THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOTERS' ATTITUDES ON ABORTION AND THEIR POLITICAL PARTY SELECTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES' 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND POLAND'S 2023 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

by

LILIA GARCIA

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CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

We hereby approve the thesis of

Lilia Garcia

candidate for the degree of Master of Arts*.

Committee Chair

Karen Beckwith

Committee Member

Pete Moore

Committee Member

Matthew Lacombe

Date of Defense

March 31, 2025

*We also certify that written approval has been obtained for any proprietary material

contained therein.

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The Relationship Between Voters' Attitudes on Abortion and their Political Party

Selection: A Comparative Analysis of the United States' 2024 Presidential Election and

Poland's 2023 Parliamentary Election

Abstract

by

LILIA GARCIA

The highest judicial authorities on the constitution in both the United States and

Poland decided to increase the restrictions on abortion access. This was able to occur

because politicians from anti-abortion political parties in both countries ensured that there

were conservative supermajorities that were willing to increase the barriers to accessing

abortion services. The first major national elections after these decisions were released

were the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary

election. While Poland elected a majority of politicians from pro-abortion parties to

parliament, the United States elected a president from an anti-abortion party. Because

these countries started with similar circumstances but ended up with different electoral

results, I conducted a comparative case study analysis on the relationships between

voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection for the United States' 2024

presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election using survey data and

cross-tabulation tables.

I.   Introduction

Since the mid-twentieth century, numerous countries have liberalized laws restricting access to abortion in order to ensure women's bodily autonomy, health, and safety. However, abortion as a political issue has remained highly controversial, especially among competing political parties in electoral democracies. As of 2022, the Center for Reproductive Rights estimates that forty percent of women live in countries that restrict access to abortion, which amounts to nearly 753 million women of reproductive age. While the vast majority of countries that have liberalized restrictive abortion laws continue to guarantee the legality of abortion, four countries within the last thirty years have reversed their liberal abortion laws in favor of more restrictions on abortion, or banning abortion entirely (Center for Reproductive Rights 2022). The two most recent countries that have repealed laws protecting the right to abortion are Poland and the United States.

In October 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland,[1] which consisted of a majority of conservative justices that were selected by the right-wing Law and Justice party, decided that it was unconstitutional to abort a fetus due to fetal impairment (Bucholc 2022, 84). Prior to the Constitutional Tribunal's decision to increase the restrictions on abortion, Poland only allowed abortion for three cases: (1) if the fetus suffered from severe fetal impairment; (2) if the pregnancy would endanger the mother's life or health; or (3) if the pregnancy was a result of a crime (Kowalczyk 2021, 27). Because Poland's Constitutional Tribunal added another restriction to abortion, abortions are currently only legal in the latter two cases. Immediately following the Constitutional

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[1] The Constitutional Tribunal of Poland is Poland's highest judicial authority on the constitution, and is comparable to the Supreme Court of the United States in that regard.

Tribunal's 2020 ruling that further restricted access to abortion, Poland experienced mass mobilizations of protest by supporters of abortion rights.

Similar to Poland, the United States has also recently increased restrictions to abortion access. In June 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973) in *Dobbs* v. *Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022), which ultimately removed the nationwide constitutional right to abortion and allowed the legality of abortion to be decided by individual states. Notably, the Supreme Court was able to overturn *Roe* in the *Dobbs* decision due to the conservative supermajority of the Supreme Court justices, all of whom were nominated by Republican presidents. Like Poland, after the *Dobbs* decision was released the United States also experienced mass mobilizations of protest from supporters of abortion rights. In the months following the *Dobbs* decision, eighteen states banned or severely restricted access to abortion. While some states have been able to combat these bans and restrictions to abortion through abortion-rights ballot measures, which allows citizens to be able to vote for codifying the right to abortion into their state constitution, this is not allowed in every state. As of 2025, abortion is completely banned in twelve states in the United States.

Due to the new restrictions and bans that have been preventing access to abortion in Poland and the United States during the years leading up to significant national elections for both respective countries, this study focuses on exploring the relationships between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. While the United States and Poland may not seem very comparable due to the fact that they are two very different countries with different political histories and political systems, these two

cases are similar because they both had judicial decisions that increased restrictions to abortion access several years before major national elections. However, the electoral results of these two cases differed. American voters elected a presidential candidate from a political party that has been historically anti-abortion while Polish voters elected a majority of parliamentary candidates from parties that supported access to abortion, which resulted in Poland gaining a prime minister from a political party that supported abortion rights.

Because the cases of the United States and Poland started with similar circumstances but ultimately produced different electoral results, this study aims to answer the following questions: (1) Was there a relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election? (2) If a relationship was present, was there a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the United States' 2024 presidential election? (3) Was there a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the United States' 2020 presidential election? (4) Was there a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election?

Answering these research questions should improve the understanding for why the United States and Poland reached different electoral results by analyzing the relationships between American and Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection. More specifically, comparing the strength of the relationships

between American and Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election to Poland's 2023 parliamentary election will demonstrate whether there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection or between American voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection. In turn, this finding could help to explain at least one of the reasons for why these two countries ultimately reached different electoral results.

Additionally, comparing the strength of the relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection between the United States' 2020 and 2024 presidential elections will illustrate whether there was a change in the relationship following the reversal of *Roe* that occurred in 2022. Lastly, comparing the strength of the relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection between Poland's 2019 and 2023 parliamentary elections will reveal whether there was a change in the relationship after the Constitutional Tribunal's 2020 ruling that further restricted abortion. Overall, the main goal for answering these research questions is to form a better understanding for why the United States and Poland had differing electoral results after they both experienced increased restrictions to abortion access, which was met with strong opposition in both countries.

To begin my research, I reviewed relevant literature regarding voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in past presidential elections in the United States and in past parliamentary elections in Poland. I also reviewed literature that discussed the partisan divide on the issue of abortion between the United States' two major political parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Additionally, I

read literature that discussed the positions on abortion of the five major political parties in

Poland for the 2023 parliamentary election: Civic Platform (PO), New Left (NL), Third

Way (TD), Law and Justice (PiS), and the Confederation Liberty and Independence

(Confederation). Of these five political parties, I consider three of them to be

pro-abortion: PO, NL, and TD.[2] The two political parties that are anti-abortion are PiS

and Confederation.

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted a comparative case study

analysis on the relationships between voters' positions on abortion and their political

party selection for the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023

parliamentary election using survey data and cross-tabulation tables. After collecting the

relevant survey data from the United States' 2024 and 2020 presidential elections and

Poland's 2023 and 2019 parliamentary elections, I created cross-tabulation tables and bar

charts to analyze the relationships between American and Polish voters' positions on

abortion and their political party selection for their respective country's national

elections. Using the data that I had collected, I found that there were differences in the

relationships between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection for

the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election.

Additionally, some of my findings were also in agreement with the current literature that

was reviewed in this study.

Overall, the findings from this study highlight the current politicization of

abortion and the increased partisan divide on the issue of abortion in the United States

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[2] It is important to note that while I consider these three parties to be pro-abortion in this study, they are
much less pro-abortion than the United States' Democratic Party. The reason why I consider these parties to
be pro-abortion is because all three of them mentioned either getting rid of the current restriction on
abortion for fetuses with fetal anomalies that are not compatible with life and/or allowing abortions for any
reason up until at least twelve weeks of pregnancy in their 2023 party programs.

and Poland. Hopefully the findings of this study will help other political scientists to gain a better understanding of the relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection, and how this relationship could potentially be related to the electoral outcomes of major national elections.

II.   Literature Review

The Partisan Divide on the Issue of Abortion in the United States

In the United States, the two main political parties are highly polarized on a variety of issues, including the issue of abortion. The Republican Party, as an ideologically conservative political party, is often against liberalizing abortion laws. Instead, the Republican Party has frequently supported "pro-life" legislation, which often restricts women's access to abortion, or attempts to ban abortion entirely. Moreover, the 2024 Republican Party platform from the Republican National Committee stated that the Republican Party "Will Protect and Defend a Vote for the People, from within the States, on the Issue of Life" (Republican National Committee 2024, 20). This quote demonstrates that the Republican Party supports the overturning of *Roe* v. *Wade*, which gave individual states the power to restrict, or ban, abortion, and that the Republican Party supports states that decide to do so. In contrast, the Democratic Party, which is an ideologically liberal political party, supports liberalizing abortion laws and ensuring that women are able to access abortion services. In fact, the 2024 Democratic Party platform from the Democratic National Committee stated that "Democrats are fighting back to restore reproductive freedom for women in every state" (Democratic National Committee 2024, 49).

While there is currently a clear partisan divide on the issue of abortion in the United States, this was not always the case. Through a time series analysis on the issue of abortion, Adams (1997) found that abortion gradually "evolved into a partisan issue" from 1972 to 1994 (724). More specifically, Adams found that people identifying as Democrats, along with Democrats in Congress, both became "comparatively more

pro-choice than Republicans" during the twenty-two years that he analyzed (1997, 733).

Adams also found that Republicans and Democrats in Congress were only "moderately

divided over abortion during the 1970s," and started to become "extremely polarized" on

the issue of abortion by the late 1980s (1997, 724). In regard to the general population,

Adams found that "Republicans were more pro-choice than Democrats until the late

1980s" (1997, 731). From his study, Adams determined that the partisan divide on the

issue of abortion was solidified during the late 1980s for both the general population and

for the members of Congress.

Similarly, Hout (1999) conducted a study that examined how differing views on

abortion became politicized in the United States from 1972 to 1994. In his study, Hout

found that "[t]he gap between the abortion opinions of liberals and conservatives has

grown dramatically since 1972" (1999, 6). Furthermore, Hout specified that liberals

became more pro-choice while conservatives became more pro-life (1999, 6). Hout also

analyzed the connection between abortion opinions and partisanship, and found that "the

greater people's opposition to legal abortion becomes, the more they lean toward the

Republicans; the more they support legal abortion, the more they lean toward the

Democrats" (1999, 26). Hout (1999) and Adams (1997) both came to the same

conclusion: abortion gradually became a partisan issue in the United States.

In O'Brian's (2020) study, he explored how the Republican Party became

associated with anti-abortion attitudes. O'Brian claimed that a correlation between the

anti-abortion attitudes of ordinary voters and conservative views on other noneconomic

issues, such as feminism and civil rights, began to emerge in 1970 (2020, 1031). By

1972, O'Brian contended that anti-abortion attitudes also began to be correlated with the

Republican presidential vote choice of ordinary voters (2020, 1031). Even though anti-abortion attitudes started to become correlated with ordinary voters' Republican presidential vote choice in 1972, O'Brian clarified that this correlation "predated the parties taking divergent abortion opinions," which is consistent with the findings of Adams (1997) and Hout (1999) (2020, 1031). Ultimately, O'Brian argued that "issue overlap among ordinary voters incentivized Republicans to oppose abortion rights once the issue gained salience" due to the Republican Party appealing to voters with conservative attitudes on a variety of noneconomic issues (2020, 1031).

In another study, Doherty (2022) conducted a pair of conjoint experiments in order to gain a better understanding of the attitudes that Americans have in regard to abortion. For the pair of conjoint experiments, respondents were presented with different detailed profiles of pregnant women and were asked whether the pregnant women should be allowed to receive a legal abortion based on her profile description (Doherty 2022, 147). The different details that were included in Doherty's descriptions of the pregnant women in his experiments consisted of the following: the reason a woman gave for why she sought an abortion (or lack thereof); the number of children a woman already has; the woman's marital status; the woman's age; the woman's family's income; and the woman's race/ethnicity (2022, 150). In his study, Doherty analyzed the respondents' responses in order to decipher whether there was a pattern between respondents' party identification and their responses (2022, 148). Overall, Doherty found that Republicans were "less inclined to support permitting abortion than Democrats in the experimental tasks" and that "[s]upport for permitting abortion [was] systematically lower among

Republicans than among Democrats" (2022, 148, 150). These findings are consistent with the findings of Adams (1997), Hout (1999), and O'Brian (2020).

The current literature regarding the partisan divide on the issue of abortion agrees that Democrats are more likely to support abortion rights while Republicans are more likely to not support abortion rights. However, there is currently a gap in the literature regarding American voters' positions on abortion in relation to their political party selection after the *Dobbs* decision in 2022. Because the current literature lacks data regarding the relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection after the constitutional right to abortion was revoked, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing this relationship for the first presidential election following the *Dobbs* decision, which was the United States' 2024 presidential election.

The Issue of Abortion and Presidential Elections in the United States

After the decision of *Roe* v. *Wade* in 1973, abortion became a much more salient issue in United States politics. Because of this, scholars began to pay more attention to the relationship between voters' views on abortion and their political party selection in elections, especially in presidential elections. Vinovskis (1979) analyzed the first presidential election following the decision of *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973), focusing on whether there was a relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their presidential candidate selection. In her study, Vinovskis concluded that "one's position on abortion was not a good predictor, by itself, whether one voted for Ford or Carter" in the 1976 presidential election (1979, 1765).

In a similar study, Granberg and Burlison (1983) examined abortion as a voting issue for the United States' 1980 presidential election. In regard to the 1980 presidential

election, Granberg and Burlison found that abortion did not significantly influence voters' presidential candidate selection, as "[v]oters were not likely to name abortion as one of the more important problems facing the nation" (1983, 231). In a related study, Bolce (1988) analyzed the impact of abortion on presidential candidate selection in the 1976 and 1980 presidential elections. In accordance with Vinovskis (1979) and Granberg and Burlison's (1983) findings, Bolce also found that "abortion [had] an unevent impact on the two major parties" in both presidential elections (1988, 817). Daynes and Tatalovich (1992) analyzed abortion as a voting issue for the five presidential elections that took place from 1972 to 1988. In their study, Daynes and Tatalovich ultimately found that their data "do[es] not support the interpretation that abortion attitudes had much effect on how voters differentiated between Republican and Democratic presidential candidates" in all five of the presidential elections that they examined (1988, 556). Ultimately, past scholarship suggests that voters' attitudes on abortion were not related to their presidential candidate selection, or political party selection, in the presidential elections during the 1970s and 1980s.

More recently, Etzerodt (2024) analyzed the electoral consequences of the politicization of abortion in the United States by examining how American voters' attitudes on abortion has affected presidential elections from 1980 to 2020 (1). From his study, Etzerodt found that "abortion has increasingly become an important issue for vote choices," and that the politicization of abortion increases after the Supreme Court issues major changes or decisions regarding abortion rights or abortion access (2024, 1). In accordance with the studies discussed above, Etzerodt found that voters with pro-abortion attitudes were "negatively associated" with voting for the Republican presidential

candidate (2024, 3). Ultimately, Etzerodt concluded that "abortion is increasingly important for vote choices in presidential elections" and that over time, abortion has become a "stronger predictor" for whether a voter decides to vote for the Republican or Democratic presidential candidate in presidential elections (2024, 4).

With the exception of the study conducted by Etzerodt (2024), the majority of the scholarship that has focused on the relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' presidential elections is over thirty years old, which means that the findings of these studies can no longer be applied due to the drastically different current state of United States politics. Moreover, the study conducted by Etzerodt (2024) does not include data for the 2024 presidential election, which is significant because the 2024 presidential election was the first presidential election following the *Dobbs* decision. Due to the fact that there has not been much recent literature that has analyzed the relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection for presidential elections, there is currently a gap in the literature. This paper aims to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between voters' position on abortion and their political party selection for the 2024 presidential election in the United States.

Poland's Parliamentary Parties' Positions on Abortion

From 1956 to 1992, Poland had liberal abortion laws that allowed women to access abortion services on demand. However, four years after the fall of communism in Poland, an anti-abortion law was passed by parliament in 1993 that "criminalized abortions carried out on social grounds" (Nowicka 2007, 169). The anti-abortion law that was passed, which was the Family Planning, Human Embryo Protection, and Conditions

of Permissibility of Abortion Law, only allowed for abortion in three cases: (1) if the

pregnancy threatens the life or health of the mother; (2) if the pregnancy is a result of a

criminal act; or (3) if a medical professional determines that the fetus has a severe,

life-threatening fetal defect (Kowalczyk 2021, 27). In 1996, abortions carried out for

social reasons were decriminalized, but were criminalized again a year later after the

Constitutional Tribunal decided that it was unconstitutional to allow abortions for social

reasons (Nowicka 2007, 169-170). In 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal further limited

Polish women's access to abortion when they declared that it was unconstitutional for

women to be able to obtain an abortion if the fetus is found to have a severe fetal defect.

As Polish democracy developed, various political parties were formed, and they

varied in regard to the issue of abortion rights. The main political parties in Poland's

parliament currently include: Law and Justice (PiS), Civic Platform (PO), New Left

(NL), Third Way (TD), and Confederation Liberty and Independence (Confederation). In

order to determine Poland's political parties' positions on the issue of abortion from 1991

to 2019, Kowalczyk (2021) developed a typology based on information obtained from the

parties' ideological programmes, and split Poland's political parties into four separate

categories: "the parties that support the right to abortion, the opposing parties, the

heterogeneous parties, and those which do not deal with this issue" (30). In his typology,

Kowalczyk determined that the conservative PiS should be considered a party that is

opposed to allowing women to have the right to abortion. To defend this position,

Kowalczyk cited a brochure that PiS created in 2005 where the party states: "Law and

Justice appreciates the existing scope of the protection of unborn life. The current law in

most cases protects human life, and its abolishment would mean legalization of prenatal

infanticide for the so-called material or social reasons" (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2005, 20, cited in Kowalczyk 2021, 32). Kowalczyk also affirmed that PiS continued to have this position in its 2009 and 2014 programmes as well (2021, 32).

For the centrist PO, Kowalczyk identified PO as a heterogeneous party that has had an "ambiguous position" on the issue of abortion (2021, 32). At the time of publication, PO had "not produced any documents concerning anti-abortion laws," but the leaders of the party had discussed their support for the 1993 legislation, which criminalized abortion for social reasons (Kowalczyk 2021, 33). In regard to NL, Kowalczyk determined that it was a party that supported the right to abortion (2021, 31). While Kowalczyk did not directly mention NL in his study, Kowalczyk discussed the position of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), which merged with an ideologically similar party, the Spring Party, to form NL in 2021. To support his assertion, Kowalczyk wrote that SLD "concluded that it would aim to abolish the 1993 abortion law" because the party believed that the "access to legal abortion within the provisions of the law is somewhat problematic" (2021, 31).

Lastly, for the Confederation and TD, the latter of which includes both Poland 2050 and the Polish People's Party (PSL), Kowalczyk categorized these two parties as parties that do not deal with the issue of abortion (2021, 33-34). Kowalczyk wrote that this is because these parties "have not expressed their opinions on the issue [of abortion]" (2021, 33). Because of the lack of scholarship on this topic, and Kowalczyk's article being several years old, there is a gap in the literature. This paper seeks to fill this gap by providing the most updated information regarding Poland's main political parties in parliament, specifically focusing on these parties' position on abortion.

The Issue of Abortion and Parliamentary Elections in Poland

Due to the fact that abortion had not been a major political concern for Polish voters until after the 2020 decision of the Constitutional Tribunal, there is not a lot of literature on the relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's parliamentary elections. However, Bień-Kacała (2024) sought to fill this gap by researching the following question: "[T]o what extent did the abortion issue influence the result of a general election in Poland in 2023 and the change of the ruling majority" (122)? To answer this question, Bień-Kacała focused on analyzing how Poland's political parties strategically used the issue of abortion during their pre-electoral campaigns for the 2023 parliamentary election (2024, 122). In her paper, Bień-Kacała found that the electoral programs of all three of the competing parties against PiS, which were PO, NL, and TD, argued in favor of "gender equality and women's rights, with stress on reproductive health and the right to abortion" (2024, 131). By contrast, Bień-Kacała observed that PiS and the other right-wing party, the Confederation, both "tried to discredit the mass movements of women" that were protesting against Poland's highly restrictive abortion laws (2024, 131). From her research, Bień-Kacała concluded that while abortion may have affected Poland's 2023 parliamentary election outcomes, abortion was only one of the many reasons why the opposing political parties were able to dethrone PiS, and that abortion was not the "leitmotif" of Poland's political parties' campaigns (2024, 133).

Compared to the United States, there are few studies addressing the relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in Poland. This is partially because the issue of abortion "has never been the main divider between the two

largest parties," the PiS and the PO, over the last twenty years (Tronina and Kaźmierska 2023). Because the politicization of abortion is a relatively new phenomenon in Poland, there is currently a gap in the scholarship in Polish politics regarding abortion's newfound electoral significance. This paper seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection during Poland's 2023 parliamentary election.

III.   Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. Furthermore, this study also aims to observe whether the strength of the relationships between American and Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection changed after abortion rights were diminished in both countries. In order to gauge whether the strength of the relationships between American and Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection changed following the judicial decisions that further restricted access to abortion, this study will also compare the United States 2024 presidential election to the 2020 presidential election, and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election to the 2019 parliamentary election.

Likewise, this study focuses on the following research questions: (1) Was there a relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election? (2) If a relationship was present, was there a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the United States' 2024 presidential election? (3) Was there a greater relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the United States' 2020 presidential election? (4) Was there a greater relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election?

To answer these research questions, this study employs a two-case comparative study analysis for the research design. To conduct this analysis, I will analyze survey data for the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, along with survey data for the United States' 2020 presidential election and Poland's 2019 parliamentary election. For this research design, the individual countries being studied are the unit of analysis, which are the United States and Poland. This study will only analyze the major political parties of both countries, which are the Democratic Party and Republican Party for the United States and PO, NL, TD, PiS and Confederation for Poland. Lastly, this study will compare the United States' 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2019 parliamentary election to the 2023 parliamentary election, respectively, in order to observe whether any changes had occurred following the enactment of more restrictive abortion laws in both countries.

Case Selection Justification

This study regarding the relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection focuses on the cases of the United States and Poland. The main reason for why the cases of the United States and Poland are significant is because both countries' highest judicial authority on the constitution increased restrictions to abortion access several years before a major national election. As aforementioned, the Supreme Court of the United States reversed the decision of *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973) in *Dobbs* v. *Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) on June 24, 2022, which ultimately removed women's constitutional right to abortion at the federal level. Reversing *Roe* also meant that a woman's right to abortion was able to be decided by individual states, after which eighteen states banned or heavily restricted access to

abortion. Similarly, the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland further restricted women's

access to abortion by criminalizing the abortions of fetuses with life-threatening fetal

anomalies on October 22, 2020. Notably, the Supreme Court's decision to reverse *Roe*

occurred two years before the United States' 2024 presidential election, and the

Constitutional Tribunal's decision occurred three years before Poland's 2023

parliamentary election.

      While the fact that the highest judicial authorities on the constitution of the United

States and Poland both decided against protecting abortion rights a few years before a

national election is the primary reason that these countries were chosen for this study,

there are several other similarities that contributed to the selection of these two countries.

Another important similarity between the United States and Poland is that they are both

constitutional representative democracies. This means that the citizens of the United

States and Poland both elect representatives to make legislative decisions on their behalf,

but the representatives are bound by the laws of the constitution in order to limit the

government's power and to ensure the protection of citizens' individual rights. This is an

important constant between the two cases because this study will be analyzing survey

data from elections from both countries, so it makes sense to compare the elections from

the United States and Poland because the elections in the government systems of both

countries function similarly, even if the type of election being studied is not quite the

same. Additionally, presidential elections in the United States and parliamentary elections

in Poland both occur every four years, which means that even though the elections for the

United States and Poland did not take place within the same year, there is the same

amount of time in between the two elections that will be studied for both the United States and Poland individually.

Furthermore, another significant similarity between the cases of the United States and Poland is that both countries experienced mass mobilizations of protest from supporters of abortion rights following both countries' respective judicial decisions that diminished constitutional protections for the right to abortion. In the United States, thousands of protests occurred after a leaked draft of the *Dobbs* decision was released on May 2, 2022, and when the decision was officially released on June 24, 2022 (Kishi 2022). In fact, aggregate data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) found that at least 3,071 protests took place between May 2 and July 1, 2022 as a result of the leaked and official *Dobbs* decision, with a majority of the protests in support of abortion rights (Kishi 2022).

Similarly, protests erupted in Poland as a result of the Constitutional Tribunal's decision to further restrict abortion access in 2020. Following the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling, there were protests almost every day for nearly two months, and these protests were considered to be the largest mass demonstrations of protest in Poland since the fall of communism in 1989 (Magdziarz and Santora 2020). On October 28, 2022, Poland's Chief of Police reported that there had been 410 protests with over 430,000 protesters throughout Poland against the Constitutional Tribunal's decision (Kowalczyk 2020). The largest protest, which consisted of 100,000 participants, took place on October 30, 2022 in Warsaw, Poland (Szczęśniak et al. 2020). The fact that there were mass mobilizations in both the United States and Poland following judicial decisions to further restrict abortion is significant because it demonstrates how these decisions were

widely unpopular in both countries. This could, in turn, have affected voters' voting behavior in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election.

One last significant similarity between the cases of the United States and Poland is that all of the main political parties for both countries have openly stated their positions on the issue of abortion. As was mentioned in the literature review, the 2024 Democratic Party platform was pro-abortion, which is evident from this direct quote from their program: "Democrats are fighting back to restore reproductive freedom for women in every state" (Democratic National Committee 2024, 49). By contrast, the 2024 Republican Party platform was more subtle in its statement in their program, but this quote is unmistakably anti-abortion: "[the Republican Party] Will Protect and Defend a Vote for the People, from within the States, on the Issue of Life" (Republican National Committee 2024, 20). By including this quote in their platform, the Republican Party is openly stating that it supports the overturning of *Roe*, and that the Republican Party also supports the states that choose to ban abortion.

For Poland, the three main opposition parties to PiS, which were PO, NL, and TD, all mentioned liberalizing the restrictions on abortion in Poland. As aforementioned in the literature review, PO had not always taken a direct stance on the issue of abortion. However, the party leaders of PO decided that they needed to appeal to leftist voters for the 2023 parliamentary election. In turn, the 2023 PO program included provisions for "legal, safe and affordable abortion up to the 12th week of pregnancy" (Tvn24.pl 2023, translated from Polish).[3] Of the three pro-abortion political parties in Poland, NL has often been described as the most liberal on the issue of abortion. Likewise, the 2023 NL

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[3] All of the sources that were originally in Polish were translated by the author.

program stated that they would ensure that women would have: "the right to terminate the pregnancy by the 12th week, depending solely on the woman's decision, and after the 12th week of pregnancy - in the event of a threat to the life or health of the woman or serious fetal defects" (Sitnicka 2023, translated from Polish).

On the other hand, TD has often been characterized as more conservative on social issues than PO and NL; however, the 2023 TD program "included the preparation of a law reversing the negative effects of the Constitutional Tribunal's 2020 ruling on the admissibility of termination of pregnancy," because TD wanted to give the voters the opportunity to decide on this issue of abortion via a referendum (Tvn24.pl 2023, translated from Polish). Conversely, PiS demonstrated its anti-abortion position in the following quote from their 2023 program: "We find it unacceptable to kill unborn children, while defending the dignity and health of women" (Tvn24.pl 2023, translated from Polish). Lastly, while the Confederation did not explicitly mention abortion in their 2023 program, the Confederation's 2019 program illustrated its anti-abortion position by stating that one of their priorities would be to increase regulations on abortion in order to guarantee the "protection of the life of the unborn" (Sitnicka 2023, translated from Polish).

However, even though Poland and the United States both experienced similar circumstances in regard to abortion, such as the diminishing of abortion rights and the subsequent mass mobilizations of protest from supporters of abortion rights in response, they both had very different electoral outcomes: Poland elected a majority of politicians to parliament from political parties that supported abortion rights while the United States elected a president from a political party that has historically identified as anti-abortion.

Because of these two countries' dramatically different results, I chose to conduct a case

study of these two countries to better understand how voters' attitudes on abortion relates

to how they voted in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023

parliamentary election. In regard to the specific method that was used for the case

selection, this study attempts to fulfill John Stuart Mill's "method of difference" (Mill

1973). Van Evera (1997) defined the method of difference as a case study that focuses on

"cases with similar general characteristics and different values on the study variable"

(57). Because the general characteristics of these two cases are similar, but the electoral

outcomes were different, the case selection of this study aims to employ the method of

difference. Table 3.1 summarizes the significant similarities, or constants, between the

cases of the United States and Poland, with the similarities acting as the controls for the

case study analysis.

Table 3.1: Case Selection: Significant Constants

Significant Constants	The United States	Poland
Government System	Constitutional representative democracy	Constitutional representative democracy
Highest Judicial Authority on the Constitution	The Supreme Court of the United States	The Constitutional Tribunal of Poland
Judicial Decision on the Legality of Abortion	In 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States announced their decision of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The *Dobbs* decision reversed *Roe*, resulting in the removal of the constitutional right for women to receive an	In 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland decided to criminalize abortions for fetuses that have severe fetal abnormalities that are not compatible with life.

	abortion at the federal level.	
Date of Judicial Decision	June 24, 2022	October 22, 2020
Mobilization After the Judicial Decision	There were mass pro-abortion demonstrations in the United States after the Supreme Court struck down the constitutional protection for abortion in *Dobbs*.	There were mass pro-abortion demonstrations in Poland after the Constitutional Tribunal further restricted access to abortion.
Date of First National Election Following Judicial Decision	November 5, 2024	October 15, 2023
Frequency of National Election	Every four years	Every four years
The Position on Abortion of the Country's Main Political Parties	Democratic Party, pro-abortion Republican Party, anti-abortion	PO, pro-abortion NL, pro-abortion TD, pro-abortion PiS, anti-abortion Confederation, anti-abortion

Data Collection Process

For the first research question, which seeks to explore whether there was a relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, the independent variable (IV) is the voters' positions on abortion and the dependent variable (DV) is the voters' political party selection. From this research question, I have the following hypotheses: (1) I expect to find that American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic Party and that American voters

that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican Party in the United States' 2024 presidential election; and (2) I expect to find that Polish voters that supported access to abortion were more likely to vote for one of the parties that supported expanding abortion access in Poland (PO, NL, and TD) and that Polish voters that supported more restrictive abortion laws were more likely to vote for one of the parties that supported restricting access to abortion (PiS and Confederation) in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. I anticipate that the survey data will support these hypotheses because the abortion laws in the United States and Poland have both recently become more restrictive, so it is plausible that voters that strongly believed that abortion should be legal would vote for the political parties that supported liberalizing abortion laws. For the same reason, it would also be plausible that voters that strongly believed that abortion should not be legal would vote for the political parties that supported increasing restrictions on abortion.

To test the hypotheses mentioned above, I employed data from surveys that asked American and Polish voters what their position on abortion was, and which political party they voted for in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. The data source for the survey that was completed by American voters was administered by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research at the University of Chicago in 2024, and the data source for the survey that was completed by Polish voters was administered by the Institute of Social Sciences at SWPS University in 2023.[4] Using the data that I collected from these two raw survey datasets, I created two

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[4] Unfortunately, there were no datasets that were publicly available that included data on Polish voters that were asked about their attitude on abortion and which political party they voted for in Poland's 2019 and 2023 parliamentary elections. However, after reaching out to researchers at the Institute of Social Sciences at SWPS University in Warsaw, Poland, the researchers graciously shared their unpublished raw harmonized dataset for their Polish National Election Survey (PNES) project, which is the dataset that was used in this study.

cross-tabulation tables (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2) in order to analyze the relationships between American and Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and the political party of the candidate(s) they voted for in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. Additionally, for all of the cross-tabulation tables, I highlighted all of the pro-abortion political parties in light blue and all of the anti-abortion political parties in light red in order to examine the relationships between the IV and the DV more easily.

For the second research question, which focuses on determining whether there was a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the United States' 2024 presidential election, the IV is the voters' positions on abortion and the DV is the voters' political party selection. From this research question, I hypothesize that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the 2023 parliamentary election than American voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election. I expect to find this result because Polish voters voted for a majority of candidates from political parties that supported abortion rights while American voters voted for a presidential candidate from an anti-abortion political party. To test this hypothesis, I compared the data that I compiled into the two cross-tabulation tables that I had created to test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2). Using this data, I was able to observe which country had a stronger relationship between voters' attitudes and their political party selection based on which country's voters' attitudes on abortion had consistently higher percentages for a given political party, or multiple parties.

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In regard to the third research question, which asks whether there was a stronger relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the 2020 presidential election, the IV is the voters' position on abortion and the DV is the voters' political party selection. In regard to this research question, I anticipate that there will be a stronger relationship between American voters that supported the legality of abortion and voted for the Democratic Party and that there will be a stronger relationship between American voters that did not support the legality of abortion and voted for the Republican Party in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the United States' 2020 presidential election. I expect these results because the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision in 2022 struck down the constitutional protection for abortion, which likely motivated more voters that supported the legality of abortion to vote for the Democratic Party in the 2024 presidential election than in the 2020 presidential election due to the legality of abortion being at risk nationwide in 2024. In contrast, it is likely that fewer voters that supported the legality of abortion voted for the Republican presidential candidate, which means that there would be a stronger relationship between voters that did not support the legality of abortion and voted for the Republican Party. In order to test this hypothesis, I created an additional cross-tabulation table (Table 5.3) with survey data from the United States' 2020 presidential election that was administered by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research at the University of Chicago in 2020, which included the same questions as the survey data for the 2024 presidential election. Additionally, I created two bar charts (Figure 1 and Figure 5.2) for the United States' 2024 and 2020 presidential elections in order to visually compare the distribution of voters' attitudes on abortion and

their political party selection from the 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election.

For my final research question, which focuses on determining whether there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election, the IV is the voters' attitude on abortion and the DV is the voters' political party selection. For this research question, I anticipate that there will be a stronger relationship between Polish voters that supported abortion access and voted for one of the parties that supported liberalizing Poland's abortion laws and that there will be a stronger relationship between Polish voters that did not support abortion access and voted for one of the parties that supported restricting Poland's abortion laws in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the 2019 parliamentary election. Similar to Hypothesis 4, which compares the United States' 2020 and 2024 presidential elections, I expect these hypotheses to be supported by the survey data because the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland further restricted access to abortion by deciding that it is unconstitutional to abort a fetus with severe fetal defects in 2020. Because of this, it is plausible that Polish voters that strongly supported the right to abortion would have voted for one of the parties that also supported the right to abortion in order to increase the likelihood that abortion laws would be liberalized in the future. Conversely, it is also plausible that fewer Polish voters that supported the right to abortion would have voted for one of the parties that did not support abortion rights, which means that there would be a stronger relationship between Polish voters that did not support the legality of abortion and voted for PiS or Confederation.

To test these hypotheses, I created an additional cross-tabulation table (Table 5.4) with survey data from Poland's 2019 parliamentary election that was administered by the Institute of Social Sciences at SWPS University in 2019, which included the same questions as the survey data for the 2023 parliamentary election. In addition, I created two more bar charts (Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4) for Poland's 2023 and 2019 parliamentary elections in order to visually compare the distribution of Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection from the 2019 parliamentary election to the 2023 parliamentary election.

IV.   Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

     I expect to find that American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic Party and that American voters that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican Party in the United States' 2024 presidential election.

Hypothesis 2

     I expect to find that Polish voters that supported access to abortion were more likely to vote for one of the parties that supported expanding abortion access in Poland (PO, NL, and TD) and that Polish voters that supported more restrictive abortion laws were more likely to vote for one of the parties that supported restricting access to abortion (PiS and Confederation) in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election.

Hypothesis 3

     I hypothesize that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the 2023 parliamentary election than American voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election.

Hypothesis 4

     I anticipate that there will be a stronger relationship between American voters that supported the legality of abortion and voted for the Democratic Party and that there will be a stronger relationship between American voters that did not support the legality of abortion and voted for the Republican Party in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the United States' 2020 presidential election.

I anticipate that there will be a stronger relationship between Polish voters that supported abortion access and voted for one of the parties that supported liberalizing Poland's abortion laws and that there will be a stronger relationship between Polish voters that did not support abortion access and voted for one of the parties that supported restricting Poland's abortion laws in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election.

V.   Data Analysis

To test for Hypothesis 1, I used a dataset titled "AP VoteCast 2024 General Election," which was administered by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research (2025). In order to extract the relevant data from the raw dataset, I created a pivot table in Excel that only included data on the American voters that answered the question regarding their position on the legality of abortion and voted for either the Democratic or Republican presidential candidate in the 2024 presidential election.[5] Using this data, I created Table 5.1, which is a cross-tabulation table that has American voters' positions on abortion as the IV and the voters' political party selection as the DV. In addition to including the number of voters that fit the criteria for each of the individual cells, I also calculated the percentage of voters that voted for the Democratic or Republican candidate for president in relation to their position on the legality of abortion for each cell.

Table 5.1: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on American Voters' Positions on the Legality of Abortion for the United States' 2024 Presidential Election

	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases	Total Respondents
Democrat 2024	86% (7,668)	63% (8,308)	19% (1,767)	23% (512)	18,255
Republican 2024	14% (1,286)	37% (4,906)	81% (7,677)	77% (1,744)	15,613
Total Respondents	8,954	13,214	9,444	2,256	33,868

Source: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2025

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[5] The survey question regarding the legality of abortion was: "Which comes closest to your opinion on abortion? Should abortion be…" (AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2025). The response options were: "legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, and illegal in all cases" (AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2025).

In order to determine whether American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more or less likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in 2024, I analyzed the percentages that I had calculated for each cell in Table 5.1 to see which political party had the highest percentage of voters that supported the legality of abortion in all cases or in most cases. As shown in Table 5.1, American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate, with 86 percent and 63 percent of voters that supported the legality of abortion in all cases or in most cases, respectively, voting for the Democratic presidential candidate. By contrast, Table 5.1 also shows that voters that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican presidential candidate, with 77 percent and 81 percent of voters responding that abortion should be illegal in all cases or in most cases, respectively, voting for the Republican presidential candidate. Overall, the conclusions of Hypothesis 1 are supported by the data because the voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate, and the voters that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican presidential candidate in the United States' 2024 presidential election.

To test for Hypothesis 2, I used a dataset titled "Polskie Generalne Studium Wyborcze 2023 (PGSW 2023) / Polish National Election Study 2023 (POLNES 2023)," which was administered by the Institute of Social Sciences at SWPS University in 2023. In order to only include the relevant variables from the raw dataset, I created a pivot table in Excel that only displayed data on the Polish voters that answered the question concerning their attitude on abortion and voted for either PO, NL, TD, PiS or

Confederation. With this data, I created Table 5.2, which is a cross-tabulation table that has Polish voters' attitudes on abortion on a scale from 1-7[6] as the IV, and the voters' political party selection as the DV. Similar to Table 5.1, I included the percentages of the distribution of the political parties that Polish voters selected based on their attitude on abortion on a 1-7 continuum along with the number of voters that responded in each individual cell.

Table 5.2: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on Polish Voters' Attitudes on Abortion for Poland's 2023 Parliamentary Election

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Respondents
PO 2023	49% (152)	42% (69)	35% (47)	30% (38)	26% (30)	12% (16)	6% (7)	359
NL 2023	19% (58)	12% (19)	4% (6)	3% (4)	3% (4)	4% (5)	1% (1)	97
TD 2023	23% (71)	33% (54)	30% (40)	17% (21)	11% (13)	7% (10)	2% (3)	212
PiS 2023	6% (18)	11% (18)	24% (33)	46% (57)	55% (64)	69% (93)	82% (101)	384
Confederation 2023	3% (9)	3% (5)	7% (9)	4% (5)	4% (5)	8% (11)	9% (11)	55
Total Respondents	308	165	135	125	116	135	123	1,107

Source: Cześnik et al. 2025
Note: Because all of the percentages in each cell were rounded to the nearest whole number, some of the columns do not add up to be exactly one hundred percent.

In Table 5.2, the percentage of Polish voters that supported access to abortion and voted for a particular party can be observed by locating the percentage of each cell within

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[6] The survey question regarding the respondents' position on abortion asked the respondent to select a number from 1-7 that best represents their position on abortion, with 1 being "A woman - if she so decides - should have the right to abortion in every situation" and a 7 being "A woman - regardless of her social or health situation - should not have the right to abortion" (Cześnik et al. 2025).

a column. Regarding the 1-7 continuum on Polish voters' attitudes on abortion, Polish voters that selected "1" supported unrestricted access to abortion while voters that selected "7" did not support abortion access for any reason. Because this survey question asked voters to rate their attitudes on abortion on a continuum from 1-7, voters that selected numbers closer to "1" (such as "2" and "3") have varying levels of support for abortion access while voters that selected numbers closer to "7" (such as "5" and "6") have varying levels of opposition to abortion access. Polish voters that selected "4" are treated as having an ambivalent attitude on abortion since "4" is in the middle of the continuum, and does not lean more toward "1" or "7."

By analyzing the percentages in Table 5.2, Polish voters that were more supportive of allowing women to have access to abortion were more likely to vote for parties that supported abortion rights, which were PO, NL, and TD. When the percentages of the voters that selected "1" and voted for either PO, NL, or TD are all added together, the percentage of voters that supported unrestricted access to abortion and voted for a party that supported abortion access is 91 percent. By contrast, the combined percentage of voters that selected "1" and voted for the anti-abortion parties, PiS or Confederation, is 9 percent. On the other hand, the combined percentage of voters that selected "7" and voted for PiS or Confederation is 91 percent while the combined percentage of voters that selected "7" and voted for PO, NL, or TD is 9 percent. From the data compiled in Table 5.2, Hypothesis 2 is supported because Polish voters that supported women's access to abortion were more likely to vote for one of the pro-abortion parties and Polish voters that supported banning abortion were more likely to vote for one of the anti-abortion parties.

In order to test for Hypothesis 3, I used the data that I had compiled for the United States' 2024 presidential election in Table 5.1 and the data for Poland's 2023 parliamentary election in Table 5.2. To compare the strength of the relationships between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election to Polish voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the 2023 parliamentary election, I compared the percentage of American voters that supported the legality of abortion in all cases and voted for the Democratic presidential candidate to the percentage of Polish voters that supported unrestricted abortion access and voted for either PO, NL, or TD. I also compared the percentage of American voters that supported the illegality of abortion in all cases and voted for the Republican presidential candidate to the percentage of Polish voters that supported banning abortion and voted for PiS or Confederation. From this comparison, there is a slightly stronger relationship between Polish voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection, with 91 percent of Polish voters that supported unrestricted abortion access voting for PO, NL, or TD, compared to 86 percent of American voters that supported the legality of abortion in all cases voting for the Democratic presidential candidate. Furthermore, 91 percent of Polish voters that supported banning abortion voted for PiS or Confederation while 77 percent of American voters that supported the illegality of abortion in all cases voted for the Republican presidential candidate.

Based on these findings, Hypothesis 3 is corroborated by the data because there is a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection than American voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection. Although the data for Poland has a wider distribution for Polish voters'

attitudes on abortion than the United States' data for American voters, this study is only

focusing on the answers for Polish and American voters' attitudes on abortion that are on

either extreme to test Hypothesis 3, which means selecting a "1" or "7" for Polish voters

or "Legal in all cases" or "Illegal in all cases" for American voters. By only analyzing the

answers on the voters' attitudes on abortion that are on either extreme, this study attempts

to make a more accurate comparison between the relationships between Polish and

American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection because

selecting a "1" on the Polish survey is essentially the same as selecting "Legal in all

cases" on the American survey. Likewise, Polish voters selecting "7" is also essentially

the same as American voters selecting "Illegal in all cases." However, because the other

responses for the voters' attitudes on abortion in the Polish and American surveys cannot

be accurately equated, they are not included in the discussion concerning the findings for

Hypothesis 3.

In order to test Hypothesis 4, I used the data that I compiled for Table 5.1 along

with a dataset titled "AP VoteCast 2020" from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs

Research for the United States' 2020 presidential election as a means to compare the

strength of the relationships between American voters' positions on abortion and their

political party selection in the 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election

(2021).[7] After creating a cross-tabulation table from the raw dataset for the United States'

2020 presidential election, the data of which is located in Table 5.3, I created two bar

charts (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2) that included the data from Table 5.1 and Table 5.3,

respectively, in order to provide a visual comparison for the strength of the relationships

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[7] The survey question regarding the American voters' position on the legality of abortion is the same for both the "AP VoteCast 2020" and "AP VoteCast 2024 General Election" datasets.

between the voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection from 2020 to 2024. Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 illustrate the percent of American voters that chose either one of the extreme options, "Legal in all cases" or "Illegal in all cases," for the question on the legality of abortion and which party the American voters voted for in the United States' 2020 and 2024 presidential elections. Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 only include the two extreme options in order to provide a more accurate comparison for the data on the Polish voters because I also only included the extreme options (selecting a "1" or a "7") for the figures illustrating the Polish data from Table 5.2 and Table 5.4., which will be discussed more in depth in the following pages.
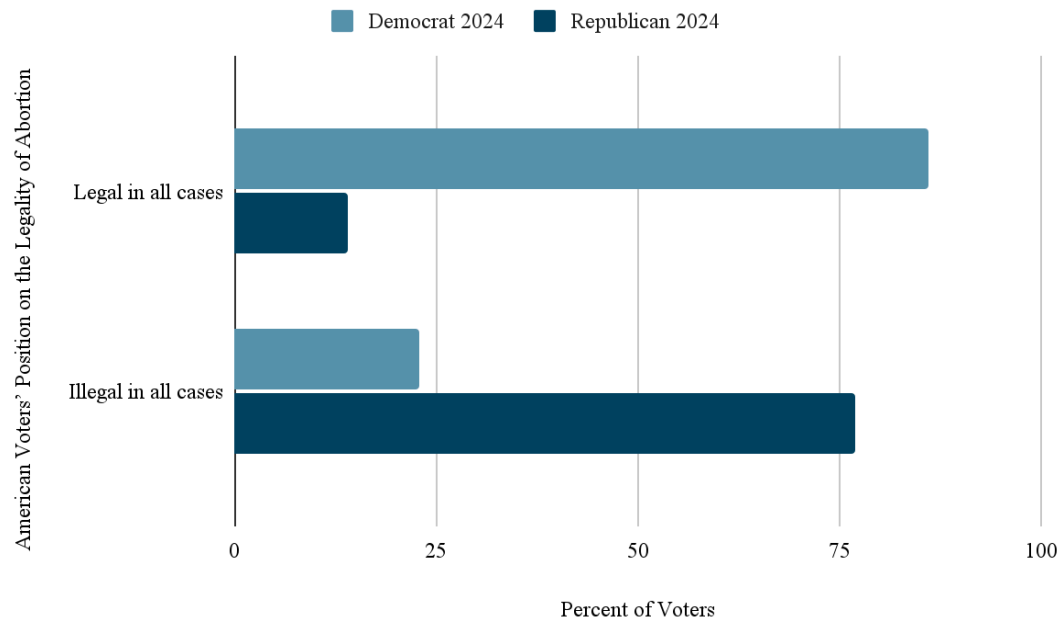
Table 5.3: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on American Voters' Positions on the Legality of Abortion for the United States' 2020 Presidential Election

	Legal in all cases	Legal in most cases	Illegal in most cases	Illegal in all cases	Total Respondents
Democrat 2020	87% (7,419)	71% (8,679)	27% (2,268)	23% (733)	19,099
Republican 2020	13% (1,153)	28% (3,413)	73% (6,130)	77% (2,521)	13,217
Total Respondents	8,572	12,092	8,398	3,254	32,316

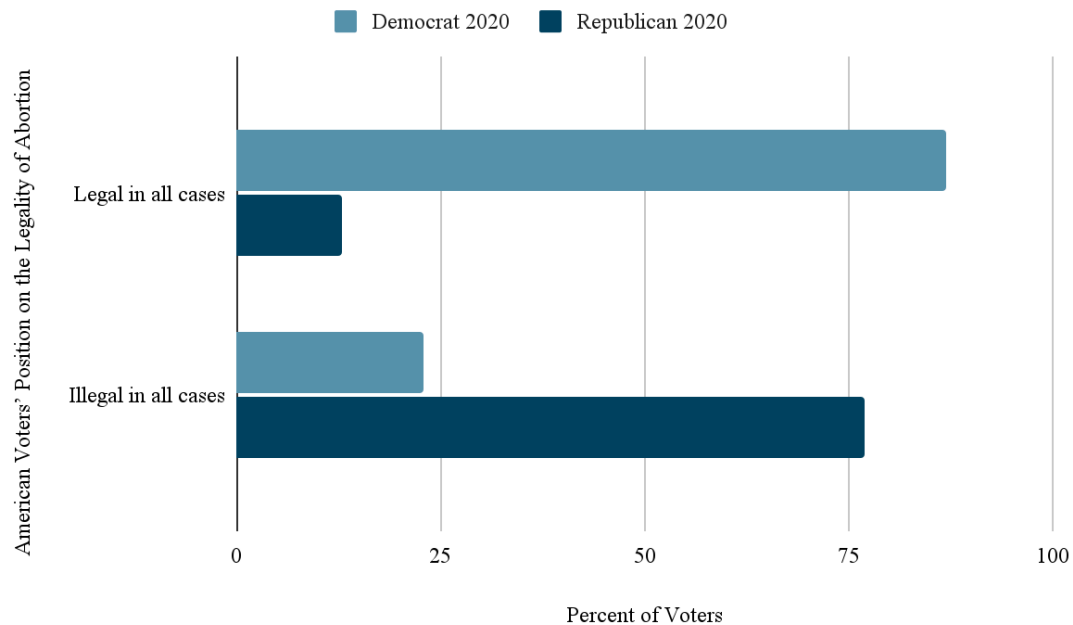*Source*: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2021
Note: Because all of the percentages in each cell were rounded to the nearest whole number, some of the columns do not add up to be exactly one hundred percent.

Figure 5.1: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on American Voters'

Positions on the Legality of Abortion for the United States' 2024 Presidential Election

Source: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2025

Source: AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 2021

After analyzing the data from Table 5.1 and Table 5.3, along with Figure 5.1 and

Figure 5.2, there does not seem to be a significant difference between the strength of the

relationship between American voters' position on the legality of abortion and their

political party selection from 2020 to 2024. More specifically, there does not seem to be

any significant differences between the American voters that supported the legality of

abortion and voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in 2020 compared to 2024.

However, there was an increased percentage of voters that supported the legality of

abortion in most cases and voted for the Republican presidential candidate in the 2024

presidential election compared to the 2020 presidential election. From the data displayed

in Table 5.1 and Table 5.3, the percentage of American voters that supported the legality

of abortion in most cases that voted for the Republican presidential candidate increased by 9 percent from the 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election. Additionally, the percentage of American voters that supported the illegality of abortion in most cases that voted for the Republican presidential candidate increased by 8 percent, while the percentage of American voters that supported the illegality of abortion in most cases that voted for the Democratic presidential candidate decreased by 8 percent from the 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election. Although the relationship between American voters' positions on the legality of abortion and their political party selection did not significantly change between the 2020 presidential election and the 2024 presidential election, the small differences that were observed for the voters that voted for the Republican presidential candidate can most likely be attributed to the fact that the Supreme Court removed the constitutional protection for the right to abortion, which has mostly affected states with large populations of Republican voters. Overall, Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the data because there were not any significant differences in the relationships between American voters' positions on the legality of abortion and their political party selection from the 2020 presidential election to the 2024 presidential election.

In order to test Hypothesis 5, I used the same raw harmonized dataset that I used for Table 5.2 to create Table 5.4, which contains the survey data from Poland's 2019 parliamentary election.[8] Due to the fact that data for NL, TD and Confederation were not included in the dataset for Polish voters in 2019, I used the survey data for SLD, PSL, and KORWiN from Poland's 2019 parliamentary election in order to provide a

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[8] Because the same harmonized dataset was used for the data from Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, the same survey question regarding Polish voters' attitude on abortion from 1-7 was used in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election.

comparison between all five of the major political parties from Poland's 2023

parliamentary election. Using the data for SLD, PSL, and KORWiN from Poland's 2019

parliamentary election to compare the relationship between the voters' attitudes on

abortion and their political party selection from the 2023 parliamentary election with NL,

TD, and Confederation should be relatively accurate due to the fact that SLD merged

with another leftist party and renamed itself NL in 2021, PSL merged with several other

parties to form TD in 2023, and KORWiN changed its name then merged with several

other parties and joined Confederation in 2019. Because of this, I included the data for

SLD, PSL, and KORWiN from the 2019 parliamentary election so that there could still be

a comparison between NL, TD, and Confederation from 2019 to 2023.

To compare the strength of the relationships between Polish voters' attitudes on

abortion and their political party selection from 2019 to 2023, I created two bar charts

(Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4) using the data compiled in Table 5.2 and Table 5.4. Figure 5.3

includes the data for the five major Polish political parties that were in Poland's 2023

parliamentary election, and Figure 5.4 uses the data from Table 5.4, which includes two

political parties that were in both the 2019 and 2023 parliamentary elections, PO and PiS,

and the three comparable political parties, SLD, PSL, and KORWiN, all of which have

since merged with the party that they are being compared to.

Table 5.4: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on Polish Voters' Attitude
on Abortion for Poland's 2019 Parliamentary Election

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Respondents
PO 2019	50% (117)	44% (92)	32% (51)	22% (37)	24% (44)	18% (29)	9% (13)	383
SLD 2019	23%	21%	11%	5%	3%	5%	2%	142

	(54)	(45)	(18)	(8)	(6)	(8)	(3)	
PSL 2019	8% (19)	12% (25)	12% (19)	5% (9)	5% (10)	6% (10)	1% (1)	93
PiS 2019	15% (35)	22% (47)	39% (62)	63% (106)	66% (122)	68% (109)	86% (118)	599
KORWiN 2019	3% (7)	1% (1)	4% (7)	5% (9)	1% (2)	3% (5)	1% (2)	33
Total Respondents	232	210	157	169	184	161	137	1,250

Source: Markowski et al. 2023

Note: Because all of the percentages in each cell were rounded to the nearest whole number, some of the columns do not add up to be exactly one hundred percent.
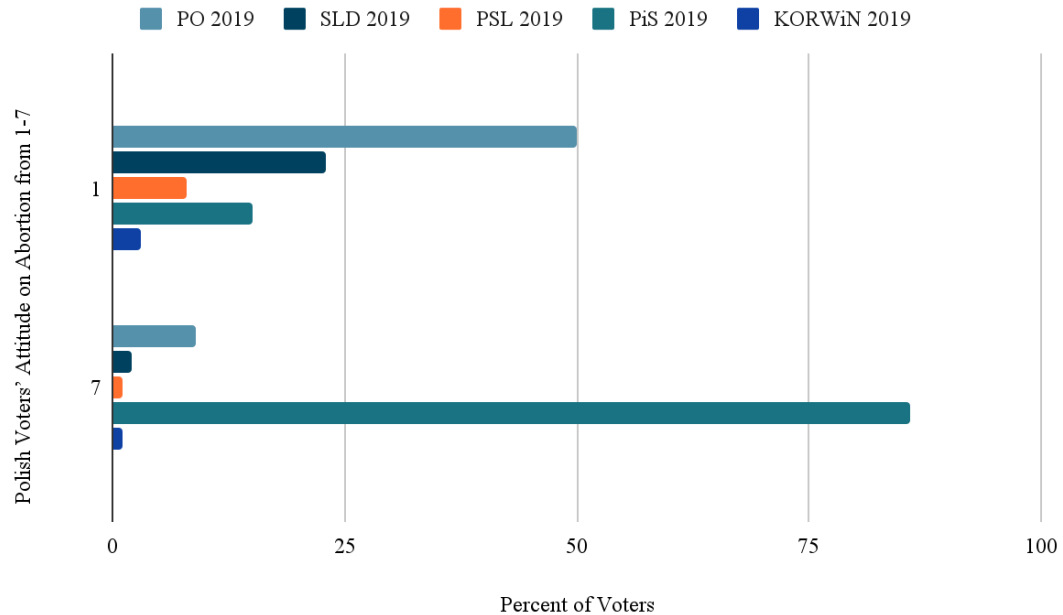
Figure 5.3: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on Polish Voters'

Attitudes on Abortion for Poland's 2023 Parliamentary Election
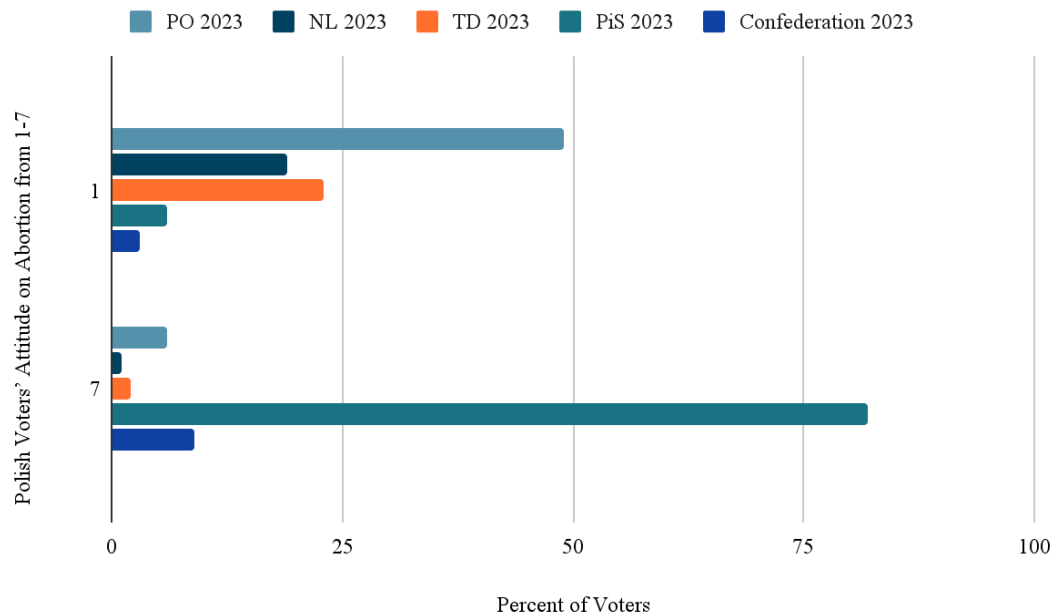
Source: Cześnik et al. 2025

Figure 5.4: The Distribution of Political Parties Selected Based on Polish Voters'

Attitudes on Abortion for Poland's 2019 Parliamentary Election

Source: Markowski et al. 2023

By analyzing the data from Table 5.2 and Table 5.4 along with the visual

representations of the data in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4, there seems to be a stronger

relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection

in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the 2019 parliamentary election. From

Figure 5.4 to Figure 5.3, there is a visible increase in the percent of Polish voters that

selected "1" and voted for a political party that supported abortion rights. There was also

a decrease in the percent of Polish voters that selected "7" and voted for a political party

that supported abortion rights from the 2019 to 2023, which can also be seen by

comparing Figure 5.4 to Figure 5.3. Conversely, Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 also show that

the percent of Polish voters that selected "1" and voted for a political party that did not

support abortion rights decreased from the 2019 parliamentary election to the 2023

parliamentary election. More specifically, the percentage of Polish voters that selected "1" and voted for one of the three political parties that supported abortion rights increased by 10 percent from 2019 to 2023. This result demonstrates that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection for the 2023 parliamentary election than for the 2019 parliamentary election. Moreover, there was also a minimally stronger relationship between Polish voters that selected "7" and voted for parties that supported restricting abortion access in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election. To be precise, the percentage of Polish voters that selected "7" and voted for one of the anti-abortion parties increased by 4 percent between 2019 to 2023. Furthermore, the percentage of Polish voters that supported abortion access and voted for either PiS or Confederation (KORWiN) decreased between Poland's 2019 parliamentary election to the 2023 election. In fact, the percent of voters that selected "1" or "2" decreased by 9 percent each, and the percent of voters that selected "3" decreased by 12 percent from 2019 to 2023.

Overall, Hypothesis 5 is supported by the data from Table 5.2 and Table 5.4, along with Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4. This is because the data showed that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters that supported abortion access and voted for one of the political parties that supported liberalizing Poland's abortion laws in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the 2019 election. In addition, there was also a stronger, albeit much smaller, relationship between Polish voters that did not support liberalizing abortion laws and voted for one of the anti-abortion political parties in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the 2019 election. These results can most likely be attributed to the fact that the Constitutional Tribunal's 2020 ruling that banned

women from aborting fetuses with severe genetic defects was widely unpopular in Poland, and ultimately caused thousands of protests throughout Poland. Because of this, it is plausible that the stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection in the 2023 parliamentary election is a reflection of Polish voters' dissatisfaction with the way that Poland's government is currently addressing the issue of abortion.

Limitations

While this study attempts to be as accurate as possible, there are limitations to the accurateness of this study. One limitation of this study is the fact that the survey data for American voters had significantly more respondents than the survey data for Polish voters. To compare, the American survey data for 2024 had 33,868 respondents and the survey data for 2020 had 32,316 while the Polish survey data for 2023 had 1,250 respondents and the survey data from 2019 had 1,107 respondents. Due to the large difference in the number of respondents between the survey data for American voters and the survey data for Polish voters, the survey data for the American voters is most likely to be more accurate than the survey data for Polish voters. Consequently, this also means that the findings for the Polish voters are most likely unable to be generalized to other parliamentary elections in Poland. However, the findings for the American voters are more likely to be generalizable due to the fact that there were over 30,000 respondents for the United States' survey data for both the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections. Accordingly, the findings for the American voters can most likely be generalizable to other presidential elections in the United States.

Similarly, because this study analyzed five political parties for Poland and there are fewer respondents for the survey data for Polish voters, some of the data for the political parties that were analyzed is likely to be more inaccurate. Specifically, the data for KORWiN and Confederation are most likely to be inaccurate simply due to the fact that there were very few respondents that voted for either of those parties in the survey dataset. Because of this, the data for KORWiN and Confederation are the political parties that are most likely not representative of the average voters for those political parties.

Lastly, another limitation of this study is that the hypotheses that were supported by the data that I collected have very limited authority for explaining why the United States and Poland ended up with different electoral outcomes when they both started with similar circumstances. A significant weakness of using the method of difference for comparing cases in a case study is that "the characteristics of paired cases are never nearly identical (as the method of difference requires)" (Van Evera 1997, 57-58). Unfortunately, this weakness is present in this study because the cases of the United States and Poland are not identical. For example, one of the differences between these two countries that could have affected the findings in this study include the fact that the elections that were being analyzed were two different types of elections. Another difference that could have affected the findings of this study is the fact that the United States has a two-party system while Poland has a multi-party system. Due to the limited scope of this study, I did not take these variables, or any other variable that differentiates the two countries, into consideration in my analysis. This means that the supported hypotheses have very limited explanatory power for why the United States and Poland ultimately reached different electoral results.

VI.   Conclusion

Within the past five years, the highest judicial authorities on the constitution in the United States and Poland have both imposed more restrictions on accessing abortion services. As a result of these judicial decisions, abortion has emerged as a significant political issue in the United States' and Poland's recent national elections. However, while Poland was able to elect enough members of parliament from pro-abortion parties to overthrow the anti-abortion PiS-majority government in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, the United States voted for a presidential candidate from an anti-abortion party in the 2024 presidential election. Even though both of these countries faced similar circumstances in regard to abortion, they ultimately reached completely different electoral outcomes during the first national election following the increase in restrictions to abortion access. In an attempt to gain a better understanding of why these two countries had drastically different electoral outcomes, this study sought to analyze the relationships between American and Polish voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection.

In that regard, the following research questions guided my study: (1) Was there a relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election? (2) If a relationship was present, was there a stronger relationship between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in the United States' 2024 presidential election? (3)Was there a stronger relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the United States' 2024 presidential election than in the United States' 2020 presidential

election? (4) Was there a stronger relationship between Polish voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in Poland's 2023 parliamentary election than in Poland's 2019 parliamentary election? To answer each of these research questions, I conducted a comparative case study analysis on the relationships between voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection for the United States' 2024 and 2020 presidential elections and Poland's 2023 and 2019 parliamentary elections using survey data. To analyze the survey data, I created cross-tabulation tables in order to only include the voters' positions on abortion and which political party they voted for in the United States' 2024 and 2020 presidential elections and Poland's 2023 and 2019 parliamentary elections.

From the data that I had collected, I found that American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in the United States' 2024 presidential election. Conversely, I also found that American voters that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican presidential candidate in the United States' 2024 presidential election. Notably, these first two findings are in agreement with the current literature on the partisan divide on the issue of abortion in the United States. After comparing these results to the data that I compiled for the United States' 2020 presidential election, I found that the relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection was not stronger for the United States' 2024 presidential election than for the 2020 presidential election, which was contrary to what I had hypothesized. This is because I had expected more American voters to be more polarized on the issue of abortion after the reversal of *Roe*, so I had anticipated that there would have been a

stronger relationship between American voters' positions on abortion and their political party selection in the 2024 presidential election when compared to the 2020 presidential election. Instead, I found that there were no significant differences between the percentages collected in the two cross-tabulation tables that I had analyzed (Table 5.1 and Table 5.3), or in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2, and that the percentages were essentially the same for the 2024 presidential election and the 2020 presidential election.

From the data that I had collected on Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, I found that Polish voters that supported abortion rights were more likely to vote for one of the pro-abortion political parties, such as PO, NL, or TD. By contrast, Polish voters that did not support abortion rights were more likely to vote for one of the anti-abortion political parties, such as PiS or Confederation. Additionally, when I compared the survey data from Poland's 2023 parliamentary election to the survey data for the 2019 parliamentary election, I found that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters that supported abortion rights and voting for a pro-abortion political party in the 2023 parliamentary election than in the 2019 parliamentary election. Similarly, there was also a stronger relationship, albeit to a much smaller extent, between Polish voters that supported restricting abortion access and voting for an anti-abortion political party in 2023 than in the 2019. Lastly, I also compared the survey data for the United States' 2024 presidential election to the survey data from Poland's 2023 parliamentary election, and I found that there was a stronger relationship between Polish voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection than American voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection.

The findings from this study, particularly the findings that American voters that supported the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate and that American voters that did not support the legality of abortion were more likely to vote for the Republican presidential candidate, seem to demonstrate that an American voter's position on abortion could be a predictor of voting behavior. The same seems to be true for the findings that Polish voters that supported abortion rights were more likely to vote for the pro-abortion political parties and that Polish voters that did not support abortion rights were more likely to vote for anti-abortion political parties. While these findings may seem to suggest that abortion was a predictor of voting behavior, there is currently not enough information included in this study to conclude that abortion was a predictor of voting behavior for the United States' 2024 presidential election or Poland's 2023 parliamentary election. However, this study could be expanded upon in the future to be able to determine whether abortion was a predictor of voting behavior in these elections. Similarly, this study could also be expanded upon by controlling for other variables that were included in the raw datasets and by conducting statistical analyses for the survey data that was collected in order to determine whether voters' attitudes on abortion actually affected their vote choices in the United States' 2024 presidential election and Poland's 2023 parliamentary election.

Overall, the research in the study is important because this study filled a gap in the current literature by analyzing the relationship between voters' attitudes on abortion and their political party selection using survey data from the first national elections in the United States and Poland following the judicial decisions that greatly diminished abortion rights in both countries. To conclude, research on the relationship between voters'

attitudes on abortion and their political party selection is significant because research on this topic can provide valuable insight on the increased politicization of abortion, the increase in partisan polarization on the issue of abortion, and how abortion could potentially affect the outcomes of elections. This study in particular strives to contribute to the current literature on the politicization of abortion and the partisan divide on the issue of abortion in the United States and Poland.

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