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Abstract

This paper compares the “mental maps” of redistribution among politicians and citizens across seven parliaments, using original in-person surveys of sitting MPs and nationally representative citizen samples. Fairness beliefs and ideology are the strongest correlates of support for redistribution in both groups, while misperceptions of wealth concentration matter for citizens but much less for politicians. A central finding is that politicians hold markedly more polarized views on redistribution than citizens, including within the same party families. We also find systematic elite–voter gaps: left MPs are more supportive than their voters (notably on inheritance taxation), whereas right/liberal MPs are less supportive than theirs. These patterns point to a representation concern and a bargaining space among elites that is narrower than in the electorate.

Key words: Preferences for redistribution, polarization, politicians, fairness beliefs, inequality perceptions, wealth taxes

JEL classification: H24, D31, D63

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1 Introduction

Economic redistribution policies are at the centre of societal debate, reflecting divergent views about the origins and acceptability of inequality. Preferences for redistribution are shaped by perceived levels of inequality, fairness beliefs about the origin of income, as well as by altruism, risk preferences, and political ideology. Recent evidence on rising wealth concentration and persistently low intergenerational mobility has intensified discussions about the role of redistributive tax policies in addressing these challenges, particularly introducing wealth taxes.¹ A crucial determinant of the feasibility and effectiveness of such policies is the extent to which they are supported by the public and endorsed by political elites.

Without sufficient societal and political support, redistributive policies may fail to be implemented or sustained. It is therefore essential to understand not only citizens' preferences for redistribution but also those of the political elites who design and approve such policies. In particular, examining whether and how politicians' preferences differ from those of the general public can shed light on the political feasibility of redistribution. As emphasized by [Stantcheva \(2021\)](#), this involves comparing the “mental maps” that underlie attitudes toward redistribution—namely, how individuals perceive the causes and consequences of inequality and the role of government intervention.

This study investigates preferences for redistributive policies among members of parliament (MPs) in seven national or regional parliaments.² Drawing on original surveys fielded among MPs and representative samples of citizens, we compare the “mental maps” of economic redistribution held by politicians and the public. Specifically, we analyse attitudes toward several redistributive policies and how they relate to fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, political ideology, and demographic characteristics. Unlike many elite surveys conducted by letter, email, or phone, we collected MP responses in person, ensuring that the measures reflect politicians' own views rather than those of staffers.

By comparing how the drivers of redistributive preferences differ between politicians and citizens, we seek to explain why broad public support for redistribution does not always translate

¹For wealth inequality trends, see [Alvaredo et al. \(2017\)](#), [Piketty \(2014\)](#), [Atkinson et al. \(2011\)](#), [Saez and Zucman \(2020\)](#), and [Zucman \(2019\)](#). Similarly, [Nolan et al. \(2020\)](#), [Alvaredo et al. \(2017\)](#), and [Cowell et al. \(2019\)](#) report a sizeable contribution of inheritances to private wealth and inequality transmission across generations. For discussions about the introduction of wealth taxes, see [Saez and Zucman \(2019\)](#), [Piketty \(2020\)](#), [Landais et al. \(2020\)](#), [IMF \(2020\)](#), [IMF \(2021\)](#), [Advani et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Scheuer and Slemrod \(2021\)](#).

²These include the parliaments of Australia, Belgium-Flanders, Belgium-Wallonia, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Norway, and Sweden. The two Belgian parliaments are independent institutions, each representing and legislating for one of the country's two linguistically and politically distinct regions.

into more extensive redistribution or lower inequality. Prior work shows that higher inequality need not raise demand for redistribution, due to beliefs in upward mobility ([Benabou and Ok, 2001](#)), misperceptions about overall income inequality and one's own position ([Hvidberg et al., 2023](#); [Cruces et al., 2013](#); [Karadja et al., 2017](#); [Fernandez-Albertos and Kuo, 2015](#)), inaccurate views of tax incidence ([Kuziemko et al., 2015](#); [Sides, 2016](#); [Fisman et al., 2020](#); [Bastani and Waldenström, 2021](#)), risk attitudes ([Gärtner et al., 2017](#)), among others. Complementing these explanations, our central result is that politicians are markedly more polarized than citizens in their redistribution preferences. This narrows the bargaining set among elites relative to what public opinion would sustain, making compromise on redistributive policy less likely. Notably, these gaps appear across all party families.

Recent evidence on American legislators' voting behaviour by [Carreri and Teso \(2023\)](#) shows that preferences for redistribution are more polarized along party lines among politicians than among citizens. Their findings also point out that personal exposure to economic shocks during the impressionable years (ages 18–25) is a key driver of this gap. Similarly, [Sevenans et al. \(2024\)](#) find that politicians in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, and Germany systematically misperceive citizens' preferences across a range of socio-economic policies, with their estimations more closely aligned with the preferences of the rich than those of poorer people. For Swiss legislators specifically, [Helfer et al. \(2024\)](#) report that politicians tend to oppose redistribution more strongly than the public and are more likely to view inequality as a fair outcome. Ideological orientation plays a central role in explaining this polarization, even more so than differences in social class.

Democratic systems rest on the principle of representation, whereby elected politicians are expected to reflect the policy preferences of the electorate. Accordingly, one would expect a certain degree of alignment between the preferences of citizens and those of their political representatives.³ Yet, recent studies have documented substantial divergences in policy preferences between politicians and citizens. For example, [Sheffer et al. \(2018\)](#) find that politicians in Belgium, Canada, and Israel tend to favour more status quo-oriented policies than citizens, are more susceptible to framing effects and exhibit a lower time discount than their constituents. Similarly, [Ågren et al. \(2007\)](#) show that Swedish politicians exhibit stronger preferences for higher spending on local welfare services.

³It is important to note, however, that some politicians may prioritize the preferences of their party's voters over those of the general public, as assumed in models of representation such as [Pierce \(1999\)](#) and [Dudzińska et al. \(2014\)](#).

A related strand of research in political science investigates how accurately politicians perceive the preferences of citizens and party supporters. Several studies find that politicians are not necessarily skilled public opinion readers, although they tend to be slightly more accurate in estimating the preferences of their own party’s voters (Sheffer et al., 2018; Walgrave and Joly, 2018; Broockman and Skovron, 2018; Kalla and Porter, 2021; Walgrave et al., 2023). The central hypothesis in this literature is that misperceptions of public opinion may discourage politicians from pursuing certain policies, thereby weakening the mechanisms of democratic representation. Moreover, studies such as Bartels (2016), Gilens (2005), Gilens (2011), Kelly and Enns (2010), and Pereira (2021) suggest that politicians may be more responsive to the preferences of the rich, especially with respect to redistributive issues. These findings are consistent with politico-economic models such as the “one dollar, one vote” equilibrium, in which political influence increases with economic resources (Karabarbounis, 2011).

By leveraging survey data from sitting members of national parliaments and representative samples of the general public, this paper examines the extent to which redistributive preferences are driven by fairness beliefs about the determinants of income (effort and luck), perceived wealth inequality, and ideological orientation. We document that fairness beliefs and political ideology are the substantively strongest predictors of support for redistribution in both groups, while inequality perceptions—especially misperceptions about wealth concentration—also play an important role.

Our findings highlight meaningful differences between politicians and citizens. Politicians are more ideologically polarized in their redistributive preferences and place greater weight on effort-based beliefs, whereas citizens are more influenced by the belief that luck determines economic outcomes. We also show that political elites, even within the same party families, often express views more extreme than those of their voters, particularly on policies such as inheritance taxation. These differences persist even after conditioning on observable characteristics, suggesting the presence of systematic representational gaps. Our distributional analyses using polarization indices further confirm that redistributive preferences are significantly more polarized among politicians than among citizens.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the data sources, key variables, and empirical approach. Section 3 presents the main descriptive statistics and econometric findings. Section 4 examines the extent and sources of polarization in redistributive preferences. Section 5 concludes.

2 Data and methods

2.1 Surveys

We fielded surveys among citizens and politicians in seven parliaments (of six countries) between February 2022 and March 2023. The surveys are part of the POLPOP project, which investigates how public opinion shapes policymaking in 13 countries.⁴ We focus on the countries that fielded questions about attitudes towards economic redistribution, perceptions of inequality, and fairness beliefs. Thus, we have data for Australia, Belgium-Flanders, Belgium-Wallonia, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Norway, and Sweden.⁵ To examine politicians' attitudes towards redistribution, fairness beliefs and perceptions of inequality, we use a unique and extensive dataset based on face-to-face interviews with 606 elected national and regional politicians. This dataset represents one of the most comprehensive collections of interviews with political elites to date. The sample is broadly representative of the wider population of politicians in terms of gender, seniority and ideological orientation (see Lucas et al. 2024, for a detailed description of the sample composition). While response rates varied considerably across countries, they are in line with expectations from samples of politicians (Bailer, 2014). The overall number of completed surveys is exceptionally high for studies of active parliamentarians.

The elite surveys were organized and administered by each country team participating in the POLPOP project. The recruitment process involved inviting politicians to participate via email and telephone, offering them the opportunity to complete both an online survey and a

⁴POLPOP is an international collaboration examining elected politicians' opinions, perceptions, and evaluations in 13 countries. The project is led by Stefaan Walgrave (University of Antwerp) and supported by an ERC Advanced Grant (POLEVPOP, ID:101018105). In Australia, the project is led by Patrick Dumont (Australian National University), in Belgium (Flanders) by Stefaan Walgrave (University of Antwerp), in Francophone Belgium by Jean-Benoit Pilet and Nathalie Brack (Université Libre de Bruxelles), in Canada by Peter Loewen (Cornell University) and Jack Lucas (University of Calgary), in the Czech Republic by Ondrej Cisar (Charles University Prague), in Denmark by Anne Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen), in Germany by Christian Breunig (University of Konstanz) and Stefanie Bailer (University of Basel), in Israel by Lior Sheffer (Tel Aviv University) and Eran Amsalem (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), in Luxembourg by Javier Olivera (Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research), in the Netherlands by Rens Vliegthart (Wageningen University) and Marc Van de Wardt (Free University of Amsterdam), in Norway by Yvette Peters (University of Bergen), in Portugal by Miguel M. Pereira (University of Southern California) and Jorge Fernandes (University of Lisbon), in Sweden by Mikael Persson (University of Gothenburg), and in Switzerland by Frédéric Varone (University of Geneva) and Pirmin Bundi (University of Lausanne). Each country team obtained approval from their respective Research Ethics Boards to conduct the politician surveys.

⁵The citizen surveys were fielded between February and May 2022, while the elite surveys were fielded during March 2022 and March 2023. The countries surveyed are Australia (distinguishing the regions of Flanders and Wallonia), Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Sweden. For more details about the project, see <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/m2p/polpop>. Although the German survey included questions on fairness beliefs and preferences for redistribution, it did not include questions on perceived inequality. As a result, Germany is not part of our analytical sample for this study.

recorded interview. The survey comprised a 30-minute structured questionnaire, conducted in the presence of a local researcher –either in person or virtually– to ensure that the politician personally completed the survey rather than delegating the task to a member of their staff. This ensured that MPs –not staffers– answered and allowed real-time clarification, while preserving privacy: researchers could not see responses as they were entered. The primary dataset used in this study is based on identical questions administered to both elites and citizens, utilizing the same standardized Qualtrics platform to ensure comparability across groups.

To complement the data collected from politicians, online surveys of the general population were conducted in February/March 2022 in each country. The survey was designed to compare answers of citizens and politicians on various topics addressed in the POLPOP project. The citizen surveys were fielded using quota sampling applied to existing panels of subjects in each country (run by the survey firm Dynata). The initial sample size for our countries consisted of 15,183 individuals. To reduce the differences between the composition of the samples and the populations of the various countries, calibration weights were calculated. These weights were computed to match the (joint) distribution of age, gender, education, and party choice in the most recent national election observed in each country. No weights are calculated for respondents who had a missing value on one of these four variables, so that the citizen sample reduces to 13,418 citizens (see Table A-1).

2.2 Variables of interest

The surveys measured respondents’ support for economic redistribution –covering general redistribution and wealth taxation– on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, ..., 7 = Strongly agree). Our main outcomes are: *Incomered* (support for government measures to reduce income differences), *Wealthred* (reduce wealth differences), *Wealthtax* (introduce a tax on wealth above a threshold), and *Inheritax* (introduce a tax on inheritances above a threshold).⁶ We also construct *Avgindex*, a composite redistribution index equal to the average of the four standardized items, following Cruces et al. (2013). All outcomes are rescaled to the [0,1] interval.

Fairness beliefs are measured through individuals’ level of agreement with four statements, each assessed on a 1–7 Likert scale. We construct a *Luck belief index* to capture the view that

⁶Question wordings: “The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels”; “The government should take measures to reduce differences in wealth levels”; “A tax on wealth above a certain amount should be introduced”; “A tax on inheritances above a certain amount should be introduced”.

luck and circumstances are key determinants of economic success. This index is based on the standardized responses to the statements: “The rich are richer because they have had more luck in life” and “The rich are richer because they come from a wealthier family.” The standardized values are summed and rescaled to lie between 0 and 1. Similarly, we construct an *Effort belief index* to reflect the belief that effort and smart choices drive economic success. It is based on the standardized responses to: “The rich are richer because they have worked harder in life” and “The rich are richer because they have made smarter choices,” with the resulting index also normalized to the [0, 1] interval. We interpret that people with a higher score in *Luck belief index* may consider that inequality tends to be unfair, as it could be the product of luck and circumstances beyond the individual’s control. People with a higher score in *Effort belief index* may believe that the generation of inequality tends to be fair, as it is the result of effort and smart decision-making, i.e., being rich is not the product of chance, but is the result of individual choices.

We also construct a single composite index that captures a continuum between income generation beliefs, which we refer to as the *Fairness belief index*.⁷ Lower values indicate stronger beliefs that effort is the main driver of income; higher values indicate stronger beliefs that luck is the main driver; intermediate values reflect the view that both matter. Prior work shows that individuals tend to accept more inequality when it is attributed to performance rather than luck, with substantial variation within and across countries (e.g., [Almås et al., 2024](#); [Almås et al., 2020](#)). Because these beliefs shape the willingness to accept or resist inequality, they are central to understanding attitudes toward economic redistribution.

For inequality misperceptions, the individuals are asked to report the proportion of national wealth they think is owned by households located in the top 1%, and the bottom 50% of the distribution of wealth, which is similar to survey questions implemented in [Stantcheva \(2021\)](#). We compute the degree of misperception by subtracting the actual wealth share from the perceived wealth share. For the actual values of the top 1% and bottom 50% wealth shares, we use estimates of wealth concentration for 2022 from the World Inequality Database. The alternative measures of inequality misperceptions are:

$$bias1 = top1^{perceived} - top1^{actual} \quad (1)$$

⁷The index is constructed in three steps: (1) each of the four fairness belief statements is regressed on the other three, and the predicted values are obtained; (2) the predicted values for the two statements related to luck and circumstances are summed, and the predicted values for the two statements related to effort and smart choices are subtracted; (3) the resulting score is normalized to range between 0 and 1.

$$bias50 = bot50^{perceived} - bot50^{actual} \quad (2)$$

A positive (negative) value of *bias1* indicates a positive (negative) bias, meaning that the individual perceives higher (lower) wealth inequality than the actual level. In contrast, a positive (negative) value of *bias50* reflects the perception of lower (higher) inequality compared to reality. Some studies (e.g., [Cruces et al., 2013](#); [Karadja et al., 2017](#)) identify a category of “no bias” for individuals whose perceived inequality closely matches the actual level. However, given the high prevalence of positive bias in our samples and the difficulty of establishing a reliable threshold for defining unbiased individuals, we retain *bias1* and *bias50* as continuous measures without imposing a no-bias category.

Political ideology is one of the strongest predictors of individual attitudes toward major policy areas such as taxation, social security, and health insurance ([Stantcheva, 2021](#)). In our surveys, respondents self-placed on an 11-point ideological scale ranging from 0 (left) to 10 (right). For the main analysis, we construct dummy variables indicating left-wing (0–4) and right-wing (6–10) ideological positions, using the centre (5) as the reference category. We also incorporate information on the party affiliation of politicians and the voting intentions of citizen respondents for the next general election. Rather than relying on individual party labels—which may have limited sample sizes—we classify parties into broader party families. This classification follows the frameworks of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) ([Jolly et al., 2022](#)), the Political Party Database Project (PPDB) ([Scarrow et al., 2017, 2022](#)), and ParlGov ([Döring and Manow, 2024](#); [Langsæther, 2023](#)).⁸

The analysis also includes demographic covariates such as gender, age group, university education, and self-reported social class (measured on a 1-to-5 scale)⁹. The selection of these variables is constrained by data availability in the politician sample, as the pseudonymization process imposed restrictions on the identification of individual politicians due to data protection regulations. For instance, age is only recorded as a binary indicator of whether a politician is older than the median age of other politicians in their country. To ensure comparability, we recode the age variable in the citizen sample using the same median-based classification. We use self-reported social class rather than income, as income information is not available for politicians, although it is reported in brackets for citizens. Finally, due to the high concentra-

⁸The party families used are: Conservative, Greens, Liberal, Radical Left, Radical Right, Social Democrats, and Others.

⁹The classes are: (1) Lower class, (2) Working class, (3) Lower middle class, (4) Upper middle class, and (5) Upper class.

tion of politicians with university degrees, there is limited variation in educational attainment; accordingly, we retain a binary indicator for university education in both samples.

2.3 Econometric approach

As highlighted by [Stantcheva \(2021\)](#) and other studies, individual attitudes toward redistribution are shaped by multiple factors, most notably fairness beliefs regarding the origins of inequality, (mis)perceptions of inequality, and political ideology. Understanding the mental models that underpin redistributive preferences among both citizens and politicians is essential for identifying the key drivers of support for redistribution, as well as the potential divergence between policy-makers and the public. If these mental maps differ substantially, alignment between voters and their representatives may be limited, potentially contributing to increased political polarization around redistribution, especially if politicians' attitudes are more tightly linked to ideological convictions. Conversely, greater similarity in these mental models may reduce the risk of such polarization.

We estimate linear models in which preferences for redistribution are regressed on a set of explanatory variables, following the specification below:

$$y_j = \beta_0 + \beta_1 luck + \beta_2 effort + \beta_3 bias1 + \beta_4 bias50 + \beta_5 left + \beta_6 right + \beta_7 Z + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

Where y_j represents one of the outcomes j , *luck* and *effort* are indices of fairness views, *bias1* and *bias50* indicate the level of biased perceptions in the top 1% and bottom 50% wealth shares, while the variables *left* and *right* are dummy variables indicating political ideology. The control variables are gender, age group, university education and social class. The citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while the politician regressions apply calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country differences in parliamentary size.

2.4 Polarization in attitudes

We also examine the similarity between the distributions of redistributive preferences among politicians and citizens by aligning the observable attributes of the two groups. To do so, we construct a counterfactual distribution of politicians' preferences for redistribution based on the estimated relationship between covariates and preferences observed among citizens. This counterfactual distribution is then compared to the predicted distribution derived from politicians'

own estimated model. Operationally, we proceed in two steps. First, we estimate equation 3 using the sample of citizens and apply the resulting coefficients to the covariates of the politicians to generate counterfactual predictions. Second, we estimate equation 3 using the sample of politicians and use these coefficients to predict redistributive preferences based on their own covariates. This approach allows us to isolate the extent to which observed differences in preferences are due to differences in characteristics versus differences in how these characteristics are mapped into preferences.

To obtain a summary measure of the degree of similarity between the distributions of politicians and citizens, we rely on the polarization index proposed by Foster and Wolfson (2010). We focus on polarization to investigate the extent to which politicians hold more or less polarized views on redistribution compared to citizens. The Foster–Wolfson index divides the population into two groups: those below and those above the median. Inequality is decomposed into a *between-group* component (G_B), capturing inequality between the two groups based on their respective means, and a *within-group* component (G_W), which is a population-weighted average of the Gini coefficients within each group. The overall Gini coefficient is the sum of these two components ($G = G_B + G_W$). The polarization index is then defined as $P = (G_B - G_W)/(\mu/m)$, where μ is the overall mean and m is the median. This measure reflects the extent to which overall inequality is driven by divergence between the lower and upper halves of the distribution, relative to inequality within them. Higher values of P indicate greater bipolarization and a more pronounced erosion of the middle of the distribution.

3 Results

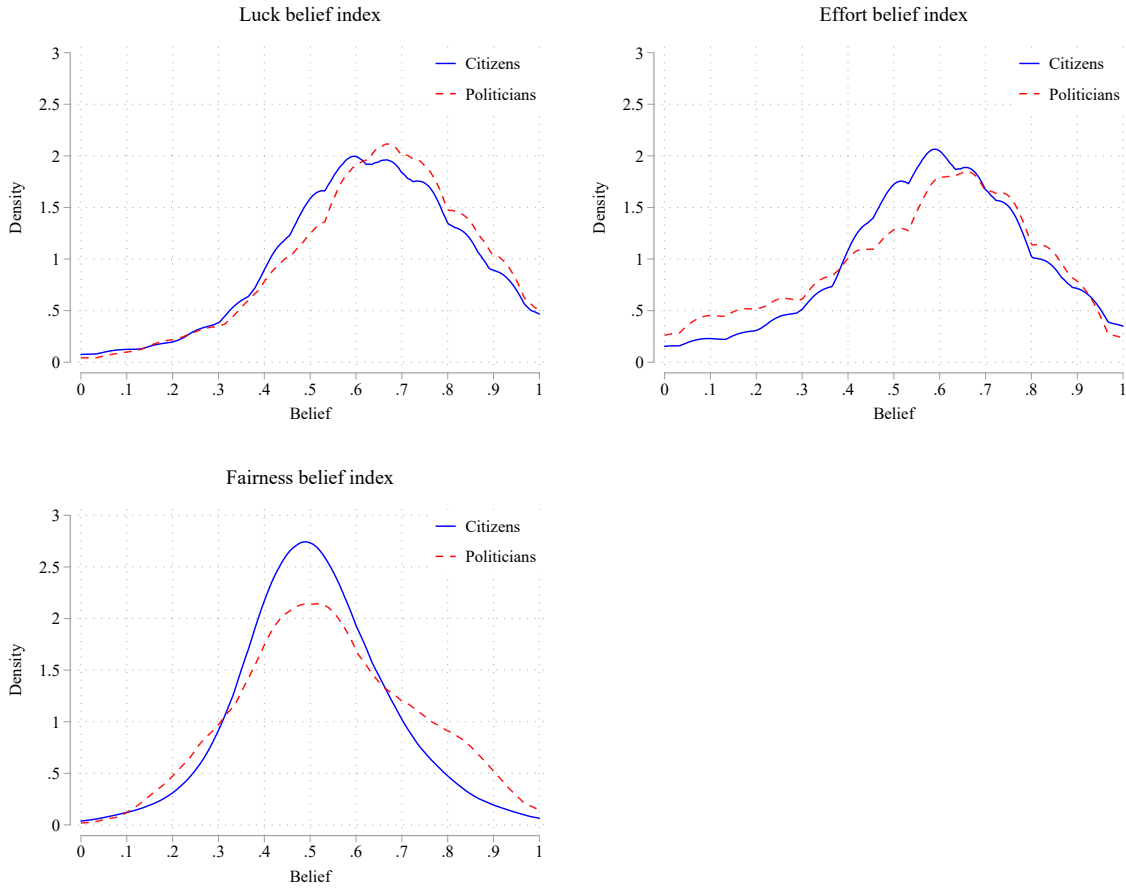
3.1 Differences between citizens and politicians

Many studies have shown that fairness beliefs –particularly whether individuals attribute economic success to luck or effort– strongly influence attitudes toward redistribution and tax policies (Fong, 2001; Alesina and Angeletos, 2005; Schokkaert and Truyts, 2017; Cappelen et al., 2013; Durante et al., 2014; Karadja et al., 2017; Gärtner et al., 2017; Stantcheva, 2021; Gärtner et al., 2023; Almås et al., 2020; Cohn et al., 2023; Henkel et al., 2025). While this relationship is well established among the general public, much less is known about how such beliefs are held by political elites, a gap this study seeks to address. Figure 1 presents kernel density estimates of fairness beliefs among citizens and politicians. On average, politicians are more likely

to attribute economic success to luck, whereas citizens emphasize the role of individual effort. As shown in Table 1, these differences are statistically significant, though modest in size. The *Fairness belief index*, which synthesizes both dimensions of fairness beliefs, reveals a more concentrated distribution among citizens and a more dispersed one among politicians, suggesting greater heterogeneity –and potentially more polarization– within the latter.¹⁰ Additional evidence is provided in Figure A–1 in the Appendix, which displays the index distribution by party family. It reveals substantial variation in fairness beliefs across politicians from different party families, as well as notable gaps between politicians and citizens within the same party family. This divergence is especially pronounced among left-leaning parties (Social Democrats, Greens, and the Radical Left), where politicians tend to express more egalitarian views than their voters. Furthermore, fairness beliefs among citizens appear relatively homogeneous across party lines.

¹⁰Dispersion is higher among politicians. The Gini coefficient of the *Fairness Belief Index* is 0.164 for citizens and 0.194 for politicians; the corresponding coefficients of variation are 0.301 and 0.340, respectively.

Figure 1: Fairness views among citizens and politicians



Notes: The top panel displays kernel density estimates of fairness beliefs among citizens and politicians. The *luck belief index* is based on agreement with the statements: (1) “The rich are richer because they have had more luck in life” and (2) “The rich are richer because they come from a wealthier family”. The *effort belief index* reflects agreement with: (3) “The rich are richer because they have worked harder in life” and (4) “The rich are richer because they have made smarter choices”. The bottom panel shows the distribution of a composite index of fairness views derived from all four statements. Lower values indicate stronger beliefs that effort is the main driver of income; higher values indicate stronger beliefs that luck is the main driver; and intermediate values reflect the view that both matter. All indices are normalized to the [0,1] range. The citizen sample is weighted using survey design weights, while the politician sample applies calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country variation in parliamentary size.

Table 1 reveals that most citizens and politicians exhibit a positive bias in their perceptions of wealth inequality when measured using the top 1% wealth share. Specifically, 79.2% of citizens and 76.4% of politicians overestimate wealth concentration. Furthermore, a majority of individuals overestimate the wealth owned by the bottom 50% of the population, with 94.4% of citizens and 91.7% of politicians perceiving a higher share than the actual level. Although both politicians and citizens are off in their predictions of wealth inequality, the former tend to be more accurate. Tables A-2 and A-3 in the Appendix report inequality biases by country, showing that both politicians and citizens greatly misperceive wealth inequality in all countries. The distributions of these biases are also computed by party family in the Appendix (Figures A-2 and A-3). Politicians and citizens have similar misperceptions about the top 1% wealth

share within each party family, except for Conservatives and Greens, where politicians are statistically more accurate than their voters. For the bottom 50% wealth share, politicians are more accurate than their voters within each party family. In summary, our data reveal that both citizens and politicians hold significant misperceptions about wealth inequality. On the one hand, individuals tend to overestimate inequality when focusing on the perceived share held by the top 1%, and on the other hand, they underestimate it when considering the perceived share held by the bottom 50%.

Table 1: Differences among citizens and politicians

	Citizens	Politicians	Diff
I. Fairness views			
Luck belief index (level)	0.618	0.647	-0.028***
Effort belief index (level)	0.616	0.584	0.032**
Fairness belief index (level)	0.486	0.522	-0.036***
II. Bias in wealth shares			
Bias in top 1% share (level)	0.321	0.268	0.053***
Positive bias in top 1% share (share)	0.792	0.764	0.030
Bias in bottom 50% share (level)	0.397	0.201	0.196***
Positive bias in bottom 50% share (share)	0.944	0.917	0.028**
III. Political ideology (share)			
Left	0.236	0.389	-0.153***
Centre	0.448	0.235	0.212***
Right	0.316	0.375	-0.059**
IV. Redistributive attitudes (level)			
Income redistribution	0.623	0.568	0.055***
Wealth redistribution	0.616	0.573	0.042**
Wealth tax	0.587	0.583	0.004
Inheritance tax	0.428	0.519	-0.091***
Redistribution index	0.567	0.562	0.006
V. Demographics			
Male (share)	0.487	0.593	-0.106***
Older age (share above median age)	0.547	0.518	0.029
University education (share)	0.183	0.728	-0.544***
Social class (level, 1–5)	0.024	0.037	-0.013***

Notes: The table presents the means of beliefs, perceptions, ideological views and common available demographics of citizens and politicians. The estimated means are conditional on country dummies included in linear regressions. Citizen means incorporate survey design weights, and politician means use calibrated weights to account for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Sample size is 13,202 for citizens and 525 for politicians. *p<0.10, **p<0.05 y ***p<0.01.

Other variables in Table 1 show that citizens are more likely to identify with the ideological centre (45%), compared to 24% on the left and 31% on the right. Among politicians, however, 24% identify as centrist, 39% as left-wing, and 37% as right-wing. Citizens express stronger support for income and wealth redistribution than politicians, but they are less supportive of an inheritance tax. On average, no statistically significant differences are found between citizens and politicians regarding support for a wealth tax or the overall redistribution index. In terms of

demographics, the sample of politicians includes a higher proportion of men, individuals with a university degree, and members of higher social classes.

3.2 Regression results

While the estimates of equation 3 are reported in Table 2, Figure 2 summarizes the coefficients for the *Redistribution Index* from our main specification.¹¹ The covariates have the expected signs: left-identifying respondents are more supportive of redistribution, and right-identifying respondents less so. Regarding fairness views, stronger beliefs in effort as the driver of success are associated with lower support for redistribution, whereas stronger beliefs in luck are associated with higher support. In addition, overestimating the wealth share held by the top 1% is positively related to support for redistribution, while misperceptions about the bottom 50% are not significantly associated with redistributive preferences.

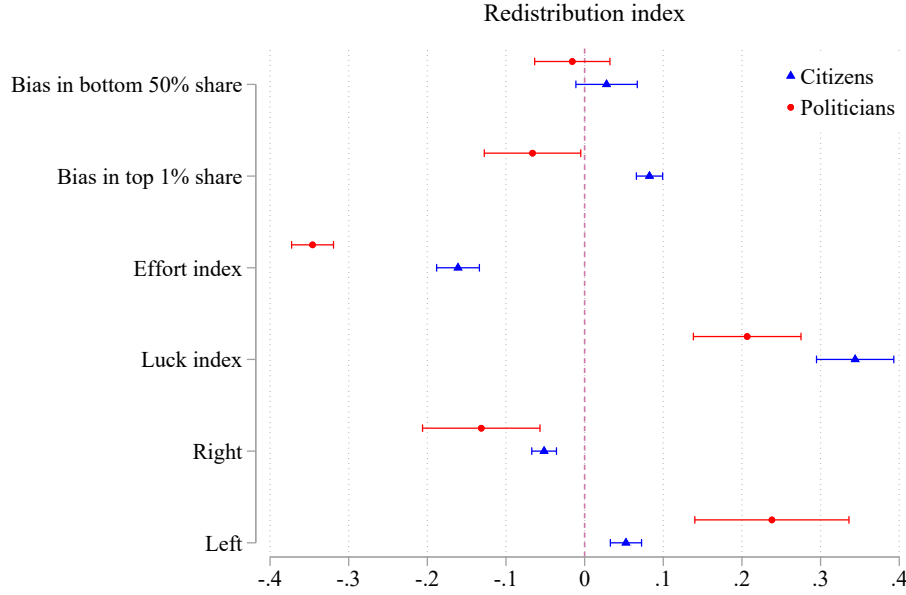
The magnitudes of the coefficients for citizens and politicians differ significantly for fairness beliefs, the bias in the top 1% wealth share, and left-wing ideology. Politicians place greater weight on the belief in effort as a driver of success when stating their preferences for redistribution, compared to citizens. In contrast, the belief in luck plays a more prominent role in shaping redistributive preferences among citizens than among politicians. These differences suggest that the mental maps linking fairness beliefs to redistribution are structured differently across the two groups.

Interestingly, political ideology plays a considerably more prominent role in shaping redistributive preferences among politicians than among citizens. The absolute difference between the coefficients for left-wing and right-wing individuals—a proxy for ideological polarization—is 0.105 for citizens and 0.369 for politicians. This implies that the ideological divide is more than three times larger among politicians. In other words, ideology occupies a much more central position in the mental map of politicians compared to that of citizens. A natural follow-up question is whether this polarization among politicians is uniformly distributed across the ideological spectrum. Figure B–1 in the Appendix addresses this by plotting regression coefficients for each point on the 0–10 political ideology scale. The results show that the gap in the importance of ideology between citizens and politicians is particularly pronounced—and statistically significant—among those on the left. Among right-wing individuals, the differences become statistically significant only at the far-right end of the spectrum (scores of 9 or higher), and even

¹¹ Additional specifications are reported in Tables B–1 and B–2 in the Appendix.

then, the magnitude of the differences is smaller than those observed on the left.

Figure 2: Estimated coefficients of support for redistributive policies



Notes: The figure displays the estimated coefficients from OLS regressions of the composite index of preferences for redistribution on inequality perception, fairness views, and political ideology. All regressions include country fixed effects and the following controls: age group, gender, university education, and social class. The citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while the politician regressions apply calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Standard errors are robust and clustered at the country level. Confidence intervals are shown at the 90% level.

Replacing the separate luck and effort measures with the composite fairness index leaves the main results substantively unchanged (see Model 2 in Table B–1 in the Appendix). Table B–2 and the corresponding visualizations in Figure B–2 (Appendix) present estimation results for the four individual items measuring support for redistribution. Overall, the results are consistent with those obtained using the composite *Redistribution Index*, with no major differences observed. One exception arises in the case of support for an inheritance tax, where the difference in the effect of the luck belief between politicians and citizens is not statistically significant.

Political ideology, as measured by left-right self-placement, has emerged as a key determinant of redistributive preferences, particularly in shaping the mental models of redistribution policies of politicians. To assess the robustness of this result, we explore alternative measures of political orientation, including party family and individual party identifiers. Regressions using party family indicators for the *Redistribution Index* yield results broadly consistent with our baseline findings (see Table 2, Model 2). Politicians affiliated with left-wing party families (Social Democrats, Greens, and the Radical Left) show significantly greater support for redistribution, and similar patterns are observed among citizens who voted for these parties. In

contrast, having voted for Conservative or Radical Right parties is associated with lower support for redistribution among citizens, whereas politicians affiliated with these parties do not differ significantly from others. Voting for or affiliation with Liberal parties does not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with redistribution preferences in either group. Model 3 introduces fixed effects for specific political parties in place of party family indicators, with results that remain consistent: fairness beliefs continue to exhibit a strong association with redistributive preferences. As in prior specifications, politicians' preferences are more strongly shaped by *effort*-related fairness beliefs, whereas citizens' preferences are more closely associated with *luck*-based beliefs. Finally, overestimation of the wealth share held by the top 1% remains positively associated with support for redistribution among citizens, but is negatively associated among politicians.

Table 2: Regression estimates of support for redistribution (including party information)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Citizens	Politicians	Citizens	Politicians	Citizens	Politicians
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Bias in perceived top 1%	0.082*** (0.010)	-0.066 (0.037)	0.073*** (0.013)	-0.069* (0.033)	0.070*** (0.012)	-0.071* (0.037)
Bias in perceived bottom 50%	0.028 (0.024)	-0.016 (0.029)	0.023 (0.025)	-0.025 (0.049)	0.019 (0.023)	0.037 (0.038)
Luck belief index	0.344*** (0.030)	0.207*** (0.042)	0.348*** (0.033)	0.199** (0.055)	0.344*** (0.033)	0.142** (0.042)
Effort belief index	-0.161*** (0.017)	-0.346*** (0.016)	-0.171*** (0.027)	-0.339*** (0.021)	-0.163*** (0.027)	-0.231*** (0.038)
Left	0.053*** (0.012)	0.238*** (0.060)				
Right	-0.052*** (0.010)	-0.131** (0.045)				
Conservative			-0.041** (0.012)	-0.076 (0.088)		
Greens			0.065** (0.018)	0.273** (0.084)		
Liberal			0.025 (0.015)	-0.075 (0.095)		
Radical left			0.094*** (0.021)	0.339** (0.099)		
Radical right			-0.036** (0.014)	-0.091 (0.110)		
Social democrats			0.076*** (0.017)	0.255* (0.113)		
Constant	0.458*** (0.026)	0.469*** (0.020)	0.426*** (0.037)	0.465*** (0.091)	0.539*** (0.041)	0.826*** (0.035)
Observations	13202	525	10626	525	10626	525
R^2	0.239	0.765	0.260	0.751	0.275	0.826
Family party FE	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Party FE	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Notes: The table presents the results of OLS regressions on the support for redistribution captured by *Redistribution Index*. The index ranges between 0 and 1. All regressions include the following controls: age group, gender, university education, and social class. When party affiliation is included, the six major party families are represented as dummy variables, with “Other party family” serving as the reference category. Citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while politician regressions use calibrated weights to account for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Robust standard errors are in parenthesis. *p<0.10, **p<0.05 y ***p<0.01.

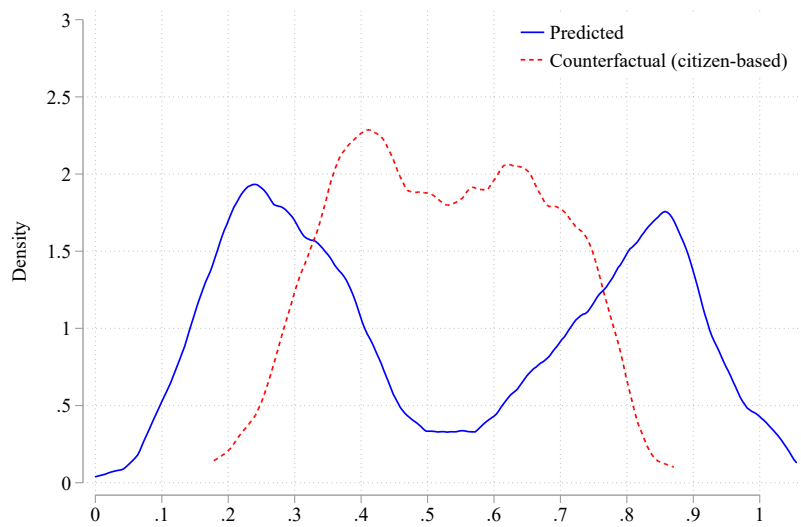
4 Polarization in preferences for redistribution

Given earlier findings that underscore the important role of political ideology in shaping attitudes toward redistribution, this section examines whether politicians display greater polarization in these attitudes than citizens. As described in Section 2.4, we compare the distribution of predicted preferences for redistribution among politicians, based on their own covariates and estimated coefficients, with a counterfactual distribution obtained by applying the coefficients from the citizen sample to the same set of politician characteristics. Figure 3 presents both distributions for the *Redistribution Index*, showing pronounced polarization in the predicted

preferences of politicians, in contrast to the substantially less polarized counterfactual distribution. The Foster–Wolfson polarization index is 0.220 for the predicted distribution and 0.082 for the counterfactual, with the difference statistically significant at the 1% level.¹²

Not only does the composite index of support for redistribution exhibit substantial polarization among politicians, but each of the individual redistributive policy measures does as well. In all cases, the differences between the predicted and counterfactual distributions are statistically significant at the 1% level (see Figure C–1 in the Appendix).

Figure 3: Polarization among politicians in support for redistribution



Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by the *Redistribution Index*) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample.

Figure 4 displays the predicted and counterfactual distributions of the *Redistribution Index* by party family. To facilitate comparisons, the first column includes parties with right-wing or centrist orientations, while the second column shows left-wing parties. Across all party families, politicians are consistently more polarized in their preferences for redistribution than their voters. Politicians from the Radical Right, Conservative, and Liberal families tend to support less redistribution than their respective electorates, whereas politicians from the Radical Left, Green, and Social Democratic parties are more supportive of redistribution than their

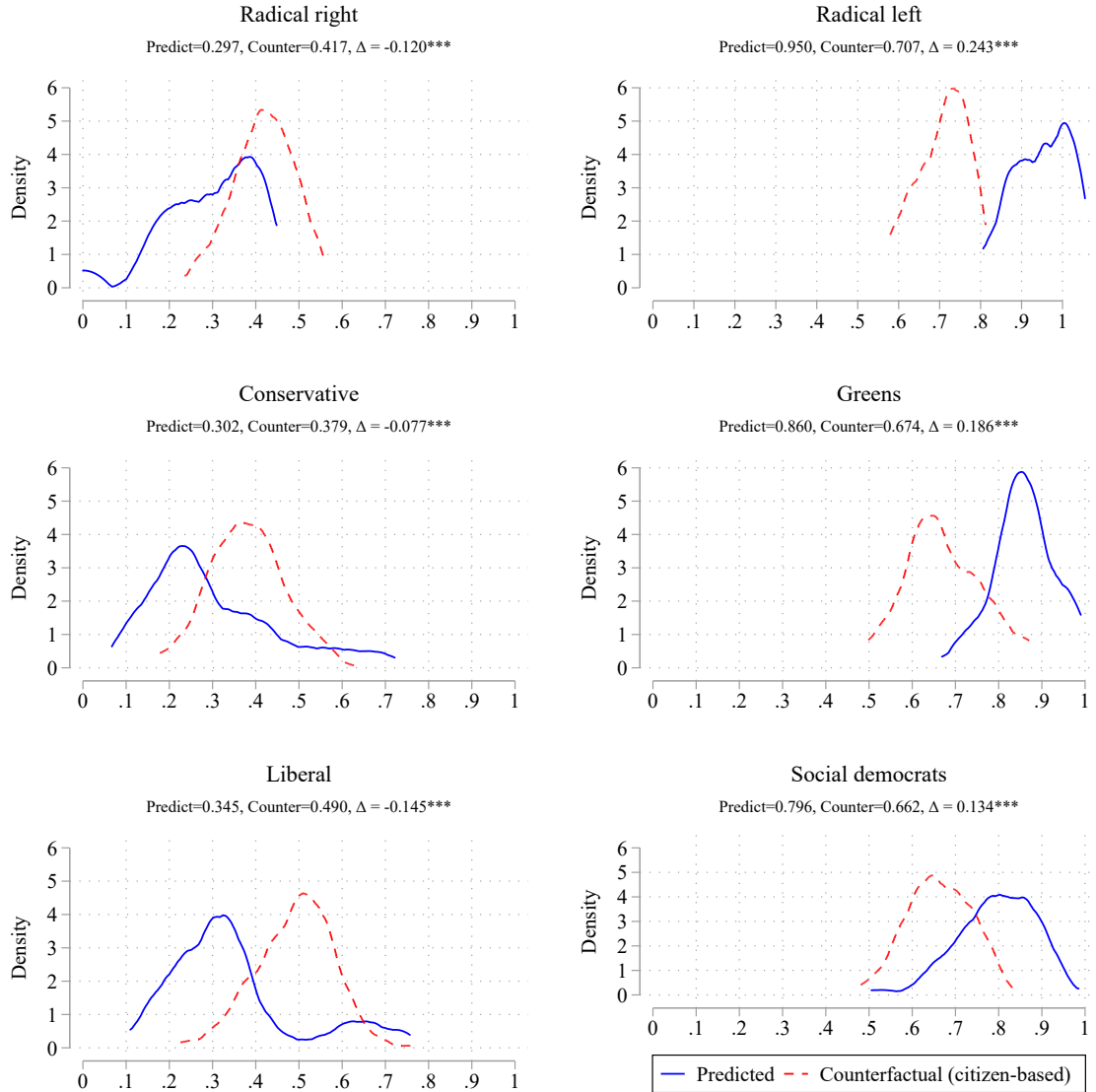
¹²Statistical tests are based on standard errors obtained from bootstrapping with 100 replications of the polarization index. The finding of greater polarization among politicians is robust to alternative polarization measures. According to the Deutsch–Hanoka–Silber index (Deutsch et al., 2007), polarization in the predicted and counterfactual distributions is 0.609 and 0.489, respectively. Using the Zhang–Kanbur index (Zhang and Kanbur, 2001), the corresponding values are 4.112 and 2.917.

voters. This pattern implies that, although voters from ideologically distant parties differ in their views, their positions are relatively closer than those of the politicians who represent them. For example, the difference in mean support for redistribution between Conservative and Green politicians is about 0.56, while the corresponding difference between voters of these parties is approximately 0.30.

These politician–voter patterns across party families are also observed when examining support for each specific redistributive policy (see Figures C–2 to C–5 in the Appendix). One particularly striking result concerns support for an inheritance tax, which shows the largest divergence between politicians and voters within the three left-wing party families. For example, while politicians from Radical Left parties display an average support of 0.97 for an inheritance tax, their voters report an average support of only 0.57. Another notable divergence appears among Liberal parties regarding the wealth tax: politicians from this group show an average support of 0.32, compared to 0.55 among their voters.

Overall, the evidence points to “substantial polarization” among politicians relative to citizens on redistribution. Citizens’ views –even across distant party families– overlap to a meaningful extent, but elite positions are more sharply separated. This implies a bargaining space among politicians that is narrower than what the public would sustain, making compromise less likely and raising the risk of gridlock. Because the predicted-counterfactual comparisons hold characteristics constant, the gap reflects how elites map beliefs and ideology into policy positions rather than who they are. The result is a representation concern: in several party families, MPs appear to overshoot or undershoot the redistributive preferences of their voters. Whether driven by selection, party discipline, or information environments, this elite-mass distance is not helpful for finding compromises on redistribution policies.

Figure 4: Politicians' support for redistribution by family party



Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by the Redistribution Index) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Mean values are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions, along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ y *** $p < 0.01$.

5 Conclusions

This paper provides new evidence on redistributive preferences among political elites and citizens using matched surveys from seven parliaments. In both groups, fairness beliefs and ideology are the strongest correlates of support for redistribution, with misperceptions of wealth concentration also playing a role. Politicians exhibit greater ideological polarization than citi-

zens and place more weight on effort-based justifications, whereas citizens are more influenced by luck-based beliefs.

We also document systematic elite-voter gaps within party families. Politicians from left parties tend to support more redistribution than their voters –especially on inheritance taxation– while politicians from right and liberal parties are generally less supportive than their electorates. These differences persist after conditioning on observables. Our counterfactual exercises and polarization indices (Foster–Wolfson and alternatives) show that redistributive preferences are more polarized among elites than among citizens, and that imposing citizen coefficients on politicians’ covariates substantially reduces measured polarization. While [Nathan et al. \(2022\)](#) caution that standard survey items can amplify partisan divisions, our cross-country patterns and multiple policy items suggest substantive, not merely measurement-driven, party divides –particularly among politicians.

These findings have implications for representation and policy-making. Greater elite polarization narrows the bargaining set and makes compromise less likely, increasing the risk of gridlock. If politicians mirrored their voters’ preferences more closely, the scope for agreement would be wider. The counterfactual comparisons point to a representation concern: in several party families, MPs’ redistributive positions diverge systematically from those of their voters, often taking more extreme or more restrained stances than the electorate.

We cannot identify mechanisms with our data, but several channels are plausible: selection (individuals who enter office already differ from citizens), socialization (legislative careers, party caucuses, and elite networks shift views once in office), and information or cueing (politicians misread voter preferences or prioritize party lines and donor pressures over constituency signals). Future work should distinguish these channels –for example, using panel data around entry to office, informational interventions, or within-party shocks– and examine how elite-mass gaps affect legislative behaviour and voter evaluations. Understanding whether better information about constituency preferences, and how beliefs about effort and luck are formed among elites, can widen the bargaining set is a promising direction for research on the politics of redistribution.

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Appendix

A Sample and descriptive statistics

Table A–1: Sample size

Country	Citizens			Politicians			
	Fieldwork	Sample	Analytical sample	Fieldwork	Target pop.	Sample (%resp.)	Analytical sample
Australia	Feb-Mar 22	1,744	1,716	Nov 22-Mar 23	273	57 (21)	44
Belgium (Flanders)	Feb-Mar 22	1,962	1,943	Mar-Aug 22	254	215 (85)	179
Belgium (Wallonia)	Feb-Mar 22	1,862	1,821	Apr-Oct 22	214	148 (69)	131
Czech Republic	Feb-Mar 22	2,019	1,971	Apr-Oct 22	200	64 (32)	61
Luxembourg	Feb-Mar 22	1,757	1,754	Nov 22-Jan 23	60	21 (35)	17
Norway	Feb-Mar 22	2,055	2,016	Jun 22-Feb 23	169	34 (20)	32
Sweden	Feb-Mar 22	2,019	1,981	Oct 22-Feb 23	374	67 (18)	61
Total		13,418	13,202		1,544	606 (39)	525

Table A–2: Bias in perception of the 1% top wealth share (in percentage points)

Country	% of people who have positive bias		Perceived top 1% share		Actual top share	Level of bias		
	Citiz.	Polit.	Citiz.	Polit.		Citiz.	Polit.	Diff
Australia	79.1	77.3	56.0	41.4	24.0	32.0	27.5	4.6
Czech Republic	82.4	63.9	56.0	39.8	26.3	29.7	13.5	16.2
Flanders (Belgium)	88.9	89.9	52.3	41.5	14.9	37.4	30.2	7.3
Luxembourg	82.8	88.2	56.5	48.5	28.6	27.9	20.0	8.0
Norway	87.4	84.4	61.6	60.7	23.9	37.7	36.7	1.0
Sweden	74.4	73.8	50.0	49.9	27.4	22.6	22.5	0.1
Wallonia (Belgium)	89.5	90.1	54.7	49.9	14.9	39.8	35.0	4.8
Total	83.5	79.8	55.3	49.2	22.9	32.4	26.7	5.8

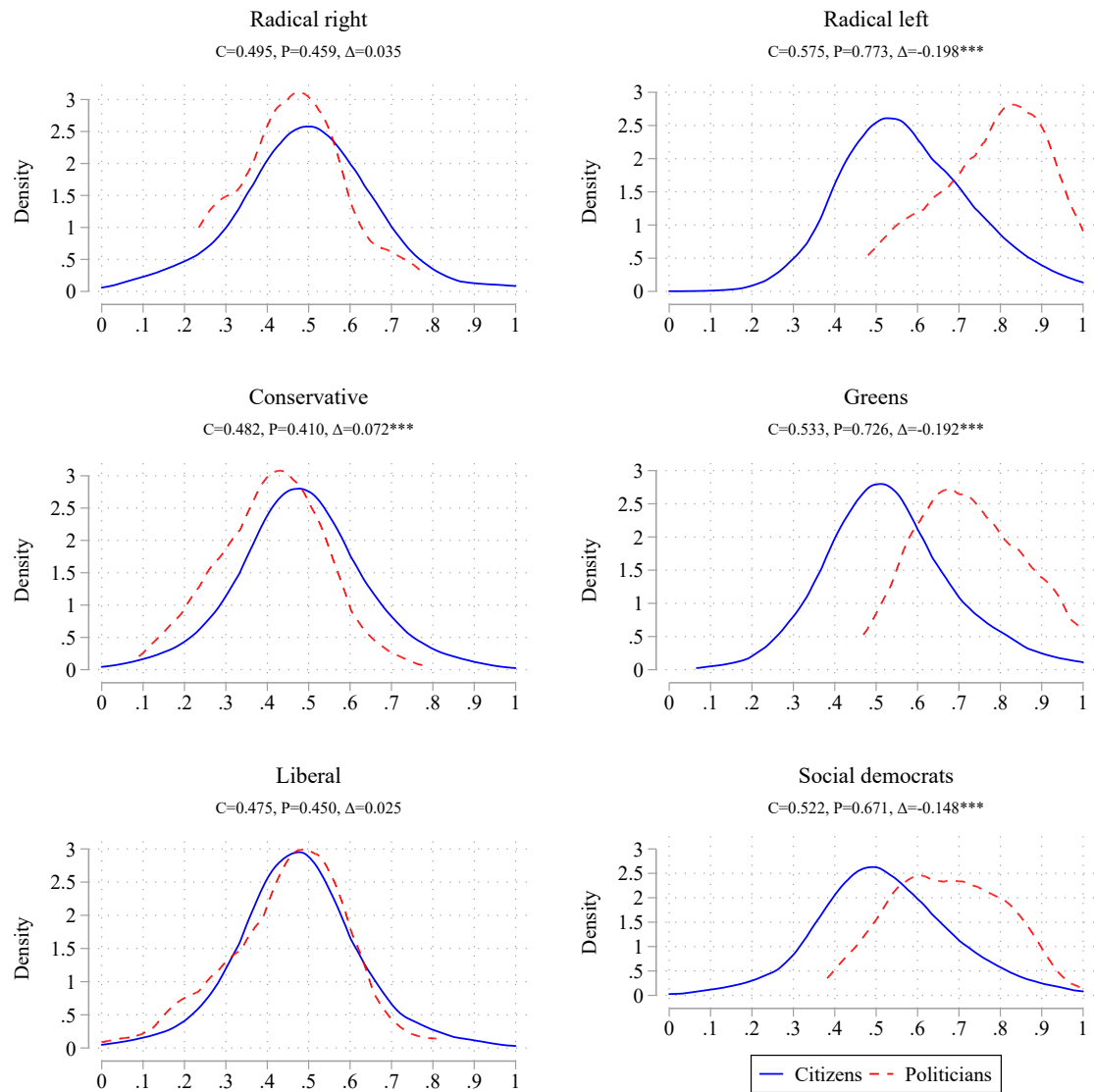
Notes: The table reports the average perceptions of citizens and politicians regarding the top 1% wealth share in each country. Citizen averages are weighted using survey design weights, while politician averages apply calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. The actual top 1% wealth share refers to 2022 and is sourced from the World Inequality Database.

Table A–3: Bias in perception of the 50% bottom wealth share (in percentage points)

Country	% of people who have positive bias		Perceived bottom 50% share		Actual bottom share	Level of bias		
	Citiz.	Polit.	Citiz.	Polit.		Citiz.	Polit.	Diff
Australia	95.7	84.1	44.9	17.5	4.0	40.8	13.5	27.3
Czech Republic	95.2	98.4	35.3	22.5	3.9	31.4	18.6	12.9
Flanders (Belgium)	95.4	89.9	44.1	23.4	7.5	36.6	15.9	20.7
Luxembourg	96.3	94.1	35.7	27.5	4.4	31.3	23.2	8.1
Norway	95.2	90.6	34.1	13.1	3.6	30.6	9.5	21.0
Sweden	100.0	100.0	40.3	19.9	-10.9	51.2	30.8	20.4
Wallonia (Belgium)	90.1	92.4	41.9	25.5	7.5	34.4	18.0	16.4
Total	95.5	93.0	39.4	20.7	2.7	36.7	19.3	17.3

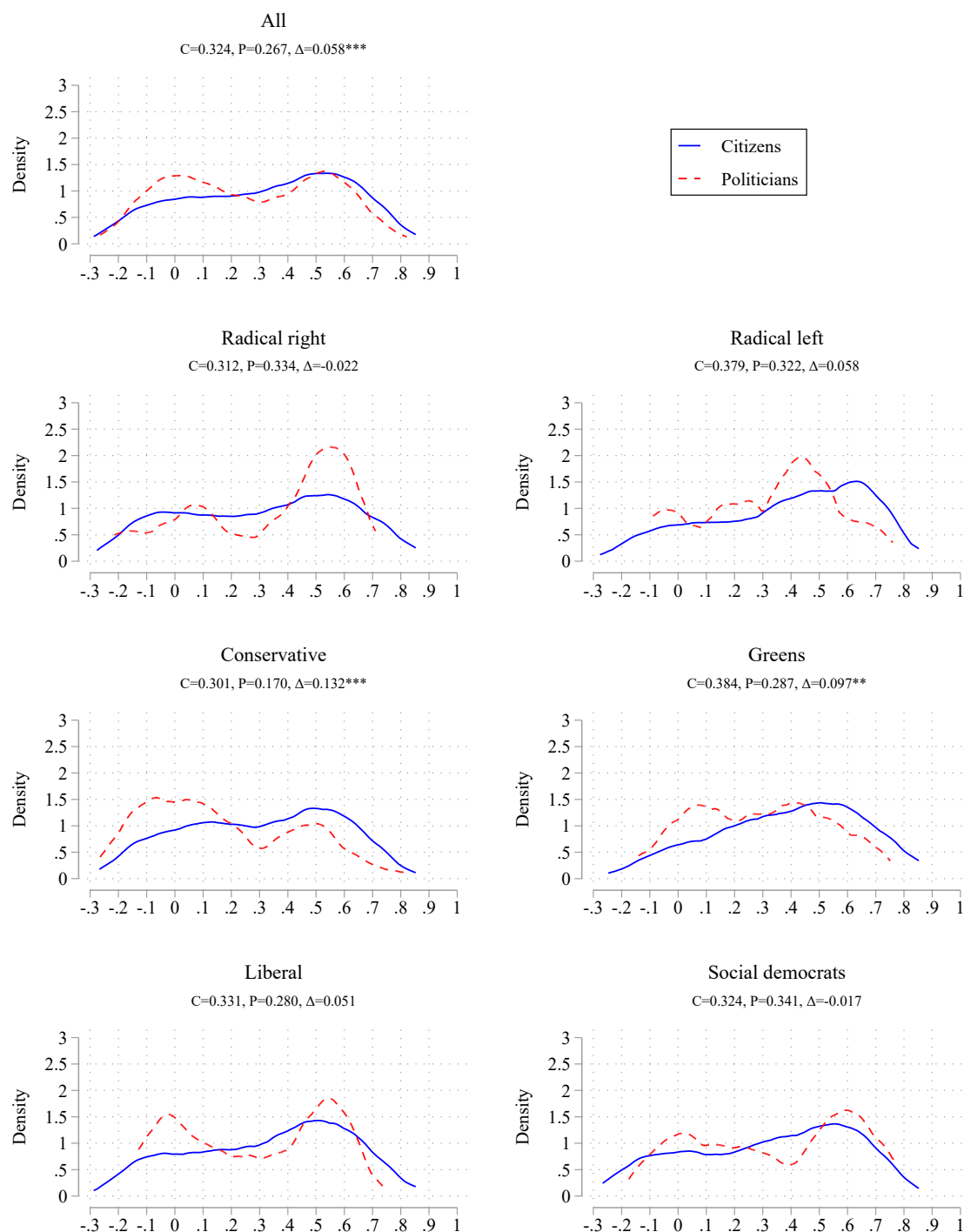
Notes: The table reports the average perceptions of citizens and politicians regarding the bottom 50% wealth share in each country. Citizen averages are weighted using survey design weights, while politician averages apply calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. The actual bottom 50% wealth share refers to 2022 and is sourced from the World Inequality Database.

Figure A-1: Fairness beliefs among citizens and politicians by party family



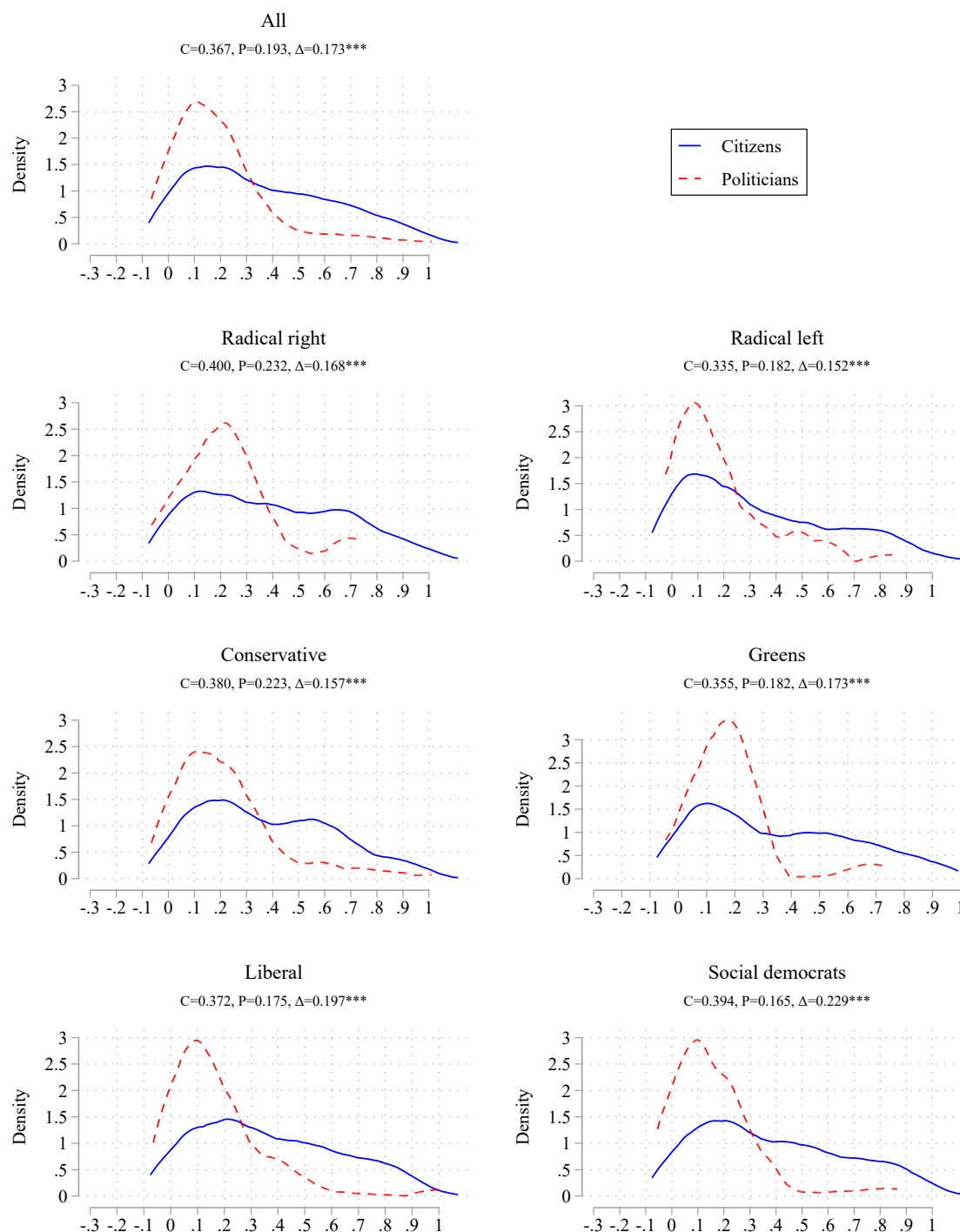
Notes: The figures display kernel density estimates of the *Fairness belief index* for citizens and politicians. Lower values indicate stronger beliefs that effort is the main driver of income; higher values indicate stronger beliefs that luck is the main driver; and intermediate values reflect the view that both matter. The citizen sample is weighted using survey design weights, while the politician sample applies calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country variation in parliamentary size. Mean values are indicated for citizens (C) and politicians (P), along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A–2: Bias in the top 1% wealth share among citizens and politicians by party family



Notes: The figures show kernel density estimates of the perceived bias in the top 1% wealth share among citizens and politicians. Positive values indicate that individuals overestimate the concentration of wealth (i.e., perceive higher inequality than actual), while negative values reflect underestimation. The citizen sample is weighted using survey design weights, while the politician sample applies calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country variation in parliamentary size. Mean values are indicated for citizens (C) and politicians (P), along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

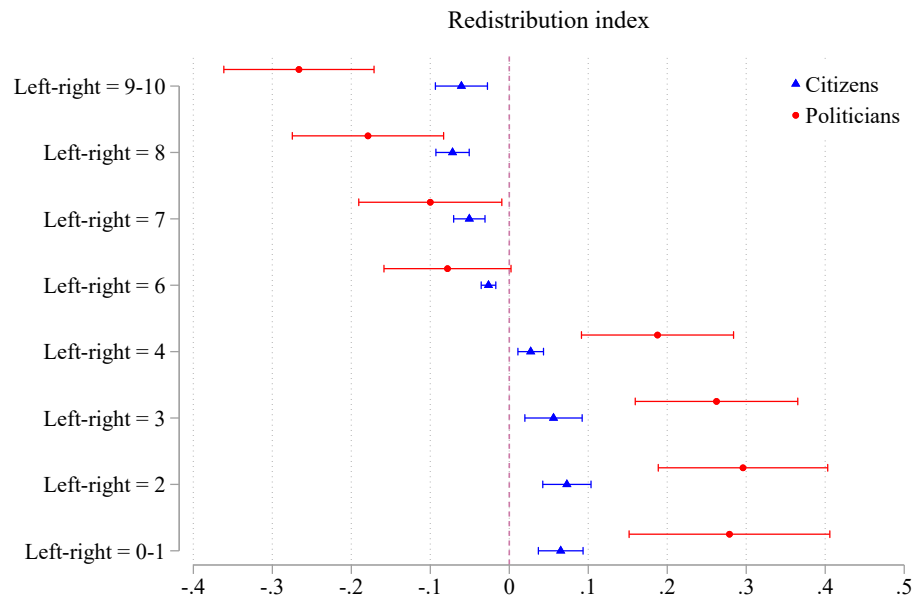
Figure A–3: Bias in the bottom 50% wealth share among citizens and politicians by party family



Notes: The figures show kernel density estimates of the perceived bias in the bottom 50% wealth share among citizens and politicians. Positive values indicate that individuals overestimate the wealth held by the bottom half of the distribution (i.e., perceive lower inequality than actual), while negative values reflect underestimation. The citizen sample is weighted using survey design weights, while the politician sample applies calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country variation in parliamentary size. Mean values are indicated for citizens (C) and politicians (P), along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

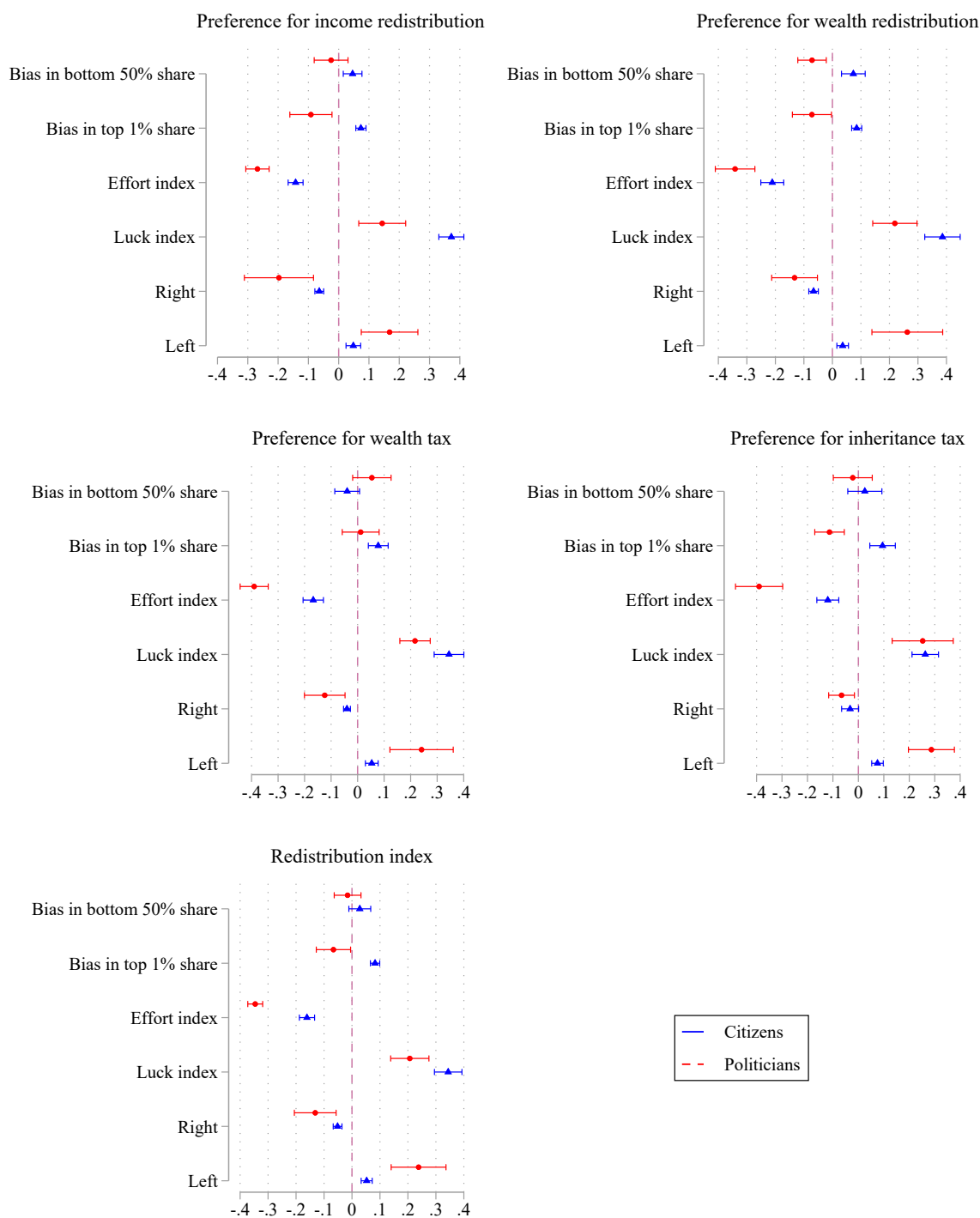
B Additional figures and regressions

Figure B–1: Estimated coefficients of political ideology on support for redistributive policies (the redistribution index)



Notes: The figure plots the estimated coefficients of political ideology on the redistribution index among the citizens and politicians. The original 0-10 point political ideology scale was converted into dummy variables. The reference variable is the dummy variable for the value 5 of the scale (the political centre). All regressions include country fixed effects and the following controls: age group, gender, university education, and social class. The citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while the politician regressions apply calibrated weights to adjust for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Standard errors are robust and clustered at the country level. Confidence intervals are shown at the 90% level

Figure B–2: Estimated coefficients of support for redistributive policies



Notes: The figures plots the estimated coefficients of inequality perception bias, fairness beliefs, and political ideology on various redistributive policies among the citizens and politicians. All regressions include country fixed effects, survey weights for citizen data, and the following controls: age group, gender, university education and social class. The standard errors are robust and clustered by country. The intervals are based on a 90% level of confidence.

Table B–1: Regression estimates of support for redistribution

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Citizens (1)	Politicians (2)	Citizens (3)	Politicians (4)
Left	0.053*** (0.012)	0.238*** (0.060)	0.053*** (0.013)	0.234*** (0.062)
Right	-0.052*** (0.010)	-0.131** (0.045)	-0.047*** (0.009)	-0.129** (0.045)
Bias in perceived top 1% share	0.082*** (0.010)	-0.066 (0.037)	0.086*** (0.010)	-0.069 (0.037)
Bias in perceived bottom 50% share	0.028 (0.024)	-0.016 (0.029)	0.034 (0.024)	-0.012 (0.031)
Luck belief index	0.344*** (0.030)	0.207*** (0.042)		
Effort belief index	-0.161*** (0.017)	-0.346*** (0.016)		
Fairness belief index			0.436*** (0.034)	0.566*** (0.040)
Constant	0.458*** (0.026)	0.469*** (0.020)	0.350*** (0.026)	0.107*** (0.020)
Observations	13202	525	13202	525
R^2	0.239	0.765	0.209	0.767

Notes: The table presents the results of OLS regressions on the support for redistribution captured by the composite index of redistributive preferences. The index ranges between 0 and 1. All regressions include country fixed effects and the following controls: age group, gender, university education, and social class. Citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while politician regressions use calibrated weights to account for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Robust standard errors are in parenthesis. *p<0.10, **p<0.05 y ***p<0.01.

Table B–2: Regression estimates of support for redistributive policies

	(1) Income redistribution	(2) Wealth redistribution	(3) Wealth tax	(4) Inheritance tax
Panel A. Citizens				
Left	0.048** (0.015)	0.036** (0.012)	0.053** (0.015)	0.075*** (0.014)
Right	-0.064*** (0.009)	-0.066*** (0.010)	-0.040*** (0.008)	-0.032 (0.020)
Luck belief index	0.372*** (0.025)	0.386*** (0.038)	0.345*** (0.034)	0.263*** (0.032)
Effort belief index	-0.142*** (0.015)	-0.211*** (0.024)	-0.167*** (0.023)	-0.120*** (0.026)
Constant	0.535*** (0.028)	0.559*** (0.027)	0.463*** (0.032)	0.250*** (0.041)
Bias in perceived top 1% share	0.073*** (0.010)	0.085*** (0.011)	0.078** (0.023)	0.095** (0.030)
Bias in perceived bottom 50% share	0.046** (0.019)	0.073** (0.025)	-0.039 (0.028)	0.025 (0.041)
Observations	13202	13202	13202	13202
R^2	0.203	0.225	0.156	0.083
Panel B. Politicians				
Left	0.168** (0.057)	0.263** (0.075)	0.241** (0.073)	0.287*** (0.055)
Right	-0.197** (0.069)	-0.133** (0.049)	-0.124** (0.047)	-0.066* (0.031)
Bias in perceived top 1% share	-0.092* (0.042)	-0.072 (0.042)	0.012 (0.042)	-0.113** (0.035)
Bias in perceived bottom 50% share	-0.025 (0.034)	-0.071* (0.030)	0.054 (0.044)	-0.022 (0.046)
Luck belief index	0.144** (0.047)	0.219*** (0.047)	0.217*** (0.035)	0.253** (0.073)
Effort belief index	-0.268*** (0.023)	-0.341*** (0.042)	-0.390*** (0.032)	-0.390*** (0.056)
Constant	0.534*** (0.044)	0.458*** (0.055)	0.446*** (0.072)	0.434*** (0.084)
Observations	525	525	525	525
R^2	0.626	0.734	0.643	0.612

Notes: The table presents the results of OLS regressions on the support for four alternative redistributive policies. All outcomes range between 0 and 1. All regressions include country fixed effects and controls (age, gender, tertiary education, and social class). Citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while politician regressions use calibrated weights to account for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Robust standard errors are in parenthesis. *p<0.10, **p<0.05 y ***p<0.01.

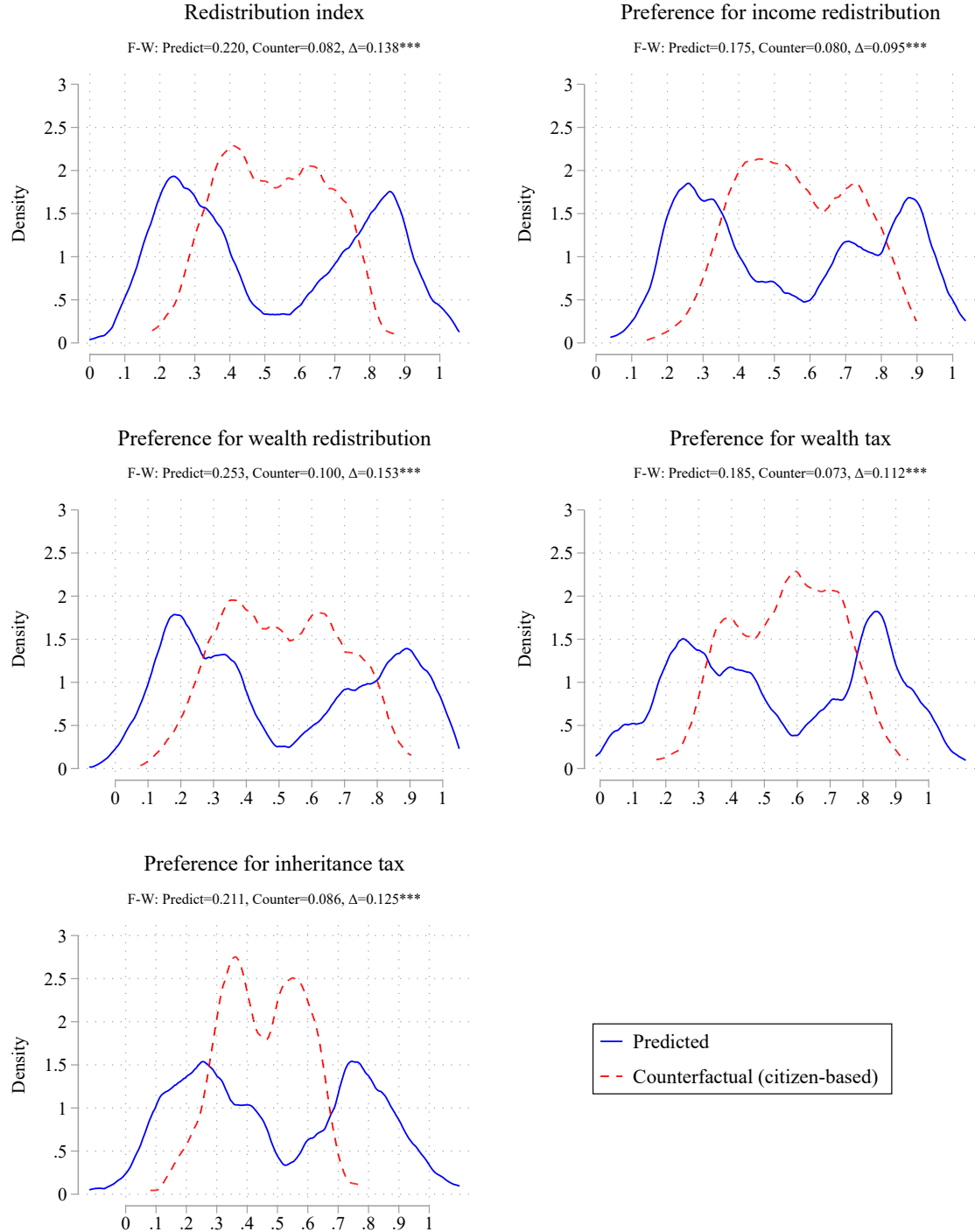
Table B–3: Regression estimates of support for redistributive policies (including party information)

	(1) Income redistribution	(2) Wealth redistribution	(3) Wealth tax	(4) Inheritance tax
Panel A. Citizens				
Luck belief index	0.374*** (0.032)	0.379*** (0.040)	0.357*** (0.040)	0.256*** (0.040)
Effort belief index	-0.146*** (0.030)	-0.211*** (0.036)	-0.160*** (0.026)	-0.132*** (0.032)
Constant	0.593*** (0.037)	0.625*** (0.043)	0.514*** (0.049)	0.404*** (0.061)
Bias in perceived top 1%	0.056*** (0.006)	0.070*** (0.014)	0.073** (0.025)	0.083** (0.032)
Bias in perceived bottom 50%	0.026 (0.021)	0.061* (0.025)	-0.037 (0.029)	0.019 (0.038)
Observations	10626	10626	10626	10626
R^2	0.230	0.249	0.186	0.118
Panel B. Politicians				
Bias in perceived top 1%	-0.098* (0.048)	-0.071 (0.042)	-0.009 (0.041)	-0.106*** (0.028)
Bias in perceived bottom 50%	0.023 (0.042)	-0.017 (0.044)	0.117* (0.060)	0.024 (0.066)
Luck belief index	0.069 (0.047)	0.174*** (0.046)	0.153** (0.042)	0.180** (0.070)
Effort belief index	-0.144** (0.039)	-0.234** (0.073)	-0.293*** (0.044)	-0.259*** (0.044)
Constant	0.925*** (0.081)	0.843*** (0.044)	0.757*** (0.075)	0.770*** (0.066)
Observations	525	525	525	525
R^2	0.689	0.779	0.720	0.693
Party FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: The table presents the results of OLS regressions on the support for redistribution captured by the composite index of redistributive preferences. The index ranges between 0 and 1. All regressions include party fixed effects the following controls: age group, gender, university education, and social class. Citizen regressions incorporate survey design weights, while politician regressions use calibrated weights to account for cross-country differences in parliamentary size. Robust standard errors are in parenthesis. *p<0.10, **p<0.05 y ***p<0.01.

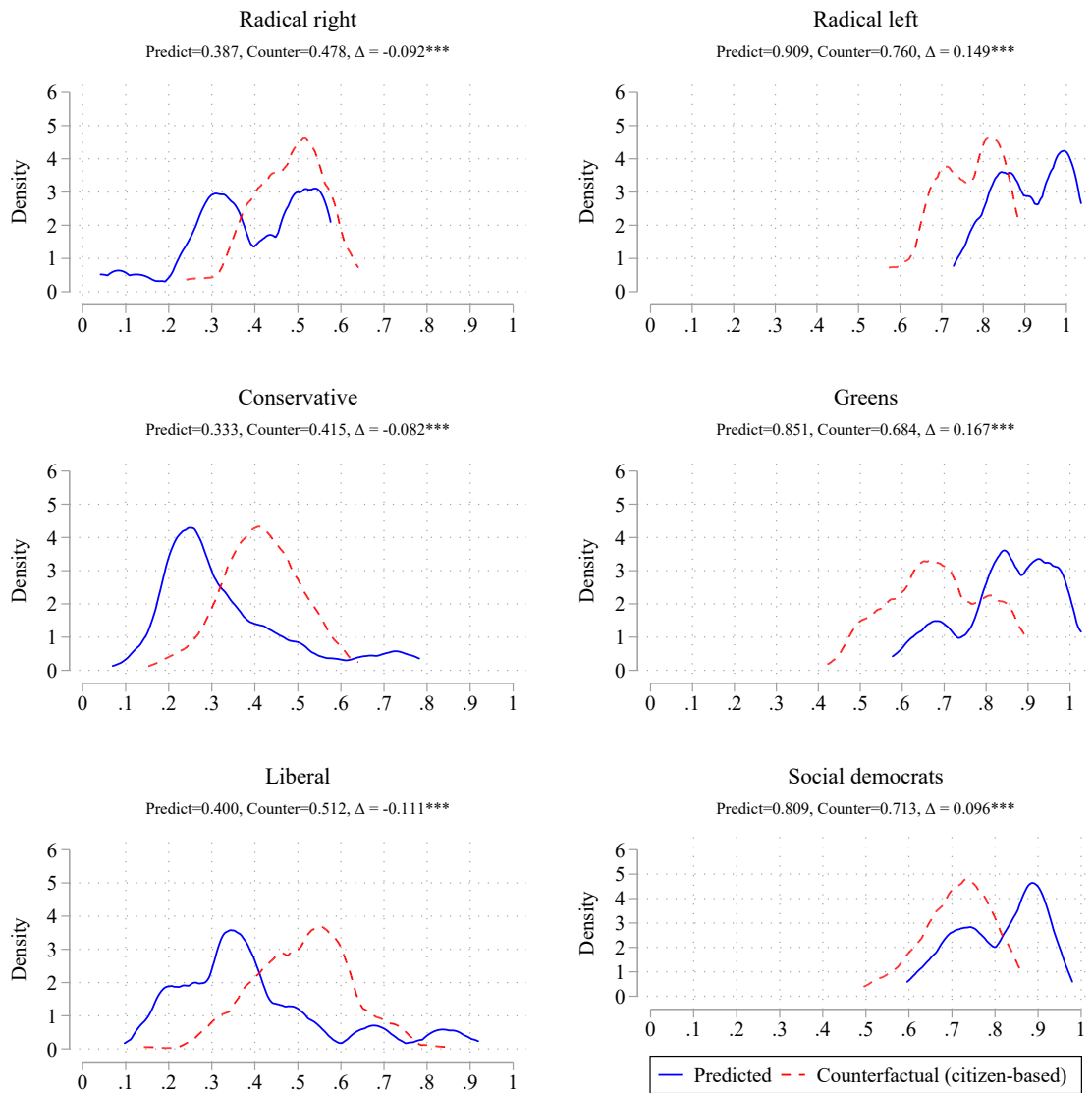
C Politicians' polarization in support for redistribution

Figure C-1: Polarization among politicians in support for redistributive policies



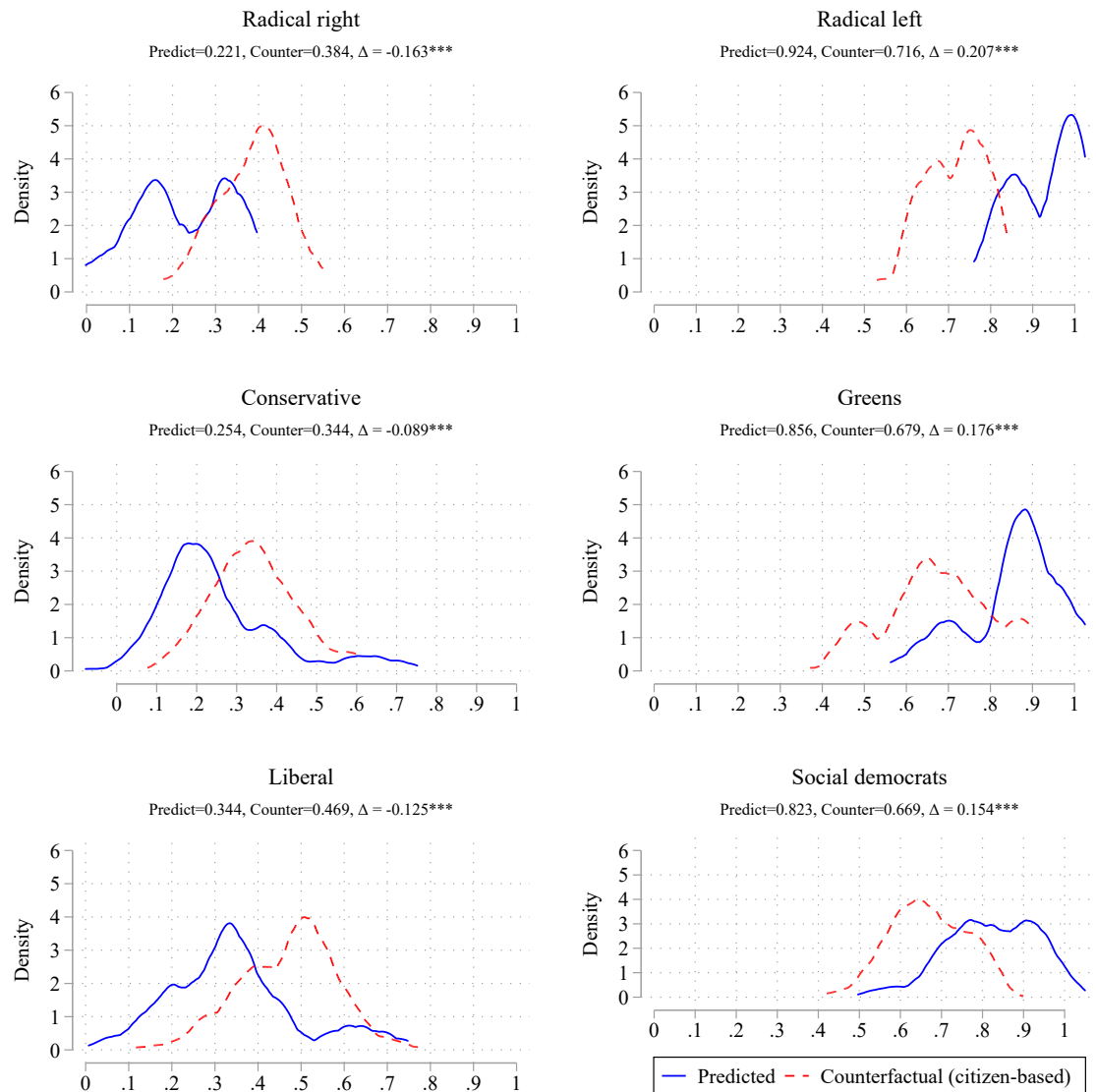
Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Values for the Foster-Wolfson polarization index are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions. Significance stars refer to the difference in Foster-Wolfson index values between the two distributions: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ y *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure C–2: Politicians' support for *income redistribution* by family party



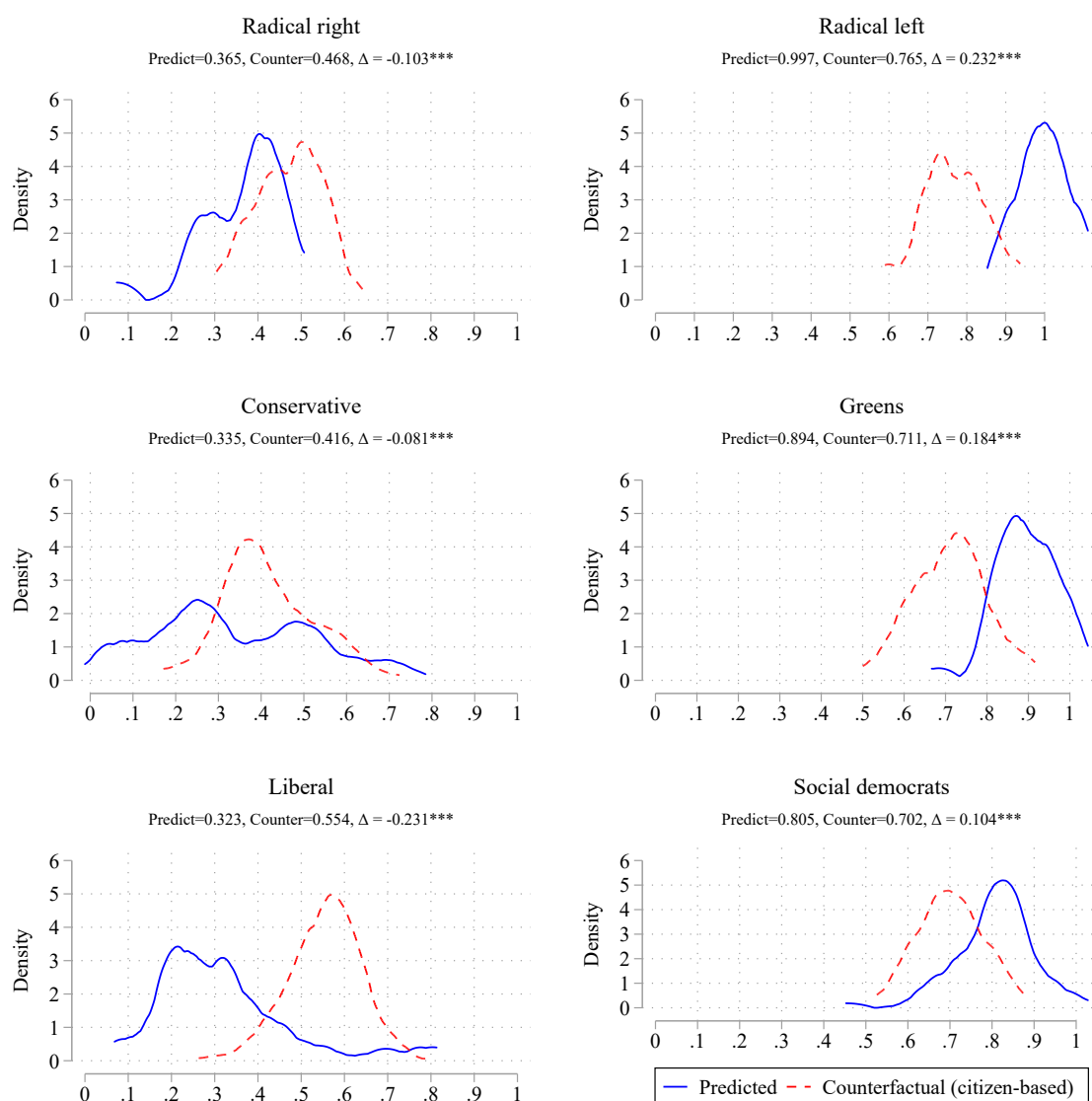
Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by *Income Redistribution*) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Mean values are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions, along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ y *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure C–3: Politicians' support for *wealth redistribution* by family party



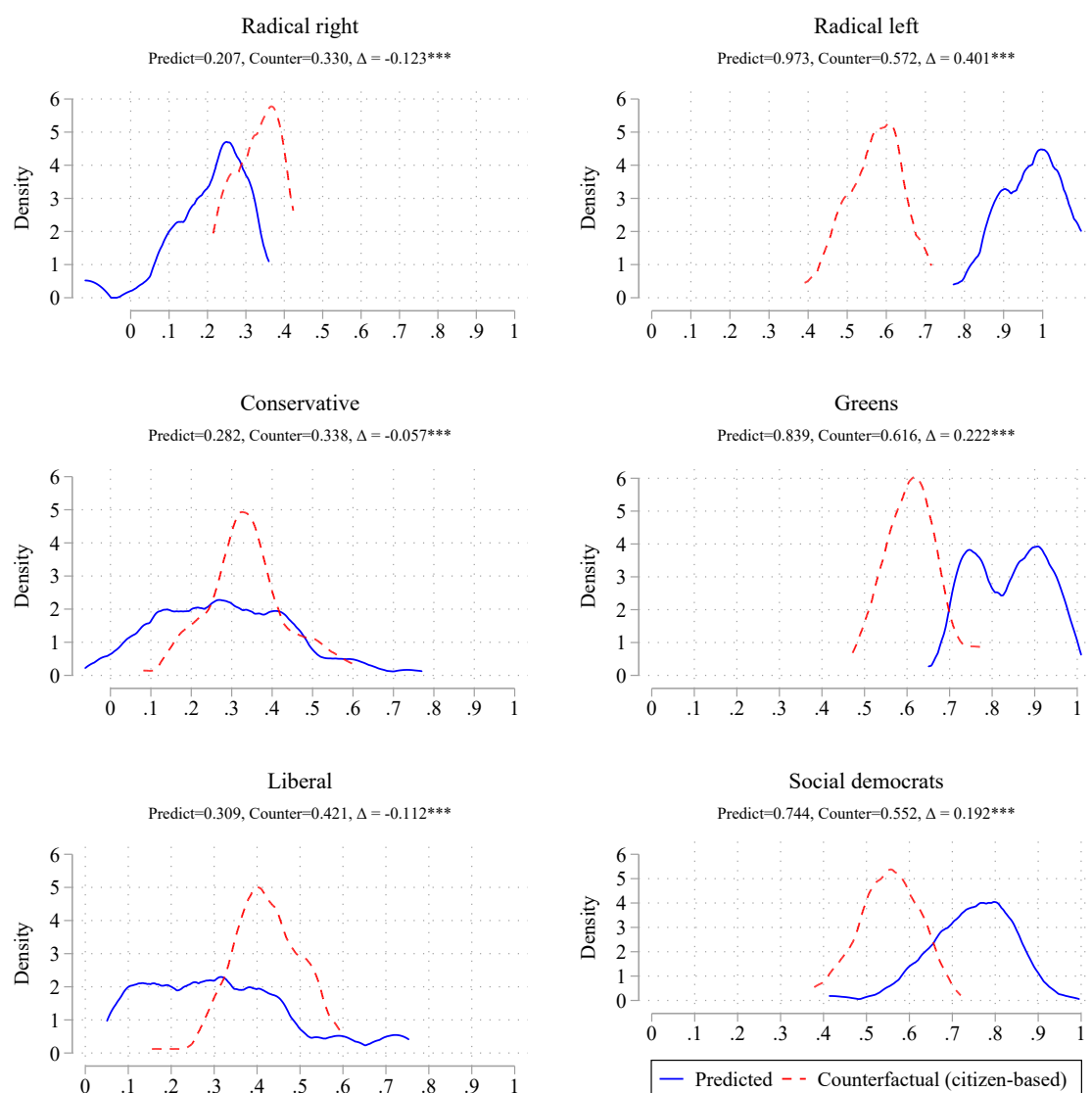
Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by *Wealth Redistribution*) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Mean values are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions, along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ y *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure C-4: Politicians' support for a *wealth tax* by family party



Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by *Wealth Tax*) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Mean values are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions, along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure C-5: Politicians' support for a *inheritance tax* by family party



Notes: The figure shows kernel density estimates of predicted support for redistribution (measured by *Inheritance Tax*) among politicians. The thick blue line represents predicted values based on politicians' own characteristics, including ideology, fairness beliefs, perceptions of inequality, demographics, and party affiliation. The dashed red line shows a counterfactual distribution, obtained by applying the regression estimates from the citizen sample to the characteristics of the politician sample. Mean values are reported for predicted (Predict) and counterfactual (Counter) distributions, along with significance stars for mean differences: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$ y *** $p < 0.01$.