European populist radical right leaders' foreign policy beliefs: An operational code analysis

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Abstract

Despite the significance of the subject, studies on the foreign policy preferences of European populist radical right leaders are scarce except for a handful of examples. Are European populist radical right leaders more hostile than other world leaders or comparatively friendly? Do they use cooperative or conflictual strategies to achieve their political goals? What are the leadership types associated with their strategic orientations in international relations? Using the operational code construct in this empirical study, we answer these questions and depict the foreign policy belief systems of seven European populist radical right leaders. We test whether they share a common pattern in their foreign policy beliefs and whether their foreign policy belief systems are significantly different from the norming group of average world leaders. The results indicate that European populist radical right leaders lack a common pattern in terms of their foreign policy belief systems. While the average scores of the analysed European populist radical right leaders suggest that they are more conflictual in their world views, results also show that they employ instrumental approaches relatively similar to the average group of world leaders. This article illuminates the microfoundations of strategic behaviour in international relations and arrives at conclusions about the role of European populist radical right leaders in mainstream International Relations discussions, such as idealism versus realism. In this sense, the cognitivist research school complements and advances structural accounts of international relations by analysing leadership in world affairs.

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Introduction

European international affairs have been relatively cooperative since the end of the
Second World War. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)/European Union
(EU) expansions to the east further strengthened the calm on the continent. Recent politi-
cal developments, however, have caused concerns. A major culprit is the populist radical
right, which paves the way for illiberal democracies in Europe, challenging the legiti-
macy of the EU. The success of the UK's populists in the Brexit campaign stunned the
continent in 2016. The rise of populist authoritarian governments in Hungary and Poland,
and Marine Le Pen's, Geert Wilders's and Norbert Hofer's significant electoral cam-
paigns, reveal important insights into the current landscape of European politics. As
Chryssogelos (2017) notes, populism is no longer considered a phenomenon isolated
within domestic politics; world affairs are also largely influenced by it. Populist radical
right leaders influence their countries' foreign policies even when they are not in power.

Research conducted on the foreign policy positions of populist radical right parties in
Europe has found a number of common agendas and concerns, such as Euroscepticism,
migration (especially by Muslim populations), terrorism, Turkey's EU membership aspi-
rations and anti-Americanism (Chryssogelos, 2017; Liang, 2007). Despite these com-
monalities, inconsistent and changing views on most foreign policy issues are distinctive
characteristics of European populists. The National Rally's (formerly known as the Front
National (FN)) radically different attitudes towards Russia during and in the aftermath of
the Cold War (Shields, 2007), the Freedom Party of Austria's (FPÖ's) contradictory posi-
tions on relations with the US and Russia (Meyer, 2007), or European populist radical
right (EPRR) leaders' more positive attitudes vis-a-vis the US after the election of
President Donald Trump in 2016 present some examples in this regard.

Despite its utmost importance, scholarship has largely ignored populist radical right
leaders' international agendas, with only a few exceptions. Liang's (2007) edited volume
deals with various populist radical right parties in Europe, with a focus on foreign policy.
Verbeek and Zaslove's (2015, 2017) studies analyse the relationship between populism
and foreign policy in general. The 'Europe's troublemakers: The populist challenge to
foreign policy' report by a pan-European network of experts on radical right populism in
Europe describes EPRR parties as the 'troublemakers' of Europe in terms of their atti-
tudes towards foreign policymaking (Balfour et al., 2016). Cas Mudde (2016: 14) has
argued that 'recent developments, like Brexit and the refugee crisis, have made it clear
that' this lack of academic interest cannot continue 'as radical right parties are increas-
ingly affecting foreign policy, and not just the process of European integration'.

This study aims to fill this gap by analysing the foreign policy belief systems of seven
influential EPRR leaders: Marine Le Pen (France), Viktor Orban (Hungary), Geert Wilders
(Netherlands), Nigel Farage (Britain), Jimmie Åkesson (Sweden), Frauke Petry (Germany)
and Norbert Hofer (Austria).[1] We answer the following questions: are the foreign policy

beliefs of these EPRR leaders hostile or cooperative towards other states? Do they use coercive or cooperative instruments of power as strategies to achieve their goals? Do they believe that they are in control of history or do they attribute historical control to the political Other? What are their leadership styles and which strategies do they use?

One of the major contributions of this study is its empirical approach to the topic. We use a well-established foreign policy analysis theory and its analytical tools to analyse the foreign policy beliefs of EPRR leaders. Operational code analysis (George, 1969; Leites, 1951, 1953; Walker, 2000) relies on a strong theoretical ground based on political-psychology literature. By using the operational code construct, we test various hypotheses regarding the foreign policy beliefs of populist radical right leaders. To this end, we have independently collected a large data set including the public speeches of these seven EPRR leaders. Following the creation of the data set, we used a computer programme (ProfilerPlus) to run statistical tests and a content analysis, which allowed us to compare the results to the scores of a norming group of world leaders.

The results make important contributions to the literatures of both populism and International Relations (IR). There is a growing need to study the foreign policy beliefs of populist radical right leaders. This article sheds light on the debate as to whether populist radical right leaders are significantly different from other leaders in their foreign policy beliefs concerning the use of power and which strategies to employ. It is important to note that this study does not claim to analyse populism's or the radical right's foreign policy beliefs; rather, it compares the beliefs of EPRR leaders with those of average world leaders.

Theoretically, this article illuminates the microfoundations of macro-behaviour in international affairs. IR theory is saturated with structural analysis based on very high degrees of abstraction. Theories such as neorealism or neoliberalism are underspecified about agents, their preconceived cognitive heuristics (such as beliefs) and how they affect decision-making in IR. By answering significant questions with regards to EPRR leaders' beliefs about vital IR concepts such as conflict, cooperation or the role of the Self as an agent of history, this article illuminates the microfoundations of strategic behaviour.

Based on these microfoundations, this article also arrives at interesting conclusions about the broader debates within the mainstream IR community. By specifying the underpinning mechanisms, we offer an agent-oriented model of international affairs that can also serve traditional IR theories. In other words, the specific beliefs measured and tested in this article help to define populist radical right leaders' positions in mainstream IR discussions. The master beliefs measured in this article correspond to the world views represented by classical realism and idealism in IR. The empirical assessment of whether EPRR leaders' beliefs reflect a hostile versus friendly political world, or cooperative versus conflictual strategies, allows us to systematically determine their position in the enduring realist–idealist dichotomy. In this sense, this article relates to IR theory as well.

In the following section, we briefly review operational code analysis as an instrument for analysing the foreign policy beliefs of EPRR leaders. Then, we present our hypotheses, which are based on our review of the populist radical right literature and IR theory. The subsequent sections explain the research design and results and are followed by a discussion and conclusion to illuminate EPRR leaders' foreign policy belief patterns and their importance in terms of major IR theory debates.

Operational code analysis: Theory and literature

Do different EPRR leaders share similarities in their approaches to foreign policy? We ponder this question from two perspectives, namely, whether EPRR leaders conform with each other in terms of their policies, and whether they diverge from those of other world leaders. To this end, we ask: (1) 'Do they share a common set of beliefs about the exercise of power in the conduct of foreign policy?'; and (2) 'Do their average beliefs about the exercise of power differ from those of average world leaders?'

Based on the core argument of the cognitivist literature that leaders' beliefs are important factors in explaining world politics, operational code analysis is a classical approach to studying foreign policy and international relations. This approach relies on an at-a-distance method that includes the collection of public speeches, interviews and writings by leaders (Schafer and Walker, 2006a; Walker, 2000; Walker et al., 1998) and their analysis through content analysis procedures. In this respect, a causal link is established between leaders' foreign policy beliefs and their foreign policy decisions (George, 1969; Schafer and Walker, 2006a; Walker, 1983).

Originating from Nathan Leites's (1951, 1953) work on the Soviet Politburo, operational code analysis became more popular among scholars during the 1970s. Alexander George (1969) analysed Leites's works and categorised his results about the cognitive processes of Soviet Politburo members using a series of questions about their philosophical and instrumental beliefs. In this categorisation, philosophical beliefs represent basic assumptions and premises about the nature of the political universe. Instrumental beliefs are linked to the instruments of power chosen to achieve political goals. While questions on philosophical beliefs enable the examination of a leader's perception of the role of the 'Other' that he or she confronts, the instrumental questions provide conclusions about a leader's perception of the 'Self' regarding their optimal means for achieving political goals. Those questions developed by George (1969: 201–216) are as follows:

Philosophical questions:

P-1. What is the 'essential' nature of political life? Is the political universe one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?

P-2. What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?

P-3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?

P-4. How much 'control' or 'mastery' can one have over historical development? What is one's role in 'moving' and 'shaping' history in the desired direction?

P-5. What is the role of 'chance' in human affairs and in historical development?

Instrumental questions:

I-1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?

I-2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?

I-3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?

I-4. What is the best 'timing' of action to advance one's interests?

I-5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interest?

To focus on the core of operational code analysis, George (1969) narrows down different aspects of the exercise of power either by the Self (instrumental beliefs) or by the Other (philosophical beliefs). He defines these aspects as risk orientation, predictability, tactics, strategy, conflict, cooperation and hostility, which are embedded into several operational code beliefs. Going back to the prototype of operational code analysis, Leites (1951, 1953), for example, clearly identifies three aspects of power with regards to Lenin's operational code: (1) the cognitive aspect, which is the interest in who controls whom (also known as '*kto-kovo*', as coined by Lenin in Russian); (ii) the emotional aspect, which is the fear of annihilation; and (3) the motivational aspect, which is the principle of the pursuit of power. The exercise of social power in its various forms is highly relevant in all of the indices subsequently developed by Walker, Schafer and Young (1998) to answer the 10 questions listed earlier. Their Verbs In Context System (VICS) of content analysis identifies the basic means of exercising social power (rewards/punishments, promises/threats and supporting/opposing statements), which are retrieved and aggregated statistically so that the researcher can construct VICS indices of cooperation/conflict, strategies/tactics and historical control (Walker, 2000).

Holsti (1977) developed the theoretical aspect of operational code analysis further with his construction of a leadership typology based on combinations of different answers given to George's (1969) 10 questions. He included six types in his typology, A, B, C, D, E and F, which were later reduced to four by Walker (1983). The typology (see Figure 1) is mainly based on the master beliefs (P-1, I-1 and P-4), signalling the leader's belief (P-1) about the nature (either temporary or permanent) and the source of conflict (the individual, society or international system), plus (I-1) the leader's own (the Self's) belief regarding the best approach to strategy, as well as (P-4) their belief regarding control over historical development.

P-1, I-1 and P-4 are considered master beliefs for two reasons. First, both Alexander George (1969) and Ole Holsti (1977), as pioneers of modern operational code studies, use the term 'master belief' to refer to the centrality of P-1 regarding the Other. According to cognitive consistency theories of belief systems (Abelson, 1967; Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958), the elements (beliefs) of the system need to be internally consistent or logically coherent with one another. Therefore, George (1969) and Holsti (1977) have argued that all of the other operational code beliefs need to be consistent with P-1, which is how Holsti constructed his A through F typology. Methodologically, the VICS indices for P-1, I-1 and P-4 are defined as master beliefs as the indices of the remaining beliefs are extensions or derivations thereof.

TYPE A	**TYPE C**
Settle>Deadlock>Dominate>Submit	Settle>Dominate>Deadlock>Submit
Philosophical: Conflict is temporary, caused by human misunderstanding and miscommunication. A 'conflict spiral,' based upon misperception and impulsive responses, is the major danger of war. Opponents are often influenced in kind to conciliation and firmness. Optimism is warranted, based upon a leader's ability and willingness to shape historical development. The future is relatively predictable, and control over it is possible. **Instrumental**: Establish goals within a framework that emphasizes shared interests. Pursue broadly international goals incrementally with flexible strategies that control risks by avoiding escalation and acting quickly when conciliation opportunities arise. Emphasize resources that establish a climate for negotiation and compromise and avoid the early use of force.	**Philosophical**: Conflict is temporary; it is possible to restructure the state system to reflect the latent harmony of interests. The source of conflict is the anarchical state system, which permits a variety of causes to produce war. Opponents vary in nature, goals, and responses to conciliation and firmness. One should be pessimistic about goals unless the state system is changed, because predictability and control over historical development is low under anarchy. **Instrumental**: Establish optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Pursue shared goals, but control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Act quickly when conciliation opportunities arise and delay escalatory actions whenever possible. Resources other than military capabilities are useful.
TYPE D-E-F	**TYPE B**
Dominate>Settle>Deadlock>Submit	Dominate>Deadlock>Settle>Submit
Philosophical: Conflict is permanent, caused by human nature (D), nationalism (E), or international anarchy (F). Power disequilibria are major dangers of war. Opponents may vary, and responses to conciliation or firmness are uncertain. Optimism declines over the long run and in the short run depends upon the quality of leadership and a power equilibrium. Predictability is limited, as is control over historical development. **Instrumental**: Seek limited goals flexibly with moderate means. Use military force if the opponent and circumstances require it, but only as a final resource.	**Philosophical**: Conflict is temporary, caused by warlike states; miscalculation and appeasement are the major causes of war. Opponents are rational and deterrable. Optimism is warranted regarding realization of goals. The political future is relatively predictable, and control over historical development is possible. **Instrumental**: One should seek optimal goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework. Control risks by limiting means rather than ends. Any tactic and resource may be appropriate, including the use of force when it offers prospects for large gains with limited risks.

Figure 1. The revised Holsti typology.
Source: Walker (1983).

A highly important stage in the operational code literature was reached in the late 1990s with efforts regarding the quantitative operational code research agenda (Walker et al., 1998). They developed VICS, which enabled the researcher to make at-a-distance inferences by using the texts, speeches and interviews of a leader in a more structured and replicable way than the preceding qualitative research. In this natural-language processing program (ProfilerPlus), each belief system corresponds to its own numerical

indices, allowing analysts to make 'direct, meaningful comparisons across [our] subjects and conduct statistical analyses that allow for probabilistic generalizations' (Schafer and Walker, 2006b: 27). Researchers would now use the ProfilerPlus program to conduct this content analysis in an automated manner. Prior to this innovation, each researcher created a Self/Other dictionary of the leader and hand-coded their subject's public speeches, which made it difficult to reliably compare results for each world leader.

Drawing from the methodological development of operational code analysis, this theoretical approach that researchers have adopted depicts certain patterns of foreign policy beliefs through a leader's public statements and allows for inferences to be drawn about the leader's type of operational code (Schafer and Walker, 2006b; Walker et al., 1998). In modern operational code studies, it is possible to infer a leader's preferences regarding the outcomes of settlement, deadlock, domination and submission, as seen in Figure 1, for the Self and Other based on their master beliefs in operational code analysis (P-1, I-1 and P-4). A leader's master beliefs are compared to the scores of 164 speeches by a norming group of world leaders (Malici and Buckner, 2008). Based on the comparison with this norming group, a researcher can make predictions about the likelihood of a particular leader's strategies for conflict or cooperation (Walker et al., 2011).

The studies utilising operational code analysis have mostly focused on heads of states, such as US presidents (Renshon, 2008, 2009; Schafer and Crichlow, 2000; Walker, 1995; Walker et al., 1998, 1999), British prime ministers (Dyson, 2006; Schafer and Walker, 2006a), German chancellors (Malici, 2006), Israeli prime ministers (Crichlow, 1998), Chinese leaders (Feng, 2005), Cuban and North Korean leaders (Malici, 2011; Malici and Malici, 2005), Russian leaders (Dyson and Parent, 2017), and Islamist leaders (Özdamar, 2017; Özdamar and Canbolat, 2018). In addition, studies have been conducted on foreign policy decision-makers other than heads of states, such as Holsti's (1970) work on Dulles, and Starr's (1984) work on Kissinger. Recently, with the rise of global terrorism, more attention has been paid to the leaders of terrorist groups (Jacquier, 2014; Walker, 2011).

Hypotheses

We formulate five basic hypotheses about the operational codes of populist radical right leaders in Europe. The first three hypotheses are derived from the literature on the populist radical right (Liang, 2007; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000), and they focus on whether EPRR leaders are significantly different from average world leaders in terms of their foreign policy beliefs. Each of these hypotheses forecasts different beliefs, namely, the nature of the political universe (P-1), the control over historical development (P-4) and the strategic tools to be utilised for achieving goals (I-1).

EPRR leaders' belief systems are dominated by a Manichaean outlook, 'in which there are only friends and foes. Opponents are not just people with different priorities and values, they are evil' (Mudde, 2004: 544). This characterisation also leads EPRR leaders to regard their political opponents as illegitimate (Mudde, 2004: 553). Nativism, as one of the three main concepts of EPRR parties (the others being authoritarianism and populism), reinforces this Manichaean view in their conduct in political affairs. Radical right populism establishes its thin-centred ideology upon the promise that they will support the

'rightful' and 'true' members of the community at the expense of various others. Therefore, the nature of political life is much more conflictual for them, which also holds true in terms of their foreign policy beliefs. Liang (2007: 8) focuses on the role of fear deriving from multifaceted globalisation, which is perceived as a threat to national cultures and identities. According to this mindset, the 'enemies of the nation' do not function on their own, but are 'increasingly seen as part of global networks themselves, be it radical Islamist groups, US–Israeli conspiracies, or elitist Eurocrats' (Liang, 2007: 27).

In Europe, groups that are stigmatised as political others in domestic politics include, for example, Sinti and Roma, Jews, immigrants, and Muslims. In the foreign policy discourse, the political others vary depending on the context and the country, including but not limited to the US (Chryssogelos, 2011: 11), Germany, the EU, China and Turkey. Therefore, we hypothesise the following:

> *Hypothesis 1*: EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs on the essential nature of political life, measured by the average of the seven leaders' P-1 scores in the operational code construct, are more conflictual than the average score of world leaders.

As a natural result of their Manichaean outlook, EPRR leaders ascribe significant importance to 'Others' in the historical development of events. As Taggart (1996: 33) points out, populists 'may not know who they are, but they know who they are not'. They mostly identify and express themselves through perceived dichotomies with several Others, such as establishment parties, the EU, Eurocrats, the US, Muslims and immigrants. These actors have a scapegoat function and are universally blamed for problems at home and abroad, which also becomes manifest in the perpetuation of conspiracy theories by EPRR leaders, for example, labelling the Maastricht Treaty as an 'infamous Treaty of Troy', or the EU as a 'Soviet Union of Europe as a nest of freemasons and Communist bankers' (Liang, 2007: 12). Despite their promise to change such structures and actors once they come to power, they do not and cannot attribute much of a role to themselves in terms of having control over the historical development of politics. Therefore, our second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

> *Hypothesis 2*: EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs on the Self's control over history, measured by the average of seven leaders' P-4 scores in the operational code construct, are lower than the average score of world leaders.

European politics have been operating based on cooperative strategies since the 1950s. The EU is portrayed as the most, and maybe the only, successful example of a supranational organisation with a significant level of sovereignty transferred from the member states (Sandholtz and Sweet, 1998). Cooperation, which initially extended to some economic areas, has since evolved into a deeper and broader union, including cooperation and integration in fiscal, legal, monetary and political areas. However, as the EU institutions have broadened their competencies, the problem of a democratic deficit has emerged (Benz and Papadopoulos, 2006; Meny and Surel, 2002). This democratic deficit is at the core of the rise of radical right populism in Europe as these parties and leaders stress the loss of their national sovereignty, rejecting the current forms of cooperation. By emphasising the

importance of unilateralism in international relations as opposed to the multilateral approach of the EU, EPRR leaders offer their own national solutions to the problems that their societies face regarding issues such as immigration, terrorism and relations with Russia. Thus, we formulate our third hypothesis as follows:

> *Hypothesis 3*: EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs about strategic orientation, measured by the average of seven leaders' I-1 scores in the operational code construct, are less cooperative than the average score of world leaders.

Leites (1951, 1953) argued that the Bolshevik cadres had common foreign policy belief systems. Such in-group resemblance within these cadres was a result of a strict organisational structure and ideological loyalty. The populism literature argues that there is no such resemblance among populist leaders. It is also true, though, that despite all their differences, as Liang (2007: 27) points out, radical right populists in Europe 'have created a transnational network which is supported by a collective identity and international compatible ideologies', and that these movements and leaders' 'collective identity is perpetuated by a racial and a cultural community based on Greek, Roman and Christian civilizations'. We suspect, however, that the role of such a transnational network is limited in creating a shared pattern of foreign policy beliefs among EPRR leaders. While populism is also defined as an ideology, there have been substantial doubts about its ideological coherence, unlike ideologies such as Marxism or liberalism. Cas Mudde (2004: 544) defines populism as a 'thin-centered ideology' that 'can be easily combined with very different (thin and full) other ideologies, including communism, ecologism, nationalism or socialism'. The concept of populism itself is a difficult and slippery one (Taggart, 2000: 2). Laclau (1977: 143) also has a similar approach as he defines populism as 'a concept both elusive and recurrent'. This diversity is due to the fact that populism does not have the same level of intellectual refinement and consistency as other ideologies. Therefore, it is possible to describe populism as having 'a parasitic relationship with other concepts and ideologies' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2014: 379). From this perspective, populism gains credence by borrowing and distorting the ideas of other, more coherent, ideologies for its own aims.

Populism can form such a 'parasitic relationship' with either a right- or left-wing ideology, as can be witnessed across Europe. The Podemos and Syriza cases are good examples of left-wing populism (Kioupkiolis, 2016; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014), while in the rest of Europe, the populist right is more dominating. Besides these divisions, the specific national contexts in which EPRR leaders operate cause them to lean towards a variety of positions across the political spectrum. Rather than being members of a homogeneous and centrally organised political movement, these leaders are merely representatives of a certain category based on similar developments and challenges affecting people across Europe. For this reason, populism lacks a strict organisational structure, which limits its capacity to impose a top-down character that eventually accomplishes an 'identity transformation' (George, 1969: 194). Besides the national political contexts of EPRR leaders, their varying cultural, historical and biographical backgrounds implicate important differences among them. Therefore, we hypothesise the following:

Hypothesis 4: As populism is a thin-centred ideology (Mudde, 2004), it is expected that EPRR leaders do not have a shared pattern in terms of their foreign policy beliefs, measured by operational code master beliefs (P-1, P-4 and I-1).

Our final hypothesis aims at positioning EPRR leaders within the dichotomy of realism and idealism. While the literature on the populist radical right tends to argue that these parties and leaders are prone to being isolationist and neglecting developments beyond their national borders (Taggart, 2000: 121–122), EPRR leaders do have an interest in foreign policy and international relations. Simply stated, they aim to reinforce their national borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, foreign policy's function should be 'protecting sovereignty of the own state and the welfare of the own people' (Mudde, 2002: 177), which corresponds to the most basic elements of the realist theory of international relations, that is, security, sovereignty and national interest (Morgenthau, 2006).

As Berezin (2009: 11) puts forth, 'rightwing populism poses a challenge to prevailing social science and common-sense assumptions about transnationalism and cosmopolitanism', including the rejection of neoliberalism, a free-market culture and the expansion of the European project. As EPRR leaders underscore state sovereignty, as opposed to European integration or supranational-type arrangements, they favour a looser intergovernmental alliance labelled a 'Europe of fatherlands', or 'Europe of nations' (Balfour et al., 2016: 29). In other words, EPRR leaders want to return to the roots of modern international relations, where individual nation-states act with full sovereignty in the international arena and seek to maximise their national interests through unilateral tools. While populist radical right leaders do not pursue isolationism per se, they react against what they perceive as the diminishing role of popular sovereignty in the conduct of their countries' foreign policies. This tendency is best illustrated by these leaders' perceptions of Russia. As Chryssogelos (2011: 17) argues, contrary to the civilisational and liberal alliance with the US, Europe's radical right populist parties:

> promote a cosy relationship between the EU and Russia; play down issues of human rights and democracy; see Russia as a strategic asset for Europe, implying that it could replace the US as an ally; and highlight Russia's advantages, such as its energy sources.

Therefore, norms such as human rights and democracy are secondary to Russia's strategic importance and potential in contributing to the national well-being of European states. Accordingly, our final hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 5: As realists, EPRR leaders are expected to perceive the political universe as more conflictual (P-1) and choose less cooperative instruments (I-1) to achieve their political goals.

Research design

These hypotheses are tested through content analysis using the ProfilerPlus software and statistical significance tests. As noted earlier, ProfilerPlus is a specific content analysis program that enables the coding of the verbs used in public speeches through VICS.

Table 1. Minimum, maximum and total number of words and verbs for each leader.

Leader	No. of speeches	Words			Verbs		
		Min.	Max.	Total	Min.	Max.	Total
M. Le Pen	10	576	5286	22,695	19	183	790
V. Orban	26	595	6210	52,984	24	140	1647
G. Wilders	20	509	3544	27,626	23	144	1164
N. Farage	21	335	1881	14,813	17	54	509
J. Åkesson	6	657	1322	5770	15	45	184
F. Petry	7	578	2676	11,192	22	70	347
N. Hofer	5	575	1489	5542	21	43	168
Total	**95**			**140,622**			**4809**

VICS is based on George's aforementioned 10 operational code questions and provides scores for each related variable.[2] An automated system is more reliable compared to hand-coding, and enables us to compare scores for selected leaders with the norming group's scores[3] produced by the same automated system (Shafer and Walker, 2006a).[4]

The unit of analysis in this study is a set of public speeches and texts by EPRR leaders, allowing us to calculate the means and standard deviations for each leader.[5] The analysed texts consist of speeches, interviews, press statements, op-ed articles and panel discussions that took place/were published between 2013 and 2017. They address mostly international target groups but also audiences at the domestic level. We have used a variety of sources to access the texts, including international news websites (*Spiegel*, CNN, BBC, *Newsweek, Wall Street Journal, Deutsche Welle* and *Bild*), as well as the official websites of political parties, the leaders' personal blogs and — in the case of Viktor Orban — government websites. For some leaders, such as Marine Le Pen, Frauke Petry and Norbert Hofer, it was difficult to find texts in English, which led us to look for alternatives. English-language speeches and interviews of these leaders that are available in the form of videos have been transcribed and coded. This method has enabled us to access a substantial number of analysable texts for these leaders as well.

We have taken the following four criteria into consideration for the selection of public speeches, as established by Walker et al. (1998: 182): '(1) the subject and object are international in scope; (2) the focus of interaction is a political issue; (3) the words and deeds are cooperative or conflictual'; and the minimum number of codable verbs contained by the text should be at least 15 (Schafer and Walker, 2006a). Fulfilling these criteria, we have coded 95 speeches for seven leaders. The minimum, maximum and total numbers of words and verbs for each leader are indicated in Table 1. Our data set satisfies — and goes beyond — all of the requirements that are specified in the literature in order to ensure a rigorous analysis.

The seven leaders whose speeches we analyse were selected for several reasons. First of all, they — and their respective parties — are generally regarded as radical right populists in scholarly work (Akkerman et al., 2016; Rydgren, 2018). A summary of their stances on different policy areas is given in Table 2. Second, these leaders have been

Table 2. List of the EPRR leaders, their parties, most recent vote share and key foreign policy positions.

Country	Party	Leader	Vote[a]	Key foreign policy-related positions[b]
France	National Rally (NR) (formerly known as the Front National (FN))	Marine Le Pen	33.90% (2017)	Abolish euro. Renegotiation of existing international treaties for full France sovereignty. Annual limit to immigrants. Abolishment of *jus soli* principle. Russia as a strategic partner. Against Turkey in EU.
Hungary	Hungarian Civic Alliance (FIDESZ)	Viktor Orban	49.27% (2018)	Wants sovereignty back. Stop immigration. Personal ties with Putin. Commitment to NATO.
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	Geert Wilders	13.10% (2017)	Leave EU and euro. If remaining in EU, then abolish European Parliament. Abolish Schengen. Anti-Muslim. Strict control of immigration and refugees. In favour of NATO but without Turkey. Against common EU foreign policy.
UK	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	Nigel Farage[c]	1.80% (2017)	In favour of Brexit. Cooperation with EU only on selected issues. Strict control of immigrants and refugees. Critical of foreign interventions. Positive stance towards Putin.
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)	Jimmie Åkesson	17.53% (2018)	Eurosceptic. Anti-immigration. Against multiculturalism. For Europe being comprised of nation-states. Against euro, European Parliament and European Commission. For trade and economic relations only with European states. Against NATO membership of Sweden. Critical of Russian aggression in the region. Against Turkey joining EU.
Germany	Party Alternative for Germany (AfD)	Frauke Petry[c]	12.6% (2017)	Abolishment of euro. For national legislation. EU as a single market for sovereign states. Strict control of immigrants and refugees. Germany should not carry the burden. Friendly relations with Russia. Against Turkey in EU.
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	Norbert Hofer[d]	46.70% (2016)	No further enlargement. Abolish euro. Stop immigration. Against multiculturalism. Sees Russia as an important partner. European independence from US hegemony. Anti-Islamist.

Notes: [a] According to the latest federal, national or European Parliament elections. [b] Positions are retrieved from the European Policy Centre's report on European populists (Balfour et al., 2016: 58–72). [c] Farage and Petry are no longer the leaders of UKIP and the AfD, respectively. [d] Although Austria's presidency is largely ceremonial, we have included Hofer in this analysis for two reasons. First, despite our extensive research, we have not found a sufficient number of speeches in English by the FPÖ leader Strache. Second, Hofer is also a prominent politician who promised to use his powers at full capacity, while trying to expand the influence of the presidency in Austria.

active in politics in varying degrees, both at the national and European level. Finally, in line with the selected research method, consideration was given to the availability of texts and speeches in English. For this reason, we had to omit leaders such as Poland's Jarosław Kaczyński and Italy's Matteo Salvini despite their political successes as the available texts/speeches given by them in English in the time frame of our study were insufficient. Therefore, the selected seven leaders constitute the domain of EPRR leaders whose speeches were available in English. This group of leaders includes EPRR leaders from both Western and Eastern European countries. Also, the fact that this set includes leaders of both ruling and main opposition parties, as well as parties on the margins, contributes to the representative scope of the approach.

Results

Table 3 presents: (1) a summary of the scores for each leader's P-1, I-1 and P-4 master beliefs; (2) the group mean for each score; (3) the norming group's scores; and (4) the statistical significance levels. Appendix 1 (available online) contains this information for the remaining operational code beliefs and the formulas for the VICS indices for all 10 operational code beliefs. The data analysis results and conclusions about the five hypotheses regarding P-1, I-1 and P-4 are discussed later. The VICS index scores for each of these beliefs vary from $+1.0$ to -1.0 as follows: P-1 from a friendly $(+)$ to hostile $(-)$ political universe; P-4 from high $(+)$ to low $(-)$ historical control; and I-1 from a cooperation $(+)$ to a conflict $(-)$ strategy.

There are diverse views among the populist leaders vis-a-vis the first master belief, that is, how they view the nature of political life. Orban's (P-1 = 0.413), Petry's (P-1 = 0.348) and Hofer's (P-1 = 0.643) P-1 scores present a friendlier political universe than the rest of the EPRR leaders' scores, as well as the average score of world leaders (P-1 = 0.301). The other four EPRR leaders have lower P-1 scores, meaning that their scores for the nature of the political universe are more hostile than the norming group of world leaders. Le Pen's (P-1 = 0.068), Wilders's (P-1 = 0.063), Farage's (P-1 = 0.178) and Åkesson's (P-1 = 0.044) philosophical belief results are significantly lower than those of average world leaders. This means that they perceive the political world significantly more conflictual than the other EPRR leaders and the norming group. The mean of the P-1 variable for the seven leaders (P-1 = 0.235) is lower than the average world leaders' mean (P-1 = 0.301), and this difference is statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 1, which expects that EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs on the essential nature of political life are more conflictual than those of the average world leader, is confirmed.

Second, contrary to our expectations, all EPRR leaders' sense of historical control is higher than the norming group average (P-4a = 0.224). We hypothesised that as populist leaders subscribe to a Manichaean view — us versus them, the people versus the elite, we versus the Other and so on — and perceive the latter as being responsible for all major societal problems, they would attribute historical control to the political 'Other'. Contrary to these expectations, the populist leaders' P-4 scores present a different picture. The scores of Hofer (P-4a = 0.578), Wilders (P-4a = 0.277), Orban (P-4a = 0.538), Åkesson (P-4a = 0.463) and Petry (P-4a = 0.326) are significantly higher than those of the norming group. Le Pen's (P-4a = 0.273) and Farage's (P-4a = 0.266) scores also

Table 3. The operational codes of EPRR leaders compared to the norming group's scores.

	Norming group	Marine Le Pen	Viktor Orban	Geert Wilders	Nigel Farage	Jimmie Åkesson	Frauke Petry	Norbert Hofer	Average
	$n = 164$	$n = 10$	$n = 26$	$n = 20$	$n = 21$	$n = 6$	$n = 7$	$n = 5$	$n = 95$
P-1 Nature of political universe (conflict/cooperation)	0.301	0.068** (0.0071)	0.413* (0.027)	0.063*** (0.0002)	0.178* (0.032)	0.044* (0.0175)	0.348 (0.333)	0.643** (0.0044)	0.235** (0.00765)
P-4 Historical development (low control/high control)	0.224	0.273 (0.1179)	0.538*** (0.000)	0.277* (0.04705)	0.266 (0.094)	0.463*** (0.000)	0.326* (0.02)	0.578*** (0.000)	0.377*** (0.000)
I-1 Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.401	0.193 (0.0664)	0.518 (0.092)	0.27 (0.09715)	0.481 (0.218)	0.503 (0.2833)	0.274 (0.22)	0.81* (0.018)	0.420 (0.3621)

Notes: *P*-values are given within brackets under each score, calculated via two sample *t*-tests. Means and standard deviations for the norming group are taken from Akan Malici. Statistically significant differences from the norming group are at the following levels (one-tailed test): *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Table 4. Comparison of leaders with higher and lower I-1 scores.

		Norming group	Leaders with a higher I-1 score	Leaders with a lower I-1 score
		n = 164	n = 58	n = 37
I-1	Strategic approach to goals (conflict/cooperation)	0.401	0.528 (0.0856)	0.249* (0.0247)

Notes: P-values are given within brackets under each score, calculated via two sample t-tests. Means and standard deviations for the norming group are taken from Akan Malici. Statistically significant differences from the norming group are at the following levels (one-tailed test): *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

represent a higher sense of historical control, albeit with no statistical significance. The mean P-4a score for the seven EPRR leaders (P-4a = 0.377) is also significantly different from the average world leaders' scores, meaning that, on average, they have a higher sense of historical control. Therefore, our second hypothesis, which predicts a lower sense of control for EPRR leaders, has been rejected; none of the analysed leaders represents a significantly lower P4 score than the norming group, and the mean for the seven leaders is significantly higher than the corresponding norming group score.

The EPRR leaders' larger belief in historical control in comparison with the average world leader can be explained through the audacity and poignancy in which they challenge mainstream politics and go beyond the historical moment created thereof. That is to say, in retrospect, they tend to blame the Other for the present situation but, at the same time, exhibit a high level of confidence in the Self's ability to survive and transform the status quo in the near future.

In terms of the strategic orientation measured by the I-1 scores, the EPRR leaders show mixed results. None of them shows a statistically significant level of less cooperative beliefs compared to the norming group. While Le Pen (I-1 = 0.193), Wilders (I-1 = 0.27) and Petry (I-1 = 0.274) have the lowest I-1 scores in the group, meaning that their strategic orientations are less cooperative than those of the average world leader (I-1 = 0.401), these results are not statistically significant. All other EPRR leaders have higher I-1 scores than the norming group, indicating a relatively cooperative approach to foreign policy. Among those with higher scores, Hofer's (I-1 = 0.81) is the only statistically significant one. The mean for the I-1 scores of the seven EPRR leaders is 0.420, and it is slightly higher than the average of the norming group of world leaders. Our third hypothesis, which anticipates a less cooperative approach by these leaders in the pursuit of their political goals, has therefore been rejected in a statistical significance test.

We have also grouped EPRR leaders into two clusters according to their I-1 scores, that is, based on whether those fall below or exceed the corresponding score of the average world leader. Results show that when grouped together, the cluster with lower I-1 scores differs from the norming group (i.e., the average world leader) with a higher statistical significance than the group whose I-1 scores exceed that of the norming group (see Table 4). This analysis points to divisions among European populists in terms of their beliefs, which may serve as an avenue for future research.
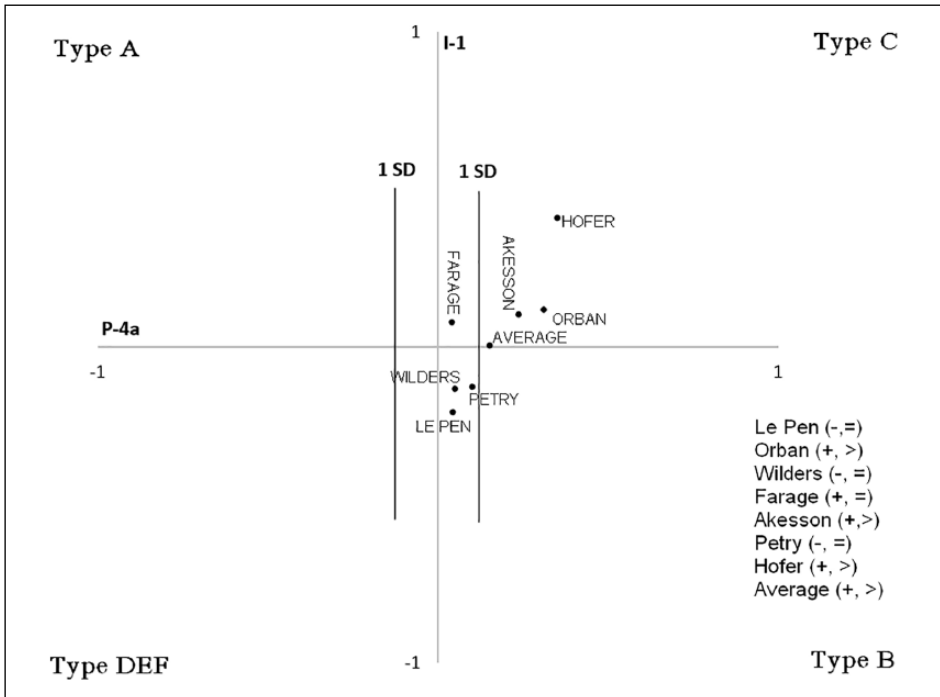
Figure 2. Self's location from the norming group mean.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the positions of the EPRR leaders and the average of the group in terms of their master beliefs. While Figure 2 presents the perceptions of the Self of the leaders, that is, their P-4a and I-1 scores, Figure 3 shows the perceptions of the Other of EPRR leaders based on the P-4b and P-1 scores.[6] Each quadrant in these graphs corresponds to a leadership type based on the typology developed by Holsti (1977) and revised by Walker (1983). There are four leadership types in this typology, that is, Type A, B, C and DEF. The horizontal axes correspond to P-4a or P-4b scores varying from −1.0 to +1.0, and the vertical axes correspond to P-1 or I-1 scores varying from −1.0 to +1.0. The norming group's scores are used as the origin in these graphs, and the scores for each leader are transformed into distances in standard deviations above or below the means for the norming group's scores, which enables us to draw a comparative analysis of the leaders (Walker and Schafer, 2010; Walker, 2013). The transformed locations provide a better picture of the relative positions of the images of the Other and Self of EPRR leaders in comparison with the average world leader's location at the origin of each graph.

As Figure 2 shows, the images of the Self of Hofer, Åkesson, Orban and Farage fall under leadership Type C, while Wilders's, Petry's and Le Pen's images of the Self correspond to Type B. The upper two quadrants in the figure are associated with a more cooperative approach in world politics, while the lower two quadrants indicate a more conflictual outlook concerning political affairs. This means that while four of the EPRR
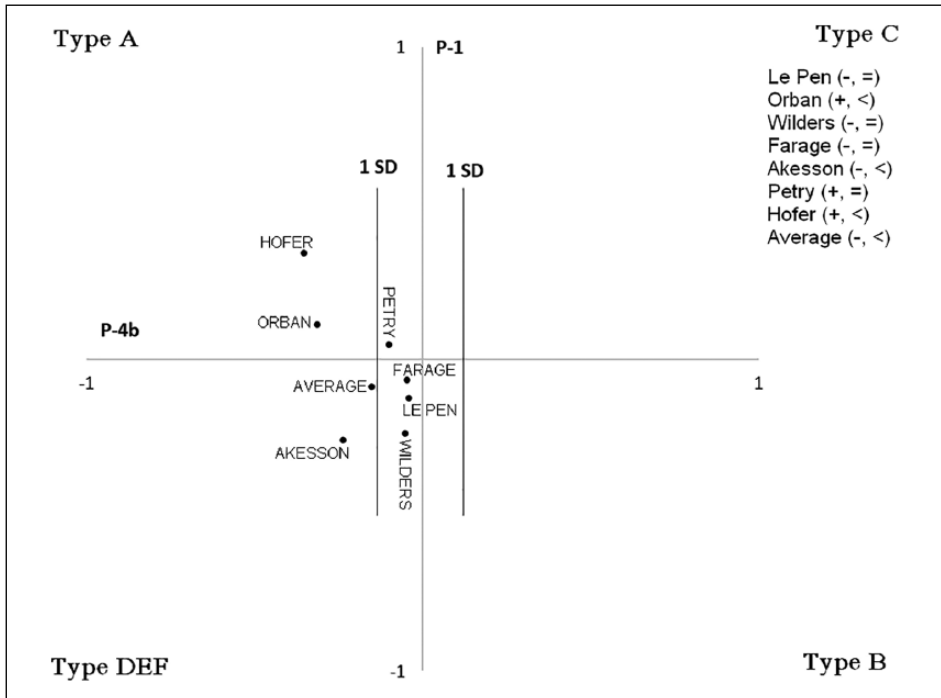
Figure 3. Other's location from the norming group mean.

leaders' images of the Self and strategic orientations lean more towards cooperative strategies, Wilders's, Petry's and Le Pen's analysis reveals a more conflictual strategic outlook. The average of all seven leaders is located on the borderline between the quadrants associated with Type B and Type C leadership.

Similarly, in Figure 3, with an origin representing the world leaders' averages for the Other, we observe that Farage's, Wilders's, Åkesson's and Le Pen's images of the Other are more hostile than that of the average world leader. In other words, these leaders perceive the political universe as hostile and correspond to a DEF-type leadership, as anticipated in Hypothesis 5. In Figure 3, we see that Hofer's, Orban's and Petry's images of the Other are relatively friendly, falling into the upper-left quadrant associated with Type A. The average location of all seven EPRR leaders is in the Type DEF quadrant.

When looking at these two figures, two clusters, one below and one above the vertical axis according to the I-1 and P-1 scores, can be observed. While the Self scores (I-1) for Farage, Åkesson, Hofer and Orban are higher and indicate more cooperativeness than the norming group, Wilders, Le Pen and Petry have lower scores, therefore subscribing to a less cooperative outlook. Therefore, the EPRR leaders are fairly divided in their instrumental approaches to strategy. Similarly, in terms of P-1 scores, the seven EPRR leaders do not cluster in one quadrant. Hofer, Orban and Petry perceive the political universe as friendlier; Åkesson, Farage, Le Pen and Wilders have lower P-1 scores, meaning that they consider the Other in the political universe as more conflictual. In contrast to the

Table 5. Leadership types of EPRR leaders based on their operational code master beliefs.

Leader	I-1, P-4a (Self)		P-1, P-4b (Other)	
Marine Le Pen	Type B	Conflictual	Type DEF	Conflictual
Viktor Orban	Type C	Cooperative	Type A	Cooperative
Geert Wilders	Type B	Conflictual	Type DEF	Conflictual
Nigel Farage	Type C	Cooperative	Type DEF	Conflictual
Jimmie Åkesson	Type C	Cooperative	Type DEF	Conflictual
Frauke Petry	Type B	Conflictual	Type A	Cooperative
Norbert Hofer	Type C	Cooperative	Type A	Cooperative
Average EPRR Leader	Type C	Cooperative	Type DEF	Conflictual

varying P-1 and I-1 scores among the leaders, it is possible to observe a shared pattern according to their P-4 scores. All EPRR leaders have higher P-4a scores than the norming group, meaning that they believe they have more control over historical development than the political Other.

Based on these results, we conclude that it is difficult to discern a strictly shared pattern in terms of EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs, which fundamentally confirms our fourth hypothesis originating from the populism literature (Mudde, 2004). EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs vary a large amount as they are scattered at different points in the analytical space. A higher sense of historical control (P-4a) is the only shared foreign policy belief. Therefore, being defined as a 'thin-centered ideology' (Mudde, 2004: 543; see also Pauwels, 2014: 18), populism on the right end of the political spectrum lacks a shared pattern in its foreign policy beliefs as well.

With regards to our final hypothesis, we expect EPRR leaders to exhibit a leadership style consistent with realist theory in terms of how they see the political universe and the specific tools they use to achieve their political goals. In line with the belief system typology of Holsti (1977) and Walker (1983), Type A and Type C leaders would exhibit an idealist strategic culture with higher P-1 and I-1 scores, as well as a cooperative leadership style. Type B and Type DEF leaders, however, are expected to be leaders with a realist strategic culture, with lower P-1 and I-1 scores and a conflictual leadership style (Walker et al., 2011). The horizontal lines in Figures 2 and 3 demarcate the boundary between the leaders with idealist and realist strategic cultures (Walker and Schafer, 2007).

Based on our results and the leadership styles and strategies associated with idealist and realist approaches to IR, as shown in Table 5, we infer that four out of these seven leaders (Le Pen, Wilders, Farage and Åkesson) possess a hostile world view represented by conflictual leadership styles and strategies attributed to the Other. Three out of the seven leaders (Le Pen, Wilders and Petry) fall under the realist category, with conflictual leadership styles and strategies attributed to the Self. Despite the fact that there is no widely shared pattern of leadership among them, the average scores of these seven leaders enable us to make a generalisation about the strategic culture of EPRR leadership. Therefore, our final hypothesis is partially confirmed: EPRR leaders, as a whole, do perceive the political universe as conflictual (P-1); however, as a group, they are strategically as cooperative (I-1) as the average world leader, though more assertive about their belief in historical control (P-4).

Discussion

This section focuses on a general discussion of the EPRR leaders' foreign policy beliefs since it would be beyond the scope of this article to analyse each leader individually. We discuss two main points here: first, the lack of a shared pattern among EPRR leaders in terms of their foreign policy beliefs; and, second, an interpretation of their operational code analyses in general, which confirms concerns related to the rise of the populist radical right in Europe.

Unlike other ideologies such as Marxism or liberalism, the operational code analysis results have shown that the populist radical right lacks an institutional and centralised structure that can contribute to shared identity formation among the proponents of an ideology. Leites (1951, 1953) was able to find shared operational code patterns among Bolshevik cadres since the fundamental tenets of Bolshevism are strict and implemented in a top-down structure. However, neither populism in general nor the populist radical right seem to have such a 'handbook.' Apart from certain shared characteristics, such as nativism and authoritarianism, the populist radical right does not necessarily lead to any similarities among leaders in their foreign policy beliefs. It is true that these leaders from all over Europe have come together sporadically to create a European network of radical right populism, such as in Vienna in 2005 or in Koblenz in 2017. They are definitely motivated to create a continental synergy that could contribute to their electoral success in both national and European elections. Nevertheless, the results of our study suggest that EPRR leaders do not have a shared pattern of foreign policy perceptions or tools. This proves that populism is a thin-centred ideology with a limited impact in terms of shaping the foreign policy beliefs of EPRR leaders.

This point is best illustrated by the dispersion of the EPRR leaders in terms of their I-1 and P-1 scores. While four out of the seven leaders have a more cooperative belief in the Self compared to the scores for the average world leader, the other three leaders have a more conflictual belief in the Self. This picture is almost replicated in the EPRR leaders' belief about the Other. Three EPRR leaders in our sample do not exhibit a consistent pattern of either conflict or cooperation strategies between Self and Other, while the other four leaders do. The further analysis of these two clusters among EPRR leaders presents a possible area for future research. In terms of the role of the Self and Other with respect to historical control, it is obvious that EPRR leaders in Europe have a shared pattern, which attributes more control to the Self and less to the Other. However, based on the centrality of the P-1 and I-1 scores, for now, we conclude that EPRR leadership in Europe conforms to the 'thin-centered' (Mudde, 2004: 543) ideological stance in foreign policy as well.

We conclude that although it is difficult to find a strictly shared pattern, the mean scores of the seven EPRR leaders' operational codes raise concerns regarding the international relations of Europe. These concerns are well founded, as illustrated in particular by the P-1 scores of the average EPRR leader. As Type DEF leaders, their average differs with statistical significance from the average world leader's belief about the Other as they rank 'domination' as opposed to, for example, conflict settlement as their top preference, as shown in Figure 1. While Type DEF leadership may not seem as 'perilous' as Type B leadership, it still poses a threat to international relations. Besides, as Table 4 illustrates, the group of EPRR leaders with a lower P-1 score than the norming group

differs with a higher degree of statistical significance than the group of EPRR leaders whose P-1 score exceeds that of the average world leaders. The higher level of divergence towards the conflictual quadrants of the spectrum suggests that should they come to power, EPRR leaders in Europe are likely to engage in conflictual games in international affairs, in which a rational measure is to dominate and avoid cooperation. Additionally, although the position of the Self for the average EPRR leader in Europe falls into the Type C quadrant, it is at the same time just on the margin of the Type B leadership quadrant. Considering the high level of inconsistencies and changes in the attitudes of EPRR leaders, we can argue that this position at the margin of the most alarming leadership style presents a concern for European politics. In this sense, our study confirms the concerns about the rise of the populist radical right and the future of international relations in Europe.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the definition of populism as a 'thin-centered' (Mudde, 2004: 543) ideology is correct as affiliation to the populist radical right does not lead to a uniform pattern concerning a foreign policy belief system. Our results show that some EPRR leaders have more conflictual foreign policy beliefs than the average world leaders, especially when it comes to their beliefs about the nature of the political universe. Also, the mean scores of the seven EPRR leaders indicate a more conflictual leader profile. However, these findings do not enable us to define a shared pattern in terms of their leadership in foreign policy. Taking this into consideration, we suggest that the idea of a one-size-fits-all solution in interacting with these leaders would be misleading. Case studies and leader-specific analyses may prove to be a better option for both scholars and policymakers to pursue. In the scholarly and political domains, assertive conclusions about the effects of the populist radical right on European politics are plentiful. However, this study shows that more cautious analyses based on strong theoretical and methodological foundations are necessary. We believe that these counter-intuitive results about the populist radical right and foreign policy present an original contribution to an understudied aspect of the literature.

The variation of foreign policy beliefs represented by the seven EPRR leaders analysed in this article presents valuable insights for IR theories as well. Despite being European and having other political similarities, these leaders have distinctly varying foreign policy beliefs. This shows that structural theories of IR must be accompanied by 'agent-oriented models of beliefs to capture the microfoundations of strategic interactions between states' (Walker and Schafer, 2007: 771).

Cognitivist studies focusing on human decision-makers as agents strengthen both rational choice studies and structural accounts of international politics. Many operational code studies depict a foreign policy decision-maker's subjective preference ordering for the political outcomes between Self and Other in terms of settlement, submission, domination and deadlock. These preference orderings are then placed within a game-theoretic analysis to predict a leader's behaviour. In this sense, operational code studies take a *via media* position in the rational-cognitive debate by emphasising the value of synthesising these competing approaches. Operational code master beliefs are also used as useful

proxies to measure an individual decision-maker's proximity to world views represented by classical IR approaches such as idealism or realism. Specifically, P-1 is a focal point to analyse a leader's approach to the nature of the political environment and I-1 for their strategies to reach political goals (Walker and Schafer, 2007). Although this article does not intend to test the major hypotheses of realism or idealism, results show to which extent the seven EPRR leaders' beliefs reflect the most basic assumptions of these two contending perspectives.

Classical realism suggests that the political world is one of conflict and leaders tend to have a negative image of politics. In operational code analysis, these earlier realist views are represented by the beliefs corresponding to the two lower quadrants in Figure 1. Type DEF and Type B leaders have a negative, hostile image of the political universe. Given the negative political discourse of EPRR leaders, one would expect their P-1 scores to appear in the two lower quadrants. Four out of seven leaders' images of the political universe are located in the lower quadrants, as classical realism would predict. Furthermore, the average of all seven leaders also falls clearly into the Type DEF quadrant, as shown in Figure 3. We conclude that although not a monolithic bloc, the majority of EPRR leaders seem to confirm realism's expectations of a conflictual world view. The individual analysis reveals that some EPRR leaders, that is, Nigel Farage, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders, have significantly more hostile world views than others.

Idealism expects most world leaders to lean towards cooperative strategies in pursuing foreign policy. This corresponds to higher levels of the I-1 score in the operational code construct, and images of the Self corresponding to the upper two quadrants in Figure 1. In other words, idealism's expectations of world leaders are represented by Type A and Type C leaders, who are generally cooperative, in the operational code construct. The scores for four leaders and the average score for all seven appear in the upper quadrants. Geert Wilders's, Marine Le Pen's and Frauke Petry's I-1 scores, on the other hand, are below the x-axis. The average I-1 score of the seven leaders also reveals an interesting picture. Although it is slightly above the x-axis, the results do not represent a clearly cooperative picture. As many would expect, the leaders' average I-1 score is not highly cooperative.

A major result of our research is that four out of the seven analysed EPRR leaders have a relatively cooperative strategic orientation. These leaders are Norbert Hofer, Jimmie Åkesson, Viktor Orban and Nigel Farage. According to the results, they may be expected to choose cooperative strategies in foreign policy. In sum, EPRR leaders are more in line with the expectations of idealism than one would predict in a superficial analysis. Second, the EPRR leaders' approaches to strategies to achieve political aims are quite varied, as the results show. However, there are two leaders that require specific attention. Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen seem to be the most 'worrying' leaders in this analysis. Their world views are very hostile and they are likely to pursue conflictual strategies in foreign policy. In this sense, they appear to be archetypes of a realist world view in foreign policy.

By introducing an eclectic method of studying the link between the populist radical right and foreign policy, this study offers a methodological innovation to the literature. We believe that in addition to the well-founded conclusions regarding EPRR leaders and their foreign policy beliefs, this article also paves the way for further research on leaders with

different perspectives. From a comparative point of view, there are many opportunities to use operational code analysis to better characterise EPRR leadership. In further research, the operational code approach could also be used to compare the thinness of populism in contrast to the thickness of the radical right ideology in Europe in terms of their role in EPRR leadership. As populism and radical right ideology are the two interwoven components of the populist radical right, the lack of a specific foreign policy belief pattern among the EPRR leaders could have been interpreted as the decisiveness of populism's thinness over the latter. However, such an argument can only remain a speculative one as it extends beyond the scope of this article and requires further research design.

Finally, a comparative study of the ruling and non-ruling EPRR leaders would improve our understanding of the role of party positions and institutional limitations concerning the philosophical and instrumental beliefs of EPRR leaders. Also, an analysis of speeches addressed to domestic audiences in comparison to those intended for international target groups would allow the researcher to discuss the role of electoral concerns in these leaders' discourse. Lastly, there have been many categorisations of the populist radical right in the literature, such as the one by Roger Brubaker (2017) concerning nationalist and civilisational populism in Europe. Further research could help develop a discussion about Brubaker's categorisations from a foreign policy perspective.

Notes

1. This list includes non-governing and even peripheral political parties and their leaders because we argue that these parties and their leaders are gaining importance as foreign policy actors. Due to Europeanisation and globalisation in particular, the study of national foreign policies is no longer an isolated field in which issues are only dealt with between governments; these policies are also 'subject to domestic scrutiny and contestation akin to domestic policy issues' (Chryssogelos, 2017: 7). Like other peripheral parties, most of the EPRR parties 'matter in unorthodox ways' (Williams, 2006: 2), including through agenda-setting and their role in both institutional and policy dimensions. Their transformative influence on politics and the larger society is particularly evident in the ways in which certain issues are now framed, such as the xenophobic framing of immigration (Carvalho, 2014).
2. We have used the online version of ProfilerPlus provided by Social Science Automation on the www.profilerplus.org website (last accessed 3 August 2017). After establishing the P-1, P-2, I-1 and I-2 scores through the online version of the software, we calculated the other scores using the formulas provided by Michael D. Young, to whom we express our sincere thanks.
3. The operational code research program does not provide regional or subgroup norming samples. Therefore, this article compares the EPRR leaders only to the norming group of world leaders without any categorisation.

4. External reliability, that is, making a comparison with the norming group, requires not creating an updated Self/Other dictionary for each leader. We used the classical dictionary provided by the ProfilerPlus software.

5. A detailed list of the texts used in the analysis is included in Appendix 2 (available online).

6. P-4b = 1 – P-4a. The two scores are complementary (sum to 1.0) percentages of coded transitive verbs respectively attributed to the Self or Other. P-4a is identical to the original P-4 index (Self Attributions/ Self + Other Attributions) for the Self's belief in control over historical development (Schafer and Walker, 2006b: 34, 51).

Supplemental material

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article on the publisher's website:

Appendix 1: The operational codes of EPRR leaders compared to the norming group's scores and the operational code formulas.

Appendix 2: The list of speeches and the data set.

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