

## **Online Appendix**

### ***Appendix 1: Description of the six electoral system features***

#### *Clear majorities*

After elections, it is sometimes clear whether a party or a specific camp won and can be represented in government. In other cases, parties first have to negotiate who will govern together. The electoral system can influence how likely or unlikely a clear majority is.

#### *Promising parties*

Some electoral systems make it hard for small, or smallest, parties to get elected into parliament. These systems can therefore differ in how likely it is for only large, or also smaller and smallest parties to get voted into parliament. With smallest parties, we mean those that are elected by less than 5% of the population. With small parties, we mean those with 5%-10% support within the electorate, and large parties those with over 10% support.

#### *Equality between vote shares and seat shares (proportionality)*

There are electoral systems that award parliamentary seats according to the amount of votes received during the election. This is called proportionality. A party, that receives 40% of the votes, would also receive 40% of votes in parliament. Other electoral systems may only partially fulfil this requirement.

#### *Influence on candidates*

In general, voters can influence which party they will choose in electoral systems. There are electoral systems which allow voters to choose which candidate in a party they would have as a representative. Other systems, however, only allow voters to vote for a party, and not a specific candidate.

#### *Simplicity*

Electoral systems differ in their complexity. Some electoral systems impress voters with their simplicity and are easily understandable for every voter. Some others already present

their voters with the problem of filling out the ballot, or with the mechanism that translates votes into seats. These latter systems we define as complex.

### *Societal acceptance*

Some electoral systems are disputed among the general population; others find broad support. The general support of an electoral system can lead to acceptance of the election. Whether a system finds support within the populace does not necessarily have to mean that you personally like the system.

## ***Appendix 2: The six competence questions and the answers***

### *Q1 (Proportionality)*

Imagine that in a country, three different electoral systems are available. A party receives 10% of the votes.

In the first electoral system (A), this party would then have 7% of the parliamentary seats.

In the second electoral system (B), this party would then receive 11% of the parliamentary seats.

In the third electoral system (C), this party would then receive 14% of all parliamentary seats.

Which of these electoral systems best fulfils the criteria of equality between votes and parliamentary seats (proportionality)?

- Electoral System A
- Electoral System B [\*]
- Electoral System C
- Don't know

### *Q2 (Clear majorities)*

Please picture these two situations!

In the situation A, four parties enter parliament with each 25% of the seats.

In the second situation, B, two parties enter parliament – one with 60% and the other with 40%.

Which of these two situations results in a clearer formation of government?

- Situation A
- Situation B [\*]
- No difference
- Don't know

### *Q3 (Simplicity)*

The electoral system within the Netherlands is one of proportional representation, which means that parties are granted seats according to their amount of votes. With his vote, a

voter can choose a certain candidate from a party list and thus support the party as well as a specific candidate.

In the United Kingdom, they use a plurality system. This means that only one representative is elected per district – the one with the most votes – who then goes into parliament.

In Germany, voters have two votes; one in a plurality tier like in the UK, and the second in a proportional representation tier with an additional 5% threshold. For the seat distribution, both votes are offset against each other.

What electoral system do you think is most complex?

- The electoral system in the Netherlands.
- The electoral system in the UK.
- The electoral system in Germany [\*]
- Don't know

#### *Q4 (Influence on candidates)*

And which of these systems gives voters the largest influence on candidates, in your opinion?

- The electoral system in the Netherlands [\*]
- The electoral system in the UK
- The electoral system in Germany
- Don't know

#### *Q5 (Promising parties)*

In which of the electoral systems do you think smallest parties have the best chance to be represented in parliament?

- The electoral system in the Netherlands [\*]
- The electoral system in the UK
- The electoral system in Germany
- Don't know

*Q6 (Societal acceptance)*

Picture three countries with the following background:

In Country A, there was recently a national referendum about the electoral system, in which the current electoral system was chosen with 60% of the vote. The losing 40% of the population has issued a legal complaint against the electoral system.

The electoral system is not up for a vote in Country B. Different minorities regularly protest against the electoral system, which according to them disadvantages them. Also parts of the majority criticize the system as unfair.

A new electoral system was introduced in Country C, which received 90% of the vote.

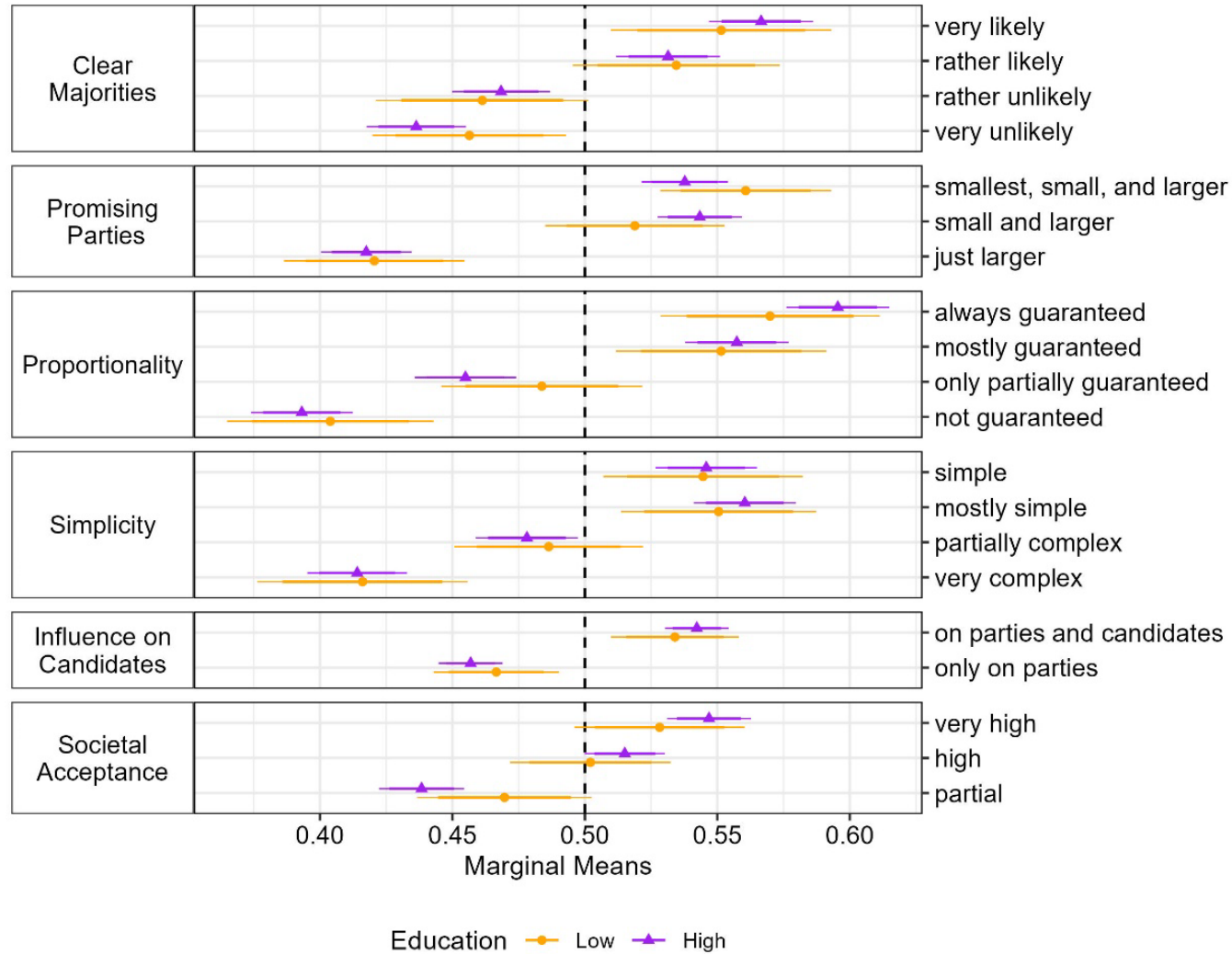
Occasionally, supporters of the old system voice their displeasure about the reform in the media.

What do you think, in which country does the electoral system have the highest societal acceptance?

- Country A
- Country B
- Country C [\*]
- Don't know

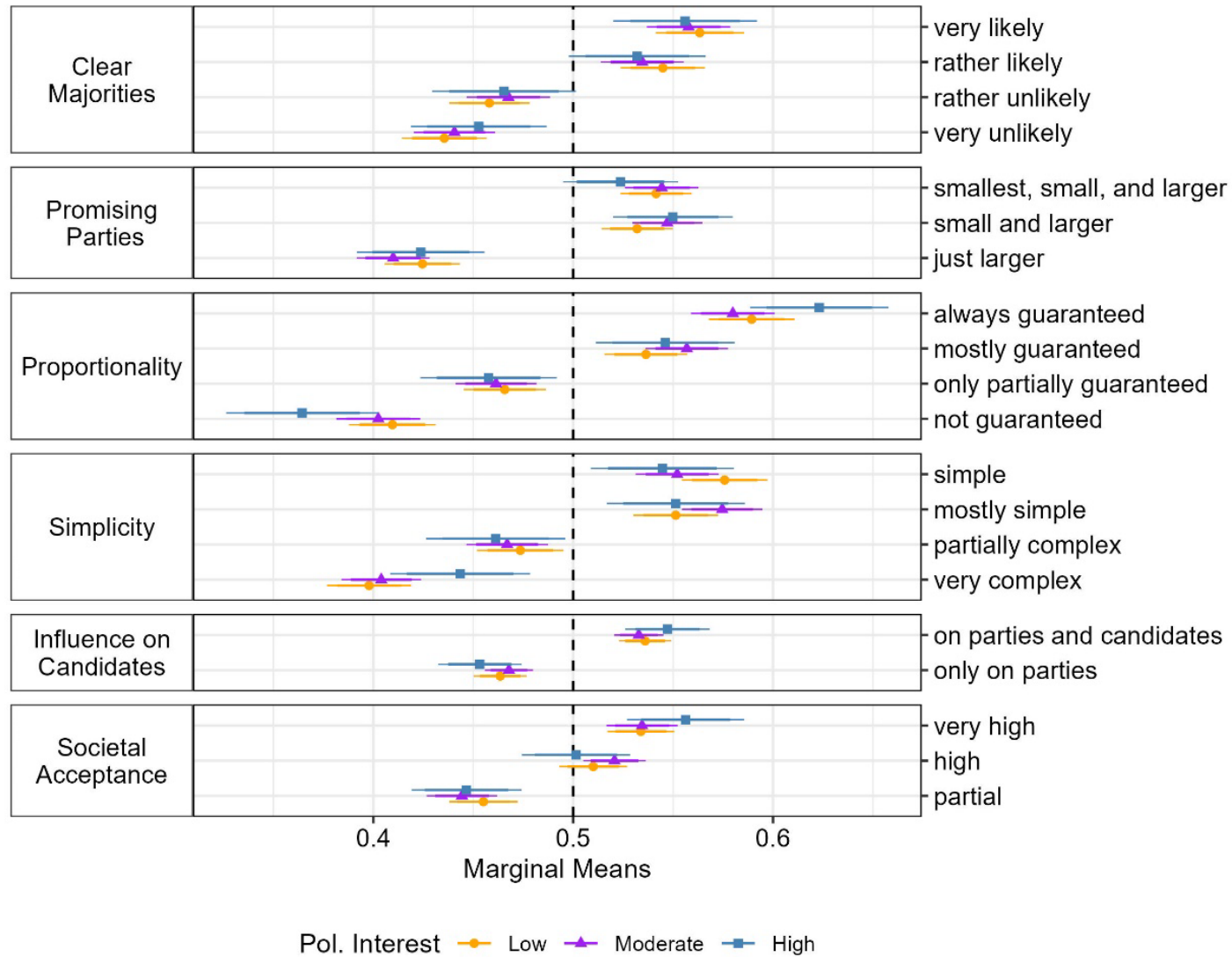
**Appendix 3: Further subgroup analyses**

Figure A1: Marginal means by education



*Note:* We asked the subjects about their highest school degree. We code 'education' as high, if the graduation qualifies for university in the respective country, and low otherwise. Subjects still going to school are dropped for this analysis.

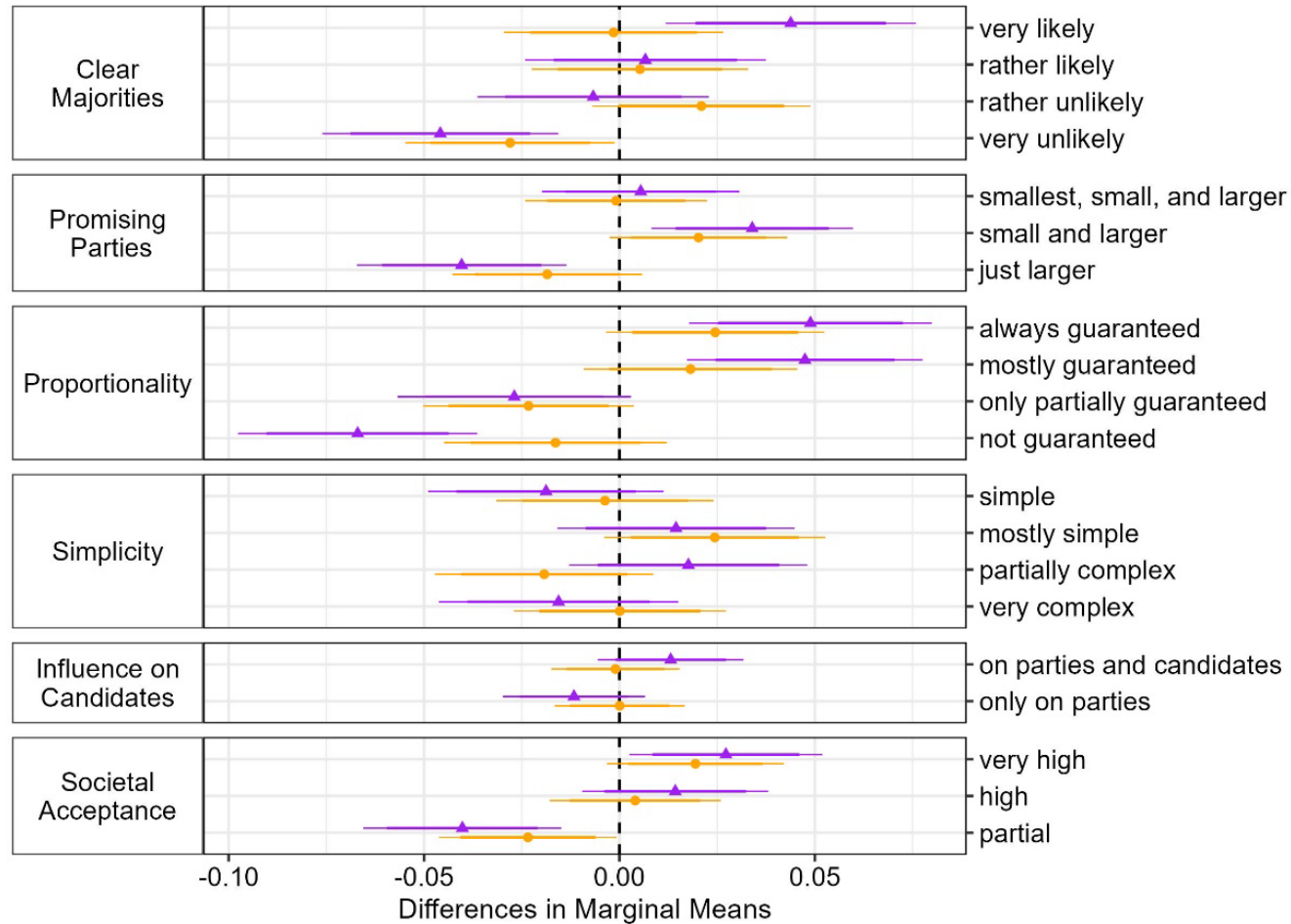
Figure A2: Marginal means by political interest



Note: Political interest has been asked on a scale from 1 ('not at all') to 5 ('very interested'). We code subjects' political interest as low for values 1 and 2, moderate for 3, and high for 4 or 5.

**Appendix 4: Differences in Marginal Means**

Figure A3: MM Differences by Political Competence



Pol. Competence (Ref. = Low) — Moderate — High



Figure A4: MM Differences by Country

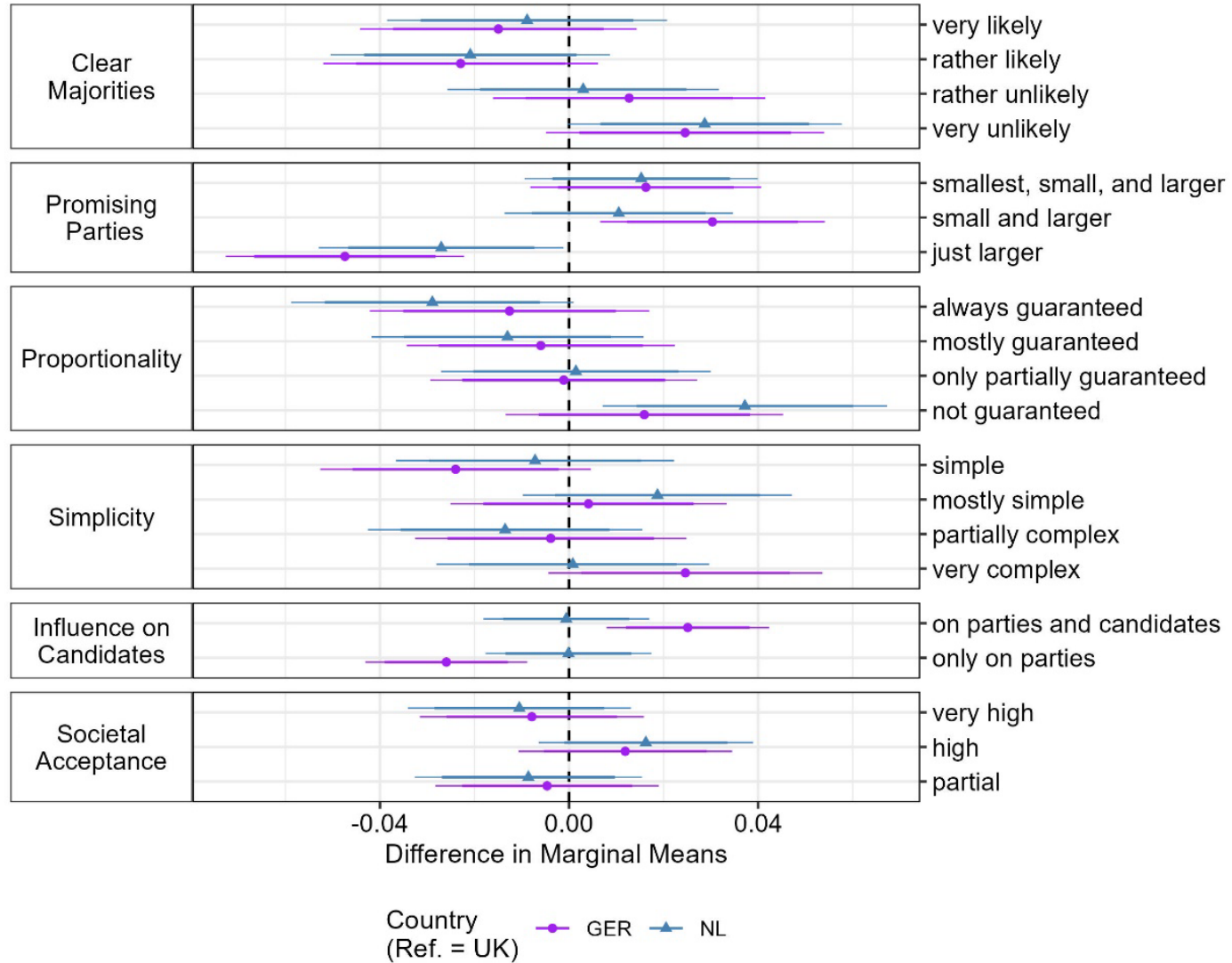


Figure A5: MM Differences by Left-Right

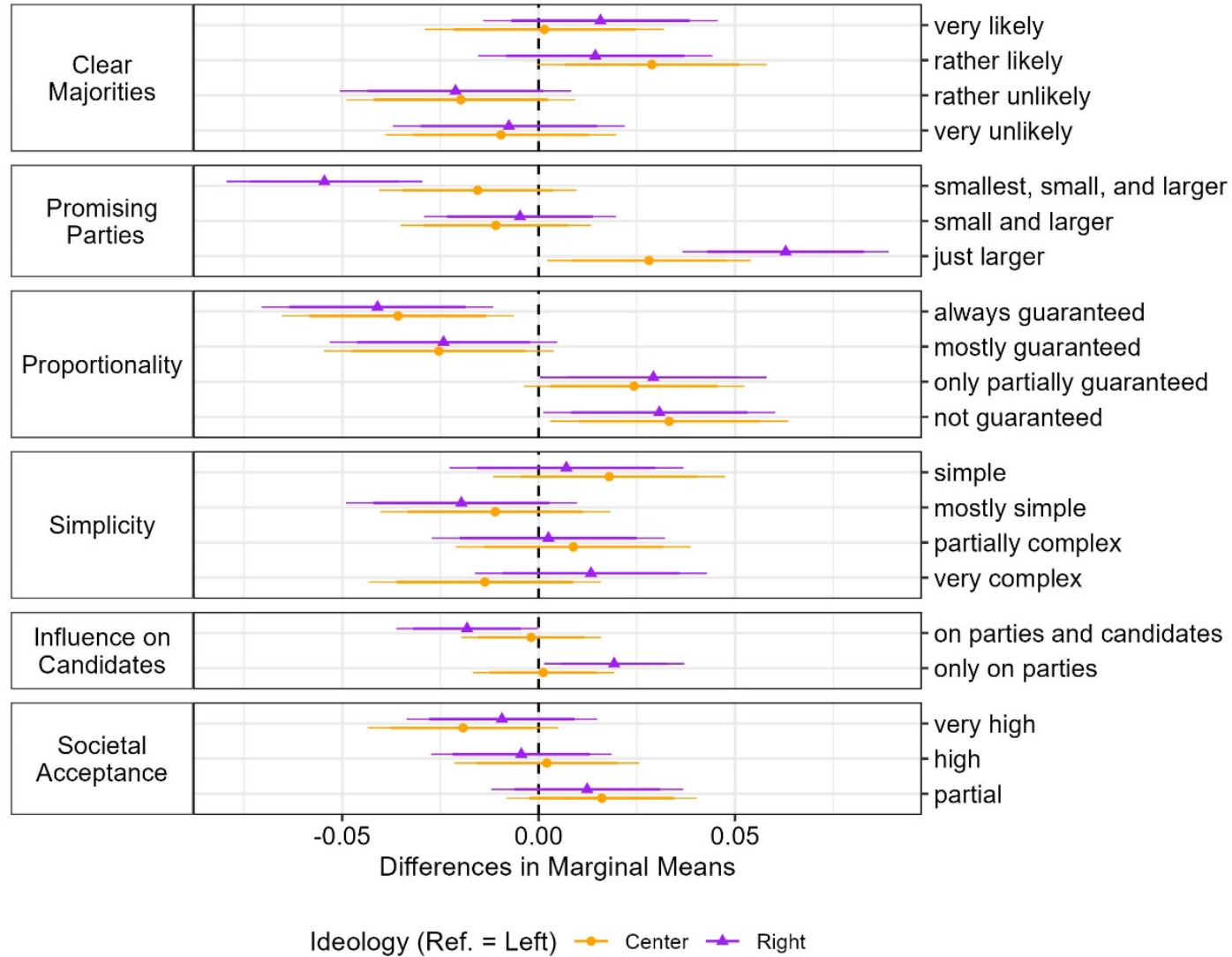
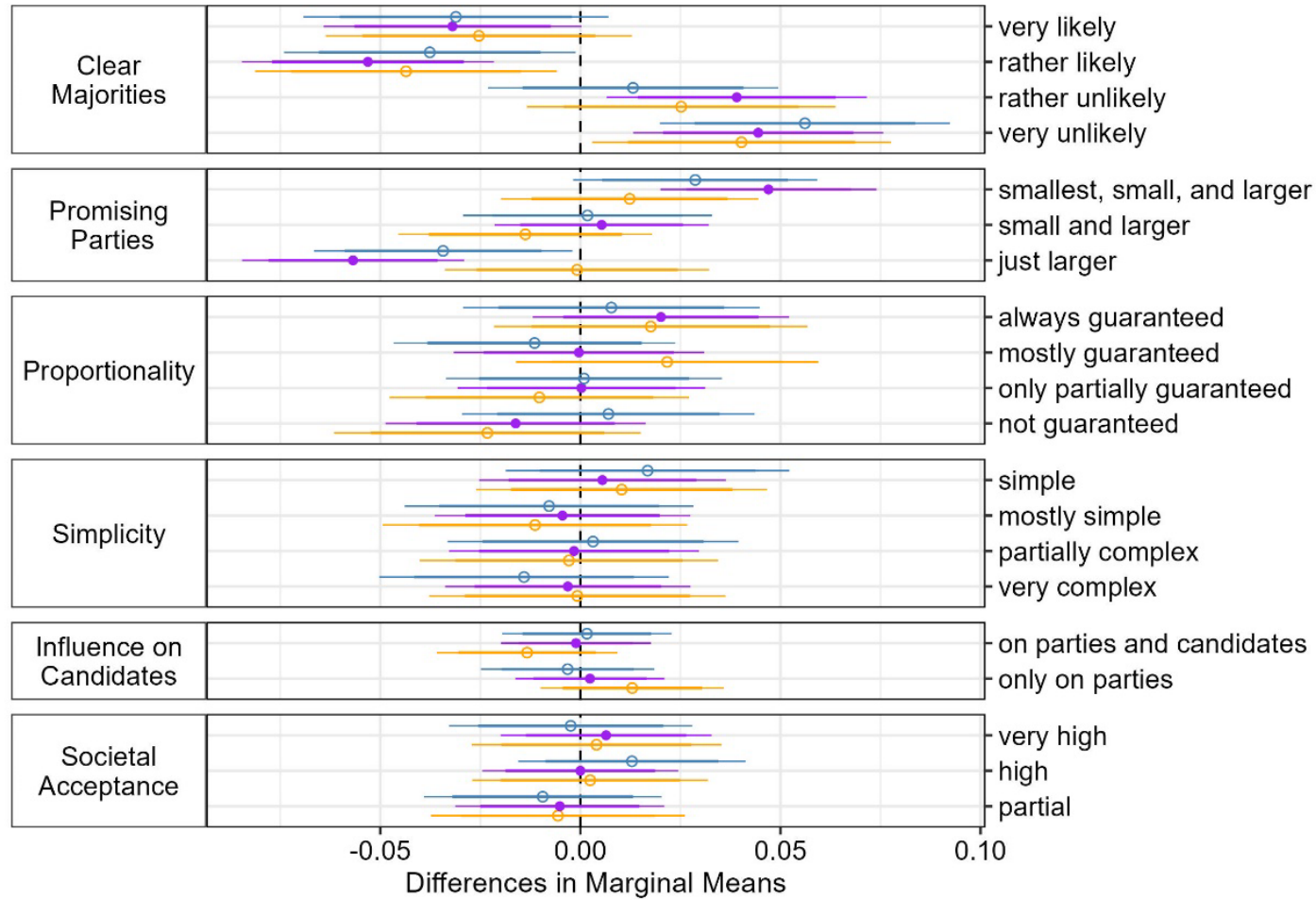


Figure A6: MM Differences by Party Size



Party Support (Ref. = Largest Party)

- 2nd Largest Party
- Other Parties
- Unsure/Non-Voters

### **Appendix 5: Composition of our Sample**

The following table provides information about the composition of the sample with regard to gender, age, education and region. It also provides the respective values for the (voting) population that we tried to target by using quotas. We also report the vote intention of the respondents. We do not report a target value for vote choice as we did not use quotas for vote choice. As it is common with surveys, we observe high levels of underreporting with regard to non-voters.

The total number of observations for each country are as follows:

Germany:  $N = 1,251$

Netherlands:  $N = 1,229$

UK:  $N = 1,259$

*Table A1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample and Target Values*

<b>Gender</b>				
<i>Country</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Sample (in %)</i>	<i>Target (in %)</i>	<i>Difference<sup>a)</sup></i>
Germany	Female	49.8	50.0	-0.2
Germany	Male	50.2	50.0	+0.2
Germany	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
Netherlands	Female	51.7	50.0	+1.7
Netherlands	Male	48.3	50.0	-1.7
Netherlands	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
UK	Female	50.4	50.0	+0.4
UK	Male	49.6	50.0	-0.4
UK	Other	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Age Group</b>				
<i>Country</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Sample (in %)</i>	<i>Target (in %)</i>	<i>Difference<sup>a)</sup></i>
Germany	18-39	37.3	32.0	+5.3
Germany	40-59	43.4	34.5	+8.9
Germany	60+	19.3	33.6	-14.3
Netherlands	18-39	36.7	33.3	+3.4
Netherlands	40-59	39.6	34.3	+5.3
Netherlands	60+	23.7	32.4	-8.7
UK	18-39	42.2	36.3	+5.9
UK	40-59	41.0	33.4	+7.6
UK	60+	16.8	30.3	-13.5

<b>Education</b>				
<i>Country</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Sample (in %)</i>	<i>Target (in %)</i>	<i>Difference<sup>a)</sup></i>
Germany	high <sup>b)</sup>	36.5	36.4	+0.1
Germany	low <sup>b)</sup>	63.5	63.6	-0.1
Netherlands	high <sup>b)</sup>	42.3	30.3	+12.0
Netherlands	low <sup>b)</sup>	57.7	69.7	-12.0
UK	high <sup>b)</sup>	37.1	36.6	+0.5
UK	low <sup>b)</sup>	62.9	63.4	-0.5
<b>Region</b>				
<i>Country</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Sample (in %)</i>	<i>Target (in %)</i>	<i>Difference<sup>a)</sup></i>
Germany	Baden-Württemberg	12.7	13.1	-0.4
Germany	Bayern	16.1	15.8	+0.3
Germany	Berlin	4.2	4.2	0.0
Germany	Brandenburg	2.5	3.2	-0.7
Germany	Bremen	0.8	0.8	0.0
Germany	Hamburg	2.4	2.2	+0.2
Germany	Hessen	7.4	7.3	+0.1
Germany	Mecklenburg-Vorpomm.	1.6	2.0	-0.4
Germany	Niedersachsen	9.8	9.7	+0.1
Germany	Nordrhein-Westfalen	22.2	21.3	+0.9
Germany	Rheinland-Pfalz	5.0	4.9	+0.1
Germany	Saarland	1.1	1.2	-0.1
Germany	Sachsen	5.3	5.1	+0.2
Germany	Sachsen-Anhalt	2.9	2.8	+0.1
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	3.8	3.6	+0.2
Germany	Thüringen	2.2	2.8	-0.6
Netherlands	Drenthe	4.3	2.8	+1.5
Netherlands	Flevoland	2.7	2.4	+0.3
Netherlands	Friesland	4.5	3.7	+0.8
Netherlands	Gelderland	12.5	12.0	+0.5
Netherlands	Groningen	4.0	3.4	+0.6
Netherlands	Limburg	7.8	6.5	+1.3
Netherlands	Noord-Brabant	14.2	14.7	-0.5
Netherlands	Noord-Holland	14.3	16.5	-2.2
Netherlands	Overijssel	6.8	6.7	+0.1
Netherlands	Utrecht	5.5	7.8	-2.3
Netherlands	Zeeland	2.4	2.2	+0.2
Netherlands	Zuid-Holland	21.1	21.3	-0.2

UK	East Midlands	7.6	7.2	+0.4
UK	East of England	9.8	9.3	+0.5
UK	Greater London	13.1	13.4	-0.3
UK	North East England	4.4	4.1	+0.3
UK	North West England	10.8	11.0	-0.2
UK	Northern Ireland	1.4	2.9	-1.5
UK	Scotland	7.8	8.3	-0.5
UK	South East England	14.5	13.7	+0.8
UK	South West England	9.0	8.4	+0.6
UK	Wales	4.3	4.8	-0.5
UK	West Midlands	8.8	8.9	-0.1
UK	Yorkshire and the Humber	8.6	8.3	+0.3

#### **Vote Choice**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Sample (in %)</i>
Germany	CDU/CSU	21.8
Germany	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	18.3
Germany	SPD	11.6
Germany	Die Linke	10.2
Germany	AfD	9.8
Germany	FDP	4.3
Germany	Other party	5.4
Germany	Don't know/undecided	13.8
Germany	Not going to vote	4.8
Netherlands	VVD	12.8
Netherlands	PVV	12.2
Netherlands	SP	8.2
Netherlands	FvD	7.2
Netherlands	PvdA	7.1
Netherlands	CDA	7.1
Netherlands	GL	5.0
Netherlands	PvdD	3.8
Netherlands	CU	3.6
Netherlands	D66	3.6
Netherlands	SGP	2.5
Netherlands	50+	1.4
Netherlands	Denk	0.2

Netherlands	Other party	0.7
Netherlands	Don't know/undecided	20.3
Netherlands	Not going to vote	4.4
UK	Conservatives	30.5
UK	Labour	30.0
UK	Liberal Democrats	7.0
UK	Greens	5.3
UK	SNP	3.2
UK	Brexit Party	3.1
UK	DUP	0.3
UK	Plaid Cymru	0.3
UK	Alliance	0.2
UK	SDLP	0.1
UK	SF	0.1
UK	UUP	0.1
UK	Other party	0.4
UK	Don't know/undecided	14.5
UK	Not going to vote	5.0

*Note:* The target values were chosen according to official statistics on the composition of the voting-age population, with the exception of gender, where values have been set to 50% for female and male.

<sup>a)</sup> in percentage points.

<sup>b)</sup> high: graduation qualifies for university in respective country; low: graduation does not qualify for university in respective country.