

Monitoring political extremism in Germany: theory, methods and selected results

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Monitoring System and Transfer Plattform Radicalisation

MOTRA-Network partners

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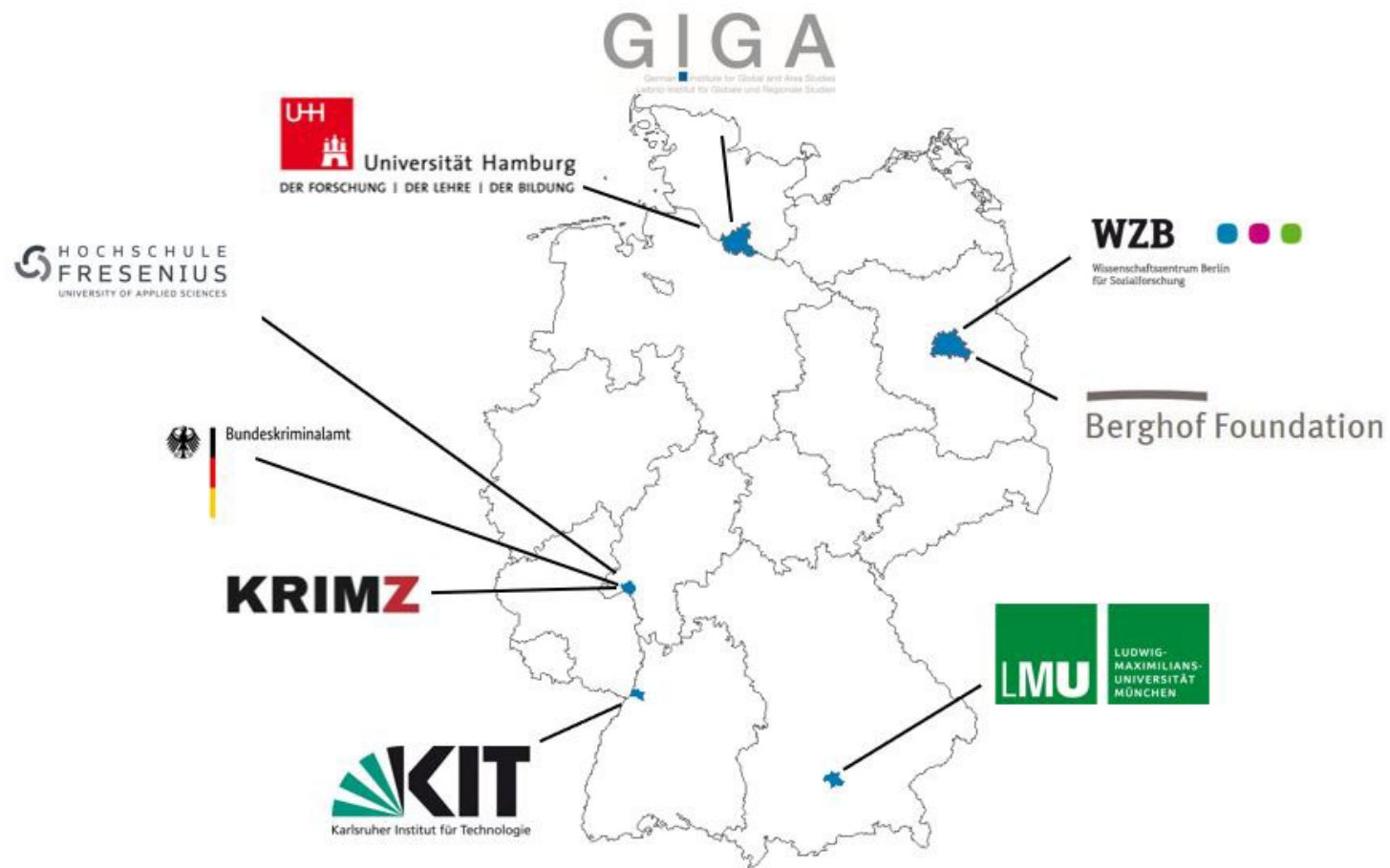
Goals of the MOTRA consortium

Research: Monitoring 'radicalization' and political extremism

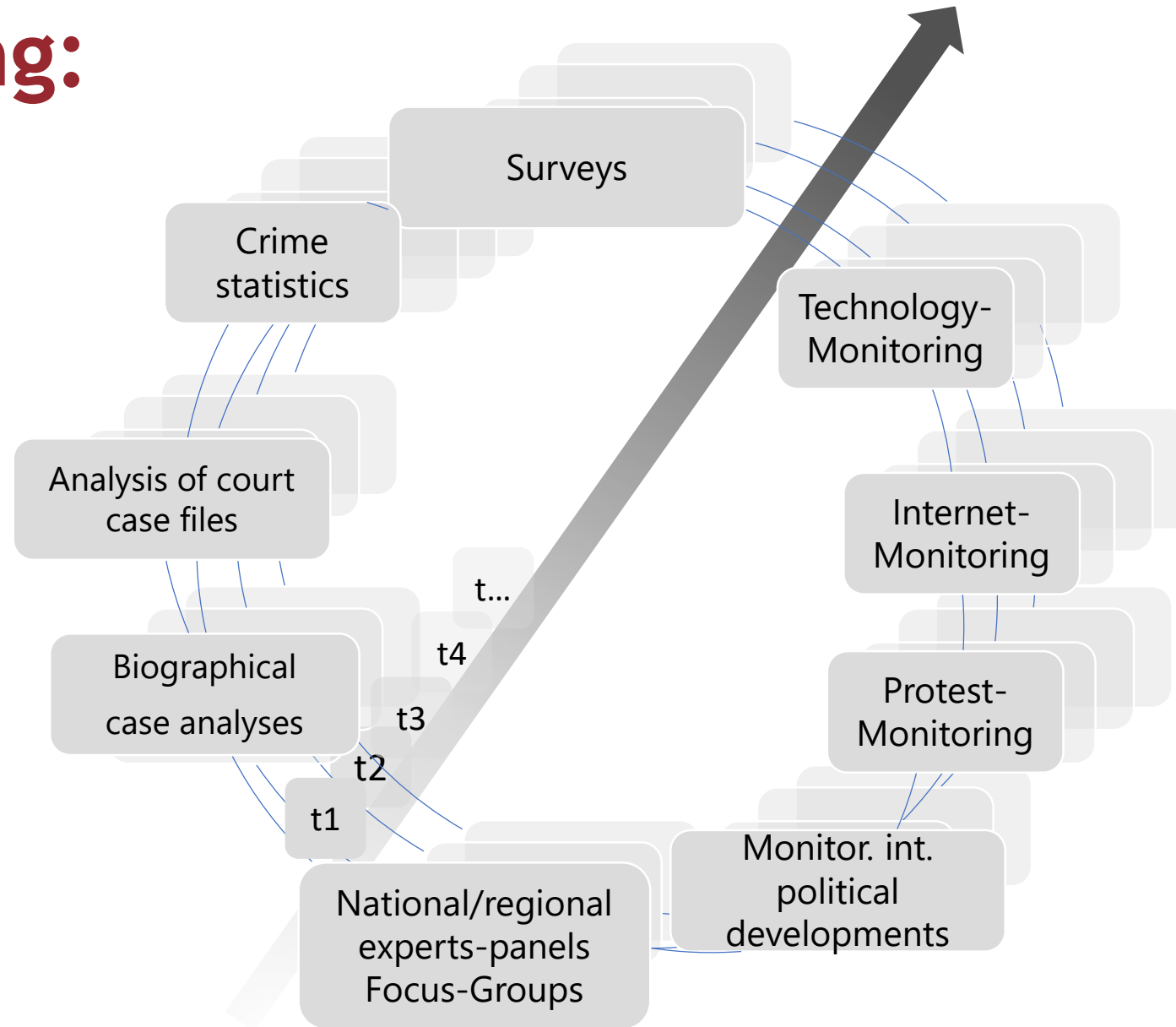
- multi-method analysis of extent and social distribution of different forms of radicalization and political extremism
- Cross-phenomenon and phenomenon-specific trend analysis and investigation of possible influencing factors

Transfer: organization of a transfer platform

- Inventory of secured research findings
- Exchange forum for science, politics and practice
- Promotion of knowledge transfer in politics and practice



Monitoring:



Research of the UHH in the Context of MOTRA

Surveys implemented by the University of Hamburg

MiD

Menschen in Deutschland

[People in Germany]

- Wave 1: 2021
(n = 4483)
- Wave 2: 2022
(n = 4319)
- Wave 3: 2023
(recently finished, ca.
4300 respondents)

JuMiD

Junge Menschen in Deutschland

[Young People in Germany]

- Wave 1: 2022
n = 3590 (16 - 21 y.o.)

MiDInt

Menschen in Deutschland: International

[People in Germany International]

- Wave 1: November 2022 (n = 2429)
- Wave 2: February 2023 (n = 2428)
- Wave 3: April 2023 (n=3426)

Specific goals of these data collections

- Cross-phenomenal analysis of the extent and social distribution of **extremist attitudes**, various forms of **group-related prejudices** and the **acceptance of politically motivated violence**
- Theory-based investigation of **risk factors and social context conditions** that influence extremist attitudes and the acceptance of politically or politically-religiously motivated violence
- Analysis of **observations** of politically or religiously motivated extremism in one's own living environment and related **feelings of threat**
- Analysis of **temporal trends** in relation to central variables and influencing factors

General goals of these data collections

- **Descriptive goal:** To create a barometer of extremist attitudes and related issues in order to keep track of social moods, anticipate problems and evaluate interventions
- **Explanative goal:** To contribute to the theory driven empirical understanding of political extremism and related subjects
- **Policy relevance:** To deliver useful inputs to policy makers fast and in an accessible (non-academical) form

MOTRA Spotlights for Policy and Practice

<h2>MOTRA 01/23 SPOTLIGHT</h2> <p>Perspektiven auf die Klimakrise: Verbreitung von Sorgen wegen des Klimawandels und Einstellungen zur Weltklimakonferenz 2022 Ergebnisse der ersten Welle der Studie „Menschen in Deutschland: International“ (MiDInt)</p> <p><small>Katrin Brettfeld, Janosch Kleinschnittger, Thomas Richter, Peter Wetzels Universität Hamburg und GIGA</small></p>	<h2>MOTRA 03/23 SPOTLIGHT</h2> <p>Einstellungen zu den Protesten wegen Menschenrechtsverletzungen im Iran und deren Zusammenhänge mit Muslimfeindlichkeit in Deutschland.</p> <p><small>Peter Wetzels, Thomas Richter, Diego Farren und Katrin Brettfeld Universität Hamburg und GIGA</small></p>	<h2>MOTRA 04/23 SPOTLIGHT</h2> <p>Besorgnisse wegen der Folgen des Klimawandels, Akzeptanz von Maßnahmen zum Klimaschutz und Einstellungen zu Regelverletzung und zivilem Ungehorsam als Protestformen.</p> <p><small>Katrin Brettfeld, Diego Farren, Janosch Kleinschnittger, Thomas Richter, Peter Wetzels Universität Hamburg</small></p>	<h2>MOTRA 05/23 SPOTLIGHT</h2> <p>Einstellungen zu Waffenlieferungen an die Ukraine und die Verbreitung von Kriegsängsten in Deutschland.</p> <p><small>Peter Wetzels, Thomas Richter, Diego Farren, Katrin Brettfeld Universität Hamburg und GIGA Hamburg</small></p>
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<https://www.motra.info/publikationen/spotlight/>

Normative definition of political extremism

Political extremism is a set of deviant attitudes and/or deviant behaviors that is characterized by:

- the rejection of basic constitutional principles of the state organization of a liberal democracy

and/or

- the denial of universal basic rights of freedom and equal treatment for members of certain outgroups and minorities

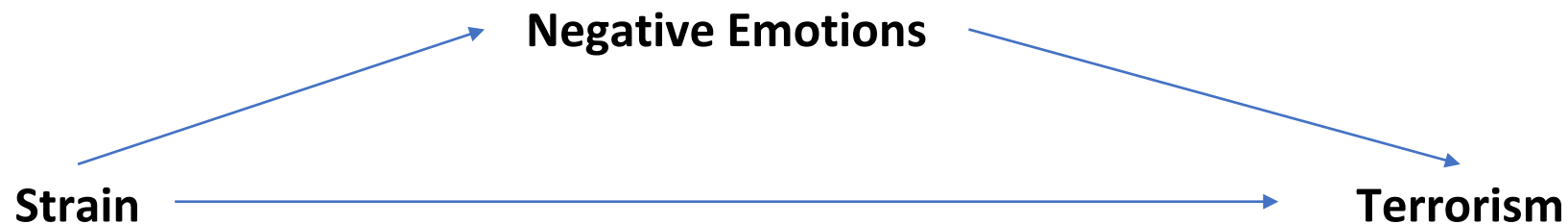
A core element of political extremism is the fight against central principles of liberal democracy and the goal to enforce a different legal order.

Some key constructs/measures

- **Cross**-phenomenon measure of **democracy-distance**
- Phenomenon-**specific** measure of **right-wing extremist attitudes**
- Phenomenon-**specific** measure of **islamist attitudes**
- Hostility and **Intolerance towards outgroups**: islamophobia, antisemitism, xenophobia, hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers
- **Observations** of radicalization, discrimination and extremist activities/violence in the social environment of respondents
- Self-reported experiences of personal **discrimination**

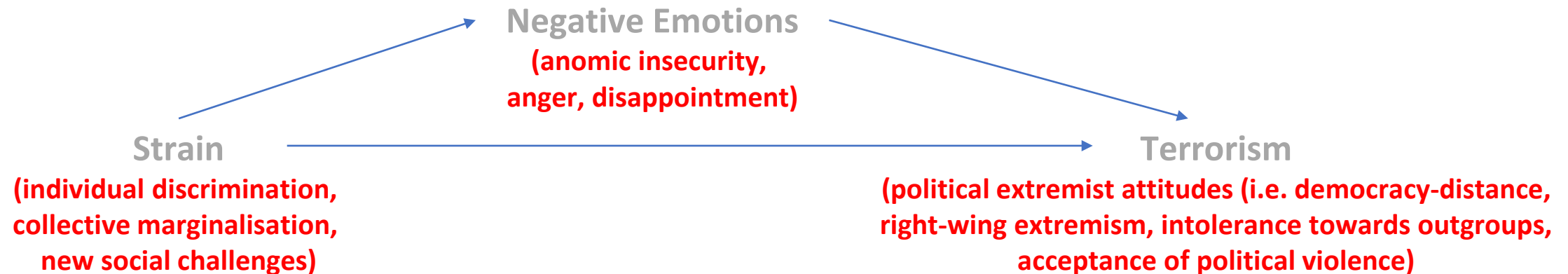
Theoretical Background: General Strain Theory (of Terrorism)

- “[T]he GSTT [“general strain theory of terrorism”] states that terrorism is more likely when individuals experience “collective strains” [...]. These collective strains increase the likelihood of terrorism because they increase negative emotions.” (Agnew 2017, pp. 121-122)

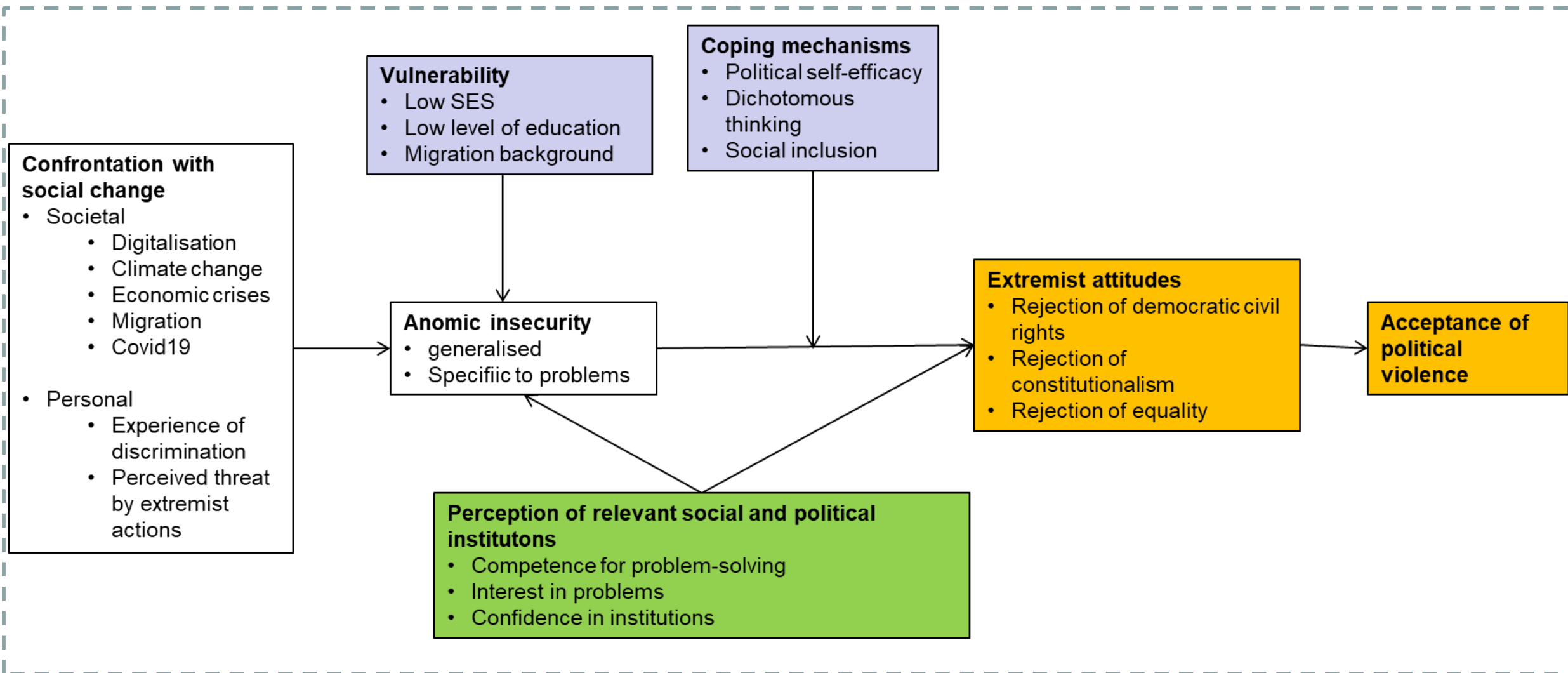


Theoretical Background: General Strain Theory (of Terrorism)

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Conceptual Model: General Strain Theory

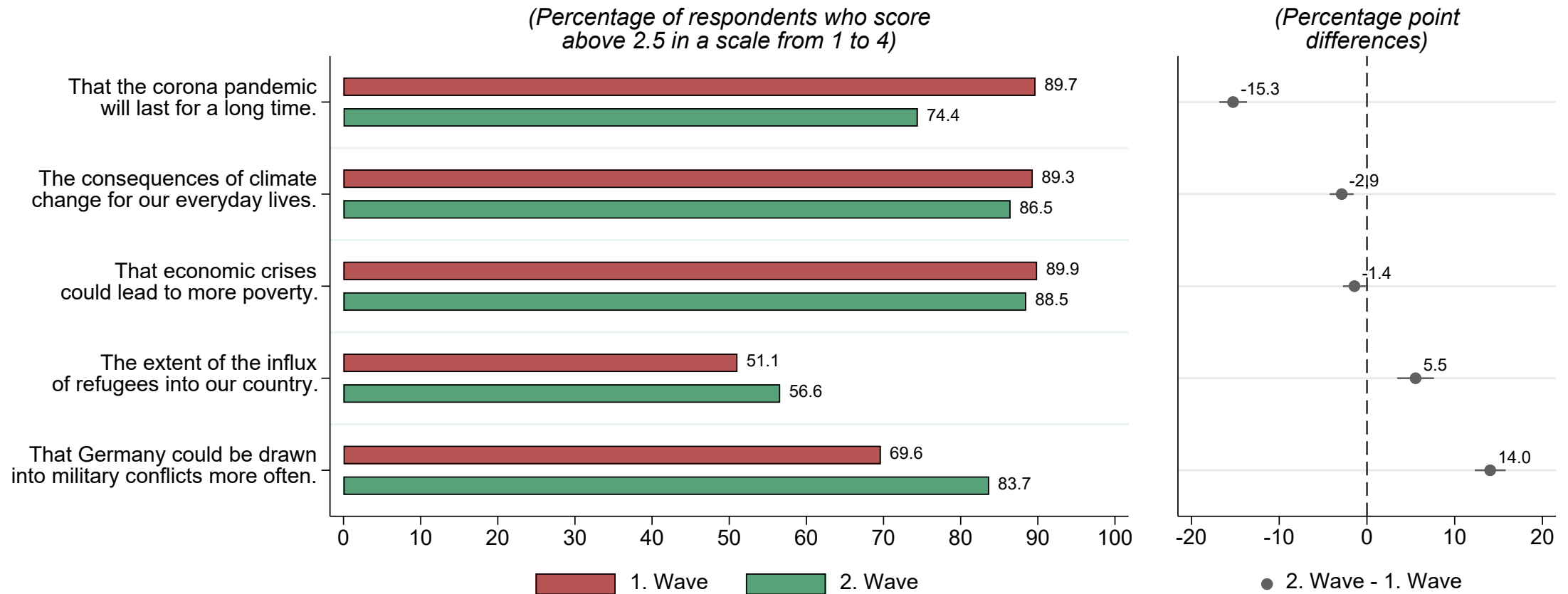


Some examples of analyses already conducted

- Democracy-Distance: Prevalence of attitudes rejecting democracy, changes over time and explaining factors
- Conflict Escalation in Gaza 2021: a multi-method and quasi-experimental approach to analyse international influences on the prevalence of antisemitism in Germany
- Islamophobia: a survey experiment on the influence of state violence and human rights violations in Iran on the development of anti-Muslim attitudes in Germany
- Evaluation of state institutions as a predictor of extremist attitudes: the procedural justice perspective in research on political extremism
- Prevalence and social distribution of islamist attitudes among muslims living in Germany: discrimination, collective marginalisation and the role of religiosity – a latent class analysis
- The connection of discrimination experiences, negative emotions and the acceptance of political violence

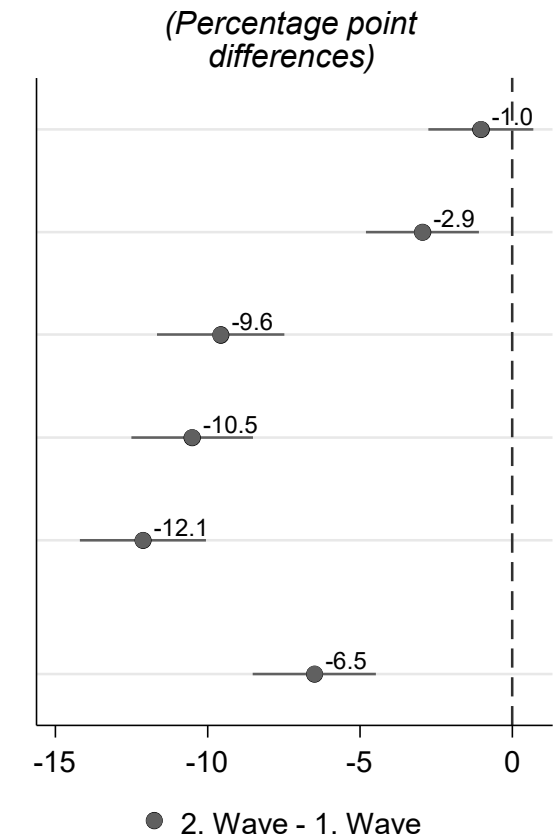
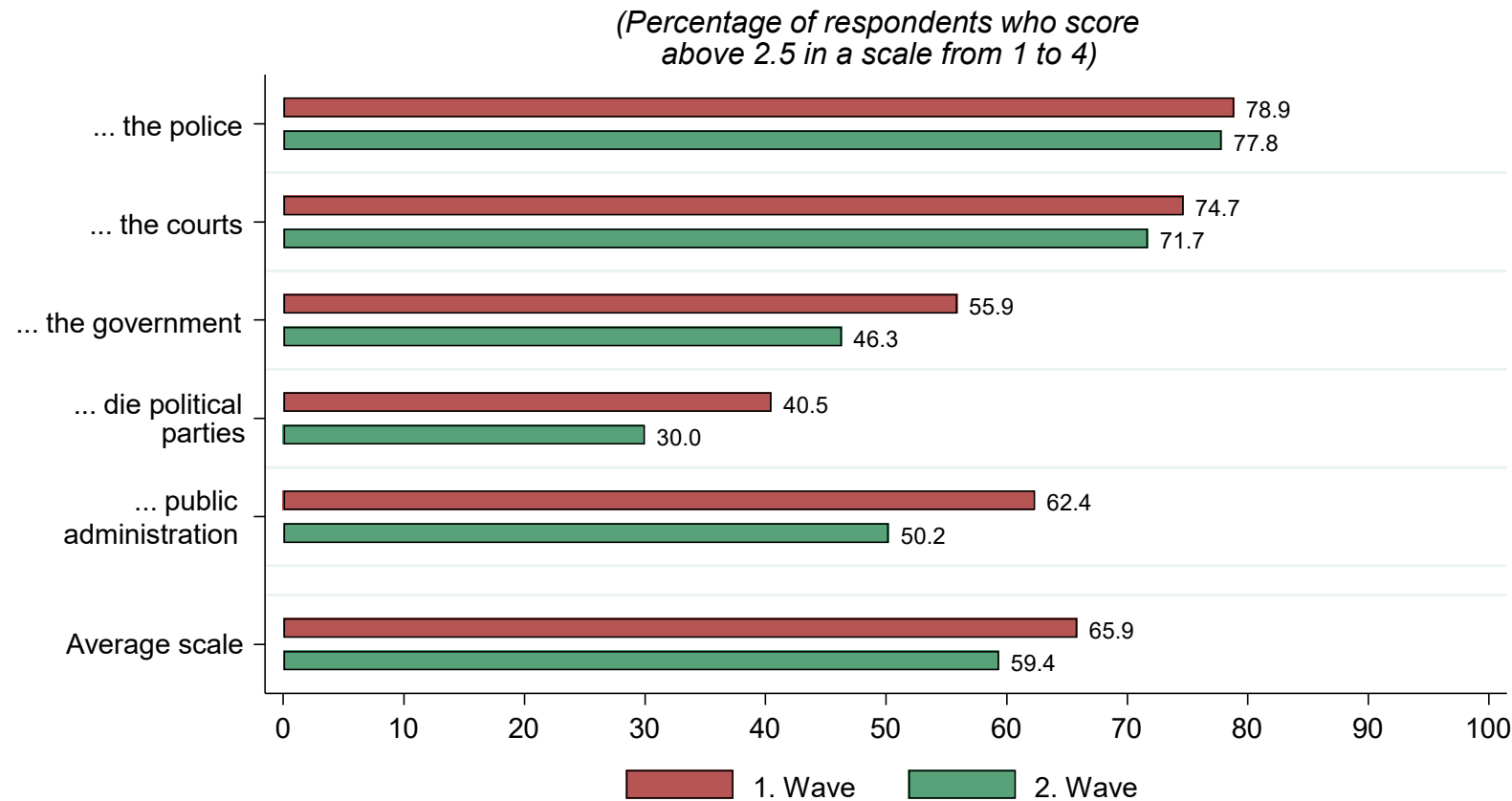
Results of Analyses of the Survey „MiD“ Wave 1 (2021) and Wave 2 (2022)

Concerns about current societal challenges and crises in 2021 and 2022



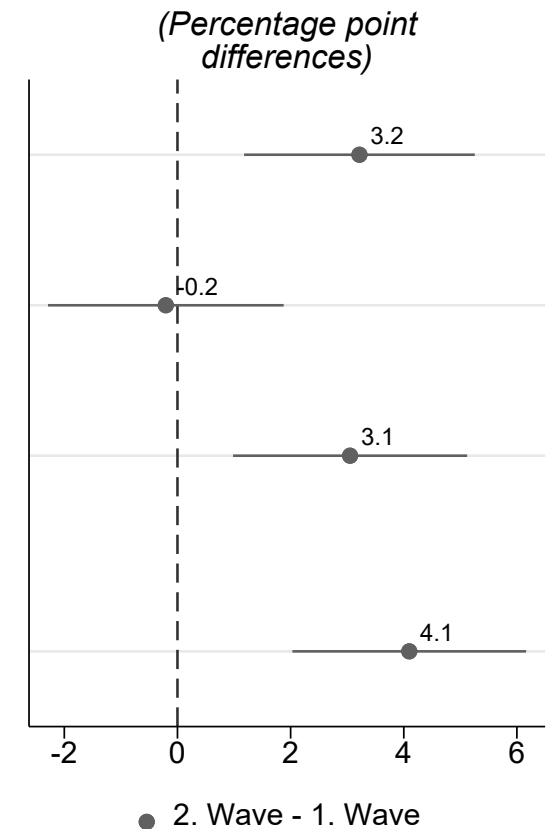
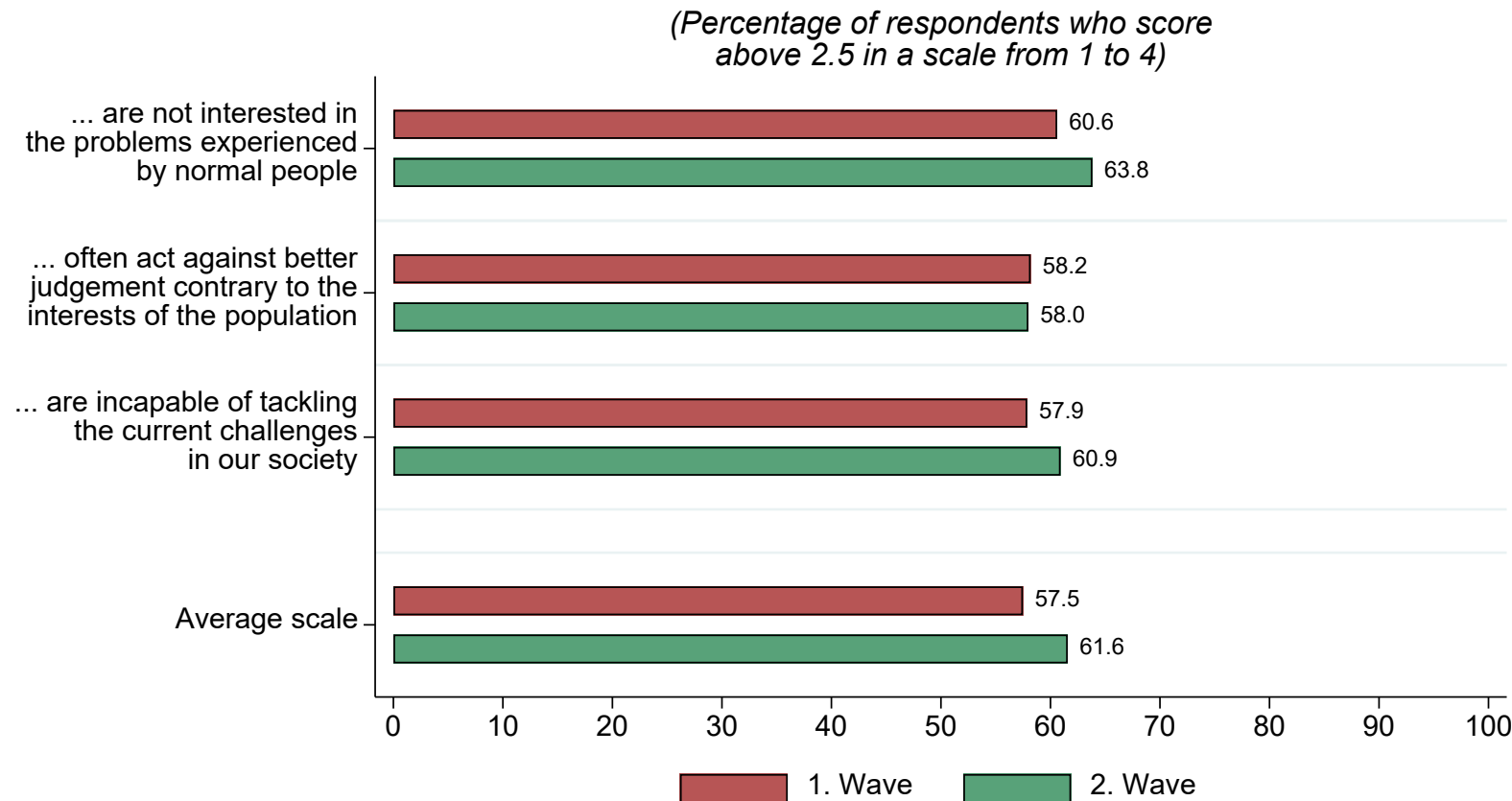
System trust 2021 and 2022

How much confidence do you have in...

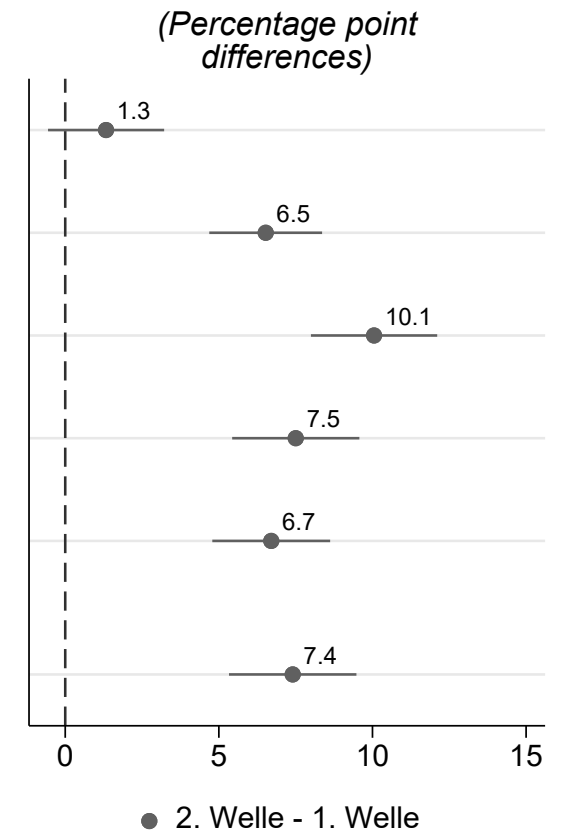
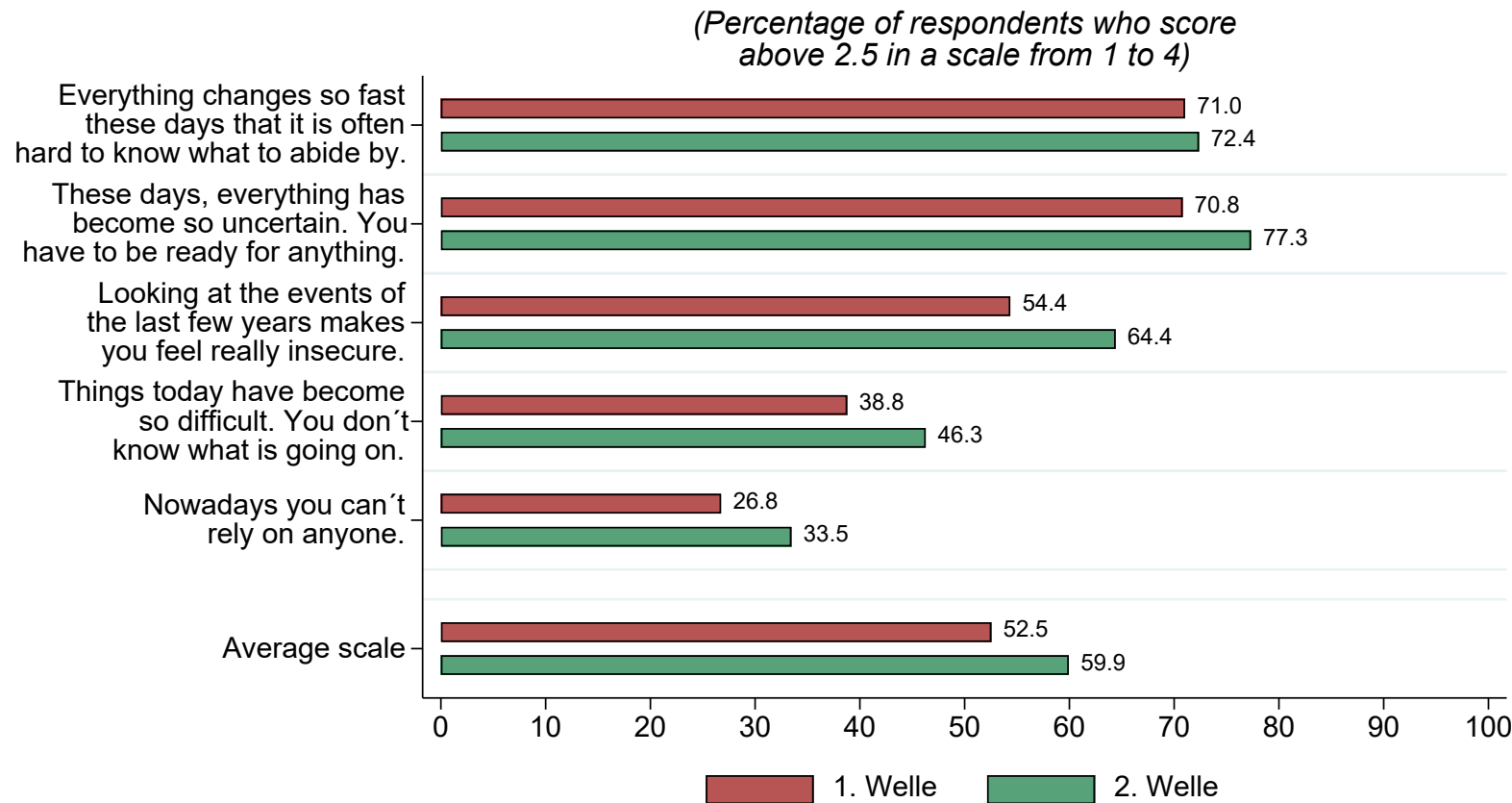


Perceptions of incompetence in 2021 and 2022

The decision-makers in our country ...



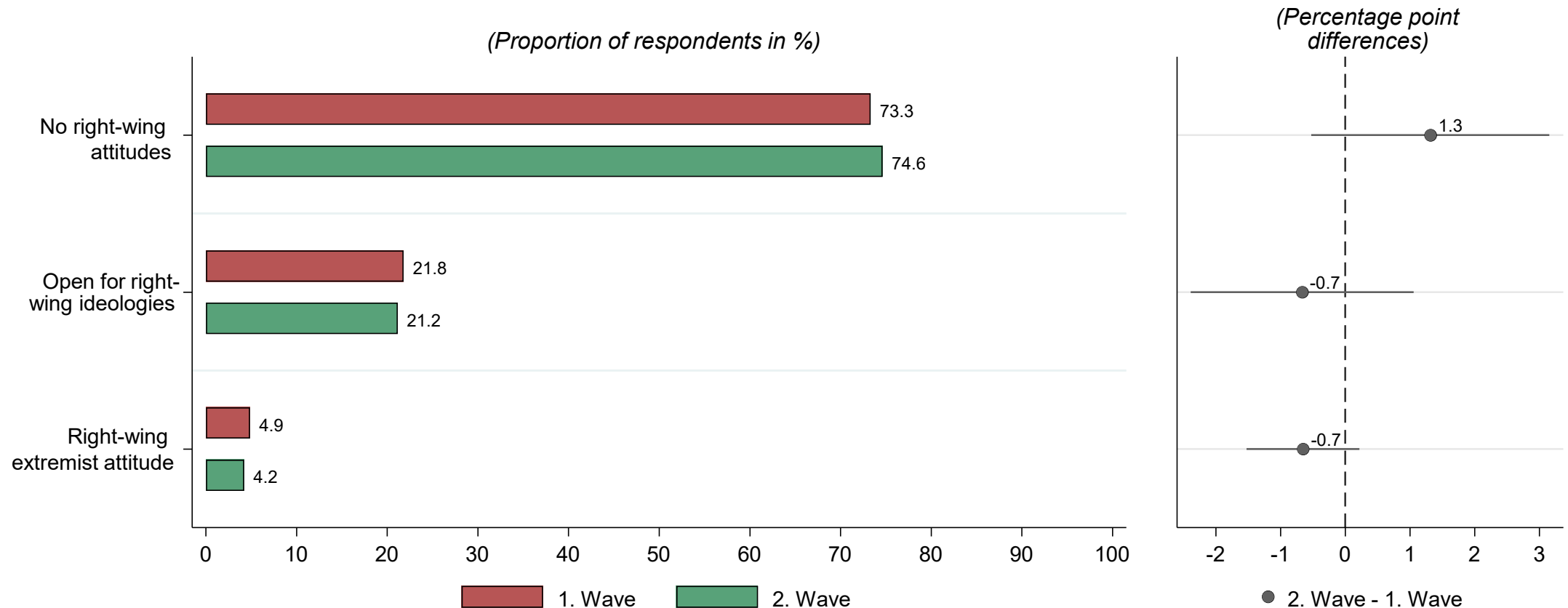
Anomic insecurities 2021 and 2022



Right-wing extremist attitudes: Subdimensions and Items

Dimensions	Items
Xenophobia	– There are too many foreigners in Germany.
Islamophobia	– If we are not careful, Germany will become an Islamic country.
Antisemitism	– Jews have too much influence in Germany. – You cannot trust Jews.
Chauvinism	– We should at long last have the courage to feel a strong sense of national identity again. – My people are superior to other peoples.
Social-Darwinism	– The strongest must prevail, otherwise progress is not possible. – There are worthwhile and also worthless forms of human life.
Supports right-wing dictatorship	– A state should have a leader who rules the country with a forceful hand for the good of everyone.
Trivialization of national socialism	– A lot of what has been said about the crimes committed by the national socialists is exaggerated.

Prevalence of Right-wing extremist attitudes 2021 and 2022

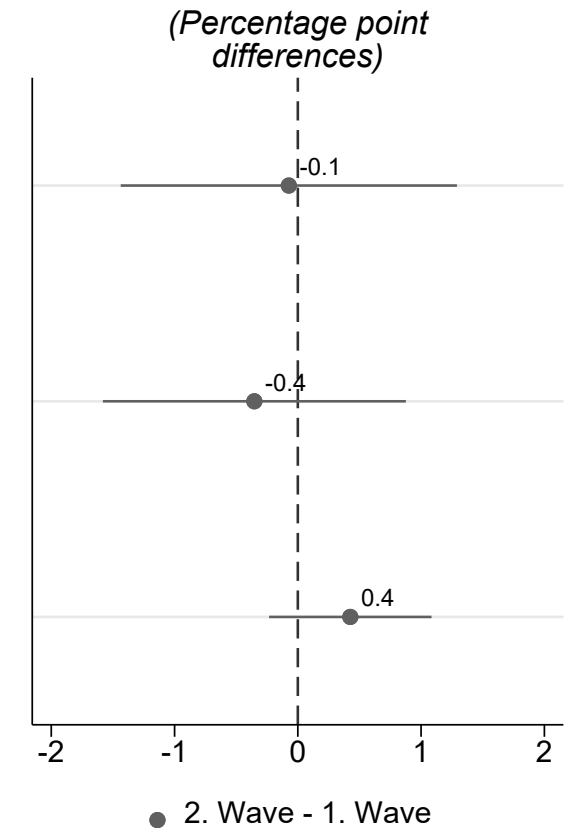
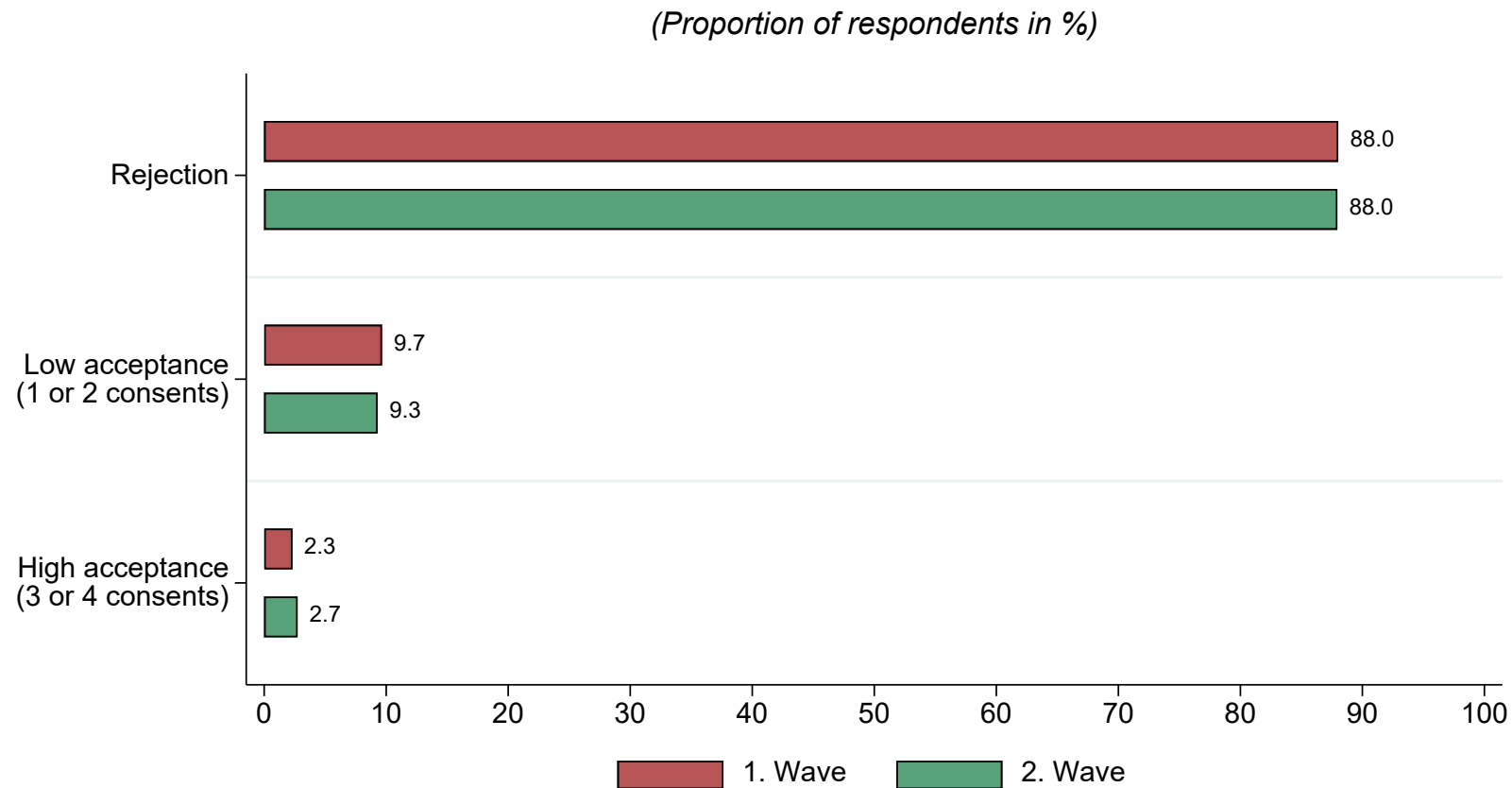


Acceptance of political violence: items

Items

- Every democratic society has certain conflicts that have to be dealt with through violence.
- The changes needed in this society can only be achieved through violent revolution.
- Sometimes you have to fight the representatives of the system using violence.
- Even in a democracy, it is sometimes necessary to use violence to achieve one's political goals.

Acceptance of political violence 2021 and 2022



Democracy-Distance: Items and Subdimensions

Dimension A. Basic rights of freedom

- Every citizen should have the right to go out and demonstrate for what they believe in.
- Strikes and demonstrations pose a danger to public order and should be banned.
- The freedom of the press in our country must be protected.
- All minorities should have the right to freely express their views.

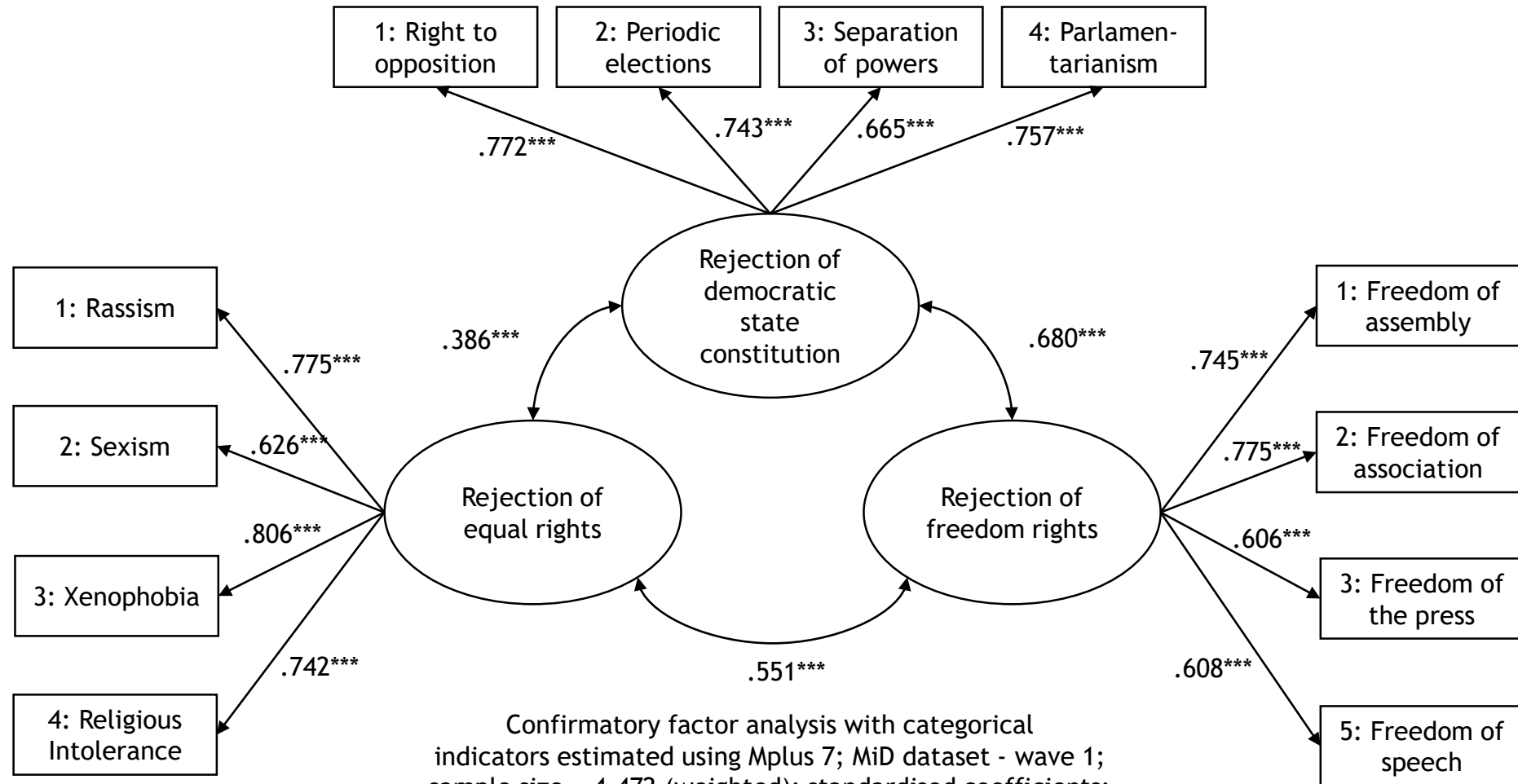
Dimension B. Constitutional principles of democracy

- Those who lose out in an election should not be allowed to criticise the business of government.
- If a government is doing a good job, there is no reason to hold a new election after four years.
- If Parliament makes a decision, it cannot be allowed to be overturned by a court.
- In order to have strong political leadership in Germany, Parliament should have less influence.

Dimension C. Equal rights

- People should not be discriminated against because of their skin colour.
- Women and men should receive equal pay for doing the same work.
- Foreigners should not be treated differently to native citizens regarding allocation of housing.
- Muslims must be allowed to pursue their religion in the same way as Christians, Jews or followers of other religions.

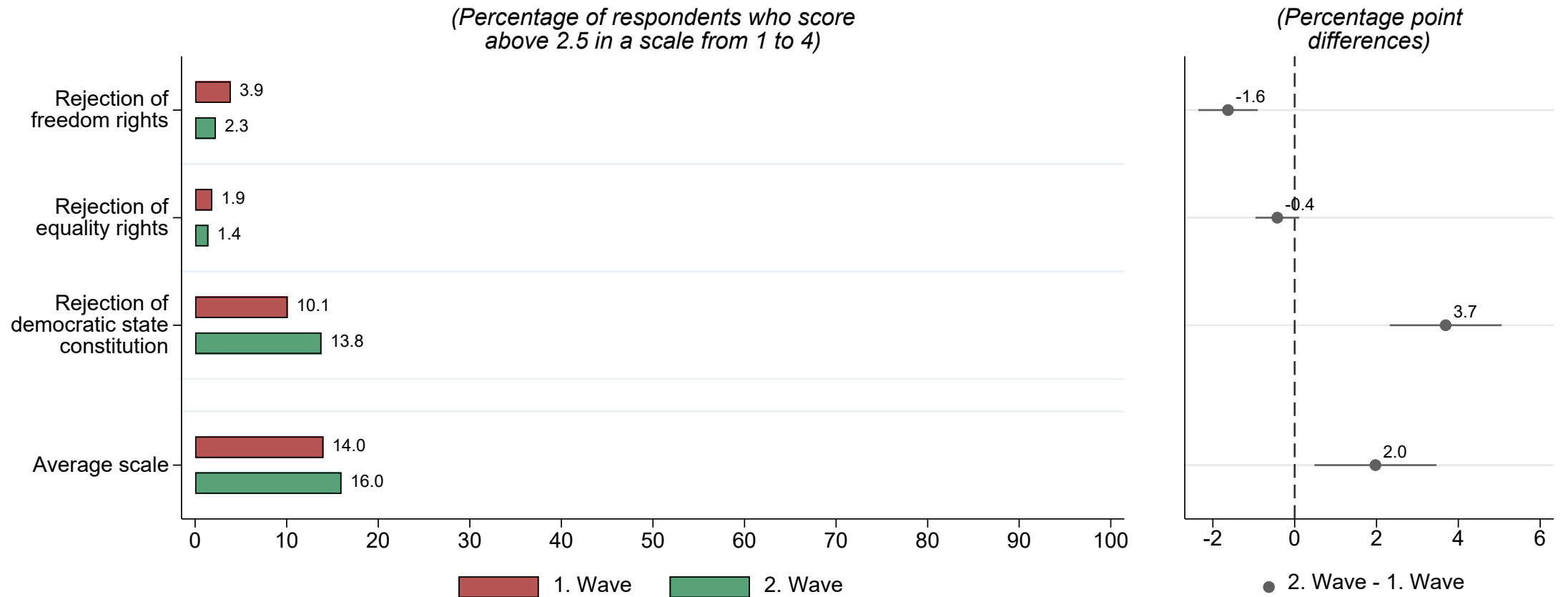
Democracy-Distance: Confirmatory Factor Analysis



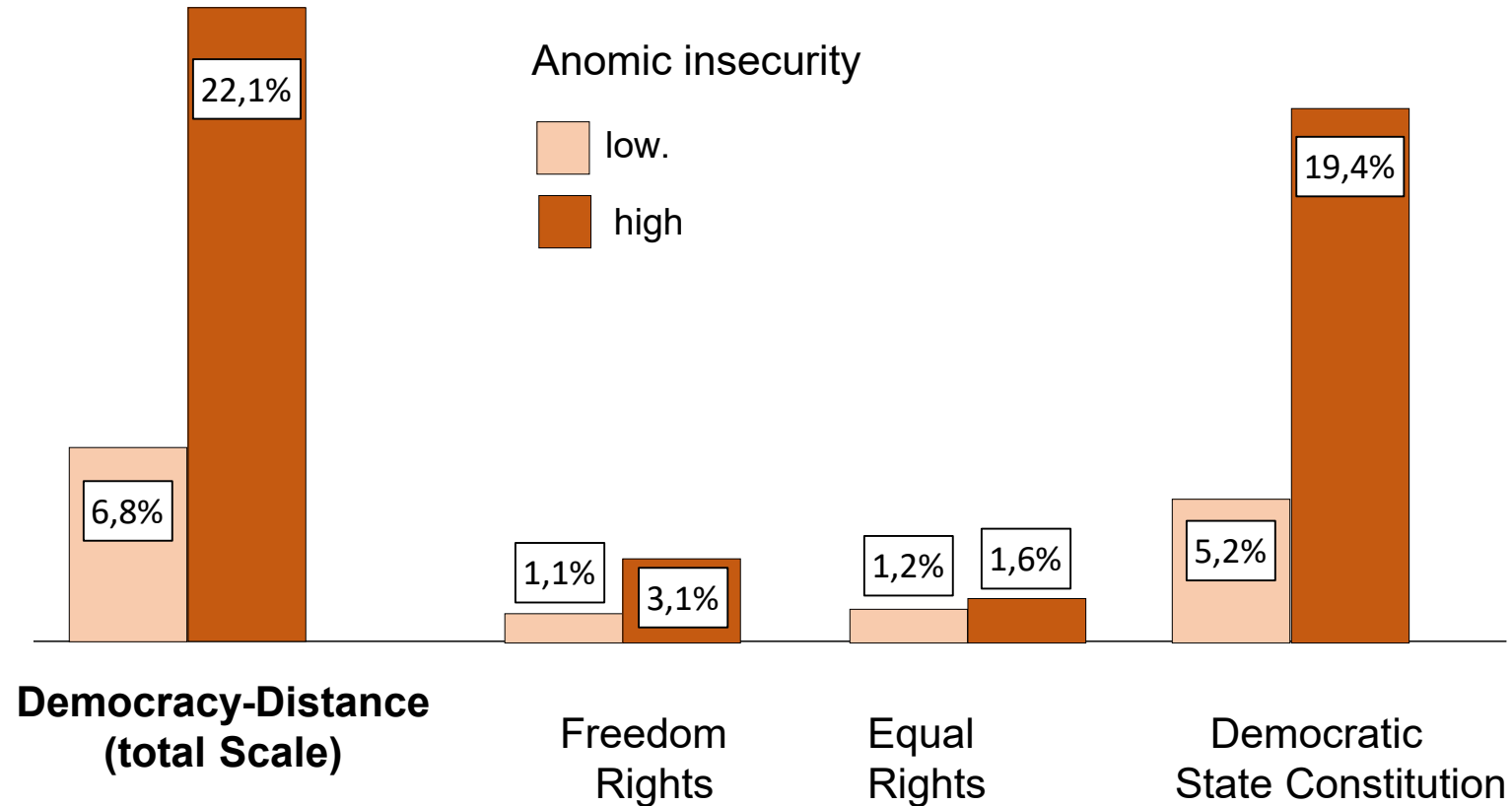
Confirmatory factor analysis with categorical indicators estimated using Mplus 7; MiD dataset - wave 1; sample size = 4,472 (weighted); standardised coefficients; Chi-square 324,544, df 51, $p < .000$; CFI .959; TLI .947; RMSEA .035 (90% KI 0.031, 0.038);

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

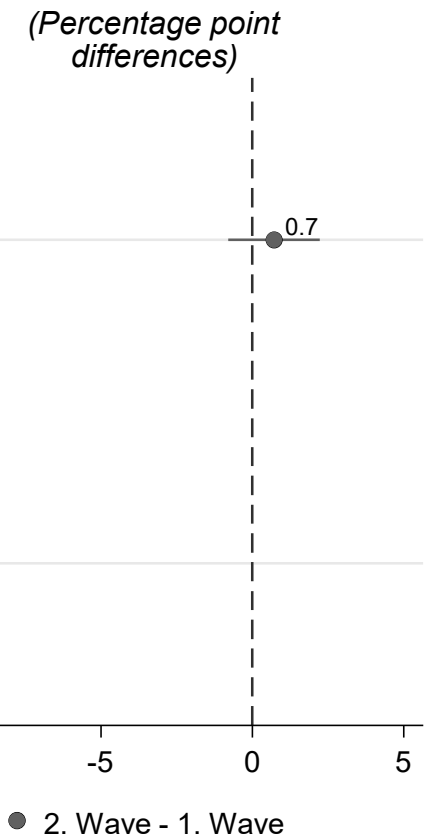
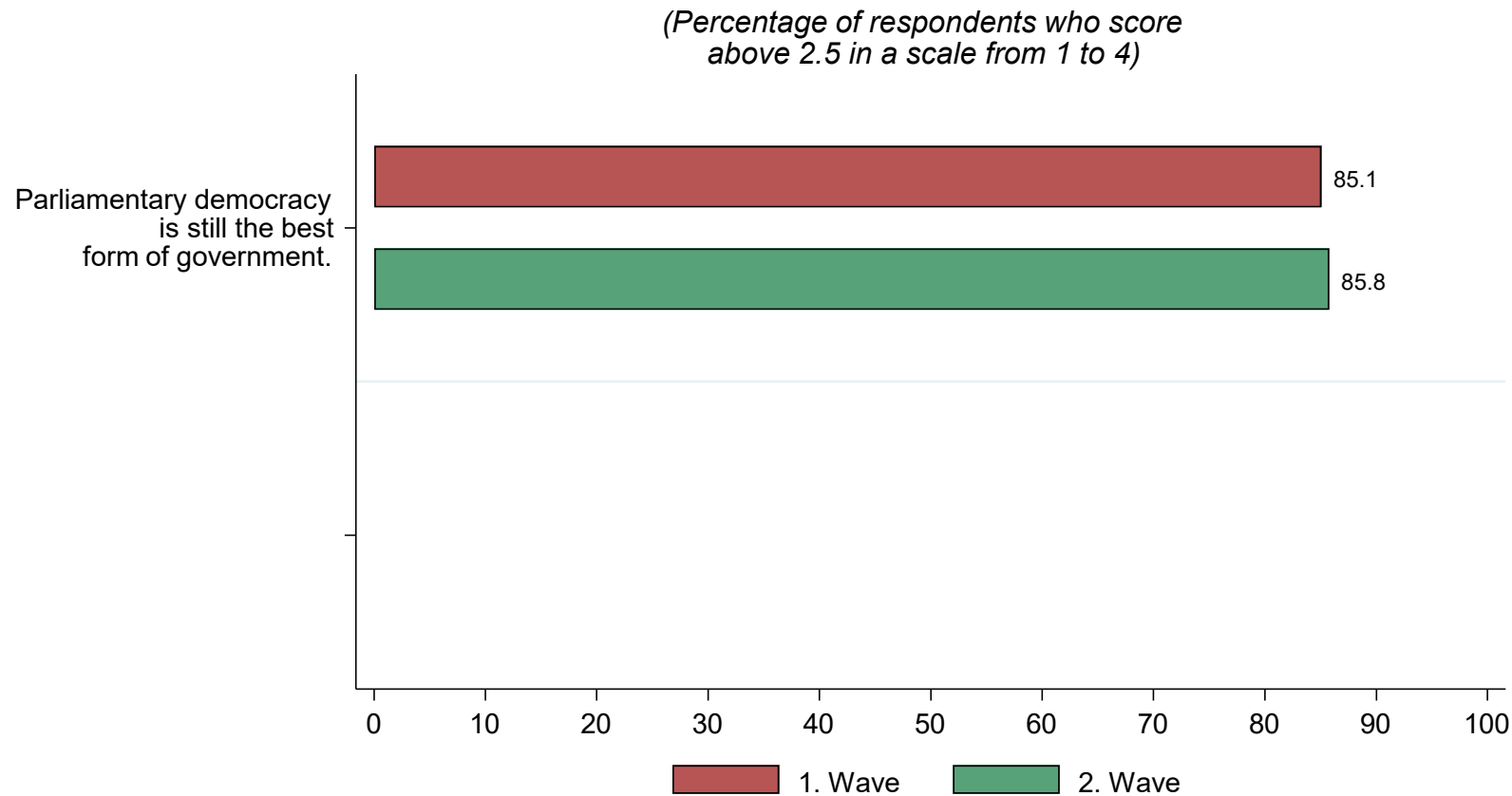
Democracy distance 2021 and 2022



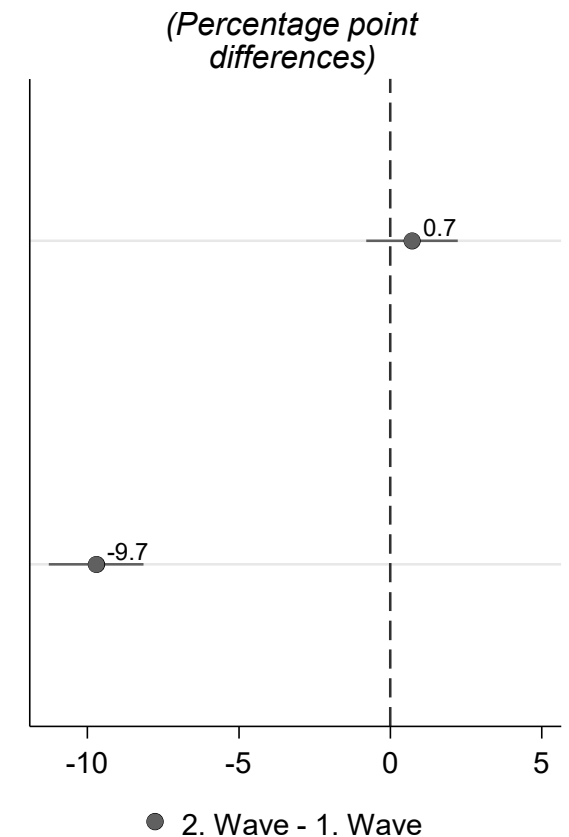
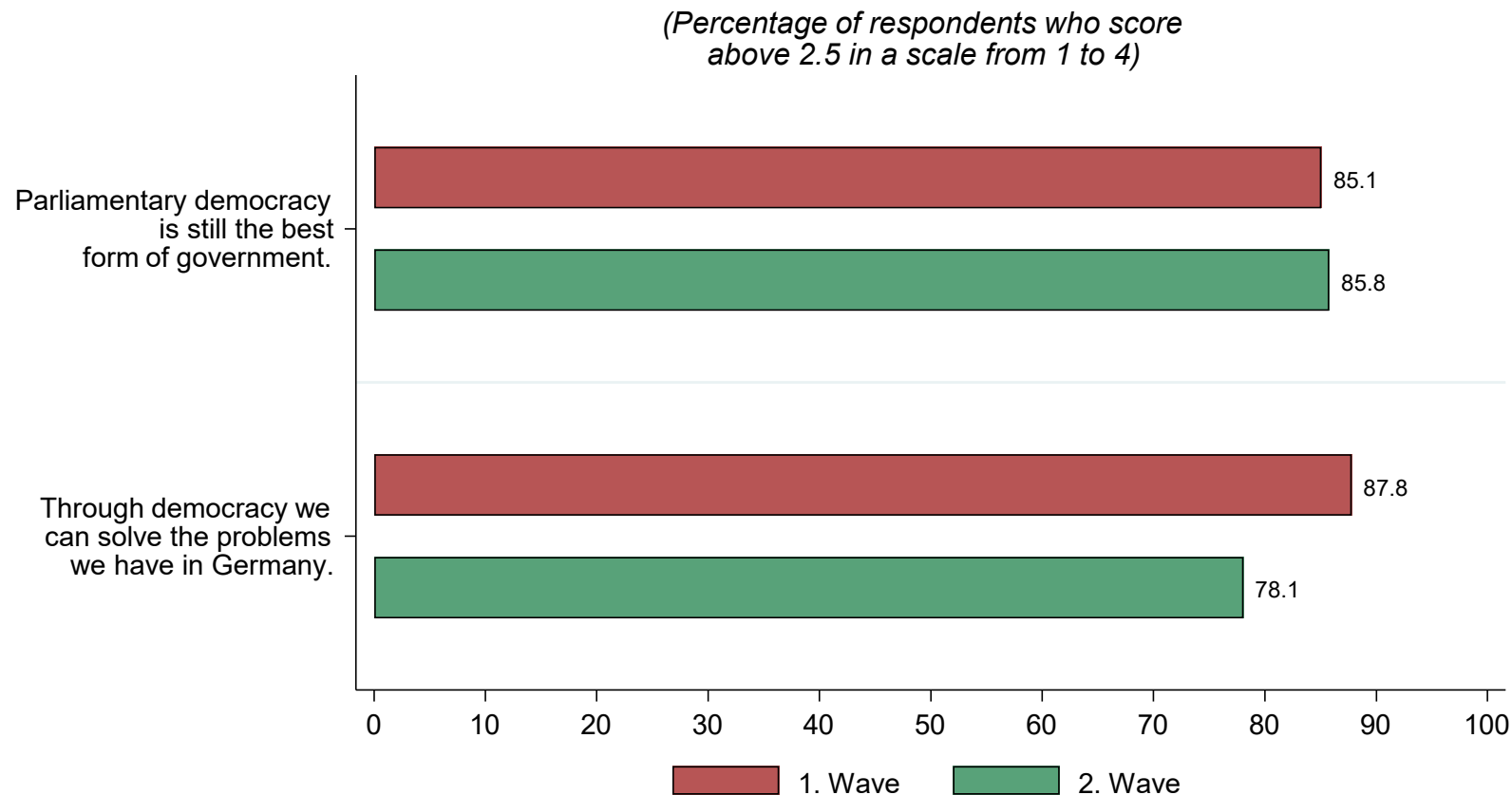
Democracy distance and anomic insecurity



General evaluation of democracy 2021 and 2022



General evaluation of democracy 2021 and 2022

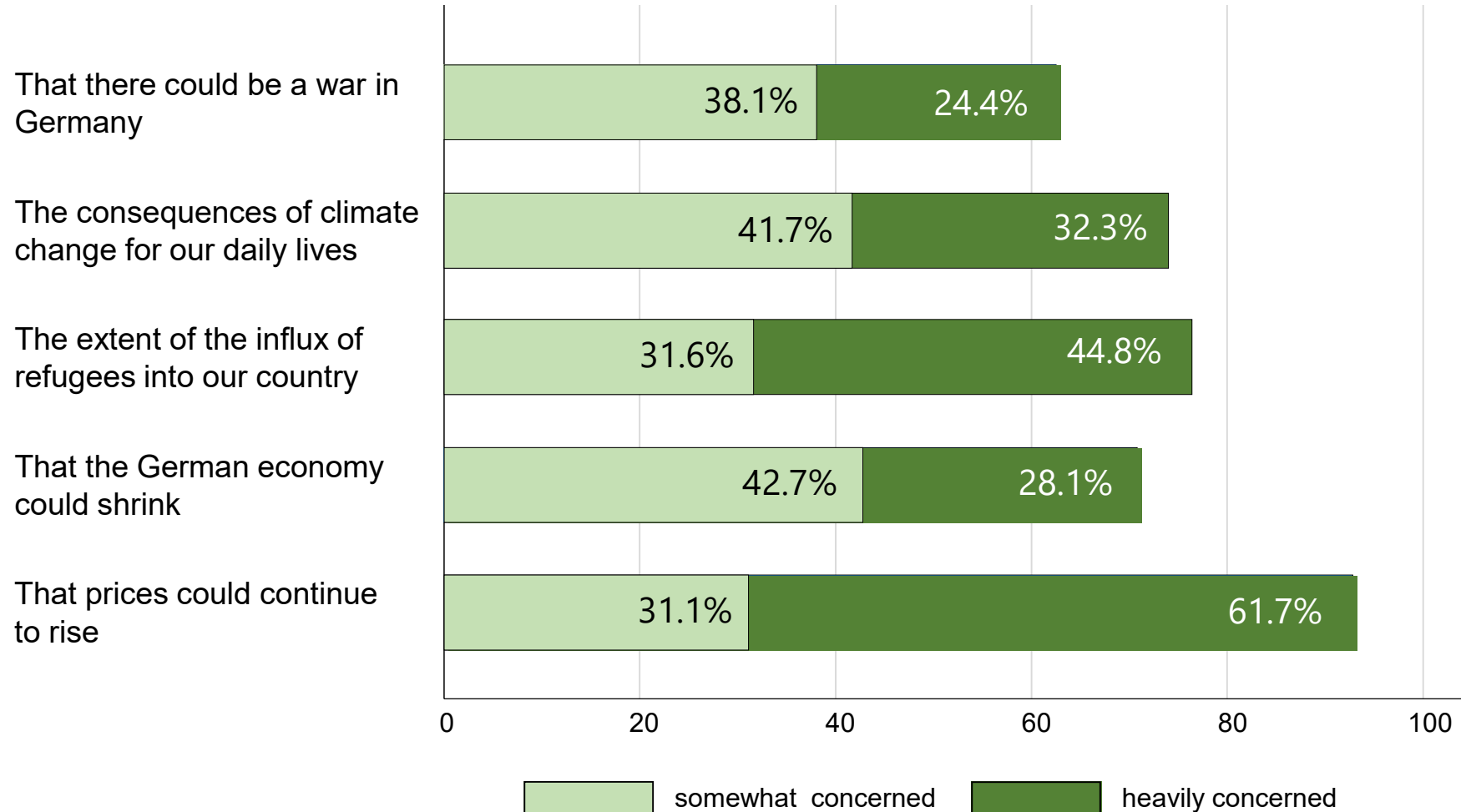


Selected Results of the most recent Wave of MiDInt (April/May 2023)

Acceptance of Autocracy during Times of Crisis

Prevalence of Concerns about actual Social Challenges

(MiDInt April/May 2023)

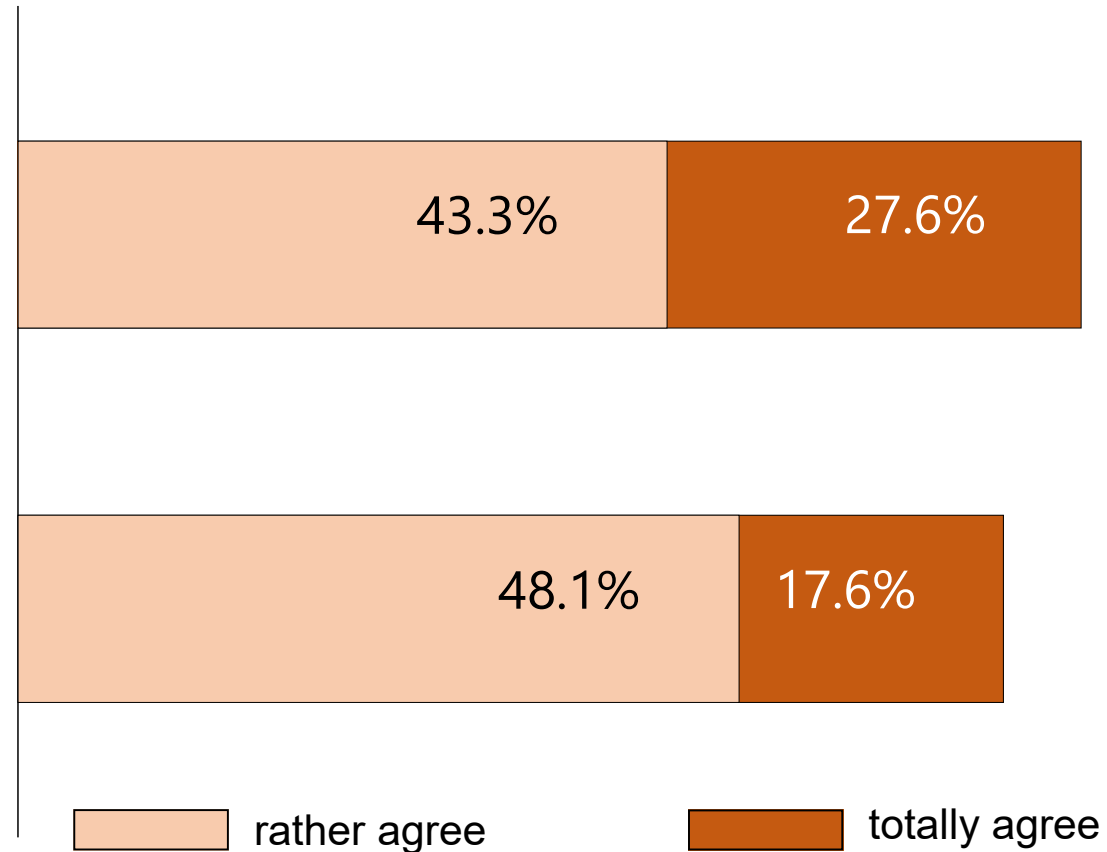


General Attitudes towards Democracy in Germany

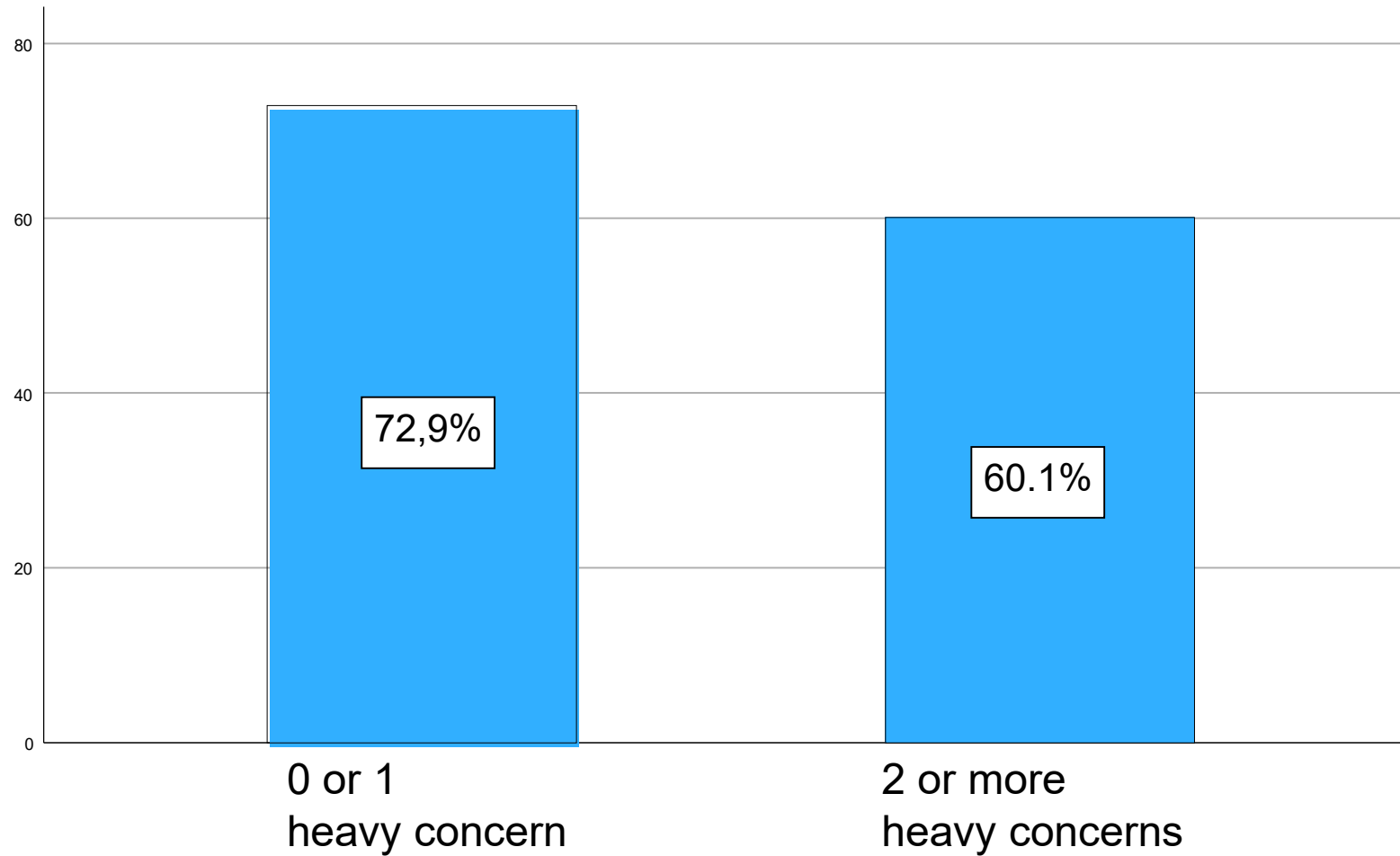
(MiDInt April/Mai 2023)

Parliamentary democracy is still the best form of government

With democracy we can solve the problems we have in Germany.



Percentage of people who agree that democracy is able to solve problems by individual amount of heavy concerns



Scale „Acceptance of Autocracy“

(MiDInt April/May 2023)

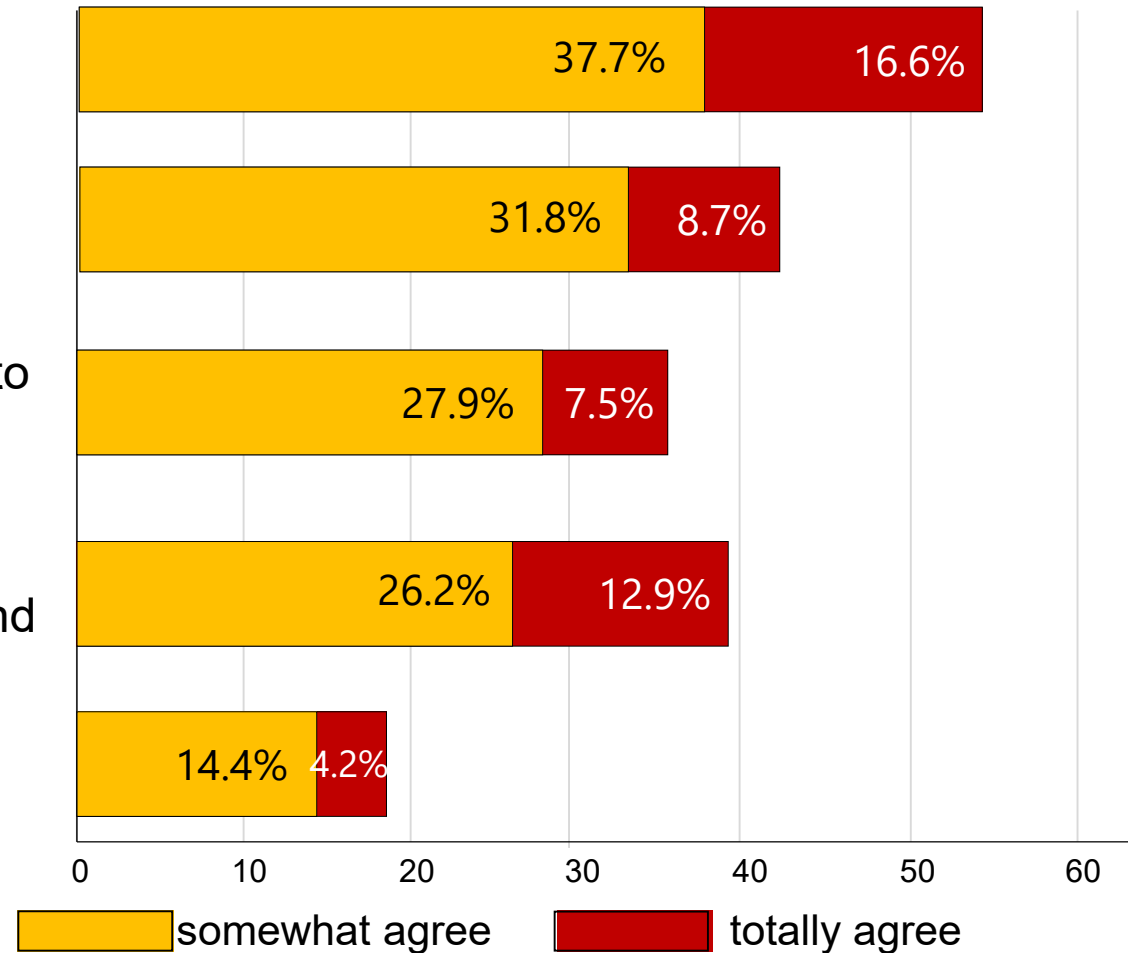
In the current situation we cannot afford long political debates and diversity of opinion.

In the interest of strong political leadership in Germany, the Parliament should have less influence.

In the current situation, the government's ability to act must not be restricted by the courts.

In the current situation, the state should have a leader who will rule the country with a strong hand for the benefit of all.

In the national interest, a dictatorship would be the better form of government in the current situation.



Prevalence of Acceptance of Autocracy by Level of Education

(MiDInt April/May 2023)

Scale

„Acceptance of Autocracy“
(5 Items; Range 1-4).

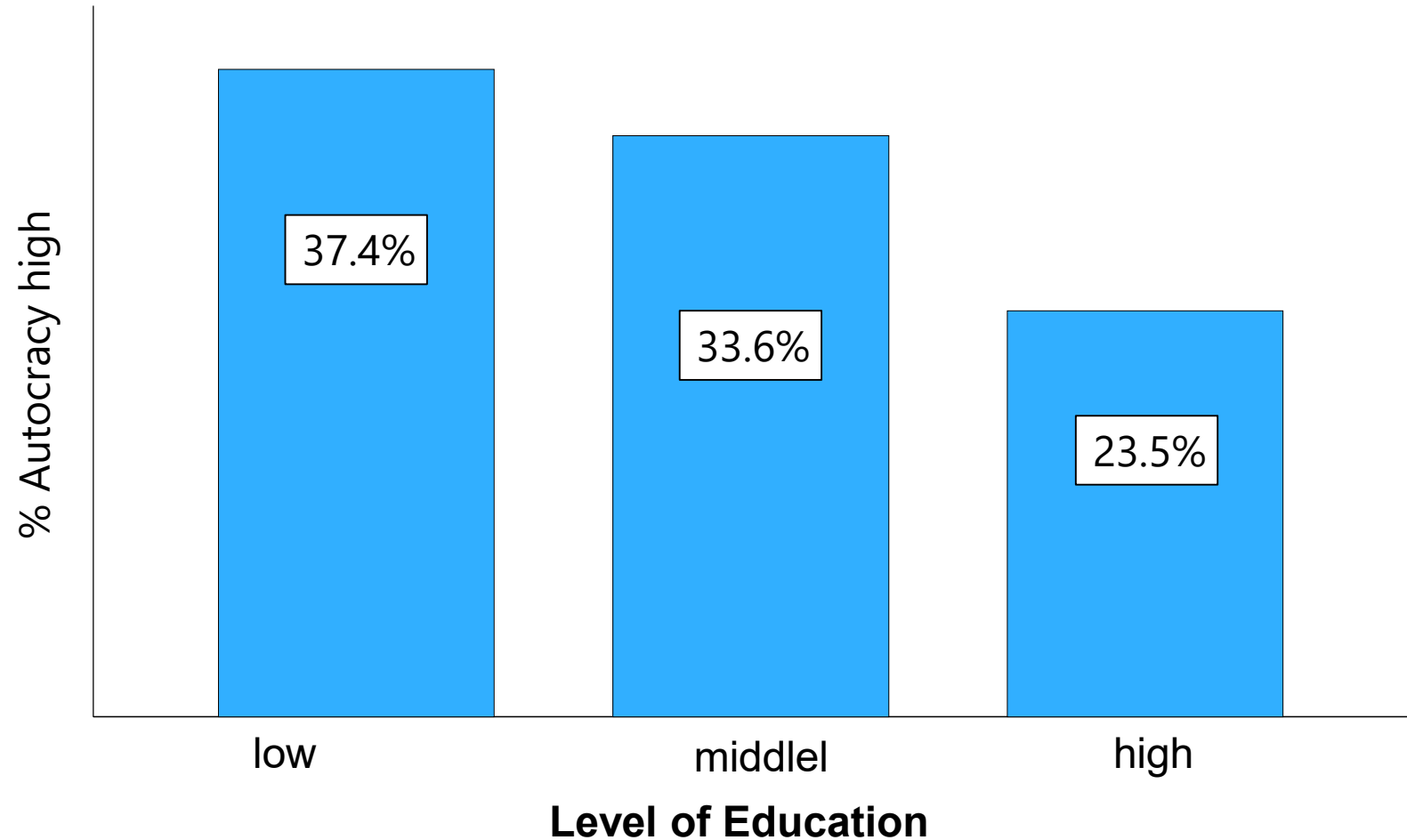
Categorical Indicator

Percentage above absolute
Mean >2.5:

Acceptance of Autocracy=yes

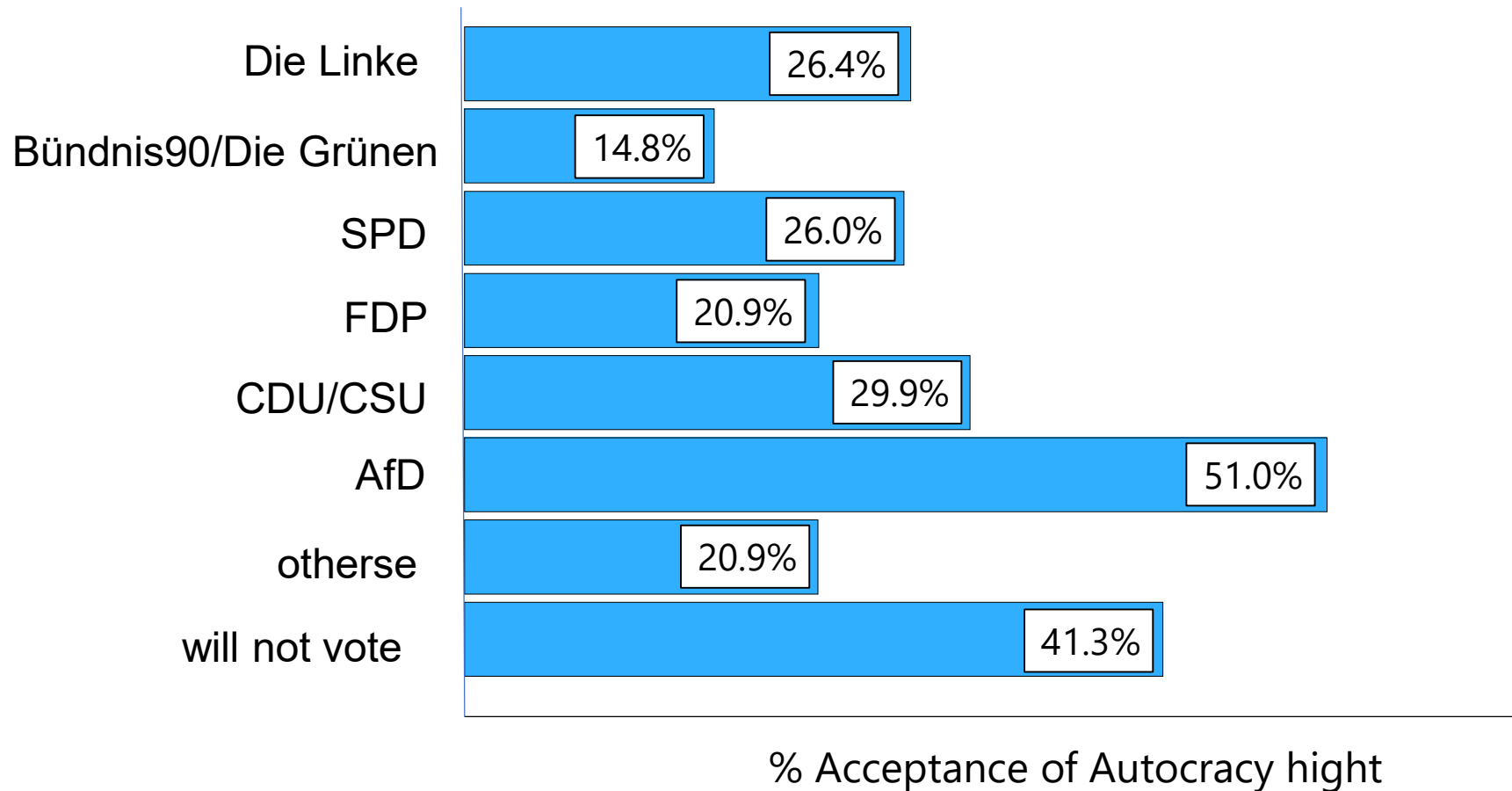
Prevalence of Acceptance of Autocracy in the total

Sample: 31.5%



Acceptance of Autocracy by Voting Preference

(MiDInt April/May 2023)



Subjective Probability of Personal Economic Restrictions in the area of basic needs in the next 6 months (*% likely / very likely*)

... that I will lose my job

18.3%

... that I can't pay my rent anymore

24.0%

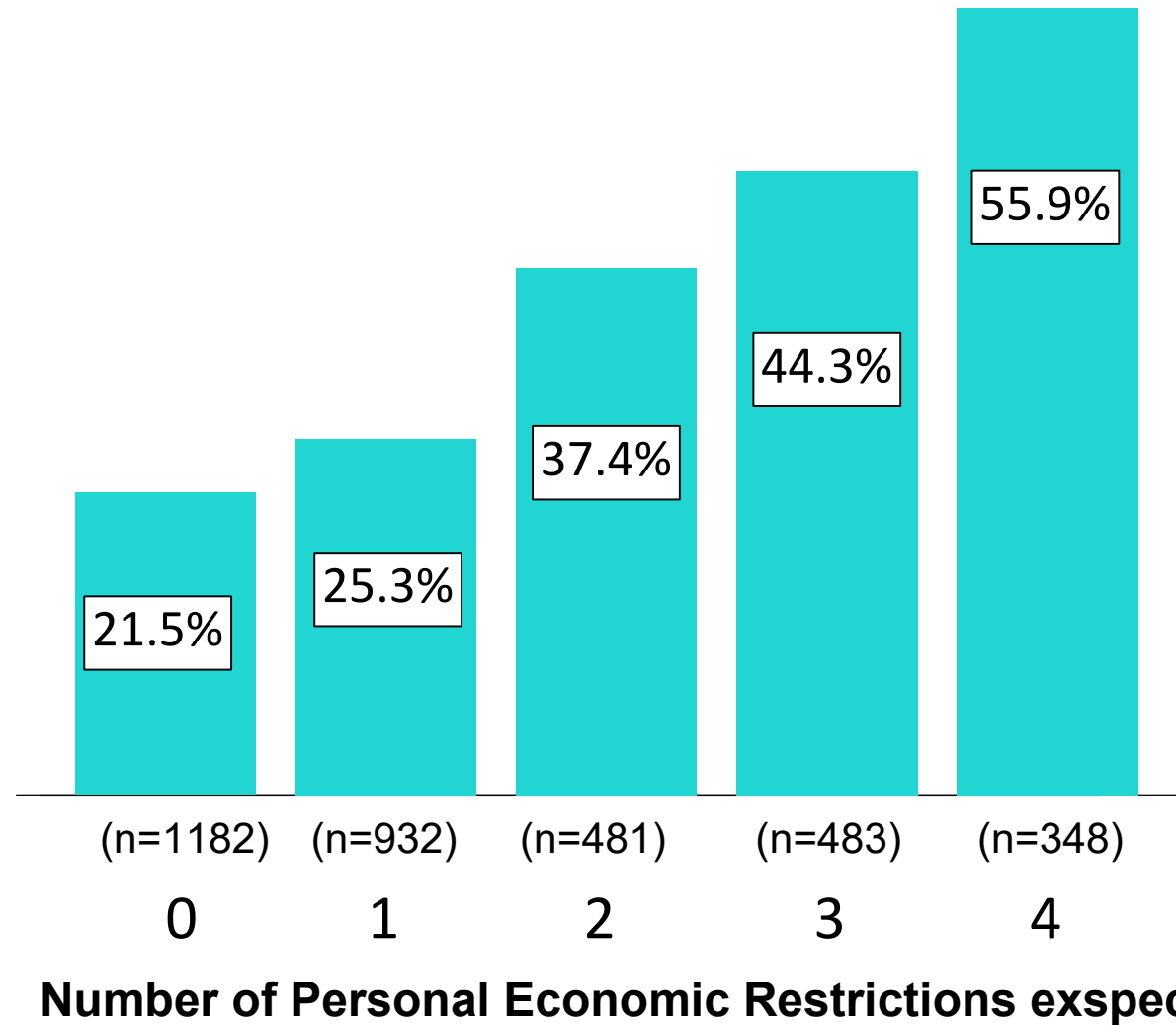
... that I can no longer pay for heating and electricity

34.9%

... that I have to limit myself in buying food

61.1%

Prevalence of Acceptance of Autocracy by Personal Economic Restrictions expected in the next 6 months



Logistic Regression: Effects of Personal Economic Restrictions expected on Autocracy, controlling for Age, Sex, Education and Social Welfare Dependency

	Model 1	Model 2
Age (Reference: 18-39 yrs.)		
40-59 yrs.		.93 (n.s.)
more than 59 yrs.		.88 (n.s.)
Sex (1=male)		.96 (n.s.)
Education (1=high)		.58 (***)
Social Welfare Dependency (1=yes)		1.02 (n.s.)
Number of economic Restrictions expected (Reference: 0)		
Restrictions = 1	1.24 (*)	1.19 (n.s.)
Restrictions = 2	2.20 (***)	2.01 (***)
Restrictions = 3	2.80 (***)	2.69 (***)
Restrictions = 4	4.63 (***)	4.37 (***)

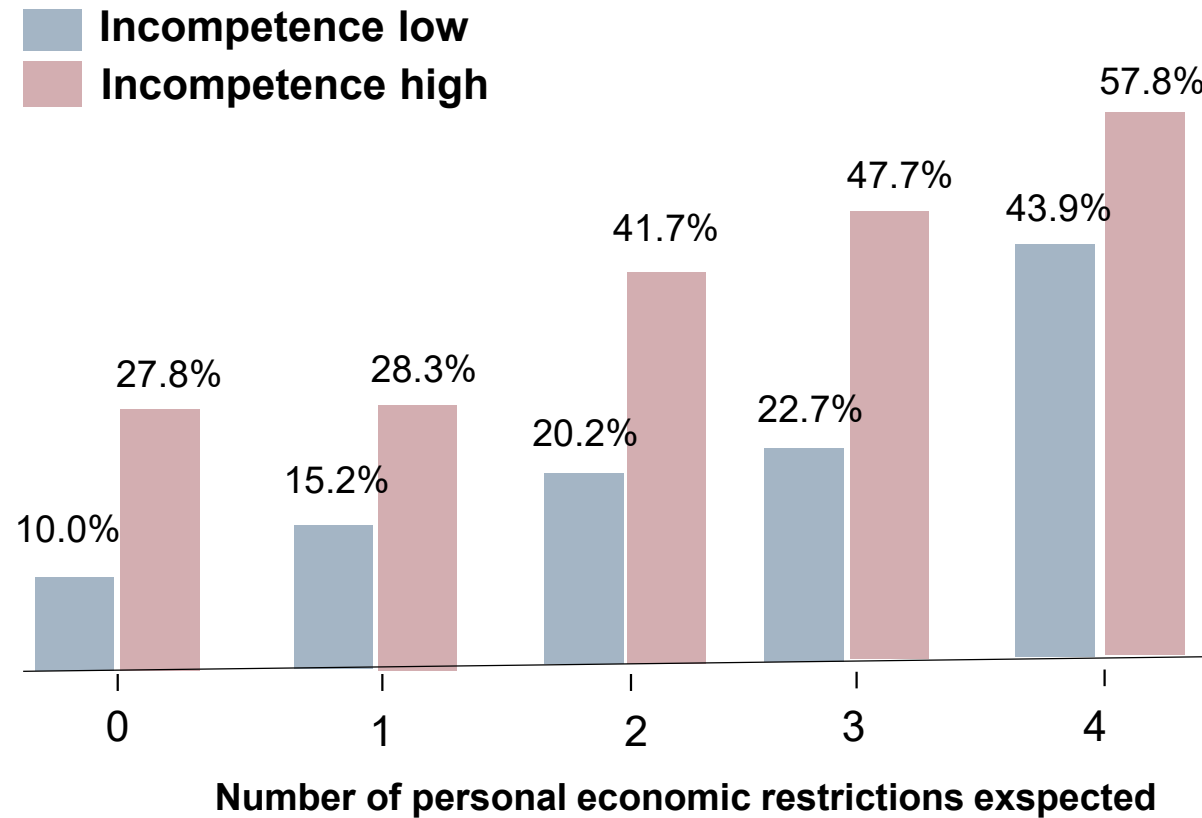
Perceptions of Incompetences of Authorities and relevant Decisionmakers in Economy, Science and Politics

<i>The Authorities and relevant Decisionmakers in our Country...</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>	<i>somewhat disagree</i>	<i>somewhat agree</i>	<i>totally agree</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>% > 2.5 („high“)</i>
...are not interested in the problems of ordinary people	4.8%	19.3%	40.7%	35.2%	3.06	.86	75.9%
...are incapable of tackling the current challenges our society is confronted with	3.6%	20.0%	43.3%	33.1%	3.06	.82	76.4%
...often act contrary to the interests of the population	3.7%	21.3%	38.0%	37.1%	3.08	.85	75.1%
...are only talking but do not solve the problems	3.3%	16.8%	40.5%	39.3%	3.16	.82	79.9%
Scale: „Incompetence of Decisionmakers“					3.09	.73	75.6%

Logistic Regression: Effects of Personal Economic Restrictions on Autocracy, controlling for Age, Sex, Education, Social Welfare Dependency and Incompetence of Decisionmakers

	Modell 1	Modell 2	Modell 3
Age (Reference: 18-39 yrs.)			
40-59 yrs.		.93 (n.s.)	.91 (n.s.)
more than 59 yrs.		.88 (n.s.)	.84 (n.s.)
Sex (1=male)		.96 (n.s.)	1.01 (n.s.)
Education (1=high)		.58 (***)	.61 (***)
Social Welfare Dependency (1=yes)		1.02 (n.s.)	1.02 (n.s.)
Perception of Incompetence of Decisionmakers (1=high)			2.67 (***)
Number of economic Restrictions expected (Reference: 0)			
Restrictions = 1	1.24 (*)	1.19 (n.s.)	1.08 (n.s.)
Restrictions = 2	2.20 (***)	2.01 (***)	1.81 (***)
Restrictions = 3	2.80 (***)	2.69 (***)	2.32 (***)
Restrictions = 4	4.63 (***)	4.37 (***)	3.75 (***)

Prevalence of Acceptance of Autocracy by Economic Restrictions and Perceptions of Incompetence of Decisionmakers



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Thank you!!!!

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