experimental study and its observational counterparts suggest that those worried about the "democratic deficit" should not just pay attention to elec-

14. In the posttreatment questionnaire we asked respondents whether they believed important issues were addressed in the campaign. We would expect our treatment to influence this variable if there truly is an effect of the treatment on satisfaction with democracy. Table A3 shows that respondents are more likely to say important issues were addressed in the campaign when exposed to discussion of the environment. We also asked respondents whether they believed people like themselves had a say in what government does. This is not an ideal measure because it is unclear why discussion of the environment by environmentalists or the Green Party (who does not form government) would affect their perceived influence on government. However, it may tap into underlying efficacy and can serve as a robustness check. The results, presented in table A2, show the effect holds only for students.

toral systems but to other, more changeable institutions as well. While electoral systems do indeed strongly influence the number of parties, and particularly the presence of parties trumpeting single issues that might be ignored in smaller party systems, other features of political systems may also have important effects on satisfaction because of their impact on democratic discourse. An important future research agenda would inquire as to the links between these institutional features and satisfaction with democracy.

The experimental approach used here can be transported into other institutional and issue contexts for greater external validity, while new manipulations could shed light on how different features of political discourse are related to satisfaction with democracy. For one example, as Reher (2014) shows, satisfaction with democracy could increase simply by elevating the salience of issues that people care about independent of whether a certain issue position is reflected in discourse. Our experiment does not provide a clean test of this proposition because respondents see both their issue and issue position reflected in the simulated election campaign. For another example, it may also be interesting to manipulate other indicators of discourse quality to determine their effect on satisfaction with democracy, such as justification quality, displays of mutual respect, and consensus building to provide a bridge to the important work done by democratic theorists. There is still much that we do not know about citizen satisfaction with democracy. We hope that well-crafted experimental manipulations can provide an important contribution as the research program moves forward.

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