Do the Means Justify the Ends? Procedural Fairness Theory, Electoral Interests, and Political Consent

Troels S. Bøggild
tboeggild@ps.au.dk

Department of Political Science & Government
Aarhus University, Denmark
Bartholins Allé 7
Building 1340, 336
Abstract: Encouraging and maintaining political trust and support among its citizens is an essential prerequisite for every modern representative democracy. But given that policies benefit some and not others, how do we keep levels of trust and support high among both the winning and the losing team? Drawing on procedural fairness theory from social psychology, I argue that decision-maker impartiality yields significant effects on policy evaluations and trust in authorities independently of decision outcomes. In three survey experiments I show that voters were significantly less inclined to trust politicians and support their policies when the decision-making process was dominated by electoral interests of the decision maker relative to when no personal motives were present. Contrary to a rich literature in social psychology and behavioral economics, however, the effects of impartial decision making were not crowded out among people experiencing a favorable outcome. These findings were robust across a range of political issues and operationalizations of outcome favorability, which testifies to the generic and absolute relevance of the procedural perspective in a political setting and a distinct logic of a highly symbolic political culture.

Introduction
Democratic theories hold diverging views on the appropriateness and effectiveness of decision makers motivated by electoral interests. According to economic conceptions of democracy, electoral interests are instrumental in keeping decision makers in competition over fulfilling the will of the majority (Downs 1957). Schumpeter (1943), for example, states that “…we must start from the competitive struggle for power and office and realize that the social function is fulfilled… incidentally – in the same sense as production is incidental to the making of profits” (Schumpeter 1943: 282). To the contrary, it follows from deliberative conceptions of democracy (Habermas 1992; Durkheim 1986) that electoral interests of decision makers serve as a perverse incentive structure leading the political process away from its true purpose of collective problem solving (for a discussion see Loftager 2004). Despite this tension in democratic theory we know little about how citizens respond when political decisions are guided by electoral interests of decision makers. Will the same decision maker and the same political decision achieve different levels of trust and support depending on whether the process is dominated by electoral interests relative to when the decision is crafted without any personal agenda of the decision maker?
This oversight is unfortunate and symptomatic of the lack of attention to non-outcome, procedural factors in empirical research on political trust and support for the outputs of the political system (see Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2001, 16–19). Popkin (1991) represents the mainstream view within this literature when stating that people care about “results and are generally ignorant of or indifferent about the methods by which the results are achieved” (Popkin 1991, 99). But given that politics, by its very nature, creates winners and losers, this outcome perspective leaves little guidance on how to build and maintain trust and support among those whose policy preferences are not accommodated. Furthermore, this perspective holds little promise in upholding trust and support in times of economic austerity where unpopular decisions must be made, and everyone stands to lose from retrenchment policies or increasing tax rates. How is political trust and support kept at reasonable levels without taking on the utopian task of succumbing to instrumental or value based demands of every citizen?

This paper addresses how to raise political trust and support beyond merely providing favorable outcomes, earning the consent of both winners and losers. Building political trust and support by attending to the decision-making process, it is argued, serves as a more viable, long-term solution compared to the zero-sum dynamics of simply (re-)distributing scarce resources. More specifically, the paper adopts insights from procedural fairness theory in social psychology and argues that features of decision-making processes serve as a source of political trust and support independently of the substance of the decision. The paper considers the role of decision-maker impartiality, here operationalized in terms of the presence or absence of electoral interests of the decision maker. Impartial decision making has proven essential in evaluating authorities and their decisions within social psychology (Tyler 1990) and behavioral economics (Blount 1995; Smith et al. 2007) but has only received theoretical consideration in the field of political science (Lane 1988; Rothstein & Teorell 2008).

The paper also addresses the scope and limits of cross-disciplinary research within the social sciences. All three studies in this article demonstrated, in line with social psychology theory, that an impartial decision-making process raised trust towards political decision makers and support for their policies. However, while a rich literature in social psychology and behavioral economics has found that the effects of procedural factors are reduced or crowded out entirely when the substance or outcome of the decision is
favorable, all three studies found that procedures exerted a universal and unconditional influence on evaluations of decision makers and political decisions, independently of decision outcomes. This speaks to the limited direct applicability of social psychological theory in political science but simultaneously serves as a potential to understand the distinct and unique aspects or culture underlying each research domain. The results indicate that in a political context legitimate procedures provide intrinsic value to citizens and that political reasoning is highly symbolic and based on abstract principles of legitimacy and fair conduct.

**Procedural factors and political consent**

Citizen acknowledgement of and deference to authorities is among the most fundamental premises for the viability and stability of any political system (Dahl 1971). Without voluntary public consent to political authorities and their legislation, a political system must rely on unwieldy and costly coercive means and threats to uphold citizen compliance (Easton 1965), leaving any political system in “constant peril of disequilibrium and instability” (Saphire 1978, 189). This paper centers on two central aspects or requirements in inducing voluntary compliance and obedience from citizens: trust in decision makers and support for the decisions they implement (Scholz & Lubell 1998; Levi & Stoker 2000; Grimes 2006).

Most existing literature on political trust and support focuses on people’s reactions to the substance and outcomes of political decisions. Such outcome perspectives perceive political trust and support as a simple function of public satisfaction with the outputs and outcomes produced by the political system (Gamson 1968). Spatial theories (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1996), retrospective voting models (Fiorina 1981; Dorussen & Taylor 2000) and other public choice perspectives (Laver 1997) all subscribe to the same basic principle that people are “moved by their perceptions and appraisals of policy and performance” (Key & Cummings 1966, 150). Ulbig (2002), for example, notes that “Policy evaluations have been the workhorse of much political trust research, with trust thought to move in tandem with satisfaction about government outputs” (Ulbig 2002, 793). While such outcome perspectives certainly have validity, they are not a sufficient, nor a very encouraging, account on how to foster and maintain political consent. Accommodating the innumerable various outcome related demands of citizens seems like a remarkably tall order for any
political system, which only becomes more challenging in times of economic austerity where resources are scarce and unpopular cutbacks must be made.

Fortunately, an alternative source of political trust and support does not stem from outcome concerns and, as argued further below, proves effective among both the winning and the losing team. The procedural perspective argues that people hold certain standards or expectations of the process through which authoritative decisions come about, and that features of decision-making processes serve as independent factors in evaluations of decision makers and concrete authoritative decisions (Tyler 1990; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2001). In contrast to the outcome perspectives above, raising political trust and support by means of the procedural perspective is a potential plus-sum game. Since citizens hold widely different values and material interests, outcome based efforts to raise political trust and support among one segment will most often come at the expense and dissatisfaction of another. However, in spite of its potential, the procedural perspective has generally been underappreciated in the empirical literature on political trust in decision makers and policy support (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 1995).

The sparse literature that does address the role of decision-making processes generally suffers from shortcomings at both the methodological and conceptual level. At the methodological level extant research is largely cross-sectional and consequently struggles with issues of endogeneity (e.g. Tyler, Rasinski, & McGraw 1985; Rasinski & Tyler 1988; Ulbig 2002; Farnsworth 2003). This is problematic since trust towards incumbents or political institutions or satisfaction with a political decision could likely foster positive evaluations of the procedures underlying these objects rather than vice versa (Gangl 2003; Grimes 2006, 288–289; Doherty & Wolak 2012). Moreover, the literature suffers from somewhat diffuse or vague conceptualizations of decision-making processes. For example, Ulbig (2002) demonstrates a correlation between honesty of representatives (operationalized as whether “the people running government are crooked”) and trust in government. While such studies teach us that political trust and support might be endogenous to other factors than outcome considerations such as the conduct and motives of decision makers, they provide us with little direction on which specific procedural elements are important or how to apply this knowledge in practice to raise political trust and support. This has prompted scholars to urge for
clearer conceptualizations and analytically clear criteria for what constitutes a widely perceived legitimate decision-making process (Ulbig 2002, 806; Farnsworth 2003, 76).

Two recent experimental studies (Gangl 2003; Doherty & Wolak 2012) have mapped out three relevant components in a widely perceived legitimate political decision-making process. These studies find that a decision-making process must (i) be open, where all relevant parties are allowed to voice their opinion, (ii) be based on accurate information, and (iii) have unbiased decision makers without a personal interest in the outcome. These studies are relevant first steps in investigating the central components of a legitimate decision-making process but neither takes the next step and demonstrates actual political implications in terms of effects on evaluations of policies, decision makers or political institutions and hence leaves us oblivious to the real, political implications of procedures.

Why and to whom does impartial decision making matter?

While scant attention has been paid to the role of procedures in a political context, a rich literature in social psychology has provided evidence that people judge decision makers and their decisions through seemingly generic and universal standards of what constitutes a “fair process” (Thibaut & Walker 1975; Tyler 1990 Tyler & Lind 1992). While much of the research has focused on the effects of granting people a say (i.e. voice) in the decision-making process, the literature offers a range of criteria (Leventhal 1980; Tyler 1990), of which decision-maker impartiality is of special interest here.

The notion of impartiality in the decision-making process rests on the basic principle that decision makers cannot have a vested interest in the outcome. The procedural fairness literature has demonstrated the legitimizing effects of impartial decision making in a wide range of settings including legal (Lind & Lissak 1985), managerial (Kovovsky 1995; Dasborough & Ashkanasy 2002) and law enforcement (Feld & Frey 2007) contexts, yielding positive evaluations of decision makers and concrete decisions. Moreover, additional research in social psychology and behavioral economics has found that people are highly vigilant towards potential self-serving intentions and motives of transactional partners and decision makers and make inferences about actors and their decisions on this basis (Blount 1995; De Cremer 2004; Hibbing & Alford 2004).
The social psychology literature on procedural fairness holds two perspectives on why procedural information matters. Early work in social psychology adopted an instrumental model of procedural fairness, holding that people insist on fair procedures to gain control over and attain the best possible outcome (Thibaut & Walker 1975). In economic theory, for example, claiming fair procedures is perceived as a means for principals (e.g. voters) to secure that agents (e.g. political representatives) work towards organizational or group goals thus serving a clear instrumental purpose in controlling actions of subordinates (Anand 2001).

According to the more recent relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind 1992) people look to procedural information to evaluate the quality of their relationship with the authority. In social identity construction people constantly strive to constitute an equal member of a social group and enjoy the same status and rank as other group members. Decision-making processes communicate information about whether an authority appreciates the status and standing of the individual, and when this is not the case people respond with decreased group engagement (Tyler & Blader 2003), group cooperation (De Cremer & Van Vugt 2002) and compliance (Tyler 1990). In this sense fair procedures serve as a diagnostic tool to monitor group membership status rather than as a pragmatic means to favorable ends (Gonzalez & Tyler 2007). In Tyler's (1997) words “authorities communicate that group members have status, and members respond with deference” (Tyler 1997, 325).

In social psychology research, procedural fairness has been found to influence evaluations of, and more specifically trust towards, decision makers (Brockner & Siegel 1996; Ngodo 2008), but the causal pathways or mechanism of this relationship remains unresolved (Dirks & Ferrin 2002, 617). The instrumental and relational models represent different accounts on how procedural fairness affects trust in authorities. According to the instrumental model, procedural information should influence pragmatic trust, concerning whether decision makers are willing to and competent in generating favorable outcomes for the individual and the group at large (Folger 1986a, 1986b; Tyler & Degoe 1996, 332–339). To the contrary, the relational model holds that procedural information is evaluated through an ethical frame and consequently should affect moral trust, concerning the integrity of the decision maker and whether he values the welfare of citizens and recognizes their standing (Tyler 2001). This relational model has gradually gained currency as scholars have demonstrated that people are sensitive to procedural elements even when they have
no possible implications on outcomes (Lind et al. 1990). Thus, it seems that partial, biased decision making does not raise pragmatic concerns about the instrumental value of the decision maker but raises moral concerns by signaling that the authority does not appreciate the status and rights of the individual (Konovsky & Pugh 1994; Tyler & Degoey 1996).1

\textit{H1a: Decision-maker impartiality raises trust towards political representatives.}

\textit{H1b: Decision-maker impartiality raises moral trust but not pragmatic trust in political representatives.}

The main interest of the procedural fairness literature has been how features of decision-making processes influence evaluations of and support for authoritative decisions. Tyler (1990) proposes a two-stage model in which people use procedural information to evaluate the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the decision maker, and trust in the decision maker is subsequently applied as a heuristic in the evaluation of the concrete decision. Hence, while the conduct of decision makers in the decision-making process serves as direct information in trust evaluations, it only works indirectly through trustworthiness of a decision maker as a cognitive shortcut in evaluating the decision outcome (Grimes 2006; Ngodo 2008). (Van den Bos et al. 1998) support this perspective by demonstrating that procedural factors have little influence on evaluations of decisions when people have clear information about the trustworthiness of decision makers, while the effect is substantially larger when trustworthiness of decision makers is uncertain.

\textit{H2: Decision-maker impartiality raises support towards political decisions}

A rich literature in social psychology demonstrates an interaction between procedural information and the substance or favorability of the outcome (see Brockner & Wiesenfeld 1996 for evidence from more than

1 The distinction between pragmatic and moral trust in decision makers is often applied in the literature on political trust, although sometimes in different terminologies. For example, Almond & Verba (1963) divide evaluations of decision makers in to an instrumental and an affective component, Tyler (2001) discerns judgments of competence and benevolence and Citrin & Muste (1999) distinguish between evaluations regarding competence and integrity (see also Kinder et al. 1980; Markus 1981)
40 studies). Drawing on attributional theories procedures are perceived as a particularly effective means in raising evaluations of authorities and their decisions when the individual is dissatisfied with the substance of the decision, while people on the other hand will tend to ignore or tolerate unfair procedures when the arrangement benefits themselves (Lind & Lissak 1985; Folger 1986a; Tyler 1990; Brockner & Wiesenfeld 1996). In other words the social psychology literature holds that the effects of procedures should largely be crowded out among those experiencing favorable outcomes.

However, when assessing the role of outcome favorability the question becomes just how far the social psychology framework travels in the realm of politics. The political context or culture distinguishes itself in two respects, which modifies the theoretical expectations. First, the conventional wisdom in public opinion research is that people place very little emphasis on narrow self-interest and outcome favorability of the individual (for reviews see Citrin & Green 1990; Chong 2013). According to this literature people perceive politics as abstract, disconnected and irrelevant in relation to their own personal situation resulting in highly “morselized” attitudes (Lane 1962) in the sense that narrow self-interest and everyday experiences are largely excluded from political reasoning and behavior (Lippmann 1922; Schumpeter 1942). Instead, political attitudes are to a large extent based on abstract symbols and principles and serve a self-expressive and social identity constructing rather than an instrumental function (Katz 1960; Herek 1986; Sears & Funk 1991).

Second, existing literature hints that legitimate political decision making processes generate high intrinsic value or “procedural utility”. For example, people derive general well-being from being entitled to vote at national elections (Lane 1988, 2000; Frey & Stutzer 2005) and generally “attach a high value to democratic rights simply because they give them a sense of inclusion, identity and self-determination” (Benz 2005, 3). Hence, within a highly symbolic political context we should expect procedural features to matter in their own right – independently of the substance of the political decision.

**H3: Decision-maker impartiality raises trust towards political representatives and support for political decisions independently of whether decision outcomes are favorable or unfavorable.**
Study 1

Research design and data

Study one consists of data from a paper and pencil, between-subject survey experiment among Danish undergraduate students (N=154). The survey was handed out to 196 students, and 154 were fully completed, resulting in a response rate of 78.6%. The survey experiment was a 2 x 2 factorial design manipulating the two independent variables of interest: impartial decision making and outcome favorability. The survey entailed a first section of background questions, followed by a short manipulated news article constructed for the occasion and a number of follow-up questions concerning the policy described in the article and trust towards the decision maker. Respondents were randomly assigned to treatments and after filling out the survey debriefed and made aware of the artificial nature of the news article. The news article described a fictitious policy initiative at the EU level investing resources in higher education. The initiative was a trial or experimental scheme where eight pilot member countries were chosen to test the effects of making further investments in higher education.

The impartiality of the decision-making process was manipulated by offering two different versions on how the trial member countries were chosen. In the partial edition the countries were chosen based on electoral interests of the chairman of the EU Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). The article read that the chairman had included his own country in the experimental scheme in order to increase his popularity and chances of reelection at the forthcoming European Parliament election.

In the impartial edition the chairman drew the pilot countries randomly. Research in experimental economics and social psychology has demonstrated that an allocation mechanism based on randomness rather than an intentional, self-serving calculus of the decision-maker (both resulting in the same outcome) is perceived and evaluated as markedly more fair (Blount 1995). Such research, in line with procedural fairness theory, holds that people are vigilant to intentionality and partiality in authoritative decision-making and that randomness serves as a useful operationalization of its counterpart – an impartial decision-making process (Hibbing and Alford 2004, 200). The section elaborating on vote-maximizing efforts in the partial edition

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2 While some would fail to see that distribution by mere chance has a fair ring to it, randomness is, by definition, free of intent and beyond the influence of personal agendas of any decision-maker and hence fair in the sense of
was substituted with a section describing the commitment of the chairman to improving the educational standards within the EU. Emphasizing decision-makers’ motivation to solve the societal problem at hand serves further as an indicator that no personal agendas were dominating the process (see also Gangl 2003).

Thus, the impartial edition of the article did not provide any substantial information or arguments on why the policy was undertaken or why the municipalities were chosen but merely stated that the allocation occurred through a random process and that decision makers were committed to improving the educational standards within the EU. The outcome and substantial arguments related to the decision were thus held constant while the procedure or distribution mechanism through which the outcome was obtained varied.

The favorability of the outcome was manipulated by varying the member countries included in the trial scheme. In the favorable condition the chairman of the CULT was a Danish EU representative, Ole Christensen, who (either randomly or intentionally depending on the impartiality manipulation) included the respondents’ own country (Denmark), receiving half a billion Danish kroner (app. 67 million Euro) to invest in higher education. The article read that this outcome spurred “great enthusiasm among Danish politicians and experts”. In the unfavorable condition the chairman was a Belgian EU representative, Phillipe de Backer, who instead included Belgium as a trial member country. This triggered “great disappointment among Danish politicians and experts”. The full stimulus material is available in Appendix A.

Measures

This study asked two simple, general questions about trust towards the decision maker on a 0 to 10 scale with 10 being the highest amount of trust (see Levi & Stoker 2000). Respondents were first asked “How much trust do you have in a politician like Ole Christensen [Phillipe De Backer]?” and secondly “To what extent do you perceive a politician like Ole Christensen [Phillipe de Backer] as trustworthy?” ($r = 0.82; M = 0.40 ; SD = 0.20$).

Support for the political decision was measured through an index including two items each ranging from 0 to 10 ($r = 0.70 ; M = 0.58 ; SD = 0.20$): “To what extent do you agree with the EU politicians’ impartiality. This is not to say that impartiality generally requires random allocation, but for the purpose of grasping the effects of impartiality in decision-making it serves as an analytically clear operationalization.
decision on an educational trial scheme?"; “How much sympathy do you have for the EU politicians’ decision on an educational trial scheme?”.

Lastly, the survey included two items serving as manipulation checks of the two manipulations. The outcome favorability manipulation was assessed by asking respondents “To what extent is the EU’s educational trial scheme favorable to Denmark?” on a 0 to 10 scale. The impartiality manipulation was assessed by inquiring “How fair was the way that the pilot member countries were selected?” on a 0 to 10 scale. In order to ease interpretation and allow direct comparison between unstandardized parameter estimates, all variables are recoded from 0 to 1.

Results
Before addressing the theoretical expectations the two manipulation checks of the independent variables are reported. Figure 1 shows that people do in fact perceive the decision-making process to be markedly more fair in the impartial relative to the partial edition (M_{impartial} = .63 , M_{partial} = .37 , p<0.001). Thus, an allocation mechanism based on randomness is perceived as significantly more fair than an allocation mechanism based on electoral interests of the decision maker. Furthermore it is relevant to note that while randomness is perceived as fair in relative terms it only scores just above medium in absolute terms. Hence, while randomness serves as an analytically clear operationalization of decision maker impartiality, it also limits the variation on the independent variable, which will result in a somewhat conservative test of the procedural framework.

**FIGURE 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE**

Figure 2 indicates that respondents did in fact perceive the political decision to be significantly less favorable towards their own country in the unfavorable condition compared to the favorable condition (M_{LowOF} = .40 , M_{HighOF} = .64, p<0.001). The theoretical expectations are that people will express lower levels of trust in the decision maker and policy support in the partial compared to the impartial edition (H1a,
H1b and H2) independently of whether the political decision is in line with the interests of the individual or not (H3).

**TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE**

Model 1, Table 1 reveals that impartial decision making yields strong effects on trust in political representatives, lending support to H1a. The impartial decision making manipulation results in a 12 percentage point difference in trust evaluations of the EU politician. This pattern is also depicted in Figure 3 where differences in trust evaluations of the impartial and partial decision maker are clear and significant. Moreover, the procedural manipulation changes sympathy towards and inclinations to vote for the decision maker significantly at the .01 level (models not reported here). This should be the first study to deliver methodologically sound evidence that trust towards real-life political representatives is endogenous to procedural features above and beyond decision outcomes.

In stark contrast, the outcome favorability manipulation has no significant influence on trust towards decision makers. The minor difference between the favorable and unfavorable editions does not reach statistical significance and could likely stem from an in-group bias since respondents evaluate a Danish EU politician in the favorable condition and a Belgian EU politician in the unfavorable condition.

**FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE.**

The insignificant interaction term of Model 2 demonstrates that the effects of impartial decision making on trust in the decision maker are not crowded out in the favorable condition where the respondents’ own country benefits from the political decision. Hence, people are by no means any more tolerant of decision makers motivated by electoral interests when they or their group stand to gain from the arrangement. The same picture presents itself in Figure 3 depicting that the effects of decision maker impartiality are strong and significant in both the low and high outcome favorability conditions, lending support to H3.
Model 3 of Table 1 reports the effects on support for the political decision. In accordance with H2 impartial decision making has a considerable and significant effect on support for the political decision with an effect slightly above 10 percentage points. Hence, in line with the theoretical expectations procedural impartiality not only affects trust in the authority at hand but also transcends in to evaluations of decisions generated by these authorities. This finding demonstrates that the means can in fact justify the ends in the sense that certain procedures can make political decisions more acceptable. Figure 4 displays this pattern graphically where differences in policy support are evident across the partial and impartial editions. One previous study has found that an administrative decision of a public administration unit received higher levels of support when this unit publicly justified its actions and allowed citizens to voice their opinion during the process (Grimes 2006). However, this should be the first study to demonstrate that procedures adopted by elected representatives affect citizen evaluations of their political decisions. Furthermore, the study is the first to demonstrate procedural features conceptualized in terms of decision-maker impartiality as a factor in explaining support for a concrete political initiative. Thus, this study is at least among the very first to advocate for the procedural perspective as an effective means in raising support for outputs of the political system.

In stark contrast, Model 3 reports no effect of outcome favorability on support for the political decision. While the manipulation check in Figure 2 demonstrates that respondents did in fact perceive the low outcome favorability condition as markedly less favorable to their own country than the high outcome favorability condition, these perceptions do not translate in to differences in policy support. This finding is somewhat surprising and testifies to the very limited role of self-interest in political reasoning and attitude formation.

The insignificant interaction term of Model 4 indicates, in line with H3, that the effects of decision maker impartiality on policy support are not crowded out among those experiencing a favorable outcome. Figure 4 furthermore indicates that the effects of impartial decision making are strong and significant in both
the low and high outcome favorability editions. Thus, even when a decision is unfavorable to them, people will support it as long as it is based on an impartial decision making process.

Together these findings present evidence of a highly symbolic and principle based political culture where procedures matter above and beyond political substance with the potential to raise political trust and support among both winners and losers.

**Study 2**

*Research design and data*

Study two followed the same basic design and procedure as study one but entailed a policy decision at the national level (N=528). This shift to the national level was made in order to enhance the personal significance and perceived (un-)favorability of the outcome and hence further attempt to crowd out the effects of decision maker impartiality. The news article described a fictitious policy initiative passed by the current Danish government investing in new jobs for newly educated. The initiative was a trial or experimental scheme where six pilot municipalities were chosen to test the employment effects of creating new jobs for unemployed newly educated.

In line with study one the impartiality of the decision-making process was manipulated by offering two different versions on how the pilot municipalities were chosen. In the partial edition the municipalities were chosen based on electoral interests of the government. The article read that the government with the initiative was courting moderate voters in the chosen municipalities. Further, the article described how the architect behind the initiative, Social democrat Lennart Damsbo Andersen, had included his own constituency as a pilot municipality in order to increase his popularity and personal chances of reelection at the next parliamentary election. In the impartial edition the pilot municipalities were chosen randomly. As in study one the sections elaborating on vote-maximizing efforts in the partial edition were substituted with sections describing the commitment of the government and the architect of the initiative Lennart Damsbo Andersen to address the high unemployment among newly educated.

Outcome favorability was manipulated by varying which municipalities were included in the trial scheme. In the favorable condition the respondents’ own municipality (Aarhus) was part of the experimental
scheme, thus granted new jobs for newly educated. In the unfavorable condition a distant municipality (Næstved) was chosen at the expense of respondents’ municipality. The full stimulus material is available in Appendix B.

Compared to other studies this design entails a hard test of the procedural framework in the sense that it should be all the more difficult to move people’s trust evaluations towards a sitting government than towards relatively unknown public administration units (Grimes 2006) or entirely anonymous and hypothetical congress members (Tyler 1994). The study embodies a highly realistic setting where respondents evaluate what they believe to be a real political decision by a decision-making authority that most should be familiar with and hold rather crystalized opinions of (Slater 1991).

Measures

Since a main interest in this article is to observe which dimensions of political trust are affected by decision-maker impartiality, this study targets respondents’ moral and pragmatic concerns about decision makers (see also Almond & Verba 1989; Citrin & Muste 1999; Owen & Dennis 2001). In measuring moral and pragmatic trust towards decision makers, most items follow question wording from national election studies and extant work on political trust (Goul Andersen et al. 1992, Goul Andersen 2004; Jackson 2010).3

The moral trust index entailed three items in which respondents were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements on a 1 to 7 scale (α = 0.75; M = 0.37; SD = 0.20). The statements of the three items read: “The Government most often has its own rather than citizens’ interests in mind” (reverse coded); “The Government is only interested in my vote, not in my opinion” (reverse coded), and “The Government usually has other intentions than it conveys to citizens” (reverse coded). These items all address whether the government acts and communicates in an honest way, its opportunism and whether it recognizes the welfare and standing of citizens vis-à-vis its own interests.

The pragmatic trust index also included three items where respondents were asked to assess three statements on a 1 to 7 scale (α = 0.74; M = 0.43; SD = 0.21): “The Government consists of competent people

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3 Original items measuring trust towards politicians in general are rephrased to measure trust evaluations of the Danish government.
who know what they are doing”; “In general you can trust that the government makes the right decisions for the country” and “The Government is wasteful with taxpayers’ money” (reverse coded). In contrast to the items of the moral trust index, these items are strictly concerned with instrumental considerations about the competence and efficiency of decision makers in providing beneficial outcomes.

Support for the political decision was measured via an index including two items each ranging from 0 to 10 ($r = 0.69; M = 0.58 ; SD = 0.19$): “To what extent do you agree with the government’s decision concerning a job scheme for newly educated?”; “How much sympathy do you have for the government’s decision concerning a job scheme for newly educated?”. As in study 1 all variables are recoded from 0 to 1.

Results
First, Figure 4 shows, as expected in H1b, that decision maker impartiality has no influence on pragmatic trust towards decision makers ($M_{impartial} = .43$ vs. $M_{partial} = .43, p=0.917$). Whether decision makers have an electoral interest in the decision or not does not seem to raise concerns about their competence, ability to make the right decisions for the country or efficiency with taxpayers’ money. This finding does not lend support to the instrumental model of procedural fairness, holding that the motivation for attending to procedural information stems from instrumental concerns about attaining the best possible outcomes. At least this finding indicates that the effects on trust towards decision makers do not seem to work through this motivational system.

In contrast, the figure testifies to a significant effect of impartiality on the moral dimension of political trust, lending support to H1a and H1b. People are significantly more inclined to express moral trust in government in the impartial edition than in the partial edition ($M_{impartial}=.39$ vs. $M_{partial}=.35, p=0.039$). Impartiality of decision makers thus influences whether people perceive decision makers to value the standing and welfare of citizens vis-à-vis their own interests. The effect of decision maker impartiality on
moral trust in government is also reported in Model 1 of Table 2. In this model we also see that outcome favorability of the decision does not influence moral trust in government.

Compared to study 1 the effect on trust is relatively modest amounting to a 4 percentage point difference between the impartial edition and the partial edition. This is consistent with the theoretical account in the sense that people should hold rather clear, crystalized opinions and trust evaluations of the government, which reduces the impact of procedural information. Still, when dealing with a widely known political actor in the Danish context subjected to extensive media coverage, this non-outcome information does change trust evaluations significantly at the .05 level. Moreover, we should keep in mind that this is the effect of only one decision-making process and that a number of similar, subsequent procedures should likely have a larger total impact on these overall trust evaluations. These findings demonstrate that the procedural framework fares in a highly realistic political context involving well-known political actors. Furthermore, these findings enlighten us on the specific concerns that partial decision making raise about decision makers, holding that especially the perception of decision makers’ morality, integrity and respect for citizens are affected.

\textit{TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE}

In support of H3 Model 2 of Table 2 demonstrates that there is no significant interaction between decision maker impartiality and outcome favorability on moral trust in government. That is, respondents were not any more inclined to overlook or tolerate electoral interests of the government when this benefitted their own rather than a faraway located municipality. This result is further outlined in Figure 6, which in fact shows that the effect of decision maker impartiality only reaches statistical in the high outcome favorability condition.

\textit{FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE}
Model 3 presents the effects of decision maker impartiality on policy support addressed in H2. In line with the first study we see a significant difference in support for the political decision between the impartial and the partial edition. This difference is also displayed in Figure 7. Since the sample size is cut in half when evaluating the effects within each outcome favorability condition, the differences do not reach statistical significance. Again, the effect of about four percentage points is somewhat modest, which is likely because subjects hold rather clear and stable perceptions of trustworthiness of the government. Yet, even in a highly realistic context where prior attitudes are many and party affiliations strong the procedural framework proves significant in evaluations of political decisions.

**FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE**

Finally, Model 4 of Table 2 demonstrates that there is no interaction effect between decision maker impartiality and outcome favorability on support for the political decision. As in study 1 respondents were not any more accepting of a policy based on electoral efforts of the decision maker when those efforts were directed at themselves. This picture is also presented in Figure 7 where the differences between the partial and impartial editions are not stronger in the unfavorable relative to the favorable condition.

**Study 3**

*Research design and data*

Study three consists of data from a paper and pencil, between-subject survey experiment among Danish undergraduate students (N=151). The survey was handed out to 196 students, and 151 were fully completed, resulting in a response rate of 77.0%.

Research on the role of self-interest in political reasoning suggests that its effects could be limited to issues that have direct implications on people’s pocket books such as taxation (Sears & Citrin 1985; Sears & Funk 1991). This study tests if people still object to partial decision making when the decision entails considerable, direct economic benefits. Study three entailed a vignette approach in which respondents were
randomly assigned one of four scenarios (thus, again a 2 x 2 factorial design). Respondents were asked to imagine a political party proposing a growth package restructuring taxes, levies and municipal subsidies.

The impartial edition read that the party had adopted the proposition strictly in an attempt to stimulate economic growth in society rather than reaping votes among certain voter segments. The partial edition read that for the party the proposition was just as much about reaping votes among certain voter segments by providing them with an increase in income as about stimulating economic growth in society. Outcome favorability was simply manipulated by informing that the proposal would result in a 500 kroner monthly increase or decrease (app. 67 euros) in income for a voter like the respondent.

In contrast to the first two studies, this study tested the effects of decision maker impartiality involving a political decision that did not entail an experimental scheme. Experimental schemes, it could be argued, is a particular type of political decision in which the prime objective should be evaluation and providing new knowledge rather than satisfying certain societal interests per se. Hence, people might object more strongly to electoral interests in such a setting, which requires a test of the effects of decision maker impartiality outside this setup.

Measures

Trust towards the decision maker was measured via a single item scaled from 0 to 10 asking: “How much trust would you have in such a party?”. In line with study 1 and 2 support for the political decision was measured through an index including two items each ranging from 0 to 10 (r = 0.86; M = 0.46 ; SD = 0.27): “To what extent do you agree with such a proposition of a growth package?”; “How much sympathy do you have for such a proposition of a growth package?”. Again all variables are recoded from 0 to 1.

Results

Model 1, Table 3 reveals two familiar trends. In line with H1a impartial decision making exercises a strong and independent effect on trust towards the decision maker. The model indicates that trust evaluations go up almost 25 percentage points when the decision maker is impartial rather than partial. Thus, whether the political party is strictly concerned about stimulating economic growth in society or is equally preoccupied
with winning votes has a major influence on trust evaluations. Decision maker impartiality also changed sympathy towards and inclinations to vote for the party at the .001 level (models not reported). The large effect is again in accordance with the theoretical expectations since people have very little information about the trustworthiness of the decision maker aside from the procedural information. The same pattern is depicted in Figure 8, illustrating the large and significant effects of impartial decision making across the outcome favorability conditions.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In line with the studies above respondents did not deem the decision maker more trustworthy when provided with a favorable outcome. Quite to the contrary, it seems there is a slight, although not statistically significant, negative effect on trust in the decision maker. Figure 8 indicates how this deviation is due to a minor overrepresentation of positive respondents in the group exposed to an impartial decision maker providing unfavorable outcomes. It makes little sense that respondents should be more positive in the impartial, unfavorable condition compared to the impartial, favorable condition, suggesting that the random allocation of stimuli was not entirely successful with such a small sample.

FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

Model 2 of Table 3 demonstrates that there is no significant interaction effect between impartial decision making and outcome favorability, lending support to H3. The same picture presents itself in Figure 8 where decision maker impartiality matters consistently across outcome favorability. Hence, people do not tolerate decision makers motivated by electoral interests even when they benefit financially from this arrangement.

Model 3 in Table 3 shows that impartial decision making influences support for the political decision, supporting H2. The difference between an impartial and partial decision maker here yields a difference in policy support for just above 25 percentage point. Again, this effect is quite substantial since respondents are
provided with very little information on either the decision maker or the political decision. To the contrary, the model shows that outcome favorability has no influence on support for the political decision. Once again the results indicate that people are remarkably inattentive to tangible payoffs but rather put emphasis on an impartial decision making process.

**FIGURE 9**

Model 4 of Table 3 demonstrates, in line with H3, that impartial decision making influences policy support both when outcomes are favorable and unfavorable. The insignificant interaction term indicates that people are no more accepting of a political decision motivated by electoral interests when they stand to gain from the decision financially. Thus, study 3 corroborates the findings of study 1 and 2 but through a markedly different approach: people value process over substance when evaluating both decision makers and their concrete decisions, and they react strongly to perceived “unfair” procedures even when they stand to win from such an arrangement.

**Discussion**

The three studies have jointly provided evidence that an impartial decision-making process raises trust towards decision makers and support for their policies independently of the outcome or substance of the decision. The fact that these procedural effects are present among the losing and the winning team has two important implications. First, these results underline the potential of procedural factors to uphold political trust and support among segments or in exacting situations where outcomes are unfavorable. A vast literature within public policy research has demonstrated the difficulties that political elites face when attempting to implement cuts in existing welfare state benefits without being subjected to intense electoral punishment (Pierson 1996, 2001). The findings of this article suggest that adopting such welfare retrenchment policies through a widely perceived legitimate process (such as granting relevant parties a voice, basing the decision on accurate information, and securing decision-maker impartiality) may serve as a cushion against negative reactions of citizens in terms of support for policies and evaluations of decision makers. It is doubtful
whether the right procedures can make citizens approve of retrenchment policies but they can make people dislike them less and potentially reduce the sanctioning and punishment of the elites carrying them out. In short, the findings illustrate the potential of “process politics” (Ophuls 1977) where political representatives design the process in such a way that the losing team to a larger extent will trust authorities and back their policies.

Second, the fact that the effects of procedural factors are not crowded out when decisions are favorable underlines both the limitations and the potential in applying theoretical frameworks from other disciplines. On the one hand the results clearly demonstrate the limits to which the social psychology framework travels. The main effects of procedural factors were clearly replicated in a political setting but the interaction effect with outcome favorability was just as clearly absent. While these findings only underline the generic and unconditional relevance of the procedural framework in a political setting, they also indicate that there are certain limits to the direct application of psychological theory in a political setting. On the other hand these results indicate a potential for such cross-disciplinary work to inform us on the unique logics and cultures within each research domain. In line with the symbolic politics literature these findings suggest that political reasoning and attitude formation relies very little on narrow self-interested cost-benefit calculations and is heavily dominated by abstract symbols and principles such as general fairness perceptions. Whether this is symptomatic of a perceived disconnection between the lives of citizens and the political arena (Schumpeter 1942; Brody & Sniderman 1977) or is an auspicious indication of citizens’ attention to the public good (Citrin & Green 1990) is debatable and worth investigating.

Although this article has mainly focused on the upsides of procedural fairness in terms of raising trust and support among both the winning and the losing team, at least one appeal to caution seems in order. Apart from its potential upsides, procedural fairness could also be applied in a manipulative sense in the promotion of policies that are not in the interests of citizens. While the lesson here seems to be that the means to some extent can justify the ends, a legitimate decision-making process does not guarantee the quality of the subsequent decision per se (Tyler & McGraw 1986; MacCoun 2005). In this sense procedural fairness is a double-edged sword with the potential to raise political trust and support towards actors and policies that are not in the interests of society.
While the article provides answers to previously unresolved questions, it also poses new ones and opens up new potential inquiries. First, there is still a wide range of procedural criteria that have not been considered in a political setting (Leventhal 1980; Tyler 1990). For example, do people respond to the accuracy or quality of information on which a political decision was crafted? Do people judge political representatives and their decisions based on whether relevant interest groups are consulted and allowed a voice in the decision-making process? Moreover, the effects of these procedural features might interact and mutually reinforce each other (De Cremer 2004). While people might be relatively accepting of one procedural aberration, they may react strongly when several procedural expectations are broken.

Second, the effects and significance of the procedural perspective across the social sciences begs the fundamental question of where our notions of procedural fairness stem from and what exact function they serve. While social psychology literature theorizes about both the instrumental and identity-based, relational motivations for attending to procedural information, it remains clear that “little is known about the origin of procedural preferences” (Tyler 1990, 109). Recently, advances in anthropology and evolutionary psychology have hinted that our vigilance towards the process of authoritative decision-making in general, and motives and incentives of decision makers in particular, is deeply ingrained in our very human nature (Boehm 1999; Hibbing and Alford 2004). From this perspective our moral craving for procedural fairness could be an evolved adaptation to the ancestrally recurring problem of fending off exploitative group leaders and maintaining social order and coordinated efforts towards group-oriented goals and provision of simple public goods (see also Erdal & Whiten 1996; Smith et al. 2007; Haidt 2013). In this sense our seemingly generic and universal sensitivity to procedural fairness (Lind & Earley 1992) could likely be part of an evolved psychology of checks and balances, which is activated in a broad range of settings involving authoritative decision making, including in modern democracies. In a closely related literature scholars are arguing for the evolutionary origins of our taste for distributive fairness (Krebs 2008; Binmore 2011); it seems plausible that the other major type of fairness could have evolutionary roots as well. A study in to the deeper motivational systems and functional objective of procedural fairness holds the potential for an ultimate, and arguably more satisfactory, account of the procedural framework and a better understanding of relevant contextual and individual-level moderators.
References


Figures

Study 1: Survey experiment – EU level

FIGURE 1: Manipulation check of decision maker impartiality manipulation

***p<0.001
FIGURE 2: Manipulation check of outcome favorability manipulation

***p<0.001
FIGURE 3: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on trust in decision maker across low and high outcome favorability.
FIGURE 4: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on support for political decision across low and high outcome favorability.

*p<0.05 ; **p<0.01

*Study 2: Survey experiment – Danish Government*
FIGURE 5: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on moral and pragmatic trust in government.

*p<0.05
FIGURE 6: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on moral trust in government across low and high outcome favorability

*p<0.05
FIGURE 7: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on support for political decision across low and high outcome favorability.
Study 3: Vignette study

![Graph showing effects of impartiality of decision maker on trust in decision maker across low and high outcome favorability.](Image)

**FIGURE 8:** Effects of impartiality of decision maker on trust in decision maker across low and high outcome favorability.
FIGURE 9: Effects of impartiality of decision maker on support for political decision across low and high outcome favorability.

Tables

Study 1: Survey experiment – EU level

TABLE 1: Effects of Impartiality of decision maker, outcome favorability and interaction between these two variables on Trust in decision maker (Model 1 and 2) and Policy support (Model 3 and 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model I Trust in decision maker</th>
<th>Model II Trust in decision maker</th>
<th>Model III Policy support</th>
<th>Model IV Policy support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.313*** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.320*** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.545*** (0.025)</td>
<td>0.535*** (0.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial decision maker (IDM)</td>
<td>0.126*** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.108* (0.049)</td>
<td>0.105** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.129** (0.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome favorability (OF)</td>
<td>0.054 (0.032)</td>
<td>0.040 (0.043)</td>
<td>-0.026 (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.006 (0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM * OF</td>
<td>0.032 (0.065)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.065)</td>
<td>0.045 (0.065)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.065)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. $R^2$</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: OLS-regression with standard errors in parentheses.
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. All tests are two-sided.

### Study 2: Survey experiment – Danish Government

#### TABLE 2: Effects of Impartiality of decision maker, outcome favorability and interaction between these two variables on Moral trust in government (Model 1 and 2) and Policy support (Model 3 and 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model I Moral trust in government</th>
<th>Model II Moral trust in government</th>
<th>Model III Policy support</th>
<th>Model IV Policy support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>0.354*** (0.015)</td>
<td>0.361*** (0.017)</td>
<td>0.567*** (0.015)</td>
<td>0.572*** (0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impartial decision maker (IDM)</strong></td>
<td>0.036* (0.017)</td>
<td>0.021 (0.024)</td>
<td>0.041* (0.017)</td>
<td>0.033 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome favorability (OF)</strong></td>
<td>-0.006 (0.017)</td>
<td>-0.020 (0.024)</td>
<td>-0.014 (0.017)</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDM * OF</strong></td>
<td>0.030 (0.034)</td>
<td>0.018 (0.034)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>515</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj. R²</strong></td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: OLS-regression with standard errors in parentheses.
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. All tests are two-sided.

### Study 3: Vignette study

#### TABLE 3: Effects of Impartiality of decision maker, outcome favorability and interaction between these two variables on Trust in decision maker (Model 1 and 2) and Policy support (Model 3 and 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model I Trust in decision maker</th>
<th>Model II Trust in decision maker</th>
<th>Model III Policy support</th>
<th>Model IV Policy support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>0.384*** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.355*** (0.036)</td>
<td>0.349*** (0.032)</td>
<td>0.325*** (0.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impartial decision maker (IDM)</strong></td>
<td>0.244*** (0.038)</td>
<td>0.304*** (0.052)</td>
<td>0.255*** (0.038)</td>
<td>0.304*** (0.053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome favorability (OF)</strong></td>
<td>-0.073 (0.038)</td>
<td>-0.016 (0.051)</td>
<td>-0.024 (0.038)</td>
<td>0.023 (0.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDM * OF</strong></td>
<td>-0.125 (0.075)</td>
<td>-0.102 (0.076)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adj. R²</strong></td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: OLS-regression with standard errors in parentheses.
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. All tests are two-sided.
Appendices

Appendix A: Full stimulus material of Study 1. Impartiality manipulation in separate columns, outcome favorability manipulation in italics and square brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impartial edition</th>
<th>Partial edition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[No] Extra EU millions for better education in Denmark.</td>
<td>Electoral interests in EU politics secure [block for] EU millions for better education in Denmark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark will [not] be part of EU’s grand educational trial scheme, which will investigate the effects of investing further in education and teaching.</td>
<td>Denmark will [not] be part of EU’s grand educational trial scheme, which will investigate the effects of investing further in education and teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark has for long been in the picture as a potential trial member country receiving half a billion Danish Kroner for improved higher education from the EU. Consequently, great enthusiasm [disappointment] was triggered among Danish politicians and experts Friday when the chairman of the EU’s educational committee, Ole Christensen [Phillipe De Backer], drew Denmark [Belgium] and seven other trial member countries at the expense of other candidates including Belgium [Denmark].</td>
<td>Denmark has for long been in the picture as a potential trial member country receiving half a billion Danish Kroner for improved higher education from the EU. Consequently, great enthusiasm [disappointment] was triggered among Danish politicians and experts Friday when the chairman of the EU’s educational committee, Ole Christensen [Phillipe De Backer], drew Denmark [Belgium] and seven other trial member countries at the expense of other candidates including Belgium [Denmark].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christensen [De Backer] drew the countries randomly to secure that national or personal interests did not have any influence on the choice of trial member countries.</td>
<td>The fact that Christensen [De Backer] chose his home country Denmark [Belgium] is regarded as a clear charm offensive aimed at Danish [Belgian] voters in an attempt to secure his reelection at the upcoming European Parliament election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christensen [De Backer] states that this is »an important step towards better education and long term growth in the EU« and that the trial member countries are ideal in evaluating the effects of the investment.</td>
<td>Christensen [De Backer] states that this is »an important step towards better education and long term growth in the EU« and that the trial member countries are ideal in evaluating the effects of the investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Belgian [Danish] EU politician Phillipe De Backer [Ole Christensen] states that the scheme should have included all member countries from the</td>
<td>The Belgian [Danish] EU politician Phillipe De Backer [Ole Christensen] states that the scheme should have included all member countries from the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phillipe De Backer [Ole Christensen] does, however, acknowledge the hard efforts of Christensen [De Backer] and the educational committee to put the education issue on the agenda and improve the quality of higher education in the EU. Moreover, Ole Christensen is furthermore vexed that the efforts for improved higher education is used as a strategic means for the powerful chairman to insure his own reelection.

Appendix B: Full stimulus material of Study 2. Impartiality manipulation in separate columns, outcome favorability manipulation in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impartial edition</th>
<th>Partial edition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>[No]</strong> new jobs for newly educated in Aarhus</td>
<td>The Government’s vote chase leads to [in the way of]** new jobs for newly educated in Aarhus.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the new “Job scheme for newly educated” the government sets up 2,000 new positions for newly educated in six selected municipalities.</td>
<td>With the new “Job scheme for newly educated” the government sets up 2,000 new positions for newly educated in six selected municipalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarhus has from the beginning been in the picture to become a trial municipality and [but] was in the end selected [deselected] at the expense of [for the benefit of] Næstved municipality. 28 of the municipalities of the country had put themselves down for becoming a trial municipality. Of these municipalities six were chosen randomly, where Aarhus was [was not] one of them.</td>
<td>Aarhus has from the beginning been in the picture to become a trial municipality and [but] was in the end selected [deselected] at the expense of [for the benefit of] Næstved municipality. According to spectators the initiative is an attempt to win back the many moderate voters in Central Jutland [Southern Zealand] the government has lost to the opposition since the election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social democrat and chairman of Folketinget’s Employment committee Lennart Damsbo-Andersen is satisfied with the initiative and states that it »will have a noticeable effect on the high unemployment among newly educated«. Damsbo-Andersen has since the election worked hard to put the unemployment issue among newly educated on the agenda, which initially has brought about financing</td>
<td>Social democrat and chairman of Folketinget’s Employment committee Lennart Damsbo-Andersen is satisfied with the initiative and states that it »will have a noticeable effect on the high unemployment among newly educated«. Relevant to the story, Damsbo-Andersen stands for election for parliament in the Aarhus [Næstved] area. By bringing new jobs to his own constituency he thereby increases his own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for a trial scheme of a total of 2,000 new positions. personal chances of reelection at the next parliamentary election.

The mayor of Næstved [Aarhus] municipality appreciates the efforts of the government against the unemployment among newly educated but is puzzled why the positions are limited to a few, chosen municipalities. Spectators interpret the job scheme as evidence that the government is determined to fight the unemployment issue among newly educated although the scheme can prove unpopular among certain voter segments.

The mayor of Næstved [Aarhus] municipality appreciates the efforts of the government against the unemployment among newly educated but is puzzled why the positions are limited to a few, chosen municipalities. The mayor is furthermore vexed that the employment efforts are subject to tactics and spin and labels the initiative a well- planned, voter oriented charm offensive.

Appendix C: Full stimulus material of Study 3. Impartiality manipulation in separate columns, outcome favorability manipulation in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Impartial edition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Partial edition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imagine a political party proposing a growth package entailing a restructuring of taxes, levies and municipal subsidies.</td>
<td>Imagine a political party proposing a growth package entailing a restructuring of taxes, levies and municipal subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the party, the proposition is strictly about stimulating growth in society rather than winning votes among certain voter segments.</td>
<td>For the party, the proposition is just as much about winning votes among certain voter segments by providing them with an increase in income as about stimulating growth in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a voter like you the proposition will mean an increase [decrease] in income of 500 Kroner per month.</td>
<td>For a voter like you the proposition will mean an increase [decrease] in income of 500 Kroner per month.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>