How does KO's and PiS' stance of migration policy align

with the opinions of their voters?

Julia Łukuć, Sára Sipos, Abriana Ferguson

Amsterdam University College

900355SSCY: Political Communication and Data Analysis

20.12.2024

Introduction

In 2015, Poland entered into what is known as the rule-of-law crisis after the right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party won the elections. Although, Poland is one of many cases of democratic backsliding referenced in the literature, it is significantly different in terms of the origins of this phenomenon (Tworzecki, 2018). Poland of 2015 lacked all major predictor cleavages that could indicate a turn away from democratic values such as "persistent economic dysfunction, cripling racial or ethnic divisions, polarizing winner-take-all institutions, or pernicious international entanglements" (Tworzecki, 2018, p. 98). Instead of a bottom-up polarization what happened was polarization driven by the elites (political class) that utilized the anti-establishment populist narrative to win the elections. Additionally, PiS seized the fears of the society by instrumentalizing the Middle Eastern refugee crisis and presenting it as a security threat, which has to this day consequences in the rise of racial-based hate crimes (Ściechowicz, 2021; Tworzecki, 2018). These unprecedented circumstances led us to choose Poland as our case study to examine the divergence between party stance on immigration policies and their respective voter's opinion. If the globalization cleavage around migration issues is fueled by top-down party cues, then we expect to find similarities between the political elite and its electorate's stances.

Theory

In Poland, parties are divided based on politicians' ideological differences or personal ambitions (Ślarzyński, 2023). Even parties that seem close ideologically are divided because of how the electoral system works (Ślarzyński, 2023). These polarized elite cues seem to have a top-down influence (Tworzecki, 2018). This can have quite drastic consequences, as PiS's system-delegitimizing rhetoric might have been a contributor to perceived unfairness despite economic

progress and continuously improved levels of happiness and satisfaction with life (Tworzecki, 2018). This level of influence is due to the fact that PiS was one of the only major parties at that time (Tworzecki, 2018). They reached this level of influence by utilizing the media to portray Poland pre-2015 in a worse shape than in actuality, which aligns with the first principle of political communications, namely: political power means power over the media (Tworzecki, 2018; Wolfsfeld, 2022). This can be seen by PiS winning the majority of the votes during the 2019 parliamentary elections. Other than deepening existing political divisions, affective polarization broadens partisan influence on non-political issues (Otero-Felipe et al., 2024).

In this division between parties, political actors gather elements, and once encapsulated, it becomes a political cleavage, or they build around an existing one (Ślarzyński, 2023). Cleavages are powerful as they have profound structuring effects on democratic politics (Strijbis, 2018). A cosmopolitan-communitarian cleavage, which is related to immigration, was not present in Poland before 2011 due to the fact that the country was an emigrant country (Strijbis, 2018). This means that, at that time, immigrants were not of big concern. However, this have changed since then, especially due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As mentioned, political parties diverge based on personal ideological differences. This is also why, on the one hand, politicians are not likely to switch between parties (Ślarzyński, 2023). Ślarzyński (2023) assumes that the political scene is divided based on this and in Poland, a division like this has been present since the early 1990s. On the other hand, when there are many parties present in the system, voters are less party-loyal (Ślarzyński, 2023). Hence, they can be persuaded to change from one side to the other by strategies utilized by the parties, which are not in the scope of this paper (Ślarzyński, 2023).

Indelicato et al. (2023), when looking at attitudes toward immigrants from a political party view perspective, have found that left-party voters are more open to immigrants, which is shown by immigrant integration policies implemented by left-leaning parties (Indelicato et al., 2023). On

the other end of the left-right political spectrum, far-right parties show that they are against immigrants in their speeches (Indelicato et al., 2023).

It is known that the division of political parties affects voters, who are, however, less party-loyal than politicians. Moreover, far-right politicians take a stance on immigration during their speeches. What is unknown is whether parties' stances are reflective of their voters' opinions. Thus, our hypothesis that we want to test is: PiS's and KO's stances on immigration align with their respective voters' stances.

Methodology

We have chosen to look at three different sources of data; the European social survey to figure out what voters' opinions are, parties' manifestos from the parties' websites and political debate for the 2023 parliamentary elections to look at parties' stances on immigration.

To analyze the European social survey (ESS) we first selected all responses that were in from Polish respondents, then we selected the relevant questions from the questionnaire to analyze (idno, psppsgva, psppipla, cptppola, trstprl, trstlgl, trstplt, trstprt, vote, prtvtfpl, prtcljpl, prtdgcl, stfgov, imsmetn, imdfetn, impcntr, imbgeco, imueclt, imwbcnt, dscrrce, dscrntn, dscrrlg, dscrlng, dscretn) (ESS ERIC, 2024). From there we filtered out responses with answers that were unresponsive (other, refusal, don't know, didn't answer). From there we were able to add the values of the different response that showed different levels of support for ideas (such as immigration and support for the Polish government). For creating the scores, we had low numbers mean high support for immigration, and high numbers mean low support, we also took out imsmetn from the analysis because it was an outlier question on ideologies. Using this data we were able to create graphs and do ANOVA analysis on these different numbers with respect for which party the respondents voted for and which party the respondents felt closest to.

For the party manifestos, we chose to look at the two biggest parties, PiS and KO (Koalicja Obywatelska). After scraping the PDFs of the manifestos, we selected the sections containing words related to immigration. These words are: "imigracj\\w+|migracj\\w+|polityka migracyjn\\w+|imigran\\w+|uchodź\\w+". These words translate to immigration, migration, migration policy, immigrant, refugee (translated by author). Because of the nature of Polish language, we looked for the roots of the verbs and not full and concrete versions. From there, we removed the stopwords, and from the top 100 words that appear at least twice, we made a word cloud. The purpose of the visualization is to see the sentiment of text about immigration. This does not have a strong reliability, as the text was split by pages and not sections, however, the word clouds still give us an idea of what words surround the topic.

To analyse the TV debate, we selected the main debate transmitted on TVP (Telewizja Polska) which is the main public broadcast channel. It is also the only debate in which all parties' representatives participated. After finding the transcript of the debate, we scraped the website and performed text analysis. We selected the answers to the question about migration policy, which specifically asked about the parties' stance on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum of the European Union. The question was asked in a dualistic way. Firstly, the wording suggested that it actually asks whether the representatives are going to prioritise Polish interests or EU interests. Secondly, it asked whether, according to the representatives, Poland should open the borders to "illegal immigrants as per the decision of the EU". The representatives had one minute to answer the question. To prepare the text, we removed stop words and filtered out the answers of parties which are not included in the current analysis. To visualise our results we again created wordclouds to have a comparable measure to the political manifestos, and to have a comprehensive view on the parties' stance.

Results

Political Manifestos analysis

In PiS's manifesto, the words "border" and "security" are the only ones obviously connected to immigration. These words indicate that the party is concerned about the nation's security and who the borders let through. Although these words are not the biggest in the word cloud, they have appeared multiple times in the manifesto. Moreover, Russia and Ukraine were most likely mentioned due to the war, as it not only has an effect on national security as it is a war in a neighboring country, but it has also led to many immigrants entering the country from mainly Ukraine. In general, PiS seems to have a concerned and apprehensive stance on immigration based on their manifesto. See Figure 1 below for the word cloud and the translations.

Figure 1 – Word cloud of PiS from pages about immigration

Translation Polish-English from ChatGPT:

- **rząd -** government
- **polska -** Poland
- **kraj -** country
- **polski -** Polish
- **polaków -** Poles
- **programy -** programs
- **unii -** union
- **podatku -** tax
- **pracy -** work
- **żołnierze -** soldiers

- **państwa -** state(s)
- **prawa -** laws
- **lat -** years
- **ue -** EU (European Union)
- **bezpieczeństwa -** security
- **życia -** life
- **pit -** tax (Polish income tax form abbreviation)
- **sprawiedliwości -** justice
- **dzięki -** thanks to
- **środków -** funds/resources

- **latach -** in years
- **będziemy -** we will
- **lokalna -** local
- **gospodarki -** economy
- **dane -** data
- **rodziny -** families
- **pandemii -** pandemic
- **polityka -** politics
- **granicy -** border
- **rosji -** Russia
- **ukrainę -** Ukraine

On the other hand, we did not find anything related to immigration in KO's manifesto. This could be for two reasons; their manifesto is 100 promises of what they will to once elected, so not their stances on political issues, or they are not concerned with immigration and chose to not address it in their party manifesto for an unknown reason (Koalicja Obywatelska, 2023).

Debates analysis

Figure 2 – Word cloud of PiS' debate statement about immigration

Translation Polish-English with help of ChatGPT:

- **Radzie** – Council
- **zaproponowaliśmy** – we proposed
- **referendum** – referendum
- **postawiłem** – I put (or I placed)
- **władzy** – power (or authority)
- **jednego** – one
- **imigrantów** – immigrants
- **podpalonymi** – with fire (arson-related)
- **przeciw** – against
- **krytyki** – criticism
- **doszedł** – he came (or he reached)
- **Sztokholmie** – Stockholm
- **obronimy** – we will defend
- **gwałtami** – rapes
- **Polaków** – Poles
- **Państwo** – "You" in formal context
- **Szanowni** – Honorable (used in addressing people respectfully)
- **obiecane** – promised
- **karami** – punishments
- **groźne** – dangerous
- **palca** – finger
- **rudego** – red-haired (describing a person)
- **imigracji** – immigration

- **Polsce** – Poland
- **Europejskiej** – European
- **Niestety** – Unfortunately
- **fakty** – facts
- **nielegalnej** – illegal
- **nielegalnych** – illegal
- **Zaczęło** – It started
- **Paryżu** – Paris
- **Unii** – Union
- **aferą** – scandal
- **mówi** – he/she/it says
- **widzieliście** – you saw (plural or formal)
- **twarde** – hard (plural form)
- **bezpieczeństwa** – security
- **banda** – gang
- **gwarancją** – with guarantee
- **przyjmował** – he/she/it accepted (imperfect tense)
- **migracyjny** – migration (adjective)
- **naprawdę** – really
- **stanowisko** – position
- **przyjmuje** – he/she/it accepts
- **sami** – ourselves (or self)
- **wyssaną** – sucked (e.g., a story or idea that is fabricated)

In the Mateusz Morawiecki (PiS representative) statement we can see that the two most used words are "Tusk" (name of representative of opposition) and "Council" (referring to the European Council), see Figure 2. Although the frequency analysis does not provide reliable results in the context of debate (1-minute answers to questions result in a limited number of words to analyse), it nevertheless informs us on the words used by the politician. We can see negative words like "against", "criticism", "rapes", "punishments", "dangerous", "illegal", that indicate the anti-immigration stance of the party in the context of answering the question about immigration.

Morawiecki also references oppositions' counterpart Donald Tusk which shows that he uses the short time to answer the question to emphasize his opinion on the opposition, rather than "sticking to the topic".

Figure 3 – Word cloud of KO's debate statement about immigration

Translation Polish-English with help of ChatGPT:

- **powiedzieć** – to say
- **wyznaczający** – determining, defining
- **słychać** – heard
- **skończył** – (he) finished
- **skandal** – scandal
- **stchórzył** – (he) chickened out
- **wykorzystać** – to exploit, to use
- **stanąć** – to stop (in place)
- **migracyjnym** – migration
- **kolejnych** – subsequent, next
- **państwa** – state, country, or your (formal "you")

- **źródłem – source**
- **oznacza** – it means
- **debatę** – debate
- **Jestem** – I am
- **Teraz** – now
- **minutach** – minutes
- **największy** – biggest, greatest
- **prezesem** – chairman
- **dostałem** – I received
- **rozumiem** – I understand
- **niestety** – unfortunately
- **tacy** – such, like that (plural form)

- **minut** – minutes
- **sekund** – seconds
- **czas** – time
- **pierwsze** – first
- **kłamst** – lies
- **będę** – I will be
- **chcę** – I want
- **latach** – years
- **słowo** – word
- **twarz** – face
- **mówił** – (he) spoke
- **Kaczyskim** – Kaczyński (referring to the surname of a prominent Polish politician)
- **Chciałem** – I wanted
- **ośmiu** – eight

- **oglądających** – watching
- **informacji** – information
- **jedynym** – the only
- **migracji** – migration
- **temat** – topic
- **prawdę** – truth
- **odpowiedzi** – answers
- **ostatnie** – last, latest
- **skandalu** – scandal
- **szczególnie** – especially
- **sygnał** – signal
- **twarzą** – face
- **zmierzałem** – I was heading, I headed

KO's stance, represented by Donald Tusk, is characterized by most frequent words "TVP" (main public TV broadcaster in Poland) and "to say", as seen in Figure 3. Tusk also uses some negative words like "lies", "scandal", "to chicken out", but there are less of them, and they refer to the criticism towards PiS. Tusk refers in his answer to the debate itself, to the audience of the debate, to Kaczyński (referring to the surname of PiS's main politician), but not to the substance of the question. We can therefore conclude that KO's stance is not expressed in this debate. The short answer time was again utilized to talk about the opposing party rather than answering the question. There is no information on the parties' position regarding migration which aligns with our findings in KO's manifesto (*Co Mówili Kandydaci W TVP? [ZAPIS DEBATY WYBORCZEJ]*, 2023).
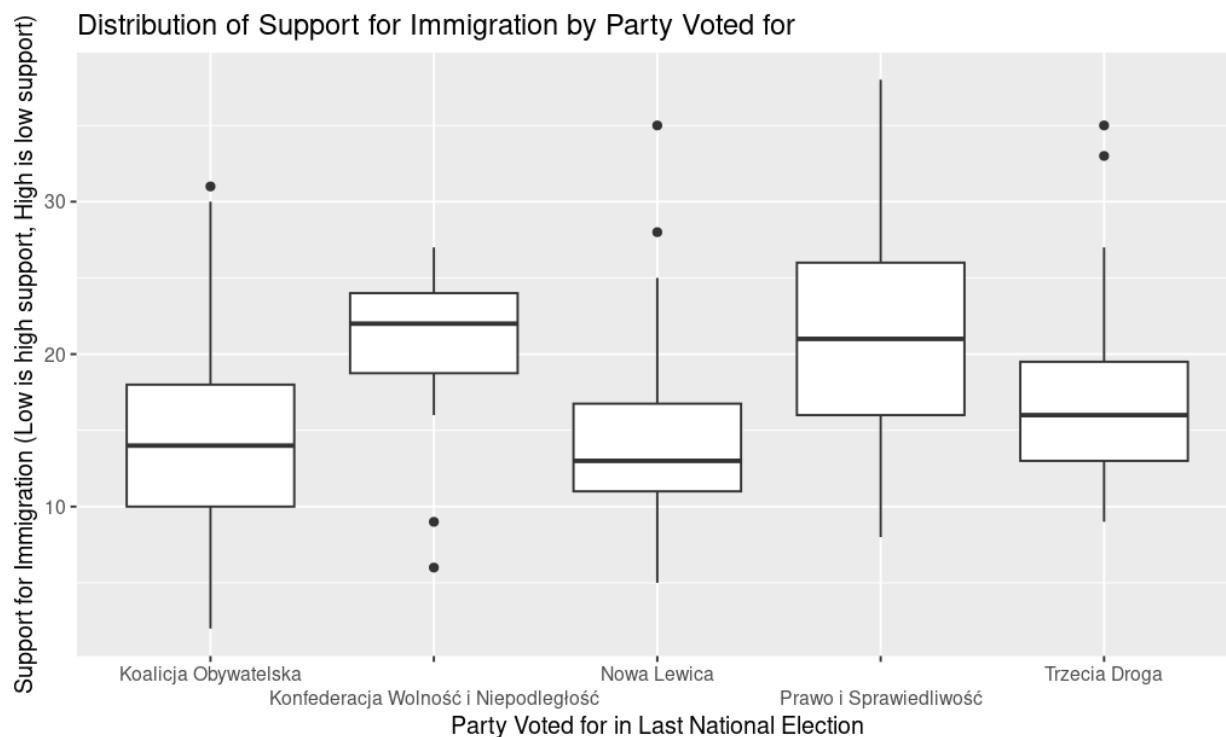
Results from ESS:

Figure 4: Graph of support for immigration, grouping by which party the respondent voted for
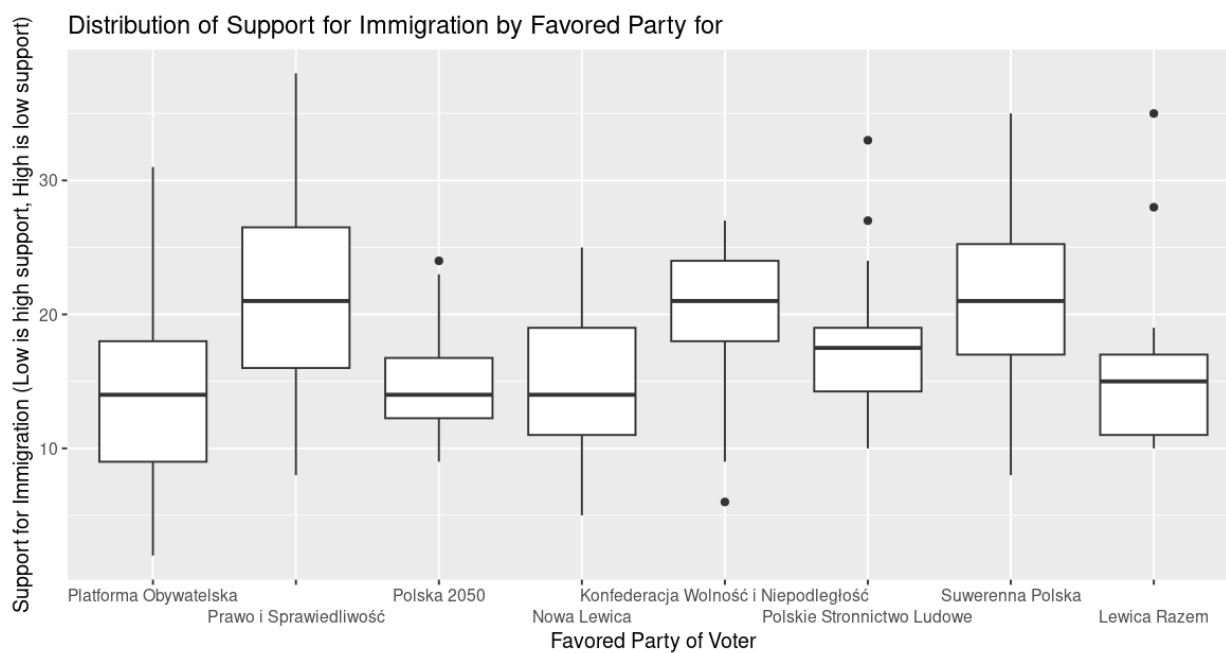

Figure 5: Graph of support for immigration, grouping by which party the respondent felt closest to

```
Call:
lm(formula = ESS_data2$Immsum ~ ESS_data2$Partyvoted)

Residuals:
    Min      1Q  Median      3Q     Max
-14.6000 -4.3226 -0.3226  3.8671 20.5000

Coefficients:
                                                        Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)                                              14.1329     0.5147  27.456  < 2e-16 ***
ESS_data2$PartyvotedKonfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość  6.4671     1.5356   4.211 3.08e-05 ***
ESS_data2$PartyvotedNowa Lewica                           0.3671     1.3267   0.277   0.7821
ESS_data2$PartyvotedPrawo i Sprawiedliwość                7.1897     0.7000  10.270  < 2e-16 ***
ESS_data2$PartyvotedTrzecia Droga                         2.6710     1.0420   2.563   0.0107 *
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 6.47 on 438 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.2124,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.2052
F-statistic: 29.53 on 4 and 438 DF,  p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

Table 1: Results from ANOVA analysis of the respondents' thoughts on immigration grouped by party voted for. The intercept party is Koalicja Obywatelska.

```
Call:
lm(formula = ESS_data2$Immsum ~ ESS_data2$Partyclosest)

Residuals:
    Min      1Q  Median      3Q     Max
-14.115  -4.388  -0.388   4.176  18.867

Coefficients:
                                                          Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)                                                13.8239     0.5400  25.602  < 2e-16 ***
ESS_data2$PartyclosestPrawo i Sprawiedliwość                7.5640     0.7196  10.512  < 2e-16 ***
ESS_data2$PartyclosestPolska 2050                           1.1376     1.3725   0.829   0.4077
ESS_data2$PartyclosestNowa Lewica                           1.1416     1.3112   0.871   0.3844
ESS_data2$PartyclosestKonfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość  6.2914     1.3725   4.584 5.98e-06 ***
ESS_data2$PartyclosestPolskie Stronnictwo Ludowe            4.1761     1.6098   2.594   0.0098 **
ESS_data2$PartyclosestSuwerenna Polska                      7.4261     3.2621   2.276   0.0233 *
ESS_data2$PartyclosestLewica Razem                          2.3094     1.7469   1.322   0.1869
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 6.434 on 435 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.2265,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.214
F-statistic: 18.19 on 7 and 435 DF,  p-value: < 2.2e-16
```

Table 2: Results from ANOVA analysis of the respondent's thoughts on immigration grouped by party closest to. The intercept party is Koalicja Obywatelska.

What the results from Figure 4 and Table 1 show is that there is a statistically significant difference between the respondents' views on immigration who voted for KO and those who voted for PiS. It shows that KO has a much higher support for immigration compared to PiS. Furthermore,

the voters who were not statistically different from KO's voters were Nowa Lewica and Trezica Droga.

What Figure 5 and Table 2 show, supports our above analysis and adds more parties to the perspective. This analysis shows that Nowa Lewica, Polska 2050, Suwerenna Polska, and Lewica Razem were not statistically significantly different from KO's closest supporters views on immigration. Whereas PiS, KWiN and Polskoe Stronnictwo Ludowe does have statistically significant different views on immigration that KO, with the graph showing that they are all less supportive of immigration.

Conclusion

We have found it to be true that right wing politicians express their stance on immigration in their speeches, but also in PiS's case, in party manifestos as well. On the left however, we did not find too much information on KO's stance on immigration. Due to it not being mentioned in the manifesto and not answering the question related to immigration policy in the debate. As for our hypothesis, we did not come to the same conclusion for both parties. We can conclude that PiS and its voters have similar views on immigration, which is being against immigration, based on their manifesto, debate answer, and the European Social Survey answers. However, we cannot conclude whether or not KO's stance aligns with its voters, who are generally supportive of immigration because of the lack of addressing the topic. This, nevertheless, could be interpreted as immigration is not an important topic for KO to address. In which case, it does not align with its voters' stance most likely. For future research, it would be useful to look at other sources of showcasing the stances of KO, to better understand where they stand on immigration.

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