

Do Two-Party Systems Hamper Defection from Undemocratic Candidates?*

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Abstract

Do the electoral constraints imposed by two-party systems make citizens less likely to defect from undemocratic candidates? I employ two innovative candidate choice experiments fielded in England to answer this question. Specifically, I implement two designs manipulating the number and effective number of parties displayed between two and three, exploiting the characteristics of England's party system. Contrary to expectations, I find that Labour and Conservative identifiers do not defect more from undemocratic in-partisan candidates when they face three (effective) parties—Labour, the Conservatives, *and* the Liberal Democrats—rather than just the two major parties. Instead, defection from undemocratic in-partisans to the out-party drops and relocates to the Liberal Democrats even when the latter have no chance of winning. These findings highlight that having three rather than two parties does not generate more defection from undemocratic politicians—and that voters prefer defecting to the option ideologically nearest to the in-party even when this option is chanceless.

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Introduction

The link between party systems and democratic stability constitutes a longstanding debate in political science (e.g., Sartori 1976; Dahl 1971; Lipset 1983; Linz 1978; Lijphart 1999; Anderson and Guillory 1997). Whereas the consequences of party systems for democratic stability in a broad sense have been extensively studied, we lack knowledge about the consequences of party systems for the most frequent type of democratic breakdown today, namely, voters' support for democracy-subverting politicians (e.g., Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Svobik 2019). Studying this question is highly relevant, since party systems do sometimes change in currently backsliding democracies that suffer from attacks on the electoral system, court-packing, and harassment or manipulation of the media. The recent transformation of the Hungarian party system is a prime example.

I shed light on the link between a key component of the party system—the number of options offered in the voting booth—and punishment of undemocratic behavior using two innovative survey experiments. In these, I exploit the characteristics of England's party system and the Liberal Democrats' role within it. I evaluate the theoretical argument that voters punish undemocratic behavior more when the options offered by the party system increase—specifically that voters punish in-partisan, undemocratic behavior more when they have the option to vote for a party positioned in between the in- and out-party. The reasoning behind this argument is that party systems alter voters' incentives fundamentally: It is less costly—ideologically and psychologically—to defect from in-partisan candidates when the choice set offered by the party system extends beyond the out-party (Sniderman and Levendusky 2007).

The survey experiments were pre-registered and fielded in England in June 2022 (N = 2,100 respondents and 28,000 candidate observations). Specifically, the experiments utilize the fact that the English party system may be conceived of as in between a two-party and a multi-party system, as the system contains two-and-a-half effective political parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979).¹ I manipulate the number of parties in the system

¹Using the Laakso-Taagepera measure for vote shares in the 2019 General Election yields 2.83 effective parties, whereas the measure for shares of seats won yields 1.88 effective parties. The same measures yielded 2.58 and 2.04 effective parties in 2017, respectively.

by drawing and building further on recent innovations in candidate choice experiments (Jenke et al. 2021). The gist of these innovations is the idea of increasing the number of options shown to respondents beyond the traditional two-profile design (as described in e.g., Hainmueller et al. 2015).

In the first experiment—the “increase-in-profiles” design—the treatment consists of simply manipulating the number of parties shown to the respondents from two (only Labour and Conservatives) to three (Labour, Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats). In the second experiment—the “constituency-information” design—I hold the number of shown profiles constant at three and instead manipulate the *effective* number of parties by providing information about whether the Liberal Democrats usually stand a chance in a given constituency. I demonstrate that this treatment does indeed manipulate the perceived effective number of parties successfully. In both experiments, I evaluate whether voters punish in-partisan undemocratic behavior—randomly assigned to the candidates from Labour and the Conservatives—more when the number of (effective) political parties increase from two to three with the third party being positioned in between the in- and out-party. Both experiments also enable me to evaluate how and to whom voters defect (by shifting their vote to the out-party, to the Liberal Democrats, or by abstaining from voting).

Contrary to the theoretical expectation, I find that there is no difference in the *extent* to which voters punish in-partisan undemocratic behavior when the (effective) number of parties is three rather than two, although partisans correctly identify the Liberal Democrats as positioned in between the in- and out-party. Instead, defection amounts to a 12-17 percentage points loss in the vote share of the undemocratic in-partisan in all instances. However, I also find that the number of options offered by the party system alters *how* voters defect from undemocratic in-partisan candidates. When the Liberal Democrats are included as a third party, but irrespective of whether the party is presented as effective, defection from the out-party drops and shifts over to the Liberal Democrats. Although unanticipated, this is rather consistent with the theoretical argument, as it shows us that partisans would rather defect to the Liberal Democrats

than the out-party. Recall that this nuanced evaluation of defection would not have been possible with a traditional two-profile design.

The former finding suggests that the electoral constraints imposed by two-party systems do not make partisans punish undemocratic behavior less. The latter finding suggests that partisans prefer defecting to the option ideologically nearest to the in-party. However, in the specific context of England the latter finding also implies that the inclusion of the Liberal Democrats in the party system may unintentionally hurt opposition to undemocratic politicians: When one of the major parties violates democratic principles, the Liberal Democrats attract defection from the violating party even when the Liberal Democrats appear as a chanceless, small party. As this defection would otherwise have gone to the democratically compliant out-party that actually stands a chance in the election, the Liberal Democrats end up boosting the winning chances of the violating party. But it is important to highlight that this implication is conditional on the electoral first-past-the-post system in England.

This paper therefore contributes theoretically, methodologically, and empirically to the classical debate about party systems and democratic stability (e.g., Sartori 1976; Dahl 1971; Lipset 1983; Linz 1978; Lijphart 1999; Anderson and Guillory 1997) as well as the burgeoning literature explaining why voters support undemocratic political leaders (e.g., Graham and Svobik 2020; Frederiksen 2022a; Carey et al. 2020; Bartels 2020; Braley et al. 2021; Cohen et al. 2022; Krishnarajan 2022). It contributes theoretically by zooming in on the relation between party systems and the perhaps most crucial aspect of democratic stability today, namely, voter support for politicians committed to subverting democracy. Methodologically, it provides two innovative ways of manipulating the number of options offered by the party system. Empirically, it shows us that having three parties is not better than having two when it comes to opposition to undemocratic politicians. Whereas prior studies on support for undemocratic political leaders have typically focused on the characteristics of the options within the system—such as to which extent they are polarized—this paper sheds light on what happens when the very number of options in the party system increases or decreases. The symbiosis between this and prior

studies yields an institutional choice set theory of punishment of undemocratic behavior, as the choice set offered at the voting booth is constituted by the number as well as characteristics of options (Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). Whereas option characteristics matter for the *extent* to which undemocratic behavior is punished (e.g., Graham and Svolic 2020), I show that the number of options changes *how* it is punished.

Theoretical Argument

The gist of the theoretical argument I test in this article is that voters' incentives to punish undemocratic behavior by the in-party depend on the options offered by the party system. When only two parties exist—the in-party and the out-party—it is very costly for partisans to defect from their party as a consequence of undemocratic behavior. When more parties exist—in the simplest of structures the in-party, the out-party, and a party in between—defection becomes less costly and more attractive.

I test the argument on the case of England, as England closely resembles this simple structure. Moreover, the English system may be seen as borderline two-party and borderline three-party with two-and-a-half parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979), as the Liberal Democrats are a substantially smaller party than the two main parties. The case is not perfect, as the Liberal Democrats usually aligns with one party more than the other—currently Labour due to disagreement with the Conservatives on Brexit (e.g., Sloman 2020)—but it may be seen as a good starting point for testing the theory due to the simple structure and knife-edge balance between two-party and multi-party.

The argument relates to the classical accounts on party systems and democratic stability (Sartori 1976; Dahl 1971; Lipset 1983; Linz 1978; Lijphart 1999; Anderson and Guillory 1997) as well as extant explanations of why voters support undemocratic political leaders (e.g., Graham and Svolic 2020; Frederiksen 2022a, 2022b; Carey et al. 2020; Touchton et al. 2020; Bartels 2020; Albertus and Grossman 2021; Ahlquist et al. 2018; Svolic 2020; Luo and Przeworski 2019; Braley et al. 2021; Carey et al. 2019; Simonovits et al. 2022; Cohen et al. 2022). Although not touching upon support for undemocratic

politicians, Linz (1978, 72) observed that defection in presidential systems—which should not be equated but surely overlaps with two-party systems—is generally costly due to a 'winner-takes-all'-logic. Linz also noted that ideological distances between individual parties are smaller in multi-party systems, implying that defection is less costly there. Moreover, Sartori (1976, 297) discusses a 'defection point' where, due to some action (e.g., undemocratic behavior), voters turn away from their party. The party system alters this defection point according to the argument tested in this article. To be exact, the defection point is reached when, for a given voter, the negative value attached to undemocratic behavior exceeds the positive value of the in-party over the nearest option. Exemplifying this in the simple context of England, the Liberal Democrats are an ideologically closer option than the out-party, which means that the defection point is more easily reached when this third party figures in the system. This implies that punishment of undemocratic behavior increases with the number of parties in this context.

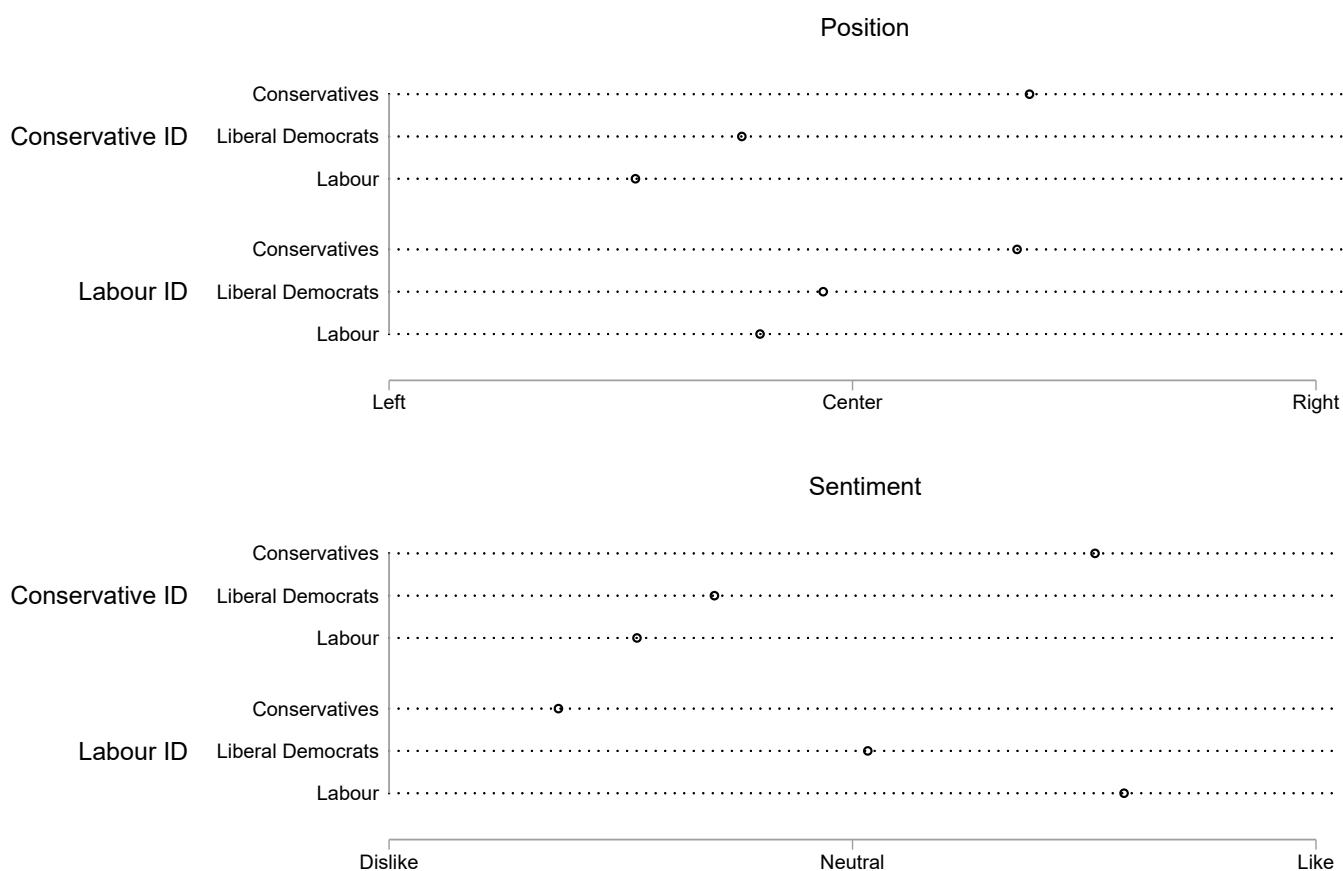
In terms of prior studies on voter support for undemocratic leaders, the argument draws on the logic that although voters care about democratic compliance, they also care about other factors—in this case those associated with their preferred party whether it be partisan loyalty (e.g., Graham and Svulik 2020), policy interests (e.g., Svulik 2020), or competence (e.g., Frederiksen 2022a). The argument presented here advances the literature by theorizing on the alternative options that the party system offers beyond the out-party: The trade-offs between democratic compliance and other factors decrease in intensity when the party system offers other options than the out-party. This is because parties located in between the in- and out-party are perceived as offering better and more competent policies than the out-party. The English case is again illustrative, as partisans of both camps presumably perceive the Liberal Democrats as positioned in between Labour and the Conservatives and value the Liberal Democrats to a greater extent than the out-party. The argument thus distinguishes itself by moving our focus from the characteristics of the parties or candidates within the choice set of the party system—for example, to which degree they are polarized (Graham and Svulik 2020)—to the number of alternatives in the choice set (Sniderman and Levendusky 2007).

Within the context of England, the argument requires a certain degree of voter rationality to be tested. Voters need to be aware of the positioning of the three parties with Labour being on the left-wing, Conservatives being on the right-wing, and the Liberal Democrats being in between. Voters also need to be able to link their sentiment toward all three parties to their partisanship, so that they like their in-party the most, their out-party the least, and the Liberal Democrats somewhere in between. I included two questions in the surveys before the experiments—which I will present in the next section—to validate these assumptions. The first question, which is commonly used in the British Election Study (Fieldhouse et al. 2022), asks Labour and Conservative identifiers to place the three parties on an 11-point scale from left to right, whereas the second question asks the respondents about their sentiment toward each of the parties on a five-point like/dislike scale.

Figure 1 validates the assumptions: The order in terms of positioning and sentiment is correct for both Labour and Conservative partisans. Also consistent with the English context, voters of both parties place the Liberal Democrats slightly to the left and closer to Labour than to the Conservatives. Interestingly, Conservative identifiers perceive larger distance between the parties, whereas affective polarization (differences in sentiment) is stronger among Labour identifiers: The latter have nothing more than neutral sentiment toward the Liberal Democrats despite the perceived proximity between the two parties, while they strongly dislike the Conservatives.

Nevertheless, Figure 1 illustrates that we should expect more defection as a consequence of undemocratic behavior when the Liberal Democrats figure as an effective party with real chances of winning elections (i.e., if voters perceive a three-party structure) than when the Liberal Democrats are not part of the competition between parties (i.e., if voters perceive a two-party structure). This is because Labour and Conservative identifiers both perceive the Liberal Democrats as closer to their own party than the out-party and also show more positive sentiment towards the Liberal Democrats than the out-party.

Figure 1: Perceived positions of parties and sentiment toward the parties for Labour and Conservative identifiers. N = 2,100 respondents.



Research Design and Data

I fielded two pre-registered² and well-powered candidate choice experiments in England with Lucid in June 2022 to test the theoretical expectation (N = 2,100 respondents and 28,000 candidate observations). The two experiments were fielded at the exact same time and respondents were not able to participate in both surveys. Only voters identifying with the Conservatives or Labour, including leaners, were included in the experiments, as we are theoretically interested in how these two groups respond to in-partisan undemocratic behavior depending on whether the Liberal Democrats figure in the system. Following the advice for Lucid samples in Ternovski and Orr (2022), I screened out inattentive

²The pre-registration is publicly available here: <https://osf.io/m9p8h>

respondents pre-treatment.³ The samples are nationally representative on gender and age, after screening.

I examine the impact of undemocratic in-partisan candidate behavior through 18 candidate choice tasks in both experiments, but manipulate the (effective) number of parties in two different ways in the experiments, as illustrated by Figure 2. This variation in treatment is included to boost the external validity of the study, as showing similar results across different treatments increases our trust in the findings (Mutz 2011; Shadish et al. 2002; Egami and Hartman 2020). Both party system treatments are inspired by recent methodological innovations extending candidate choice designs beyond traditional two-profile scenarios to three-profile scenarios (Jenke et al. 2021).

Party System Manipulations

In the “increase-in-profiles” design, I simply manipulate the number of parties shown to the respondents by between-subject randomizing whether each respondent sees two (Labour and the Conservatives) or three (Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats) candidate profiles in each task. Thus, each respondent either sees 18 tasks with two profiles or 18 tasks with three profiles.

In the “constituency-information” design, all respondents see three candidate profiles in every task, but information about the constituency in which the candidates compete is then randomized in each task (within- and between-subject). Each constituency is either “a constituency where Labour and the Conservatives are the strongest parties” and the “Liberal Democrats have never won an election” (two effective parties) or “a constituency where Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats are equally strong” and “all three parties have won several elections” (three effective parties).⁴

Each treatment has different strengths and weaknesses. The increase-in-profiles

³The survey included two soft screeners and a harder screener. To screen out respondents who just click randomly through the survey, I screened out respondents who answered that they live in another country than England and respondents who did not enter a number between 18 and 120 when stating their age. The harder screening question reads: “We have inserted this question to check whether you are attentive to the survey. Please click “Next” (the arrow in the lower right-hand corner) without selecting any of the response options!” Respondents who selected any of the response options were screened out.

⁴The order of Labour and the Conservatives in this information was between-subject randomized (i.e., each respondent always saw the same order).

Figure 2: Two Experimental Designs Manipulating the (Effective) Number of Parties

a1) Increase-in-profiles: Two parties

Imagine that the following two candidates compete for a seat in parliament.

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B
Party	Labour	Conservatives
Age	38	41
Gender	Female	Female
Policy	Reinvest in local schools	Support local businesses more
Recent behavior	Proposed to appoint Supreme Court Justices loyal to Labour	Said the rights of media platforms should be protected

Which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Abstain

To what extent do you like or dislike each of the candidates?

	Dislike very much	Dislike somewhat	Neutral	Like somewhat	Like very much	Don't know
Candidate A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

a2) Increase-in-profiles: Three parties

Imagine that the following three candidates compete for a seat in parliament.

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B	CANDIDATE C
Party	Labour	Conservatives	Liberal Democrats
Age	38	41	53
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Policy	Reinvest in local schools	Support local businesses more	Establish basic income
Recent behavior	Proposed to appoint Supreme Court Justices loyal to Labour	Said the rights of media platforms should be protected	Said that vote buying is never acceptable

Which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Candidate C
 Abstain

To what extent do you like or dislike each of the candidates?

	Dislike very much	Dislike somewhat	Neutral	Like somewhat	Like very much	Don't know
Candidate A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate B	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate C	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b1) Constituency-information: Two effective parties

Imagine that the following three candidates compete for a seat in parliament in the constituency described below the profiles.

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B	CANDIDATE C
Party	Labour	Conservatives	Liberal Democrats
Age	38	41	53
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Policy	Reinvest in local schools	Support local businesses more	Establish basic income
Recent behavior	Proposed to appoint Supreme Court Justices loyal to Labour	Said the rights of media platforms should be protected	Said that vote buying is never acceptable

- This is a constituency where Labour and the Conservatives are the strongest parties
- The Liberal Democrats have never won an election in this constituency

Which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Candidate C
 Abstain

Which candidate do you think would win this election?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Candidate C
 Don't know

b2) Constituency-information: Three effective parties

Imagine that the following three candidates compete for a seat in parliament in the constituency described below the profiles.

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B	CANDIDATE C
Party	Labour	Conservatives	Liberal Democrats
Age	38	41	53
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Policy	Reinvest in local schools	Support local businesses more	Establish basic income
Recent behavior	Proposed to appoint Supreme Court Justices loyal to Labour	Said the rights of media platforms should be protected	Said that vote buying is never acceptable

- This is a constituency where Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats are equally strong
- All three parties have won several elections in this constituency

Which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Candidate C
 Abstain

Which candidate do you think would win this election?

Candidate A
 Candidate B
 Candidate C
 Don't know

design plainly manipulates the number of parties and therefore provides a very strong treatment. The constituency-information design manipulates the effective number of parties with information—that is, with lower strength but with stronger experimental realism, as English voters always have the option to vote for a Liberal Democrat, strong or weak, in the real world. Nevertheless, I expect both experiments to invoke the same mechanics in line with the theoretical argument: When the Liberal Democrats figure in the system—either as a third party or a third effective party—it is less costly for Labour and Conservative identifiers to defect as a consequence of undemocratic behavior, as they have a(n) (effective) voting option beyond the out-party.

Candidate Profiles

Figure 2 also provides a taste of the candidate construction for the experiments.⁵ Each candidate was assigned a party label, age, gender, one policy position, and a recent behavior that was either undemocratic or democratically compliant. In terms of party labels, age, gender, and policy positions, I constructed the 18 tasks on the basis of real-world contests in 18 English constituencies.⁶ For ethical reasons, the names of the constituencies were not displayed and the survey informed respondents that all candidate profiles are hypothetical, so that respondents did not associate undemocratic behaviors with any specific real-world candidates.

Due to the realistic constituency-based construction of scenarios, everything except undemocratic behavior was held constant in each task—while differing from task to task—between respondents. The experiments presented here thus deviate from other candidate choice experiments examining support for undemocratic political leaders (e.g, Carey et al. 2020; Frederiksen 2022a), as I have stronger control over each candidate scenario and do not apply a fully randomized conjoint experiment. This also implies the

⁵The order of Labour and the Conservatives in each scenario (i.e., in terms of which is to the left and which is to the right) was between-subject randomized.

⁶These constituencies are (listed chronologically from task 1-18): Manchester Central, Lincoln, Hazel Grove, Kingswood, Knowsley, Reigate, Oxford East, Liverpool Wavertree, Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Thurrock, Birmingham Selly Oak, Wansbeck, Tatton, Blaydon, Southampton Test, Bath, Bermondsey and Old Southwark, and Kingston and Surbiton. The background attributes for each candidate in each task are displayed in Appendix A.

Table 1: Undemocratic and Democratic Behaviors

Undemocratic:	Democratic:
Proposed to reduce polling stations in areas that support [Labour/the Conservatives]	Proposed to preserve existing polling-stations in all areas
Said that vote buying is acceptable under some circumstances	Said that vote buying is never acceptable
Said we should put restrictions on media platforms supporting [Labour/the Conservatives]	Said the rights of media platforms should be protected
Said it is acceptable to harass journalists who do not reveal sources	Said it is unacceptable to harass journalists even though they do not reveal sources
Said it is legitimate to fight political opponents in the streets if one feels provoked	Said it is unacceptable to fight political opponents in the streets even though one feels provoked
Proposed to appoint Supreme Court Justices loyal to [the Conservatives/Labour]	Proposed legislation protecting the Supreme Court from partisan influence

benefit that each candidate is extremely realistic: For example, no policy positions that Labour candidates would not take on in the real world are assigned to Labour candidates. This further boosts external validity and accommodates recent calls for more awareness of profile construction when estimating effects in conjoint experiments and similar designs (e.g., de la Cuesta et al. 2022; Abramson et al. 2022).⁷

Undemocratic behaviors were randomly assigned to the candidates from Labour and the Conservatives, whereas the Liberal Democrats always behaved democratically compliant. As Table 1 illustrates, the assigned behaviors are violations of the democratic principles of free and fair elections, civil liberties, and the rule of law, similar to those employed in recent studies on support for undemocratic political leaders and resembling typical undemocratic behaviors in contemporary democracies (Graham and Svobik 2020; Carey et al. 2020; Frederiksen 2022a). The scenarios were constructed so that maximally one candidate violated democratic principles, which provides three possible combinations: 1) all candidates behave democratically compliant, 2) only the Conservative candidate violates democratic principles, or 3) only the Labour candidate violates democratic prin-

⁷The latter of these cited articles also note that in conjoint experiments and similar designs, effects (AMCEs) should not be interpreted as majority preferences. Majority preferences are not central to this article, and the results should not be interpreted as signalling majority preferences.

ciples.

As pre-registered, I exclude scenarios where only the out-party candidate violates democratic principles when estimating the effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior (and vice versa when estimating the effects of out-partisan undemocratic behavior, see also Appendix C). Thus, scenario 1) described above always serves as the baseline scenario. I constructed the scenarios and analysis in this way as it optimizes alignment with the theory: We are interested in how willing voters are to defect from undemocratic in-partisan candidates when the alternatives—the out-party and the Liberal Democrats—behave democratically compliant.

Outcomes and Modelling

As Figure 2 also hinted to, I employ the same main outcome across the two designs. This outcome asks the respondents which candidate they would vote for and includes the option of abstaining, which enables me to examine whether voters punish undemocratic in-partisans by abstaining or by shifting their vote (and to whom). As pre-registered, I split this outcome in four binary outcomes—measuring the shares voting for each of the three candidates and abstaining—and estimate 2x2 interactions between undemocratic behavior and the party system treatment(s) using linear regression with respondent-clustered standard errors (e.g., Hainmueller et al. 2014).

Each design has an additional outcome. In the constituency-information design, I employ a manipulation check to examine whether I successfully manipulated the perceived effective number of parties by asking who the respondents think would win the election. This check reveals that the manipulation was successful, as the perceived winning chances of the Liberal Democrats were 4.3 percentage points higher in the constituencies with three effective parties compared with constituencies with two effective parties ($p < 0.001$). In the increase-in-profiles design, I employ a supplementary rating outcome to check if the results travel beyond the forced choice outcome, which enables me to further assess the external validity of the findings (see also Appendix H).

Results

Three-Party Scenarios Do Not Increase Defection from Undemocratic In-Partisans

Figure 3 illustrates to what extent partisans punish undemocratic behavior depending on the number of parties in the system. The upper panel shows the marginal means of vote shares for in-partisan candidates who either violate democratic principles or behave democratically compliant in two- and three-party scenarios across the increase-in-profiles (IP) and constituency-information (CI) designs (Leeper et al. 2020).⁸ The lower panel provides the direct test of the theoretical expectation by illustrating the effects of undemocratic behavior and interaction with the party system treatments.

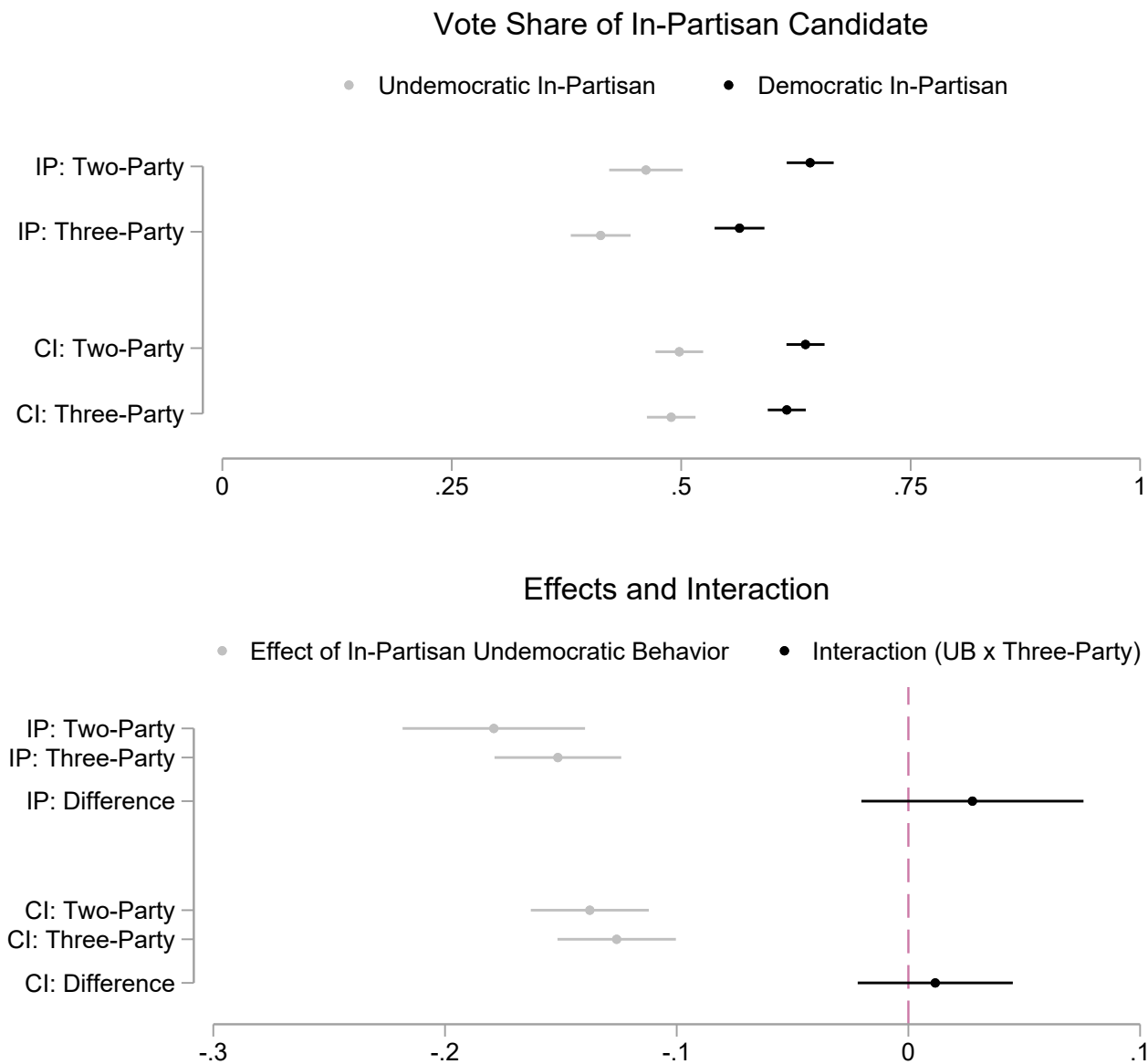
The theoretical expectation gains support if the interactions between undemocratic behavior and three-party scenarios are significantly negative. But this is not what we see: Voters punish in-partisans for behaving undemocratically by approximately a 12-17 percentage points loss in vote share in each design, but this loss does not differ across the two- and three-party scenarios in any of the designs. The two interaction terms yield statistically insignificant positive coefficients in both designs.⁹ As the coefficients are in the opposite direction of the theoretical expectation and the experiments are well-powered, we can quite confidently reject the expectation.¹⁰ These results do not differ across partisanship (see Appendix B). Both Labour and Conservative identifiers punish their own for behaving undemocratically but this punishment does not depend on how many (effective) parties there are. Thus, increasing the number of (effective) parties from two to three does not increase defection from undemocratic in-partisan candidates.

⁸Recall that abstain-votes are included, so that the marginal means signal vote shares out of the total pool of abstainers, out-party votes, and in-party votes. For example, if the in-partisan candidate gains 65% of the votes, this does not imply that the out-partisan candidate gained 35% of the votes, as the 35% includes abstainers as well as out-party votes. We may also notice that in-party vote shares generally are lower in the three-party scenarios in the increase-in-profiles design than in the constituency-information design conditions, which both contain three parties. This difference is driven by a higher share of abstain-votes in the increase-in-profiles design (see also Figure 4). The reason is plausibly that the information provided in either condition of the constituency-information design mobilizes votes.

⁹Increase-in-profiles: coef. = 0.028 and p = 0.258; Constituency-information: coef. = 0.012 and p = 0.497.

¹⁰Each of the two experimental designs are equipped to capture interaction coefficients of 0.048—that is, 4.8 percentage points—with 80% power (see also Appendix I).

Figure 3: The upper panel shows vote shares of undemocratic and democratic in-partisan candidates in two- and three-party scenarios across the increase-in-profiles (IP) and constituency-information (CI) designs. The lower panel shows the effects of undemocratic behavior and the interactions with the number of (effective) parties. Approximately 14,000 candidate observations in each design.



Three-Party Scenarios Relocate Defection from Undemocratic In-Partisans

The designs allow exploring to what extent partisans defect to the out-party, to the Liberal Democrats, or abstain when in-partisans violate democratic principles.¹¹ As also

¹¹Of course with the exception of the two-profile scenario in the increase-in-profiles design, where only the shares voting for Labour, Conservatives, and abstaining are observed.

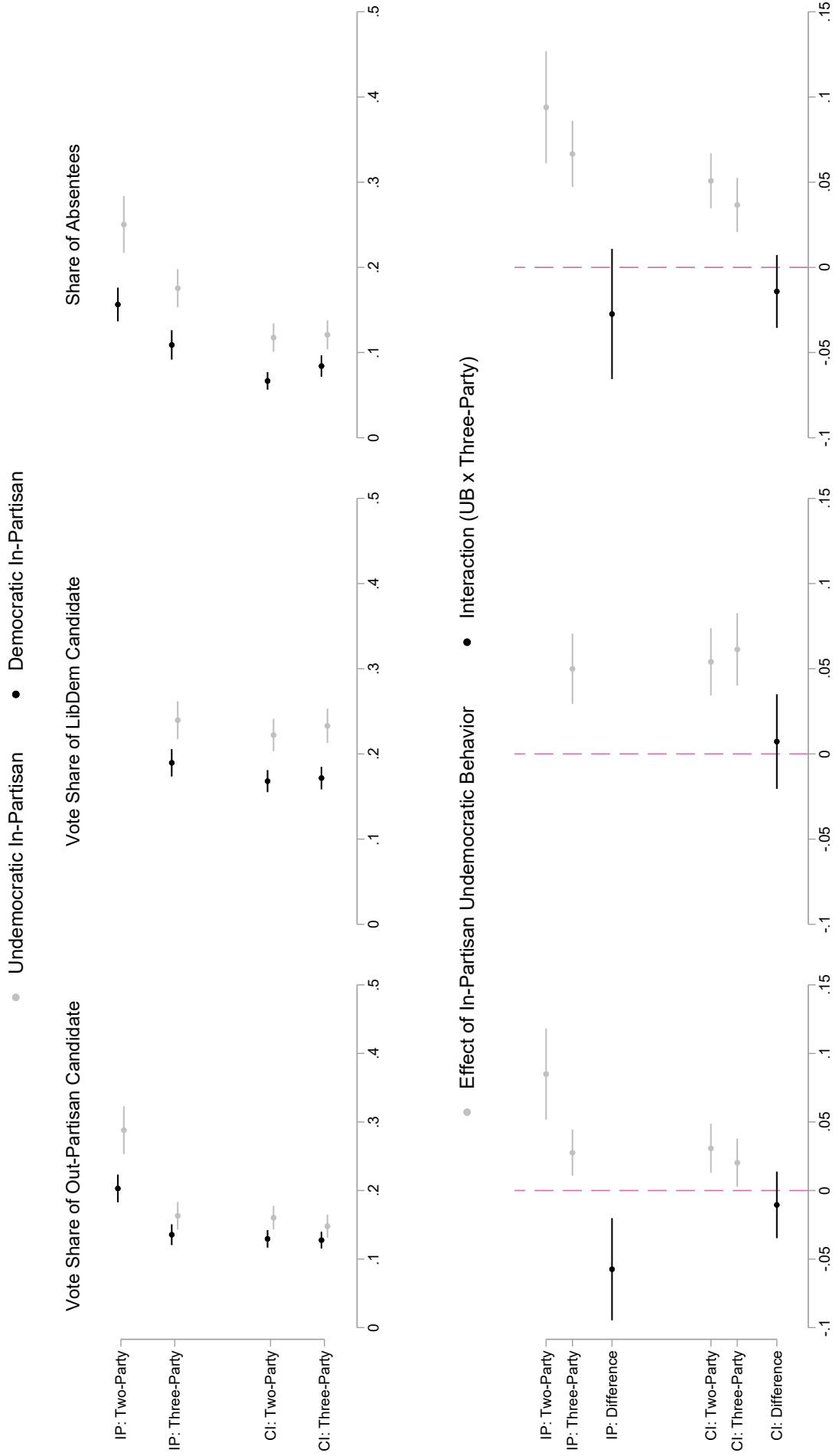
noted in the pre-registration, exploring this is important to grasp the full picture of how voters defect in scenarios differing in the number of (effective) parties. Figure 4 therefore shows the consequences of in-partisan undemocratic behavior for the vote shares of the out-partisan, the Liberal Democrat, and abstaining across two- and three-party scenarios. The upper panels again show marginal means, whereas the lower panel shows the effects of undemocratic behavior and interaction with the number of parties.¹²

The results reveal that the inclusion of the Liberal Democrats in the party system relocates defection from undemocratic in-partisans. This defection shifts from the out-party to the Liberal Democrats when the latter figure in the party system but irrespective of whether the Liberal Democrats are an effective party. In the two-party condition in the increase-in-profiles design where the Liberal Democrats are not included, defection to the out-partisan candidate amounts to a 8.5 percentage points gain in vote share (first coefficient in lower left panel). Defection to the out-partisan candidate then decreases by a statistically significant margin of 5.7 percentage points when the Liberal Democrats are included in this design (the first interaction coefficient in the same panel). Defection to the out-party generally averages to 2.6 percentage points and barely gains statistical significance in the conditions where the Liberal Democrats are included across the two designs. The most plausible reason—which makes perfect sense theoretically, as the Liberal Democrats position themselves between Labour and the Conservatives—is that partisans are generally more willing to defect to the Liberal Democrats than to the out-party.

Importantly, whether the Liberal Democrats are an *effective* party does not change how partisans defect, as we see that the results are largely similar across the two- and three-party conditions in the constituency-information design. Defection as a consequence of in-partisan undemocratic behavior therefore shifts from the out-party to the Liberal Democrats even when the Liberal Democrats have no chance of winning the election. Given the electoral first-past-the-post system in England, this means that the mere inclusion of the Liberal Democrats in the system may hurt opposition to undemo-

¹²I zoom in on the x-axis as the vote share for out-partisans, Liberal Democrats, and abstaining never exceed 0.5 in the results.

Figure 4: The upper panels show vote shares of the out-partisan candidate, the Liberal Democrat candidate, and abstaining when in-partisans violate democratic principles in two- and three-party scenarios across the increase-in-profiles (IP) and constituency-information (CI) designs. The lower panels show the effects of undemocratic behavior on these vote shares and the and interactions with the number of (effective) parties.



cratic candidates, as this inclusion shifts defection away from a strong democratically compliant party to a chanceless party. However, given the conditionality on the electoral system, the general take-away from this finding is that partisans prefer defecting to the option nearest to the in-party. Increasing the number of parties relocates defection when the added party is positioned in between the in- and out-party.

Finally, a note on punishment of undemocratic behavior by abstention. Voters of both partisan camps do punish their parties for behaving undemocratically by abstaining—undemocratic in-partisan behavior typically increases abstention by 5 percentage points—but the number of (effective) parties does not change this defection. Thus, whereas the number of parties change to whom partisans defect, having three (effective) parties does not alter punishment by abstention. We could have imagined that punishment by abstention—rather than punishment by defecting to the out-party—would decrease when the Liberal Democrats are included, because partisans refuse to vote when only an undemocratic in-partisan and a democratic out-partisan figure in the party system. This would not have hurt opposition to undemocratic candidates in England, as a shift away from abstention toward voting for the Liberal Democrats would not alter the relative winning chances of an undemocratic in-party and a democratically compliant out-party. But instead, the presence of the Liberal Democrats turns voters away from the out-party and—given the electoral system—boosts the winning chances of the in-party.

Robustness Checks and Auxiliary Analyses

In the appendix, I show that the results are fairly similar for Conservative and Labour identifiers, with the exception that the relocation of defection from the out-party to the Liberal Democrats is strongest among Labour identifiers (Appendix B). This makes theoretical sense, as the Liberal Democrats are located closer to Labour than to the Conservatives (see also Figure 1). Moreover, I show the effects of *out*-partisan undemocratic behavior to provide a comparison category for the effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior (Appendix C).

I also show that the main results do not differ systematically across the 18 tasks

displayed to the respondents (Appendix D), as neither the effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior, the differences in effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior between the two- and three-party scenarios, or the effectiveness of the constituency-information treatment decrease or increase throughout the tasks. These findings resemble those of related candidate choice studies showing little or no sensitivity to task effects (e.g., Jenke et al. 2021; Bansak et al. 2021).

Furthermore, I show that the main results are robust to dropping abstain-votes by coding them as missing (Appendix E), to splitting the undemocratic behavior measure in its four antagonistic pairs displayed in Table 1 (Appendix F), to excluding respondents who do not place the parties correctly from left to right or do not show sentiment toward the parties in the expected order (Appendix G), and to employing the supplementary rating outcome in the increase-in-profiles design (Appendix H). Finally, I provide a power analysis—which was included in the pre-registration as well—showing that the rejection of the theoretical expectation unlikely was due to a lack of power (Appendix I).

Discussion and Conclusion

The consequences of party systems for democratic stability constitute a classical debate in political science (e.g., Sartori 1976; Dahl 1971; Lipset 1983; Linz 1978; Lijphart 1999; Anderson and Guillory 1997), but knowledge on the link between party systems and the most frequent cause of democratic breakdown today—subversion of democracy by elected leaders—is lacking. This paper fills the gap using two innovative survey experiments implemented in England and testing the argument that two-party systems hinder punishment of undemocratic behavior.

The main empirical findings are that having two rather than three (effective) parties does not increase the extent to which voters punish in-partisan undemocratic behavior, whereas the number of parties—but not whether the third party is effective—matters for how they defect. Labour and Conservative identifiers do not punish in-partisan undemocratic behavior *more* when the Liberal Democrats figure as a(n) (effective) party,

but they defect less to the out-party when the Liberal Democrats figure in the system. Given the electoral first-past-the-post system in England, this highlights an adverse effect of three-party systems, which potentially shift defection away from a strong, democratically compliant out-party to a democratically compliant but electorally irrelevant third party. The finding also highlights that English voters in this case behave ideologically rationally but not very strategically (Cox 1997), as they just defect to the nearest option even when risking vote wasting.

The experimental designs employed here make use of and advance recent innovations in candidate choice experiments by implementing three-profile designs (Jenke et al. 2021). Specifically, the designs exploit the close relation between the number of profiles displayed to respondents and the characteristics of the party system. The increase-in-profiles design mimics this relation directly by including a party positioned in between the in- and out-party in the three-party condition. The constituency-information design employs three profiles all the way but instead manipulates the effective number of parties. The case of England serves as the ideal case for this implementation, as the English party system may be conceived as in between a two- and multi-party system and follows a simple structure with two partisan camps and a party in between. The focus on the characteristics of the party system and the three-profile designs enabled examining how and to whom voters defect, rather than sticking exclusively with a focus on the extent to which they defect, which is a general limitation of two-profile designs.

This methodological contribution may also spark further research on the topic: The designs implemented here are quite simple in the sense that they go to maximum three profiles. As I, consistent with the first innovations on three-profile designs (Jenke et al. 2021), find no evidence of respondents being incapable of adjusting to these designs, we may advance further methodologically by implementing more complex multi-profile designs, for example by evaluating the impacts of party systems in contexts with more parties than the English. Given the successes of the three-profile design in this study and elsewhere (Jenke et al. 2021), we may dare displaying even more complex scenarios to respondents looking forward.

Relatedly, generalization constitutes a key task for future studies. There is no guarantee that the findings replicate in systems containing, say, eight rather than three parties. In particular, one could ask whether the presence of multiple left- and right-wing options secures a higher level of defection from undemocratic candidates in some multi-party systems. However, the fact that increasing the number of parties from two to three did not yield stronger punishment of undemocratic behavior among either partisan group could suggest that this finding is rather general. Specifically, it is noticeable that the presence of the Liberal Democrats does not even increase punishment of undemocratic behavior among Labour identifiers. As the Liberal Democrats currently align more with Labour due to disagreement on Brexit with the Conservatives (Sloman 2020), Labour and the Liberal Democrats may be conceived of as two left-wing alternatives, as also testified to by Figure 1. Thus, the findings of this article suggest that increasing the number of parties does not increase punishment of in-partisan undemocratic behavior, even when the added party is ideologically proximate to the in-party. This boosts the prospects of generalization.

These conclusions add to the classical debate about party systems and democratic stability that more parties do not always foster the latter—at least not when it comes to opposition to undemocratic politicians. Moreover, the findings add to the burgeoning literature on support for undemocratic leaders (e.g., Graham and Svobik 2020; Frederiksen 2022a; Carey et al. 2020) that not only the characteristics of the options within the party system matter for punishment of undemocratic behavior; the number of options also matters. In combination with prior studies, we gain an institutional choice set theory of voter punishment of undemocratic behavior, as electoral choice sets offered to voters depend on the number of options as well as their characteristics (Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). Whereas the characteristics of the options affect the magnitude of punishment for undemocratic behavior, the number of options offered by the party system determines to whom voters defect.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Background Attributes of All Candidates

As mentioned in the article, I constructed the background attributes of each candidate—party, age, gender, and policy—in the experiments on the basis of real-world contests in 18 English constituencies, which—in that order in terms of task 1-18—are Manchester Central, Lincoln, Hazel Grove, Kingswood, Knowsley, Reigate, Oxford East, Liverpool Wavertree, Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Thurrock, Birmingham Selly Oak, Wansbeck, Tatton, Blaydon, Southampton Test, Bath, Bermondsey and Old Southwark, and Kingston and Surbiton. For ethical reasons, I never displayed any of the names of the constituencies to the respondents. Each constituency and candidate therefore appeared as hypothetical to the respondents, and none of the candidates or constituencies were possible to identify.

Table A1 in this appendix shows the background attributes assigned to each of the candidates. Each policy position—which differ in extremity—has been endorsed by the relevant candidate contesting in the 2019 General Election in the given constituency. I made sure to pick constituencies that did not generate strong differences in age and gender between the candidates from the different parties in the aggregate. The mean age of Labour candidates is 51 years, whereas the mean ages for Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are 44 and 49, respectively. 56% of the Labour candidates are males, whereas 61% of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are males.

Appendix B: Results Split by Partisanship

In this appendix, I split the original results by Conservatives and Labour identifiers. Figure B1 shows the effects of undemocratic behavior and number of parties on support for in-partisans—thus corresponding to the original Figure 3—whereas Figure B2 corresponds to Figure 4 and employs support for the out-partisan, the Liberal Democrat, and abstaining as dependent variables. Figure B1 demonstrates that the rejection of the theoretical expectation holds across partisanship: Neither Labour identifiers nor Conser-

Table A1: Background Attributes of All Candidates.

Task and Party	Age	Gender	Policy
1: Labour	45	Female	Against reducing social housing benefits
1: Conservatives	40	Male	Prioritise more jobs over education benefits
1: Liberal Democrats	53	Male	Protect relationship to the EU
2: Labour	60	Female	Increase investment in health care
2: Conservatives	51	Male	Increase transport investment
2: Liberal Democrats	49	Female	Boost efforts to attract businesses
3: Labour	53	Male	Against privatisation of public services
3: Conservatives	32	Male	Against more EU integration
3: Liberal Democrats	52	Female	Improve road safety by speed limits
4: Labour	49	Female	Against oil and gas exploration in the North Sea
4: Conservatives	38	Male	Reduce funding of local government
4: Liberal Democrats	57	Female	Prevent local school closings
5: Labour	70	Male	Increase taxes to fund the NHS
5: Conservatives	48	Female	Encourage women's representation in politics
5: Liberal Democrats	44	Male	Protect businesses from consequences due to Brexit
6: Labour	69	Female	Increase investment in renewable energy sources
6: Conservatives	59	Female	Supports legalisation of cannabis
6: Liberal Democrats	47	Male	Boost international cooperation
7: Labour	41	Female	Increase corporation tax
7: Conservatives	39	Male	Increase investment in technology to fight global warming
7: Liberal Democrats	57	Male	Prioritise climate as most important issue
8: Labour	47	Female	Increase number of social care workers
8: Conservatives	52	Female	Improve economy through increased trade
8: Liberal Democrats	67	Male	Improve quality and quantity of housing locally
9: Labour	25	Male	Increase efforts to prevent hate crime
9: Conservatives	55	Male	Increase funding of police
9: Liberal Democrats	47	Female	Stop cuts to local school funding
10: Labour	52	Male	More police on the streets
10: Conservatives	50	Female	Strengthen provisions for single-sex spaces
10: Liberal Democrats	60	Male	Increase investment in education
11: Labour	64	Female	Against cuts to policing
11: Conservatives	42	Male	Increase funding of local schools
11: Liberal Democrats	40	Male	Improve cycling infrastructure
12: Labour	56	Male	Oppose a second referendum on Brexit
12: Conservatives	26	Male	Increase investment in enterprise zones to create more jobs
12: Liberal Democrats	37	Male	Increase taxes for the richest
13: Labour	35	Female	Protect local public services against cuts
13: Conservatives	52	Male	Boost efforts to stop illegal immigration
13: Liberal Democrats	45	Male	Increase funding of hospitals
14: Labour	63	Female	Supports more EU integration
14: Conservatives	50	Male	Decrease power of trade unions
14: Liberal Democrats	31	Female	Works for more gender equality
15: Labour	69	Male	Increase commitment to lower carbon emissions
15: Conservatives	40	Male	Supports tax cuts
15: Liberal Democrats	35	Male	Improve economy to help the poor
16: Labour	34	Female	Oppose austerity and privatisation
16: Conservatives	51	Male	Improve transport and reduce pollution
16: Liberal Democrats	35	Female	End most carbon emissions by 2030
17: Labour	40	Male	Improve efforts to reduce homelessness
17: Conservatives	28	Male	Prioritise building more homes
17: Liberal Democrats	46	Female	Prevent police shortages
18: Labour	38	Female	Reinvest in local schools
18: Conservatives	41	Female	Support local businesses more
18: Liberal Democrats	53	Male	Establish basic income

vative identifiers punish undemocratic behavior more when there are three rather than two parties (i.e., all four interaction coefficients are insignificant). We may also note that both partisan groups punish undemocratic behavior to an approximately equal extent.

Figure B2 shows that the relocation of defection when the Liberal Democrats are included in the party system is strongest among Labour identifiers. The interaction term between undemocratic behavior and number of parties when employing out-partisan vote share as the dependent variable is strongly significant among Labour identifiers but insignificant—though keeping the direction—among Conservative identifiers. This makes sense theoretically, as the Liberal Democrats are a more palatable alternative for Labour identifiers than they are for Conservative identifiers (see also Figure 1 in the article).

Appendix C: Punishment of Out-partisan Undemocratic Behavior

This appendix shows the effects of out-partisan undemocratic behavior, which give us a category for comparison and sense of how much voters sanction undemocratic in-partisan behavior.

Mirroring Figure 3, Figure C1 therefore shows the vote shares for democratic and undemocratic out-partisan candidates across party system conditions in the upper panel and effects of undemocratic behavior and interaction with the number of parties in the lower panel. The main takeaway from Figure B1 is that voters punish out-partisans much less than in-partisans for undemocratic behavior, plausibly because they hold out-partisans in low esteem regardless of whether they violate democratic principles (see also the original Figure 1). Whereas Figure 3 shows that voters punish in-partisan undemocratic behavior by approximately 12-17 percentage points, Figure C1 shows that voters approximately punish out-partisans by 4-7 percentage points. The differences in effects of in-partisan and out-partisan undemocratic behavior are statistically significant on the 0.001-level in both designs. This informs us that the sanction on in-partisans for violating democratic principles is quite large. Figure C1 also shows that punishment of out-partisan undemocratic behavior—regardless of the design and just like in-partisan

Figure B1: Results from the original Figure 3 split by partisanship.



Figure B2: Results from the original Figure 4 split by partisanship.

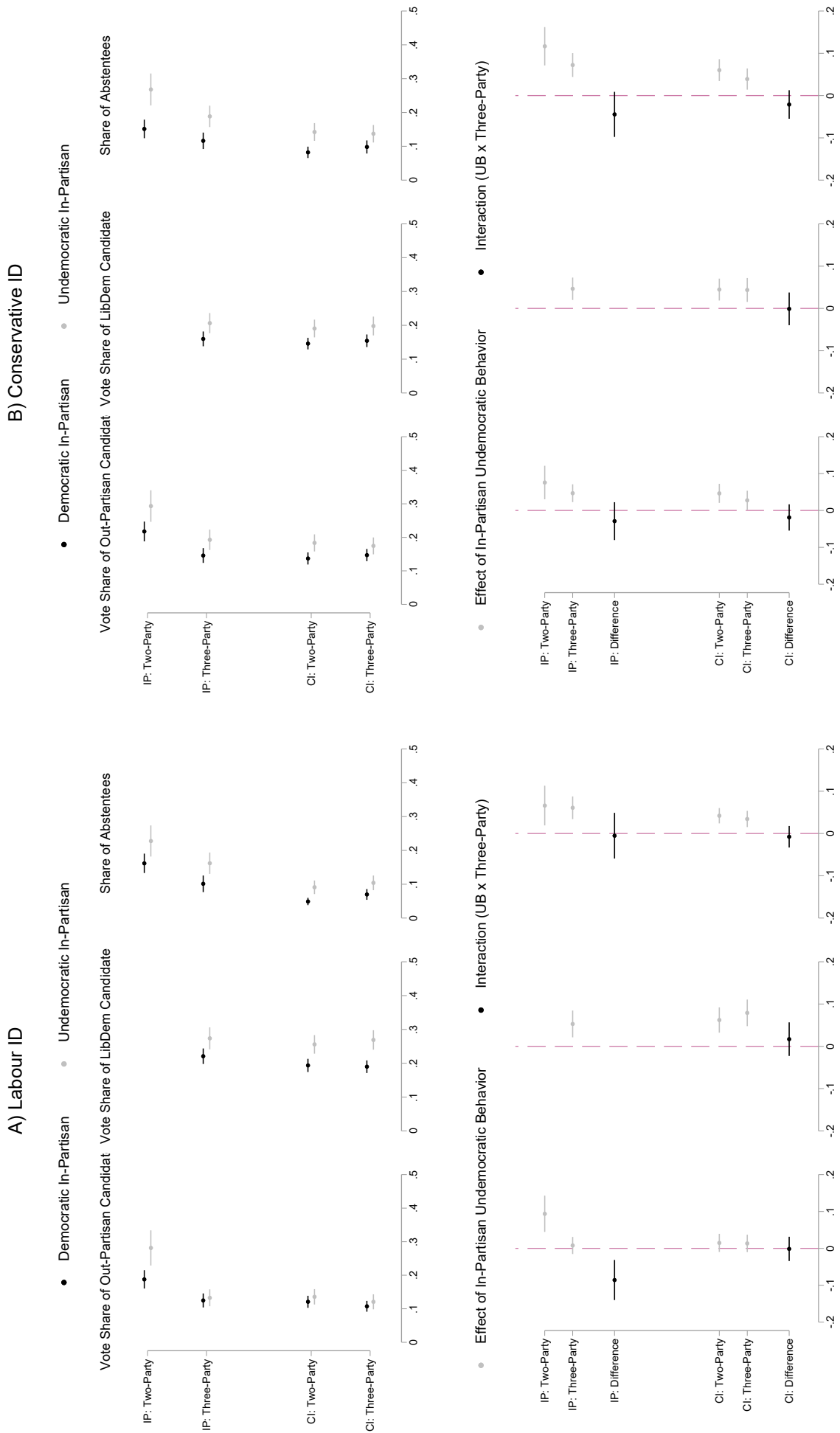
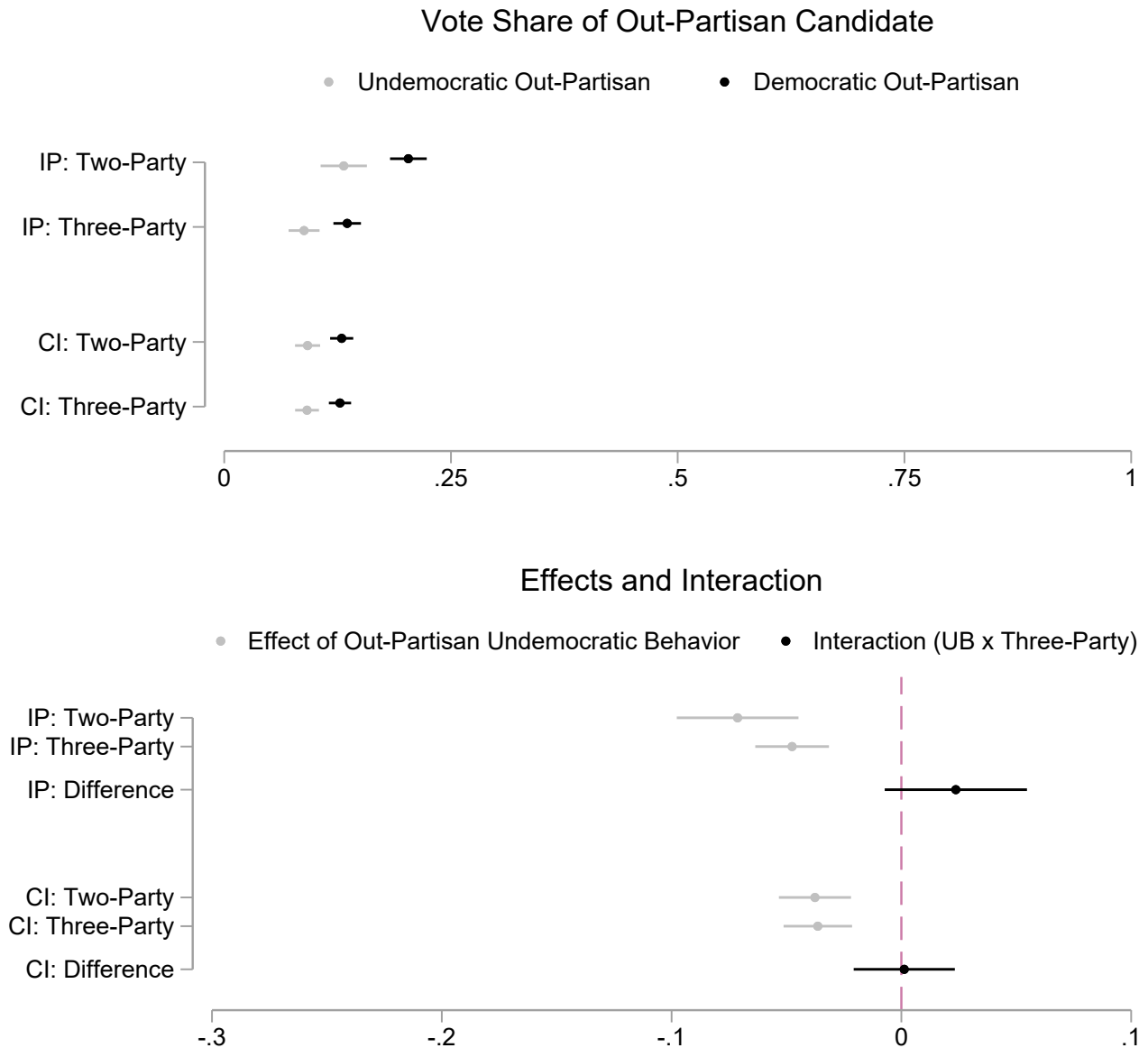


Figure C1: The upper panel shows vote shares of undemocratic and democratic out-partisan candidates in two- and three-party scenarios across the increase-in-profiles (IP) and constituency-information (CI) designs. The lower panel shows the effects of out-partisan undemocratic behavior and the interactions with the number of (effective) parties.



undemocratic behavior—do not change much between two- and three-party scenarios.

Appendix D: Task Effects

This appendix explores whether there are any task effects in the main finding related to the rejection of the theoretical expectation—that is, whether the lack of difference in the

extent to which voters punish undemocratic behavior across treatment conditions varies across the 18 tasks. Figure D1 shows the effects of undemocratic behavior in both designs as well as the effect of the party systems treatment on the expected winning chances of the Liberal Democrats in the constituency-information design across tasks. We could, for example, be worried that the absence of difference in punishment of in-partisan undemocratic behavior across conditions is driven by the amount of tasks (i.e., the differences in effects of undemocratic behavior and the effectiveness of the constituency-information treatment decrease toward zero as the tasks progress).

Figure D1 shows that we need not be worried: The effects of undemocratic behavior stay below zero and the differences in effects between the two- and three-party conditions fluctuate unsystematically throughout the tasks. Moreover, the effect of the constituency-information treatment—which is statistically significant on the 0.001 level and substantially amounts to 4.3 percentage points on average, as described in the article—on the perceived winning chances of the Liberal Democrats fluctuates unsystematically throughout the tasks. I therefore find no evidence of task effects in the experiments.

Appendix E: Robustness to Dropping Absentees

In the original specifications, I include absentee votes. This appendix examines the sensitivity of the results to this decision by coding absentee votes as missing and re-running the analyses behind Figures 3-4 with this change. Figures E1-E2 show the results with the same setup as in the original figures, except for the fact that the effects of undemocratic behavior on abstaining of course are absent.

Figure E1 shows that the vote shares for undemocratic and democratic in-partisans and effects of undemocratic behavior across the party system treatments are similar to in the original results. The degree to which voters punish in-partisans for behaving undemocratically is largely unchanged and shifting from two-party to three-party scenarios do not increase this punishment in neither design.

Figure E2 corroborates the finding—judging from the lower left panel—that de-

Figure D1: Differences in effects of undemocratic behavior (both designs) and manipulation of the effective number of parties (only the constituency-information design) across the 18 tasks displayed to the respondents.

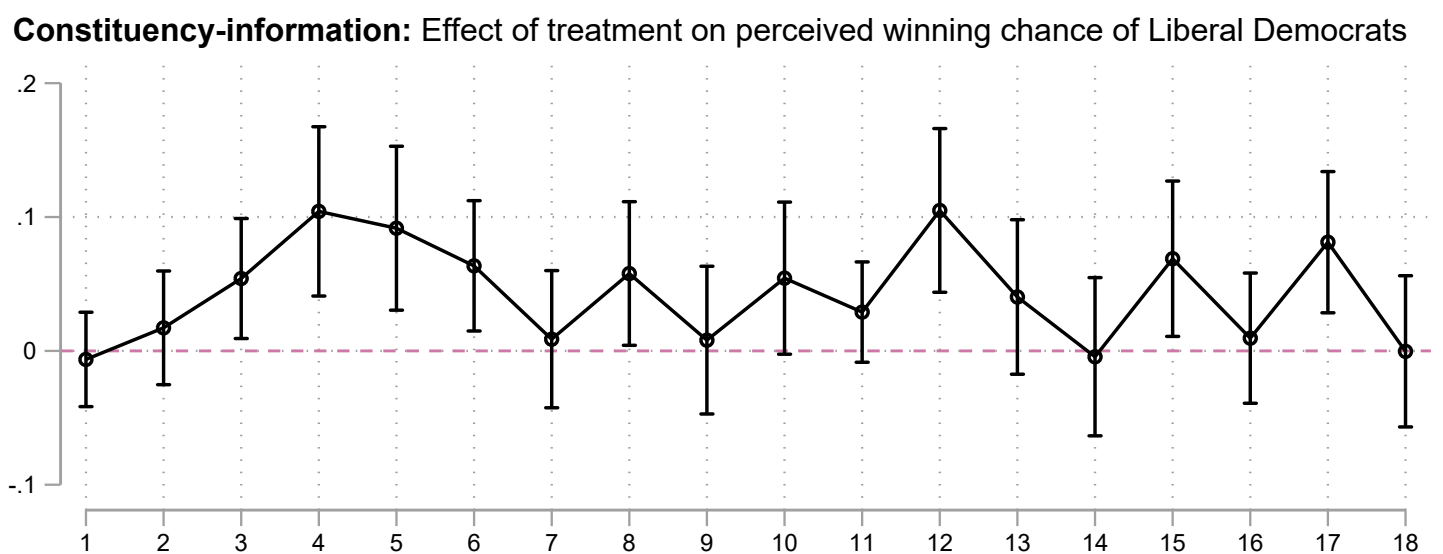
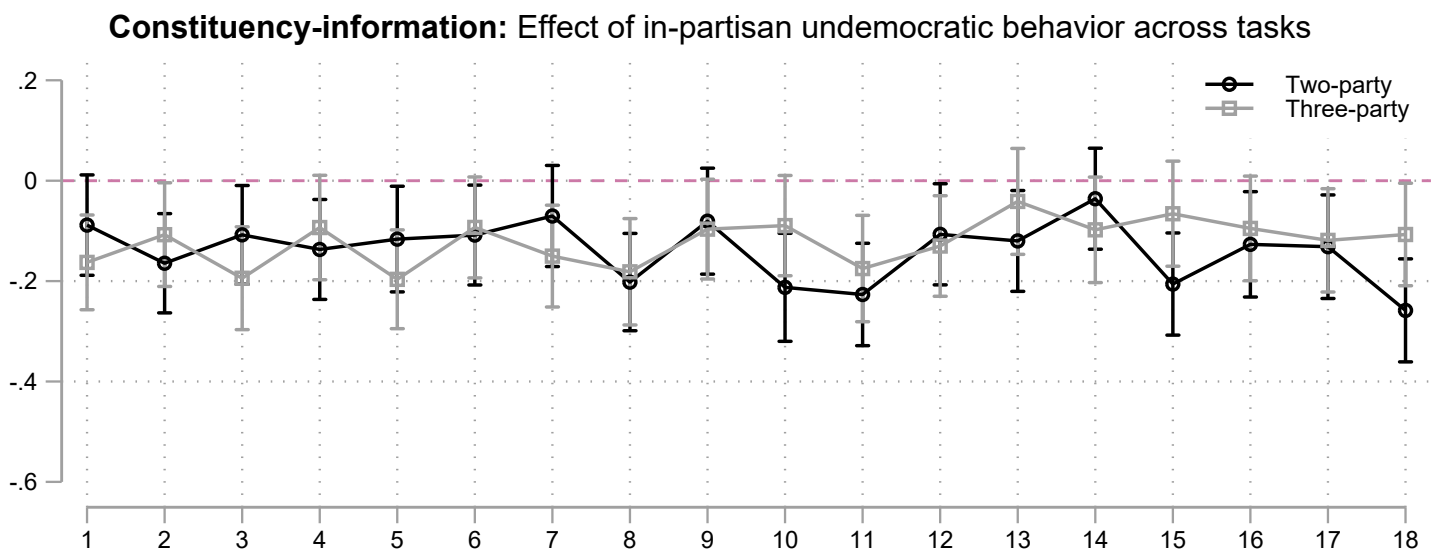
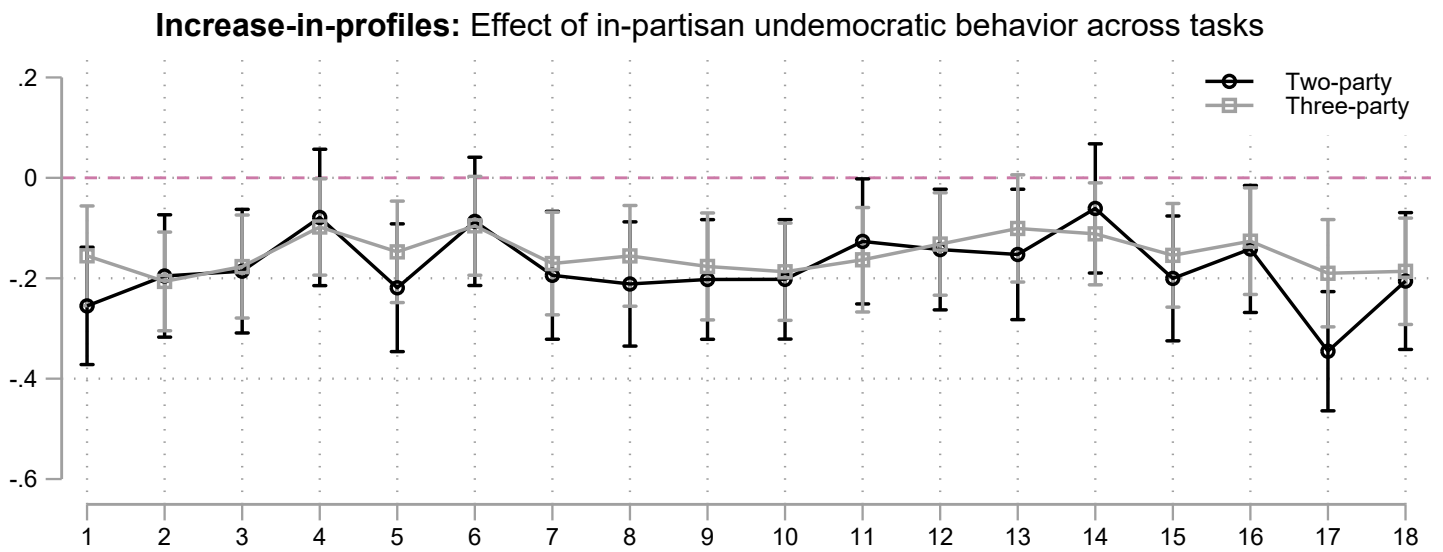
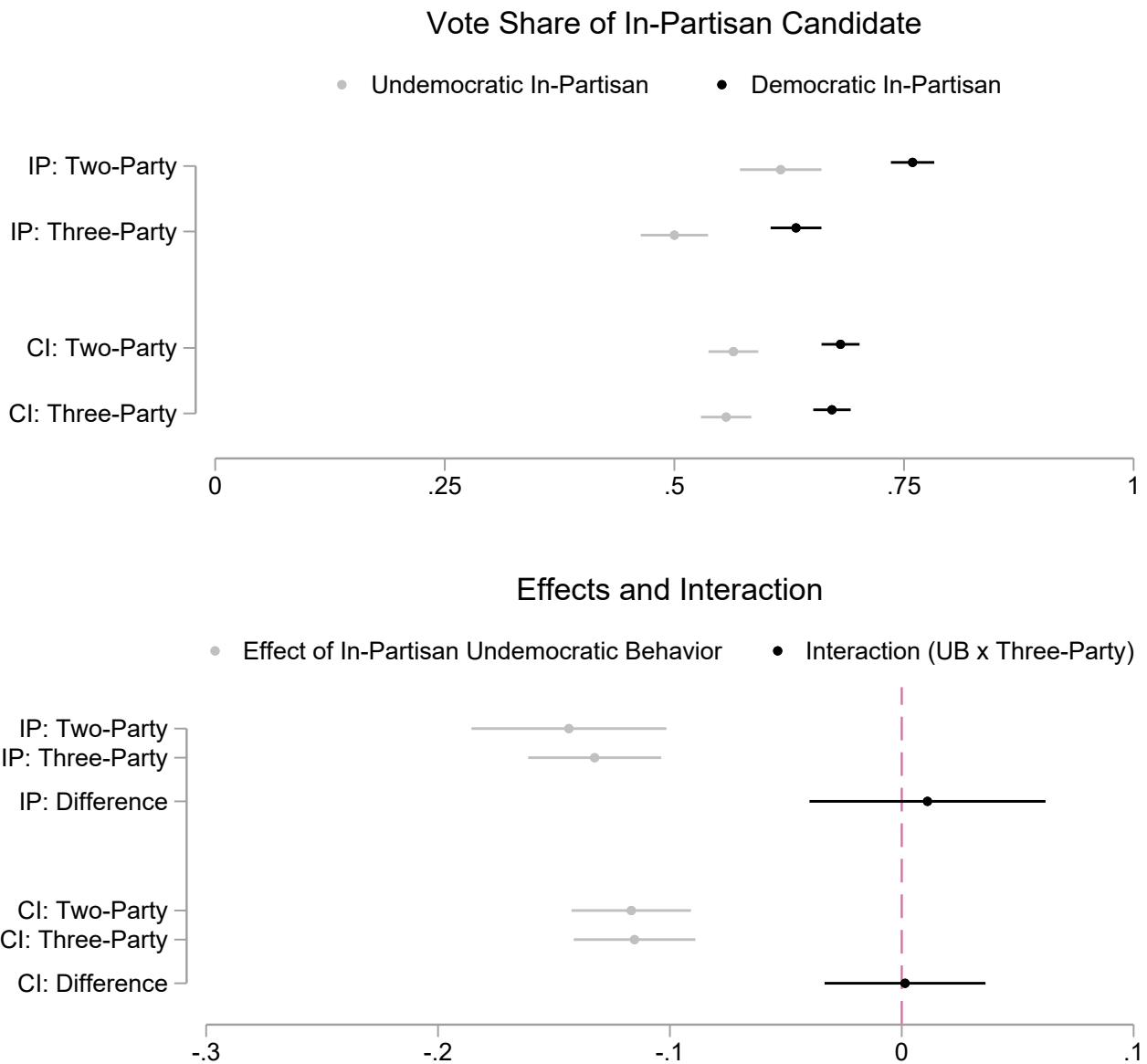
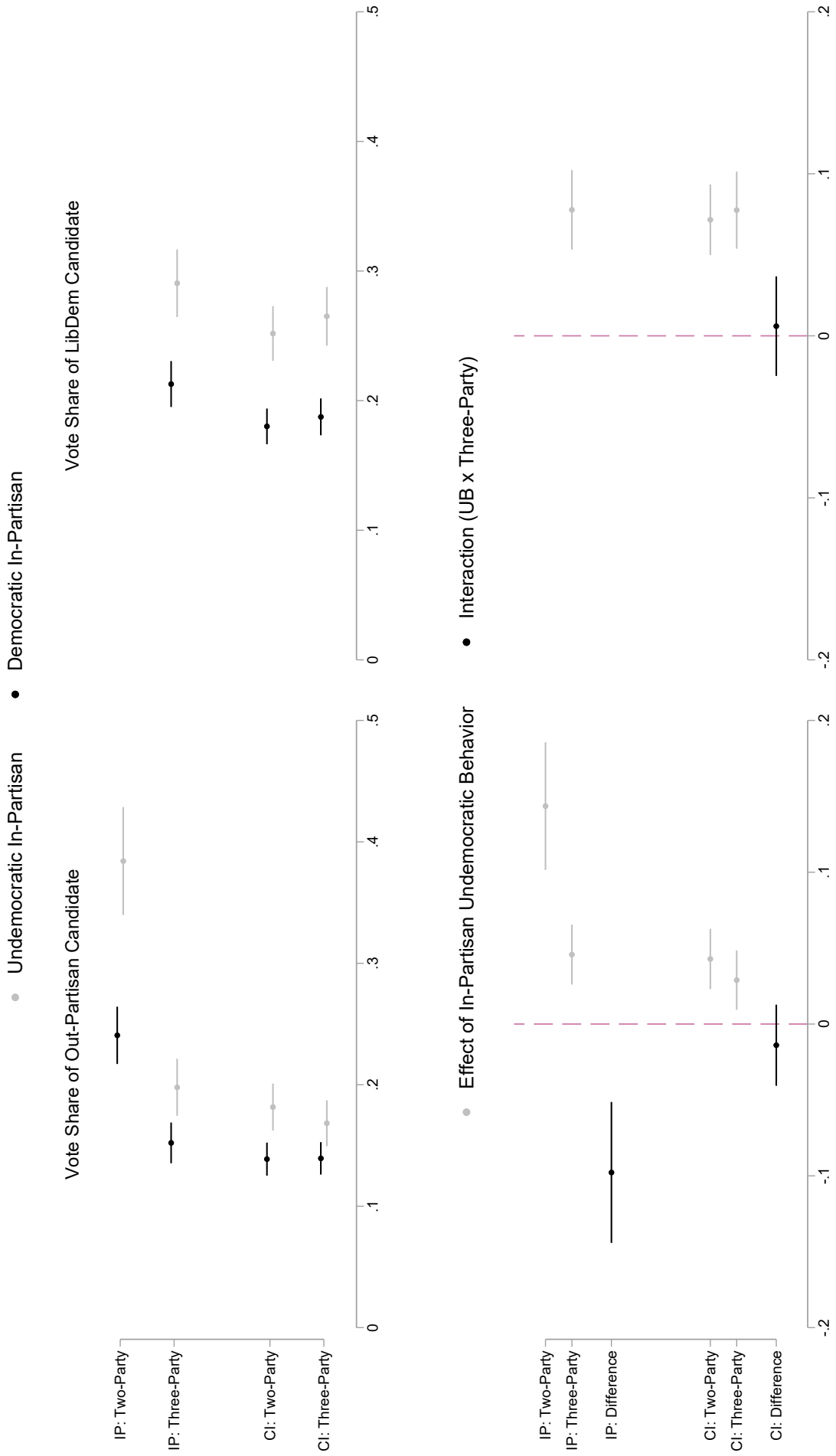


Figure E1: Results from the original Figure 3 when dropping absentees.



fection to the out-party as a consequence of undemocratic behavior by the in-party decreases as soon as a Liberal Democrat is included in the scenarios. The coefficient is in fact almost twice as large as in the original specifications, and also statistically significant among Conservative identifiers (not shown in the figure), although still larger among Labour identifiers. Figure E2 also replicates the finding that defection to neither the out-party nor the Liberal Democrats is affected by whether the Liberal Democrats are an effective third party.

Figure E2: Results from the original Figure 4 when dropping absentees.



Appendix F: Robustness to Splitting the Undemocratic Behavior-measure

In this appendix, I test to what extent the findings hold across the different undemocratic behaviors included. These undemocratic behaviors—which are illustrated in Table 1 along with their democratic counterparts to which I compare each behavior here—include proposing to reduce polling stations in areas supporting the out-party, legitimizing vote buying, proposing to restrict media supporting the out-party, legitimizing journalist harassment, encouraging violence, and proposing to pack the courts to the benefit of the party.

Figures F1-F2 show the tests related to the two main findings, namely, in-partisan undemocratic behavior is not punished more in three-party scenarios, whereas three-party scenarios—irrespective of third party effectiveness—relocate defection to the Liberal Democrats. Just like in the original Figure 3, Figure F1 shows that the effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior remain largely unchanged from the two-party to the three-party scenarios. Importantly, none of the twelve interaction terms between undemocratic behavior and the party systems treatments are statistically significant. Moreover, although the effects differ with legitimizing vote buying producing the strongest effects, we see that all six undemocratic behaviors affect in-partisan vote shares negatively.

Figure F2 corroborates the finding that defection to the out-party decreases in scenarios where the Liberal Democrats are included. Focusing on the increase-in-profiles design, some decreases in defection to the out-party are larger than others across the six behavior pairs. The interaction terms are statistically significant on the 0.05-level for two of the behaviors—reduce stations and vote buying—and insignificant yet keeping the same direction on the remaining three behaviors. Given the substantial decrease in statistical power in each test, this is to be expected.

Figure F1: Effects of different undemocratic behaviors and their interaction effects with the number of parties on in-partisan vote shares.

● Effect of In-Partisan UB on In-Partisan's Vote Share ● Interaction (UB x Three-Party)

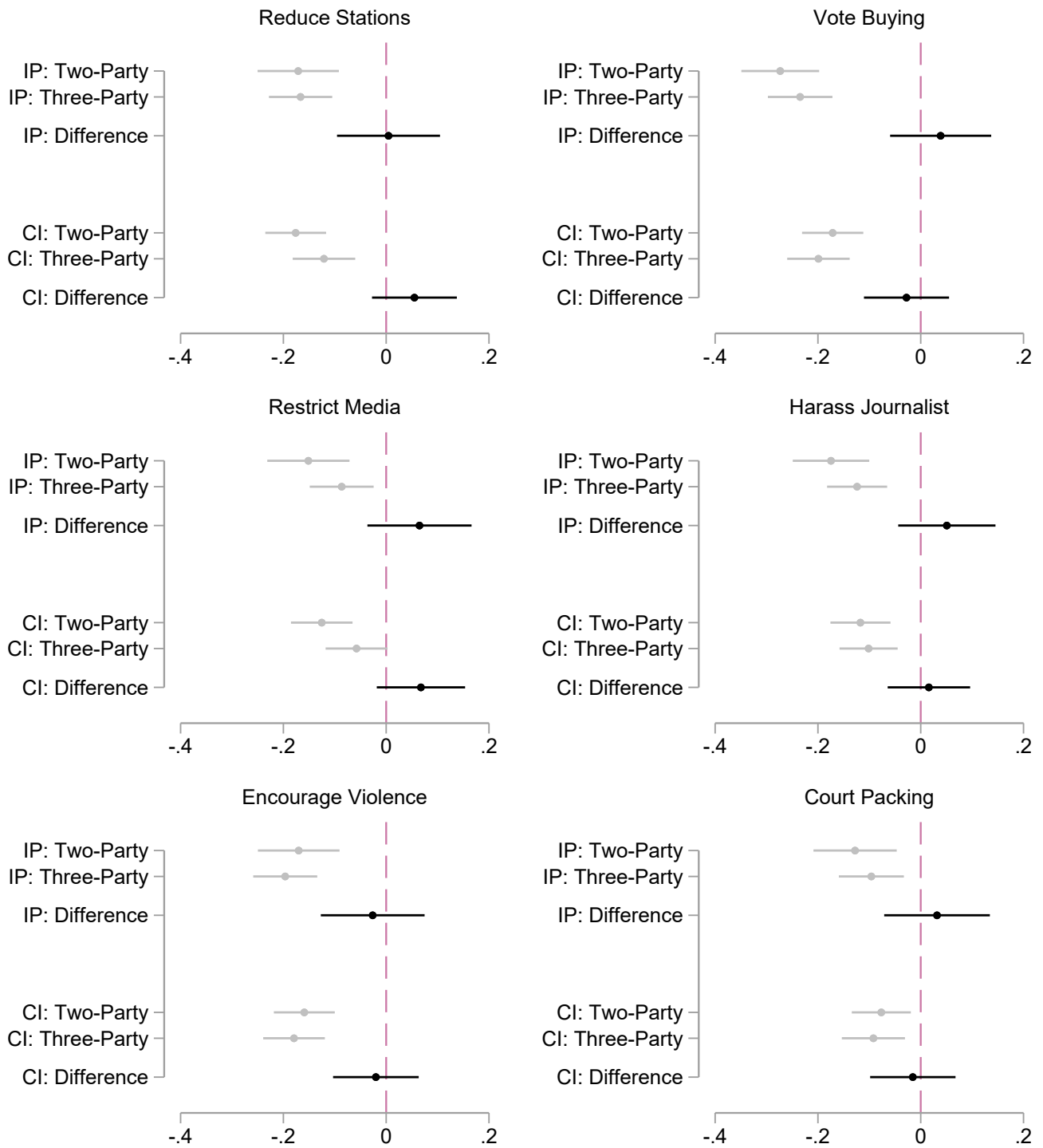
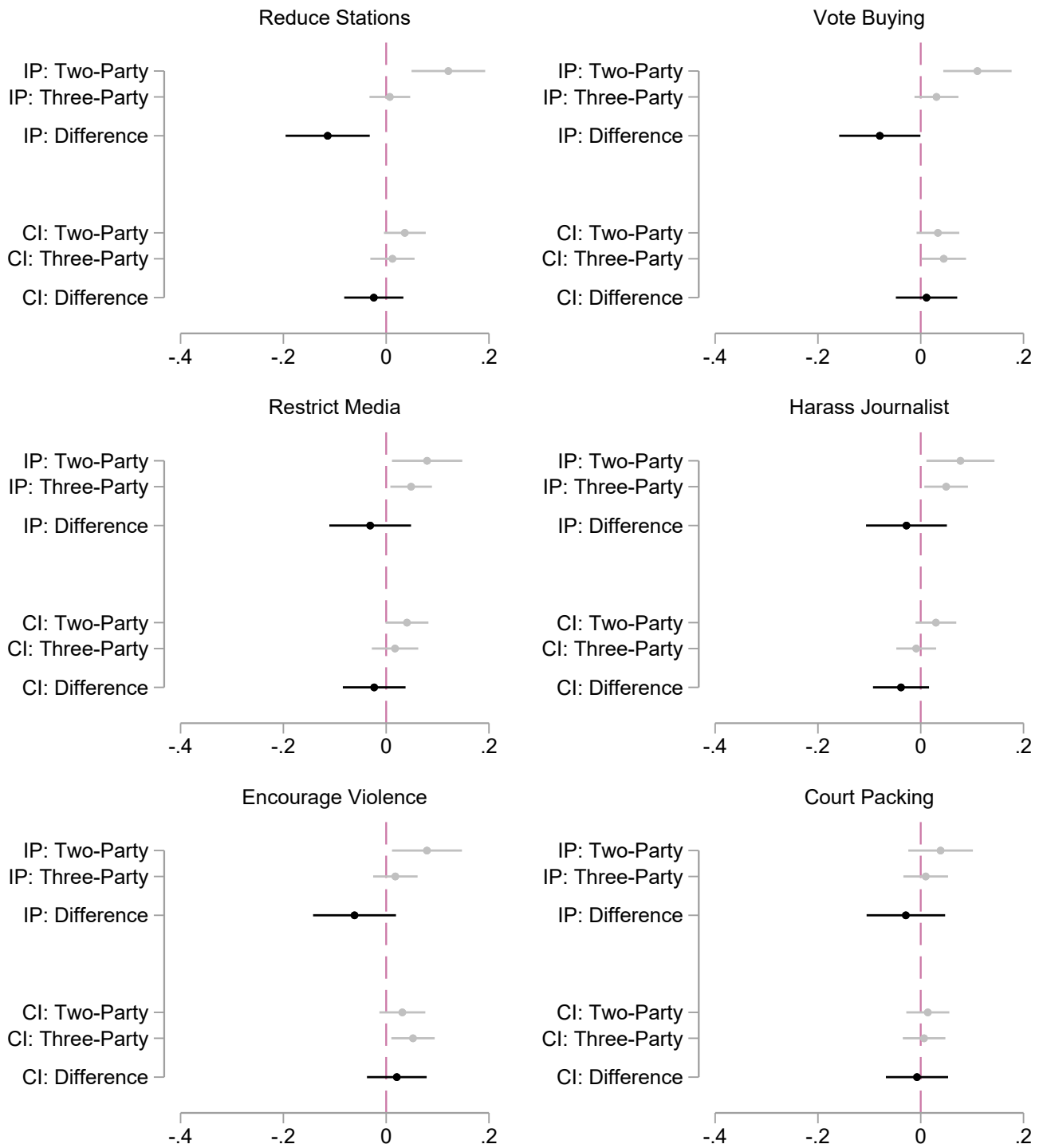


Figure F2: Effects of different undemocratic behaviors and their interaction effects with the number of parties on out-partisan vote shares.

- Effect of In-Partisan UB on Out-Partisan's Vote Share
- Interaction (UB x Three-Party)



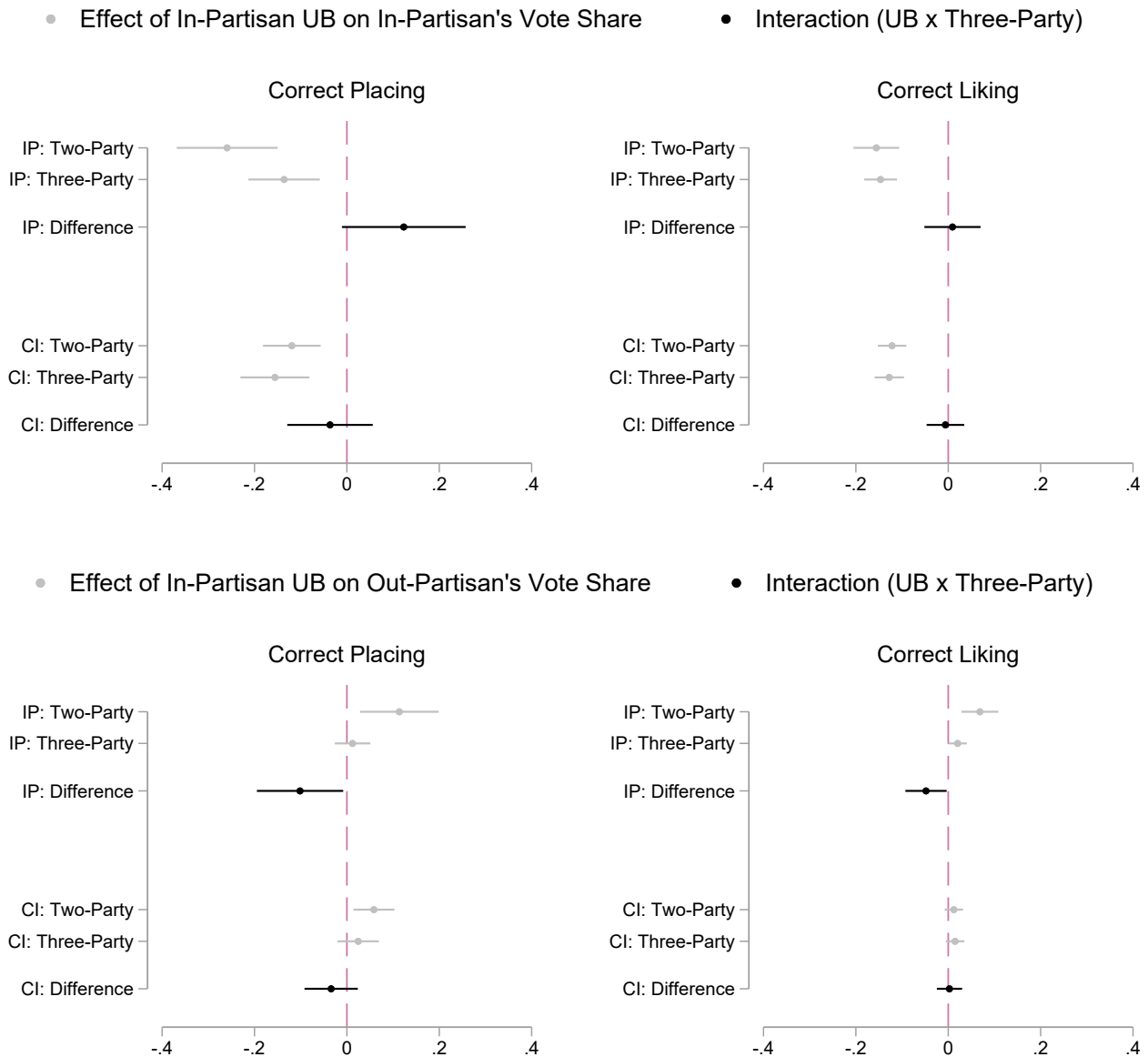
Appendix G: Robustness to Excluding Respondents Misplacing or 'Misliking' the Parties

The theoretical argument and test of it in the article hinge on the assumption that partisans are able to identify the placement of the three parties from left to right and that they like their in-party the most, their out-party the least, and the Liberal Democrats somewhere in between. Figure 1 shows that this assumption holds in the aggregate. Nevertheless, one could speculate about whether the lack of difference in punishment of in-partisan undemocratic behavior is driven by individual respondents who do not live up to the assumption. Therefore, I test whether the results related to punishment of in-partisan undemocratic behavior and defection to the out-party across two- and three-party conditions change when excluding such respondents.

Figure G1 shows the results for in- and out-party vote shares when either excluding respondents who misplace the parties (i.e., they do not place Labour to the left of the Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Democrats to the left of the Conservatives) or 'mislike' the parties (i.e., they do not like the in-party more than the Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Democrats more than the out-party). As the figure reveals, the number of respondents who misplace are larger than the number of respondents who 'mislike', as the confidence intervals expand more when excluding respondents who misplace. The samples excluding misplacers are reduced to approximately 1,500-2,000 observations, whereas the samples excluding 'mislikers' are reduced to approximately 8,000-9,000 observations (out of 14,000 in the original specifications). This is not a surprise, as placing parties from left to right is a substantially harder—and potentially more confusing—exercise than liking/disliking parties.

The increase in statistical uncertainty aside, we see that the results do not change substantially when excluding respondents who misplace or 'mislike'. Punishment of in-partisan undemocratic behavior generally does not change between two- and three-party conditions. We see some evidence of the effect shrinking in the three-party scenario in the increase-in-profiles design for correct placement (upper left panel), but the difference between treatment conditions is statistically uncertain ($p = 0.071$) and runs counter to

Figure G1: Effects of in-partisan undemocratic behavior and its interaction effects with the number of parties on in-partisan and out-partisan vote shares when excluding respondents who misplace or 'mislike' the parties.



the theoretical explanation (suggesting that three-party scenarios decreases punishment of undemocratic behavior), which means that it does not contradict the rejection of the expectation. Meanwhile, as in the original results, defection to the out-party decreases significantly when the Liberal Democrats are included (both relevant interaction terms in the increase-in-profiles design are significant on the 0.05-level despite the increase in statistical uncertainty). It therefore seems safe to conclude that the original results are not driven by misplacers or 'mislikers'.

Appendix H: Robustness to Using Rating Outcome

As mentioned in the article, I included a supplementary rating outcome in the increase-in-profiles design. This appendix examines to what extent the results related to this design are robust to employing this alternative outcome. The question reads “To what extent do you like or dislike each of the candidates?” with the options “Dislike very much” (1), “Dislike somewhat” (2), “Neutral” (3), “Like somewhat” (4), and “Like very much” (5).

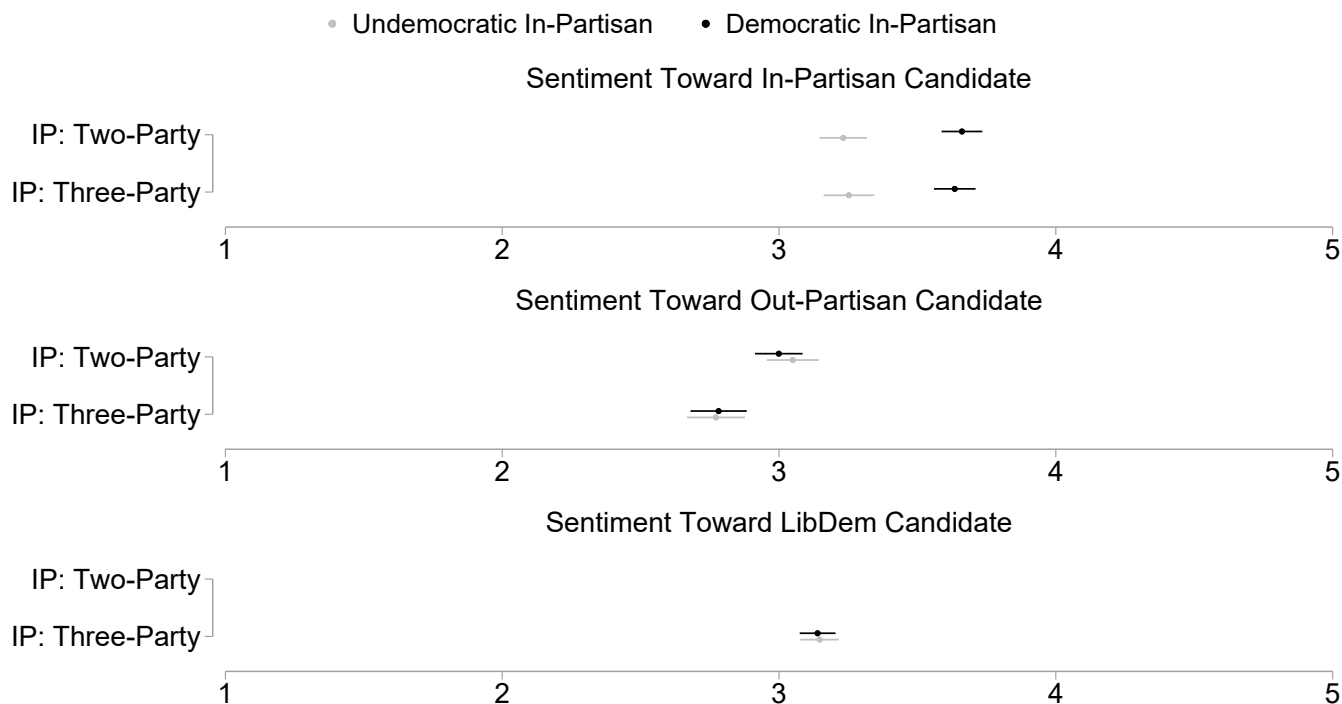
Figure H1 shows the consequences of in-partisan undemocratic behavior for the sentiment toward the in-partisan candidate, the out-partisan candidate, and the Liberal Democrat. We see that in-partisan undemocratic behavior affects sentiment toward the in-partisan candidate negatively, but the differences in marginal means do not change between the two- and three-party scenarios. This is similar to in the original results. We also see that in-partisan undemocratic behavior does not affect sentiment toward the out-partisan or the Liberal Democrat. This does not imply a deviation from the original results, as the rating outcome is different in the sense that it does not force the respondents to adjust their support for other candidates when they withdraw support from in-partisans. Nevertheless, it is substantially interesting that although votes shift as demonstrated by the forced choice outcomes, sentiment toward other candidates remain unaffected by in-partisan undemocratic behavior.

Appendix I: Statistical Power

I included a power analysis of the test of the main quantity of interest—the 2x2 interaction between undemocratic behavior and the (effective) number of parties—in the pre-registration. I simply repeat the power analysis here, as the number of observations and respondents landed as expected. I use the power tool supplied by Schuessler and Freitag (2020). The power analysis is especially important to revisit, because the main test turned out as statistically insignificant.

The power analysis shows that interaction effects of 4.75 percentage points are captured with 80% power ($\alpha = 0.05$). This means that increases (and decreases) in the negative effects of undemocratic behavior between party systems conditions of 4.75

Figure H1: Robustness of results in increase-in-profiles design to using rating outcome: Liking of the in-partisan, the out-partisan, and the Liberal Democrat when the in-partisan either behaves democratically compliant or undemocratically, split by partisanship and pooled.



percentage points are captured with 80% power. This also means that effects differing from zero in either direction by 4.75 percentage points are rejected with 80% power (i.e., differences from differences from zero of 4.75 percentage points are captured with 80% power). Importantly, this means that even rather small interaction effects would most likely have been captured by the main test, while we confidently can reject that the true interaction effect is substantial.