

# Trust in democracy in times of crisis: Trust in social justice and state institutions as precursors of extremist attitudes

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# Introduction

- **Monitoringsystem und Transferplattform Radikalisierung (MOTRA)**

“Monitoring System and Transfer Platform Radicalization” (MOTRA) is a research association funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. The project was developed for the early detection, prevention and combating of extremism and terrorism over the course of five years (11/2019 - 10/2024).

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- **Menschen in Deutschland (MiD)**

The study Menschen in Deutschland (People in Germany) is a yearly population survey conducted by the University of Hamburg. The survey addresses questions about life in Germany on main topics from society, politics and religion.

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- **Data source**

The data used for this presentation represents the first three data collections of the MiD survey collected respectively during the second quarter of 2021, 2022 and 2023.

(N<sub>1</sub> = 4 483; participation rate = 23.6) (N<sub>2</sub> = 4 319; participation rate = 20.6) (N<sub>3</sub> = 4 253; participation rate = 19.7)

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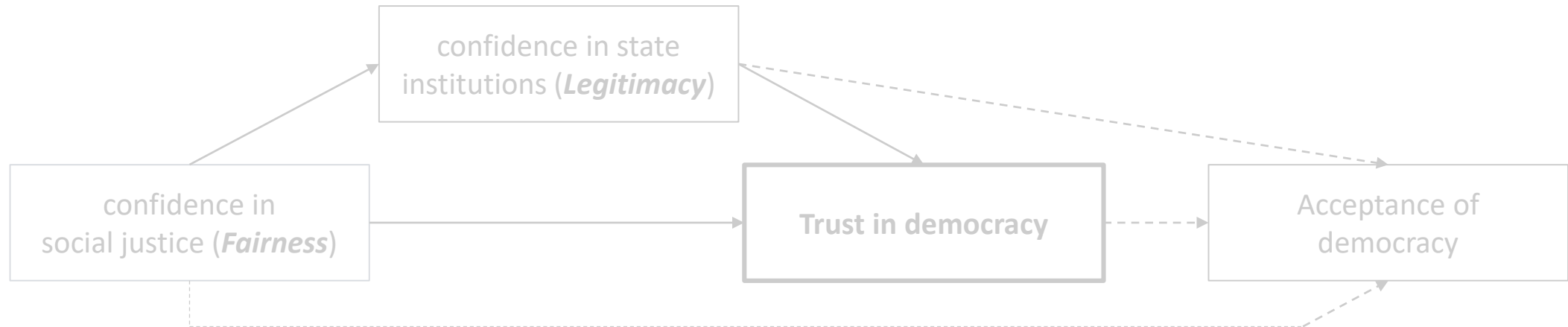
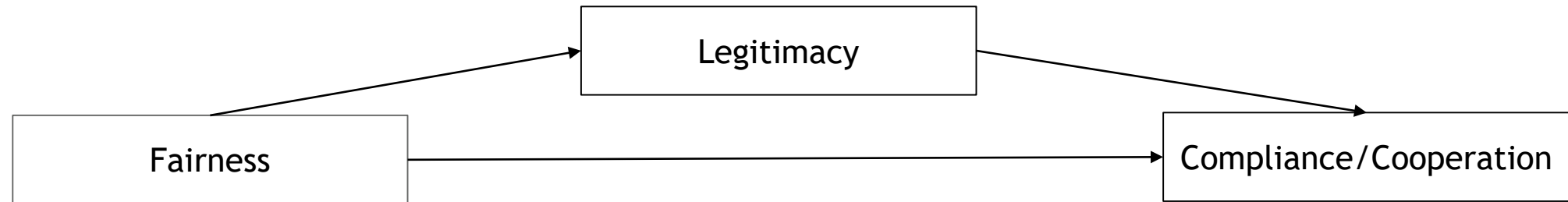
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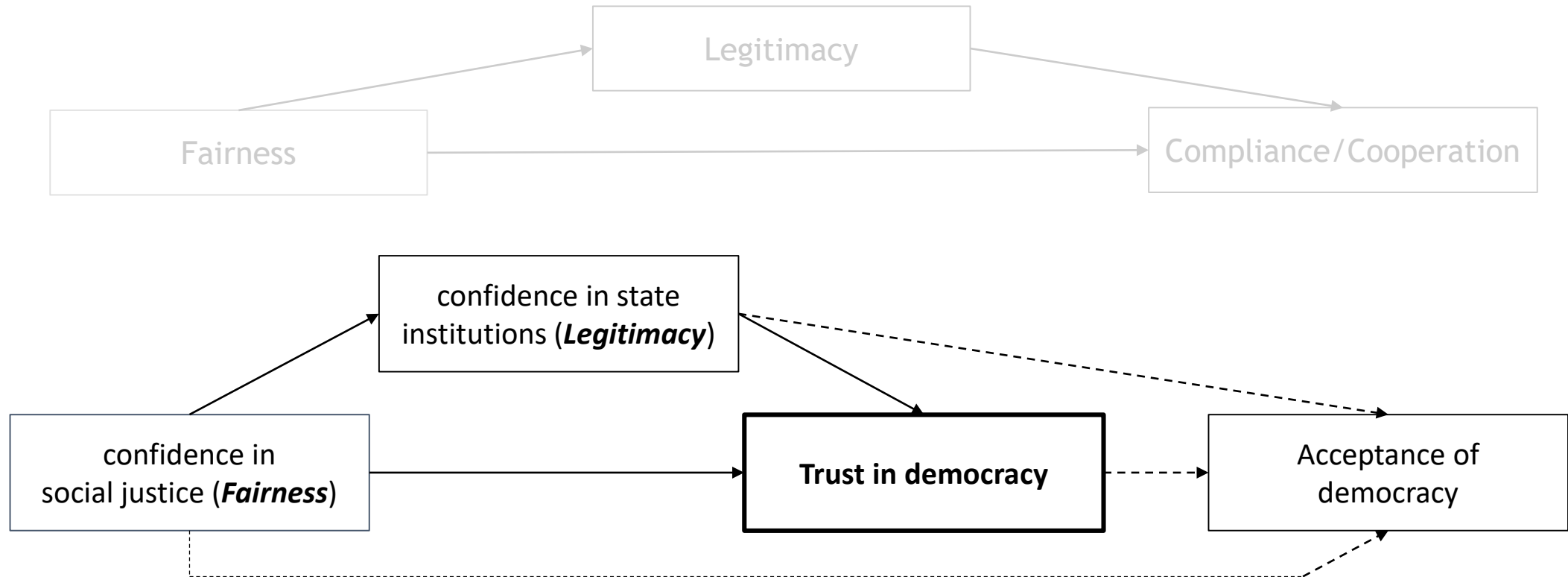
# Main idea

- To develop a theory of political legitimacy for the explanation of extremist attitudes -inspired by Procedural Justice (PJ) theory-



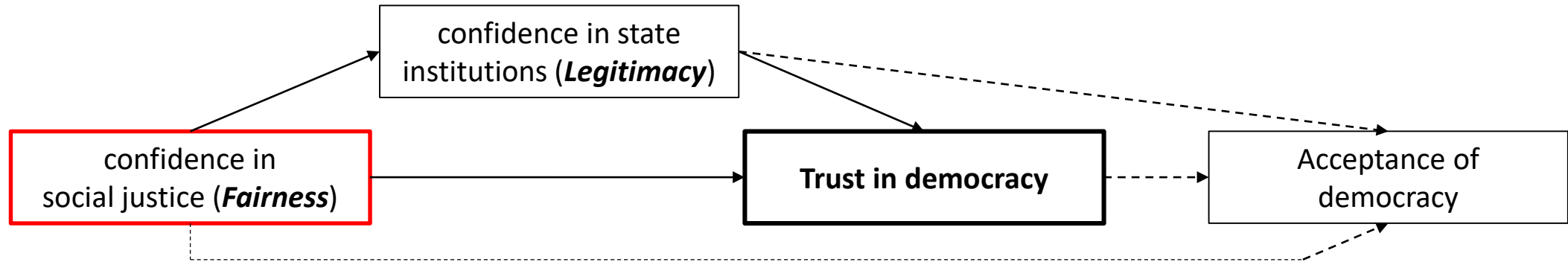
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# Operationalisations



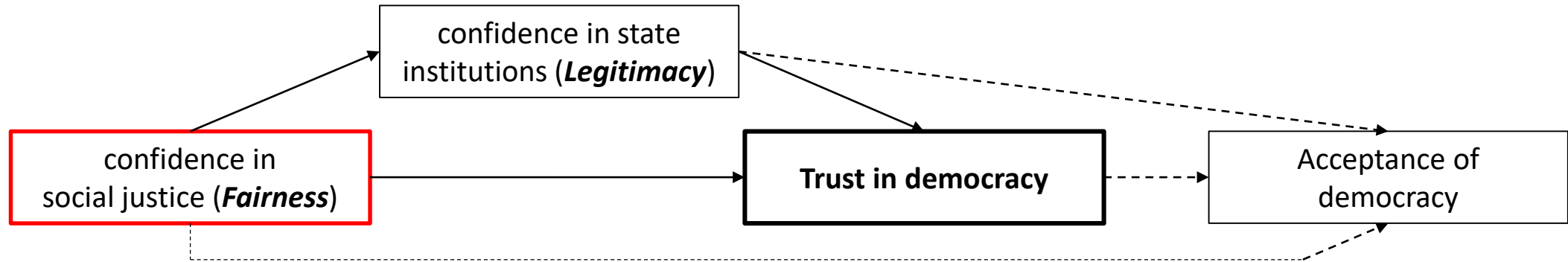
*Where we live, people like me are ...*

... disadvantaged regarding receiving social benefits.  
... treated disrespectfully by authorities.  
... treated unfairly by the police.

*Original answer alternatives:*

- (1) ... Strongly disagree
- (2) ... Somewhat disagree
- (3) ... Somewhat agree
- (4) ... Completely agree

# Operationalisations

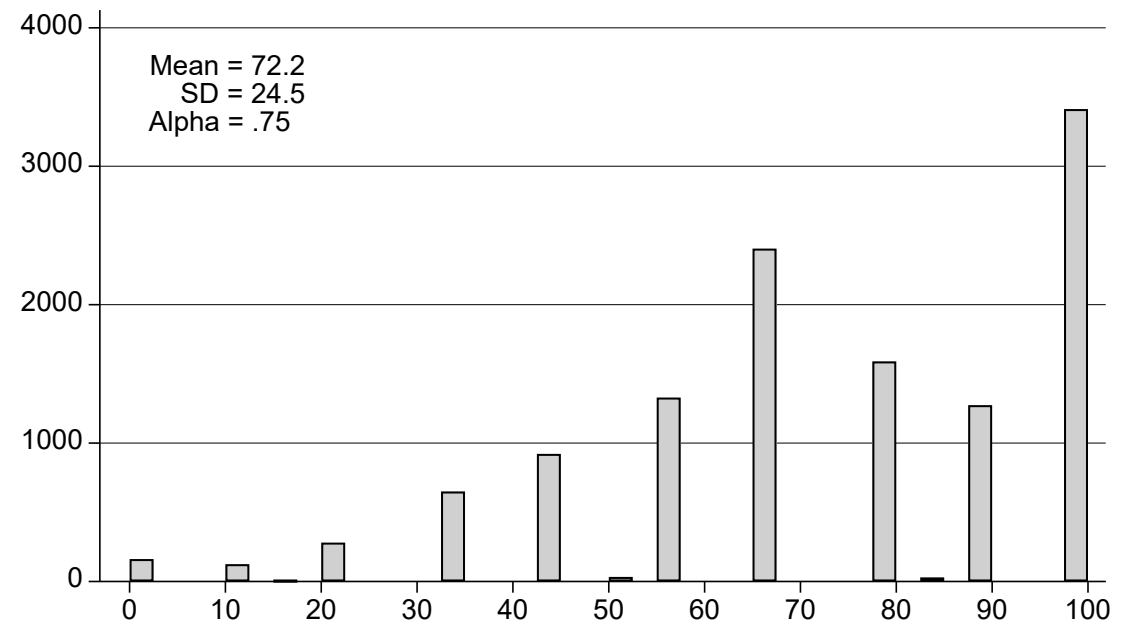


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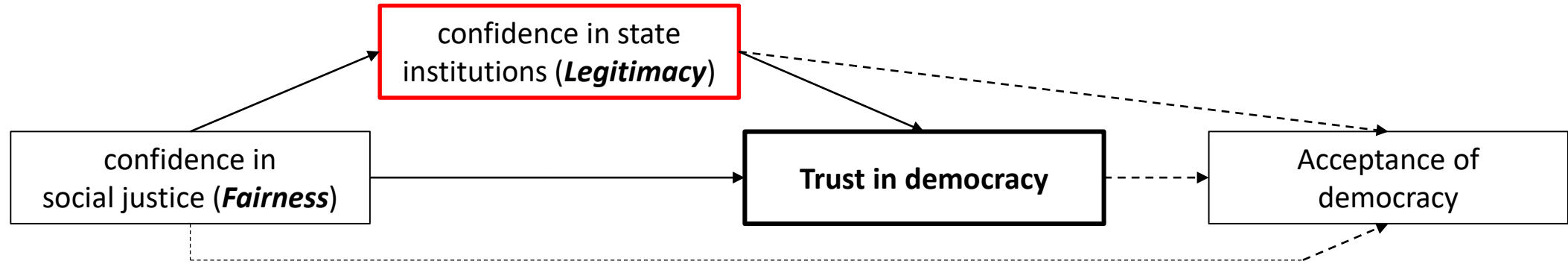
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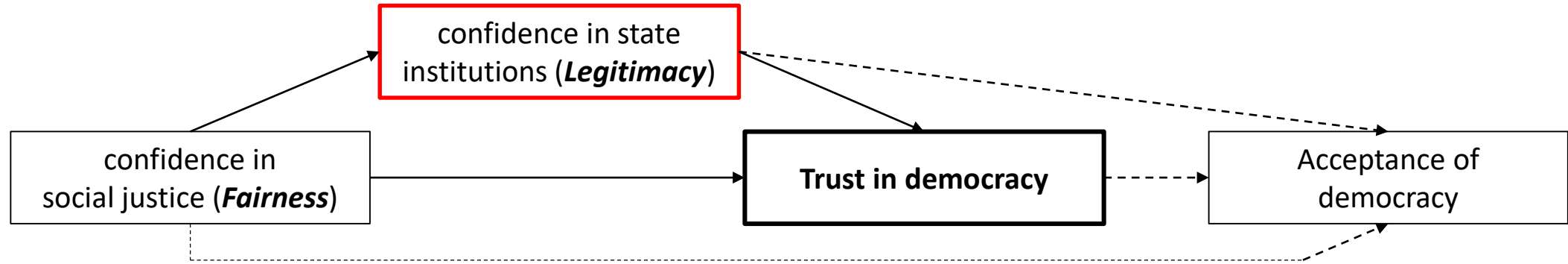


*How much confidence do you have in...*  
... the law courts?  
... the police?  
... the government?  
... the state authorities?

*Original answer alternatives:*

- (1) 1 no confidence at all
- (2) 2
- (3) 3
- (4) 4
- (5) 5
- (6) 6 complete confidence

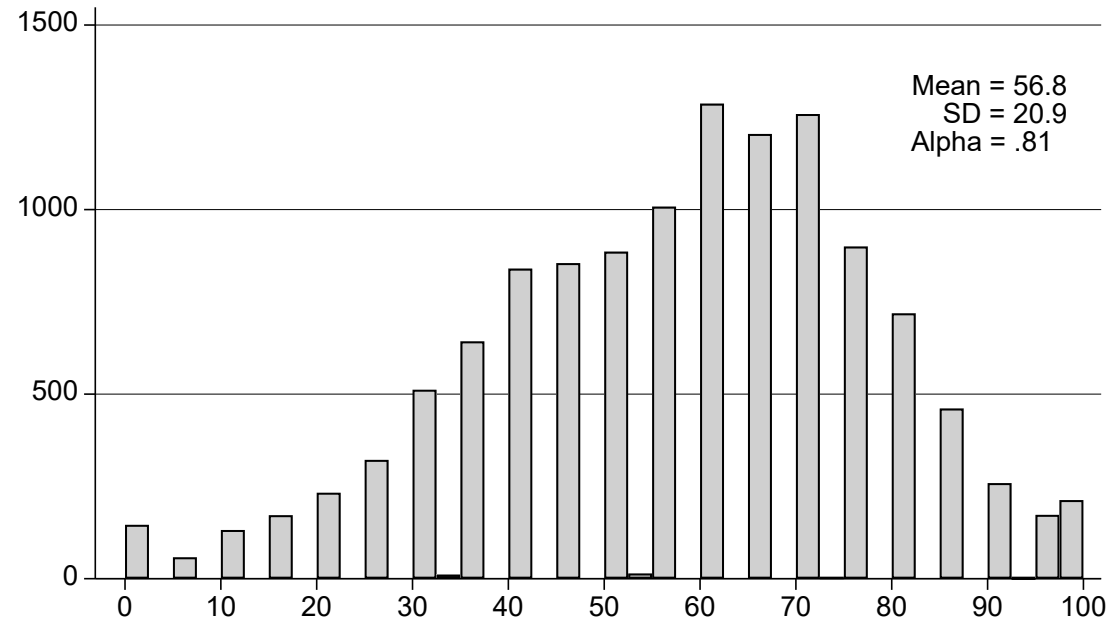
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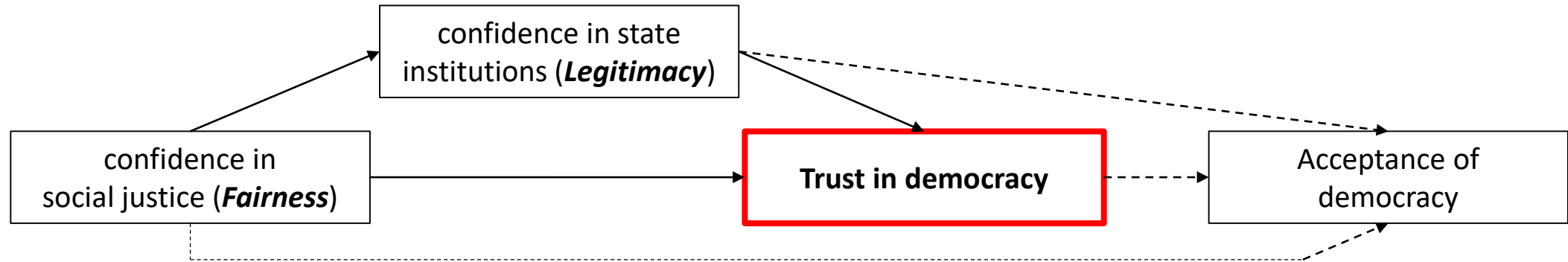
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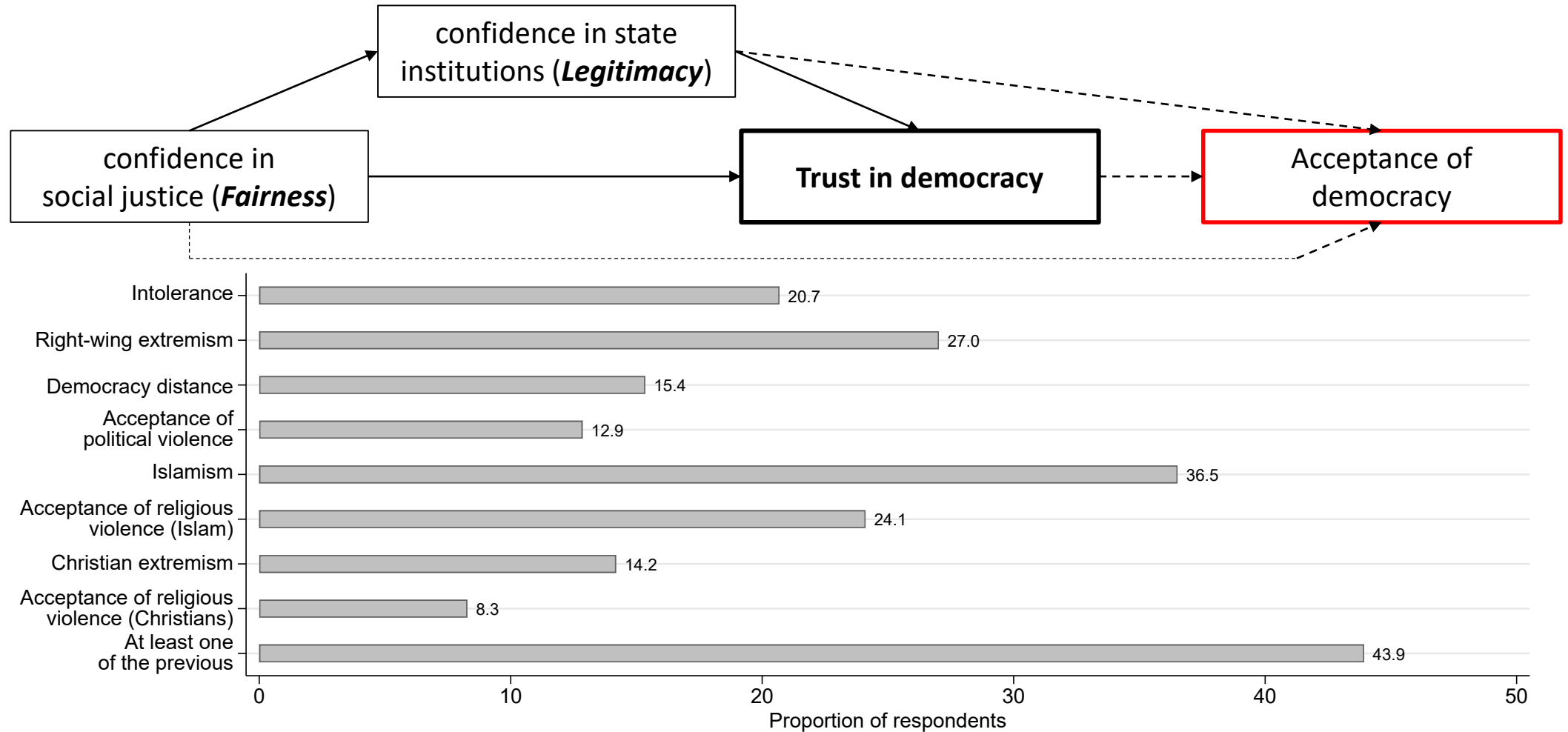
# Operationalisations



*With democracy, we can solve the problems we have in Germany*

...Strongly disagree [3.4%]	}	[17.8%]
...Somewhat disagree [14.4%]		
...Somewhat agree [45.7%]	}	[82.2%]
...Completely agree [36.5%]		

# Operationalisations



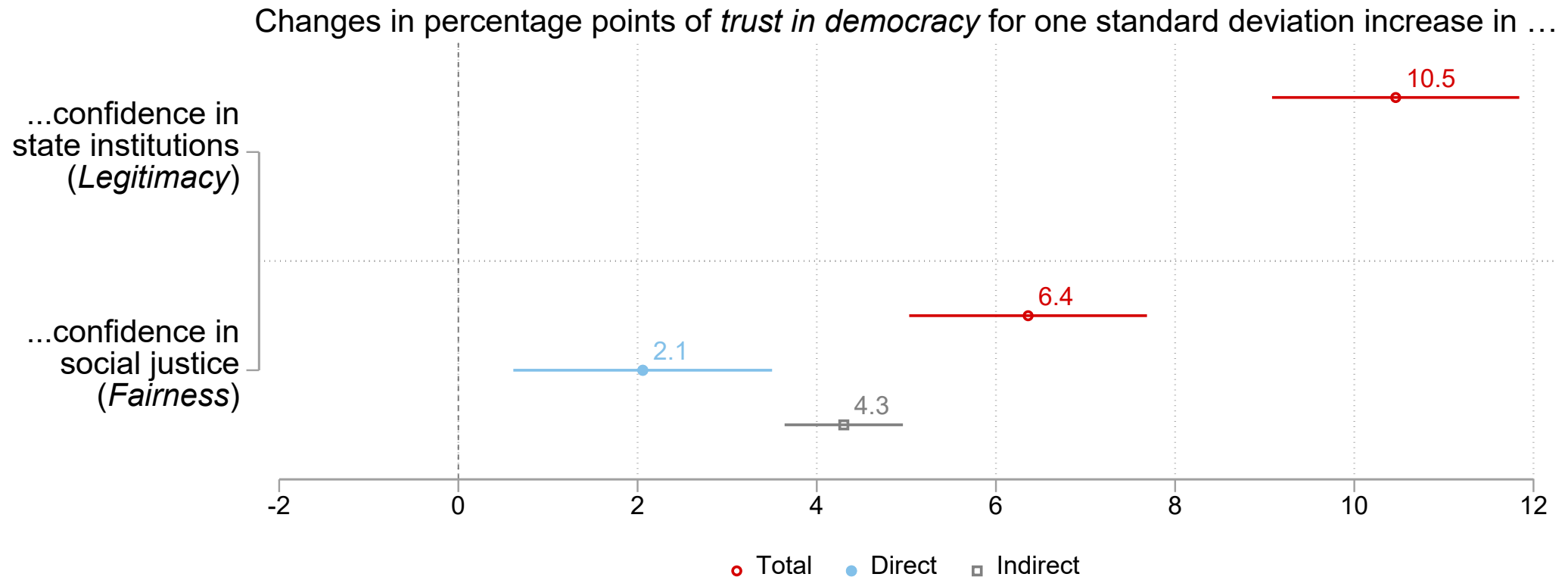
For more information see: Endtricht, R., Farren, D., Brettfeld, K., Fischer, J.M.K., & Wetzels, P. (2023). People in Germany 2021. First wave of the German national representative survey: Methodology, survey design and sampling. MOTRA Research Report No. 1. Hamburg: Universität Hamburg. <http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.12244>

# Hypotheses

- H1: The described relationships (i.e. fairness -> legitimacy -> attitudes towards democracy) **apply** to the prediction of extremist attitudes
- H2: All individual measures presented (i.e. fairness, legitimacy and attitudes towards democracy) **worsen between waves** (*pre-* and *in-crisis*)
- H3: **Changes** between waves in fairness and legitimacy **are associated with changes** in attitudes towards democracy (longitudinal model; changes within regional units of analysis)
- H4: The influence of fairness and legitimacy on attitudes towards democracy **intensifies during times of crisis**

# Results:

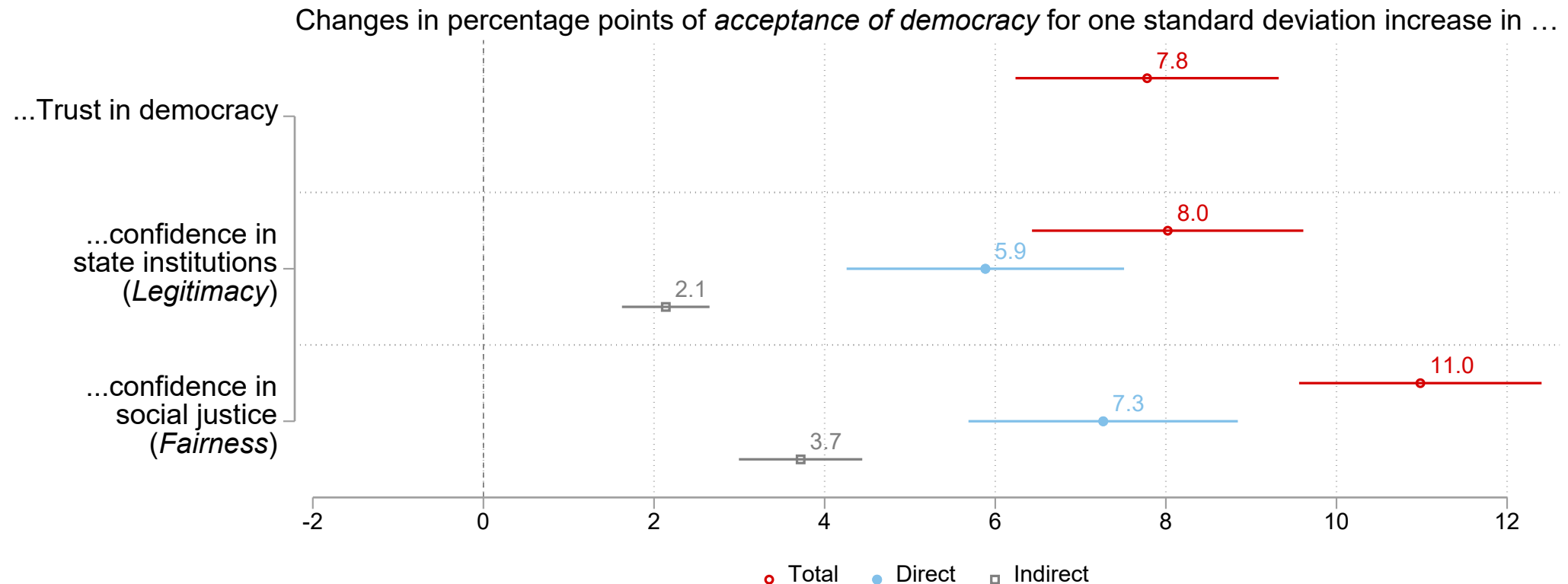
## 1) Applicability of proposed Model



\*controls = gender, age (3 categories), region (Bundesland), wave, migration status, education

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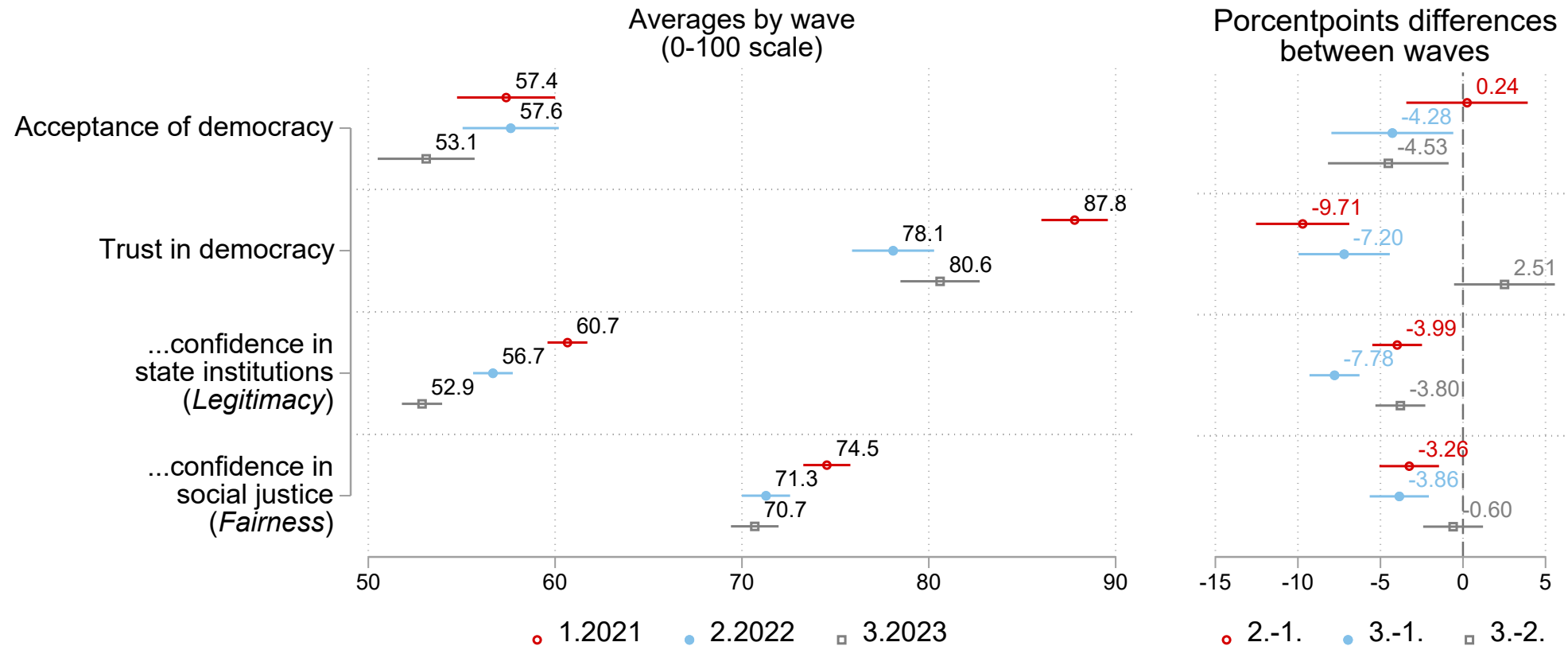


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# Results:

## 2) General changes between waves



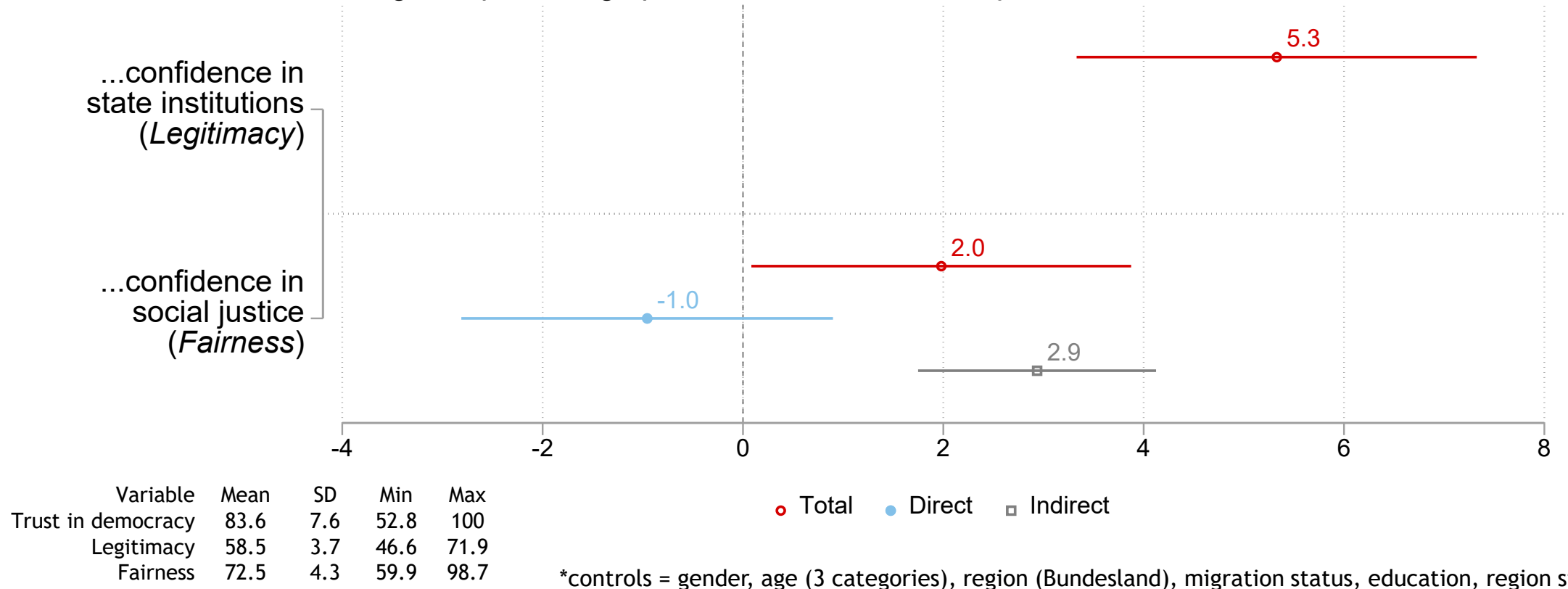
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# Results:

## 3) Relationship between changes in PJ variables and attitudes towards democracy

(longitudinal model; regional units: n=36; first two waves only)

Changes in percentage points of *trust in democracy* for one standard deviation increase in ...

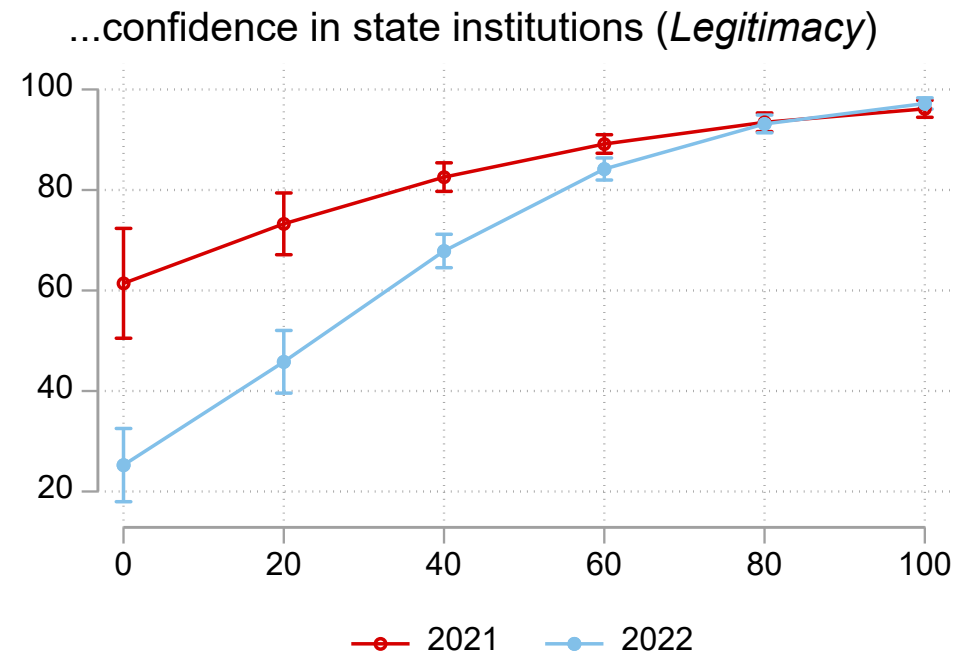
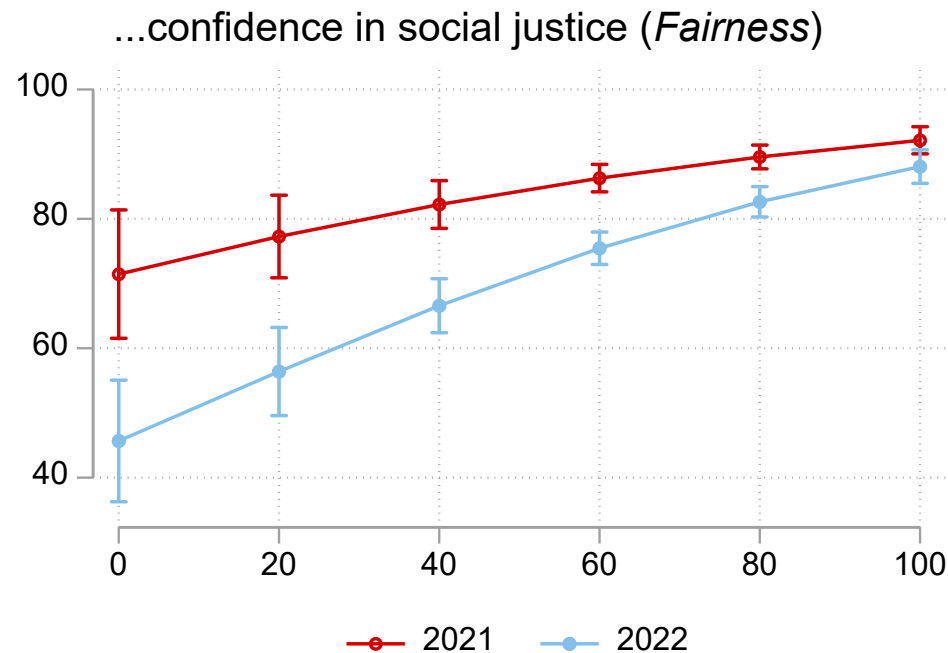


# Results:

## 4) Changes in size of relations (marginal effects) between waves

(first two waves only)

By wave average prediction of *trust in democracy* for different values of ...



\*controls = gender, age (3 categories), region (Bundesland), migration status, education

# Summary

- Perceptions of fairness and legitimacy seem to be related with attitudes towards democracy and extremism (**H1: applicability of model**)
- During times of crisis these perceptions and attitudes have worsen (**H2: changes between waves**)
- In our data, changes in perceptions of fairness and legitimacy are related to changes in attitudes towards democracy (**H3: longitudinal relationship of changes within regional units**)
- The influence of fairness and legitimacy on trust in democracy seems to intensify during times of crisis (**H4: comparison of marginal effects between waves**)

# Discussion

- **Theory:** The proposed theoretical model may provide key tools to better understand and combat extremism
- **Crisis:**
  - The evaluation of state institutions seems to be also influenced by macro events (interactional level is only one possible focus);
  - During crises the influence of the evaluation of the authorities on extremism seems even stronger
- **Barometer:** Keeping track of the evaluation of the authorities may be an efficient way to inform policies and evaluate interventions
- **Limitations/Future directions:**
  - Main outcomes are attitudes instead of behaviours;
  - Legitimacy measured as confidence in Institutions;
  - Fairness measured as a mixture of procedural and distributive fairness;
  - Relational, not causal;
  - No identity measures included

# Monitoring System and Transfer Plattform Radicalisation

# Thank you!!!!

Berghof Foundation



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