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## Breach And Observance: The Gap Between Expressed and Actual Preferences for Liberal Democracy in Poland

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## 1. Introduction

Since the victory of the nationalist-populist Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*; PiS) party in the general election of October 2015, Poland – previously seen as one of the success stories of post-1989 transition to democracy – has experienced a precipitous decline in the quality of its liberal democratic institutions, falling from 0.79 to 0.42 on the V-Dem Liberal Democracy index and being re-classified as an “electoral democracy” (Coppedge et al., 2023).

With a narrow but disciplined parliamentary majority, PiS was able to make quick progress in satisfying its long-held desire to overturn the political and institutional establishment of Poland’s post-1989 Third Republic (Bill, 2020). Public media was swiftly colonised, purged of dissenting voices and turned into a crude instrument of government propaganda. State-held enterprises were rich sources of patronage for the emerging “counterelite”, which was also cultivated through the politicisation of civil society (Bill & Stanley, 2020). The Constitutional Tribunal was paralysed and then captured through the appointment of politically loyal justices, enabling PiS to establish what amounted to an alternative legal reality in which subsequent changes, most importantly the politicisation of the judiciary, were granted the dignity of official validation, however legally spurious (Sadurski, 2019). These actions brought PiS into conflict with the European Union, with the Commission deploying its rule-of-law procedures and taking repeated action against Poland in the European Court of Justice.

While many of the actions taken by PiS echoed existing deficiencies in the functioning of Poland’s democratic institutions, as a whole they constituted a qualitative departure from the preceding political system. Illiberal changes were not just individual breaches of constitutional propriety but elements of a carefully sequenced and coordinated assault on the post-communist political settlement. Laws were often passed not to address a systematic problem but to facilitate *ad hoc* the realisation of PiS’s discrete objectives. Lacking a supermajority, PiS was unable to entrench its power as firmly and irrevocably as Fidesz in Hungary, and Poland remained a functioning electoral democracy, free if not entirely fair, with an opposition that struggled to match PiS

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3 individually but collectively remained a plausible alternative. Yet by the end of PiS's first term in  
4 2019, the norms and procedures of liberal democracy had given way to executive decisionism, with  
5 PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński, whose control of his party went unchallenged, essentially ruling  
6 without responsibility.  
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9 As Ganev (2018, p. 92) has noted in the Bulgarian context, a key feature of the political sys-  
10 tem that parties like PiS have instantiated is the denial that anything untoward is happening. Where  
11 traditional authoritarians might justify their rule by pointing to the deficiencies of democracy as a  
12 political system, their contemporary equivalents pay it lip service. Instead of making a virtue of  
13 undermining a moribund political system entirely, they claim to be redeeming it. The question is, to  
14 what extent are voters going along with this pretence? I address this question by comparing Polish  
15 voters' preferences for liberal democracy as expressed through their *declared* liberal-democratic  
16 values with their preferences as *revealed* in how those values relate to their electoral behaviour.  
17 To what extent do Polish voters claim to support liberal-democratic principles? How much do  
18 these principles matter to Polish voters when deciding which parties to support? Are Polish voters  
19 willing to sacrifice these principles for the sake of partisan interest?  
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22 In the following section, I place these questions in the context of ongoing debates about the  
23 nature, causes and consequences of democratic backsliding. I then discuss the data collected and  
24 methods of analysis, present key findings, and discuss their implications.  
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## 27 2. Top-down and bottom-up: understanding the onset and persistence of 28 democratic backsliding 29 30

31 Scholars have used a variety of terms to capture the phenomenon of movement away from a  
32 generally-understood ideal of liberal democracy, such as "autocratisation", "democratic erosion",  
33 "de-democratisation", "democratic decay" and perhaps the most common, "democratic backslid-  
34 ing". I do not intend to enter into the debate as to which of these terms most aptly encapsulates  
35 the dynamic, partly because it is not the primary focus of this paper but also because there is often  
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more overlap among these terms than their respective advocates suggest. However, in committing to using the term “democratic backsliding” I should stress that I do not intend it to imply either a purely strategic and agent-led process of deliberate subversion, or as a set of structural influences that shape the opportunities available for such subversion to occur. Rather, I concur with Andersen (2019, p. 647) that understanding the contemporary movement away from liberal democracy requires us to “distinguish the causes of vulnerability to backsliding from the proximate causes of actual backsliding”, and in so doing to attend both to supply-side and to demand-side factors.

The distinction between supply-side factors (such as party ideology and appeals, elite decision-making, the extent to which the integrity of liberal-democratic institutions are protected by common observance of norms) and demand-side factors (such as public opinion and voting behaviour) has informed attempts to understand the phenomenon. The threat backsliding poses to the stability of hitherto consolidated liberal democracies in those countries where it has already occurred has spurred attempts to move beyond *sui generis* accounts of individual cases to generate broader theories of its emergence, often with the goal of identifying ways to prevent its further spread. In keeping with theoretical accounts of the closely-related phenomenon of populism, these approaches largely devolve into “top-down” explanations of backsliding as the work of political elites, and “bottom-up” explanations that focus on public support for illiberal solutions and voting for parties offering those solutions.

Taking issue with a “folk theory” of democratic backsliding that assumes all crises experienced by democracies must ultimately be attributable to citizens’ preferences, Bartels (2023, p. 23) contends that “democracy erodes from the top.” Focusing in particular on European cases, he argues that the increase in support for the right-wing populist parties which have been the primary protagonists of backsliding can be explained primarily by the greater supply of populist mobilisation than any discernible increase in populist demand. Examining trends in European public opinion prior to and following the onset of backsliding, Bartels avers that popular attitudes supply a “reservoir of right-wing populist sentiment” rather than the much-vaunted “wave”. Given this, he concludes that backsliding has occurred largely in the absence of any real demand-side input,

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3 with citizens of contemporary European democracies “[going] about their political lives in much  
4 the way that democratic citizens generally do, focusing primarily on their own economic and social  
5 well-being and judging their political leaders accordingly” (Bartels, 2023, p. 220).  
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8 At first glance, the Polish case would seem to lend considerable support to Bartels’s con-  
9 tentions. Prior to the 2015 parliamentary election there was little sign of any significant appetite  
10 for democratic backsliding among the Polish electorate (Markowski, 2016, p. 1320; Bartels, 2023,  
11 p. 125). The long-running surveys of Poles’ attitudes to democracy conducted by the Public Opin-  
12 ion Research Centre do not show any significant decline in acceptance of democracy ahead of this  
13 election. In 2015 64% of Poles agreed that democracy is preferable to any other form of govern-  
14 ment, and 53% disagreed with the notion that it made no difference to people like them whether  
15 their country was democratic or not (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, 2021, pp. 2–3). More-  
16 over, since 2015 the proportion of Poles endorsing democracy has increased: in 2021 68% and  
17 62% gave pro-democratic answers to the above questions.  
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20 However, just as it would be mistaken to infer from PiS’s post-electoral actions that the  
21 party’s success in 2015 can be attributed to an upsurge in anti-democratic sentiment, so it would  
22 be wrong to conclude that it represented an endorsement of liberal-democratic principles. Bar-  
23 tel (2023, p. 224) is correct in his assessment that PiS parlayed 37% of the vote into a narrative  
24 of a “voting booth revolution” with the aim of justifying everything that followed. However, his  
25 contention that Polish voters did not choose even a “mildly authoritarian” alternative is less sus-  
26 tainable. During its previous spell in government from 2005 to 2007, PiS had attempted – in the  
27 less propitious circumstances of a fractious three-party coalition, and ultimately unsuccessfully –  
28 to implement changes that amply foreshadowed many of the ‘reforms’ they would undertake from  
29 2015 onwards (Stanley, 2016).  
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32 The resistance experienced from liberal-democratic institutions during this period – in par-  
33 ticular, the Constitutional Tribunal – did not impress upon the party the virtues of executive re-  
34 straint. Instead, PiS spent the eight years in opposition between 2007 and 2015 railing against  
35 the “impossibilism” of a political system in which electoral majorities were routinely thwarted by  
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unelected judges, stoking a divide between a “solidaristic” and “liberal” Poland that attributed the failures of Poland’s post-1989 democracy to a surfeit of “can’t-do” proceduralism, and elaborating – particularly in the wake of the Smoleński air crash which claimed the life of president and PiS co-founder Lech Kaczyński – a conspiracy-theory account of democratic transition as the seizure of power by a self-selecting and unaccountable cabal of liberal elites. When PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński spoke in 2011 of his conviction that Poland would have “Budapest on the Vistula”, it was a clear invocation of the illiberal crusade already embarked upon by Fidesz, PiS’s Hungarian counterpart, but also the expression of a long-held enmity towards Poland’s Third Republic.

Yet whether PiS were identifiable as “mildly authoritarian” or not in 2015 is ultimately less important than the fact that – as Bartels (2023, p. 224) himself recognises in his contention that Poles did not choose authoritarian government “at least not at first” – they assuredly *were* authoritarian thereafter. “At least not at first” is crucial here: if PiS’s initial victory can be explained primarily as a triumph for the most credible opposition force over a worn-out incumbent, their subsequent victories raise the question of why those who actively spurn liberal democracy remain unpunished by ostensibly pro-liberal-democratic electorates. If voters in consolidated liberal democracies remain largely convinced that liberal democracy is “the only game in town”, and if it is political elites that are responsible for breaking the rules of that game, then why have elites not faced greater punishment from the electorate for doing so?

While Bartels (2023, p. 25) concludes that publics in backsliding countries “were little more than passive bystanders to the erosion of democracy”, this passivity in itself is a significant part of the problem, and recent studies of “democratic hypocrisy” indicate there may be more active complicity than this formulation suggests (Carey et al., 2020; Graham & Svolik, 2020; Simonovits et al., 2022; Svolik et al., 2023). As Cohen et al. (2023, p. 264) remark in a recent study of citizens’ commitments to democracy when illiberals are in power, “citizens are not always naive victims. ... Authoritarian candidates often openly signal plans to centralize power and repress dissent; their victory suggests a critical mass of amenable voters.” Even if in 2015 Polish voters might have been forgiven for judging hyperbolic the warning by Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza that “at stake

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3 in these elections is democracy itself” (Redakcja “Gazety Wyborczej”, 2015), by the next election  
4 in 2019 those voting for PiS could not escape the question of just how much illiberalism they were  
5 willing to tolerate.  
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9 PiS’s success in delivering on many of its key election promises and the period of strong  
10 economic growth Poland has enjoyed over the last eight years may chime with a popular conception  
11 of democracy that prioritises outcomes over procedures. The vulnerability of *liberal* democracy  
12 in Poland possibly derives at least in part from Poles’ inattention to – if not necessarily hostility  
13 towards – liberal-democratic principles and institutions. As Nooruddin has remarked in direct  
14 reference to the debate sparked by Bartels, it is possible that the flourishing of liberal democracy in  
15 the post-1989 era was largely “a mirage...optimistically mistaken for the real thing” (Nooruddin, in  
16 Bartels et al., 2023, p. 17). Dawson and Hanley (2016, p. 21) have made a similar point, noting the  
17 paucity – in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe at least – of “genuinely liberal political platforms...based  
18 on shared commitments to the norms of political equality, individual liberty, civic  
19 tolerance and the rule of law”. After all, if a robust articulation of liberal democracy is in short  
20 supply, it is plausible to suppose that there is limited demand for it too.  
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23 If democracy erodes from the top, the lines of fracture cannot but reflect weaknesses beneath.  
24 An emerging body of research at the intersection of polarisation, attitudes to democracy and  
25 support for the protagonists of backsliding suggests that contemporary democracies are vulnerable  
26 to subversion not because of disenchantment with liberal democracy itself, but because the partisan force of “pernicious polarization” (Somer et al., 2021, p. 930) trumps respect for the system  
27 of rights and restraints through which that political system functions. While Wunsch et al. (2023,  
28 p. 3) find that voters generally condemn democratic violations by public officials, Cohen et al.  
29 (2023, p. 273) conclude that “authoritarian winners’ support for the political system is at best  
30 contingent”, Mazepus and Toshkov (2022) identify a greater propensity “to stand up for democratic  
31 checks and balances” among supporters of opposition parties, and Şaşmaz et al. (2022) and Fos-  
32 sati (2021) find greater acceptance among voters of anti-democratic actions if those actions benefit  
33 their preferred party. Building on these findings, Bryan (2023, p. 3) shows that in the presence  
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of strong partisanship democratic principles may be sacrificed to partisan interests, with those in power reconceptualising democracy in illiberal terms, emphasising authoritarian solutions (which favour their party's agenda) and depreciating civil rights (which favour the agenda of those without power). As Hrbková et al. (2023) note, such partisan biases may be consequential even in unstable party systems with considerable voter volatility, to say nothing of party systems as clearly defined and sharply polarised as the Polish one.

PiS's illiberal revolution has given rise to a substantial literature focusing on the nature of the institutional changes implemented and their consequences for liberal democracy, particularly at the EU level. However, comparatively less attention has been paid to the interaction between illiberalism, democratic values, polarisation and partisanship at the demand side. Chiopris et al. (2021) use an experimental treatment to measure how receiving information about the autocratic intentions of PiS affects intentions to vote for them. However, their use of age cohorts as a proxy for democratic attitudes (on the basis that socialisation wholly during communism, partially during communism, or wholly during post-communist democracy implies varying levels of commitment to democracy) potentially introduces a confounder, as younger voters are more likely to be unstable in their vote choices and thus more prone to change their vote in response to negative information. Svolik et al. (2023) find that those who vote for radical right parties in Poland are more likely to fail to punish hypothetical candidates for transgressions against liberal democracy. However, this study focuses purely on the question of *revealed* preferences, without attending to the question of whether the greater tendency of those who vote for the radical right in Poland to overlook illiberal actions reflects lower levels of support for liberal-democratic principles. It also passes over the issue of whether affective polarisation – a particularly acute issue in the Polish context – exacerbates the propensity for “illiberal forgiveness” in ways that might foreshadow acceptance of illiberal solutions when current opposition parties regain power. A full investigation of the interplay between liberal democracy and voting behaviour in backsliding countries requires an exploration of the link between declared preferences (what citizens say they think about liberal democracy) and revealed preferences (how they actually act in response to threats to that system).

Svolik (2019, pp. 21–23) identifies three potential answers to the question of why pro-democratic voters fail to punish political elites who depart from liberal-democratic norms: one, that “voters have not had enough time or clarity to recognize a subversion of democracy for what it is”; two, that they “do not care much about democracy in the first place”; and finally, that “[d]eep social cleavages and acute political tensions...undercut the public’s ability to curb the illiberal inclinations of elected politicians.”

The first of these potential explanations may be termed the *obliviousness thesis*. This holds that citizens have insufficient experience with liberal democracy as a political system to understand when key norms of that system have been breached. If this is the case, we would expect to find that *Poles hold incoherent attitudes to liberal democracy (H1a) and thus that those attitudes have a negligible impact on voting behaviour (H1b)*.

The second explanation is the *indifference thesis*. In this case, citizens have coherent attitudes to liberal democracy but do not value liberal democracy sufficiently for it to influence their voting choices. In this case, we would expect to find that *breaches of liberal-democratic norms and principles do not have a significant impact on the propensity of Poles to vote for candidates for office, regardless of a voter’s party preference or attitude to liberal democracy (H2)*.

The third explanation, the *partisan accountability thesis*, supposes that in conditions of polarisation and entrenched partisanship liberal democracy becomes one of the issues that defines the prevailing line of political competition, with supporters of an illiberal party less likely to punish candidates with illiberal views. In this case, *supporters of PiS are less likely than supporters of opposition parties to punish a candidate for breaches of liberal democracy, regardless of the candidate’s party (H3)*.

Two other potential explanations may be added. The *non-partisan accountability thesis* holds that fears about the unwillingness of electorates to hold illiberal candidates to account are unfounded, and that *citizens will punish candidates for advocating illiberal policies regardless of which party they belong to (H4)*.

Finally, the work of Simonovits et al. (2022) gives rise to the *democratic hypocrisy thesis*.

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3 From this perspective, attitudes to liberal democracy do not reinforce political divides but are  
4 subordinated to them, such that citizens are willing to punish an out-group candidate but not an in-  
5 group one. In this case, *supporters of opposition parties are more likely to punish a PiS candidate*  
6 *for breaches of liberal democracy than they are to punish an opposition candidate (H5a)*, and  
7 conversely *supporters of PiS are more likely to punish an opposition candidate for breaches of*  
8 *liberal democracy than they are to punish a PiS candidate (H5b)*.  
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### 17 3. Research design 18

19 To test these hypotheses, this paper uses an original dataset collected from an online survey of 3000  
20 Polish respondents to an online PBS internet panel. The survey was the first in a three-wave panel  
21 survey designed to track Poles' attitudes to and behaviours concerning liberal democracy over a  
22 12-month period.  
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#### 30 3.1. The analysis of declared preferences 31

32 The “declared attitudes” part of the analysis uses multinomial logistic regression models that  
33 regress vote choice on attitudes to democracy, measures of elite-level and voter-level polarisation,  
34 and several control variables standard to such models.  
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38 The dependent variable for the declared-attitudes analysis is operationalised using a stan-  
39 dard “if there were an election on Sunday, how would you vote” question. This variable distin-  
40 guishes between the five main political forces relevant in Polish politics at the time the survey was  
41 conducted: the radical-right parties PiS and Konfederacja, the centrist liberal-conservative KO, the  
42 social-democratic Lewica coalition, and the agrarian-conservative PSL.<sup>1</sup> The vote choice variable  
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44 also incorporates information about non-voting.  
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51 <sup>1</sup>A new movement, the centre-right Polska 2050, was not directly prompted for in the survey,  
52 but on the basis of vote intention surveys in early 2023 it is reasonable to assume that many of  
53 those opting for another, unspecified, party will have chosen this movement.  
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Several variables are included which are known from the existing literature to be predictive of vote choice. These are age, gender (male; female), level of education (primary; secondary; higher), place of residence (rural; small town or city; large town or city), left-right self-placement, and an alternative broad ideological dimension called the solidaristic-liberal divide (Markowski et al., 2023), which in contrast to the traditional definition of the left-right divide captures the distinction between economically interventionist and socially conservative attitudes on the one hand, and pro-market and socially progressive attitudes on the other (Tavits & Letki, 2009).

Liberal-democratic attitudes are operationalised using the 7-item index as detailed in Claassen et al.(2023). A confirmatory factor analysis of these seven variables shows that they load on a single dimension ( $\text{RMSEA}=0.06$ ). I also include two index variables derived from batteries of questions used in the European Social Survey (European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure (ESS ERIC), 2018) concerning attitudes to liberal democracy and its realisation. The first of these consists of six variables asking respondents “how important” certain key liberal-democratic institutions and principles are. All six variables load on a single dimension ( $\text{RMSEA}=0.04$ ). The second consists of six questions about the extent to which the liberal-democratic principles enumerated in the preceding ESS questions have been implemented in the respondent’s country. This model fits less well, with an RMSEA of 0.11, but all variables load reasonably well on a single dimension, with loadings of 0.59 or greater.

Political polarisation is operationalised using two variables. The first of these measures elite-level polarisation in terms of the dominant political divide in contemporary Polish politics. Respondents’ scores on an 11-point variable that measures how positive or negative they are about KO were subtracted from their scores regarding PiS, to give a variable that runs from fully pro-KO to fully pro-PiS sentiment. The second measure is derived in similar fashion from two five-point variables that ask respondents about their sentiments regarding PiS and KO voters. Here, voters were asked what they would think about a person if they had no other information about them other than their political preference, with responses ranging from “definitely a bad person” to “definitely a good person”.

Following the approach recommended by Gelman et al. (Gelman et al., 2020, pp. 186–187), all continuous variables are standardised by subtracting the mean and dividing by two standard deviations. This facilitates direct comparison of the coefficients of these variables with those from binary variables.

### 3.2. The analysis of revealed preferences

The second part of the analysis uses conjoint models to explore the causal relationship between candidate characteristics and vote choice and the mediating role of voter characteristics and attitudes. Conjoint models have two key qualities which are useful for the analysis at hand. First, they incorporate the multidimensional character of decision-making into an analysis of vote choices. By allowing the researcher to vary a number of factors in a single experiment, conjoint analysis makes it possible to estimate the impact of multiple components of an experimental treatment in the determination of an outcome, enabling the simultaneous testing of competing hypotheses (Hainmueller et al., 2014, p. 3). Second, by giving respondents a variety of reasons to justify their choices, conjoint experiments mitigate the social desirability problems that often afflict experiments where the sole treatment concerns a variable susceptible to such problems. They are thus particularly advantageous when analysing the impact of illiberalism on vote choice, given the normatively positive associations of democracy in liberal-democratic polities (Simonovits et al., 2022).

I use a paired conjoint design in which two candidates are presented to the respondent, one always a PiS candidate, the other a candidate of one of the other parties, selected at random. Taking this approach rather than varying *both* candidates entirely at random keeps the analysis focused on the question of “PiS versus anti-PiS”, which is – at least from the perspective of the democratic backsliding issue – the salient dividing line in contemporary Polish politics. Furthermore, while in countries with multi-party systems paired designs may seem unsuited to evoking a real-world electoral setting, framing the choice as one of an incumbent-party candidate versus opposition-party candidate probably has the best claim to realism.<sup>2</sup> My purpose in this part of the paper is

<sup>2</sup>Hainmueller et al. (2015) find support for the contention that paired conjoint designs outper-

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3 in any case not to replicate precisely an electoral setting, but to establish the extent to which, net  
4 of other factors that influence electoral preferences, voters are willing to punish – or reward – a  
5 candidate for advocating policies that run counter to liberal democracy. Each respondent made  
6 10 separate choices between candidates. Given 3000 respondents and a maximum of 10 variable  
7 levels this design has 99% statistical power to detect an effect size of 0.05 (Lukac & Stefanelli,  
8 2020).  
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11 To increase the realism of the choice sets and to ensure that respondents make a fuller con-  
12 sideration of candidates than a pure focus on policy allows, I include information on a number  
13 of factors that are likely to be of relevance in the evaluation of candidates' suitability for office.  
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15 *Political experience* distinguishes candidates with 8 years of experience (two parliamentary terms  
16 in the Polish case), 4 years of experience, and new candidates without prior experience. *Chance*  
17 of getting elected distinguishes between those who are unlikely to get elected, those who have a  
18 possibility of getting elected, and those who will probably get elected. *Gender* distinguishes be-  
19 tween male and female candidates, and age ranges from 23 to 57 years old, with three intermediate  
20 categories. For each of these variables there is also a “no information” option.  
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23 Each candidate was associated with three policy positions. The first two policy positions  
24 were chosen at random from among possible stances on four issues chosen to be representative of  
25 economic and socio-cultural debates in Poland: the scope of child benefit<sup>3</sup>, changes to personal  
26 income tax, introducing LGBT partnerships, and the law on abortion. The inclusion of these  
27 policies was intended to ensure that illiberal policies were presented within a realistic context.  
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30 form other approaches in replicating real-world behaviour.  
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33 <sup>3</sup>A universal child benefit policy was introduced by the PiS government in 2016. This policy in-  
34 troduced monthly benefit payments of 500 złoty per child - initially from the second child onwards,  
35 but subsequently for all children. While the introduction of this policy was initially contested by  
36 several opposition parties on the grounds of affordability, it has become an important touchstone  
37 of Polish politics.  
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The third policy position was chosen at random from ten possibilities. Six of these reflect a position contrary to the tenets of liberal democracy outlined in Claassen et al. (Claassen et al., 2023). These are:

- governments should have the possibility to ignore court rulings that they regard as politically motivated;
- governments should be able to bend the law to solve urgent social and political problems;
- some citizens should be deprived of democratic rights on the basis of their political views;
- minority groups whose protests disturb the values of the majority should be deprived of the right to protest;
- governments should have the possibility to bend the rules in their favour if their predecessors have done so;
- political decisions should be made by experts and not politicians or ordinary people.

The remaining four policy positions concern issues that are not directly related to liberal democracy. These were included to ensure that respondents were not only choosing between candidates with illiberal views. These policy positions are:

- improving air quality by banning the sale of new cars that run on petrol;
- increasing tax on the sale of cigarettes;
- increasing access to state-funded childcare;
- increasing investment in public schools.

These choice sets thus enable respondents to select between candidates who express a range of views on politically divisive and valence issues. In doing so, they may or may not be forced to consider whether to punish (or indeed, should they be so minded, to reward) a candidate for expressing illiberal views, or to overlook those views for the sake of other policy stances they agree with.

I model the responses to the conjoint questions using a multilevel logistic regression in which each of the 10 candidate choices are nested within respondents. The models are estimated within a Bayesian framework, which offers much greater flexibility for the analysis of quantities of interest. Models are estimated using the *brms* package (Bürkner, 2017), and quantities of interest are calculated using the *marginaleffects* package (Arel-Bundock, 2023).

## 4. Findings

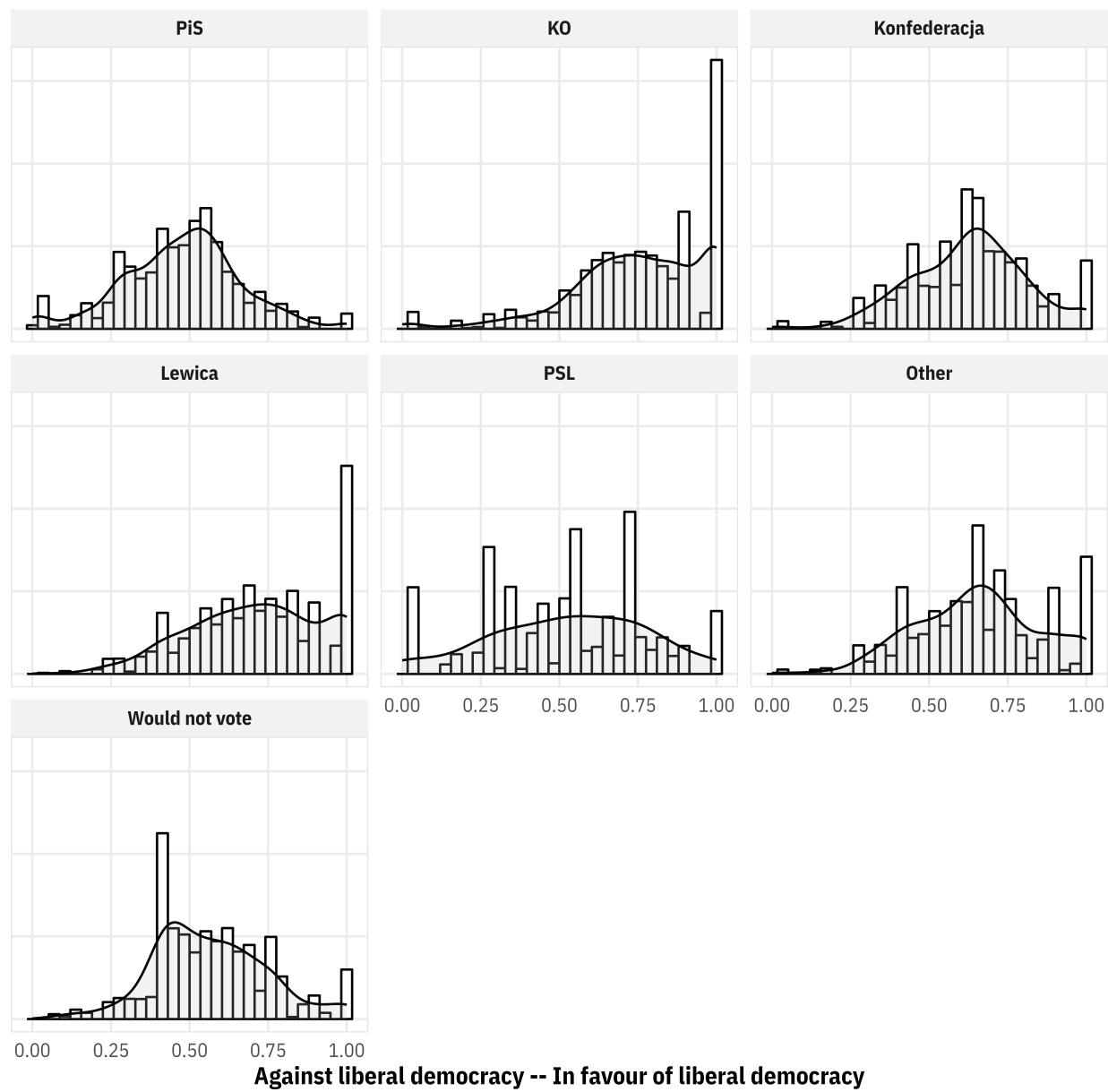
Before examining the results of the models, it is instructive to review the distributions of attitudes to liberal democracy for each of the major parties. The mean respondent is mildly pro-liberal-democracy, with a score of 0.62 on a scale of 0 to 1. Figure 1 shows a histogram and density plot with distributions for all self-declared party electorates. In PiS's case, the distribution is slightly skewed towards illiberal positions. This contrasts sharply with KO, most of whose electorate is at least moderately in favour of liberal democracy, and in many cases fully in favour. There is a similar distribution in the case of Lewica, while Konfederacja's electorate tends to be more liberal than PiS's voters, but with markedly fewer strongly pro-liberal-democracy voters. These results are in line with expectations, with PiS voters reflecting their party's much more sceptical attitude towards liberal democracy.

### 4.1. Declared preferences and vote choice

Regression outputs for the vote choice models are available in Appendix A. Table A1 shows the model with only controls. Together, these variables explain around 40% of the variance. The coefficients are broadly consistent with the existing state of knowledge about Polish voting behaviour, with better educated, more urban, less right-wing and more socio-culturally liberal voters tending to prefer KO to PiS. Indeed, the coefficients for all parties compared with PiS on both ideological variables are substantial and statistically significant.

Table A2 shows the model with elite-level and voter-level polarisation variables added, increasing explained variance to 57%. It is clear from the large coefficients that elite polarisation

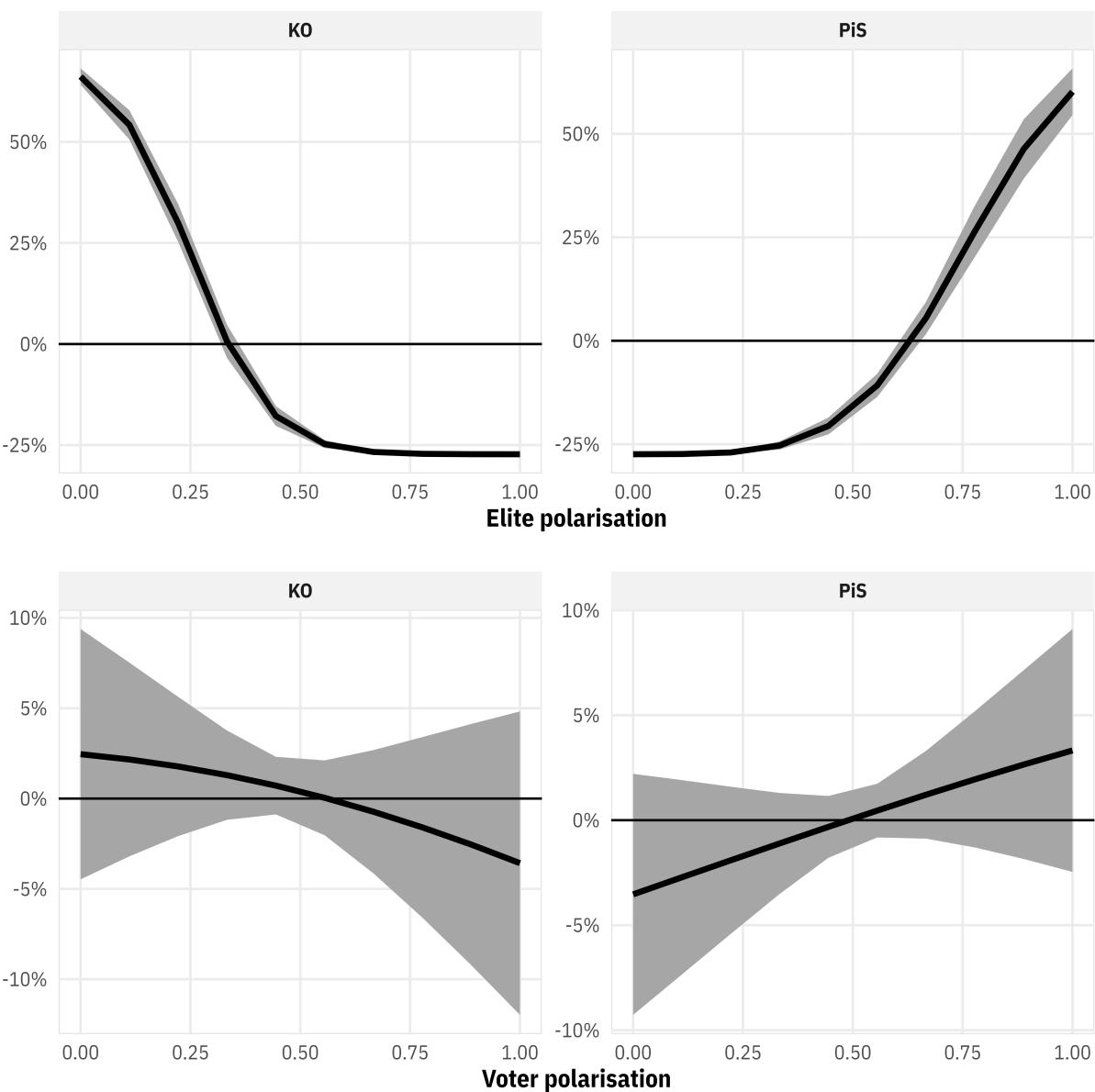
Figure 1. Index of attitudes to liberal democracy, by party



plays a significant role in vote choice. In all cases, preference for PiS over PO is associated with a decrease in the odds of choosing another party instead of PiS. This is best illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the differences in predicted probabilities of voting for a party relative to the mean probability of voting for that party. Those who are most anti-PiS and pro-PO *against* PiS are over 60 percentage points more likely than the average Pole to vote for KO, and around 25 pp. less likely than the average Pole to vote for PiS. On the other hand, those who are most polarised in favour of

PiS and against PO are around 25 pp. less likely to vote for KO and over 60 pp. more likely to vote for PiS. There is, however, no statistically significant effect of the voter-level polarisation variable when controlling for elite polarisation.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 2.** Differences in predicted probabilities: polarisation variables



<sup>4</sup>Running this model without the elite-level polarisation variable yields a negative coefficient for voting KO over PiS, but significantly smaller than in the case of elite-level polarisation.

The third model, shown in Table A3, adds the three democracy variables. Liberal-democratic attitudes are clearly associated with preferring other parties over PiS: in each case the coefficient is positive and with the exception of PSL is statistically significant. Surprisingly, despite the party's ambivalent attitude to liberal democracy, pro-liberal-democratic attitudes are associated with increased odds of preferring Konfederacja to PiS. Figure 3 shows the differences in predicted probabilities of voting for KO and PiS. A voter with fully anti-liberal democratic attitudes is 10 pp. less likely than the average voter to vote for KO, but nearly 20 pp. more likely to vote for PiS. Conversely, having pro-liberal-democratic attitudes is associated with a 9 pp. increase in the probability of voting for KO, and a 15 pp. decrease in the probability of voting for PiS.

There is also a clear divide in the case of attitudes towards the importance of liberal-democratic institutions and principles, particularly with respect to KO. Those who think liberal democracy is unimportant are 15 pp. less likely to vote for KO, but those who strongly agree that it is important are 19 pp. more likely to vote for KO. In the case of PiS, the difference is only statistically significant over a value of 0.67, but those who see it as important are 7 pp. less likely to vote for PiS.

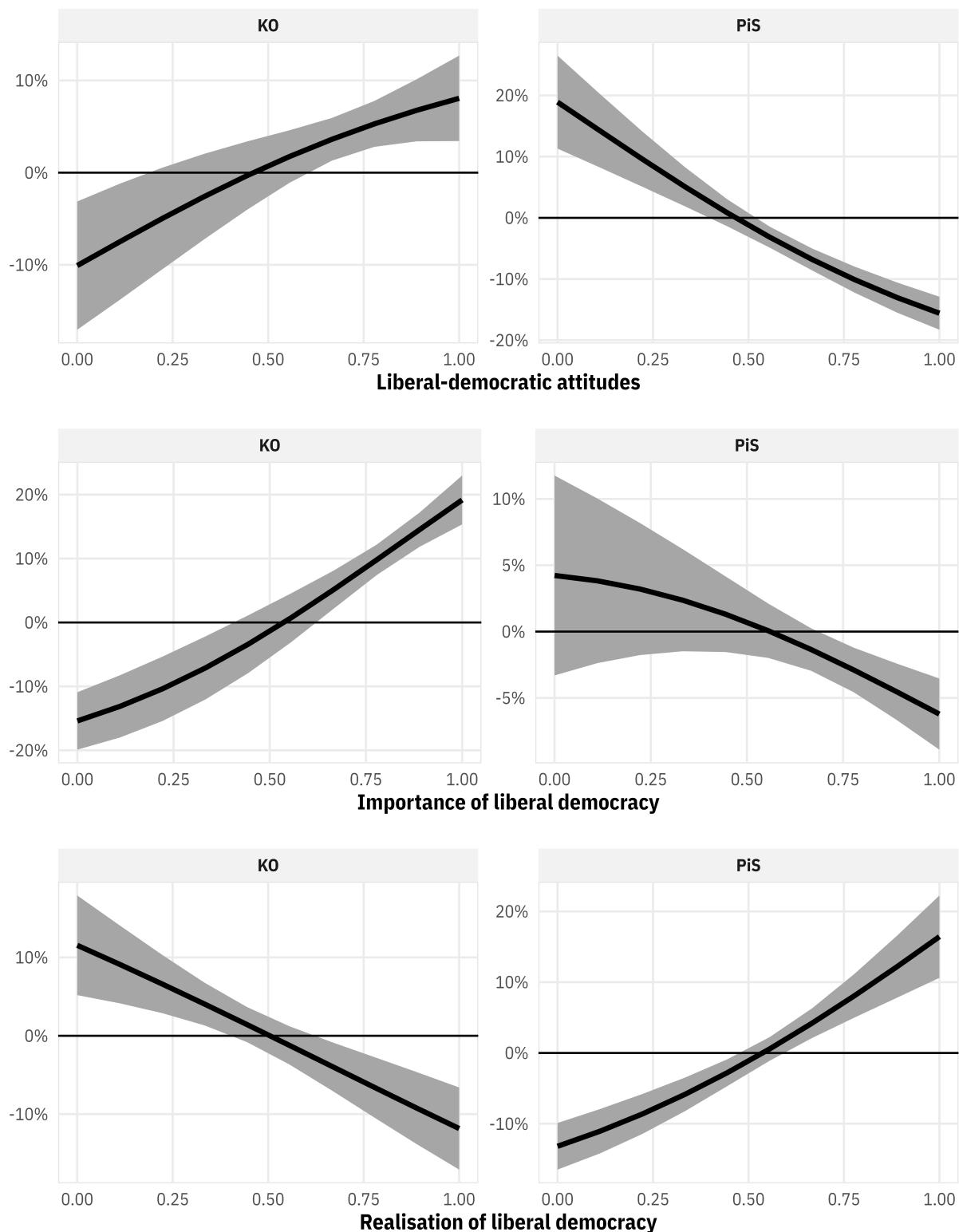
The opposite tendencies can be seen the case of whether liberal democracy has actually been realised in Poland. Those who think that liberal democracy has not been realised are 10 pp. more likely than the average voter to vote for KO and 13 pp. less likely to vote for PiS, while those who are strongly convinced that Poland is a liberal democracy are 10 pp. less likely to vote for KO and 16 pp. more likely to vote for PiS.

Table A4 shows the full model, which contains all five substantive variables of interest. Elite polarisation and liberal-democratic attitudes remain the most important predictors of vote choice.

## 4.2. Revealed preferences and vote choice

While observational data can tell us much about the relationship between declared attitudes and behaviours, the conjoint analysis allows us to analyse revealed attitudes. Following Leeper et

Figure 3. Differences in predicted probabilities: democracy variables



al. (2019), I estimate the marginal means of quantities of interest rather than using the AMCE approach advocated by Hainmueller et al. (2014). This approach makes it possible to draw conclusions about the overall impact of a given independent variable rather than having to relate it to a baseline category.

Figure 4 shows the posterior marginal means of the probability of candidate choice for each of the conditions in the conjoint choice sets. Where choice of party is concerned, the large difference between the probability of choosing a PiS candidate (median 43%) and choosing candidates from other parties (56–58%) can be explained at least in part by the fact that PiS candidates were always one of the choices offered to voters.<sup>5</sup> Other non-policy-related features of the conjoint choice sets mostly have little effect. Candidates without previous experience in the legislature, who are male, and who are middle-aged are slightly more likely to be chosen.

Where policies are concerned, we see more significant differences. In the case of child benefits, voters are on average slightly more likely to choose candidates who advocate replacing the current universal system with means-tested benefits, and slightly less likely to choose candidates who advocate removing benefits from the first child. Advocating reduced taxes for all income groups has a positive impact on the probability of a candidate's being chosen, while other responses have no impact. In the cases of abortion and LGBT marriage, respondents are more likely to choose candidates who do not express a view on these issues than they are to choose candidates who do express a view.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>It is worth noting that 43% is at the higher end of PiS's polling figures in recent years. While the proportion of respondents choosing PiS in a direct vote choice question fielded by this survey is lower, the responses to the conjoint experiment appear to be relatively consistent with average voter preferences as revealed in a variety of dedicated vote choice surveys published in the Polish media.

<sup>6</sup>This finding is likely to reflect differences at the level of party electorates, but is beyond the scope of further investigation here.

Where the four policies that are not anti-liberal-democracy in character are concerned, there is little effect on support for candidates of cigarette taxes or banning the sale of new petrol or diesel cars. However, advocating increased investment in primary education or state financing of child care is associated with approximately a 5 pp. increase in the probability a candidate will be chosen.

This leaves illiberal policies. In most cases, advocacy of these policies is associated with a significant decrease in the probability of a candidate's being chosen. Removal of political rights on the grounds of an individual's views (-7 pp.) has the largest effect. Technocratic solutions are clearly the outlier here: voters are around 5 pp. more likely to choose a candidate who advocates the making of decisions by independent experts.

**Figure 4.** Marginal means of candidate choice probabilities

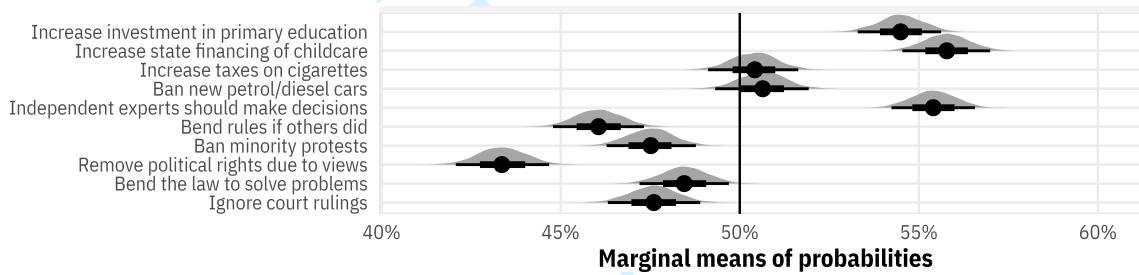
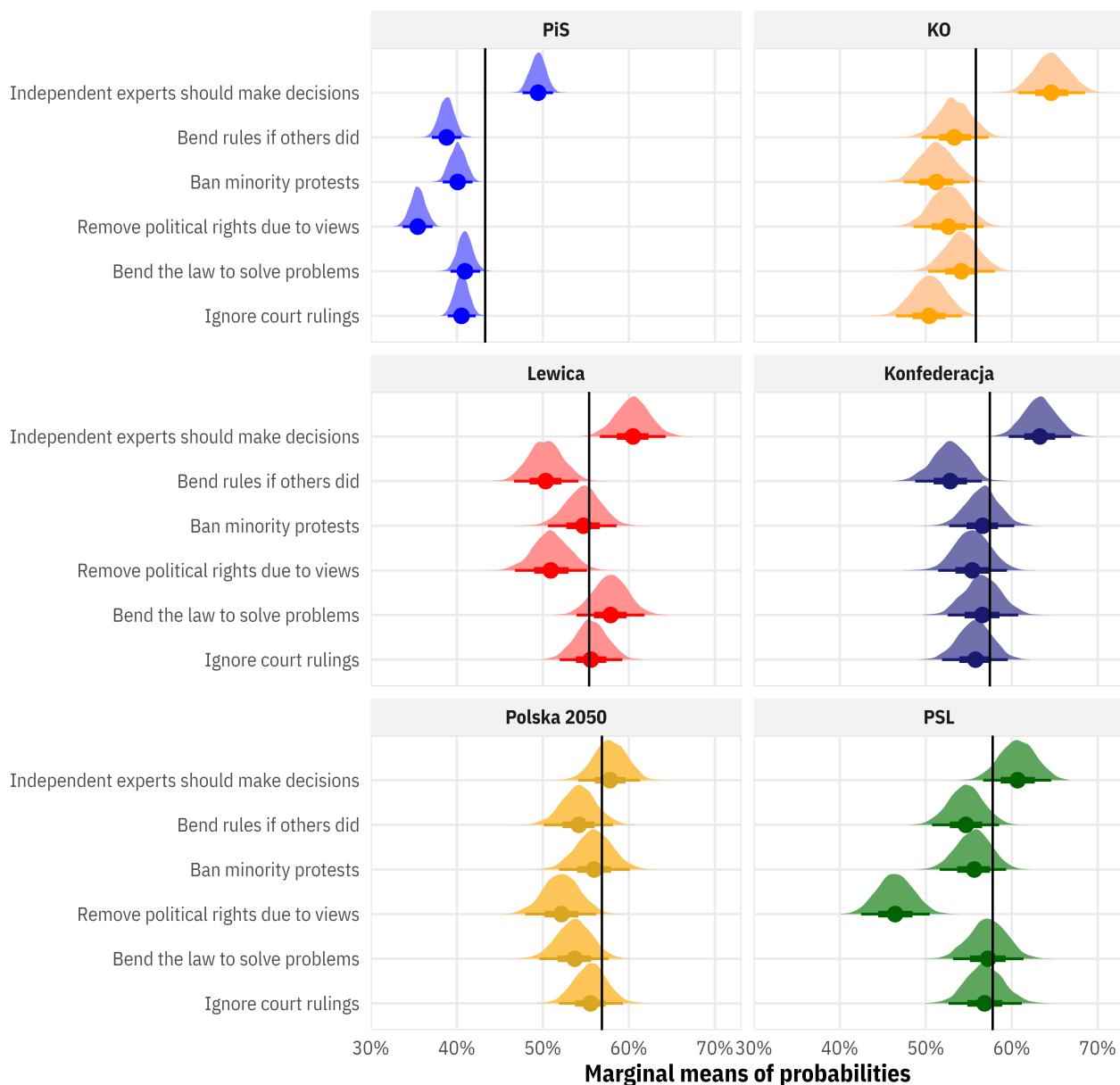


Figure 5 focuses on the illiberal stances, showing the posterior marginal means of the probabilities that voters will choose a candidate who espouses illiberal views. The vertical lines show the mean probability of voting for a candidate per party. The further the posterior marginal means are from the left of these lines, the more a candidate is punished by voters for holding these views; conversely, the further to the right, the more they are rewarded for them. With the exception of devolving decision-making to independent experts, PiS candidates are punished for illiberal views, particularly in the case of the removal of political rights. In other cases, the propensity to punish candidates varies. Illiberal views tend to mean respondents are less likely to vote for KO candidates, but there is some crossover with the mean vote, indicating that illiberalism is not always a "dealbreaker" for those otherwise inclined to choose KO candidates. Bending the law to solve problems is actually more likely to result in support for a candidate from Lewica.

Figure 6 breaks down responses to the illiberal stances not by the party of the candidate, but

Figure 5. Marginal means of candidate choice probabilities by candidate party



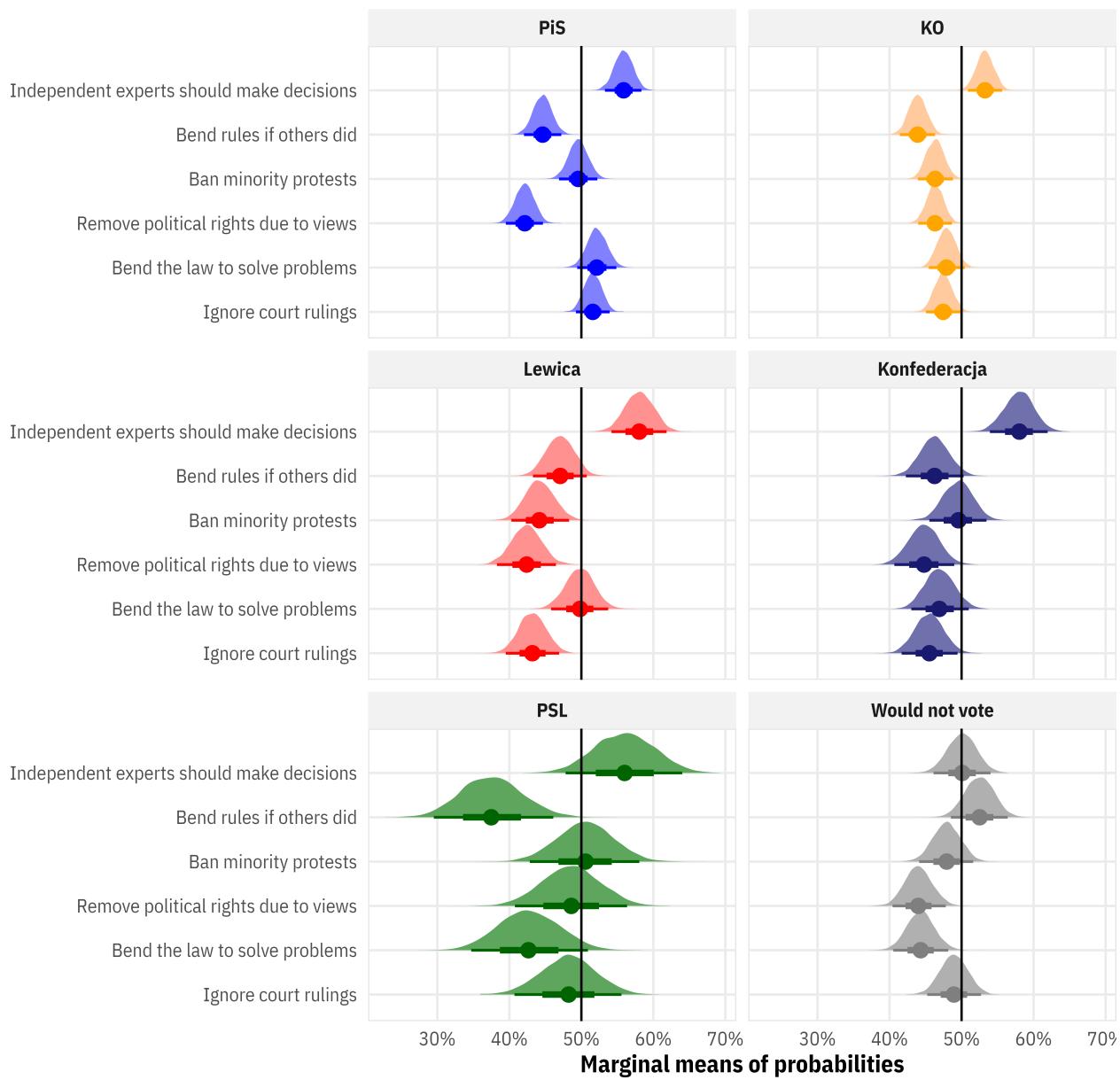
by respondent party electorates. Regardless of a voter's party of preference, candidates are more likely to be chosen if they advocate technocratic government. PiS voters are less likely to vote for a candidate who advocates bending the rules if others did or removing political rights from others on account of their views, but candidates who support bending the law to solve problems or ignoring court rulings are slightly *more* likely to be chosen by PiS voters, while advocating the banning of minority rights has little effect. In the case of KO's electorate, all anti-liberal-democratic posi-

tions decrease the probability of supporting a candidate, with the exception of devolving decision-making to independent experts. Among other parties, the picture is more mixed: supporters of the left-wing Lewica coalition punish candidates for advocating bans on minority protests, removal of political rights, ignoring court rulings, or bending the rules if predecessors had done so, but are not significantly less likely to vote for a candidate who favours bending the law to solve problems. Konfederacja voters also tend to err on the side of punishing candidates with illiberal views, but not in the case of those who would ban minority protests.

While the candidate party and voter party breakdowns allow us to evaluate general patterns of preference, to understand whether party electorates punish out-party candidates more than their own candidates it is necessary to interact policy choices with the party of the candidate and the party a respondent declared an intention to vote for. Figure 7 presents contrasts of marginal means from this model, constructed by subtracting the posterior values for each of the illiberal policies from the marginal mean of those who advocated one of the alternative policies. This gives a measure per candidate party and per party electorate of the extent to which candidates are punished for holding illiberal policies. The further to the left of the zero line, the more illiberal candidates are punished. The further to the right of the zero line, the more illiberal candidates are rewarded for their stance. For each of the parties, we compare punishment of illiberal PiS candidates with punishment of an illiberal candidate from the respondent's favoured party, with the exception of PiS, where the comparison is between a PiS and a KO candidate.

The results for the two major parties show a significant difference. PiS voters hand out greater punishment to illiberal candidates from their own party for advocating bending the rules or removing political rights, but are if anything more lenient with illiberal KO candidates, rewarding them in all cases except removing political rights. KO voters, on the other hand, oppose illiberal candidates regardless of whether those candidates come from their own party or not; indeed, in the cases of banning minority protest, bending the rules and ignoring court rulings they are *more* likely to punish candidates from their own party than they are to punish PiS candidates. To varying extents, Konfederacja, PSL and Lewica voters show a greater tendency to punish PiS candidates

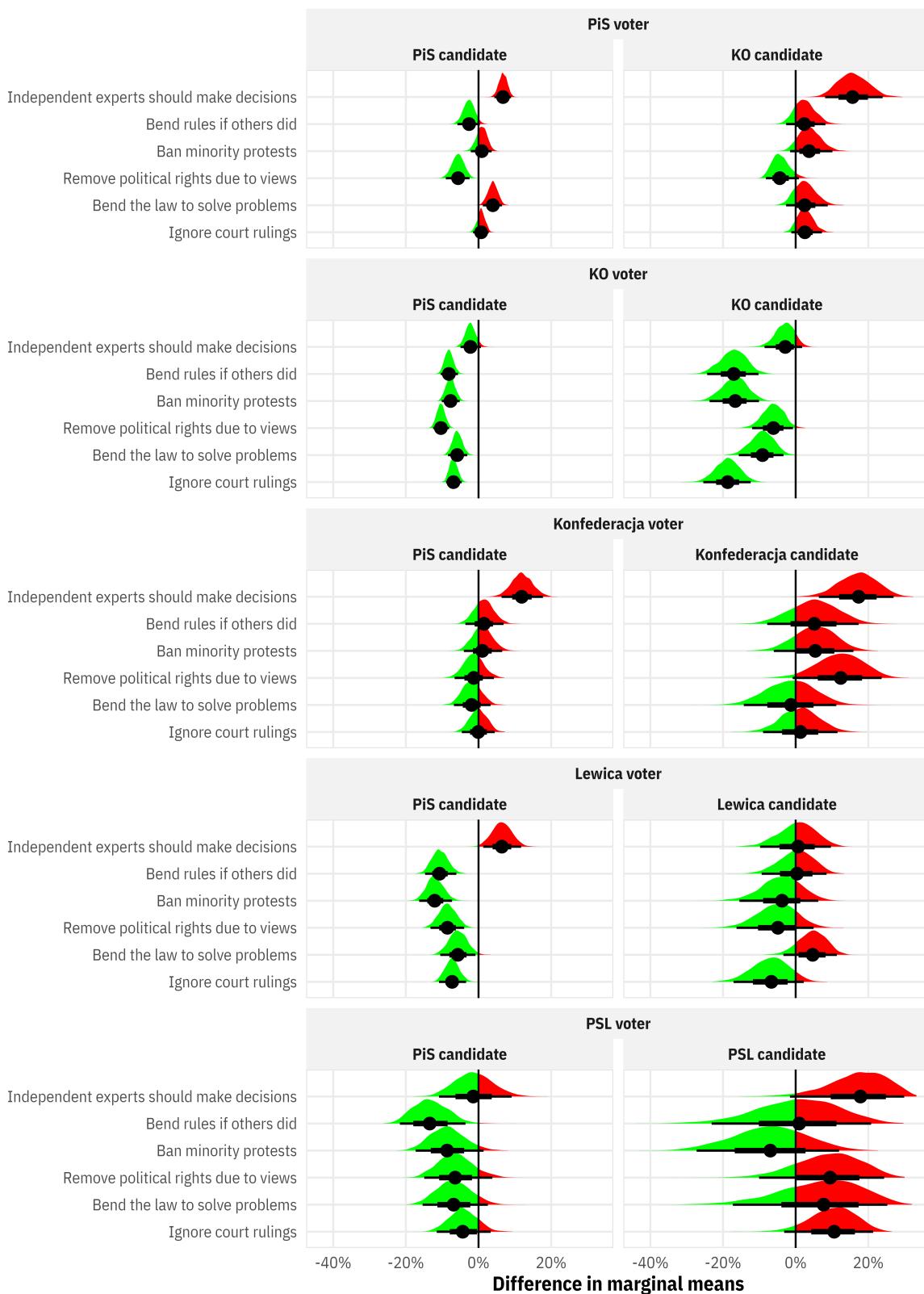
Figure 6. Marginal means of candidate choice probabilities by party electorate



who advocate illiberal policies than to punish their own candidates.

Finally, I examine the relationship between voters' own positions on the variables of interest and their propensity for rewarding or punishing illiberal policies. It is clear from the vote choice models that both liberal democratic attitudes and endorsements of the importance of liberal democratic institutions and values are associated with preferring KO over PiS. If voters do more than pay lip service to liberal democracy, their revealed actions should match their declared inten-

**Figure 7.** Contrasts of marginal means of voting for candidates who hold illiberal views versus candidates who do not



tions; that is, they should be more likely to punish a candidate for having illiberal attitudes. At the same time, I expect to see a relationship between polarisation and candidate choice, with respondents further towards the pro-KO pole punishing candidates for illiberal policies, and respondents further towards the pro-PiS pole rewarding such policies.

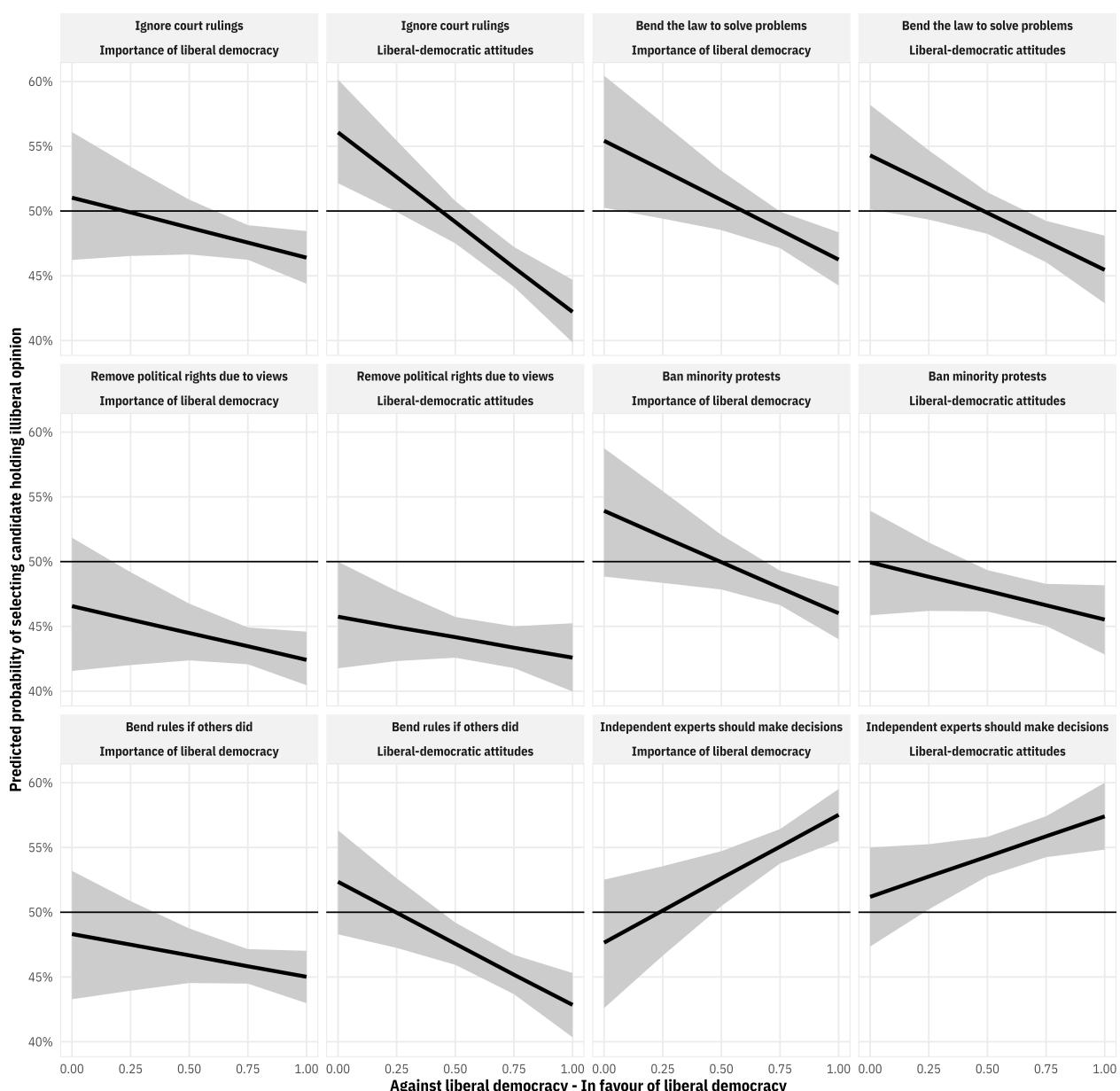
Figure 8 broadly supports the hypothesis that pro-liberal-democratic attitudes have a negative impact on selecting a candidate who espouses illiberal policies. In most cases this is a relative difference, with the average respondent across all values of the two liberal democracy variables less likely to vote for an illiberal candidate. However, in the case of bending the law to solve problems, respondents opposed to liberal democracy are more likely to select a candidate, and this is also the case for ignoring court rulings, where a candidate who advocates this policy has a 55% probability of being chosen by a voter who rejects liberal democracy. Again, technocracy stands out as an exception; the more pro-liberal-democracy a candidate on both counts, the more likely they are to vote for someone who advocates a greater decision-making role for experts.

In the case of polarisation, the picture is more mixed. The more a respondent is negatively oriented to KO as a party and to its voters, the less likely they are to punish a candidate for favouring ignoring court rulings. However, there is only a moderate increase in other cases, and the more a respondent is pro-PiS and anti-KO, the *less* likely they are to vote for a candidate who advocates bending rules if the other side did, but the more likely to vote for a candidate who calls for a greater role for independent experts.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

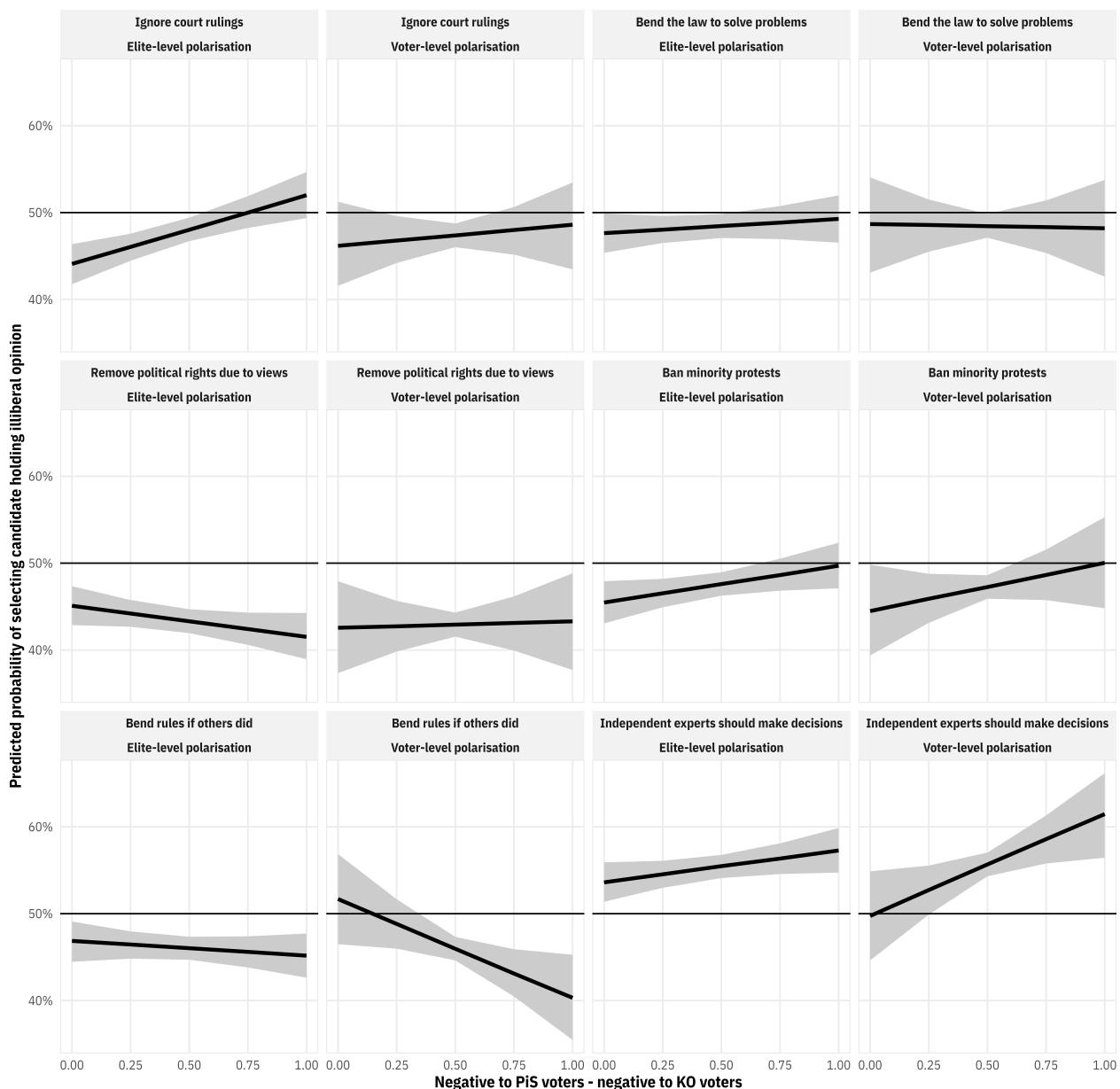
Analyses both of declared and revealed preferences yield a rich set of findings that can be applied to the hypotheses outlined above. The *obliviousness thesis* – the idea that Poles are indifferent to liberal democracy and that liberal-democratic attitudes are essentially irrelevant to their electoral choices (H1a, H1b) – can be dispensed with immediately. Firstly, as the construction of the liberal-democratic index shows, attitudes to the rule of law and political pluralism correlate with each other in coherent ways. Whether they support or oppose liberal democracy, Poles think in liberal-

**Figure 8.** Marginal means of candidate choice probabilities conditional on policy and attitudes to liberal democracy



democratic terms. Secondly, these attitudes also cohere at the party-electorate level in ways that are plausible in light of the relevance of liberal democracy to political competition in Poland, with average KO and Lewica voters markedly more pro-liberal-democracy than their PiS counterparts. Thirdly, liberal-democratic values are relevant factors in voting, particularly with respect to the main party-political divide, with pro-liberal-democracy voters more likely to vote for KO and

Figure 9. Marginal means of candidate choice probabilities conditional on policy and level of polarisation



opponents of liberal democracy more likely to vote for PiS.

The *indifference* thesis can also be rejected. Breaches of liberal-democratic norms and principles matter to voters (H2). As the revealed preferences in Figure 4 show, when choosing between candidates Polish voters tend to punish candidates for advocating illiberal policies, even when those policy preferences are not given particular emphasis among other relevant information about candidates.

If on average Poles react negatively to candidate breaches of liberal-democratic norms and principles, there may nevertheless be important differences in *how* they react. The *partisan accountability thesis* holds that the propensity of voters to punish a candidate for illiberal policy positions is influenced by the nature of the partisan divide: supporters of an illiberal party are more accepting of illiberalism, and thus more likely to accept illiberal policies regardless of the party affiliation of a candidate. In the Polish case, it was expected that PiS supporters would be less likely than supporters of other parties to punish illiberal candidates (H3).

There is some evidence to suggest that PiS supporters tend to be less committed to liberal-democratic values than the supporters of other parties. As Figure 6 shows, those who voted for PiS were only minded to punish candidates who advocated removing the political rights of citizens due to their views or breaking rules because others had done so. However, the analysis of revealed preferences does not suggest as stark a divide as might be expected from declared levels of sympathy for liberal-democratic views. This is partly due to PiS voters being less tolerant of illiberal policies than their declared views might suggest, but also because supporters of other parties are not markedly more intolerant. While PiS voters are generally less likely to punish candidates for illiberal policies than their KO counterparts, there is an important exception in the case of removing political rights from citizens because of their views, where KO voters – while disapproving of this policy overall – are nevertheless less likely than PiS voters to register their disapproval when voting. While declared preferences might suggest a liberal / illiberal cleavage between parties, revealed preferences point to only moderate relative differences. At the same time, evidence suggests that it is not the case that citizens – regardless of their declared preferences for liberalism and their party affiliation – punish illiberal candidates in an even-handed fashion (H4). When responses are broken down by candidate party, PiS candidates are more consistently punished for holding illiberal policy positions than are candidates of other parties.

There is only limited support for the *democratic hypocrisy thesis*, which holds that supporters of opposition parties are more likely to punish a PiS candidate for holding illiberal views (H5a) and vice versa (H5b). The results for the two major parties run counter to this hypothesis:

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3 in relative terms PiS supporters reward their own candidates for several illiberal stances, but rather  
4 than punish illiberal KO candidates they are if anything more lenient towards them than they are  
5 towards their own candidates. On the other hand, KO voters punish both their own candidates  
6 and PiS candidates for advocating illiberal policies. Democratic hypocrisy is more a feature of  
7 the electorates of PSL and to a lesser extent Lewica, which punish PiS illiberals but extend more  
8 tolerance to illiberal candidates from their own party. In Konfederacja's case the lack of hypocrisy  
9 reflects less a symmetry of intolerance than a relative indifference to illiberalism on the part of PiS  
10 candidates, and a preference for illiberalism on the part of their own candidates.  
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19 It remains to be seen whether the relative lack of democratic hypocrisy would survive a  
20 change of government. However, on present evidence, for most voters partisanship does not stand  
21 in the way of principled opposition to illiberal policies. This is supported by the fact that while  
22 observed attachments to liberal democracy (in the shape of liberal-democratic values and assess-  
23 ments of the importance of liberal democracy) are for the most part associated with a lower pre-  
24 dicted probability of voting for illiberal candidates, polarisation sentiment mostly has a negligible  
25 effect.<sup>7</sup>  
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33 While in recent years Polish elites may have paid lip service to liberal democracy, the  
34 evidence marshalled in this study does not support the contention that Polish voters are guilty  
35 of the same thing. There is a substantial declared divide over liberal democracy, but it does not  
36 reveal itself nearly as starkly in actual voting behaviour. Clearly, there are other ways in which  
37 a lack of concern for liberal democracy may be evinced. The absence of protest against media  
38 de-pluralisation, court-packing and the persecution of minorities is a form of passive acceptance,  
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46 <sup>7</sup>This conclusion is supported by further analyses (not shown here for reasons of space) which  
47 show the results of these contrasts for candidates of all parties rather than just comparing support  
48 for PiS candidates and own-party candidates. PiS voters are less likely to punish candidates for  
49 illiberal policies regardless of their party of origin, while KO voters are more likely to punish  
50 illiberal candidates across the board.  
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whether or not it reflects prioritisation of other issues. In that sense, Bartels's conclusion that democracy erodes from the top is too simplistic. Yet if choosing candidates for office is the ultimate test of tolerance for illiberalism, then even amid the kind of democratic backsliding Poland has experienced in recent years there are still limits to the erosive power of illiberal elites.

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## A. Appendix

**Table A1.** Regression of vote choice on control variables

	KO	Konfederacja	Lewica	PSL	Other	Would not vote
(Intercept)	-0.356+ (0.186)	-1.075*** (0.213)	-1.502*** (0.247)	-1.207*** (0.287)	-1.093*** (0.234)	-0.483* (0.209)
Age	-0.068 (0.149)	-1.555*** (0.180)	-0.672*** (0.183)	-0.902** (0.282)	-0.944*** (0.190)	-1.012*** (0.191)
Male	0.425** (0.157)	0.795*** (0.186)	0.445* (0.196)	-1.347*** (0.336)	0.208 (0.197)	-0.103 (0.197)
Secondary education	0.524** (0.187)	0.566** (0.208)	0.439+ (0.237)	-0.239 (0.363)	0.436+ (0.238)	0.259 (0.226)
Higher education	0.958*** (0.202)	0.763*** (0.226)	0.996*** (0.252)	0.533 (0.347)	0.873*** (0.251)	0.175 (0.264)
Lives in small town or city	0.594** (0.184)	0.044 (0.208)	0.340 (0.227)	0.647* (0.328)	0.489* (0.230)	0.392+ (0.222)
Lives in large town or city	0.617** (0.192)	0.134 (0.214)	0.007 (0.239)	0.048 (0.379)	0.377 (0.243)	-0.191 (0.259)
Left-right self-placement	-4.084*** (0.205)	-1.523*** (0.223)	-5.793*** (0.276)	-1.903*** (0.341)	-2.634*** (0.237)	-2.646*** (0.239)
Solidaristic-liberal self-placement	2.198*** (0.177)	1.256*** (0.186)	2.084*** (0.208)	1.725*** (0.317)	0.900*** (0.213)	1.296*** (0.215)
Num.Obs.	2163					
R2 Adj.	0.402					

+ p < 0.1, \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

Reference category of the dependent variable: PiS.

Reference categories of categorical independent variables: Female; Rural; Primary education.

**Table A2.** Regression of vote choice on political polarisation

	KO	Konfederacja	Lewica	PSL	Other	Would not vote
(Intercept)	-0.179 (0.334)	0.671* (0.281)	0.429 (0.319)	0.425 (0.353)	0.677* (0.302)	1.254*** (0.278)
Elite polarisation	-12.510*** (0.531)	-5.135*** (0.399)	-6.820*** (0.460)	-6.006*** (0.584)	-5.814*** (0.440)	-4.972*** (0.419)
Voter polarisation	-0.231 (0.304)	-0.348 (0.268)	0.145 (0.315)	-0.248 (0.435)	-0.397 (0.313)	-0.164 (0.292)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Age	-0.113 (0.245)	-0.677** (0.224)	0.028 (0.241)	-0.093 (0.328)	-0.105 (0.238)	-0.252 (0.232)
Male	0.285 (0.252)	0.845*** (0.226)	0.314 (0.252)	-1.173** (0.369)	0.291 (0.242)	-0.022 (0.235)
Secondary education	0.516+ (0.298)	0.586* (0.253)	0.356 (0.297)	-0.012 (0.407)	0.421 (0.286)	0.279 (0.266)
Higher education	1.134*** (0.319)	0.805*** (0.275)	0.997** (0.320)	0.895* (0.398)	1.037*** (0.303)	0.286 (0.307)
Lives in small town or city	0.021 (0.290)	-0.424+ (0.253)	-0.199 (0.290)	0.047 (0.371)	-0.053 (0.279)	-0.104 (0.264)
Lives in large town or city	0.523+ (0.311)	-0.043 (0.267)	-0.161 (0.313)	-0.382 (0.438)	0.104 (0.301)	-0.429 (0.307)
Left-right self-placement	-1.531*** (0.326)	-0.412 (0.291)	-4.438*** (0.342)	-0.681 (0.437)	-1.454*** (0.310)	-1.736*** (0.296)
Solidaristic-liberal self-placement	0.756** (0.282)	0.671** (0.239)	1.170*** (0.288)	1.230** (0.379)	0.192 (0.276)	0.674* (0.271)
Num.Obs.	2107					
R2 Adj.	0.569					

+ p &lt; 0.1, \* p &lt; 0.05, \*\* p &lt; 0.01, \*\*\* p &lt; 0.001

Reference category of the dependent variable: PiS.

Reference categories of categorical independent variables: Female; Rural; Primary education.

**Table A3.** Regression of vote choice on attitudes to democracy

	KO	Konfederacja	Lewica	PSL	Other	Would not vote
(Intercept)	0.313 (0.234)	-0.274 (0.252)	-0.946** (0.288)	-0.609+ (0.334)	-0.462 (0.287)	0.031 (0.251)
Liberal-democratic attitudes	1.635*** (0.226)	1.535*** (0.251)	1.615*** (0.277)	0.353 (0.368)	1.662*** (0.297)	1.160*** (0.289)
Importance of liberal democracy	1.184*** (0.224)	0.491* (0.234)	0.133 (0.270)	1.091** (0.346)	0.569* (0.279)	-0.386 (0.262)
Realisation of liberal democracy	-1.402*** (0.205)	-1.149*** (0.233)	-0.871*** (0.242)	-0.983** (0.337)	-1.165*** (0.258)	-1.074*** (0.264)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Age	-0.853*** (0.191)	-1.950*** (0.218)	-1.165*** (0.223)	-1.283*** (0.324)	-1.416*** (0.238)	-1.269*** (0.235)
Male	0.189 (0.184)	0.468* (0.208)	0.283 (0.220)	-1.494*** (0.357)	-0.228 (0.230)	-0.355 (0.220)
Secondary education	0.273 (0.219)	0.410+ (0.236)	0.371 (0.265)	-0.568 (0.393)	0.199 (0.277)	0.102 (0.251)
Higher education	0.516* (0.235)	0.378 (0.258)	0.715* (0.282)	0.259 (0.374)	0.329 (0.296)	-0.004 (0.293)
Lives in small town or city	0.634** (0.211)	0.012 (0.232)	0.332 (0.251)	0.626+ (0.352)	0.706** (0.268)	0.399 (0.246)
Lives in large town or city	0.682** (0.222)	0.132 (0.240)	0.050 (0.266)	0.199 (0.396)	0.581* (0.284)	-0.167 (0.287)
Left-right self-placement	-3.232*** (0.225)	-1.065*** (0.248)	-5.302*** (0.298)	-1.538*** (0.369)	-1.961*** (0.271)	-2.318*** (0.267)
Solidaristic-liberal self-placement	1.867*** (0.202)	1.204*** (0.212)	1.920*** (0.234)	1.779*** (0.335)	0.860*** (0.247)	1.263*** (0.244)
Num.Obs.	1911					
R2 Adj.	0.505					

+ p &lt; 0.1, \* p &lt; 0.05, \*\* p &lt; 0.01, \*\*\* p &lt; 0.001

Reference category of the dependent variable: PiS.

Reference categories of categorical independent variables: Female; Rural; Primary education.

**Table A4.** Regression of vote choice on political polarisation and attitudes to democracy

	KO	Konfederacja	Lewica	PSL	Other	Would not vote
(Intercept)	0.492 (0.395)	1.682*** (0.340)	0.942* (0.383)	1.137** (0.417)	1.432*** (0.374)	1.868*** (0.341)
Elite polarisation	-12.622*** (0.596)	-5.182*** (0.461)	-6.914*** (0.524)	-6.176*** (0.638)	-5.900*** (0.515)	-4.998*** (0.479)
Voter polarisation	-0.316 (0.311)	-0.401 (0.281)	0.098 (0.322)	-0.236 (0.437)	-0.339 (0.345)	-0.331 (0.297)
Liberal-democratic attitudes	1.689*** (0.359)	1.806*** (0.317)	1.824*** (0.369)	0.742+ (0.446)	2.062*** (0.368)	1.446*** (0.355)
Importance of liberal democracy	0.564+ (0.341)	0.628* (0.296)	-0.057 (0.346)	1.089** (0.411)	0.540 (0.342)	-0.419 (0.324)
Realisation of liberal democracy	-0.469 (0.333)	-0.846** (0.308)	-0.207 (0.342)	-0.604 (0.423)	-0.793* (0.341)	-0.782* (0.337)
<i>Control variables</i>						
Age	-0.562+ (0.290)	-1.023*** (0.264)	-0.261 (0.289)	-0.394 (0.379)	-0.513+ (0.290)	-0.411 (0.282)
Male	0.102 (0.279)	0.567* (0.252)	0.216 (0.281)	-1.313*** (0.394)	-0.125 (0.278)	-0.275 (0.262)
Secondary education	0.494 (0.330)	0.416 (0.283)	0.502 (0.329)	-0.221 (0.442)	0.309 (0.328)	0.223 (0.296)
Higher education	0.781* (0.350)	0.287 (0.307)	0.760* (0.353)	0.513 (0.428)	0.434 (0.350)	0.064 (0.337)
Lives in small town or city	0.200 (0.318)	-0.501+ (0.282)	-0.093 (0.319)	0.108 (0.400)	0.191 (0.320)	-0.060 (0.294)
Lives in large town or city	0.482 (0.341)	-0.219 (0.297)	-0.255 (0.344)	-0.341 (0.465)	0.153 (0.344)	-0.513 (0.339)
Left-right self-placement	-0.983** (0.368)	-0.033 (0.331)	-4.188*** (0.381)	-0.392 (0.482)	-0.896* (0.361)	-1.628*** (0.338)
Solidaristic-liberal self-placement	0.669* (0.313)	0.585* (0.273)	1.146*** (0.319)	1.257** (0.399)	0.163 (0.316)	0.634* (0.308)
Num.Obs.	1881					
R2 Adj.	0.631					

+ p &lt; 0.1, \* p &lt; 0.05, \*\* p &lt; 0.01, \*\*\* p &lt; 0.001

Reference category of the dependent variable: PiS.

Reference categories of categorical independent variables: Female; Rural; Primary education.