**Title:**

Going back to the well: A panel study into the election boost of political support among electoral winners, losers and non-voters

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**Abstract**
This article employs growth curve models on a four wave panel data to analyze the effects of elections on political support. Our analyses confirm that elections temporarily boost political support on aggregate, and induce a gap in political support between voters of parties that saw electoral gains (i.e., electoral winners) and those that did not (i.e., electoral losers). We specify their timing: Both effects are strongest shortly after the elections took place, but become more apparent in the week(s) before. Finally, we connect the research lines into the election boost and the winner/loser gap. Marginal effects show that although the election boost is significantly stronger among electoral winners, there is no drop in political support among electoral losers and non-voters. These marginal effects are conditional on vote certainty: the positive effect of voting for a winning party is stronger for citizens who voted for that party with more confidence.

## Introduction

In the comprehensive literature on political support, elections play an important role. Two rather distinct strands of literatures focus on seemingly different ways in which elections affect political support. The first effect is what we call the election boost in political support. Many studies show that after elections, political support increases among the citizenry as a whole. This suggests that elections sustain citizens' satisfaction with democracy and contribute to perceptions of legitimacy and accountability (Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016; Quaranta & Martini, 2016; Ferland, 2017). The second effect of elections differentiates among groups of citizens, namely among those who voted for the winning party (winners) and who voted for the losing one (losers). Research shows a gap in political support between winners and losers, with the former reporting higher levels than the latter (e.g. Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Anderson et al., 2005).

These two literatures have remained rather distinct strands of research, even though theoretically there is an intrinsic relation between the election boost of and the winner/loser gap in political support. The mechanism that drives the election boost is at the very least a likely suspect of the electoral winner/loser gap. Moreover, the two strands of research suffer from similar shortcomings. Methodologically, it has been very difficult to isolate both election effects for two reasons. First, the strong focus on systems with single party governments easily conflates the election boost and the honeymoon effect, as well as the psychological consequences of winning elections (representation) and winning the government formation (policy). This conflation may be circumvented by focusing on proportional, multi-party systems. Second, the lack of multi-wave panel data hindered answering questions on the nature and timing of the election boosts and the winner-loser gap. Two-wave panels, let alone cross-sectional research designs, have been insufficient to confirm or reject core assumptions in either literature.

In this paper, we aim to contribute to both literatures by tackling these shortcomings. We theorize about the mechanisms behind the effects as well as their timing. The highly proportional and rather fragmented multi-party system of the Netherlands allows a rather stringent test of the two election effects. In proportional systems the winner/loser gap in political support is generally smaller than in majoritarian countries (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Anderson et al., 2005; Birch, 2008), likely particularly so in the time span between elections and government formation. Yet, because of the long coalition formation periods (De Winter & Dumont 2010), the effects of the election outcomes can be isolated from that of government formation. We therefore define winners and

losers by voting for a party that won or lost in terms of vote share, irrespective of their success during the government formation.

We test our hypotheses on four waves (three pre-election and one post-election) of panel survey data about the volatile election campaign of the Dutch Lower House elections of 2012. These data allow us to track changes in the political support of groups that after the election turn out to be winners, losers, non-voters or stables (people whose party did not see a change in their number of seats in parliament). We can isolate the effect of winning elections from winning the coalition formation, as the post-election survey wave ended before it was clear which parties would end up in government. To gain insight into the dynamic nature of both election effects we assess whether, to what extent and when the election boost and the winner/loser gap takes shape. To test the mechanisms, we focus on a range of dependent variables of general support for the political system, political practices and politicians. Doing so we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent and when do elections boost political support?
2. Which aspects of political support are most likely to be stimulated by this election boost?
3. To what extent and when do elections differentially affect voters for different sets of political parties?
4. To what extent and when do new elections decay the winner/loser gap resulting from the previous election?

This study contributes to the literature on the election boost, by employing detailed panel data to test the timing of the effect in the months leading up to elections. To date, between-person comparisons suggest that the election boost occurs only after the event of the elections itself (Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016). Our within-person comparisons reveal that this boost already begins in the final week(s) of the electoral campaign. Moreover, we test the most likely mechanism behind the election boost, i.e., the perception of system responsiveness. Surprisingly, though, we find that elections tend to boost all attitudes, including ones that have very little to do with the electoral process itself.

We contribute to the literature on the winner/loser gap by testing the effect of being successful in elections, irrespective of the consequences for government composition. Our study of the proportional, multi-party system of the Netherlands provides strong evidence that the election outcomes themselves affect this winner/loser gap. Moreover, we test the scarcely addressed timing of the winner/loser gap during a volatile election campaign when opinion polls ultimately provided little clarity which parties would win the elections. Under these conditions, we find evidence that the

electoral winner/loser gap (as the consequence of the election outcome of the new elections) predominantly becomes visible after election day.

Finally, we connect the literatures on the election boost and the winner/loser gap. First, we focus on the marginal effects of the election boost among electoral winners, voters for stable parties, electoral losers, and non-voters. There is no drop in political support among losers, voters for stable parties and non-voters, even though the election boost is significantly smaller among these voters. Second, we assess to what extent these effects are conditional on voters' decision making process. While voters with stable vote intentions display higher levels of political support than who shifted vote intention, volatility does not affect the size of the election boost, nor the winner/loser gap. Concurrently, though, the positive effect of voting for a winning party is stronger for citizens who voted for that party with more confidence.

## Theory and hypotheses

### *The election boost*

Elections are a likely source of political support. "The high salience of national elections in temporary representative democracies suggests that even if these contests do not adequately perform all of the functions ascribed to them (…) their very occurrence should enhance, if only temporarily, people's feelings of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in their country" (Clarke et al. (1993: 1002). Elections may "prime democratic values and illustrate democratic practices such accountability and peaceful transitions" (Van der Meer, 2017). They "link citizens to the political system [and] let them exert control over government" (Quaranta & Martini, 2016: 168).

This "widely held belief that elections confer legitimacy upon political systems" (Esaiasson, 2011: 102) has found rather consistent support in a wide range of empirical studies, covering established democracies (Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016; Quaranta & Martini, 2016) as well as democracies that transitioned more recently (e.g. Závecz, 2017). The boosting effect may even not be limited to full democracies: In her study of China, Manion (2006) found that trust in local political leaders is higher in villages that are more competitive electorally.

Yet, it is quite difficult to isolate the election boost. Particularly in majoritarian systems, the boost gets rather easily conflated with honeymoon effect that occurs when a new government comes into power (cf. Chanley, Rudolph, & Rahn, 2000; Chanley, 2002 for in-depth analyses of the honeymoon effect in the United States). In more proportional systems, where post-electoral coalition

formation are often a lengthier and more complex process, the election boost and the honeymoon effect can more easily be pulled apart. In EU member states national elections and not newly formed governments have boosted trust in national political institutions (Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016: 186).[1] We come to the following hypothesis:

H1.    Elections boost citizens' political support.

Whereas many studies found evidence for the election boost on political support, the timing of this boost during the electoral campaign has remained largely unclear. Many studies relied on longitudinal, rather than panel data (e.g. Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016; Quaranta & Martini, 2016; Závecz, 2017; Bargsted, Somma, & Castillo, 2017). The few studies that relied on panel data covered no more than two waves (e.g. Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Esaiasson, 2011): one pre-election, one post-election. While these studies provided stronger evidence for the existence of the election boost, they did not help determine the timing of the effect.

Two studies used variation in the interview dates with respondents to shed some light on the timing of the effect. Han & Chang (2016: 96) find that satisfaction with democracy goes down as elections move further into the past. Blais & Gélineau (2007: 429-430) employ a rolling-campaign two-wave panel. Before the elections, in the first wave, they find that satisfaction with democracy was not higher among respondents that were interviewed closer to the elections. Only after the elections, in the second wave of their panel study, they find a higher level of satisfaction with democracy. They conclude: "Overall level of satisfaction remains remarkably stable throughout the campaign, it jumps substantially immediately after the election and it remains at higher levels thereafter. [This] suggests the election itself made people more satisfied with the way democracy works." Ultimately, both studies by necessity rely on between-person comparisons, as a within-person comparison during the election campaign would require more repeated measures in a panel design.

All in all, the literature offers quite little insight into the timing of the election boost. We might expect that the campaign leading up to the election already boosts perceptions of responsibility, accountability, and efficacy (but see Blais & Gélineau 2007), although this boost likely reaches its zenith on or directly after election day (H2):

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[1] Of course, new governments may briefly benefit from this election boost (cf. Armingeon and Guthmann 2014).

H2.    The boost in political support becomes most apparent directly after election day.

Studies in this field focused on either of three dependent variables, or a combination thereof: satisfaction with democracy, trust in government and trust in parliament (Clarke, Dutt, & Kornberg, 1993; Chanley, Rudolph, & Rahn, 2000; Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016). Such measures of political support are too broad and too unidimensional (Marien, 2011; Zmerli & Newton, 2017) to isolate the mechanism behind the election boost.

One attribute of elections seems particularly likely as a potential mechanism, namely the perceived responsiveness of the system. "Elections link citizens to the political system [and] let them exert control over government" (2016: 168). Electoral legitimacy is primarily about the procedural fairness that allows the system to respond to electoral wishes and preferences (Esaiasson, 2011). Campaigns emphasize responsiveness prospectively (in the form of representation) and retrospectively (in the form of accountability), thereby stressing external political efficacy (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990). Responsiveness, more than for instance (perceptions of) politicians' competence, is a political attribute that is intrinsically related to elections. Therefore, we expect the election boost to take shape predominantly in measures of perceptions of political responsiveness.

H3.    Elections have the strongest boosting effect on citizens' perceptions of political
       responsiveness.

***The winner/loser gap by electoral success***
The winner/loser gap in political support may be conceived as a specification of the general election boost. Political efficacy and perceptions of responsiveness are likely explanations of this post-election gap in political support. Many studies have shown that citizens of winning parties report more political support than those of losing parties (for an overview, see Anderson et al., 2005). While many scholars focus on the winner/loser gap in satisfaction with democracy (e.g. Clarke, Dutt, & Kornberg, 1993; Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Singh, Karakoç, & Blais, 2012; Howell & Justwan, 2013; Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014), others found evidence for the same effect on trust in parliament or politicians (Esaiasson, 2011; Schäfer, 2012; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016), trust in government (Anderson & Tverdova, 2001), system responsiveness or political efficacy (Clarke & Acock, 1989; Esaiasson, 2011), electoral fairness (Birch, 2008), or a broader range of political support factors (Anderson et al., 2005; Craig et al., 2006; Esaiasson, 2011; Singh, Lago, & Blais, 2011; Singh & Thornton, 2016). Regardless of the specific focus, winners show higher levels of

political support than losers, particularly in disproportional electoral systems (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Anderson et al., 2005; Birch, 2008), where electoral success tends to result in a disproportional amount of seats in parliament, and a disproportionally large likelihood to form (single party) government.

Despite the comprehensive literature, there are four aspects of this winner-loser phenomenon that deserve more scrutiny: the type of winning that results in the winner-loser gap, the timing of the effect, the degree of loss experienced by the losers, and its conditionality on the process leading to the vote choice.

First, a specific type of winning dominates the literature on the winner/loser gap, which determines success (winning) as voting for a party that subsequently gained executive, governmental power (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Esaiasson, 2011; Singh, Karakoç, & Blais, 2012; Howell & Justwan, 2013; Singh, 2014; Chang, Chu, & Wu, 2014; Singh & Thornton, 2016) such as the presidency (e.g. Craig et al., 2006), or some combination (e.g. Curini, Jou, & Memoli, 2012; Han & Chang, 2016). Yet, there is a second way in which elections may stimulate a sense of winning or losing among voters. Elections also upset the balance of power in parliament: Some parties gain seats in parliament, while others lose seats. In bipartisan, majoritarian systems the two modes of success (access to government and increased parliamentary power) are generally conflated, as the largest party is highly likely to obtain governmental power (cf. Howell & Justwan, 2013). By contrast, multiparty, proportional systems tend to separate the two both in time and function. Post-electoral coalition negotiations tend to range from days to months (De Winter & Dumont 2010). While party size generally increases the chance of access to government power (Mattila & Raunio, 2004), the largest party is not necessarily part of the majority coalition. Vice versa, it is not uncommon in systems with coalition governments that parties that lost part of their vote share end up in government.[2] It is therefore surprising that most studies focused exclusively on winner/loser status as access to government power, and few focused on (changes in) the distribution of parliamentary seats (but see (Hooghe & Stiers, 2016).

Equally little is known about the timing of the winner/loser gap. While various studies employed panel data with a pre- and a post-election wave to test the winner-loser claim (Anderson & LoTempio, 2002; Anderson et al., 2005; Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Esaiasson, 2011; Singh, Karakoç, & Blais, 2012; Beaudonnet et al., 2014; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016), few assess whether

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[2] In the Netherlands, alone, the six non-caretaker governments that were formed between 1994 and 2010 all contained at least one party that had lost vote share and parliamentary seats. Winning (losing) elections thus does not evidently mean winning (losing) the government formation.

winners already have higher levels of support than losers before the election that would categorize them as a group. Some suggest that they do (Blais & Gélineau, 2007), others that they do not (Beaudonnet et al., 2014). Two studies made use of the differential response dates within each waves to assess potential longitudinal changes via the differences in political support between early and late respondents, yet did not find evidence for a growth in political support as elections came nearer (Blais & Gélineau, 2007; Hooghe & Stiers, 2016).[3]

H4.     The electoral winner/loser gap in political support becomes most apparent directly after election day.

The existence of both a general election boost and a winner/loser gap suggests that the marginal effect of winning on political support is larger than the marginal effect of losing. We can*not* deduce that the marginal effect of elections is negative among those voters who lost the elections. Certainly, that is what one would expect if political support is exclusively based on outcomes. Yet, political support is also strongly driven by the quality of the political process (cf. Grimes 2017). Thus, while we argue that the election boost is most pronounced for winners, losers need not lose support but might 'merely' show a smaller bump. Esaiasson (2011: 111) concludes that "winners typically become more supportive whereas losers at minimum retain their level of support from before the election". Blais & Gelineau (2007) find a post-election increase in satisfaction with democracy among winners, losers, and abstainers with respect to access to government power. Anderson et al. (2005), though, find mixed effects: After the German 1983 election electoral losers became less satisfied, after the Spanish 1996 election their satisfaction was unchanged, and after the 1998 German elections, their satisfaction even increased. Blais et al. (2017), finally, show positive effects on all voters whose parties got seats in the post-election parliament, but negative effects on those whose parties did not. All in all, we expect:

H5.     The positive marginal effect of the election boost on voters for winning parties is larger than the marginal effect of the election boost on voters for other parties.

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[3] In part, this may be due to the availability of opinion polls that made the likely outcome of the election visible to attentive voters in the weeks before the election itself took place. In that case, the winner/loser gap might already be accounted for in the first wave of these studies.

Finally, not all votes are casted with similar conviction. Voters with stable vote intentions generally identify more strongly with their party than volatile voters (Dassonneville et al. 2015), particularly in comparison to last-minute bandwagon or strategic voters. As a consequence, stable partisans are more likely to filter external events through partisan perceptual screens (e.g. Druckman et al. 2013). Similarly, voters who are more convinced about their vote choice are likely more engaged with its success than voters who are not. The more voters identify with their vote choice at the ballot box, the more likely they are to be subject to the winner/loser gap afterwards. Indeed, ideological distance to one's party decreases the effect being a winner (Curini, Jou, & Memoli, 2012; Singh, 2014; Beaudonnet et al., 2014). We argue that the vote choice process affects the winner/loser gap:

H6a. The positive effect of voting for a winning party is stronger for citizens who intended to vote for that party for a longer time span (i.e., stable party supporters) than for citizens with volatile vote intentions.

H6b. The positive effect of voting for a winning party is stronger for citizens who voted for that party with more confidence.

## Data & Methods

### Panel survey

A test of these hypotheses places a range of demands on our data. First, in order to isolate the effects of voting for an electorally successful party at the current election from the effects of voting for a governing party at the earlier election, we need to focus on a multiparty system that offers sufficient variance. Second, to isolate the timing of the winner/loser gap as a consequence of elections, we need to study an election with a relatively high level of electoral volatility and unstable opinion polls, so that the outcome of the election would not be clear early in the campaign. Third, to isolate the effect of elections on the composition of parliament from its effect on the composition of government, we need to focus on a case with a relatively long coalition negotiation process. Fourth, a crucial test requires detailed panel data with multiple waves in the run-up to parliamentary elections as well as a post-election wave. Fifth, the data need to cover a wide range of measures of political support.

To meet these demands, we study the 2012 Dutch parliamentary elections.[4] The Netherlands has a rather fragmented multiparty system: the effective number of political parties in parliament was 6.7 before the 2012 elections and 5.7 afterwards. The 2012 election campaign showed particularly volatile opinion polls.[5] Consequently, the electoral winner/loser effect can be isolated as it theoretically cannot have been present months before the actual vote was cast. The coalition formation process did not interfere with the classification of voters as winners and losers based on the electoral gains and losses. Dutch coalition formations are notoriously long and uncertain[6] (De Winter & Dumont 2010). No earlier than six days after the 2012 elections, the future coalition parties (VVD and PvdA) decided to enter negotiations. By then, 93.3% of the respondents had filled in their answers to the final wave. The coalition agreement would only be finished 41 days later. Which parties ended up in government is thus unlikely to factor into the effects studied in this paper.

We set up a panel survey between June and September 2012. Although the survey covered five waves, we can only use four, as one of the waves (3 months before the election) did not cover the extensive battery of attitudes towards the political system (i.e., political support).[7] Our analysis thus ends up with four waves. Three of those are pre-election: mid-May (4 months before the elections), mid-August (2 months before the elections), and the very end of August (2 to 1 weeks before the elections). The final wave was a post-election wave, for which data collection started 2 days after the election and ended within a week.

A sample of respondents was drawn from the online panel of TNS-Nipo (currently: Kantar), so that the respondents would be representative to Dutch society on a range of demographic characteristics. Respondents were invited by email to participate in each wave. Particularly between the first wave (1511 respondents) and the second wave (1220 respondents) respondents dropped out. In each subsequent wave all original respondents were invited to participate, regardless of earlier non-response. The final wave covered 1143 respondents. While our main analyses are based on all

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[4] Early elections for the Lower House were announced on April 27th 2012 and held on September 12th 2012, after the previous minority government lost parliamentary support from the radical rightwing populist Freedom Party.

[5] Particularly, the Socialist Party seemed poised to win strongly until mid-August, after which it lost 15-20 seats in the opinion polls to end up with the same 15 seats it had received in 2010. By contrast, the Dutch Labour Party PvdA gained approximately the same number of seats in the polls during the last month before the election to end up with 8 more than in 2010. Finally, the Liberal-conservative VVD of Prime Minister Rutte gained 10 seats in 2012, mostly won in the final weeks before the elections.

[6] Generally, negotiations are quite likely to break down due to availability of alternative options. Although a breakdown did not happen in 2012 (the negotiation process would be completed 54 days after the elections), that was not known just after the elections when the post-election wave was fielded.

[7] We ignore this wave in our discussion of the panel data and the numbering of the waves in this article, as it is irrelevant to the analysis.

respondents who participated in at least two waves, the estimates are robustness to the subsample of respondents that participated in every single wave (see Appendix B).

*Dependent variables*

The dependent variable – political support – consists of nine items that cover two well established concepts in the literature, specific political trust and external political efficacy. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with each of these items on a 4-point scale (completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree). The items were:

1. No politician can be trusted (trust in p) (recoded)
2. Against better knowledge politicians promise more than they can deliver (p: promise vs deliver) (recoded)
3. Ministers and junior-ministers mainly guard their own interest (p: own interest) (recoded)
4. One becomes a member of parliament because of one's political friends rather than ones competencies (p: friends vs competence) (recoded)
5. Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my opinion (my vote vs opinion) (recoded)
6. Most politicians are competent people who know what they are doing (p: competent)
7. Politicians are well capable of solving important problems (p: capable)
8. Politicians do not understand anything about what is happening is society (p: not understand society) (recoded)
9. Compromises are necessary in politics (compromises)

Items 5 and 8 are about external political efficacy (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990), which deals with responsiveness of political leaders to the wishes of the electorate. All other items (save item 9) deal with politicians or political parties. Between brackets we show the labels for each dependent variable that we use in the tables below.

All variables were recoded so that high scores signal more positive attitudes towards politics and politicians. Respondents with missing values on any of these items in any wave are deleted pairwise. We thus retain as much information as possible on each item-wave combination.

The most common measure in this field, satisfaction with democracy, was unfortunately asked in merely three of the four waves.[8] Therefore, we used it as a robustness test rather than a part

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[8] Due to an error of the polling agency, the answer categories to this question were offered in reversed order in the second wave. We recoded the answers to be in line with the other waves.

of our main analysis. The outcomes show that the findings in our main analyses were substantially robust (see Appendix C).

*Independent variables*

Wave is measured as a dummy variable to signal each subsection panel wave. We treat the first wave as the reference category.

Electoral winners and losers are defined by voting for a party that won or lost in terms of vote share compared to the previous election. The 2012 vote was asked in the post-election wave of our panel survey. We recoded this vote into several categories based on their electoral success in 2012 compared to the 2010 election result: voting for a party that won substantially by gaining entrance to parliament or winning more than 5 percentage points in vote share (VVD, PvdA, newly elected 50Plus), voting for a party that lost substantially by more than 5 percentage points (PVV, CDA, GreenLeft, non-elected parties), voting for a party that remained basically stable by winning or losing maximally 1 percentage point vote share (SP, D66, CU, SGP, PvdD), non-voters, and voters who refused to answer or did not know. There are no parties that did not fit this scale; i.e., no party won or lost 1 to 5 percentage points in vote share. This classification is based on changes in electoral support rather than the absolute size of support (cf. Blais et al. 2017). Yet, this classification of winners and losers matches the post-election narratives in all major Dutch newspapers.[9] All sets of parties contain economically left-wing and right-wing parties, as well as progressive and conservative parties.

*Moderators*

Hypotheses 6a and 6b call for moderating effects. The stability of vote intentions during the campaign (H6a) is measured in three categories: (1) Stable voters who intended to vote for the same party in all three pre-election waves that they ultimately voted for at the ballot box, (2) Voters who shifted vote intention during the pre-election waves, and (3) Voters who shifted their vote intention at the last minute (i.e., never intended to vote for the party they ultimately voted for in the three pre-election waves).

To assess the certainty with which respondents held their party preference (H6b), we rely on a survey question asked in the post-election wave. Respondents were asked to assess (on a seven

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[9] In Dutch media on the day after the election, only the narrative on the Socialist Party was somewhat ambivalent. Their election outcome was framed as stability that feels like a loss, with the party losing all its electoral gains during the campaign.

point scale) to what extent they agree with the statement that they were certain about their choice when they casted their vote. Particularly among voters for winning parties, few voters had been outright uncertain about their vote, though there is sufficient variance in the degree of certainty.

*Control variables*

At the onset of the election campaign, those who had earlier voted for one of the governing parties might still be more supportive of the political system than those who had earlier voted for an opposition party (Chang et al. 2014; cf. Farland 2017). We therefore control for this rivaling winner/loser gap based on the vote at the 2010 elections for a subsequent government party.[10] We recoded this vote into a dummy variable, 2010 vote for government party. Respondents who had voted Liberal-conservative VVD or Christian-democratic CDA were coded as 1, as their parties would subsequently form the government coalition between 2010 and 2012. Respondents who had voted anything else were coded as 0.[11] Moreover, we control for the interaction between the 2010 government party vote and the survey wave, as it is at least possible that the winner/loser gap of the previous election loses its salience in the run up to the next election.

Additionally, our models control for four background characteristics that are commonly found to be related to political support (see e.g. Zmerli & Van der Meer 2017): Gender, age (non-linearly), level of education (categorical), and employment status. All were measured before the first wave was in the field.

An overview of the wording of all variables is provided in Appendix A.

*Method*

We transposed our data from a wide-format to a long-format, so that we nested the responses to each of the 9 political support items in each wave within the respondent-wave combination. This model is a 3-level model (responses nested in respondent-waves nested in respondents). The dependent variable is thus political support (at the lowest level of analysis: on each of the nine outcome variables). The stable variance between the nine items is controlled for by a variable that identifies the nine items categorically; the individual level changes over time on each of these items is explicitly modeled via the interaction with wave number.  This model strategy allows us to test

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[10] Most respondents in the TNS-Nipo panel reported their 2010 vote directly after the 2010 elections; respondents who joined the panel at a later data reported the vote before the first wave of our survey was in the field.

[11] Although radical-rightwing populist Freedom Party (PVV) had provided parliamentary support to this minority government, we did not code Freedom Party voters as 1, because (i) their party had not been part of government, and (ii) the PVV terminated its parliamentary support in April.

hypothesis 2 directly, and all other hypotheses more parsimoniously. To analyze our panel data, we employ multilevel growth curve modeling. A major advantage of the growth curve model is that it allows us to test these hypotheses temporally: It allows us to assess the theorized timing of the winner/loser effect. Because our models contain four panel waves, the growth curve model is unlikely to be too conservative (Singer & Willett 2003). Yet, the outcomes and resulting tables are rather complex, as the growth curve models requires the estimation of a large number of cross-level interaction effects and their corresponding covariances (which are not displayed in the tables below). We estimated our models in MLWin 2.29.

## Results

### *Election boost*

The top panel of Model 1 in Table 1 shows to what extent the level of political support differs across specific items (reference item is 'trust in politicans'). The results indicate that respondents are most likely to think that compromises are necessary in politics (b=0.61), and least likely to think that politicians do not promise more than they can deliver (b=-0.77). These differences across items are controlled for across all supsequent models (tables and figures).

The second panel of Model 1 relates to the first two hypotheses. We find that political support increases as elections grow nearer in wave 3 (b=0.04) and particularly after election day in wave 4 (b=0.08), compared to wave 1. We find evidence for the election boost, in line with hypothesis 1. While it already becomes visible in the weeks before, this election boost is biggest after election day. This supports hypothesis 2.

To test hypothesis 3, Model 2 introduces cross-level interaction effects that estimate whether the election boost differs significantly across the nine political support items. The direct effects under the header of *L2* signal the marginal effects of the election boost on item 1 (trust in politicians).[12] The cross-level interaction effects show to what extent the marginal effects on the other items are significantly different. Several findings stand out. First, the marginal effects are positive for all items. We thus find an election boost on all political support measures. Second, there are few significant differences in marginal effects. Most notably, the marginal effect of the post-election wave (wave 4) is significantly stronger on support for the ideas that politicians are

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[12] We also ran separate models for each dependent variable. These models show significant election boosts on each separate item (see Appendix C).

*competent* (0.04 + 0.09), that politicians are *capable* of solving problems (0.04 + 0.09) and that *compromises* are necessary (0.04 + 0.08). The commonality between these three items is not substantive but methodological: in the questionnaire's battery of items of political support, these three items were the only ones that were formulated positively, i.e., agreement with the statement signals support rather than lack of support. Apparently, the election boost was more easily expressed in respondents' responses due to the positive formulation of these three statements, even though these statements targeted attitudes on competence and compromises rather than responsiveness. These results mean that our third hypothesis, which assumes that elections have the strongest boosting effect on citizens' perceptions of political responsiveness, is not supported.

[Table 1 somewhat here]

### *Winners and losers*

With Table 2 we move to the winner/loser-effect of the 2012 Dutch parliamentary elections. At the respondent level (L3) we compare the electoral winners of the 2012 elections (who voted for a party with increased support) to electoral losers (declined support), voters for parties with rather stable vote shares, non-voters, and others. Simultaneously, we estimate cross-level interaction effects between winner/loser status (L3) and wave (L2) to estimate the differences between electoral winners and electoral losers over time.Model 3 does not control for winner/loser status based on government composition between 2010 and 2012, but Model 4 does.[13] As the outcomes are substantively similar, we will explain the tests of hypotheses 4 and 5 based on Model 3.

Table 2 reveals several findings. Citizens who voted for an electorally succesful party in the 2012 elections are indeed more supportive than citizens who voted for a losing party. But this is not sufficient evidence for the winner/loser effect. That would require us to ascribe this difference to the 2012 elections. The interaction effects in our growth curve models show that this is only partly the case. Already in the first wave, four months before the 2012 elections, the future winners report significantly higher levels of political support than the future losers (b=-0.11) and the future non-

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[13] While we find that respondents who in 2010 voted for parties that would govern during the subsequent years display higher levels of political support, we do not find any significant evidence that this effect diminishes during or even directly after the election campaign of 2012.

voters (b=-0.45). At that point in time, the winner/loser gap cannot be ascribed to apparent trends in the opinion polls that far before the elections.[14] Rather, this seems to signal spuriousness.

Concurrently, however, the cross-level interaction effects in Model 3 show that the election boost in the post-election wave (wave 4) is significantly stronger for electoral winners (b=0.12) than for electoral losers (b=0.12-0.06=0.06), for voters for stable parties (b=0.12-0.07=0.05), and for non-voters (b=0.12-0.08=0.04). In other words, the point estimates of the marginal effects are two to three times larger for winners than for other groups. This supports hypothesis 4: the boosting effect of voting for an electoral winner is largest directly after election day.

The marginal effects are positive (or, more precisely, not significantly negative) among all groups of voters, including losers and even non-voters. This is interesting from the point of view of losers' consent (Anderson et al. 2005). While the election outcomes did *not* lead to a drop in political support among non-winners, the election boost was strongest for winners. This supports hypothesis 5. The predicted means (and 95% confidence intervals) for various groups of voters in each of the four waves are graphically displayed in Figure 1, where the reference group (winners) are displayed in bold black.

[Table 2 somewhat here]
[Figure 1 somewhat here]

### *Moderating effects: volatile vote intentions and vote confidence*

Finally, we consider to what extent the winner/loser gap is moderated by voters' decision making process, namely by the stability of party preferences and by vote confidence. For that purposes, we built on model 4 by adding these moderators as direct effects (at level 3) as well as by adding the two- and three-way cross-level interaction effects (with wave and winner/loser status).

Figure 2 graphically displays the predicted probabilities and their related confidence intervals for six groups of voters, distinguished by the stability of their vote intentions and their status as winner or loser after the election. Voters with stable vote intentions generally display significantly more political support than voters of the same party who changed preferences during the campaign. Yet, the left panel in Figure 2 shows that among winners the election boost is not significantly stronger for stable partisans (in bold black) than for voters who shifted party preference

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[14] In the opinion polls published before the second half of August 2012 (3 weeks before the 2012 elections) the biggest electoral winners in these 2012 elections had been rather stable (VVD) or in a very deep dip (PvdA) compared to the 2010 election outcome.

during the campaign. This refutes Hypothesis 6a. While this finding is in line with a previous study into the two-round French 2012 legislative elections (Beaudonnet et al., 2014), it is not in line with two others (Singh, 2014; Curini, Jou, & Memoli, 2012). Possibly, it is not the act of switching to another party but the motivation (e.g., ideological or strategic) and the confidence behind the casted vote that conditions the winner/loser effect. The right panel in Figure 2 shows a similar lack of significant trends among stable and volatile electoral losers.

[Figure 2 somewhat here]

We find more support for hypothesis 6b on the confidence with which respondents for winning parties casted their votes . Figure 3a shows that  that the election boost among voters for winning parties is stronger for voters who were most confident of their vote (displayed in bold black) than for voters who were relatively less certain about their vote. From Figure 3b, we can conclude that this confidence of voting does not affect losers.

[Figure 3a and 3b somewhat here]

## Conclusion

Political science has long acknowledged that elections are a fundamental legitimizing principle of representative democracy, not only in theory but also in practice. Elections tend to boost satisfaction with regime performance, political efficacy, and trust in governmental institutions (Quaranta & Martini, 2016: 168). Concurrently, elections have resulted in a support gap between winners and losers on these very same attitudes (e.g., Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Anderson et al. 2005; Blais et al. 2017).

Yet, it has been very difficult to pull apart different explanations behind these election effects. First, most studies have not been able to distinguish between two causes of election effects, i.e., (changes in) political representation in parliament and (changes in) government formation. Second, relying on two-wave panel surveys at best, the timing of the election effects have remained unclear. Third, few studies focused on more specific aspects of political support than generic attitudes such as satisfaction with democracy and trust in government, which obscured potential mechanisms.

To isolate the effects of parliamentary elections from those of a new government, this paper focused on the Netherlands in 2012. Its highly proportional electoral system and the fragmented multi-party system enabled a rather stringent test of the two election effects. Directed coalition negotiations started a week after the election and took almost two months to conclude. Electoral winners and losers could thus be defined by the relative success of their parties in obtaining seats in the Dutch Lower House, independent of their subsequent government status. To identify the timing of the election effects, this paper employed a four wave panel survey around the elections. Notably, the Dutch 2012 election campaign showed quite volatile polls, so that the election outcome had not been telegraphed weeks beforehand. Finally, to investigate potential mechanisms, we focused on a wide range of measures of political support.

We found conformation that elections boost political support. Although we had expected that elections primarily stimulate perceptions of responsiveness, this does not seem to be the case. Any differential effect on various measures of political support turns out to be a methodological artefact instead. The election boost is strongest in the week directly after election day, but first becomes visible in the weeks before the elections. Furthermore, the election boost is strongest for voters of those parties who substantively won more seats in parliament than they held before. Yet, even among electoral losers and non-voters the marginal effects were not negative.

All in all, our findings suggests that, in a highly proportional system, elections are a rising tide that raises all boats – especially electoral winners but even electoral losers – on a wide range of attitudes.

While the winner/loser gap is the largest directly after the elections, a much smaller gap already existed in the first survey wave, four months before the elections. This cannot be attributed to any anticipated success (or the lack thereof) in the opinion polls that far ahead, nor to politically dissatisfied voters tendency to lean towards fringe parties. Close inspection of the data suggests that it might reflect the peculiar composition of the losers in 2012, with the radical right-wing populist Freedom Party (PVV) as one of the losing parties. This party attracts largely dissatisfied voters and its severe electoral loss had been telegraphed in the polls ever since it retracted its support for the Rutte I government (2010-2012). Ultimately, this serves to show the necessity of testing the winner/loser effect dynamically.

Ideally, we would have defined winning and losing in a more complex way. To date, studies have dominantly relied on the distinction between winners and losers in a rather one-dimensional way. Most define winning elections as having voted for a party that subsequently got access to government power (e.g., Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Esaiasson, 2011), although in coalition

systems it then matters to winners whether the other parties in the coalition are to their liking as well (Singh & Thornton, 2016). Yet, winning and losing comprises more than access to government. In electoral terms, one may define success in a range of ways: as successful representation, such as being the largest party, winning the seat in the constituency (Henderson, 2008), obtaining a proportional seat share (Blais, Morin-Chassé, & Singh, 2017), or winning additional seats in parliament (as we do). Moreover, we might consider the interactions between all these outcomes (i.e., winning or losing on multiple fronts), as well as the longitudinal perspective (i.e., winning or losing subsequent elections in a row – cf. Chang et al. 2014). Winning the elections but losing the government formation period might, for instance, have more harmful effects than the inverse or even than losing both the elections and the formation period. Finally, there is a somewhat more subjective aspect to winning and losing elections, depending on media frames, subjective expectations, and trends in the final weeks of the election campaign. Winning and losing is ultimately multidimensional. Richer, cross-national data with multiple pre- and multiple post-election waves are needed to distinguish between winner and loser status at various stages in a more specific and conditional way.

Despite the potential richness of such a multidimensional approach to winning and losing, the net result remains that elections boost political support. This boost occurs not merely because of the impact elections have on the composition of government but also directly because election outcomes upset the balance of power in parliament. Representation matters. Unlike countries that conventionally face representation deficits – i.e., parties that are underrepresented in parliament in comparison to their vote share – we find no evidence that elections tend to depress political support among electoral losers and non-voters in the Netherlands share (cf. Blais, Morin-Chassé, & Singh, 2017). The clarity of the proportional rules and lack of a substantive electoral threshold might justify the election outcome even to electoral losers, and thereby explain why elections do not depress losers' opinions on democracy, political institutions, and politicians.

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**Table 1. The election boost across four waves and in nine dependent political support variables**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B-coefficient | SE | B-coefficient | SE |
| *L1: Response (within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Support measure (ref: trust in p)[1] | | | | |
| • p: promise vs deliver | -0.77 | 0.01 *** | -0.76 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: own interest | -0.12 | 0.01 *** | -0.13 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: friends vs competence | -0.26 | 0.01 *** | -0.26 | 0.02 *** |
| • my vote vs opinion | -0.41 | 0.01 *** | -0.41 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: competent | -0.08 | 0.01 *** | -0.13 | 0.02 *** |
| • p:capable | -0.26 | 0.01 *** | -0.29 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: not understand society | -0.16 | 0.01 *** | -0.18 | 0.02 *** |
| • compromises | 0.61 | 0.01 *** | 0.57 | 0.02 *** |
| *L2:Wave (Within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Ref: wave 1 (3 months pre-election) | | | | |
| • Wave 2 (4 weeks pre-election) | -0.02 | 0.01 * | -0.02 | 0.02 |
| • Wave 3 (2 weeks pre-election) | 0.04 | 0.01 *** | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| • Wave 4 (post-election) | 0.08 | 0.01 *** | 0.04 | 0.02 |
| *Cross-level interaction effects* | | | | |
| Wave 2 * p: promise vs deliver | | | -0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p: promise vs deliver | | | 0.00 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * p: promise vs deliver | | | -0.01 | 0.03 |
| Wave 2 * p: own interest | | | -0.00 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p: own interest | | | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * p: own interest | | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 2 * p: friends vs competence | | | -0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p: friends vs competence | | | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * p: friends vs competence | | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 2 * my vote vs opinion | | | -0.00 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * my vote vs opinion | | | -0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * my vote vs opinion | | | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| Wave 2 * p: competent | | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p: competent | | | 0.10 | 0.03 *** |
| Wave 4 * p: competent | | | 0.09 | 0.03 *** |
| Wave 2 * p:capable | | | 0.00 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p:capable | | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * p:capable | | | 0.09 | 0.03 *** |
| Wave 2 * p: not understand society | | | -0.01 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * p: not understand society | | | 0.06 | 0.03 * |
| Wave 4 * p: not understand society | | | 0.04 | 0.03 |
| Wave 2 * compromises | | | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * compromises | | | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| Wave 4 * compromises | | | 0.08 | 0.03 ** |

Growth curve models (L1: response; L2: respondent-wave; L3: respondent), random slopes at L1
Models control for Gender, Age, Education, Employment status at L3
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

[1] 1. No politician can be trusted; 2. Against better knowledge politicians promise more than they can deliver; 3. Ministers and junior-ministers mainly guard their own interest; 4. One becomes a member of parliament because of one's political friends rather than ones competencies; 5. Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my opinion; 6. Most politicians are competent people who know what they are doing; 7. Politicians are well capable of solving important problems; 8. Politicians do not understand anything about what is happening is society; 9. Compromises are necessary in politics.

**Table 2. The election boost by voting behavior**

| | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B-coefficient | SE | B-coefficient | SE |
| *L2:Wave (Within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Ref: wave 1 (3 months pre-election) | | | | |
| • Wave 2 (4 weeks pre-election) | -0.02 | 0.02 ** | -0.03 | 0.02 * |
| • Wave 3 (2 weeks pre-election) | 0.04 | 0.02 *** | 0.05 | 0.02 *** |
| • Wave 4 (post-election) | 0.12 | 0.02 *** | 0.11 | 0.02 *** |
| *L3: Respondent* | | | | |
| 2012 vote | | | | |
| Ref: party with increased support (winners) | | | | |
| • Declined support (losers) | -0.11 | 0.04 *** | -0.11 | 0.04 *** |
| • Stable support | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.04 |
| • Non-voter | -0.45 | 0.05 *** | -0.42 | 0.05 *** |
| • DK/Ref | -0.35 | 0.13 *** | -0.32 | 0.13 ** |
| 2010 vote for government party | | | 0.11 | 0.04 *** |
| *Cross-level interaction effects* | | | | |
| Wave 2 * Declined support | -0.00 | 0.03 | -0.00 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * Declined support | 0.06 | 0.03 * | 0.05 | 0.03 * |
| Wave 4 * Declined support | -0.06 | 0.03 * | -0.05 | 0.03 * |
| Wave 2 * Stable support | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| Wave 3 * Stable support | -0.06 | 0.03 * | -0.06 | 0.03 * |
| Wave 4 * Stable support | -0.07 | 0.03 ** | -0.06 | 0.03 ** |
| Wave 2 * Non-voter | 0.07 | 0.04 * | 0.08 | 0.04 * |
| Wave 3 * Non-voter | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * Non-voter | -0.08 | 0.04 * | -0.07 | 0.04 * |
| Wave 2 * DK/Ref | -0.05 | 0.10 | -0.04 | 0.11 |
| Wave 3 * DK/Ref | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.15 | 0.12 |
| Wave 4 * DK/Ref | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.10 |
| Wave 2 * 2010govt | | | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| Wave 3 * 2010govt | | | -0.01 | 0.02 |
| Wave 4 * 2010govt | | | 0.02 | 0.02 |

Growth curve models (L1: response; L2: respondent-wave; L3: respondent), random slopes for wave
Models control for Support measure at L1; Gender, Age, Education, Employment status at L3
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.00

**Figure 1. Predicted means of political support for winners, losers and other voter groups in three pre-election waves and one post-election wave, the Netherlands 2012**

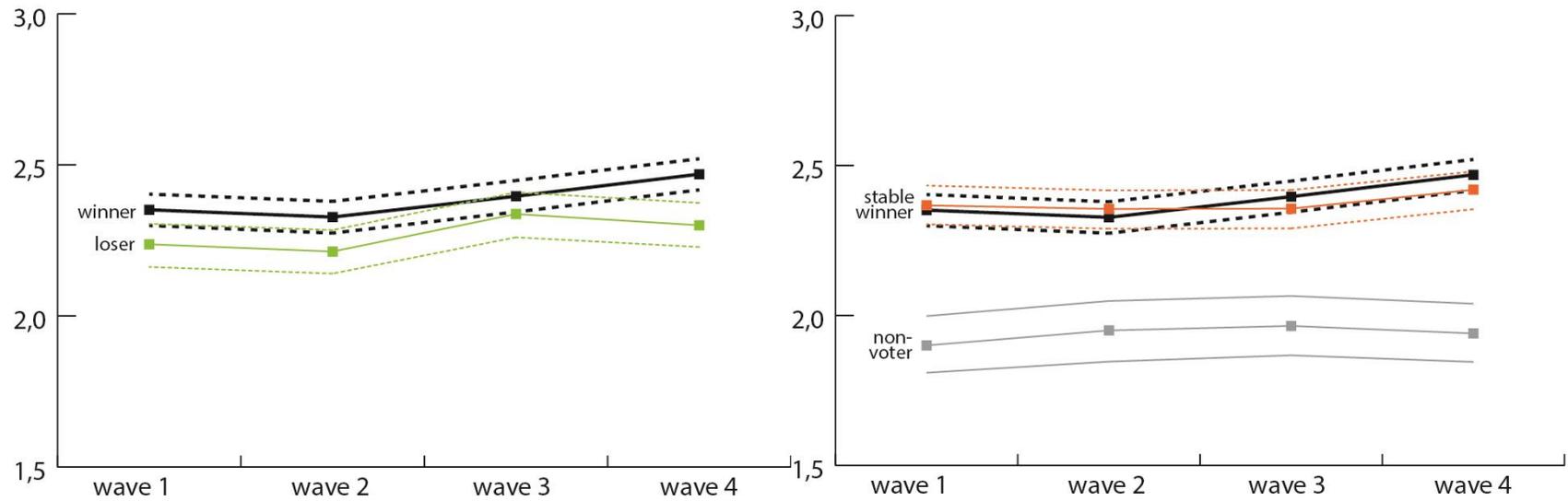**Figure 2:. Predicted means of political support for winners and losers with high, medium and low stability in vote intention, in three pre-election waves and one post-election wave, the Netherlands 2012**
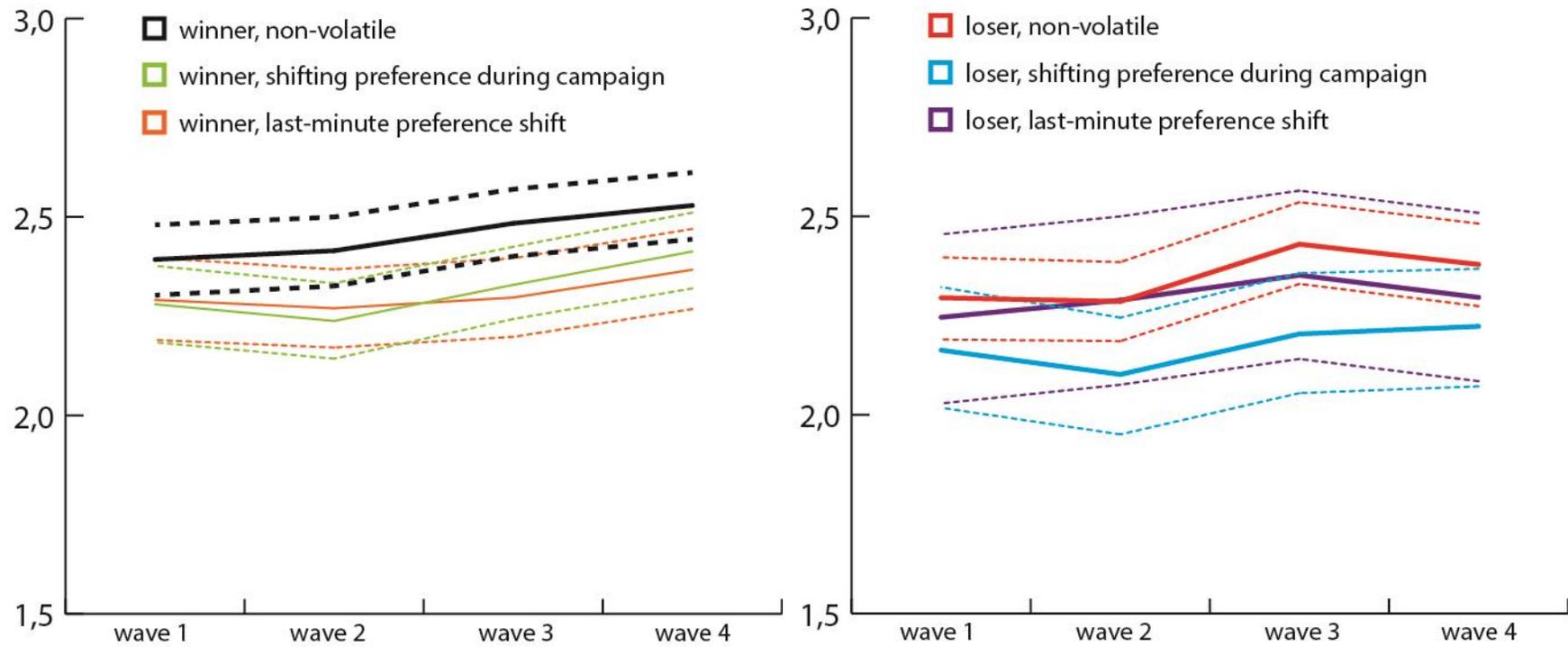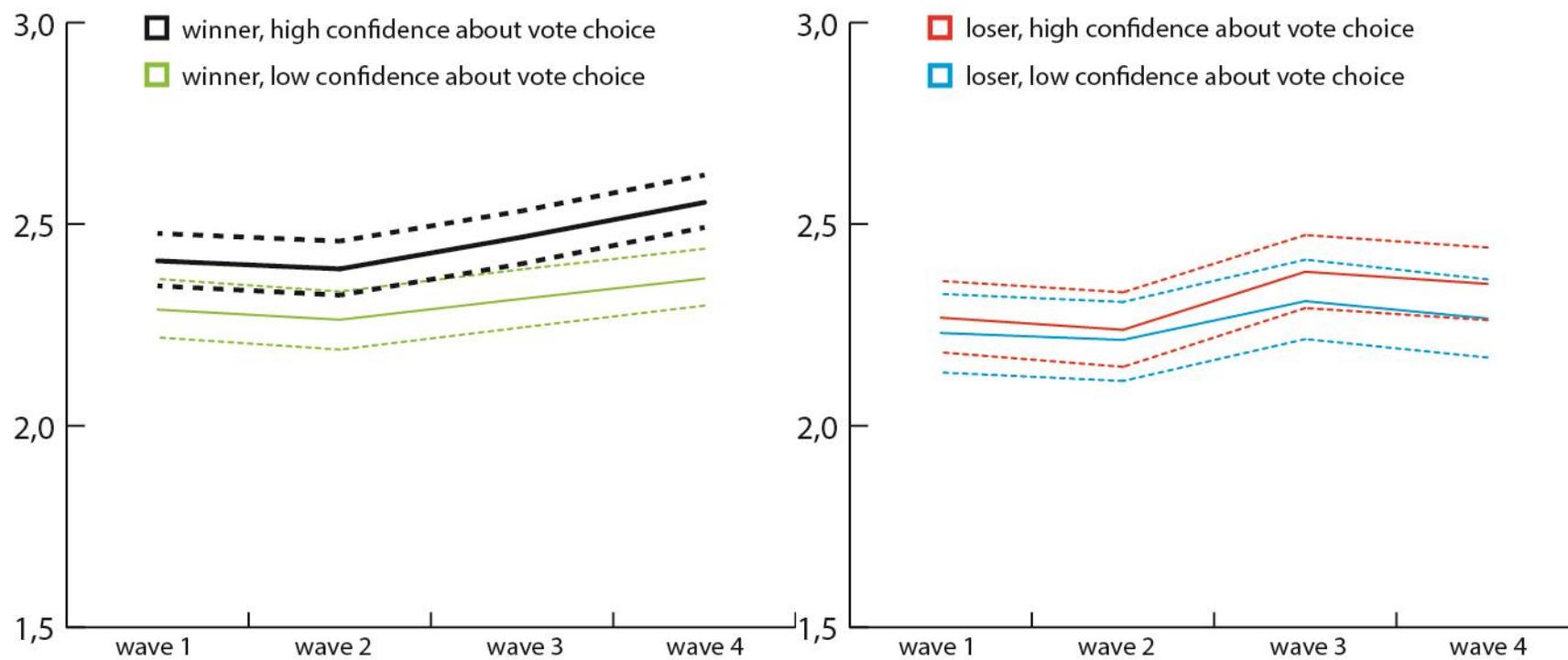
**Figure 3. Predicted means of political support for winners and losers with high and low confidence about their vote, in three pre-election waves and one post-election wave, the Netherlands 2012**

## APPENDIX A: List of variables

| Variables | Scale | Description |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Dependent variables</u> | 1-4 | "Please indicate for each statement whether you agree or not"(completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree) |
| • No politician can be trusted (trust in p) | | recoded |
| • Against better knowledge politicians promise more than they can deliver (p: promise vs deliver) | | recoded |
| • Ministers and junior-ministers mainly guard their own interest (p: own interest) | | recoded |
| • One becomes a member of parliament because of one's political friends rather than ones competencies (p: friends vs competence) | | recoded |
| • Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my opinion (my vote vs opinion) | | recoded |
| • Most politicians are competent people who know what they are doing (p: competent) | | |
| • Politicians are well capable of solving important problems (p: capable) | | |
| • Politicians do not understand anything about what is happening is society (p: not understand society) | | recoded |
| • Compromises are necessary in politics (compromises) | | |
| • Satisfaction with democracy (Appendix C) | 1-4 | "Please indicate, irrespective of the current government, to what extent you are (dis)satisfied with the way democracy works in the Netherlands?" (completely dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied, completely satisfied) |
| <u>Independent variables</u> | | |
| Wave | 0-1 | Dummies for wave 1-4, wave 1 is reference category |
| *Electoral groups:* | | |
| • Electoral winners | 0-1 | Voting VVD, PvdA, newly elected 50Plus |
| • Electoral losers | 0-1 | Voting PVV, CDA, GreenLeft, non-elected parties |
| • Voters of parties with stable support | 0-1 | Voting SP, D66, CU, SGP, PvdD |
| • Non-voters | 0-1 | |
| • DK/ref: voters who refused to answer or did not know | 0-1 | |
| Vote at the 2010 elections for a subsequent government party | 0-1 | Respondents who had voted Liberal-conservative VVD or Christian-democratic CDA were coded as 1, as their parties would subsequently form the government coalition between 2010 and 2012. Respondents who had voted anything else were coded as 0 |
| Gender[a] | 0-1 | |
| Age (non-linearly) [a] | | TNS-Nipo background measure (measured in years) |
| Level of education (categorical) [a] | | TNS-Nipo background measure (completed level of education in seven categories from none to academic MA, dk) |
| Employment status (categorical)[a] | | TNS-Nipo background measure (employed by government, employed in the private sector, self-employed, not employed, dk/ws) |
| *Stability of vote* | | |
| • Stable voters who intended to vote for the same party in all three pre-election waves | | Vote intention + vote choice in wave 1-4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| that they ultimately voted for at the ballot box | | |
| • Voters who shifted vote intention during the pre-election waves, and | | Vote intention + vote choice in wave 1-4 |
| • Voters who shifted their vote intention at the last minute (i.e., never intended to vote for the party they ultimately voted for in the three pre-election waves). | | Vote intention + vote choice in wave 1-3 |
| Certainty about party choice | 1-7 | "How certain or uncertain were you about your choice of party in this parliamentary elections?" (very certain – very uncertain) |

a Measured before the first wave was in the field.

## APPENDIX B. Consistently participating respondents

### Table B1. The election boost (consistently participating respondents)

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B-coefficient | SE | B-coefficient | SE |
| *L1: Response (within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Support measure (ref: trust in p) | | | | |
| • promise vs deliver | -0.77 | 0.02 *** | -0.76 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: own interest | -0.13 | 0.02 *** | -0.13 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: friends vs competence | -0.27 | 0.02 *** | -0.26 | 0.02 *** |
| • my vote vs opinion | -0.41 | 0.02 *** | -0.41 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: competent | -0.09 | 0.02 *** | -0.13 | 0.02 *** |
| • p:capable | -0.26 | 0.02 *** | -0.29 | 0.02 *** |
| • p: not understand society | -0.18 | 0.02 *** | -0.18 | 0.02 *** |
| • compromises | 0.61 | 0.02 *** | 0.57 | 0.02 *** |
| *L2:Wave (Within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Wave (ref: wave 1 ($t_{-13}$)) | | | | |
| • Wave 2 ($t_{-4}$) | -0.00 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.03 |
| • Wave 3 ($t_{-2}$) | 0.06 | 0.01 *** | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| • Wave 4 ($t_0$) | 0.09 | 0.01 *** | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| *Cross-level interaction effects* | | | | |
| Wave 2 * p: promise vs deliver | | | -0.03 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p: promise vs deliver | | | 0.04 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * p: promise vs deliver | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * p: own interest | | | 0.01 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p: own interest | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * p: own interest | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * p: friends vs competence | | | -0.06 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p: friends vs competence | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * p: friends vs competence | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * my vote vs opinion | | | -0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * my vote vs opinion | | | -0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * my vote vs opinion | | | 0.03 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * p: competent | | | -0.01 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p: competent | | | 0.09 | 0.04 ** |
| Wave 4 * p: competent | | | 0.07 | 0.04 * |
| Wave 2 * p:capable | | | -0.05 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p:capable | | | 0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * p:capable | | | 0.09 | 0.04 * |
| Wave 2 * p: not understand society | | | -0.02 | 0.04 |
| Wave 3 * p: not understand society | | | 0.06 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * not understand society | | | 0.04 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * compromises | | | -0.02 | 0.05 |
| Wave 3 * compromises | | | 0.01 | 0.05 |
| Wave 4 * compromises | | | 0.06 | 0.05 |

Growth curve models (L1: response; L2: respondent-wave; L3: respondent), random slopes for var
Models control for Gender, Age, Education, Employment status at L3
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

**Table B2. The election boost by voting behavior (consistently participating respondents)**

| | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B-coefficient | SE | B-coefficient | SE |
| *L2:Wave (Within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Wave (ref: wave 1) | | | | |
| • Wave 2 | 0.07 | 0.04 * | 0.08 | 0.04 * |
| • Wave 3 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.04 * |
| • Wave 4 | 0.10 | 0.10 *** | 0.14 | 0.05 *** |
| *L3: Respondent* | | | | |
| 2012 vote (ref: party with increased support) | | | | |
| • Declined support | -0.08 | 0.08 | -0.09 | 0.08 |
| • Stable support | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.07 |
| • Non-voter | -0.59 | 0.10 *** | -0.54 | 0.10 *** |
| • DK/Ref | -0.58 | 0.29 *** | -0.53 | 0.29 *** |
| 2010 vote for government party | | | 0.15 | 0.07 ** |
| *Cross-level interaction effects* | | | | |
| Wave 2 * Declined support | -0.09 | 0.07 | -0.09 | 0.07 |
| Wave 3 * Declined support | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.07 |
| Wave 4 * Declined support | -0.06 | 0.07 | -0.06 | 0.07 |
| Wave 2 * Stable support | -0.13 | 0.06 ** | -0.14 | 0.06 ** |
| Wave 3 * Stable support | -0.13 | 0.06 ** | -0.15 | 0.06 ** |
| Wave 4 * Stable support | -0.13 | 0.07 * | -0.16 | 0.07 ** |
| Wave 2 * Non-voter | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.09 |
| Wave 3 * Non-voter | -0.03 | 0.09 | -0.05 | 0.10 |
| Wave 4 * Non-voter | -0.18 | 0.10 * | -0.22 | 0.10 * |
| Wave 2 * DK/Ref | -0.16 | 0.25 | -0.17 | 0.25 |
| Wave 3 * DK/Ref | 0.00 | 0.28 | -0.02 | 0.29 |
| Wave 4 * DK/Ref | -0.03 | 0.30 | -0.07 | 0.30 |
| Wave 2 * 2010govt | | | -0.02 | 0.06 |
| Wave 3 * 2010govt | | | -0.06 | 0.06 |
| Wave 4 * 2010govt | | | -0.10 | 0.06 * |

Growth curve models (L1: response; L2: respondent-wave; L3: respondent), random slopes for wave
Models control for Variable at L1; Gender, Age, Education, Employment status at L3
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

**APPENDIX C. Satisfaction with democracy**

**Table C1. The election boost on satisfaction with democracy, by voting behavior**

| | Model 1 | | Model 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B-coefficient | SE | B-coefficient | SE |
| *L2:Wave (Within-respondents)* | | | | |
| Wave (ref: wave 1 ($t_{-13}$)) | | | | |
| • Wave 2 ($t_{-4}$) | -0.01 | 0.02 | -0.03 | 0.03 |
| • Wave 4 ($t_0$) | 0.06 | 0.02 *** | 0.10 | 0.03 *** |
| *L3: Respondent* | | | | |
| 2012 vote (ref: party with increased support) | | | | |
| • Declined support | | | -0.13 | 0.05 ** |
| • Stable support | | | -0.03 | 0.05 |
| • Non-voter | | | -0.42 | 0.07 *** |
| • DK/Ref | | | -0.46 | 0.17 *** |
| 2010 vote for government party | | | 0.17 | 0.04 *** |
| *Cross-level interaction effects* | | | | |
| Wave 2 * Declined support | | | -0.05 | 0.05 |
| Wave 4 * Declined support | | | -0.13 | 0.05 ** |
| Wave 2 * Stable support | | | -0.05 | 0.05 |
| Wave 4 * Stable support | | | -0.00 | 0.04 |
| Wave 2 * Non-voter | | | 0.02 | 0.07 |
| Wave 4 * Non-voter | | | 0.03 | 0.07 |
| Wave 2 * DK/Ref | | | 0.22 | 0.18 |
| Wave 4 * DK/Ref | | | 0.31 | 0.16 * |
| Wave 2 * 2010govt | | | -0.01 | 0.04 |
| Wave 4 * 2010govt | | | -0.09 | 0.04 ** |

Growth curve models (L1: response; L2: respondent-wave; L3: respondent), random slopes for wave
Models control for Gender, Age, Education, Employment status at L3
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

**APPENDIX D. The election boost across 9 political support items**

**Table D1. The election boost across 9 political support items**

| | No politician can be trusted (RC) | Against better knowledge politicians promise more than they can deliver (RC) | Ministers and junior-ministers mainly guard their own interest (RC) | One becomes a member of parliament because of one's political friends rather than ones capacities (RC) | Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my opinion (RC) | Most politicians are competent people who know what they are doing | Politicians are well capable of solving important problems | Politicians do not understand anything about what is happening is society (RC) | Compromises are necessary in politics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *L1:Wave (Within-resp)* Wave (ref: wave 1 (t$_{-13}$)) | | | | | | | | | |
| • Wave 2 (t$_{-4}$) | -0.02 | -0.06 ** | -0.02 | -0.05 * | -0.03 | 0.02 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.01 |
| • Wave 3 (t$_{-2}$) | -0.01 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.12 *** | 0.04 * | 0.08 *** | 0.04 * |
| • Wave 4 (t$_0$) | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.06 ** | 0.06 ** | 0.08 *** | 0.13 *** | 0.12 *** | 0.09 *** | 0.11 *** |

Growth curve models (L1: respondent-wave; L2: respondent)
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001