



What kind of democrats?

Ideological and generational gaps in forms of support for democracy in Southern Europe in the aftermath of the economic crisis

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Main research questions

- What has been the impact of the economic crisis on democratic support in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece)?
- Was the impact only ephemeral and confined to dissatisfaction with democratic performance (specific support) or has the crisis affected core democratic values and commitment to democracy (diffuse support) in the four countries?
- Has the impact been uniform or are there differences between ideological and generational groups and, at the aggregate level, between countries?

Economic crisis and democratic support

- Investigations of democratic support during the crisis tend to typically focus on real or **perceived economic outcomes** and **government performance** (e.g. Armigeon & Guthmann 2014; Magalhães 2014; Cordero & Simón 2015)
- There is evidence that the **period effect** associated with the Eurozone crisis on democratic support has been both strong (for specific democratic support) and negligible (for diffuse democratic support)
- We argue that the experience of steep economic downturns can have **differential effects** on democratic support across different generations and ideological groups in the (relatively) new democracies of Southern Europe

Comparative National Election Project
(<http://u.osu.edu/cnep/>)

European Values Study
(<http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>)

Data

Diffuse democratic support

- CNEP (bdemauth) “Which of the following phrases most closely reflects your own opinion?”
 - 3 Democracy is preferable to any other form of government; } 1 Democracy is best
 - 2 Under some circumstances, an authoritarian regime, a dictatorship, is preferable to a democratic system; } 0 Indifference\ authoritarian is best
 - 1 For people like me, one regime is the same as another }
- EVS (e123) "Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government."
 - agree strongly [0] } 1
 - agree [1] }
 - disagree [2] } 0
 - or disagree strongly [3] }

Specific democratic support

- CNEP (bdemsat) In general, are you Very satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Not very satisfied or Not at all satisfied with the way democracy is working in (...name of country)?
 - 3 Very satisfied;
 - 2 Somewhat satisfied;
 - 1 Not very satisfied;
 - 0 Not at all satisfied / Not a democracy

}	1 Satisfied
}	0 Not satisfied
- EVS (e110) On the whole are you very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country?
 - 1 very satisfied,
 - 2 rather satisfied,
 - 3 not very satisfied,
 - 4 not at all satisfied

}	1
}	0

IV and Control variables

- **leftright** self-placement on the left-right scale, from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)
- **generation** using the year the respondent was born
 - “silent” < 1945,
 - “protest” < 1964,
 - “pragmatic” < 1977,
 - “millennial” >= 1977
- **female** 1 if female, 0 if male
- **education** “No formal schooling”, “Primary education”, “Secondary education”, “University education or higher”
- **unemployed** unemployed, employed (full, part, self), others

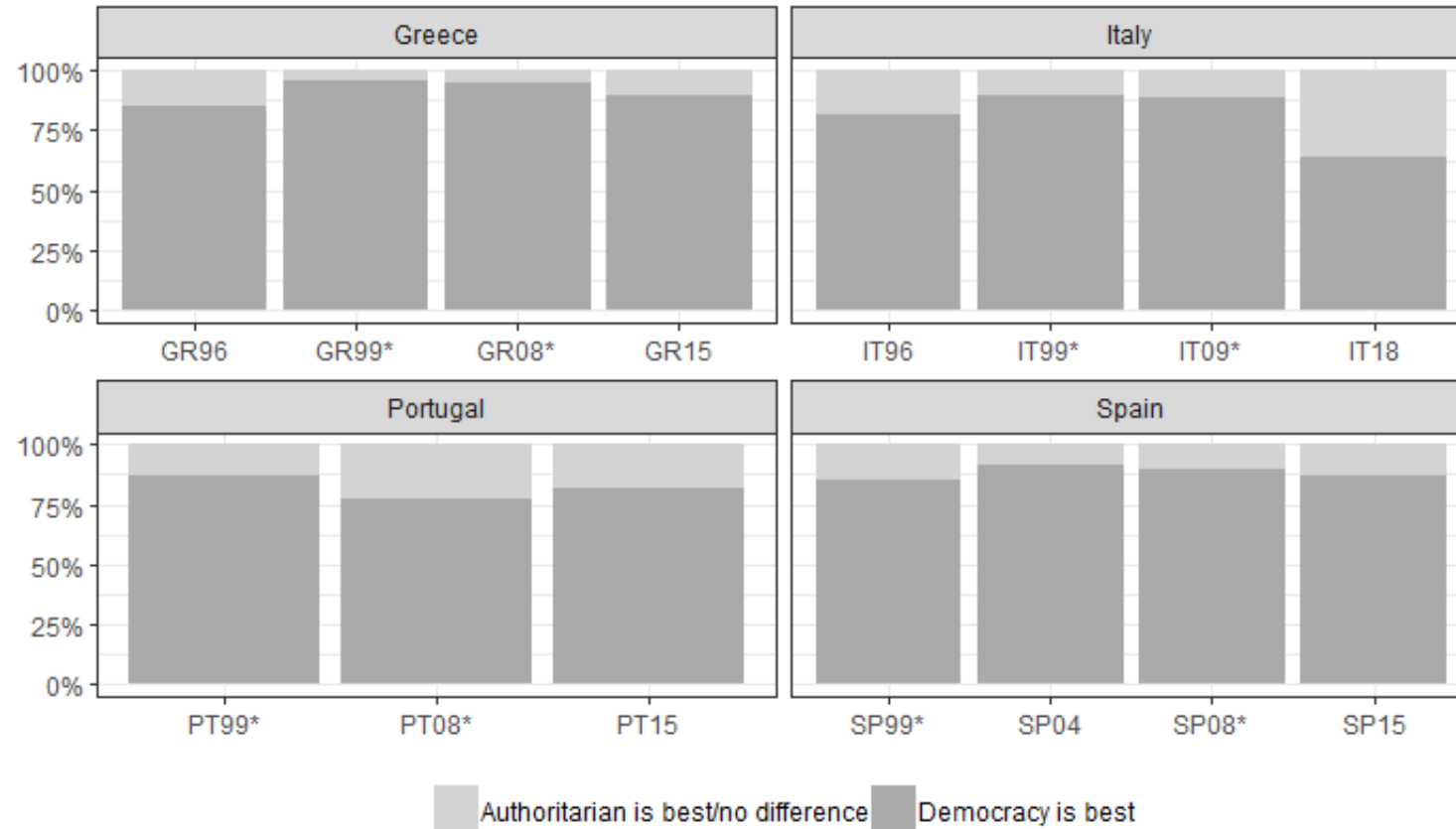
*Levels of diffuse and specific
democratic support and the
economic crisis*

Hypotheses

*H1: **Diffuse support** levels were **not affected** by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries*

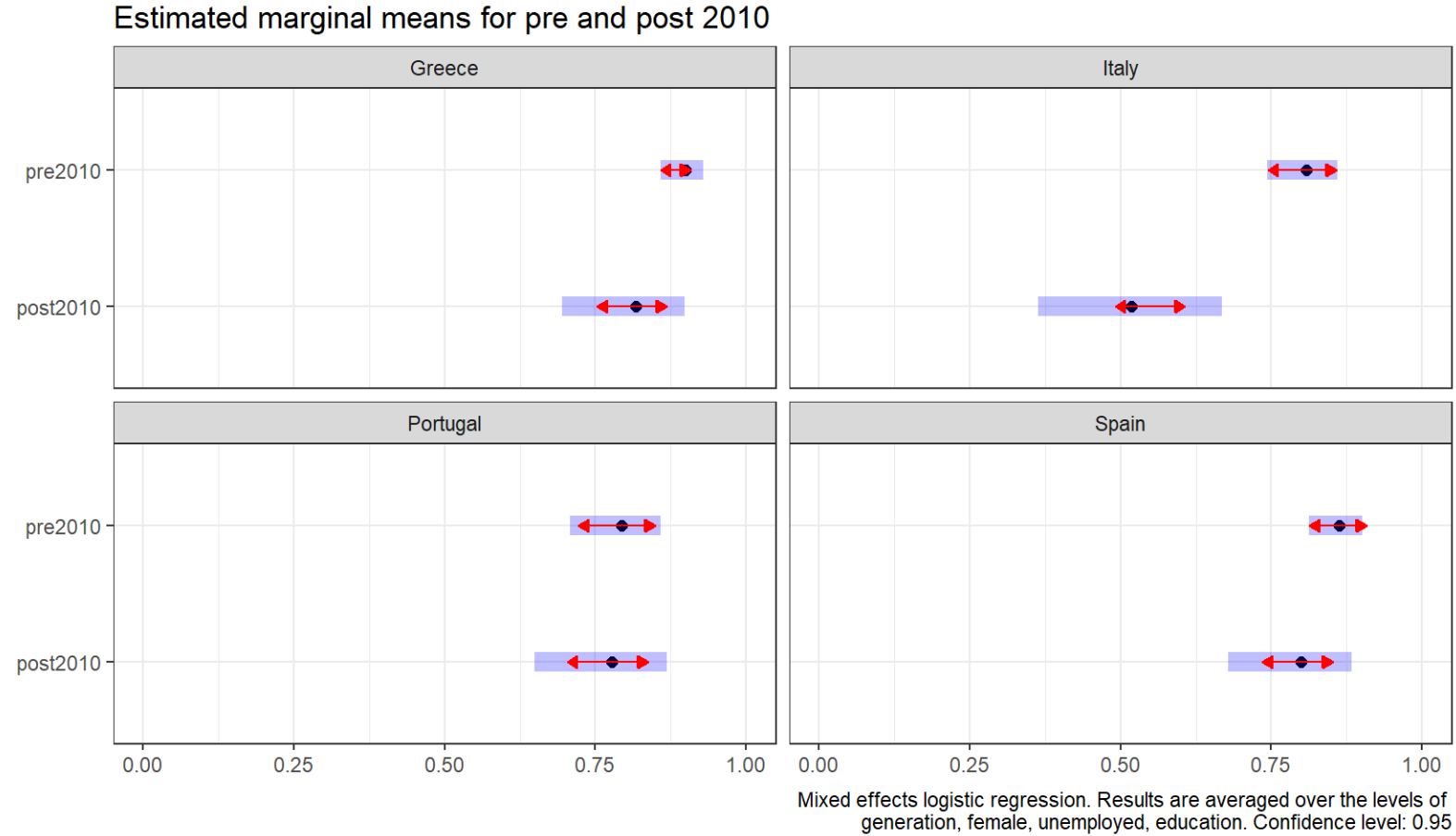
*H2: **Specific support** levels were **affected** by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries*

H1: Diffuse support levels were not affected by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries

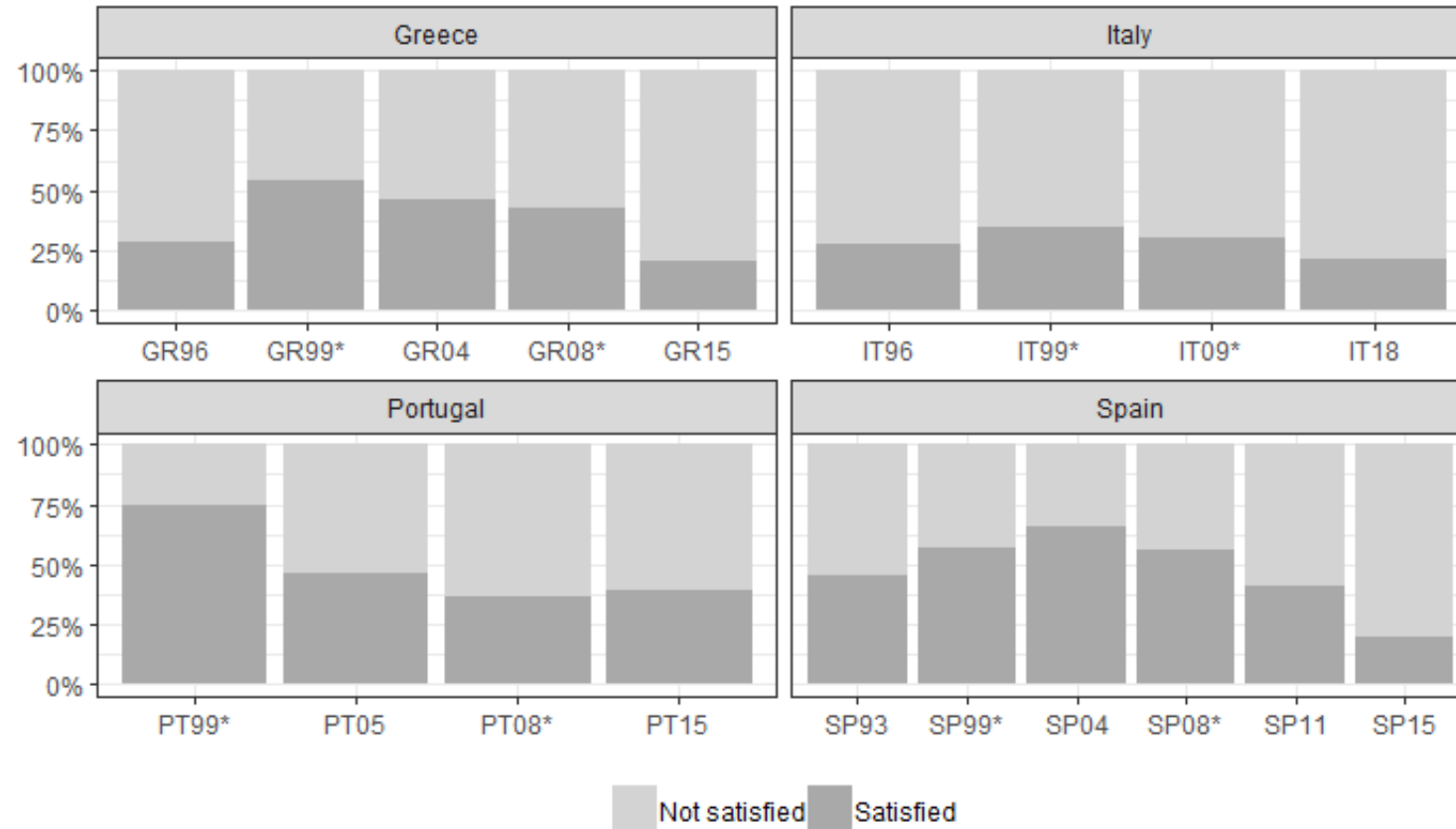


* if from EVS

H1: Diffuse support levels were not affected by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries

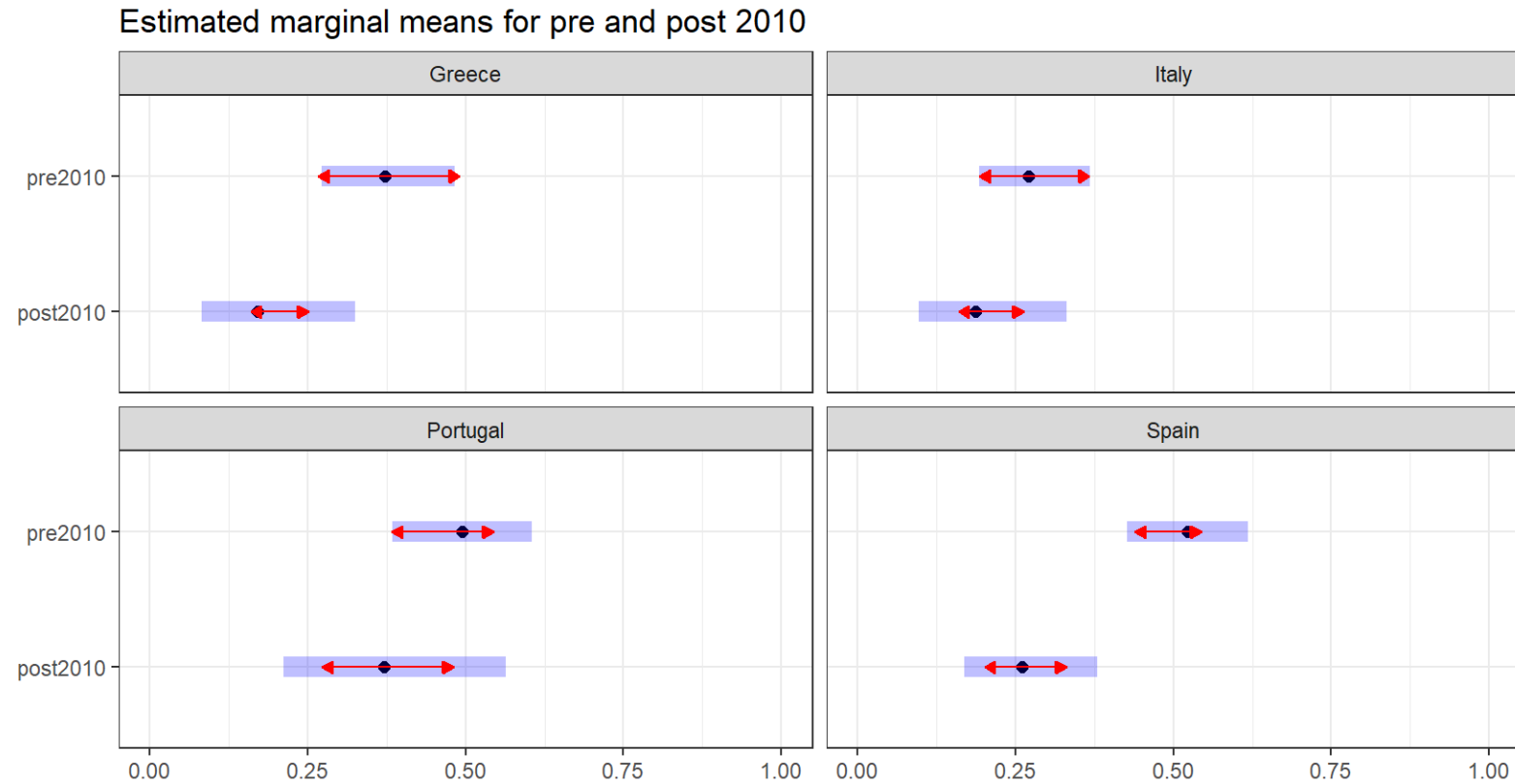


H2: Specific support levels were affected by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries



* if from EVS

H2: Specific support levels were affected by the economic crisis in the four Southern European countries



Mixed effects logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of generation, female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

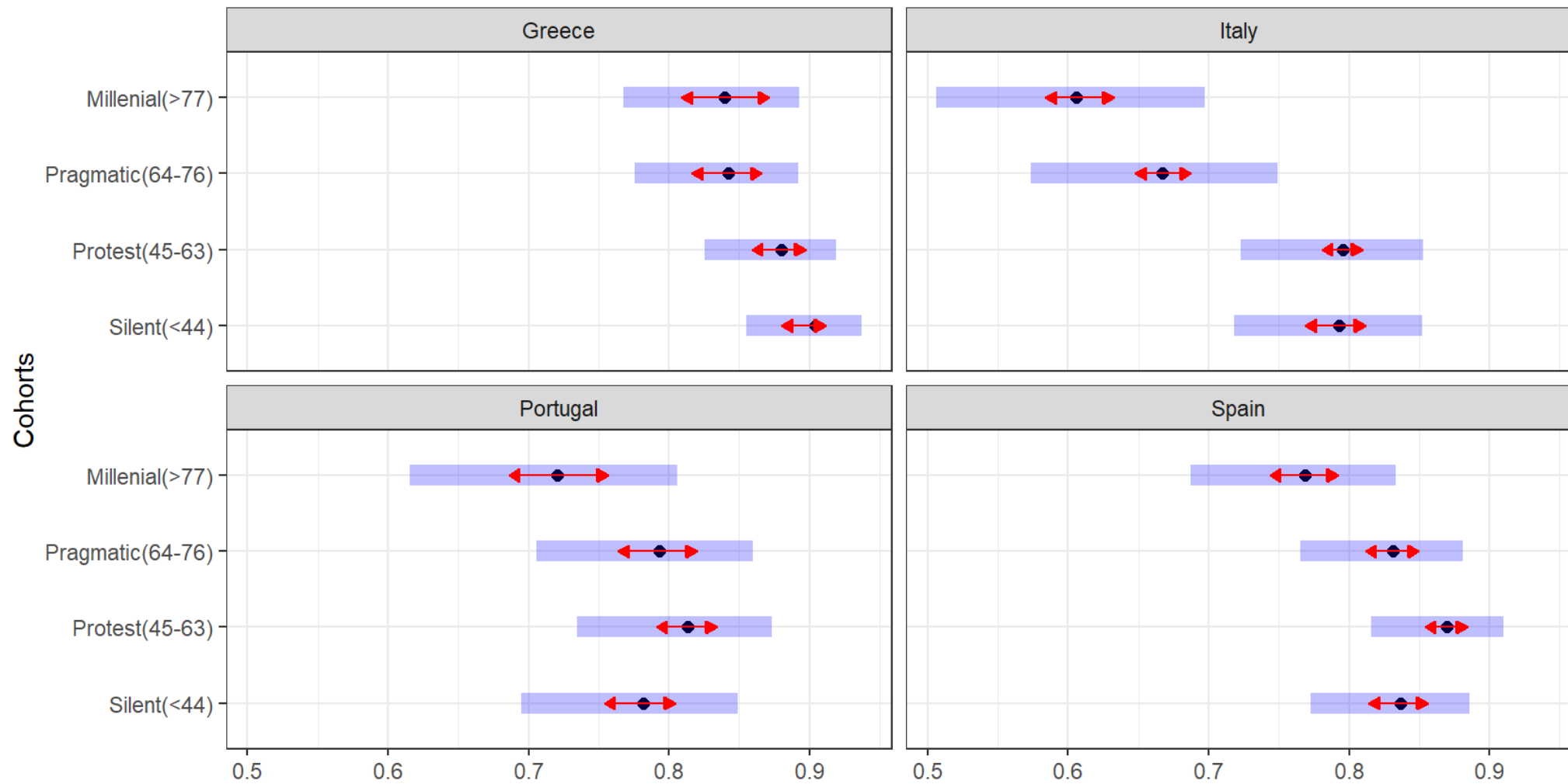
*Levels of diffuse democratic
support across generations*

Hypotheses

H3: Diffuse democratic support level should be:

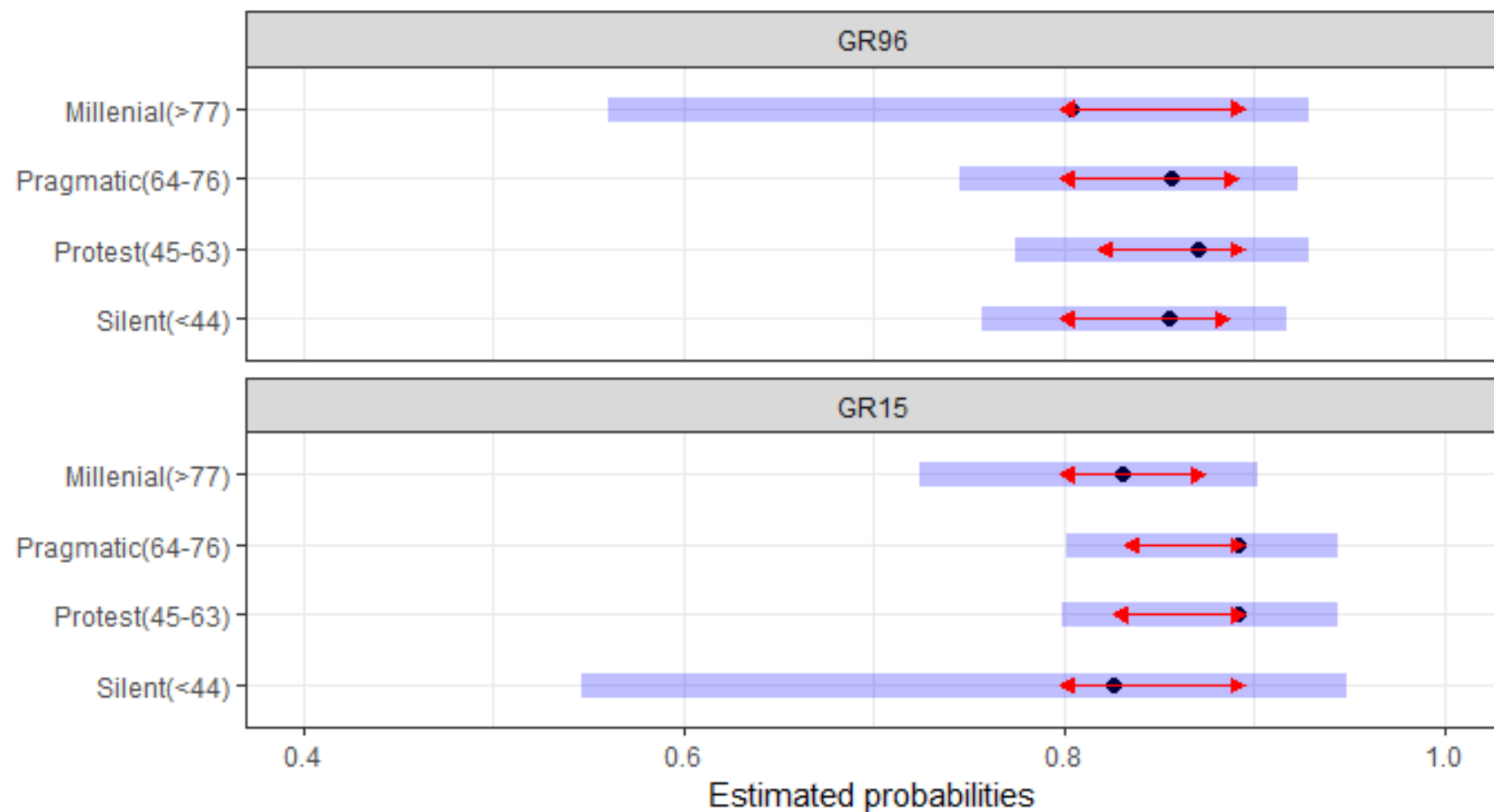
- ***higher and resilient for the “protest” (45-63) cohort in Portugal, Spain and Greece***
- ***smaller and weaker for the “silent/between war” (<44) cohort in Portugal, Spain and Greece***
- ***smaller and weaker for the “millennial” (>=77) cohort in all four Southern European countries***

Estimated marginal means for cohorts



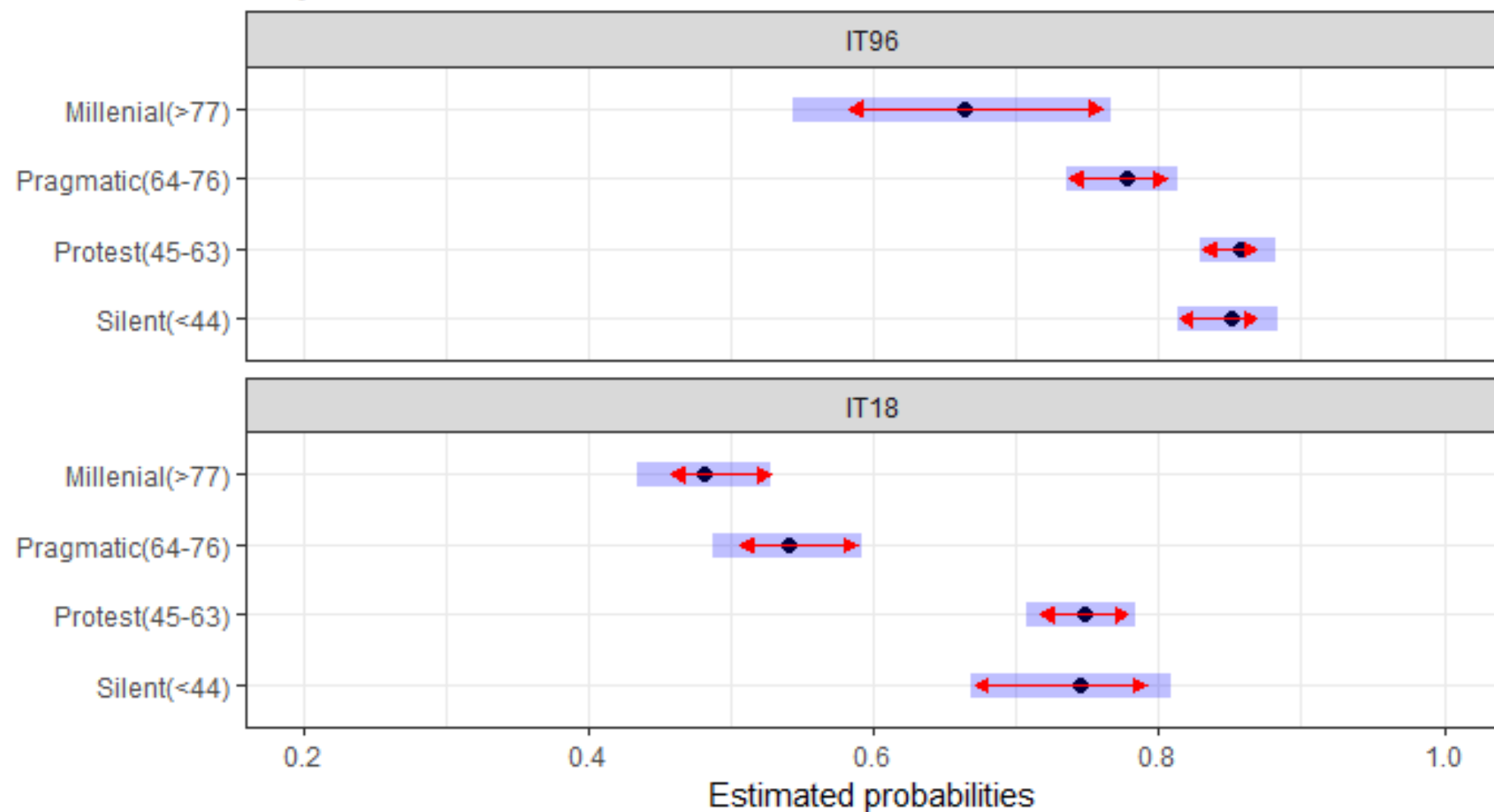
Mixed effects logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education, country. Confidence level: 0.95

Greece



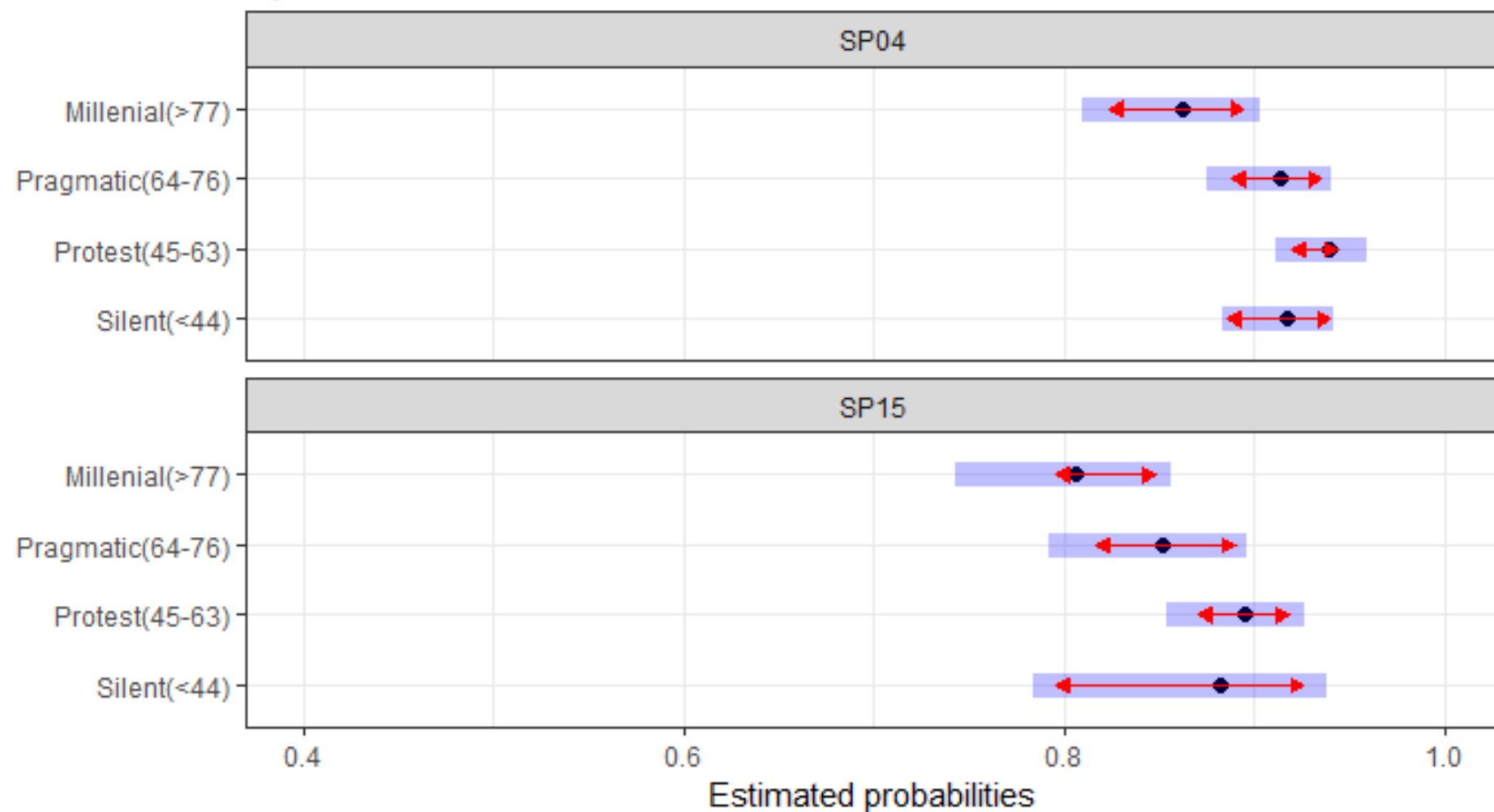
Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Italy



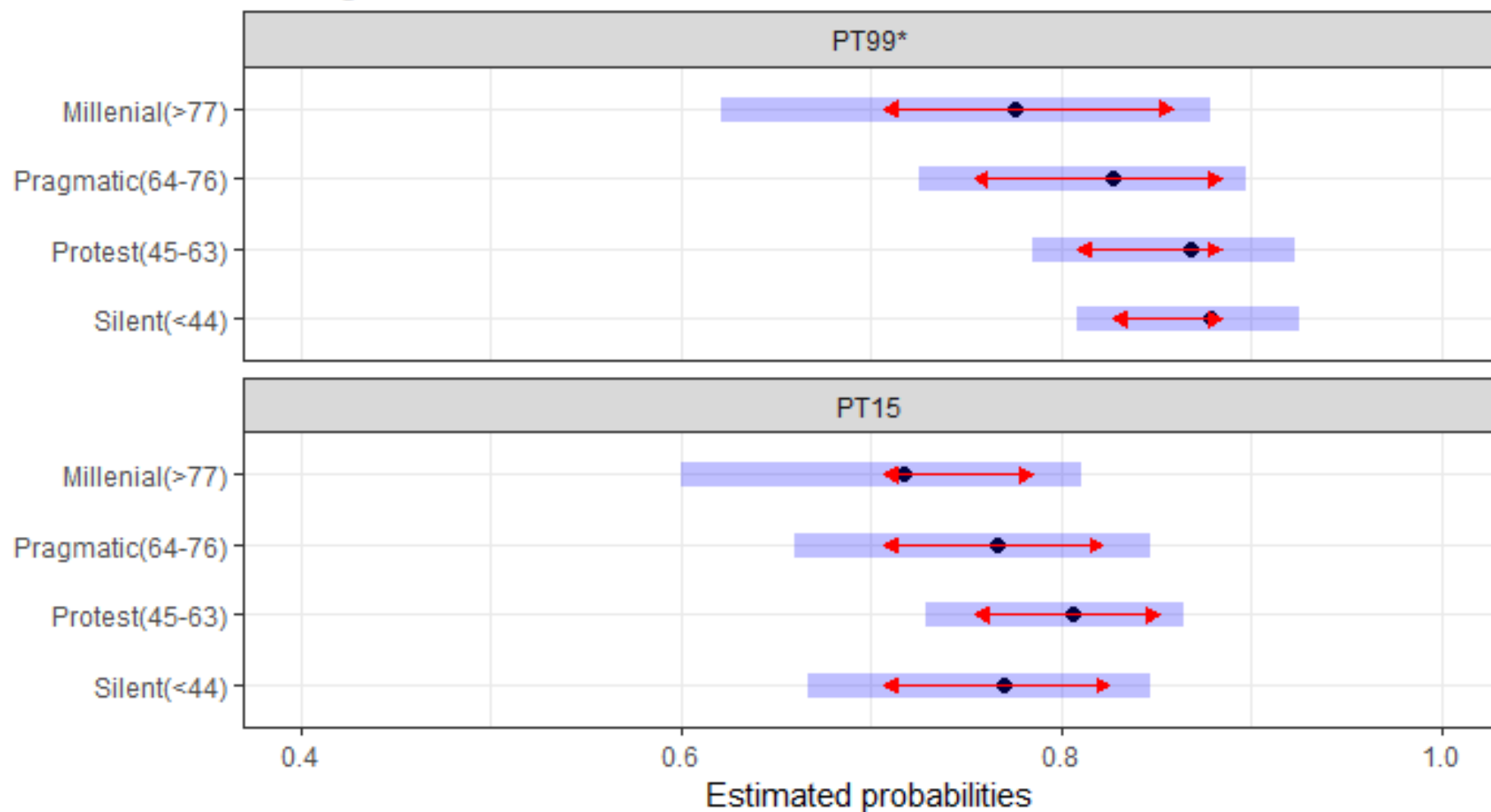
Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Spain



Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Portugal



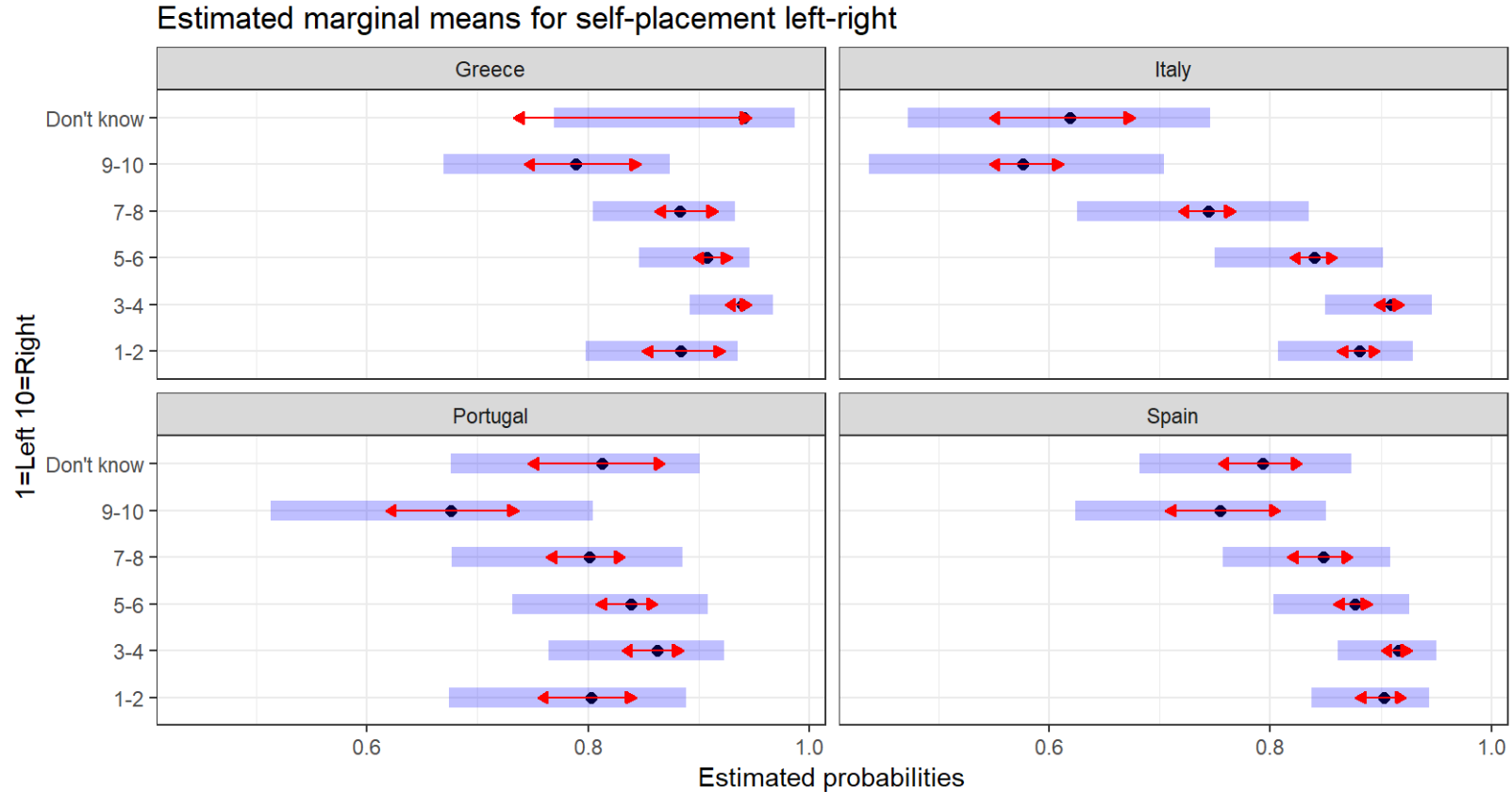
Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

*Levels of diffuse democratic support
and left-right self-placement*

Hypotheses

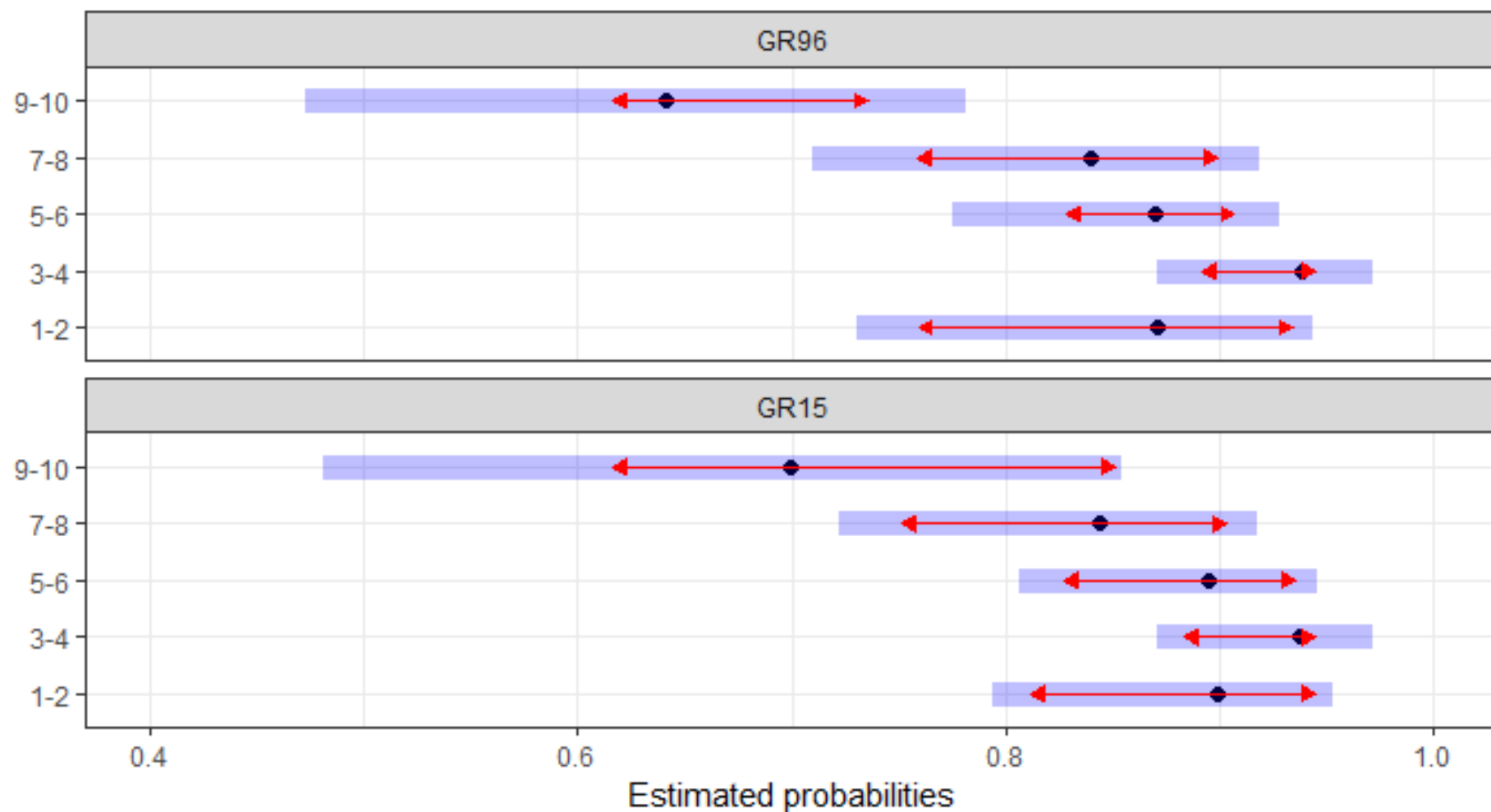
H4: Left-wing citizens should continue to display, on average, higher levels of diffuse democratic support in all four Southern European countries

H4: Left-wing citizens should display, on average, higher levels of diffuse democratic support in all four Southern European countries



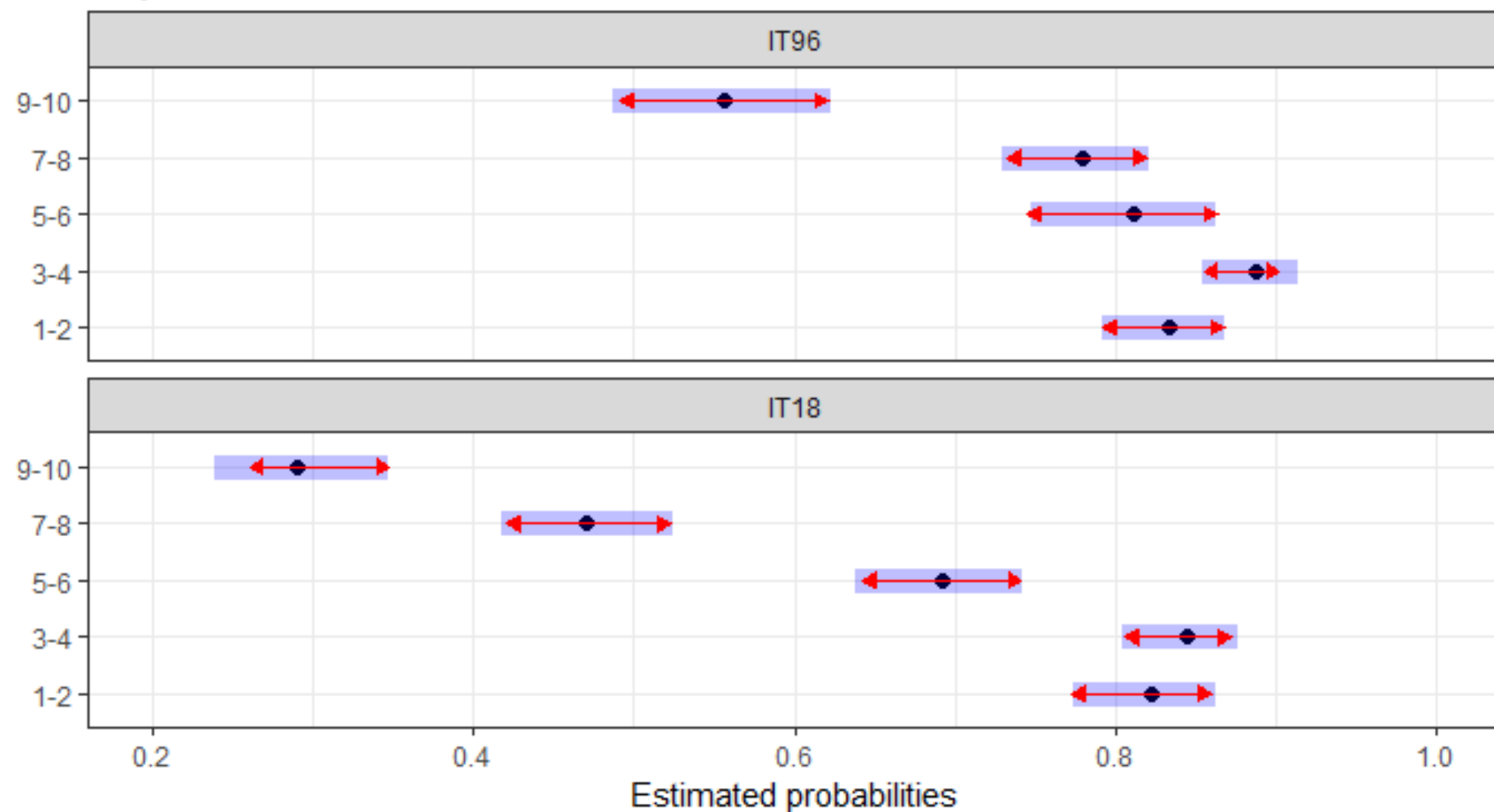
Mixed effects logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of generation, female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Greece



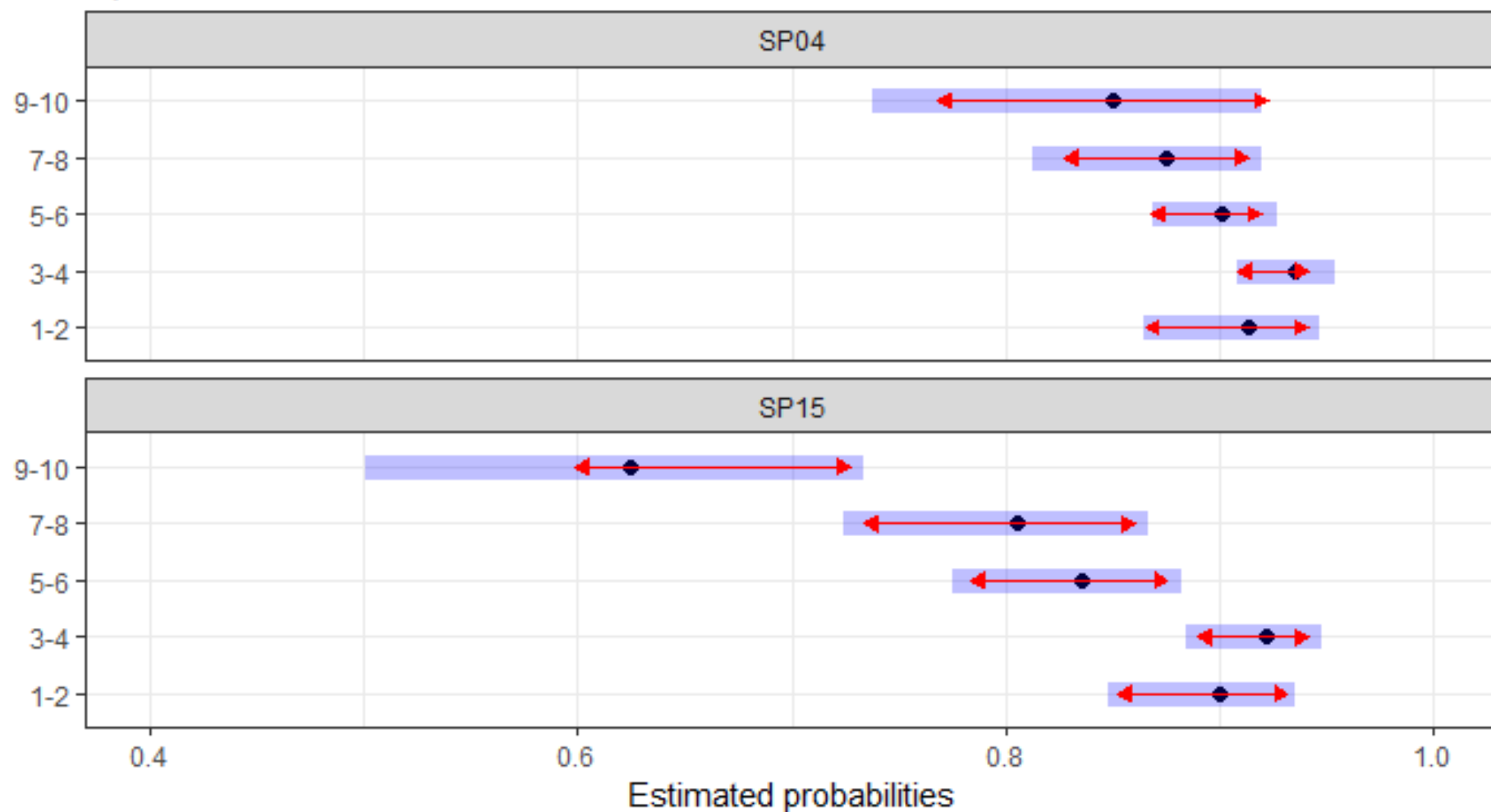
Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Italy



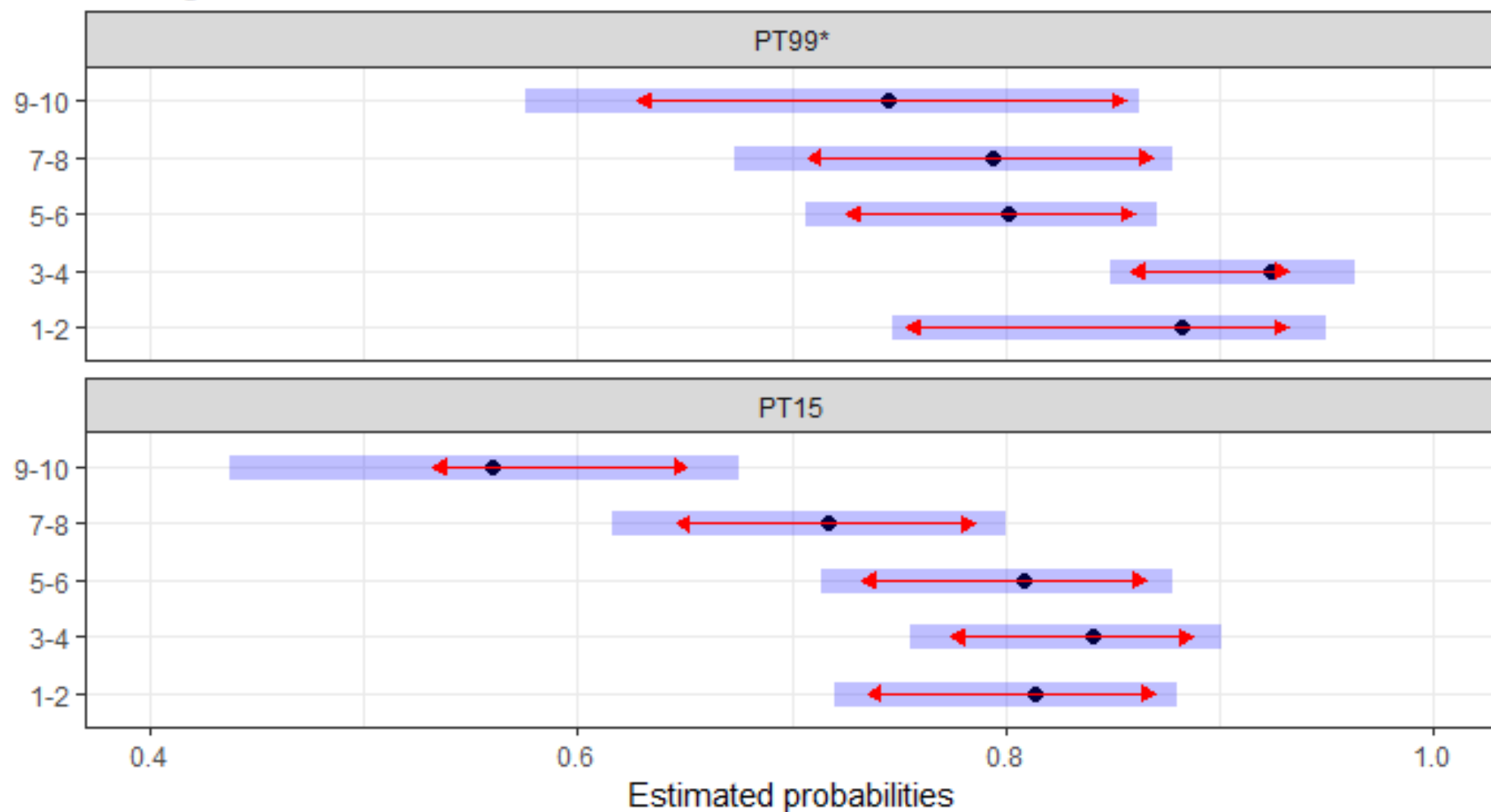
Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Spain



Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Portugal



Logistic regression. Results are averaged over the levels of female, unemployed, education. Confidence level: 0.95

Preliminary conclusions

- Only in Italy we observe a significant decrease in diffuse support after the crisis, driven by younger cohorts
- Only in Spain and Greece we observe a significant decrease in specific support after the crisis
- Millennials display the weakest attachment to democracy, but the crisis did not intensify it
- Socialization effects of older cohorts appear to maintain some relevance in Spain and Portugal
- Political ideology remains a good predictor of diffuse democratic support in the region