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# Street-Level Bureaucracy and Democratic Backsliding. Evidence from Poland

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## Abstract

Street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) are central to the implementation of government policies, which becomes crucial in the context of democratic backsliding. Their willingness to carry out policies developed by "unprincipled" principals influences the final impact of backsliding on citizens. Research on civil servants and anecdotal evidence indicate that SLBs may engage in various dissent activities when they disagree with the politicians and their policies. However, the scale of this behavior depends on how many of them perceive the government as "unprincipled." Hence, to understand the potential for dissent activities in the face of democratic backsliding, we need to examine SLBs' support for the ruling government. This paper focuses on Poland, an important case of democratic backsliding, analyzing the approval of the opposition parties and the protests in the wake of democracy-undermining reforms among the SLBs. By analyzing Polish Centre for Public Opinion Research survey data, it concludes that SLBs' support for the opposition was not overwhelming, rendering significant scale of dissent activities at the street level unlikely.

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# 1 Introduction

Governments presiding over democratic backsliding consolidate their power by capturing or weakening institutions at the heart of liberal democracy to enable greater executive control (Bermeo 2016). These institutions include the media, the judiciary, but also the backbone of state operations, the civil service, which ends up captured, sidelined, or ignored (Bauer et al, 2021). Hence, an urgent question in public administration is how civil servants respond to these assaults on their institutions as well as to specific policy proposals that undermine democratic norms. Some find hope in instances of bureaucratic resistance and sabotage, such as those witnessed during the Trump administration in the United States, which can be seen as forms of "guerilla governance" (O'Leary, 2010) in the face of unethical government actions (Schuster et al., 2022). Additionally, there are other dissent activities, such as raising concerns or objections to policies (voice), leaving the organization (exit) (Hirschmann, 1970), or engaging in foot-dragging (shirking) (Brehm & Gates, 1999).

While the civil service plays a critical role in policy formulation, it is the interactions between street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and citizens that ultimately shape policy implementation (Lipsky, 2010). Therefore, to fully comprehend how democratic backsliding affects citizens' lived experiences, we need to explore not only civil service reactions but also whether SLBs dutifully implement illiberal government policies or resist through "guerilla" methods or other forms of dissent, thus tempering the policies' effects.

Integrating O'Leary's framework with the literature on discretion and implementation willingness among street-level bureaucrats, I argue that the SLBs could potentially undermine government-led democratic backsliding through various forms of dissent activities *if* they fundamentally disagree with the ruling party's goals and ethics. This can

take both a directional form (sabotaging a policy and changing its shape) and intensity form (conscious shirking, but also putting in less effort). We have seen anecdotal evidence of this. For example, Hungarian teachers have declared that they will not teach ultraconservative curricula, which de-emphasize critical thinking (Dunai, 2020), and some have left the teaching profession in protest (Beauchamp, 2018).

However, this logic crucially hinges on bureaucrats rejecting their government's policies. To assess the potential for dissent, it is essential to analyze empirically the political preferences and beliefs of street-level bureaucrats. If they fundamentally support and endorse a backsliding government, they would be less likely to perceive its actions as fundamentally "unprincipled" and thus lack motivation to resist its policies.

This paper seeks to examine the Polish SLBs support for the opposition to Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS). PiS is the party responsible for democratic backsliding in Poland, which is one of the European countries that has experienced such regression in the last decade (Vachudova, 2020; Cianetti et al, 2018). It came to power in Poland in 2015 and promptly initiated measures to erode liberal democratic institutions, including the Constitutional Tribunal, judiciary, and media (Bernatt, 2022; Sadurski, 2019). The government took control of the Constitutional Tribunal by appointing duplicate judges and weakened judicial independence through reforms that expanded executive power over courts and judges. Additionally, it tightened its grip on public media and exerted pressure on private critical outlets like TVN (Mizejewski, 2018; Bernatt, 2022). PiS also quietly transformed the civil service, centralizing authority and favoring loyalists over merit-based hires (Mazur, 2021), leading some civil servants to leave the service due to disagreements with the government (Mazur, 2021).

PiS policies had a notable impact on street-level bureaucrats (SLBs), including judges and teachers. Judicial reforms led to the politicization of courts, prompting the judges'

association “Iustitia” to protest against democratic erosion (Bernatt, 2022). Similarly, teachers mobilized against the increasing politicization and centralization of education under PiS, which included proposed prison penalties for noncompliant school directors. Notably, many schools resisted the adoption of a government-backed controversial civic education textbook, and teacher associations rallied colleagues and parents to lobby against its adoption (Zbieg, 2022; Nodzyńska, 2022).

Despite these examples indicating SLB opposition, they remain anecdotal, and further evidence is required to accurately gauge the extent of potential resistance to undemocratic policies. Therefore, this paper aims to empirically establish the popularity of the opposition to the PiS government among street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and their stance on early illiberal reforms. To achieve this, I harmonized monthly surveys from the Polish Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) covering PiS' initial years in power until 2018. Analyzing SLB support over this period allows for an evaluation of how the early reforms influenced their political choices. Focusing on this specific timeframe enables a concentration on the agreement with reforms that contributed to democratic backsliding, rather than populist reforms that may have affected different SLB groups differently.

In reintroducing political attitudes into the analysis of responses to democratic backsliding, this paper sets itself apart from existing literature that either estimates responses assuming disagreement with the principal or describes individual cases of guerilla governance. Instead, it endeavors to estimate the actual scale of disagreement with the government presiding over democratic backsliding to determine the potential for all dissent activities at the street level in the context of democratic backsliding. I find that, in the case of Poland, SLBs' support for PiS opposition largely mirrored that of the general public and did not significantly increase in the face of protests over early institutional capture.

Consequently, the actual scale of dissent activities was unlikely to have a substantial impact on undermining the government at the street level.

## **2 Literature review**

To understand potential SLB reactions to democratic backsliding, this paper integrates the literature on dissent activities, including guerilla governance (O’Leary, 2010), with the evidence for bureaucratic responses to democratic backsliding.

### **2.1 Democratic backsliding and bureaucracy**

Democratic backsliding has been a growing concern in the recent years, as countries worldwide have seen the quality of their democratic institutions gradually eroded (Waldner & Lust, 2018). In Eastern Europe democratic backsliding in Poland and Hungary has been associated with the rule of right-wing ethnopopulist governments led by Law and Justice and Fidesz, respectively. This is not coincidental, as populism and democratic backsliding are closely intertwined. Whether considered an ideology or merely a set of strategies and discourses, populist parties and governments share characteristics that can enable democratic backsliding (Bernatt, 2022). First, they embrace a "thin ideology" pitting 'the pure people' against 'the corrupt elites' (Mudde, 2004). In the case of ethnopopulist parties, the people are understood in ethnic terms, while the elites are identified as individuals and institutions seen as promoting West European liberal values (Enyedi, 2020; Vachudova, 2020). This claim to unique ability to represent “the people” leads to anti-pluralist reform agenda, which often weakens key state institutions, as well as lowers engagement with civil society (Bauer and Becker, 2020). Second, beyond the content and discourse of populist

governments, they use procedures such as downplaying the role of experts and sidelining veto-players by reducing consultation, which further weakens policymaking (Bartha et al., 2020). Both features naturally put them on a collision course with the Civil Service, which ends up captured, sidelined, or ignored by the government (Bauer et al, 2021). Similarly, on the side of bureaucrats, the disagreement can stem both from a disapproval of populist government's policies and of how policies are conducted. For example, Story et al (2023) analyze the effect of politicized appointments to managerial positions on the civil service morale. However, in this paper I concentrate on the consequences of the first type of disagreement: the ideological conflict between the populist governments and bureaucracy.

## **2.2 Bureaucratic dissent**

To understand the bureaucratic reaction to ideological disagreement I build on a vast literature on the relationship between ideology and ethics (or “mission”), and bureaucratic (agent) behavior, analyzed by social sciences ranging from public administration (e.g., Brehm & Gates, 1999; O’Leary, 2010; Esteve & Schuster 2019) to economics (e.g., Besley & Ghatak 2018; Carpenter & Gong 2016). The effects identified can be divided into affecting the direction and intensity of work.

The *direction* stream analyzes how the content of work can be affected by disagreement with the task’s objectives. In O’Leary’s (2010) account of guerilla government, she presents ethics, specifically Waldo’s (1988) twelve ethical obligations, as one of the drivers of insubordinate behavior. O’Leary’s account concentrates on a specific type of behavior – actively pursuing actions undermining policymaking: from failing to implement subjectively unfair orders to holding clandestine meetings (O’Leary, 2010). The link between ethical concerns and dissent activities is not limited to the civil service, extending to the street level

(Gofen, 2014). When they disagree with policy they are tasked with implementing, street-level bureaucrats can display dissent activities from the same arsenal as civil servants, including a significant role for discretion (Lipsky, 2010). This possibility of interpretation and custom application of policy to individual clients makes SLB activities particularly open to shifts in the face of policy disapproval. It is important to note, however, that because of their place in policymaking hierarchy – between policymakers and clients – the SLBs are subject to pressures from above and below that shape their behavior differently to that of the civil service (Lipsky, 2010; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2012). Hence, while the actions at their disposal are similar in their nature, their relative applicability might be very different.

Ethical misalignment can also affect the *intensity* of work, decreasing the amount of effort put into the tasks. Following Hirschmann's (1970) typology, other than changing the policy, workers can change their levels of effort in activities using strategies such as exit (individuals leaving or withdrawing from an organization) and voice (individuals expressing their concerns within the organization). Building on Farrell's (1983) work, Brehm and Gates (1999) extend this menu of options to include dissent-shirking (not working because one is opposed to a particular policy output). On the street level, Tummers et al. (2012) show that the policy content is the most important factor in explaining willingness to implement policies among street-level bureaucrats. In addition to the general societal usefulness, moral judgement in relationships with specific clients is crucial in understanding the SLB behavior (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2012; Gofen, 2014). Recent literature on the effects of the ethical disagreement with "unprincipled" principals and their policies on dissent activities, both directional and intensive, shows that both the characteristics of the policy and of the



individual civil servant mediate the choice of dissent activity (Hollibaugh et al, 2020; Schuster et al, 2022).

Importantly, the negative effects of ideological disagreement on performance are not limited to the SLBs directly responsible for the disliked policy. Piotrowska (2024) shows that policy spillovers and person-organisation fit explain how ideological disagreement negatively affects job satisfaction and motivation of SLBs more generally, going beyond to those directly affected by policy change. Moreover, this framework distinguishes between shirking (purposefully putting in less effort into delivering a policy) and low motivation (resulting in worse outcomes, albeit not necessarily used as a conscious strategy) (Piotrowska, 2024).

### **3 Theory: Democratic backsliding and SLB dissent**

To understand how democratic backsliding affects SLB dissent, we first need to understand two unique features that distinguish democratic backsliding from regular policy choices. First, the disagreement with democratic backsliding is different from other forms of political misalignment. Specifically, disagreeing with governments causing democratic backsliding differs from regular policy misalignment because of its deeper metapolitical stakes: such policies do not just change policy content but systematically erode liberal democratic structures within which policy is made. Thus, dissent acquires a metapolitical dimension, in addition to opposing specific policy choices. Second, efficient policymaking is particularly important for populist governments. Right-wing governments in Eastern Europe rule on the basis that winning the elections creates legitimacy for the charismatic leaders to build a strong state that can ignore civil society in its quest to deliver policies beneficial for “the pure people” (Enyedi, 2020). This reduction in stakeholder NGO

consultations is an element that contributes to democratic backsliding. Hence, any failure to deliver policies swiftly undermines the legitimacy of the centralized populist modus operandi.

How could SLB response limit democratic backsliding? Building on the literature discussed above, the full range of possible responses can be understood as relating to different dimensions of performance and concerning the SLBs directly engaged in delivering policies they disagree with, as well as all the others that do not approve of the populist governments in power<sup>1,2</sup> (Table 1).

**Table 1** The range of possible responses to democratic backsliding

		Dimension of performance	
		Direction	Intensity
Link with the policy in question	Direct	Sabotage	Shirking, exit, low motivation
	Indirect	No effect	Low motivation, exit

The first response, sabotage, involves SLBs disagreeing with the policy they are directly engaging in changing the form that the policy takes. A Polish example would be the lack of adoption of a government-endorsed civic education textbook, which was generally criticized

<sup>1</sup> Ethical disagreement is related but not a necessary or sufficient condition for all these actions. It is possible for an agent to display shirking (leisure-shirking) or sabotage for own self-interest (Brehm and Gates, 1999; O’Leary, 2010). Similarly, ethical dissent might not translate into sabotage (e.g., Schuster et al., 2022). Other factors such as individual public service motivation (Schuster et al., 2022), management (May and Winter, 2009), organizational context and individual characteristics (Tummers et al., 2012) play a mediating role.

<sup>2</sup> As discussed above, SLB divergence does not have to stem from ideological disagreement with the government. It can be self-serving, e.g., leisure-shirking. Hence, dissent activities describe actions where SLBs do not work to maximum effort in line with governmental intentions for a policy because they do not agree with the government.

for its far-right narrative (Zbieg, 2022; Nodzyńska, 2022). Moreover, in addition to changing the policy content, SLBs directly responsible for policy implementation can shirk or unconsciously disengage if they see the policy they are responsible for as meaningless (Tummers, 2012). This can explain the wave of resignations and high vacancy rates in the Polish army and police, which were often attributed to their excessive politicization (Rp.pl, 2023; Zawadka, 2023). However, the SLBs directly responsible for the implementation of the policy they disagree with are not the only group that can display lower effort as a result of political disagreement with the populist governments. The indirect link, created by policy spillovers and person-organization fit, affects the motivation of SLBs more generally. To understand the effect of spillovers, consider the reforms of the judiciary in Poland, which caused a rule of law dispute with the European Commission. This led to the freezing of the COVID-19 recovery funds, including 18% designated for healthcare system improvements (Portal Funduszy Europejskich, 2022). Hence, while this reform has targeted the judiciary, it affected the funds available for new medical equipment. Similarly, teachers can disagree with the state portrayal of their clients (e.g., the LGBTQ youth) (Ja, Nauczyciel, 2020), even if the curriculum itself does not change. Similarly, following the recent proposed judicial overhaul, the Israeli Medical Association, held a strike, saying that the judicial overhaul would “devastate the healthcare system” (The Guardian, 2023). Concerning the person-organization fit, the management literature shows that ideological misfit with the employer and the company’s reputations affects employees’ likelihood of exit (Helm, 2013; Bermiss & McDonald, 2018). Hence, working for an undemocratic government might lower the SLB pride in their employer, if they disagree with the government illiberal ideology. This, in turn, translates into lower job satisfaction even among those SLBs whose policies were not affected (Piotrowska, 2024). Hence, both those directly involved in specific policies undermining pluralism (e.g., education) and the Rule of Law (e.g., judicial independence) and

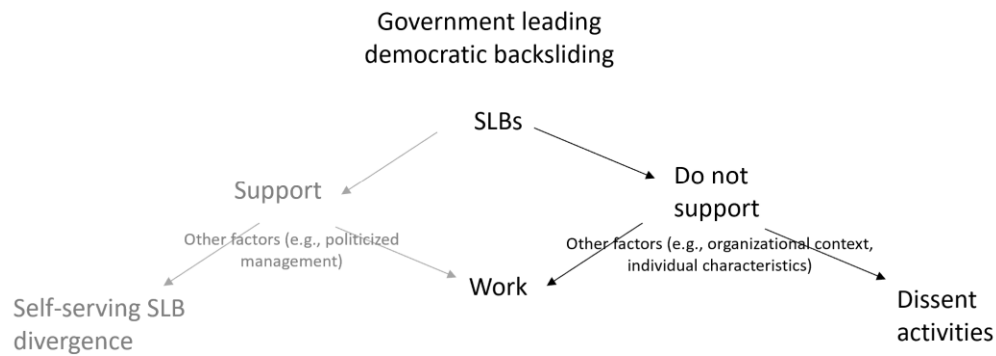
those who work on other policies but disagree with the illiberal turn of government can have effect on the direction and quality of policy implementation.

This in turn translates into potentially limiting democratic backsliding in two ways. First, the policies themselves are not implemented as intended, as in the case of the civic education textbook. Second, a much bigger portion of SLBs can put in less effort into their work, reducing the quality of public services. This channel is particularly strong and important during democratic backsliding. Its strength comes from the fact that political agreement takes on the metapolitical dimension described above. Hence, the disagreement might have a stronger effect than a regular ideological misalignment. Its importance relates to the second unique feature of populist leaders. If one of their claims to power is that they are effective at policy delivery, inefficient implementation across the board can reduce the legitimacy of a non-pluralist *modus operandi*. This, in turn, can reduce the electoral chances of the populist government in power.

Figure 1 provides a high-level summary of the above discussion. Civil servants and street level bureaucrats can exhibit dissent activities<sup>3</sup> if they are in ideological disagreement with the government (Figure 1). Democratic backsliding provides ample opportunity for such disagreements as, beyond specific policy choices, it has a metapolitical character, weakening democracy. While dissent activities can be caused by both ideological misalignment and other factors, such as poor management (Story et al, 2023), organizational context or individual characteristics, policy content has the biggest impact on the willingness to implement policies among street-level bureaucrats (Tummers et al, 2012).

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<sup>3</sup> By dissent activities, I mean the sum of actions stemming from ethical disagreement with the government other than working as dissent activities. These include all of the above: sabotage, shirking, exit, but also defensive and acquiescent silence (Story et al, 2023).



**Figure 1** Summary of the chain of factors leading to dissent activities in response to democratic backsliding in the public sector

Hence, the SLBs can display different responses that can ultimately translate into limiting democratic backsliding. However, whether any of this applies crucially rests on whether they have the motive to do so (Figure 1). The existing literature mostly considers the likelihood of different dissent activities *conditional* on the respondent disagreeing with the proposed policy. But, without knowing the scale of the disagreement, we cannot provide an estimate of the scale of resistance. Hence, beyond extending the theoretical discussion of bureaucratic responses to democratic backsliding to the street level, the key empirical contribution of this paper is to empirically evaluate the SLB support of specific populist governments – the Polish Law and Justice led ones – thus allowing us to estimate the maximum possible likelihood of the dissent activities.

### 3 Data and Methodology

The main empirical purpose of this paper is to establish the level of ideological misalignment of SLBs with the Polish government at the helm of democratic backsliding, led by Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS), to estimate the scale of grounds on which dissent activities might arise.

To do this, I use a harmonized<sup>4</sup> version of the cross-sectional data from the Polish Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), established in 1982, which has been conducting monthly “Current problems and events” polls since 1990. The advantage of using CBOS data is threefold. Firstly, it includes detailed demographic questions, enabling the identification of SLBs based on their employment status and occupation category. Secondly, its monthly frequency allows for the creation of a substantial dataset with over 48,000 respondents, ensuring sufficient statistical power for robust results. Lastly, the data also includes questions that help explore the significance of democracy for SLBs and their responses to protests in defense of democracy.

I concentrate on the two years before and after the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections, analyzing data from 2014 until the end of 2017. This allows me to benchmark the findings against the time when Poland was considered fully democratic and before democratic backsliding has started. In doing so, I hope to paint a robust picture of SLB political preferences and their evolution over time. Moreover, concentrating on the early years of PiS rule allows me to isolate the effect of policies leading to democratic backsliding<sup>5</sup>. Hence, this paper focuses on the metapolitical disagreement over democratic institutions, rather than specific populist policy disagreements.

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<sup>4</sup> As the data was collected over a long period of time, the response coding has changed and required harmonization.

<sup>5</sup> Appendix section A2 describes the reforms weakening the judiciary, all of which happened in the first months of the PiS rule.

The two key empirical variables for this study are: who are the street-level bureaucrats and how should we think about ideological alignment in the context of the CBOS surveys. The concept of a street-level bureaucrat contains two key elements: (i) they are a public sector worker and (ii) they interact directly with the public when implementing government policies. Hence, I code as SLB those who say that they (i) are employed by a completely state-owned, local government-owned, or public institution, office, or enterprise *and* (ii) their work sector could be categorized as creative professions (professionals with higher education, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers), technicians and other middle-level personnel (nurses, non-commissioned officers, police officers), and administrative and office workers (secretaries, postal workers, receptionists, telephone operators). While this proxy is likely to be noisy, I believe that it does a good job identifying SLBs<sup>6</sup>.

The second set of key variables corresponds to the respondent ethical and ideological disagreement with the PiS government. Most political science studies assume that citizens vote for the parties that they see as spatially closest to them ideologically, with important mediating factors including party identification, electoral system, positional and valence issues, and candidate characteristics (see e.g., Stubager et al, 2018). Hence, for the purposes of this study, I will treat a voting intention<sup>7</sup> for the opposition parties (parties other than PiS and its junior coalition partners, *Polska Razem* and *Solidarna Polska*), as a sign of ideological disapproval of the government. This implicitly “flattens” the voting decision to two stages and three choices: vote (yes/no), if yes (opposition/PiS government). To declare a voting intention for the opposition parties, the respondent has to feel closer to them ideologically and see the difference between PiS and opposition parties as sufficiently big to motivate

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<sup>6</sup> I discuss the details of coding of SLBs from the general survey and the measure’s robustness in the Appendix A1 and Table A1.

<sup>7</sup> The question under consideration: “If the next parliamentary elections happened next Sunday, which party/political initiative’s candidate would you vote for?”

voting. This rough proxy assesses whether the respondent finds the entire political package presented by PiS, including all policies (both delivered and promised), rhetoric, and treatment of political institutions, unattractive enough to intend to vote for the opposition parties. The opposition parties as used here include an admittedly ideologically wide range of parties, from left-wing *Zjednoczona Lewica* coalition to right-wing *KORWiN*, with the biggest opposition party being the center right *Platforma Obywatelska*.

The intention to vote for the opposition, while not a sufficient predictor of participation in actions that may counter democratic backsliding, is nonetheless necessary for involvement in dissent activities. Consequently, SLBs expressing support for PiS are unlikely to engage in sabotage or ideologically-motivated shirking. Conversely, the subset of opposition voters overlaps with, but does not equate to, the group potentially participating in dissent activities. Given the focus of this paper on estimating the maximum potential pool of individuals inclined towards dissent, voting intention serves as a suitable proxy.

The following analysis of political preferences of SLBs in the context of democratic backsliding considers three auxiliary questions, which I explore in the coming sections:

1. What are the political preferences of Polish SLBs?
2. How important is democracy for Polish SLBs?
3. How strongly did the Polish SLBs disapprove of reforms weakening the judiciary?

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of key variables measured for the both the whole sample and SLBs only. While the two groups are roughly comparable, the SLB respondents are generally more likely to be female, more likely to vote, better educated, younger and come from a larger town.



**Table 2** Descriptive statistics of the key variables

Variable	Full sample				SLBs			
	N	Mean	Min	Max	N	Mean	Min	Max
birth year	48,680	1965.77	1926	1999	4,500	1971.36	1935	1998
woman	48,680	0.54	0	1	4,500	0.70	0	1
town size	48,680	2.79	1	6	4,500	3.21	1	6
SLB	23,896	0.19	0	1	4,500	1.00	1	1
education	48,680	6.22	1	12	4,500	9.38	1	12
religious <sup>8</sup>	48,302	2.90	1	5	4,451	2.83	1	5
year	48,680	2015.51	2014	2017	4,500	2015.50	2014	2017
democracy <sup>9</sup>	6,156	1.99	1	4	609	1.90	1	4
voter <sup>10</sup>	48,680	0.57	0	1	4,500	0.65	0	1
PiS <sup>voters11</sup>	27,654	0.40	0	1	2,915	0.34	0	1
PiS <sup>everyone</sup>	48,680	0.22	0	1	4,500	0.22	0	1
Opposition <sup>voter</sup>	27,654	0.60	0	1	2,915	0.66	0	1
Opposition <sup>everyone</sup>	48,680	0.34	0	1	4,500	0.43	0	1

### 3.1 Political preferences of Polish SLBs

In this section I estimate the intention to vote for the opposition parties by SLBs two years before and after PiS came to power, as compared to those employed elsewhere<sup>12</sup>. The juxtaposition with non-SLB respondents is deliberate. First, it is useful for inference from opinion polls. If the political preferences of SLBs are similar to the general population, it allows us to gauge the SLB support for PiS and the opposition from opinion polls without the need to conduct specific surveys. Second, it allows me to understand the SLB behaviour in a

<sup>8</sup> „How often do you participate in religious practices?” 5-point scale from 1. A couple of times a week to 5. Never

<sup>9</sup> „Democracy is preferable to any other form of government.” 4-point scale from 1. I strongly agree to 4. I strongly disagree.

<sup>10</sup> 1 if the voter indicates that they would vote in hypothetical elections and 0 if they say that they would not.

<sup>11</sup> 1 if the respondent declares that they would support PiS and its coalition partners over other parties and 0 if they would vote for another party.

<sup>12</sup> Unemployed and market inactive respondents are not included in the analysis due to their different set of voting motivations and preferences.

broader context adding a useful benchmark to understand what constitutes “high” or “low” levels of support.

My main dependent variable is a binary indicator distinguishing those who express an intention to vote for any of the opposition parties in a hypothetical election taking place the following Sunday. The average support for the opposition among voters is 60.4% for the entire sample and slightly higher at 65.7% for SLBs (Table 2). However, since we are specifically interested in the likelihood of dissent action, we need to consider the support for the opposition among all respondents, not just voters. This way, we can focus on individuals who have a strong enough ideological disagreement to declare their intention to vote for a party other than PiS. Among all respondents, the support for opposition parties is 34.4%, while among SLBs it is higher at 42.6%. While this might indicate a generally higher support for the opposition among SLBs, I run OLS regressions<sup>13</sup> to control for other respondent characteristics.

The following regressions include controls that could affect the likelihood of voting for PiS and support for democracy: individual-level variables (year of birth, size of town, participation in religious practices, age, education, gender), administrative district<sup>14</sup>, and the survey year (Table 3). As visible in Table 3, after controlling for demographic variables, SLBs are no more supportive of the opposition parties than non-SLBs. This might stem from the higher proportion of women (who are more supportive of the opposition if they vote but are less likely to vote) and higher educational status (associated with a higher support for the

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<sup>13</sup> OLS has been chosen as default over logistic regression for two reasons. First, the outcome variable has a mean of 0.39, well away from the extremes of 0 and 1. Second, the results are more easily interpretable. However, in the results table (Table 3) I also include results from the logistic regression.

<sup>14</sup> Support for PiS is strongly geographically correlated, hence it is appropriate to control for the respondent district. However, this variable is not always collected, hence some of the robustness checks exclude it to maximize the power of the test.

opposition parties) among the SLBs. When keeping these two variables constant, the difference in support of the opposition between SLBs and non-SLBs disappears.

**Table 3** OLS regression of government worker support of the opposition parties

	(1) opposition	(2) opposition	(3) opposition	(4) opposition	(5) opposition	(6) opposition
SLB	0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.30*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)
2015		0.08*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)	0.07*** (0.01)		0.31*** (0.04)
2016		0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)		0.28*** (0.04)
2017		0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)		0.01 (0.07)
Education			0.03*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)		0.13*** (0.01)
Women			-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)		-0.27*** (0.03)
Religious				0.05*** (0.00)		0.21*** (0.01)
Town size				0.02*** (0.00)		0.08*** (0.01)
Birth year				-0.00*** (0.00)		-0.01*** (0.00)
_cons	0.36*** (0.00)	0.36*** (0.01)	0.26*** (0.02)	2.43*** (0.56)	-0.60*** (0.02)	8.40*** (2.55)
<i>Model</i>	OLS	OLS+FE	OLS+FE	OLS+FE	Logit	Logit+FE
<i>N</i>	23896	18820	23896	18652	23896	18652
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.07		

Standard errors in parentheses \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Fixed effects: year and wojewodztwo (district)

This has two implications. First, over the whole period under consideration, the proportion of all SLBs who supported opposition parties was c.a. 42.6%. While it is a significant number, it is very much an upper bound of those that could contemplate dissent activities, as it includes all non-PiS voters. Even this upper estimate does not pass 50%. Second, SLBs, due to their demographic characteristics display a c.a. 7pp higher support for the opposition, as measured among all respondents. Hence, in the future research their dissatisfaction can be gleaned from opinion polls but needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Having established that the majority of SLBs has not been supportive of the opposition, we need to unpack this result relative to support for one specific metapolitical feature that could be seen as separating PiS from the opposition, i.e., the importance of democracy.

### **3.2 Support for democracy**

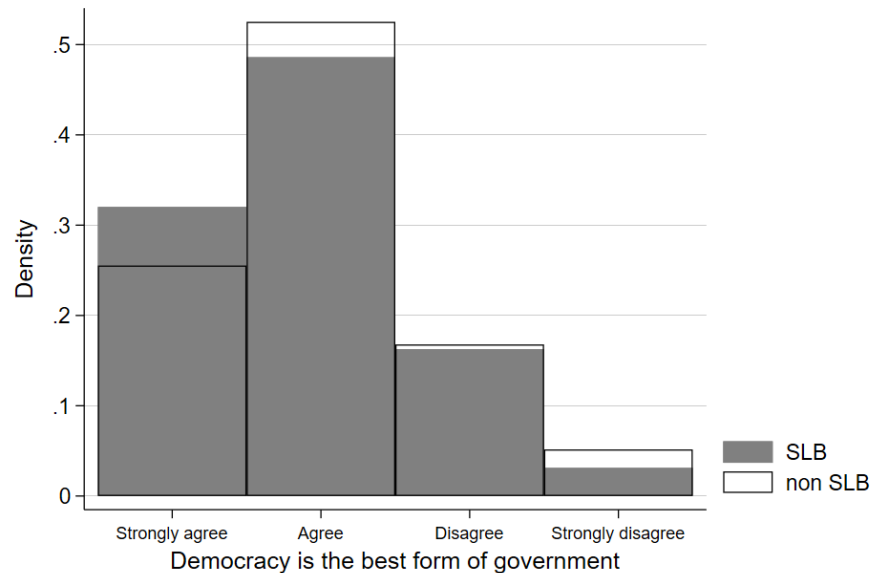
I consider the importance of democracy for SLBs as a proxy for whether democratic violations could reduce their support for PiS. Any lack of change in voting intention could stem from two mechanisms. First, the respondent may support PiS because they do not see reforms as undermining democracy. Second, the respondent may support PiS despite seeing reforms as undemocratic, because they prioritize other PiS policies over democracy. In the second group, those who highly value democracy are more likely to shift their support towards opposition parties when confronted with sufficiently illiberal reforms, especially if they perceive these reforms as undermining democratic principles.

I use a four-category ordinal variable<sup>15</sup> to gauge support for democracy, based on whether respondents consider democracy the best form of government. On average, SLBs score 1.90 (above “Agree”), indicating a preference for democracy compared to non-SLBs,

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<sup>15</sup> Statement: “Democracy is the best form of government” scored from 1 „Strongly agree” to 4 „Strongly disagree”. A higher value indicates lower levels of agreement and hence lower support of democracy.

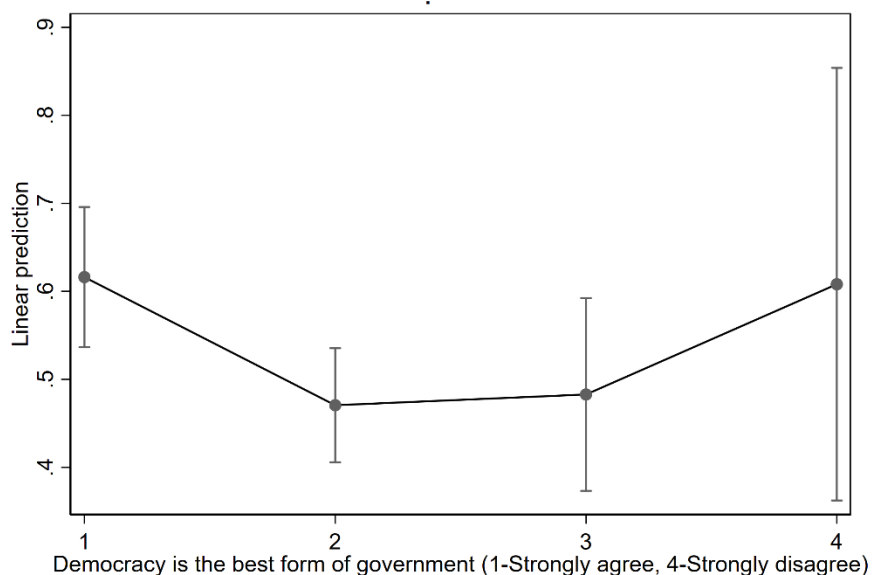
who score 2.01 (between “Agree” and “Disagree”) (Figure 2). Among SLBs, 80.62% either agree or strongly agree with this statement, while the general population shows 78.05% agreement. This suggests that if an SLB perceives a reform as a threat to democracy, it is likely to affect them slightly more than a non-SLB respondent.



**Figure 2** Histogram of preference for democracy among SLBs and non-SLBs

Does this preference for democracy translate into support for the opposition parties and hence an increased likelihood of undertaking a dissent action? I address this question with an OLS regression of opposition vote determinants run on both the whole sample and SLBs and paying particular attention to preference for democracy (Table A3, Figure 3). Table A3 shows us that a lower support for democracy decreases the likelihood of voting for the opposition, with a 5pp decrease per category on average. However, decomposing the effect for different levels of democracy support, we can see that the biggest decrease comes from moving away from strong support to any lower category (Figure 3). Moreover, as above, once

we control for their characteristics, SLBs are no more likely to support the opposition conditional on their preference for democracy (Table A3).



**Figure 3** Support for democracy and voting opposition

### 3.3 Effect of reforms weakening the judiciary

The Law and Justice government started weakening the democratic institutions from the very beginnings of its rule. Appendix A2 details the developments and reforms introduced between 2015 and 2017. In this section, I consider SLB reactions to the protests against weakening Constitutional Tribunal that were held in late 2015, organized by the Committee for the Defense of Democracy, as well as July 2017 and December 2017 protests in support of judicial independence.

The former set of protests followed a controversy surrounding the appointment of Constitutional Tribunal judges during the transition between the previous, *Platforma*

*Obywatelska* (PO)-led, government and the new PiS-led one, which eventually led to the conflict with the European Commission over the rule of law concerns. The latter wave of protests, which took place in 250 cities between 20 and 24 July 2017, followed reform proposals that were seen as politicizing the courts. In December 2017, The European Commission summarized the institutional developments as follows: “Over a period of two years, the Polish authorities have adopted more than 13 laws affecting the entire structure of the justice system in Poland (...).” (European Commission, 2017).

The CBOS data allow me to consider the respondents’ opinions about infringement of the Rule of Law in three complementary ways. First, I can check whether in the months of the protests<sup>16</sup> the support of SLBs for the opposition parties has increased. Second, given the effect of the reforms might be cumulative, rather than just pertinent to a specific month, I consider the changes in support for the opposition over the four years of the sample. Third, CBOS surveys asked questions concerning support for the 2017 protests. Given that in the above section we saw that SLBs, because of their demographics, have a slightly higher preference for democracy than other groups, I expect them to be concerned about the weakening of the judiciary<sup>17</sup>. I am again standardizing all the regressions against the general public to reveal how representative the protests are of the preferences of the SLBs.

Starting with the effect of the survey being conducted just after the protests, I expect that protest months should be associated with a higher support for the opposition. This is because the protests are likely to have increased the visibility and salience of the judicial reforms. Table 4 shows that the reforms alone do not have any discernable effect on the support for the opposition among the general population or SLBs particularly. While there

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<sup>16</sup> The “reforms” dummy takes on a value of 1 in January 2016 and July, August and December 2017.

<sup>17</sup> While judges among CBOS respondents might be coded as SLBs, making these reforms relevant directly for the work of judges, I am not concerned about them driving the results as they are likely to constitute a minute fraction of respondents (c.a. 5% using the data from Appendix A1).

is a slight difference between the coefficients for being an SLB in the months following protests as compared to others (1#0 vs 1#1), this difference is not statistically significant.

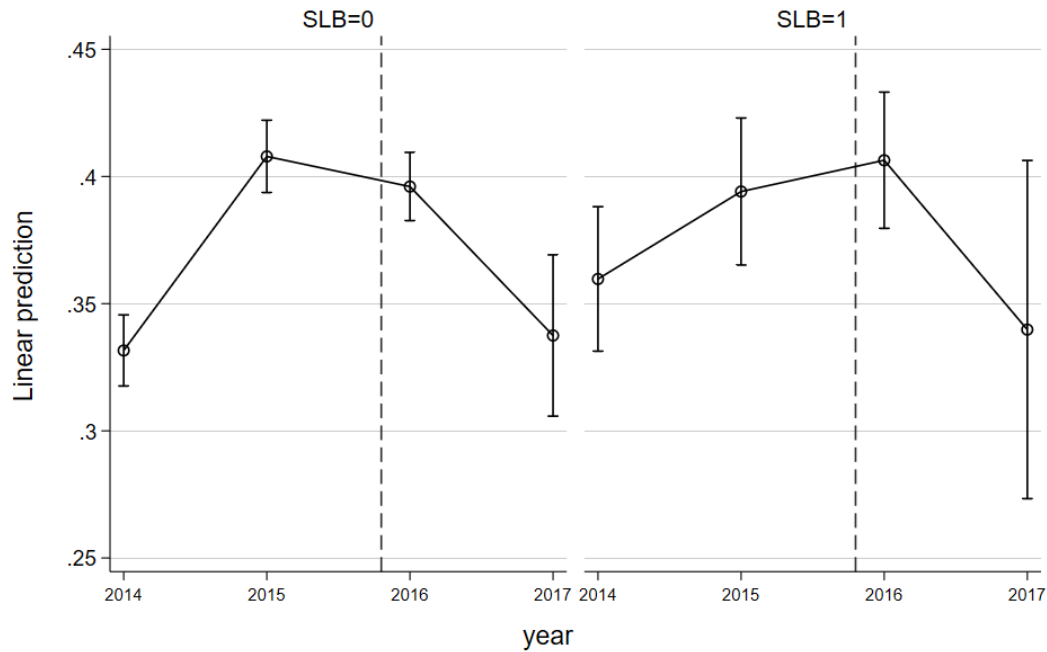
**Table 4** The effect of reform months on support for the opposition

	(1) opposition		(2) opposition		(3) opposition		(4) opposition	
SLB	0.07***	(0.01)			0.01	(0.01)		
Reforms	0.01	(0.01)			0.02	(0.02)		
SLB#reforms								
0#0			ref				ref	
0#1			0.02	(0.01)			0.01	(0.02)
1#0			0.07***	(0.01)			0.01	(0.01)
1#1			0.08***	(0.03)			0.05	(0.04)
2014	ref		ref		ref		ref	
2015	0.08***	(0.01)	0.08***	(0.01)	0.07***	(0.01)	0.07***	(0.01)
2016	0.06***	(0.01)	0.06***	(0.01)	0.06***	(0.01)	0.06***	(0.01)
2017	0.02**	(0.01)	0.02**	(0.01)	0.00	(0.02)	0.00	(0.02)
Education					0.03***	(0.00)	0.03***	(0.00)
Religious					0.05***	(0.00)	0.05***	(0.00)
Town size					0.02***	(0.00)	0.02***	(0.00)
Woman					-0.06***	(0.01)	-0.06***	(0.01)
Birth year					-0.00***	(0.00)	-0.00***	(0.00)
_cons	0.32***	(0.01)	0.32***	(0.01)	2.42***	(0.56)	2.42***	(0.56)
<i>Model</i>	<i>OLS</i>		<i>OLS</i>		<i>OLS+FE</i>		<i>OLS+FE</i>	
<i>N</i>	23896		23896		18652		18652	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.01		0.01		0.07		0.07	

Standard errors in parentheses \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Fixed effects: year and wojewodztwo (district)

However, the dummy is a rather crude proxy, as the reforms could have a cumulative effect going beyond individual protests. Hence, I consider the support for opposition over time (Table A2). Figure 4 shows that, while I only observe the first two years of the PiS government, the support for the opposition parties both among the SLBs and non-SLBs has been falling after PiS' electoral victory.





**Figure 4** Predicted margins of OLS<sup>18</sup> of SLB status in each survey year on the support for the opposition parties with 95% confidence intervals. The dashed line marks the timing of the electoral victory of PiS.

Finally, the CBOS surveys ask their respondents questions concerning current affairs, including the respondent support for protests surrounding the reforms of the judiciary. Table 5 shows that the SLBs were not statistically significantly more supportive of the protests than the general population. In particular, 54.22% (vs 45.84% in the general population) of the SLB voters supported the protests and 3.37% (vs 3%) participated in them. While unlikely to be generalizable<sup>19</sup>, this ratio is interesting, as it gives us an indication of the general range of people willing to act on their political beliefs, in this case by protesting the reforms they disagree with.

<sup>18</sup> Full table of results can be found in Appendix A3.

<sup>19</sup> Because the sample only looks at one survey, the number of responses is rather small (90 SLB respondents).

**Table 6** OLS determinants of the support for and participation in protests against politicization of the judiciary

	(1)		(2)	
	Protest support		Protested	
Opposition	0.39***	(0.05)	0.03**	(0.02)
SLB	0.00	(0.06)	-0.02	(0.02)
Woman	0.06	(0.04)	0.01	(0.02)
Education	0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.00)
Religious	0.06***	(0.02)	0.01	(0.01)
Town size	0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.00)
Birth year	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
_cons	-1.51	(3.24)	-0.18	(1.18)
<i>N</i>	480		522	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.19		0.03	

Standard errors in parentheses \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Fixed effects: year and wojewodztwo (district)

## 4 Discussion

Summing up the above discussion, it is apparent that the ideological disagreement of SLBs with PiS is not universal. The support for opposition parties among SLBs hovers around 43% of respondents. Moreover, while they generally have a moderate to strong preference for democracy over other forms of rule, SLBs did not change their declared political support in response to protests against the reforms of the judiciary. This, in turn, might stem from the fact that the protests themselves have been divisive roughly along the political support lines and hence did not manage to convince many voters to change their allegiance.

This may dampen the hope placed in street-level bureaucracy to sabotage the undemocratic developments in countries experiencing democratic backsliding, and in Poland specifically. Assuming that Schuster et al.'s (2022) estimates (i.e., 64.3% respondents are willing to engage in the “voice” response if they think is against the interest of the public)

generalize to the Polish case and to street-level bureaucrats, this would mean that on average c.a. 27% SLBs could exercise this most common form of dissent activity. The numbers for sabotage or exit would be correspondingly smaller: between 10% and 16.3%, and 14.4%, respectively. Given the way that I operationalized ideological divergence, including in the measure of the opposition all the non-PiS parties, this is also likely to be the very upper bound of possibility. Considering the proportion of SLBs that participated in protests in defense of judiciary independence in Poland, the proportion of those willing to act is likely much smaller.

However, whether this number should be seen as big or small depends on several factors. Most importantly, the concentration of political alignment among SLBs with PiS, and for governments leading to democratic backsliding countries more generally, is likely to be heterogeneous: higher for some groups of SLBs than others. Specifically, the groups closer to reforms undermining the democratic structure of the country, for example judges, will be more directly affected by these reforms than, e.g., teachers. The latter might be affected by populist reforms changing the curriculum. However, these affect the democratic stability of the state in a less direct way. Hence, the ideological disagreement with democratic backsliding might be concentrated among particular types of SLBs and should be investigated in future research.

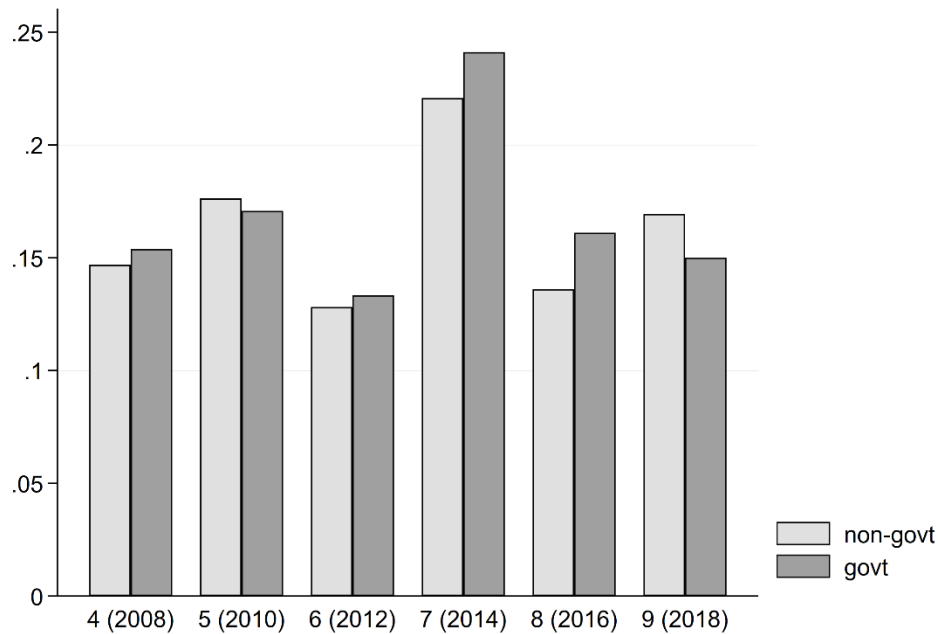
Moreover, this paper focused on the first two years of democratic backsliding to isolate the effect of the infringements of the Rule of Law, rather than specific illiberal and populist reforms that can differentially affect SLBs. As visible on the example of the controversial civic education textbook, several schools chose an alternative textbook to the one promoted by the government, thus removing some of the controversial content from students' required reading. Hence, a lack of a widespread opposition to reforms limiting the rule of law, does not mean that individual populist actions of the governments will not be frustrated.

However, as these reforms are more specific to fulfilling their populist vision, rather than democratic backsliding per se, I did not consider them in this paper. Hence, it is important to distinguish between policy disagreement with democratic backsliding more broadly and with populist policies specifically.

Going beyond the above limitations, the argument of the importance of scale of disagreement for the likelihood of SLB dissent activities applies more broadly. For example, while Poland is a representative case of a country that has undergone democratic backsliding, the power vested in its government is not Europe's highest. Hungary has been the prime example of democratic backsliding and illiberalism in Europe ever since the election of Fidesz in 2010. Consider the European Social Survey (ESS)(European Social Survey, 2020) data for Hungary gives us a preliminary overview of the government workers' support for Fidesz<sup>20</sup>. Figure 5 reveals that the relative support by government workers in Hungary for the opposition parties is even lower than in Poland, hovering around 16% of all respondents. Hence, Hungarian SLBs could be even less likely than their Polish counterparts to engage in any type of dissent activities. In fact, Rosenfeld argues that in authoritarian countries, public sector workers are more supportive of the undemocratic government than their private sector colleagues. This is because the governments coopt the public sector by providing good salaries to create a state-dependent middle class (Rosenfeld, 2020). Hence, should the democratic backsliding transform into a fully-fledged authoritarian take over, the chance of street-level sabotage would decrease even further as its politicization progresses.

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<sup>20</sup> In the data I concentrate on government worker as a proxy for SLBs.



**Figure 5** Non-Fidesz support among Hungarian government and non-government workers  
(Source: Author's analysis using European Social Survey Waves 4-9)

## 5 Conclusion

How might street-level bureaucrats react to democratic backsliding? Are they likely to engage in broadly understood dissent activities, i.e. all the actions other than loyally working that follow ideological disagreement with the government? Why could it limit democratic backsliding? Theory and anecdotal evidence might suggest that, while ideological congruence is not the sole behavior determinant, should the SLBs disagree with a populist government at the helm of democratic backsliding, some of them might engage in dissent activities. These could limit the democratic backsliding in two ways. First, by changing the shape of policies proposed by populist governments. Second, by reducing the effort of dissenting SLBs policy delivery suffers more generally, reducing citizen satisfaction and hence reducing the electoral chances of the populist governments. However, crucially, the

scale of this behavior depends on the extent to which they disagree with the government in power. In the case of democratic backsliding, this disagreement can concern two dimensions: specific populist policies and metapolitical preference for democratic governance.

This paper focuses on the case of Poland in the run-up to and at the beginning of the PiS-led government's actions that resulted in democratic backsliding. Using survey data, it describes political preferences and relevant beliefs of SLBs to understand the potential for the scale of dissent activities, concentrating on the proxies for ideological agreement with the government: likelihood of voting for broadly understood opposition, preference for democracy, and support for protests against illiberal reforms of the judiciary.

I find that, in the early years of democratic backsliding in Poland, supporters of the broadly understood opposition formed less than 50% of SLB respondents. While they generally had a strong preference for democracy, the illiberal reforms of the judiciary that accompanied the first two years of the PiS rule have not increased their support for the opposition or led a numerous participation in protests. Hence, at the time, the overall ideological disagreement of the SLBs with the government has not been overwhelming. Moreover, by benchmarking variables against the general population, I can show that, in the future studies, general SLB political preferences can be largely extrapolated from the general population, after correcting for the demographic characteristics of SLBs.

All of this means that while observing dissent activities among SLBs is possible, their scale is likely to be limited. More broadly, understanding the scale of the combined likelihood of different theoretical SLB responses to democratic backsliding requires scaling them by the actual level of ideological disagreement with the backsliding government among the SLBs.

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# Appendix

## A1 Coding Street-Level Bureaucracy

Identifying street-level bureaucrats in general surveys can be challenging. In an ideal setting, the survey would ask both about the sector of employment (private/public) *and* detailed questions about respondents' occupation coded in line with a categorization such as ISCO-08 (the International Standard Classification of Occupations). Unfortunately, CBOS does not provide such detailed coding. Hence, I make use of two questions most similar to the above: one asking about the ownership of the workplace and another concerning the sector of work. The wording of the questions and the answers is as follows:

1. *Are you currently employed at (work\_type):*
  1. A completely state-owned, local government-owned, or public institution, office, or enterprise (including sole proprietorships owned by the State Treasury)?
  2. A company with private owners (Polish or foreign) and state participation?
  3. A completely private enterprise (excluding agriculture) or a cooperative (including owners, co-owners, and self-employed individuals)?
  4. A private agricultural household?
2. *Which of the listed groups could you be classified into based on your current situation? (work\_sector)*

Sustained from work:

1. Directors, CEOs, and managerial staff of enterprises, institutions, and government and local administration.
2. Creative professions and professionals with higher education, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers.
3. Technicians and other middle-level personnel, nurses, non-commissioned officers, police officers.
4. Administrative and office workers, secretaries, postal workers, receptionists, telephone operators.

5. Shop workers, service point employees, personal service workers, conductors, child caregivers, security personnel, drivers.
6. Skilled workers and foremen employed outside of agriculture and forestry.
7. Workers performing simple tasks employed outside of agriculture and forestry; cleaners, caretakers, laborers.
8. Hired workers and foremen employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing; fishermen.
9. Individual farmers and family members assisting them.
10. Owners and co-owners of private companies, establishments, shops, sales points, as well as agents and other individuals engaged in non-agricultural business activities.

Sustained from other sources:

12. Students.
13. Pensioners.
14. Retirees.
15. Unemployed individuals.
16. Homemakers, housewives.
17. Non-working for other reasons.

I code SLBs to include those working for the government and those whose occupations can be classified as (2) creative professions and professionals with higher education; (3) technicians and other middle-level personnel, nurses, non-commissioned officers, police officers; and (4) administrative and office workers, secretaries, postal workers, receptionists, telephone operators. This way I remove both the middle management and civil service covered by work sector (1) and other professions that are not SLB in nature.

gen SLB=1 if work\_type==1 & work\_sector<5 & work\_sector>1

replace SLB=0 if work\_type==2 | work\_type==3 | work\_type==4

replace SLB=0 if work\_type==1 & work\_sector>=5

Such classification sees SLBs as comprising 69.35% of government workers, 18.83% of the workforce or 9.24% of all respondents.

The validity of this measure can be verified by juxtaposing this data with aggregate data on state employment, such as the map of state employment (Fundacja Republikańska 2017) providing a detailed breakdown basing on the official state statistics.

**Table A1** Detailed breakdown of state employment in Poland

Category	Number
Justice and courts	65,250
Security and policing	210,770
Education	593,840
Healthcare	310,840
Social work	58,060
Job centers	27,180
Pension services	50,950
Defense and military	140,650
State administration	403,590
Total	1,861,130

Source: Fundacja Republikańska (2017) *Mapa zatrudnienia w sektorze publicznym 2017*

The categories shaded in gray are likely to contain predominantly SLBs, in the sense of public sector workers interacting routinely with citizens as a part of their work. This group adds up to 1,316,890 or 70.8% of those hired by the state. This number is very close to the 69.35% estimated from the survey data.

## **A2 Calendar of key events**

The list below includes the timing of the key events limiting the Rule of Law and democratic freedoms in Poland from the 2015 electoral victories until 2018 - the end of the period under study (Skrzydłowska-Kalukin n.d.).

25 May 2015 – Andrzej Duda (PiS) won the Polish presidency.

25 October 2015 – PiS won parliamentary elections.

12 November 2015 – Inaugural Sejm session.

2 November 2015 – Works begun on changes to the Constitutional Tribunal.

2 December 2015 – New judges were selected to the Constitutional Tribunal for the previously filled positions. The President swore them in the same night, although the judges selected by the previous parliament had been waiting to be sworn in for a long time. As a result, Constitutional Court judges could be divided into judges and so-called judges-doublers.

3 December 2015 – Constitutional Tribunal's judgement on judges-doublers. The Constitutional Court unanimously ruled that three out of five judges selected by the previous parliament were legitimate Constitutional Court judges, not judges-doublers. However, two judges were chosen incorrectly, and their positions were filled with new judges. The President should have sworn in the three validly selected judges, but instead, Prime Minister Beata Szydło did not publish the Constitutional Court's judgement on judge-doublers in the Journal of Laws, seemingly disregarding its existence and authority.

22 December 2015 – Constitutional Tribunal became paralyzed by the Legal Repair Act.

22 July 2016 – Judge-doublers were allowed to adjudicate.

19 December 2016 – Julia Przyłębska (appointed by president Duda) took over the Constitutional Tribunal.

8 January 2016 – The Media Act came into force, enabling the termination of the terms of key public media directors. The act also modified the procedures for appointing CEOs and management board members of TVP and Polish Radio. Previously, the National Broadcasting Council conducted recruitment competitions for these positions, but under the new act, the Minister of the Treasury directly appointed individuals to these roles.

28 January 2016 – Amendment of the Act on the Prosecution Office. The Minister of Justice becomes the general prosecutor (the head of all prosecutors).

22 June 2016 – Formation of the Council of National Media.

July 2017 – Acts on courts. The Sejm adopted the Courts Acts to subordinate the theoretically independent and impartial judiciary to politicians.

12 July 2017 – Following the passing of laws pacifying the National Council of the Judiciary and granting authority over the appointment of court presidents to the Minister of Justice, Zbigniew Ziobro, a bill proposal to dissolve the current Supreme Court was presented. The Supreme Court had been the final hurdle in PiS's efforts to gain control over the judiciary.

December 2017 – New Acts of law on the Supreme Court and the National Council of the Judiciary. The National Council of the Judiciary, originally intended to safeguard judges' independence and participate in their appointments, became known as "neo-KRS" due to its composition of politicians with connections to PiS and judges chosen by politicians. As a result, the Disciplinary Chamber and the Extraordinary Review and Public Affairs Chamber were established in the Supreme Court, with members selected by the Neo-KRS dominated

by politicians from the ruling party. The Disciplinary Chamber holds the power to remove judges' immunity, initiate disciplinary proceedings against them, and prevent them from adjudicating, significantly affecting their careers and income.

### A3 Additional results

**Table A2** OLS of support for the opposition over time for SLBs and non-SLBs

	(1) opposition	
SLB#year		
0#2015	0.08***	(0.01)
0#2016	0.06***	(0.01)
0#2017	0.01	(0.02)
1#2014	0.03*	(0.02)
1#2015	0.06***	(0.02)
1#2016	0.07***	(0.02)
1#2017	0.01	(0.03)
Education	0.03***	(0.00)
Religious	0.05***	(0.00)
Town size	0.02***	(0.00)
Gender	-0.06***	(0.01)
Birth year	-0.00***	(0.00)
_cons	2.43***	(0.56)
<i>N</i>	18652	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.07	
Standard errors in parentheses * $p < 0.10$ , ** $p < 0.05$ , *** $p < 0.01$		

**Table A3** The effect of support for democracy for voting opposition parties

	(1) opposition	(2) opposition	(3) opposition
democracy	-0.05* (0.03)		
1.democracy		ref	ref
2.democracy		-0.15*** (0.05)	
3.democracy		-0.13* (0.07)	
4.democracy		-0.01 (0.13)	



Democracy [1,4]#						
SLB {1,0}						
1.democracy#0.SLB					0.00	(.)
2.democracy#0.SLB					-0.11***	(0.02)
3.democracy#0.SLB					-0.19***	(0.03)
4.democracy#0.SLB					-0.22***	(0.05)
1.democracy#1.SLB					0.09**	(0.04)
2.democracy#1.SLB					-0.04	(0.03)
3.democracy#1.SLB					-0.09*	(0.05)
4.democracy#1.SLB					0.09	(0.11)
education	0.04***	(0.01)	0.04***	(0.01)		
religious	0.10***	(0.02)	0.10***	(0.02)		
town_size	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)		
gender	-0.05	(0.05)	-0.05	(0.05)		
Year of birth	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)		
_cons	3.06	(4.19)	2.52	(4.18)	0.49***	(0.02)
<i>N</i>	456		456		3206	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.13		0.14		0.03	
<i>Model</i>	OLS+FE		OLS+FE		OLS	
<i>Sample</i>	SLB		SLB		All	