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Lack of Substantive Representation in Europe: Causes and Consequences

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Representation Gaps in Europe: On Incompetent Politicians, Distrust in Democracy and Populism

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Abstract

Representative democracies build on the idea that parliaments represent the policy attitudes of the voters. I compare survey responses of representative samples of voters and MPs from 28 countries to the same policy items to estimate the extent of representation. I find large and systematic "representation gaps". MPs are more left-wing on cultural and EU-related issues than their voters in nearly all countries. On economic issues, MPs tend to be more market-oriented than voters, but this result varies by country. I validate this survey data using an original dataset on referendums. My findings are inconsistent with standard probabilistic voting models. I theoretically and empirically explain the existence of representation gaps through a perceived valence advantage of some politicians, enabling them to implement the policies they prefer. Other potential causes, like MPs trying to protect minority rights or lobbying, are unlikely explanations. Citizens who are less well represented have less trust in institutions, are dissatisfied with how democracy works, and are less likely to vote. Populist parties fill representation gaps and are closer to voters on cultural issues than established parties.

Keywords: Representation, Populism

JEL Classification: D72, D78, N44, P16

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1 Introduction

Representative democracies build on the idea that voters elect members of parliament (MPs), which in turn represent the policy attitudes of voters. The extent to which policy decisions of MPs are in line with the attitudes of voters is called substantive representation (Golder and Ferland, 2017) and is a key measure of any representative democracy (Andeweg, 2012; Pitkin, 1967). A lack of substantive representation is called a representation gap. This paper assesses substantive representation in Europe and documents the existence of large, significant and systematic representation gaps. It also examines how representation gaps can arise despite political competition and shows that they help to explain high vote shares of populist parties and lack of trust in liberal democracy.

The empirical analysis builds on two novel data sets. I generate the first dataset by harmonizing and merging several pre-existing voter and MP surveys. It contains the personal policy attitudes of 2,074 elected MPs and 31,461 citizens from 28 European countries on various issues who have been elicited in the same way. According to a simple theoretical framework that I develop, substantive representation should be low only if the personal attitudes of MPs and citizens differ and MPs implement their own policy attitudes. I use a second dataset on politicians' and ordinary citizens' voting and initiation behavior in referendums to validate the survey data and theoretical framework.

I find that MPs largely ignore the attitudes of their voters. When asked whether an MP should follow the opinion of his voters or his own opinion, 69% of national and 84% of MEPs stated that the MP should follow his own opinion. This matters because, as I show, the policy attitudes of MPs and voters differ strongly, significantly, and systematically. On nearly all cultural and EU-related issues, MPs are significantly more left-wing than their voters in nearly all 28 countries. On a cultural issue index, the average national MP is about three-quarters of a standard deviation more left-wing than the average voter, while on an EU issue index, the difference is about half a standard deviation. Moreover, social democratic, green, liberal, Christian democratic, and conservative MPs all tend to be more culturally left-wing than voters.

On the economic policy dimension, MPs seem to be more market-oriented than voters, but representation gaps are much smaller than on the cultural or EU dimension. Results also depend much more on the country. For instance, MPs are much more market-oriented in many eastern European countries, while they are more state-oriented in Portugal, Ireland, and Denmark. Furthermore, social democratic MPs are more state-oriented on economic issues than the average voter, while liberal and Christian democratic MPs are more market-oriented. Hence, the average voter has established voting options to his left and right on economic issues

but only to his left on cultural topics and topics related to EU integration.

Representation gaps are larger on issues that voters and parliamentarians indicate as more important to them in surveys. They are also not driven by MPs or voters with extreme preferences. Instead, most MPs have different policy attitudes than most voters. MPs differ from the mean voter of many demographic subgroups in the same way that they differ from the overall mean voter. For instance, the mean MP is more left-wing on gender relations than the average woman, more left-wing on immigration than the average immigrant and more market-oriented than the average voter from the upper classes. Representation gaps between the mean MP and the mean citizen or the median MP and the median voter are even larger. Moreover, representation gaps have been qualitatively stable over many decades.

Standard probabilistic voting models of electoral competition cannot explain the existence of representation gaps (Adams, 1999; Lin et al., 1999; Schofield, 2004, 2007; Schofield and Zakharov, 2010). These models extend the logic of Downs (1957) to competition of multiple parties in multiple policy dimensions. As in Downs (1957) parties are assumed to maximize their vote share. Competition forces parties to converge to the electoral center.

I show theoretically how representation gaps can arise despite electoral competition. I alter the utility function of parties relative to Downs (1957) and standard probabilistic voting models such that parties are not motivated by winning the election but by the policy implemented. Moreover, my model assumes that voters see parties as differentially competent. I show that both assumptions are well supported by evidence. Due to the combination of these changes, every equilibrium of the model features a representation gap in the direction of the bliss point of the party that is seen as more competent. Intuitively, the party that is seen as more competent can shift its policy position away from the median voter and still win the election due to its valence advantage. It also has an incentive to do so because it is policy motivated. The model makes several testable predictions about the distribution of perceived competence of European parties. All of these predictions find strong support in the data. In contrast, I find no evidence that lobbyism, a desire of politicians to protect minorities from a "tyranny of the majority," or a causal effect of getting elected on policy attitudes causes the lack of substantive representation.

Representation gaps matter. Controlling for many demographic characteristics, citizens whose policy attitudes differ more from those of their representatives have less trust in democratic institutions and democracy in general and are less likely to vote.

I also present evidence that the rise of populism is a consequence of representation gaps. Populist MPs, defined as those who hold strong anti-elite sentiments (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017), are more likely to correctly perceive representation gaps than non-populist MPs. Populist MPs are also much more likely to state that an MP should follow the opinion of his voters than non-populist MPs. Populist parties provide a mixture of left-wing economic and right-

wing cultural policy positions that many citizens demand but few parties have supplied so far. Their policy positions differ more strongly from those of non-populist parties on issues where representation gaps are larger. Finally, the mean attitude of the populist parliamentarian is close to the mean attitude of voters on cultural issues, thereby being the only party group that is more right-wing than mean voter.

These findings advance our understanding of the reasons for the rise of populist parties.¹ Recent studies have shown empirically that trade exposure and resulting economic inequality (Autor et al., 2020; Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b), economic insecurity (Algan et al., 2017; Fetzer, 2019; Funke et al., 2016) and immigration (Dustmann et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017; Hangartner et al., 2019; Harmon, 2018; Tabellini, 2020) increase the vote shares of populist parties. It is less well understood why these events increase the populist vote share (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2020). There is no good reason to suppose that times of hardship or crises generally lead to populist voting. According to the "rally-round-the-flag" effect, popular government support temporarily increases during international crises (Mueller, 1970). For instance, the Covid pandemic increased government support and trust in political institutions (Esaïasson et al., 2021; Kritzinger et al., 2021).

Why do only certain events strengthen challenger parties, and why not other established parties? For instance, voters could have voted for social democratic and socialist parties in response to the great recession. It is also not obvious why these new challenger parties see the "pure people" in a struggle with the "corrupt elite", hold far-wing cultural positions, and are anti-media and anti-expert (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017).

Representation gaps can help to explain this. Suppose that voters vote for parties who are close to them in policy space. If there are representation gaps, challenger parties can fill much policy space and will ultimately rise. Because established parties are more market-oriented and culturally left-wing than voters, this explains why challenger parties are more state-oriented and culturally right-wing than established parties. They fill void policy space, thereby mirroring representation gaps. These challenger parties will rise particularly fast if issues become relevant where representation gaps are large, and they are well positioned relative to other parties, but not when issues become relevant where there is no representation gap. Because representation gaps are particularly large regarding redistribution and immigration, this explains why rising inequality, crises that highlight inequality, and immigration crises lead to populist voting. To reduce trust in their opponents, challenger parties can argue that established parties do not represent the people and instead make policy according to their own attitudes, essentially being "corrupt". Given that representation gaps exist, this statement contains a kernel of truth, and it

¹Surveys on populism are provided by Berman (2021) and Guriev and Papaioannou (2020).

is likely to damage the reputation of their rivals, helping challengers to rise. Their anti-media stance can be explained by the fact that media outlets have been shown to differ from citizens in the same way MPs do (Puglisi and Snyder, 2015). Anti-expert sentiment might also be explained this way as experts have been found to be more socially left-wing than the population (Haidt and Lukianoff, 2018).

Several other papers have also argued that the rise of populism is partly due to mainstream parties failing to represent their voters and populists filling the resulting gaps in the policy space (Berger, 2017; Berman and Kundnani, 2021; Dal Bó et al., 2022; Gethin et al., 2022; Grzymala-Busse, 2019; Lindner et al., 2020). However, none of these papers has estimated representation gaps.

In addition to explaining the power of populist parties, this paper also helps to assess whether the rise of populism is a problem or not. Many models assume that populists are an inferior alternative to established parties in any way and only mobilize voters who are unsophisticated (Levy et al., 2022) or uninformed (Crutzen et al., 2020; Sonin et al., 2021). Empirically, populists have been shown to have negative effects through disseminating fake news (Barrera et al., 2020), reducing economic growth (Funke et al., 2016) and damaging democratic institutions (Bellodi et al., 2021; Docquier et al., 2019; Funke et al., 2016; Morelli et al., 2021). The main policy implication from such a worldview is a cordon sanitaire against populists. Established parties should prevent populists from influencing politics in any way, in particular, not form coalitions with them. This is also the strategy employed most frequently by established parties in Europe.

If populists also have positive effects, they are not a strictly dominated choice. Dal Bó et al. (2022) show that populists represent formerly marginalized sectors of society descriptively. I show that populists also improve substantive representation and are closer to the mean voter than any other party group on several important issues. Moreover, I find that voters are aware that populists are much less competent than established parties. This is consistent with voters rationally weighing the costs and benefits of voting for them. Hence, this paper shows that neither is it clear that the rise of populism is overall problematic nor that voters make a mistake when voting for populists.

Moreover, I show that even if the negative effects of populism outweigh the positive effects, excluding populists might be counterproductive. It might mitigate the rise of populist parties, but this would increase representation gaps and thereby dissatisfaction of many citizens with how democracy works in their country. Such attacks may even make citizens believe that policymaking cannot be meaningfully affected through voting and turn to violence.

Hence, letting populists rise seems to have many negative effects on the economy and democratic institutions, while excluding them might reduce trust in democracy even further

and thereby also damage democracy. Simply sitting out the rise of populism and hoping that populist parties will fade by themselves might also not be a good alternative. The loss of trust in liberal democracy and the rise of populist parties is not just due to shocks like the financial or the refugee crisis. Rather, ordinary policymaking by established parties has alienated voters because it strongly differs from their policy attitudes. Crises seem to only heighten or activate awareness of this fact.

On a hopeful note, this paper highlights another policy alternative: established parties could close representation gaps. My results suggest that representation gaps exist because established politicians create them *voluntarily*, not because they are forced to by constraints. Hence, closing representation gaps mainly requires the political will to do so. This strategy looks particularly promising because the representation gaps I document are likely undesirable. I show that several potential justifications for representation gaps are not supported by evidence. Hence, if established parties reduce representation gaps, Europe might become more democratic in a majoritarian sense while not making it less democratic in a liberal sense.

How can representation gaps be reduced? Previous research has emphasized the role of economic growth and redistribution in curbing the growth of populists. I find that voters do prefer more redistribution than MPs which means that increased redistribution would narrow down a representation gap. However, the largest representation gaps arise on cultural issues like immigration, sentencing, or gender relations. Established parties would have to move sharply to the right on these issues to close representation gaps.

This paper also contributes to the literature on representation. Economists have focused on numerical representation of sociodemographic groups in positions of power, which is called descriptive representation (Golder and Ferland, 2017). Studies have mostly focused on women (Beaman et al., 2009; Besley et al., 2017; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Duflo, 2012) and ethnic minorities (Abhijit V. and Pande, 2007; Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2015; Pande, 2003), often in developing countries. Recent papers have examined descriptive representation regarding socioeconomic background in Europe (Dal Bó et al., 2017, 2022). In contrast to this literature, I focus on substantive representation.

Studies on descriptive representation have partly been motivated by the idea that low descriptive representation of a group translates into low substantive representation. I show that the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation is complex. Whether descriptively over-represented or underrepresented groups are better represented substantively depends on the policy dimension and the demographic variable. For instance, immigrants are better represented substantively than natives on cultural topics but less well on economic issues. The only descriptively disadvantaged group that is systematically disadvantaged substantively are the poor. This raises the question of how effective affirmative action policies are. First, it

suggests that such policies might not change substantive representation as desired. Second, it indicates that improving the substantive representation of descriptively underrepresented groups might not even be necessary because they might not be underrepresented substantively.

Outside of economics, there is a literature in political science on substantive representation.² The paper at hand makes several improvements over previous studies. First, it makes a methodological contribution by presenting a simple approach to measure substantive representation and validating this approach. It offers a formal framework to analyze and relate different aspects of substantive representation. This might be useful because existing studies use identical terms to refer to similar but different concepts which can create confusion (Kertzer, 2020). Moreover, most studies assess differences in personally held attitudes between voters and politicians. If politicians choose to implement the personal attitudes of voters, such differences matter little. I consider not only differences in personal attitudes but also the intention of politicians to implement their voter's attitudes and congruence of policy decisions made by voters and MPs. I find that ignoring the intention of politicians to implement their voter's attitudes leads to wrong conclusions. Moreover, the previous literature has mostly relied on hypothetical survey items. Such responses might be biased for several reasons (Heckman et al., 2019). The paper at hand uses data on real-world decision-making of politicians and voters to mitigate this problem and shows that estimating substantive representation based on my framework with survey data produces valid results. This is useful because surveys like those employed in this study exist for many other countries and could be easily used to examine substantive representation in other countries or other time periods.

The paper at hand is also more extensive than all studies on substantive representation I am aware of. Most existing studies focus on single countries (Andeweg, 2012; Andreadis and Stavrakakis, 2017; Bühlmann et al., 2010; Hakhverdian and Schakel, 2021; Holmberg, 2012; Jaime-Castillo and Coller, 2017; Lesschaeve, 2021; Schakel and Hakhverdian, 2018) and/or estimate substantive representation at only one point in time (Andeweg, 2012; Bühlmann et al., 2010; Costello et al., 2021; Hakhverdian and Schakel, 2021; Jaime-Castillo and Coller, 2017; Lesschaeve, 2021). Coverage of European countries is particularly low (Shapiro, 2011). Notable exceptions are Costello et al. (2012) and Dalton (2017) who compare personal policy attitudes of candidates to the European Parliament and European voters, and Hall and Evans (2019) who analyze whether the positions of parties and voters *change* in the same direction over time.

Moreover, the paper at hand investigates several potential causes that have not been examined to date. This includes the cause that I find to be most important for explaining representation

²See Kertzer (2020) for a recent discussion and meta-analysis.

gaps. Finally, I investigate the consequences of representation gaps in much more detail than earlier studies.

Finally, the paper adds to the theoretical literature. I provide strong evidence for heterogeneity in the perceived competence of parties and policy motivations of politicians, consistent with recent evidence (Dal Bó et al., 2022) and citizen-candidate models (Osborne and Slivinski, 1996). Adding these insights to Downs (1957) changes key predictions of the model and explains the existence of representation gaps. Hence, it might prove helpful to modify other models of electoral competition in the same way.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I present my framework of substantive representation. Thereafter I derive theoretical predictions in section 3. Section 4 provides an overview of the data used in the empirical part of the paper. This empirical part consists of three sections. First, I document the pattern of substantive representation in Europe in section 5. Thereafter, I examine the causes of this pattern in section 6 and analyse its consequences in section 7. Section 8 concludes the paper.

2 Definitions and Remarks

By substantive representation, I refer to the degree to which parliamentarians represent the policy attitudes of voters. I distinguish three aspects of substantive representation: Attitude Congruence (AC), Representation Intention (RI), and Decision Congruence (DC).

AC measures how congruent policy attitudes of politicians and voters are.³ Because I want to compare voters to the MPs that actually sit in parliament, AC is measured without accounting for demographic differences between voters and MPs. Moreover, in contrast to most political scientists, I do not claim that differences in attitudes arise causally due to the election of politicians (Kertzer, 2020). However, I do examine to what extent such differences are due to a direct effect of being elected and how much of them can be accounted for by demographic differences between MPs and voters to examine their origins.

AC measures how similar attitudes of voters and parliamentarians are at a given point in time, not whether attitudes change in the same direction over time. The latter is often referred to as policy responsiveness. Policy responsiveness is perfect if the attitudes of voters and MPs are extremely different at any point in time but move parallel over time. This means that policy responsiveness is a weak test for representation. Moreover, AC can be measured at several points

³In the literature, several terms are used to refer to this type of congruence: substantial (or substantive) representation, ideological congruence (Mayne and Hakhverdian, 2017), opinion congruence (Walgrave and Lefevere, 2013) or issue-congruence. However, these terms are not used consistently and are often synonymous with other concepts such that it might be helpful to introduce the term AC.

in time. This allows for comparing attitude levels and attitude trends between MPs and voters. Therefore, I consider AC a more useful representation measure than policy responsiveness.

Most of the previous literature has only estimated AC. But studying AC on its own is not sufficient to examine representation because it ignores that MPs do not need to have the same attitudes as voters to act in their interests. Voters could punish MPs who do not implement the voter's attitudes by not re-electing them, thereby incentivizing MPs to implement the voter's attitudes even if this goes against their own attitudes (Pitkin, 1967; Przeworski et al., eds, 1999; Sappington, 1991). Hence, I distinguish between AC and DC. DC is the congruence between the political decisions taken by the MPs and the decisions preferred by the voters. Note that from a welfare perspective, DC is more relevant than AC. How similar AC and DC are depends on the degree to which politicians implement the policy attitudes preferred by voters if they conflict with their own attitudes. I label this degree the Representation Intention (RI) of MPs.

The following framework illustrates the relationship between AC, RI, and DC. Let a_v be the density of voter attitudes and a_{MP} the density of MP attitudes. Let $m(\cdot)$ be some metric and "-" a suitable operator for the difference. For instance, $m(\cdot)$ might be the mean, and "-" might indicate the ordinary minus operator. Alternatively, $m(\cdot)$ could be the identity function and "-" the "many-to-many" congruence measure by Golder and Stramski (2010). I define AC as

$$AC(a_v, a_{MP}) = 1 - [m(a_v) - m(a_{MP})]$$

Instead of talking in terms of congruence it is often more suitable to discuss a lack of congruence between attitudes of voters and politicians. I define such an Attitude representation gap (ARG) as

$$\begin{aligned} ARG(a_v, a_{MP}) &= 1 - AC(a_v, a_{MP}) \\ &= m(a_v) - m(a_{MP}) \end{aligned}$$

The ARG is zero if the statistics of voter's and politician's attitudes are identical. An ARG can be positive or negative which makes it possible to identify in which direction politicians differ from voters.

Assume that when making decisions, MPs weigh the attitudes of voters with weight RI and their own attitudes with weight 1-RI. Decision Congruence, DC, is defined as

$$DC(a_v, a_{MP}, RI) = 1 - RI \cdot 0 - (1 - RI) \cdot [m(a_v) - m(a_{MP})]$$

where $m(\cdot)$ and "-" could take on many forms as stated above. $DC(a_v, a_{MP}, RI)$ and $AC(a_v, a_{MP})$ are identical if $RI=0$, i.e. if MPs only consider their own attitudes when making decisions. In contrast, if RI is larger than zero, AC and DC might differ. In particular, DC will equal its maximum value of one if $RI=1$. In this case MPs implement voter's attitudes even if they differ

from their own attitudes. A DRG is defined as

$$\begin{aligned}
 DRG(a_v, a_{MP}, RI) &= 1 - DC(a_v, a_{MP}, RI) \\
 &= (1 - RI) \cdot [m(a_v) - m(a_{MP})] \\
 &= (1 - RI) \cdot ARG(a_v, a_{MP})
 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Why should we care about these measures? First, low DC or even low AC or RI might lead to reactions by voters and citizens. For instance, low DC might lead voters to reconsider their voting decision and enable new parties and social movements to rise. However, it might also reduce voters' trust in democracy. They might react with protest voting and vote abstention. If DC is very low on topics that are important to many voters, reactions might include attacks on politicians or even revolutions.

Second, it is the key idea of representative democracies that MPs serve as the agents of voters and represent their interests. Therefore, a low DC might suggest that representative democracies do not work as intended. Representing the interest of the voters need not require Attitude or even Decision Congruence as voters could be irrational or uninformed. Moreover, most democracies have enacted special rules to save minorities from a "tyranny of the majority" by granting them special rights. Still, there are reasons why DC matters from a welfare perspective. First, many important policy issues do not have a correct solution but are a matter of preferences. For instance, people may hold different deep fairness ideals like "liberalism", "egalitarianism" or "meritocracy" (Cappelen et al., 2007). Such fairness ideals strongly influence redistribution preferences. At the same time, there is no correct fairness ideal. As most policy issues are influenced to some extent by deep preferences like values, one should be cautious in dismissing the attitudes of voters. Second, minority rights do not entirely overrule the obligation of the parliament to implement the policy preferences of the voters under any circumstance. Rather, both ideals have to be balanced depending on the circumstances under the proportionality principle. It is crucial to know the extent and location of representation gaps to do so. Appendix A discusses in more detail under what circumstances representation gaps might be a problem.

3 Theoretical Predictions

Economic theory on electoral competition and voting has largely been in the tradition of the spatial approach of Downs (1957). In this approach, different political positions are related to each other by how similar they are. More similar policy positions are thought of as being closer to each other. Voters have ideal points in this policy space, and political candidates announce to implement certain points if they get elected. Voters are typically assumed to base their vote

solely on the distance between their ideal points and the points announced by the candidates and vote with higher probability for candidates closer to them. Parties take ideal points of the electorate as given and are usually assumed to strategically position themselves in the policy space to maximize their chances of election.

In European countries, typically, more than two parties compete in a policy space that has been found to be multidimensional by empirical studies (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Probabilistic voting models are the preferred way to model electoral competition in such situations (Coughlin and Nitzan, 1981; Hinich et al., 1972). They often feature a (sometimes unique) convergent equilibrium. In such a convergent equilibrium all parties position themselves at the electoral *mean* on each policy dimension (Adams, 1999; Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Lin et al., 1999; McKelvey and Patty, 2006; Schofield, 2007). This implies that the mean positions of parliamentarians and voters are identical. Hence, DC in terms of means is predicted to be high. Convergence of all parties to the mean is sufficient but not necessary for high DC in terms of means. Candidates could position themselves symmetrically around the electoral mean, which could result in high DC in terms of means if coalitions are formed. While representation gaps have not been examined directly as far as I know in these models, simulation exercises suggest that if equilibria are not convergent, candidates are indeed positioned symmetrically around the electoral mean (Adams, 1999; Schofield, 2007; Schofield and Zakharov, 2010).⁴ These results are robust to the lifting of several assumptions, like strategic instead of sincere voting (McKelvey and Patty, 2006), different candidate motivations (Adams, 1999), the distance measure voters use to compare their own positions to those of candidates (Lin et al., 1999) and heterogeneity in perceived valence of the candidates (Schofield, 2007). Moreover, Adams (1999) combines Monte Carlo simulations with parameter estimates from empirical studies to argue that the conditions for a convergent equilibrium are often fulfilled in the real world.

These theoretical results suggest that DC regarding the mean should be high. The models do not make a direct prediction on AC or RI. However, an ARG combined with low RI implies a DRG. This means that ARGs and low RI should not be expected at the same time. Predictions 1 and 2 summarise these expectations.

⁴There are deterministic and probabilistic spatial voting models. Under deterministic voting, the probability that a voter votes for any candidate is 1 if he is closest to the voter and 0 otherwise. Models of probabilistic voting add a random error term to the voting behavior, such that the probability of voting for a candidate increases continuously as the distance decreases. Most models of deterministic voting do not feature pure strategy Nash equilibria unless the distribution of ideal voter points fulfills strong symmetry conditions (Banks, 1995; Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Cohen and Matthews, 1980; Eaton and Lipsey, 1975; McKelvey, 1979; McKelvey and Schofield, 1987; McKelvey and Wendell, 1976; Plott, 1967; Saari, 1997; Schofield, 1978, 1983). In particular, the median voter theorem by Black (1948) and Downs (1957) does not hold. Probabilistic voting models usually have equilibria. In addition, they are more realistic than deterministic voting because the latter requires much political knowledge from voters.

Prediction 1: DC between voters and MPs regarding the mean or the median is high

Prediction 2: Either AC is high or RI is high or both.

4 Data

To assess AC, I combine data from various surveys. These surveys have the following properties: 1) identical questions on policy attitudes with identical answer options were given to MPs and citizens of the same country. 2) the sample of MPs is representative of the universe of elected MPs in the parliament and the sample of citizens is representative of the universe of citizens in the country. 3) the survey was administered at similar points in time.

The two most comprehensive surveys that fulfill these properties are the European Election Study (EES) 2009 ([van Egmond et al., 2013](#)) and wave 1 of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS). The EES 2009 consists of a Voter Study and a Candidate Study. Both sub-studies were fielded in 27 EU-member states after the 2009 election to the EU parliament. The Voter Study was fielded to a representative sample of roughly 1000 citizens in each country. For the Candidate Study, nearly all candidates for the European parliament were contacted. It includes information on 6558 candidates from 260 parties at a response rate of 20.5%. In addition, the Candidate Study contains an indicator for whether candidates were elected, making it possible to compare the attitudes of voters and citizens to MEP candidates and elected MEPs. Because the survey was fielded (in most countries several months) post-election, the survey elicits the attitudes of those who were already working as MEPs. I have data of 169 out of the 736 MEPs that made up the 2009-2014 European Parliament (23%). Both surveys include 14 policy attitude items that are identical regarding wording and question format. In addition to policy attitudes, candidates answered several questions regarding which problems they find most important and a wide range of questions regarding representation. The EES also contains information on the demographic characteristics of candidates which match with the demographic items of voters.⁵ Moreover, the EES datasets are well suited for comparative research, as shown in many studies ([Van Der Brug et al., 2000](#); [Van Der Eijk et al., 1996](#)).

MEPs and national MPs might differ in their political attitudes. To estimate the attitudes of MPs, I employ wave 1 of the CCS. It, too, is a post-election survey among candidates fielded in 15 European countries. Because national elections of the various countries happen at different points in time, so does the timing of the surveys. Data was compiled between 2005 and 2013,

⁵A more detailed documentation of the study can be found here: <http://europeanelectionstudies.net/european-election-studies/ees-2009-study>

around the time that the other two surveys were administered. The CCS contains data on 14392 candidates at a response rate was 40.81%. It does not contain a matching voter survey like the EES. However, some attitude items contained in it exactly match items in the EES-voter surveys. This enables the comparison of MPs, MEPs, and voters of the same country at similar points in time regarding the exact same items. Finally, the CCS contains much additional information on candidates similar to the EES.

The format of the questions on policy attitudes was identical for all surveys and items. Subjects were provided with a statement like "Immigration to [Country] should be reduced significantly" and could then indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement or refuse to answer. Out of the 14 attitude items, ten were elicited on a five-point Likert scale, one had 3 answer opportunities, and one had 11 answer opportunities. Table 1 provides wordings and more information for all questions.

Voters and MEPs were asked about their opinions about immigration, assimilation of immigrants, the importance of private enterprise, same-sex marriage, state ownership, state intervention, abortion, punishment for criminals, redistribution, teaching authority in schools, direct democracy, gender relations, EU unification, and EU membership. All question wording and response categories were identical for MEPs and voters. National MPs were only asked about their opinion on assimilation, same-sex marriage, abortion, state intervention, punishment for criminals, redistribution, EU unification, and EU membership. Except for one item, all questions and answer options were the same as for voters and MEPs. Slight differences occurred in the "punishment for criminals" item. Voters and MEPs were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement that

People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days.

while national MPs were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences

I will also make use of the 2014 and 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) (Jolly et al., 2022; Polk et al., 2017). The CHES contains estimates of established policy experts of positions of various parties in European countries on a number of policy issues such as Redistribution and Immigration, which often match policy issues from the EES and CCS well.

Appendix B provides two validity checks of the EES candidate survey data. Low data quality is more likely to be a problem there than with the CCS due to the lower response rate. First, I compare demographic characteristics like gender, occupational background, education, and nationality of the elected MEPs that participated in the candidate survey to data on the

actual distributions of these variables among the European parliament at the time. I find that the MEPs that took the survey are representative of the universe of MEPs at the time along all of these demographic variables. Second, I examine how party-level measures of political positions based on the candidate survey correlate with established measures for party positions. Established measures for party positions are not suitable for comparing parties to citizens or voters, but they are a valid way of comparing different parties. Appendix B shows that measures for party positions based on the EES are highly correlated with measures based on the CHES. Hence, both checks suggest that candidate surveys provide valid data.

To estimate DC, I make use of an original referendum dataset. In principle, referendums are ideal for comparing the decisions of voters, MPs, and parties. Whether to initiate a referendum and how to vote on it are decisions with real consequences. Parliamentarians should therefore incorporate their Representation Intention into these decisions. Moreover, voters and MPs are confronted with the same well-defined issue, which enables comparability. Optimally, referendum data can inform us which topics voters and MPs disagree on and the direction of this disagreement.

Take the people's initiative "Against the construction of Minarets" in Switzerland as an example. The initiative wanted to ban the construction of minarets by constitutional article. 57.5% of those who voted in 2009 on that initiative voted in favor of the initiative. In contrast, over 72% of members of the Swiss lower house voted against the initiative. Opposition was even larger in the upper house, where 39 out of 42 delegates voted against it. Similarly, the vote share of parties that officially positioned themselves against the initiative amounted to over 64%, and the government too openly positioned itself against the initiative. The common interpretation of these results has been that the Swiss voters were much more right-wing on issues related to assimilation and Islam than the political elite.

However, one should be cautious in drawing such inferences from a single referendum. Comparing the political elite with the population requires a larger dataset of voting behavior on referendums. Not every referendum is useful in assessing DC, however. First, the initiative behind the referendum needs to be on one narrowly defined topic. For instance, initiatives that advocate for a complex package of laws do not fulfill this criterion. If one found more opposition among the population than among MPs, it would be hard to assess which law exactly is responsible for the disagreement. Second, these topics should match the topics of the survey data to enable comparability with the survey data. Third, it must be clear whether a yes or a no vote indicates a right-wing position. To the best of my knowledge, no available dataset on referendums fulfills these conditions. Hence, I compiled such a dataset. To this end, I build on the database Swissvotes (Swissvotes, 2021). Swissvotes is the primary data source

for referendums in Switzerland.⁶ It contains much information data on all referendums in Switzerland since 1884. Among this information are the yes and no votes of voters and MPs. It also contains the share of votes jointly received in the last national election for the parties that officially declared themselves in favor of the initiative and the same for its opponents and the government's official position.

To generate my referendum dataset, I read up on all referendums contained in Swissvotes and classified each referendum into topic categories used in the EES to enable comparability. Referendums that cannot be classified in that way are labeled as belonging to the category "other." Some initiatives might be classified into several topics. I, therefore, record up to three topics for each initiative. This procedure results in 126 classified referendums over 130 years. I also code the political direction of a referendum. This variable refers to whether the referendum would shift policy-making to the political left or the political right on that particular issue. For instance, a referendum on a law that would reduce immigration would have a right direction. Similarly, a referendum on a law that would foster redistribution would have a left direction. Classifying referendums as right-wing or left-wing is simple in most cases. However, I also save a variable that captures how clearly classification was. Combined with information on who initiated the referendum, this information can be used to check whether the people and the political elite try to push their country in opposite directions. For instance, I coded the Minaret Referendum as belonging to the "Assimilation" topic, matching a category from the survey data. Moreover, I code the initiative as right-wing. A discussion on descriptive statistics of the referendum dataset can be found in Appendix C.

5 Documenting Representation

5.1 Documenting Representation Intention

The EES and the CCS contain items in which MEPs and MPs were directly asked what they would do if their policy attitudes differed from that of their voters. A question contained in the EES 2009 read as follows:

How should, in your opinion, a member of the European Parliament vote if her/his voters have one opinion and his/her party takes a different position?

Possible answers included "Should vote according to her/his party's opinion" and "Should vote according to her/his voters' opinion". The CCS included a similar item which read:

An MP in a conflict between own opinion and the constituency voters should follow:

⁶Data can be accessed at <https://swissvotes.ch/page/dataset>.

Possible answers included "own opinion" and "voter opinion". Both items contrast the candidate with those who voted for him. Parliamentarians are likely particularly inclined to represent their own voters compared to all voters or all citizens. Hence, one might expect that parliamentarians would be less likely to signal a high Representation Intention if these questions had been asked in terms of voters or citizens in general. Similarly, one might fear that social desirability bias biases the estimate for the RI upward.

Despite that, estimates for the RI are low. Of the 72% of MEPs who answered the question, about 84% stated that the MEP should follow his or her own opinion. Of the approximately 77% of national MPs that responded, about 69% stated that the national MP should follow his own opinion rather than the opinion of his voters. Hence, neither MEPs nor MPs seem to have a high RI. This suggests that differences in attitudes translate into actual policymaking.

Is there important heterogeneity among MPs regarding their Representation Intention? Figure 35 in the Appendix depict the RI for various demographic subgroups. Male, less educated and younger MPs have higher RIs. However, even in these subgroups majorities state that an MP should follow his own opinion rather than the opinion of his voters. There is more variation between countries. The lowest RIs exist in Germany, the Netherlands, Island, the UK, and Switzerland. The highest is observed in Hungary, Romania, Austria, and Italy. Hungary and Romania are striking outliers as they are the only countries in which only a majority states that an MP should follow the opinion of his voters. In sum, this evidence suggests that the low Representation Intention is not driven by specific demographic groups but a majority position in most demographic groups and in most countries.

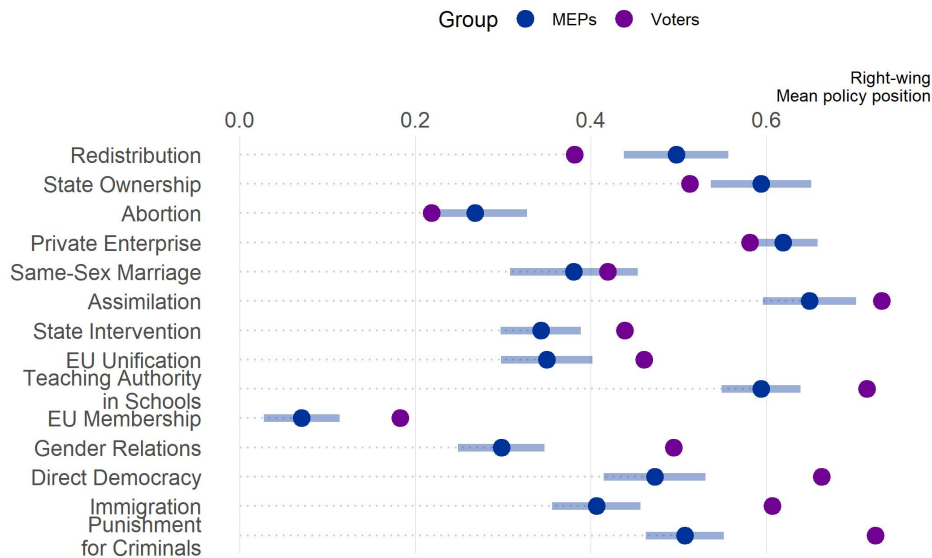
5.2 Documenting Attitude Congruence

5.2.1 Aggregate AC-measures for all Issues

Figure 1 depicts mean attitudes of voters and MEPs on several policy issues. To make attitudes comparable, I scale all variables such that responses lie between 0 and 1 and such that higher values indicate a position that is intuitively more right-wing. For instance, a preference for a restrictive immigration policy is intuitively right-wing, while a wish for more redistribution is intuitively left-wing. Voter attitudes are weighted by the ratio of their country's population to the EU27 population in 2009. Because subject samples are representative of each country, the results can be interpreted as attitudes from a representative sample of those who voted in the 2009 EU election. Similarly, I re-weight MEP observation to account for slight differences in response rates between countries. As a result, I compare representative samples from the voters for the 2009 EP election with a representative sample of members of the EP. To make means of voters and MEPs statistically comparable, I depict 95% confidence intervals around

them. Gaps between the dots for a policy issue visualize the attitude representation gap on that issue. In the language of the framework I set $m(\cdot)$ to be the mean with equal weights. Results are robust to using the median or the share of those who take a right-wing stance on an issue instead of the mean.

Figure 1: Comparing mean attitudes of voters and MEPs by issue



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy issues. The horizontal axis shows the mean positions of three groups: citizens, MEPs and voters. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

The policy attitudes of MEPs and voters differ strongly on most issues. On four issues, Punishment for criminals, Immigration, Direct Democracy, and Gender Relations, differences between the means are about 0.2, which is a fifth of the range of each variable. Confidence intervals overlap for only three out of the 14 variables, Abortion, Private Enterprise, and Same-sex marriage. On these issues, differences between the mean voter and the mean MEP are also estimated to be the smallest.

However, even large ARGs on most issues might not translate into a systematic ARG if ARGs of individual issues cancel out. For instance, if MEPs are more right-leaning regarding State Ownership but more left-leaning on State Intervention, their overall attitudes on the relative roles of the state and the market in the economy might still be close to the attitudes of their voters. However, notice that for most issues, the mean of voters and citizens is to the right of the mean of MEPs. Voters are more left-leaning than MEPs on only 4 of the 14 policy issues

(Redistribution, State Ownership, Abortion, and Private Enterprise). Moreover, citizens are more right-wing than MEPs on the issues where ARGs are the largest.

Many economists and political scientists argue that the policy space in Europe consist of at least two dimensions: one cultural (sometimes also labeled social or GAL-TAN) and one economic dimension (Bakker et al., 2012; Besley and Persson, 2021; Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Issues on the economic dimension include topics like redistribution or state intervention in the economy. The cultural dimension typically includes all topics that are not clearly economic, like gender relations or immigration. Some recent studies have argued that EU integration topics should be considered a third separate dimension (Bakker et al., 2012). I will follow this research and categorize all 14 issues into the three categories Economy, Culture, and EU. The issues categorized as economic include state intervention, redistribution, state ownership, and private enterprise. I classify the EU unification and the EU membership items as belonging to the EU dimension. All other variables are classified as cultural. These include punishment for criminals, teaching authority in schools, gender relations, assimilation, same-sex marriage, direct democracy and abortion.

Figure 1 reveals that voters and MEPs tend to have similar attitudes regarding abortion and same-sex marriage. Weighted t-tests do not detect a significant difference of means while Mood's median test detects significant differences in medians. Regarding all other seven cultural variables, voters are substantially more right-wing than MEPs. Weighted t-tests and median tests reveal that these differences are highly significant. Moreover, the four largest ARGs all arise from cultural issues. The pattern looks similar on the EU dimensions. Voters are more right-wing than MEPs on both issues. These differences are highly statistically significant according to weighted t-tests and median tests.

The pattern looks different for economic issues. Voters are significantly more left-wing than MEPs on Redistribution and State Ownership according to weighted t tests and median tests. However, they are significantly more right-wing on State Intervention according to both types of tests. Regarding the role of private enterprise in the economy their attitudes are similar and no test detects a significant difference. This shows that it is important to distinguish between economic topics and other topics when examining representation.

ARGs are robust to many alternative specifications. First, using the median or the share of those who gave a right-wing response to an item (e.g., one of the two most right-wing options on a 5-point Likert scale) does not change the results qualitatively, but ARGs increase quantitatively. Second, MEPs do not only differ from voters but also from citizens of the EU. Figure 37 compares mean-attitudes of MEPs, voters and citizens on all 14 issues. On most issues, ARGs regarding citizens are larger than regarding voters. Third, figure 40 shows that MEPs of the major European party groups are not only to the left of the mean voter regarding

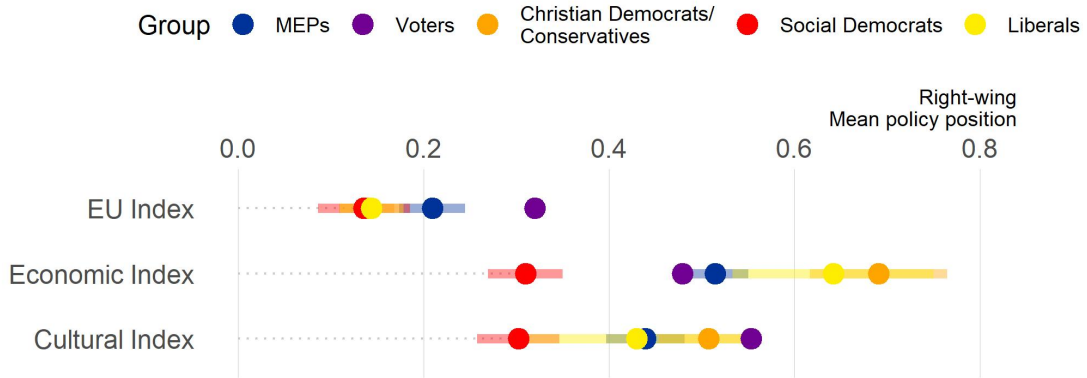
the cultural dimension in general but also on most cultural issues individually. Fourth, figure 38 in the Appendix shows the mean positions of national MPs together with those of MEPs, voters, and citizens. MEPs and national MPs tend to have similar attitudes. If anything, ARGs appear to be larger when comparing national MPs rather than MEPs to voters. Finally, ARGs might only arise on issues that voters or parliamentarians do not find important. Appendix G.1 shows that MEPs and voters consider the same topics important and find cultural and economic topics similarly important while they find topics related to the EU much less important. Moreover, if anything, topics that are considered to be more important by MEPs or voters ARGs are larger.

5.2.2 Aggregating Issues into Three Dimensions

I calculate the attitude of each subject on a dimension as the mean of this subject's positions on all topics belonging to this dimension with equal weights. Figure 2 shows the mean attitudes of voters and members of the main European party groups on these three dimensions. The results confirm that AC on the economic dimension differs from AC on the other dimensions. Party groups line up as expected on the economic dimension. The EU parliament seems to be polarized with Liberals and Christian Democrats/Conservatives Conservatives on the right and Social Democrats on the left. The mean voter's position on the economic dimension is between the mean positions of the major right-wing and the major left-wing party groups of Europe. Weighted t-tests and median tests confirm that Christian Democrats/Conservatives and Liberals are significantly more right-wing than voters, while Social Democrats are significantly more left-wing than voters. Most voters can vote for a party that is to their left or for a party that is to their right. Hence, coalitions between economically right-wing and left-wing parties are likely to feature economic policy attitudes close to the mean voter. Indeed, the mean attitudes of MEPs and voters are similar and only marginally statistically significant despite the large sample size ($p \approx 0.07$). However, Mood's median test finds a significant difference ($p \approx 0.003$).

The pattern looks qualitatively different for the other two dimensions. Party groups again line up as expected. On cultural issues, Christian Democrats/Conservatives are most right-wing, Social Democrats are most left-wing, and Liberals are in between. However, voters hold attitudes to the right of all major party families. Weighted t-tests and median tests confirm that Social Democrats and Liberals are more left-wing than voters. For instance, Social Democratic parties are more than 25 percentage points to the left on cultural issues than voters, which amounts to more than one-quarter of the index range. Mood's median test finds that the median position of Christian Democrats/Conservatives is significantly more left-wing than the median position of voters, while a weighted t-test fails to find a significant difference ($p \approx 0.1003$). MEPs as a whole are more left-wing than voters, and differences are highly significant according to

Figure 2: Voters attitudes compared to the covered policy space and party groups on three policy dimensions



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy dimensions. The horizontal axis shows the positions of voters and parliamentarians. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Dots indicate the mean-attitudes of voters, Christian Democrats/Conservatives, Social Democrats, Liberals and Greens respectively. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

mean and median tests. On the issue of EU integration, mean attitudes of all party groups are close to one another, while voters are much more right-wing. Weighted t-tests and median tests confirm that means and medians of all party groups and MEPs as a whole are significantly more left-wing than those of voters. This means that voters cannot achieve high AC on the culture and EU dimension by voting for major party families. Instead, high AC requires increased voting for parties positioned far to the right of established parties.

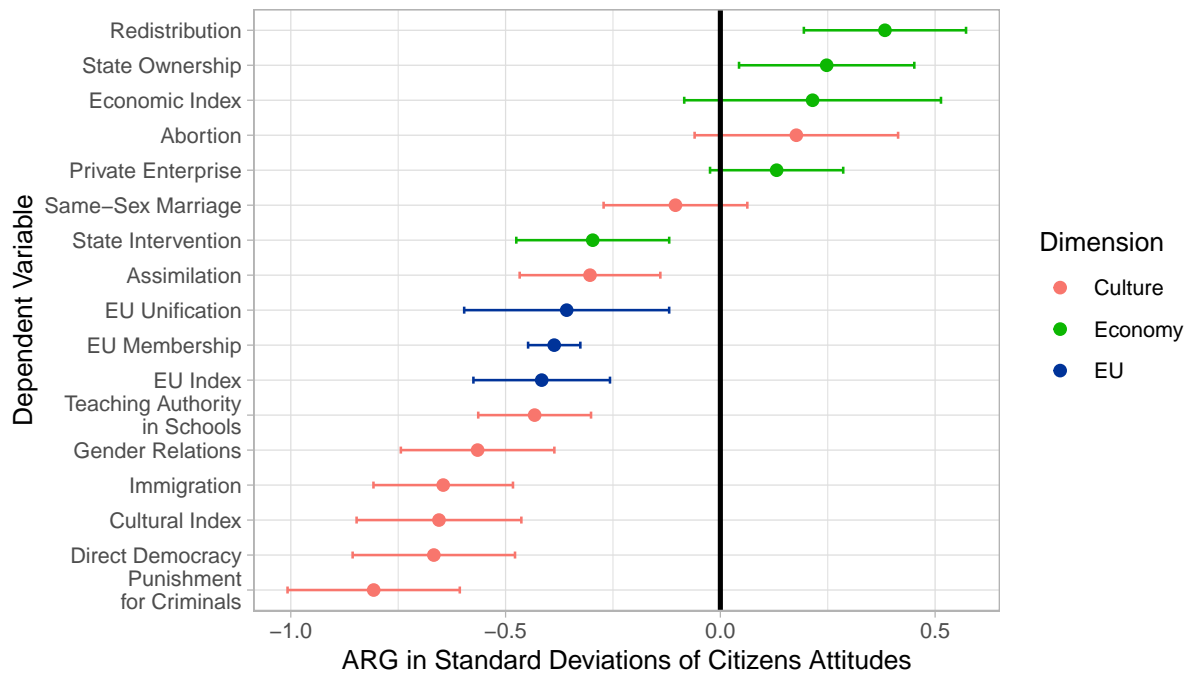
To make the magnitude of representation gaps easier to interpret I divide all policy attitude variables by the standard deviation of citizens of that variable. I then estimate regressions of the following form by OLS:

$$std(a)_{i,s} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{voter}]_{i,s} + \varepsilon_{i,s} \quad (2)$$

where $std(a)_{i,s}$ is the attitude of subject s on issue i and $\mathbb{1}[\text{voter}]_{i,s}$ equals 0 if s is an elected MEP and 1 if s is not an MEP and voted in the EP election. Regressions are weighted to adjust for differences in population sizes. I am interested in β as a descriptive measure for differences in policy attitudes between the mean MEP and the mean European Parliament election voter.

Figure 3 shows β 's and 95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered at the country level for all 14 policy issues and the three policy dimensions. Higher values indicate

Figure 3: Representation gaps in standard deviations of citizen attitudes by issue



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy issues or policy dimensions. The horizontal axis shows OLS estimates for β 's from specification 2. Regressions compare MEPs with a representative sample of those who voted in the European Parliament election. All variables were scaled to have a standard deviation of 1. Higher values indicate that MEPs are more right-wing on an issue than voters. 95% confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the country level.

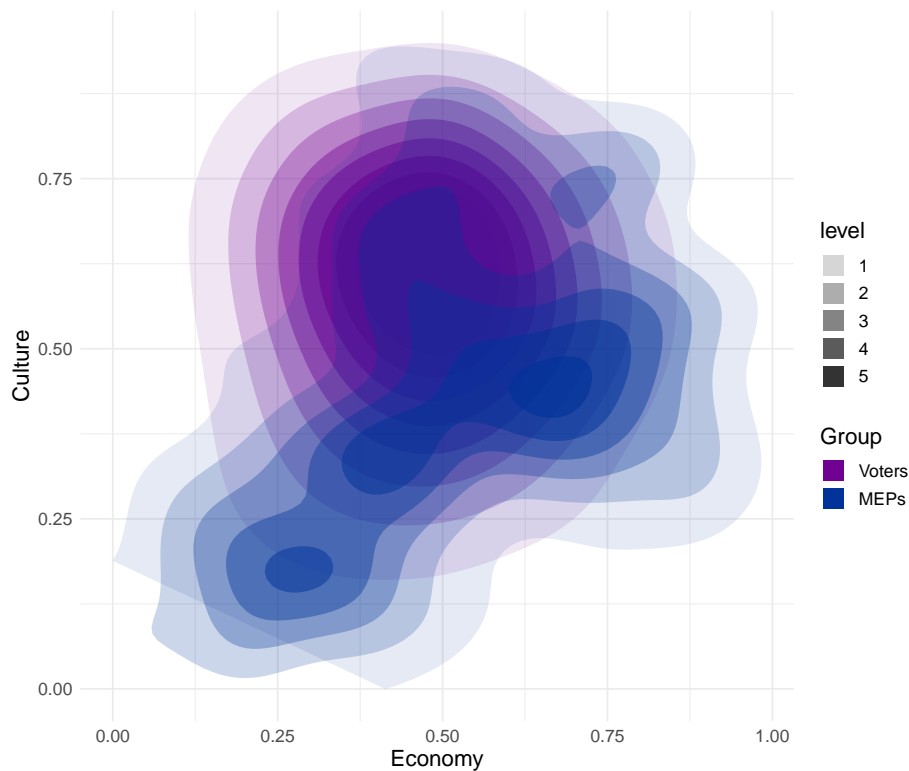
Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

that the mean MEP is more right-wing on an issue than the mean voter. On most cultural issues, the mean MEP is 40% to 80% of a standard deviation more left-wing than the mean voter, and estimates are significant. Differences are not significant regarding abortion and same-sex marriage. In aggregate, the mean MEP is about two-thirds of a standard deviation more left-wing on the cultural dimension than the mean voter. Results look similar for the EU dimension. The mean MEP is about 42% of a standard deviation more left-wing than the mean voter. Differences for economic variables are less systematic. The mean MEP is estimated to be about 0.2 standard deviations more right-wing than the mean voter, but the difference is not significant ($p \approx 0.16$). Figure 41 compares national MPs to voters. Results are qualitatively very similar but quantitatively larger. For instance, national MPs are over 75% of a standard deviation of citizen attitudes more left-wing on the cultural dimension than their national voters.

5.2.3 Distributions of Policy Attitudes

Figure 4 depict 2D densities of voter and MEP preferences in a 2 dimensional economy-culture policy space. I focus on the economy and culture dimension because Appendix G.1 shows that voters and MEPs consider them much more important than the EU dimension and a 3D space is more difficult to visualize. The cultural index is depicted on the vertical axis, and the economic index is shown on the horizontal axis. As before, higher values indicate a more right-wing attitude. Figure 36 in the Appendix shows the same distribution of voter attitudes in the same policy space together with MEP attitudes distinguished by party family.

Figure 4: Distribution of voters and MPs in the culture-economy policy space



Note: The level of transparency indicates the density. The density is higher in less transparent areas. For both policy dimensions higher values indicate a stance that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Source: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study).

The distribution of voters is unimodal and quite symmetric. In particular, there is no strong correlation between the economic and cultural dimensions. This simple structure makes it easy for parties to determine the vote maximizing policy positions in the center of the voter distribution and make a convergent equilibrium more likely in standard models. (McKelvey, 1979; McKelvey and Schofield, 1987; McKelvey and Wendell, 1976; Plott, 1967; Schofield, 2007). The distribution of MEP attitudes has a more complex form. It has two modes. The first

is in the lower-left corner where many social democrats and green MPs are located as figure G.1 reveals. The second is closer to the middle of the graph but still below the center of the voter-attitude distribution. Figure G.1 shows that many christian democrats and conservatives are located there. The distribution shows a strong positive correlation between attitudes on the cultural and the economic dimension. Variation in attitudes also seems to be higher among MEPs than among voters. This is particularly pronounced regarding the economic dimension. The MEP-attitude distribution does not only have a different shape than the voter-attitude distribution; it is also shifted. Most MEPs, even those in the "upper" right part of the MEP-attitude distribution, are below the center of the voter-attitude distribution. As a result, few MEPs have policy attitudes close to the electoral center. Most are more left-wing. There is much overlap between MEPs and culturally left-leaning voters, particularly voters with left-leaning cultural attitudes and conservative economic attitudes. Voters, with conservative cultural and left-wing economic attitudes are particularly bad represented. Figure 4 shows that the ARGs are not driven by voters or MEPs with extreme policy attitudes. Rather, most MEPs are more left-leaning culturally than most voters.

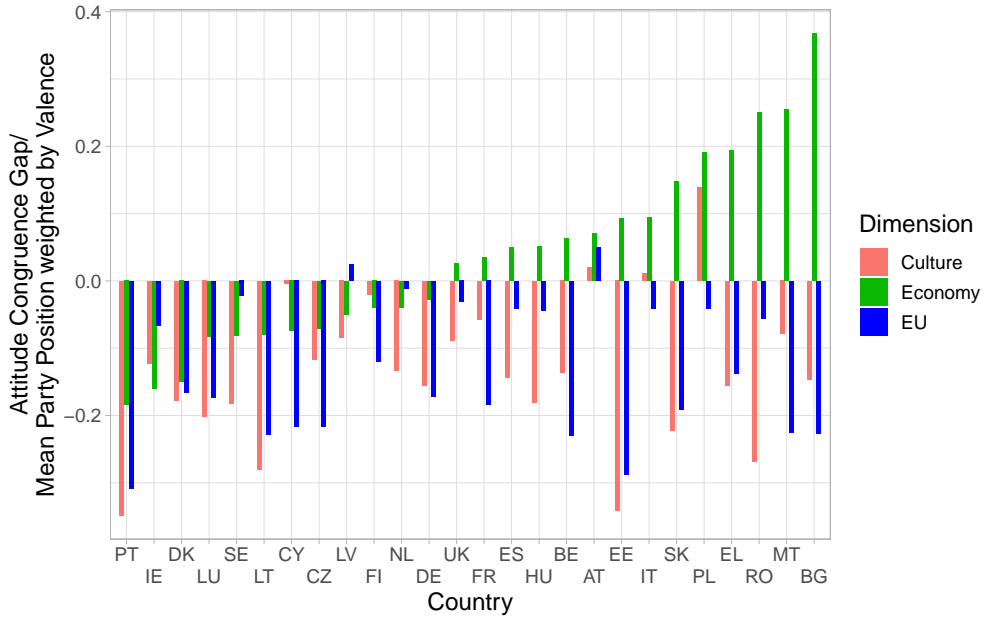
5.2.4 Attitude Congruence by Country

Are these EU-level results a general phenomenon, or do they mask important cross-country heterogeneity? Figure 5 shows ARGs for the three dimensions for all 27 countries. Countries are displayed on the horizontal axis. The heights of the bars indicate the magnitude of the ARG. A value of zero would indicate perfect AC, i.e., an ARG of zero. Positive values indicate that citizens of the respective country tend to be more conservative regarding those issues complex than MEPs, while a negative RG shows the opposite result.

MEPs are more culturally left-wing than their national voters in most countries. Differences are small in the Netherlands, Italy, Cyprus, and Austria and large in all other countries. Poland is the only country in which MEPs are substantially more right-wing on cultural issues than voters. In most countries, MEPs are much more left-wing than voters. The pattern looks similar on the EU dimension. There, MEPs are more opposed to EU integration in only two countries, Austria and Latvia. In most other countries, MEPs are much more in favor of EU integration than voters.

The pattern is very different for the economic dimension. ARGs are negative in most countries but positive in others. Moreover, economic ARGs are smaller than cultural ones in absolute value for most countries. This is not to say, however, that they are small. In fact, the high average AC seems to have masked substantial heterogeneity between countries. AC is high only in a few countries. It is highest in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, France, and Finland.

Figure 5: Attitude Congruence Gaps by country and Dimension



Note: Bars indicate ARGs by country and dimension between voters and MEPs from the same country. The larger the value the more right-wing are the MEPs compared to voters from their country.

Source: own calculation based on data from the European Election Study 2009.

In many other countries, ARGs are substantial, most notably in southern and eastern European countries like Bulgaria, Malta, and Romania.

The analysis just presented only used information on elected MEPs which means that some estimates rely on a few data points. To enable statistical tests for these countries, I use all MEP candidates for the following analysis. I show in Appendix G.4 that MEP candidates and MEPs have very similar policy attitudes such that this procedure is unlikely to bias estimates of AC. I perform a regression for each country-dimension combination of the form $index_{d,i} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MEP Candidate}] + \varepsilon_{d,i}$ where $index_{d,i}$ is the attitude of subject i on the index of dimension d . Figure 42 in the Appendix shows the resulting regression coefficients together with 95% confidence intervals for each country-dimension combination. The key results are also obtained for all MEP candidates, and most ARGs are statistically significant.

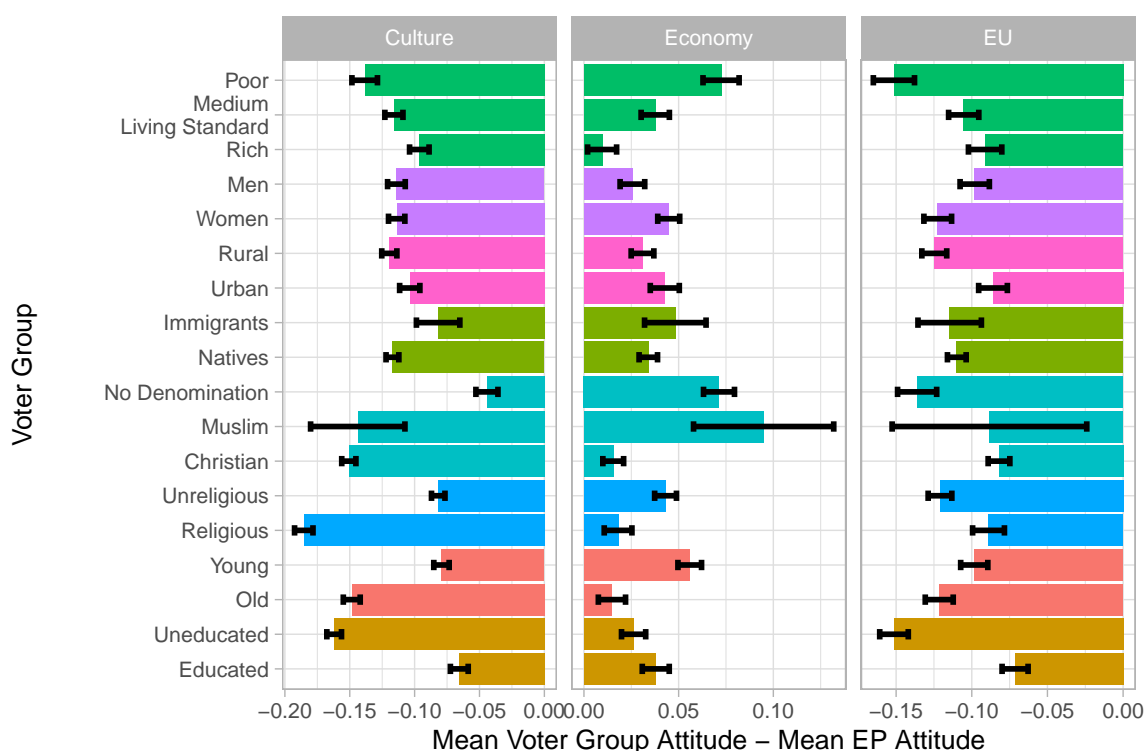
5.2.5 Unequal Representation

How does representation differ between demographic groups? Answering this question can help to examine how descriptive representation relates to substantive representation. Parliaments in European countries numerically over-represent those with a high living standard, men, natives, the old, and the educated. Are mean attitudes of these voter groups relatively close to the mean

attitudes of the European Parliament?

Figure 6 helps to answer this question. It depicts mean ARGs and 95% confidence intervals by demographic group and policy dimension. Data is pooled for all 27 EU member states from 2009 and weighted to account for cross-country differences in population size. The vertical axis displays various groups of voters. The three panels refer to ARG on the three political dimensions. Higher absolute values indicate a larger ARG in means between the voter group and the European Parliament. Positive values indicate that the mean attitude of the voter group is more left-wing on the dimension than the mean attitude of the EP. Negative values signify that the mean attitude of the voter group is more right-wing than the mean attitude of the EP. I distinguish between subgroups regarding the self-assessed standard of living, sex, whether the voter lives in an urban or rural area, whether the voter has an immigration background, religious denomination, the degree of religiosity, above versus below the median age, and education.

Figure 6: Attitude Representation Gaps in Means by Voter Group



Note: The horizontal axis shows the difference between the mean attitude of a group of those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament elections and Members of the European Parliament. The vertical axis displays various groups of voters. Data is pooled for all 27 EU member states from 2009 and weighted to account for cross-country differences in population size. I also depict 95 % confidence intervals.

Source: own calculation based on data from the European Election Study 2009.

Let's analyze the economic dimension first. Figure 6 shows that regarding living standard,

the mean attitude of the poor is indeed the furthest away from the mean EP attitude while the mean attitude of the rich is closest to it. Similarly, the ARG in means is much smaller for the old than for the young. On both of these dimensions, differences in ARGs are large. The young and the poor are more than 6-7 percent of the range of the outcome variable more left-wing than the mean MEP, while ARGs for the rich and the old are about 1 percent. Differences between subgroup ARGs are smaller for other demographic variables. ARGs are smaller for men than for women and for smaller for natives than for immigrants, but the differences are relatively small. The uneducated have smaller ARGs than the educated. Overall, in 4 out of the 5 variables, the numerically overrepresented group has a smaller ARG than the numerically underrepresented group. On the EU dimension, the rich, men, and the educated have lower ARG than the poor, women, and the uneducated, respectively. However, the largest differences between subgroups arise regarding education, not income. Moreover, there is no notable difference in ARGs between immigrants and natives, and the young have lower ARGs than the old. Hence, the numerically overrepresented group has the lower ARG in 3 out of 5 cases. On the cultural dimension, the rich have a somewhat lower ARG than the poor, and the educated have a much lower ARG than the uneducated, but ARGs for men and women are very similar. Immigrants have a lower ARG than natives, and the young have a much lower ARG than the old. Hence, the numerically overrepresented have lower ARGs in only 2 out of 5 cases, while the opposite is true in 2 cases. Taken together, these findings show that numerical overrepresentation does not necessarily lead to substantive overrepresentation. In particular, the relationship depends on the policy dimension and the demographic variable. While numerical and substantive representation seems to be positively related on the economic dimension, this is less the case on the cultural dimension. While those with higher living standard have lower ARGs on all dimensions, the young and immigrants have higher ARGs than the old and natives on the economic dimension but lower ARGs on the cultural dimension.

Evidence on unequal representation can also help to examine the origins of ARGs. On the one hand, ARGs could result from competition between large social groups. If power is unequally distributed between these groups, the more powerful group could force the parliament to bias policymaking in its favor, away from the mean voter. Such models would predict that ARGs are in opposite directions for demographic subgroups of some variable. For instance, the rich could be more right-wing than the parliament and the poor more left-wing. If the parliament is closer to the position of the rich, this could explain an overall ARG. In such a model, parliamentarians balance group interests in a biased way. On the other hand, ARGs could result from differences in attitudes between a small elite of parliamentarians and most people of the society, including majorities in all demographic subgroups. In such a model, parliamentarians do not balance group interests but hold attitudes that differ from all major

groups in the same direction. As can be seen in figure 6, all subgroups are statistically significantly more left-wing on the economic dimension than MEPs. At the same time, all groups are significantly more right-wing on the cultural and EU dimension than MEPs. This is evidence in favor of "elite vs. people" models and is consistent with the low Representation Intentions of parliamentarians.

5.3 Documenting Decision Congruence

Attitudes of parliamentarians and voters differ strongly on many issues. Moreover, parliamentarians prefer to implement their own attitudes. Hence, actual policymaking likely differs from what citizens prefer. However, the previous analysis was based on survey data. Survey data might lead to biased results if MPs and citizens interpret question items differently (Heckman et al., 2019). Similarly, politicians might have stronger incentives than citizens to give "politically correct" responses. Hence, it is important to supplement survey-based data with behavioral data in which these biases are less likely to arise. I will now use such behavioral data to estimate Decision Congruence and to validate the survey data and the results presented above.

5.3.1 Decision Congruence by Topic

In referendums, the voting decisions of citizens and MPs have real consequences. Hence, a parliamentarian must think about whether he should influence the result by his vote in a way that is according to his preferences or according to the preferences of the voters. Therefore, such voting decisions incorporate the Representation Intention. Consequently, one can calculate the Decision Congruence between voters and parliamentarians by comparing their voting behavior on referendums. My original dataset includes information for 126 referendums on whether the referendum initiative would push the country to the right or the left, and the shares of voters and national Swiss MPs who voted in favor of the initiative. I calculate the Decision representation gap for a referendum r as

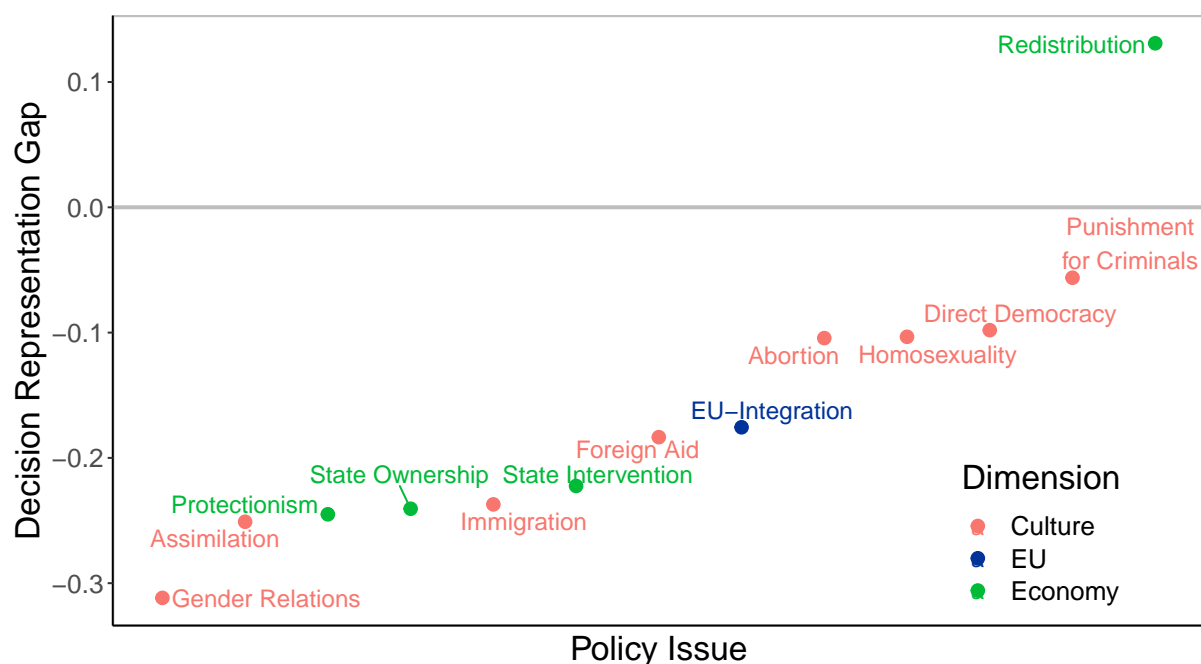
$$DRG_r = \begin{cases} \text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - \text{share of "yes"-voting MPs,} & \text{if } r \text{ is left-wing} \\ \text{share of "yes"-voting MPs} - \text{share of "yes"-voting voters,} & \text{if } r \text{ is right-wing} \end{cases}$$

To make DRGs comparable to ARGs I take the mean with equal weights of all DRG_r belonging to a group of policy issues. Figure 7 shows these average DRGs by issue. Policy issues are shown on the horizontal axis while the vertical axis measured the average DRG. Higher values indicate that MPs are more right-wing than voters. Data is pooled over all referendums.

Voters are more right-leaning than MPs on most issues. The only exception is that voters are more in favor of redistribution than MPs. Positive DRGs vary in magnitude. For some topics like gender relations, assimilation, and immigration, voters are about 25 percentage points more

likely to choose the right-wing option than MPs. For other topics like abortion and direct democracy, the difference is much smaller. Appendix E shows that results are similar if voters' actual votes are compared to the vote recommendations of parties. Appendix D shows how Decision Congruence varied over time by policy dimension. During the last 90 years MPs have been constantly more left-wing on cultural topics than voters and they have been constantly more pro-EU than voters since the first referendums on EU-related topics in the 1990s. On economic topics MPs have been more state-oriented than voters until the 1980s since when they have been constantly more market-oriented than voters.

Figure 7: DC between Swiss voters and Swiss MPs on several Political Issues



Note: The vertical axis depicts Decision representation gaps. The horizontal axis refers to policy issues. Higher values indicate that the population voted more left-wing on that topic than the lower chamber of the Swiss parliament.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

DRGs resemble AGRs. In particular, voters are consistently more right-wing on cultural and EU issues while difference between voters and MPs are more mixed on economic topics. However, these patterns cannot be compared directly. While the AC pattern was obtained with data for 2009, the DC pattern was obtained using data for about 130 years and only uses data from Switzerland. Hence, time trends could invalidate this comparison. I will now go on to examine trends in the DRG over time.

5.3.2 Validation of the Theoretical Framework and Survey Data

According to formula 1, which summarizes the theoretical framework, ARG, DRG and RI are directly related through $DRG = (1 - RI) \cdot ARG$. Testing how well empirical data conforms to this relationship helps to test the validity of the theoretical framework and the validity of the survey data. To this end I use survey and referendum data from Switzerland. I use the Candidate survey among Swiss MPs from wave I of the CCS. I add data for voters from the Swiss Electoral Studies. Both surveys were administered after the national Swiss election in 2007. I use this survey data to calculate the Representation Intention and Attitude representation gaps by issue. Referendum data only contains information on yes-no decisions. To make the Likert-data from the surveys more comparable to it I use the share of those holding a right-wing stance on an issue as a measure for the position of a group. For instance, I calculate the share of voters who agree or strongly agree that punishment for criminals should be more severe of those who respond to the question and subtract the share of MPs who agree that punishment for criminals should be more severe to calculate the ARG for Punishment toward Criminals. I then match topics of referendums manually to topics from the survey data.

Consider the following binary cross-issue regression:

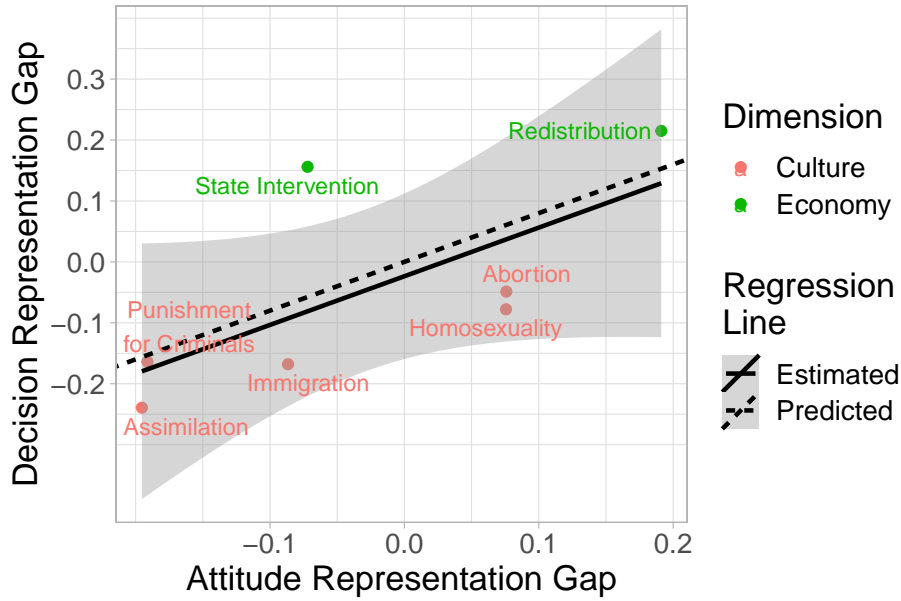
$$DRG_i = \alpha + \beta \cdot ARG_i + \varepsilon_i$$

The theoretical framework predicts that α is insignificant and close to zero and that β is significant and close to 1-RI. Figure 8 shows a scatter-plot of DRG and ARG. To calculate DRG I pool data from a 20 year time window around the surveys were administered. The horizontal axis shows the ARG on an issue. Higher values indicate that the share of Swiss voters with a right-wing stance is higher on the topic than the share of Swiss MPs with a right-wing stance. The vertical axis shows a similar measure but uses voting behavior of referendums for calculation. The dashed diagonal line shows this expected association between the two variables of 1-RI. The solid line shows the association as estimated by a binary regression including a constant surrounded by a 95% confidence band.

The two measures are positively associated. The estimate for the intercept of the regression is close to zero (about 0.02) and insignificant ($p \approx 0.67$). The estimated for the coefficient on ARG is very close to the RI of 0.8 (0.7985) and significant ($p \approx 0.028$). Hence, expected and the actual association are very similar which provides empirical support for the theoretical framework and the validity of survey data. In particular, it shows that it is important to include RI in the framework. Without considering the RI, the estimate for β would be 1.

I aggregated referendums from 1997 until 2017 because the number of topics which I can calculate the DRG for decreases when smaller time intervals are chosen. Figures 43 and 44 in the Appendix show that results change little if one chooses a 10 year or a 30 year time window

Figure 8: Actual and Predicted Relationship between DRG and ARG



Note: The horizontal axis shows ARGs calculated from 2007 survey data from Switzerland. The vertical axis depicts DRGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs of the lower house of the federal assembly of Switzerland and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of DRGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 1997 and 2017. Both types of representation gaps compare the shares voters and MPs with a right-wing stance. Topics of survey and referendum data were classified into categories by hand. The solid line is the relationship predicted by formula 1. The solid line is a fitted line from a linear regression and a 95% confidence band.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset, the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 and the CCS I.

around 2007. The estimated slope equals about 0.7 and is marginally significant ($p \approx 0.079$). If one increases the time window to 30 years the slope is estimated to equal about 0.76 and to be significant ($p \approx 0.047$).

5.3.3 Differences in Referendum Initiation Behavior between Voters and MPs

If an MP votes in favor of a referendum initiative, he strictly increases the likelihood that the initiative will be enacted. A rational MP should therefore include his Representation Intention in his choice and weigh his own opinion against the opinion of the voters. However, obtaining and incorporating the opinion of voters is costly. At the same time, incentives to do so are small because it is very unlikely that his single vote will affect the referendum. Hence, MPs might simply state their own opinion in referendums. That would imply that the estimates derived

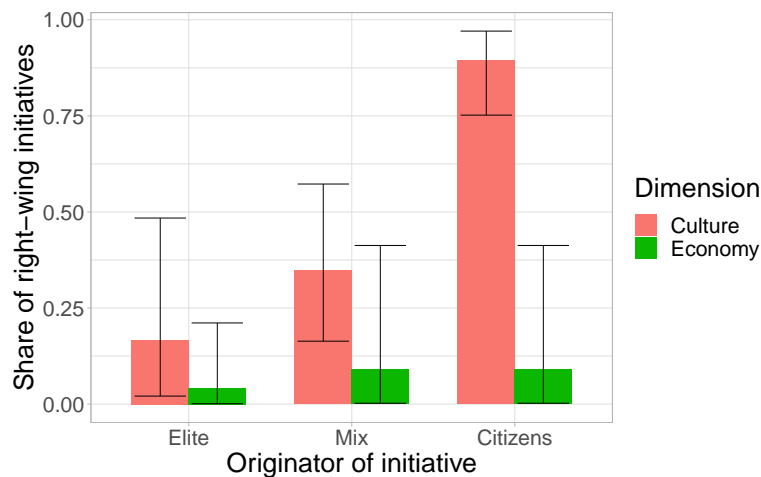
above are estimates for the Attitude Congruence, not for the Decision Congruence between voters and MPs. Under this interpretation, the results of the last sections should be interpreted as a revealed preference approach to the policy attitudes of MPs. It mitigates biases specific to surveys like lying or politically correct responses and therefore still illustrates the ARGs' robustness. However, it does not include the RI.

Stakes are much higher when deciding whether a referendum is held for an initiative or not. Hence, comparing the initiation behavior of referendums between the parliament and the citizens is more suitable to estimate DC. Referendums can be initiated by different actors. In some cases, the government or the parliament can call for a referendum. Examples include changes of the constitutions or accession to supranational organizations in Switzerland, in which case a referendum is obligatory. In other cases, referendums are initiated by ordinary citizens. In Switzerland, referendums have to be held when an initiative for a referendum has collected a certain number of signatures. An example is the Minaret Ban Initiative in Switzerland. There are also mix-versions. For instance, citizens may call for a referendum after the parliament makes a decision with which they disagree. A referendum is held when at least 55,000 signatures are found within 100 days. Similarly, the parliament may offer counter-proposals to referendum initiatives put forward by the people. In some cases, the referendum is held individually for the counter-proposal and the original proposal, and sometimes citizens can vote on both of them in a runoff.

The existence of a DRG would imply that MPs rather push for change to the political left than ordinary citizens. This implies that among referendum initiatives initiated by the people, the share of right-wing initiatives is higher than among those initiated by the elite. The analysis regarding AC and the Representation Intention suggests that such a DRG exists regarding culture and, to a lesser degree, regarding the EU but not regarding economic topics. None of the EU-related referendums have been initiated by citizens. Hence, I focus on the comparison between cultural and economic referendum initiatives. Figure 9 shows the share of initiatives with a right direction by the originator of the initiative and the topic (culture vs. economy). The height of the bars indicates the share of right-wing initiatives in the group of referendums. The horizontal axis shows three types of originators; the elite (in most cases, the parliament, otherwise the government) and (ordinary) citizens. Red bars refer to initiatives regarding cultural issues, while blue bars refer to referendums on economic issues. I also depict 95% confidence intervals from an Exact Binomial Test.

Figure 9 confirms the expectations. Regarding economic issues, most initiatives are left-wing regardless of the originators. Taken literally, the point estimate suggests that citizens are only about five percentage points more likely than the elite to initiate a right-wing referendum, but this difference is far from being significant at conventional levels. Moreover, just as many

Figure 9: Share of right-wing initiatives by originator



Note: This figure shows the share of referendums with a right direction by originator. Confidence intervals are based on an exact binomial test.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

referendums with a "mixed" originator are right-wing as from the citizens. The pattern looks very different for cultural topics. Only about 16% of referendums initiated by the elite are right-wing. That suggests that the elite overwhelmingly makes decisions that are steps to the cultural left. This is qualitatively different for ordinary citizens. About 90% of referendums initiated by the people constitute a step toward the cultural right. The difference is highly significant. Finally, the right-wing share of referendums that result from a mix of the two groups is between these two values. Taken together, this evidence suggests that ordinary citizens and the elite disagree on which direction their country should be heading regarding the cultural dimension, while no such disagreement is found regarding the economic dimension.

6 Origins of Representation Gaps

Decision representation gaps in Europe arise because there are large Attitude representation gaps between parliamentarians and voters, and parliamentarians have a low Representation Intention. But how can a DRG be stable? Why do voters vote for parties in such a way that a DRG emerges? And why doesn't electoral competition force candidates to adopt a high RI?

There are many potential reasons why electoral competition does not force candidates to implement policy attitudes of voters. I show in Appendix G that many of these factors are unlikely as an explanation. These include the intention of parliamentarians to protect minority groups from a "tyranny of the majority" (subsection G.2), lobbyism (subsection G.3), a causal

effect of being elected as a parliamentarian on policy attitudes (subsection G.4), and the intention of parliamentarians to represent citizens at large or only those who are very interested in politics (subsection G.4). The main text focuses on the explanation that seems most likely due to a plausible theoretical argument and support from an empirical analysis. This explanation is based on heterogeneous valence between parties. Valence can loosely be translated as perceived competence of a political actor. Such competence might matter for voting decisions above and beyond ideological distance (Stokes, 1992). Heterogeneous valence means that some political actors are seen as more competent than others by the electorate. I will now employ a simple model of electoral competition to show how heterogeneous valence can explain a DRG. The model features two candidates who compete on a single policy dimension. This model abstracts from many realistic features of electoral competition in Europe to zoom in on the mechanism that, I argue, generates DRGs.

6.1 A Model with Policy Motivated Candidates and Heterogeneous Valence

The model is based on Downs (1957). There is a continuum of voters. Each voter i has a policy attitude a_i . Policy attitudes are distributed on a single continuous policy dimension according to CDF $A(\cdot)$. Two candidates, L, and R, announce policy positions x_L and x_R before an election takes place. All voters cast their vote either for L or for R. The candidate who gets more votes is elected. If they get the same number of votes, the election is decided by the toss of a fair coin. The elected candidate implements the policy he has announced before the election. This final policy is denoted by x . The utility of voter i is given by $w_i(x) = -(a_i - x)^2$. The utility of the candidates equals one if they are elected and zero if they are not elected. This implies that they are not policy motivated, and hence their RI equals one. By the median voter theorem (Black, 1948; Downs, 1957) this model has a unique equilibrium in dominant strategies in which both candidates set $x_L = x_R = A(0.5)$; they both announce the attitude of the median voter. Hence, the baseline model without valence heterogeneity and full RI features full DC. Intuitively, if one candidate announces a policy position that does not equal $A(0.5)$, then the other candidate wins for sure by announcing $A(0.5)$ because the half of the electorate which is on the opposite side from $A(0.5)$ as the other candidate and the median voter will vote for the candidate at the median position.

The evidence in section 5.1 suggests that candidates are primarily motivated not by winning but by implementing their own policy attitudes. Models in which candidates are solely policy motivated, i.e., $RI=0$, have been introduced by Wittman (1977) and Calvert (1985). The only thing that changes relative to the baseline model is the utility functions of the candidates. Now

$u_L = -(a_L - x)^2$ where a_L is the policy attitude of candidate L. The utility for R is defined similarly. Assume $a_L < A(0.5) < a_R$. Again, there exists a unique Nash Equilibrium in dominant strategies in which both candidates announce the attitude of the median voter $A(0.5)$.

To see why consider the case in which a_L is closer to $A(0.5)$ than a_R is to $A(0.5)$. If both candidates announce their preferred policy attitude as their policy positions, L wins, and $x=a_L$ is chosen as the final policy. But this strategy profile cannot be an equilibrium because R can increase his utility by announcing a policy position that is larger than $A(0.5)$ and closer to $A(0.5)$ than a_L . But if R announces such a policy position, L can increase his utility in the same manner by announcing a position that is even closer to $A(0.5)$. In this manner, both candidates can be thought of as outbidding each other until they both announce $A(0.5)$ as their policy positions which is implemented with certainty. A formal proof can be found in [Persson and Tabellini \(2002\)](#). Hence, policy-motivated candidates alone are not sufficient to generate a representation gap.

Lets modify the model in a third and final step by adding heterogeneity in valence. Let the valence of candidate L be λ_L and the valence of candidate R be λ_R with $\lambda_L \geq \lambda_R$. I follow [Schofield \(2007\)](#) by capturing valence directly in the utility function of the voters. Now the utility of a voter depends not only on x but also on which candidate is elected. Formally, i's utility if L is elected is given by $w_{i,L}(x) = \lambda_L - (a_i - x)^2$ and his utility if R is elected equals $w_{i,R}(x) = \lambda_R - (a_i - x)^2$. The addition of heterogeneous valence changes the results on representation qualitatively. Now the unique equilibrium in dominant strategies features a DRG.

Intuitively, the best that R can do to maximize his vote share is to choose the position of the median voter. But because the policy space is continuous and $\lambda_L > \lambda_R$ there are $a_L \leq x_L < A(0.5)$ such that the median voter and all voters with $a_i < A(0.5)$ vote for L who therefore wins the election. So L can ensure the final policy to be biased away from the median voter toward his bliss point independent of what R does. Moreover, L has an incentive to do so because he is policy motivated. Appendix [F](#) proves that in any equilibrium of this game the final policy is biased away from the median voter toward L's bliss point. This simple model illustrates that heterogeneous valence and low RI are both needed to lead to a DRG. Low RI makes candidates willing to bias policy positions away from the electoral center. Heterogeneous valence allows the higher valence party to get away with this strategy in the face of electoral competition.

Representation gaps are systematic. In the model, policy outcomes are always biased toward the bliss point of the party that has the higher valence. Hence, a systematic DRG can only be explained by systematic differences in valence between parties. Hence, the representation gaps combined with the model make the following predictions:

1. On the cultural and EU dimensions, parties who are to the left of the mean voter are seen as more competent by voters than parties who are to the right of the mean voter in most countries
2. On the economic dimension perceived competence of parties to the right of the mean voter should be higher in a majority of countries
3. On the economic dimension, differences in perceived competence between parties to the right and the left of the mean voter are smaller than on the cultural or the EU dimension in most countries
4. Larger differences in perceived competence between parties to the left and the right of the mean voter are associated with a larger representation gap

6.2 Testing the Valence Hypothesis

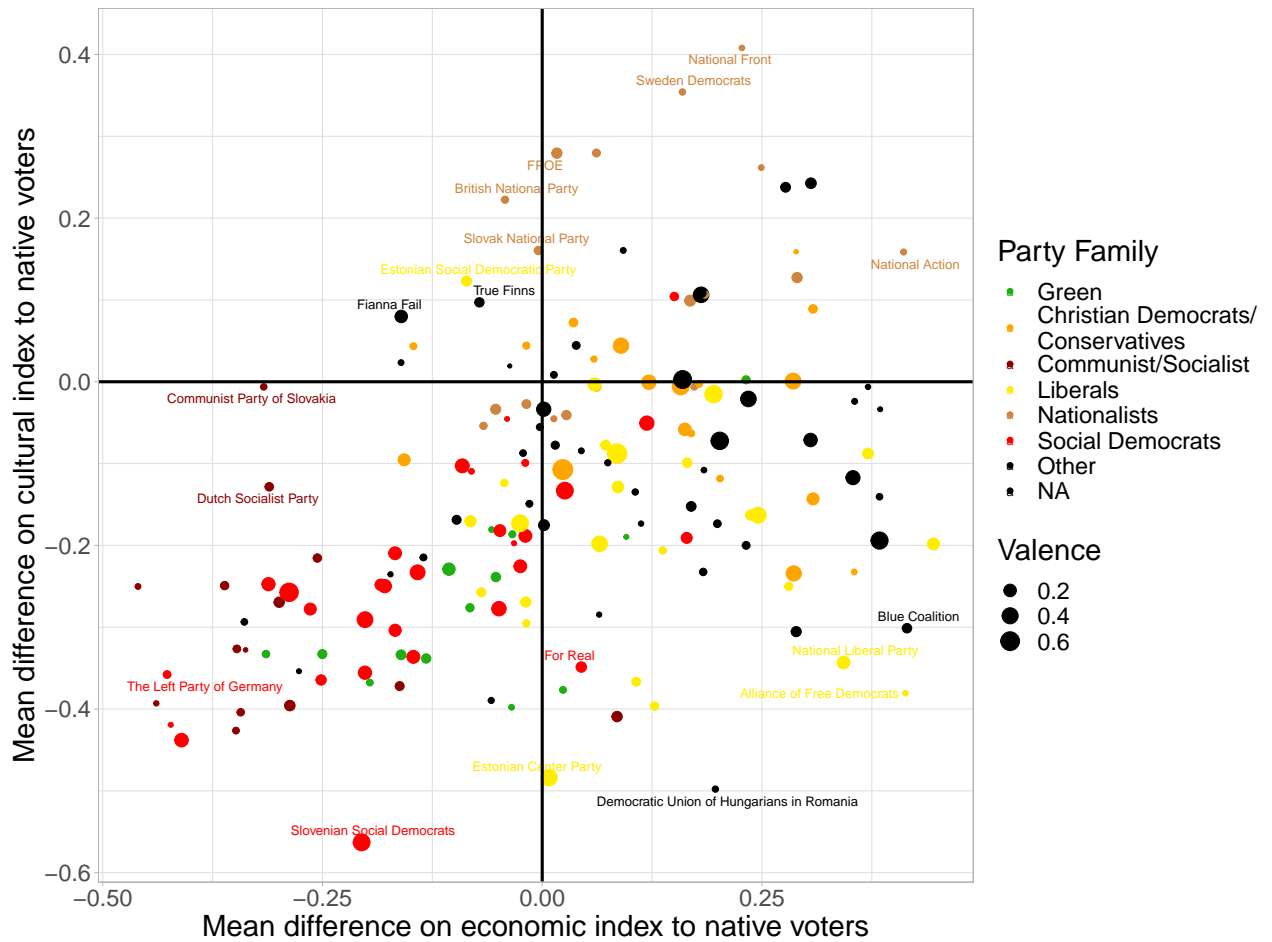
It is possible to test this prediction using data from the EES. In the voter study belonging to the EES, voters were asked to name the problem they considered most important for their country. Afterward, they were asked which party in their country they considered "best at dealing" with that problem. I calculate the valence for each party based on this variable. Let $\mathbb{1}[\text{p is best}]_{i,p}$ equal one if respondent i states that party p is best at dealing with the most important issue and zero otherwise. Let R_c be the set of those in country c who responded to the item. Let P_c be the set of parties in the country. I define the valence of party p as

$$valence_p = \frac{\sum_{i \in R_c} \mathbb{1}[\text{p is best}]_{i,p}}{\sum_{p \in P_c} \sum_{i \in R_c} \mathbb{1}[\text{p is best}]_{i,p}}$$

In words, $valence_p$ is the share of people in the country of party p that believe party p is most competent.

Figure 10 shows a scatter plot in which points represent parties. The vertical axis indicates the difference between the mean cultural index of all MEP candidates from the party and the mean cultural index of the country's voters in which that party is listed. The horizontal axis shows an analogous measure for the economic dimension. This means that the plot compares each party to voters of that country. The size of points is proportional to the valence of the party relative to other parties of the same country as perceived by voters of the respective country. Colors indicate party families. Most parties are located in a corridor that runs from an economic and culturally liberal region in the lower-left corner to a culturally liberal and economically conservative region in the low to center right, resembling the 2D density plot in figure 36. Reassuringly, party families line up as expected. Only a few parties are located above the origin, which means that most parties are more left-wing on cultural issues than the voters. In contrast, the numbers of economically left-wing and economically right-wing parties are similar. The economically left-wing and culturally right-wing quadrant is particularly empty.

Figure 10: Cultural Representation Gap, Economic Representation Gap and Valence of Parties



Note: Points represent parties. The vertical axis indicates the difference between the mean cultural index of all MEP candidates from the party and the mean cultural index of the voters of the country in which that party is listed. The horizontal axis shows an analogous measure for the economic dimension. The size of points is proportional to the valence of the party relative to other parties of the same country.

Source: own calculation based on data from the EES.

Figure 10 shows that the largest points are located below the origin. Hence, as seen by voters, the parties with the highest competence are culturally left-wing, as predicted. The few parties with high valence that are more right-wing culturally than voters differ from them only slightly. Parties that are much more right-wing culturally than voters of their country, like the former Front National or the Sweden Democrats, are seen as having very low competence. In contrast, the valence of economically left- and right-wing parties is similar.

To test the predictions more directly, I develop a measure for valence differences between parties that are more left-wing than the mean voter of their country and parties that are more right-wing than the mean voter of their country. Let c be a country and d a dimension $\in \{\text{Culture, Economy, EU}\}$. Let P_c be the set of parties in country c . Let $PL_{c,d}$ be the set of

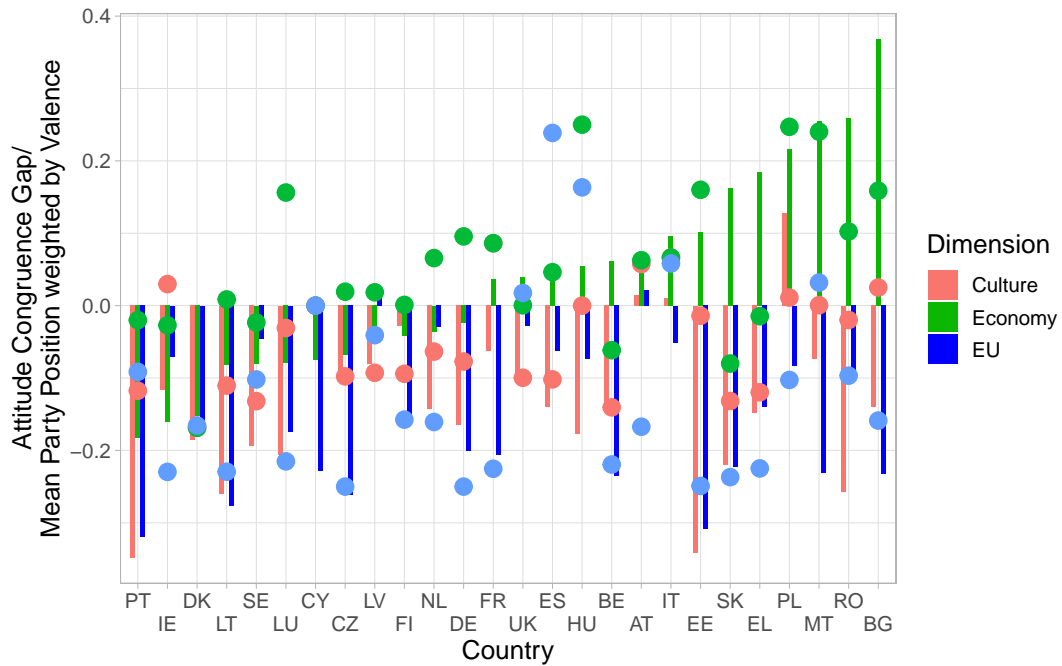
parties in country c that are more left-wing than the mean voter on dimension d . Similarly, Let $PR_{c,d}$ be the set of parties in country c that are more right-wing than the mean voter on dimension d . I define the valence advantage of right-wing parties in country c on dimension d as

$$VR_{c,d} = \left| \sum_{p \in PR_{c,d}} valence_{p,d} \right| - \left| \sum_{p \in PL_{c,d}} valence_{p,d} \right| \quad (3)$$

In words, I calculate the share of valence in the country that all right-wing parties have combined and subtract the share of valence that all left-wing parties have combined. $VR_{c,d}$ might take on different values for different dimensions although there is only one valence measure because parties that are right-wing culturally might be left-wing economically. It is distributed between -1 and 1.

Figure 11 compares ARGs and $VR_{c,d}$ by country and policy dimension. The horizontal axis shows country abbreviations. The vertical axis relates to the valence measure and the Attitude representation gap. The first three predictions can be tested by focusing on the dots.

Figure 11: Comparing the valence measure with Attitude representation gaps



Note: The horizontal axis shows country abbreviations. The vertical axis shows two variables: the Attitude Congruence Gap and the mean party position weighted by valence. Bars show values for the Attitude Congruence Gap. Points show values for the mean party position weighted by valence. Colors indicate the dimension for both measures in the same way.

Source: own calculation based on data from the EES.

The valence measure is negative for the cultural dimension 23 out of 27 countries. Thus, parties that are culturally left-wing relative to voters have combined more valence than culturally right-

wing parties have in total. This confirms prediction one. Similarly, all but three of the valence measures relating to the EU dimension are negative. This means that in most countries, parties who are in favor of EU integration are seen as more competent as a collective than parties who are rather opposed to it. This confirms prediction two. The valence pattern looks very different on the economic dimension. The valence measure is positive in 17 countries and negative in 8. As predicted, the pattern is more even than on the other two dimensions. Moreover, parties that are economically more right-wing than voters tend to unite more valence than those on the left of voters.

To test whether the valence advantages of right-wing parties correlate with the ARG between countries *within* a dimension, it is helpful to compare the points in the figure to the bars. Points and bars seem to be positively correlated. This can be seen most easily on the economic dimension, where points track bars closely. In particular, when the valence measure is negative, the ARG is also mostly negative, while the ARG is usually positive when the valence measure is positive. To test this intuition formally, I estimate the following equation by OLS:

$$ARG_{c,d} = \alpha + \beta \cdot VR_{c,d} + \theta \cdot \mathbf{X}_{c,d} + \varepsilon_{c,d}$$

where $\mathbf{X}_{c,d}$ is a vector of control variables. Table 4 shows the results. Standard errors are clustered on the country levels. The estimate for β in column 1 shows that Attitude representation gaps in favor of the political right are more pronounced when the political right has higher valence than the political left. Both measures range from zero to one. The highly significant coefficient of about 0.7, therefore, indicates a strong relationship. The R^2 in this binary regression is about 0.31, which shows that valence can account for much of the variation in ARGs on its own. In columns 2 to 4, I include several control variables which might influence ARGs, like a Democracy index and a measure for corruption. Data is taken from the World Bank. Including these controls into the regression does not change the coefficient on the valence measure notably. In column 5, I additionally include indicators for the political dimension. This means that β is estimated using only variation within each of the political dimensions. As a result, β decreases to about 0.55 and stays highly significant. Overall, these results are consistent with all hypotheses generated from the theoretical model. This supports the idea that differences in valence are an important driver of representation gaps.

7 Effects of the Congruence-Pattern

7.1 Attitudes toward Democracy

representation gaps might have a range of negative effects on citizen's perception of democracy. Citizens might start to believe that the parliament does not represent the people

and that parliamentarians act in their own interest without considering the concerns of citizens. This might lead to dissatisfaction with how democracy works and could reduce overall trust in EU institutions. The previous analysis has also shown that on the cultural and EU dimension all established party families are more left-wing than the mean and median citizen. In such a situation the many citizens who are more right-wing than established parties might struggle to find a party they can vote for because non-established parties tend to have low valence. Such citizens might therefore abstain from voting. Because there exist established party families to the right and the left of the mean citizens in Europe a representation gap on the economic dimension need not cause vote abstention.

To test these predictions I compare attitudes toward democracy of citizens who differ differently strongly from the European Parliament. Let

$$|\Delta_{i,d}| = |\text{attitude index}_{i,d} - \overline{\text{EP attitude index}_d}|$$

where $\overline{\text{EP attitude index}_d}$ is the mean value for the index on policy dimension d of MEPs. $|\Delta_{i,d}|$ measures the absolute distance between voter i on policy dimension d from the mean MEP. Higher values indicate that i 's policy attitudes differ more from the attitudes of the mean MEP. I regress survey items for attitudes toward democracy y_i on this variable:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_d \cdot |\Delta_{i,d}| + \theta \cdot \mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

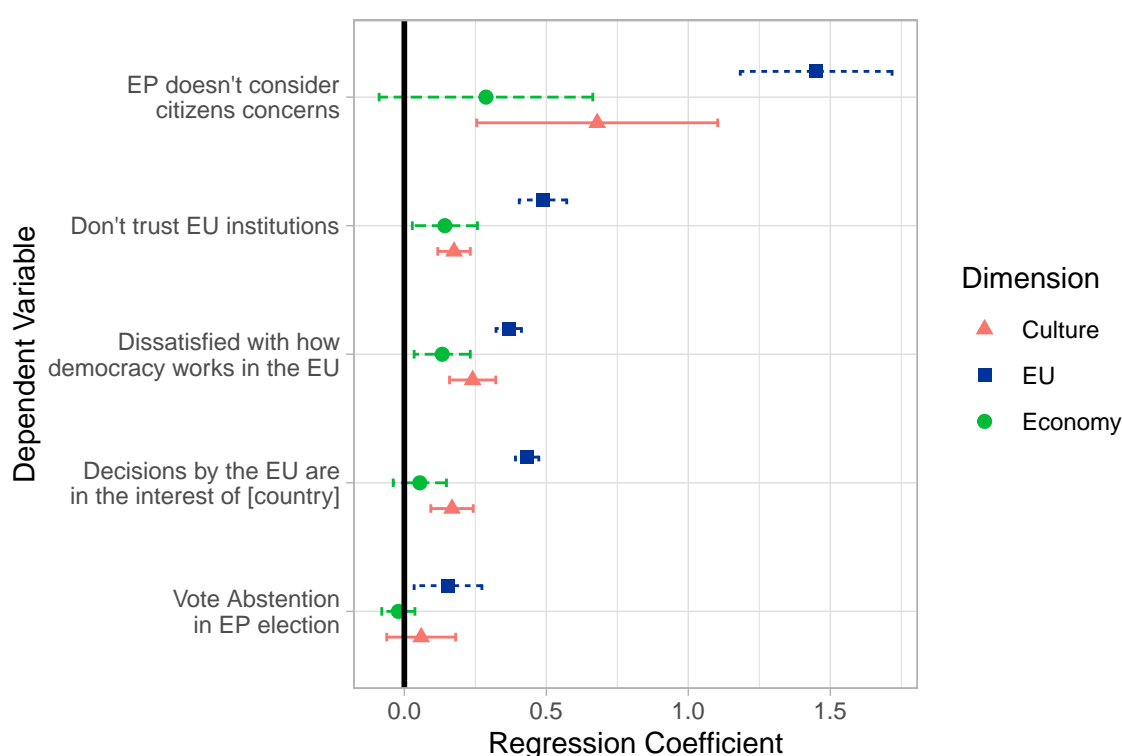
\mathbf{X}_i includes a large number of control variables. Among them are age, gender, degree of religiosity and categories for marital status, city size, living standard, social class, occupation, education, immigration background and religious denomination. To simplify interpretation I standardise all dependent variables but voting such that they have a standard deviation of 1. I am interested in β_d . It reveals by how many standard deviations y_i differs between a citizen who has the same attitudes as the mean MEP and a citizen with similar demographics but policy attitudes who differ maximally from those of the mean MEP. Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

I am interested in the causal effect of $|\Delta_{i,d}|$ on y_i . However, this regression only estimates a correlation. The inclusion of \mathbf{X}_i can help to mitigate omitted variable bias but cannot account for reversed causality. Reversed causality is likely to be most strongly pronounced on the EU dimension. Citizens might be more opposed to EU integration than the EP because they believe that the EP doesn't represent citizens rather than the other way around. This reversed causality channel is likely less strongly pronounced regarding the cultural and the economic dimension. However, estimates for β_d cannot be given causal interpretation in any case. Reversed causality is likely to bias estimates for β_d upward while measurement error leads to a bias in the opposite direction. Hence, the causal effect might be larger or smaller than β_d .

Figure 12 shows the coefficients β_d and 95% confidence intervals by democracy attitude

variable y and policy dimension d . Results confirm with the predictions. Most coefficients are positive, statistically significant and economically relevant. For instance, a citizen who has completely opposite attitudes as the mean MEP is about 0.5 standard deviations more likely to have low trust in EU institutions as an demographically similar citizen who has the same attitudes as the mean MEP. Associations are largest on the EU dimension and weakest on the economic dimension. This is consistent with the idea that coefficients regarding the EU dimension are most strongly affected by reversed causality. Still, coefficients regarding the cultural and economic dimension are also economically relevant.

Figure 12: Association between Representation and Attitudes toward Democracy



Note: This figure shows a coefficient plot. It depicts estimates for β_d from different versions of regression equation 4. The vertical axis shows different dependent variables. Colors indicate the policy dimension d on which the difference between voters and the mean MEP is calculated. The horizontal axis shows the magnitude of coefficients. All regressions condition on a large set of demographic characteristics. Data is pooled for all EU countries. Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

Source: own calculation based on the EES.

The strongest associations emerge regarding whether the mean MEP considers the opinions of its citizens. Those who have different policy attitudes than the mean MEP are much more likely to think that it doesn't consider the concerns of its citizens. Citizens with different attitudes than the mean MEP are also less likely to trust EU institutions, more likely to be

dissatisfied with how democracy works in the EU, and believe that decisions made by the EU are not in the interest of their country. This evidence is consistent with the expectations.

The association with voting in the 2009 EP election is quantitatively smaller because it is measured on a different scale. The dependent variable is an indicator of whether the citizen voted or not. Citizens who have the same opinion as the mean MEP on the EU were 15 percentage points more likely to vote than citizens who have completely different attitudes toward the EU than the mean MEP. The association regarding the cultural dimension is weaker and insignificant. The association regarding the economic dimension is insignificant and estimated to be negative. Overall this is consistent with the expectations. All established parties have very similar attitudes on the EU dimensions, which means that voters who oppose EU integration have few voting options. On the cultural dimension, all established parties are more left-wing than the mean voter, but attitudes are more diverse than on the EU dimension. On the economic dimension, most voters have established parties to the left and to the right of their own attitudes. Hence, voters who don't feel represented by the EP have good voting options to decrease this representation gap.

Figure 46 in the Appendix shows that similar results obtain at the national level. Citizens who have more distant policy attitudes from their national MPs are more likely to believe that the national parliament does not consider the concerns of its citizens, are dissatisfied with how democracy works in their country, tend to disapprove of the country's government and are less likely to vote at national elections. Overall this evidence is consistent with the idea that representation gaps decrease trust in democracy and the EU as a whole and that the lack of established parties that are right-wing on cultural and EU-related topics reduces voting.

7.2 Is Populism a Reaction to Representation Gaps?

Adding valence and policy motivated candidates to the framework of Downs (1957) explains why neither existing parties nor voters deviate from an equilibrium which features representation gaps. But why don't new parties form and rise who exploit representation gaps? I argue that this has happened during the last decades and it is called the rise of populism.

7.2.1 Defining Populism

The rise of populism refers to the increase in the vote share and power of populist parties. However, whether a party is populist is often hard to define because "populist" is usually not used by parties to describe themselves but rather ascribed to them by observers. Nonetheless, a consensus on the key properties of populists has emerged. Populism is a thin ideology. It should be distinguished from fully fleshed out ideologies like Liberalism or Conservatism,

which include a consistent worldview and derive policy objectives from it. Rather, the most important feature of populists is to draw a clear distinction between the corrupt elite and the pure and homogeneous people.

This distinction is linked to a narrative that populists base their legitimacy on and that I will label the populist narrative. According to the populist narrative the people and the elite are caught in a struggle. The elite rules against the interest of the people. In contrast, populists represent the will of the people. Hence, they want to topple the elite and rule in the interest of the people (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; ?). Neither the distinction between the people and the elite nor the populist narrative make any claims on political orientation. Hence, populism is consistent with right-wing or left-wing policy stances.

Because nearly all scholars can agree that the elite-people distinction and anti-elite sentiment are the most basic feature of populism, most past attempts to define populism have been based on it. I follow this literature. Data for classification is taken from the CHES. In one item of the CHES, political experts are asked to assess the salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric on a scale from 0 = "Not important at all" to 10 = "Extremely important". This item was included in the 2014 and the 2019 CHES, which is roughly the time period I focus on and makes over-time stability checks possible. I label all parties as populists who score more than one standard deviation above the mean on this item. This approach has two advantages over classification by hand. 1) it is simpler, and 2) the researcher can tie his hands more credibly, thereby preventing personal biases. While the threshold of one standard deviation is arbitrary, this simple threshold results in a set of populist parties that is large and plausible.

This procedure results in 50 parties which are classified as populist in 2014. These parties are listed in table 11. As can be seen, parties that are typically described as populist, like the National Rally in France, Lega Nord in Italy, or SYRIZA in Greece, are all found to be populist using this approach. The most notable exceptions are the PiS party in Poland and the SVP in Switzerland, which are not classified as populist. The dataset also included many minor parties to which researchers have paid less attention. Many of them already have the key property of populism in their official party name, like the "ANO 2011, Action of Dissatisfied Citizens" in the Czech Republic or the "Ordinary People and Independent Personalities" in Slovakia.

The correlation of the anti-elite salience item in 2014 with the anti-elite salience item in 2019 is about 0.84 which shows that the populism measure is robust over time. One possible alternative item for identifying populists is the "people vs elite" item which measures whether "the people" or elected representatives should have the final say on the most important issues, for example, by voting directly in referendums. It is only included in the 2019 CHES. The correlation between the two measures is about 0.78. In the following, I will label the 50 parties in table 11 as populists and all other parties as mainstream parties.

7.2.2 Anecdotal Evidence

The populist narrative is simplistic and, taken literally, wrong. The "people" and the "elite" are not well defined, and no group is completely homogeneous. However, to take the narrative literally misses the point that it does not claim to be scientific. Rather it is used by politicians to get attention and votes. Therefore, one should expect the populist narrative to be an exaggeration. Let's interpret it more leniently.

"Elite" and "the people" are vague terms. Populists usually refer to politicians when talking about the elite, and most populist movements are political. Hence, it makes sense to use national and EU parliament members as a substitute for the elite. "The people" likely refers to citizens of the country who do not belong to the elite. Sometimes it seems like populists exclude ethnic minorities from the people. However, this would not alter the considerations presented below, as ethnic minorities are small in most European countries. The populist narrative makes three main claims. First, if parliamentarians and citizens are caught in a struggle for the country's political direction, a representation gap must exist. I will label this the "representation gap claim". Second, it makes a "homogeneity claim" when it argues that parliamentarians and citizens are homogeneous groups. The most important implication of the homogeneity claim and the representation gap claim is that all parliamentarians have attitudes that differ from those of citizens in the same direction. Hence, closing the RG requires a rise of a counter elite representing citizens. Finally, populists make a "representation claim" when they argue to be this counter-elite. Hence, representation gaps are central to the populist narrative and to their justification for entering politics. In particular, populists argue themselves to be a reaction to representation gaps.

This paper shows that the representation gap claim is true. Large representation gaps indeed exist in Europe. The homogeneity claim is wrong taken literally, but it contains a kernel of truth. There is important within-group heterogeneity in the parties' positions and voters, and there are parliamentarians who are more right-wing than the mean voter in most parliaments. Moreover, there are parties to the right and the left on the economic dimension in most European parliaments. Hence, the homogeneity claim is an exaggeration. However, it is true that in most European countries, all large established parties are more left-wing than most voters in the same direction on the cultural and the EU dimension, and many populists focus on cultural topics like immigration, policy toward minorities, or punishment for criminals. Moreover, while differences between party positions exist, they are often small compared to the difference between the mean citizen and the mean parliamentarian. This is particularly strongly pronounced on the EU dimension. Hence, the homogeneity claim could be seen as a simplification that allows one to zoom in on a central feature of the political situation in Europe.

Populists have identified a large gap in the policy space. Filling this gap is a reasonable and plausible motive for a politician, independent of his long-term goals. Some people might have a taste for representation of attitudes of the citizens at large and might aim at filling policy space for idealistic reasons. On the other hand, an opportunistic politician who wants to acquire power should also fill empty policy space to maximize his vote share. I will now test the representation claim.

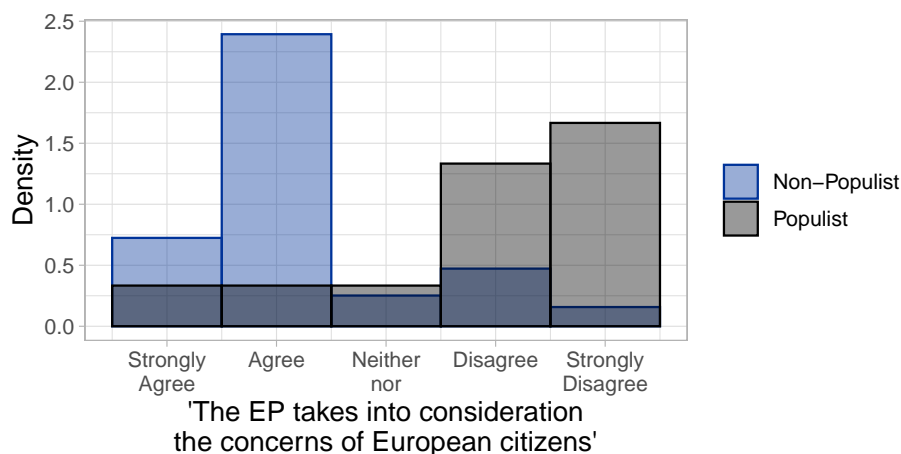
7.2.3 Testing the Representation Claim of Populists

If populists react to representation gaps populist parliamentarians should be relatively likely to believe in low representation. To test this I compare the responses of parliamentarians belonging to populist and mainstream parties to the following item:

The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens

Answers were elicited on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Figure 13 visualizes the responses of populist and mainstream MEPs in form of two histograms. As can be seen, the histograms differ strongly. A majority of MEPs from mainstream parties agree or strongly agree with the statement, while a majority of MPs from populist parties disagrees or strongly disagrees. This suggests that MPs from populist parties are more likely to believe that representation is low, which is consistent with the populist narrative.

Figure 13: Assessment of representation by populist and mainstream MEPs



Note: This figure depicts two histograms referring to answers of MEPs to the following statement: "The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens".

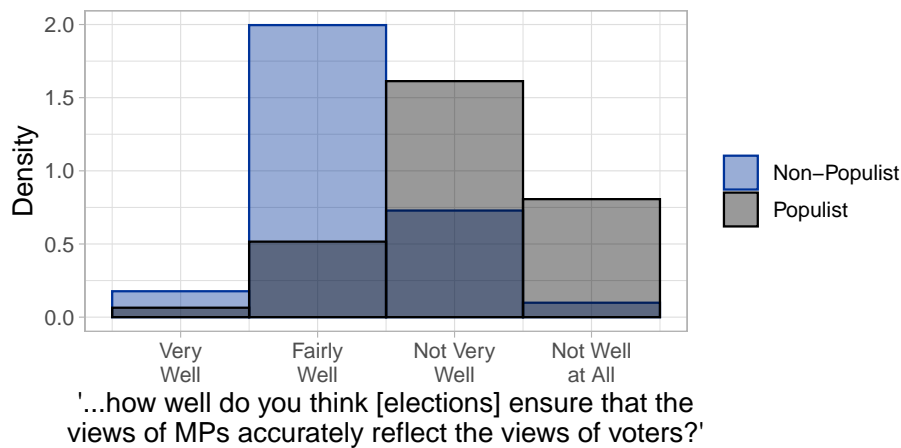
Source: own calculation based on the EES (Candidate Study).

National MPs were asked the following question:

Thinking about how elections in [country] work in practice, how well do you think they ensure that the views of MPs accurately reflect the views of voters?

Possible answers included "very well", "fairly well", "not very well" and "not well at all". This question comes close to asking MPs how high they believe ARGs to be.

Figure 14: Assessment of representation by national populist and mainstream MPs



Note: This figure depicts two histograms referring to answers to the following statement: "Thinking about how elections in [country] work in practice, how well do you think they ensure that the views of MPs accurately reflect the views of voters?"

Source: own calculation based on the EES.

Figure 14 shows the distribution of responses for national populist and non-populist MPs. Again, populists are much more likely than non-populists to believe that ARGs are large. A majority of non-populists believe that the views of MPs reflect the views of voters "fairly well," while most populist MPs think that the views of MPs reflect the views of voters "not very well" or "not well at all". Given the large ARGs found by this study, it seems that populist MPs have a more realistic perception of representation in Europe than non-populist MPs. Overall, this suggests that populists truly perceive ARGs to be large and consistent with their narrative. The populist narrative further asserts that populists do represent citizens. To examine this, I first analyze their Representation Intention. To this end I use the same survey as in section 5.1. Of the 114 MEPs I identified as belonging to non-populist parties, 98 or about 86% stated that an MEP should vote according to his own opinion if it differed from the opinion of his voters, and 14% stated that an MEP should vote according to the opinion of his voters. Of the 8 MEPs belonging to populist parties, 4 stated that an MEP should vote according to his own opinion 4 stated that an MEP should vote according to the opinion of his voters. Fisher's exact test reveals that this difference is significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.02436$). Of the 1366 national MPs belonging

to non-populist parties, 978, or about 72% said that an MP should vote according to his own opinion. Out of the 101 populist national MPs, only 31, about 31% stated that an MP should vote according to his own opinion. The difference is highly significant according to Fisher's exact test (p-value = 3.596e-16). Hence, parliamentarians from populist parties have a much higher Representation Intention than those from non-populist parties.

Are attitude representation gaps between populist MPs and voters also smaller than between mainstream MPs and voters? Populism is not necessarily correlated with substantive political positions. To examine whether and how populist parties differ from mainstream parties I run regressions of the following form:

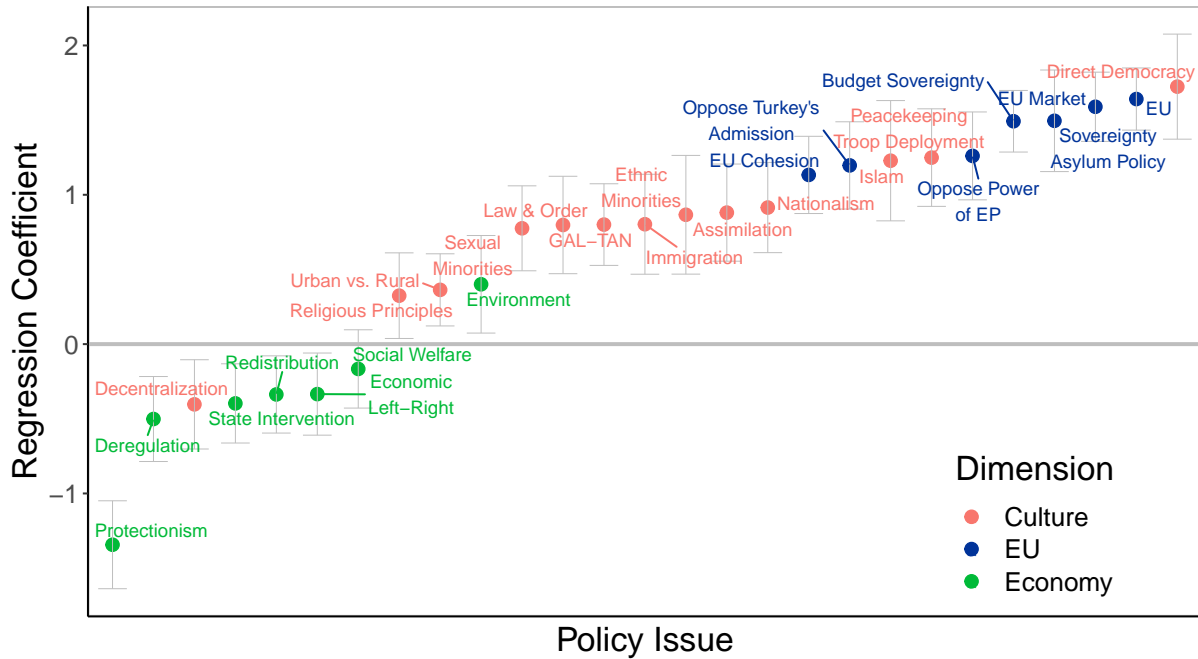
$$Y_{p,c,t,i} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot \mathbb{1}[Populist]_{p,c,t} + \delta_t + \theta_c + \varepsilon_{p,c,t,i} \quad (5)$$

where $Y_{p,c,t,i}$ is a political position of party p in country c at time t on a political issue i . For instance, i might be the topic of redistribution or immigration. $\mathbb{1}[Populist]_{p,c,t}$ is an indicator for whether the party is populist, which can be time-varying. I also include time- and country-fixed effects to absorb constant differences between countries and parallel issue-position-trends between countries. I pool data from the 2014 and 2019 CHES to estimate this model and include all policy issues included in either of the two surveys. Most items are included in both of them. To make items comparable and easier to interpret, I scale them such that higher values indicate a stance that is intuitively more right-wing on the issue and such that all variables have a standard deviation of 1. β_i measures descriptively how many standard deviations of all parties the average populist party is more right-wing on that issue compared to the average mainstream party controlling for time and country effects.

Figure 15 depicts β_i for several issues i together with 95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered at the country level. The horizontal axis refers to different political issues. The vertical axis measures the corresponding estimated coefficient. Populists and mainstream parties have very different policy positions. Nearly all estimates are significant and quantitatively large. Populist parties are significantly more right-wing than mainstream parties regarding nearly all cultural issues, and they are more right-wing on all EU issues. In contrast, populists are more left-wing on all but one economic issue, although differences tend to be smaller than for cultural and EU issues. Figure 45 shows the results from regressions in which parties are weighted with their vote share in the last national election. Results change little.

This pattern mirrors the ARG and DRG pattern documented above. Even the magnitudes of differences between populists and established parties on the one hand and voters and established parties, on the other hand, are similar. To assess this more directly, I handily match topics from the ARG data and the CHES data. I am able to do this for 8 specific policy issues and the three policy dimensions. Figure 16 shows a scatter plot of the ARG on the horizontal axis and the

Figure 15: Issue-positioning of populist parties relative to non-populist parties



Note: This figure is based on regression equation 5. Each shows the coefficients on the populist indicator for a different dependent variable. The text next to each variable indicates the dependent variable used. These dependent variables are arranged on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis shows the size of the coefficient on the populist-indicator. Colors indicate policy dimensions. Coefficients are surrounded by 95% confidence intervals. Standard error are clustered at the country level.

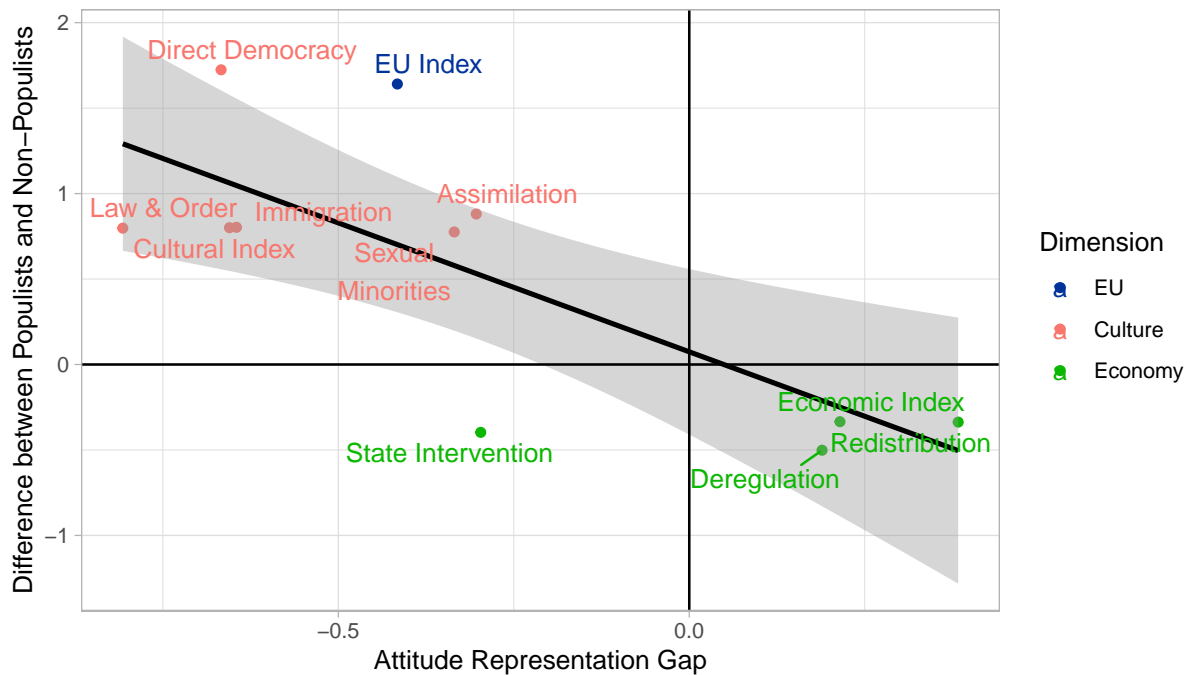
Source: own calculation based on the CHES.

regression coefficients, which measure how populist parties differ from non-populist parties on the vertical axis. Points refer to political issues or dimensions. The further a point to the right, the more right-wing voters, are relative to the EP on that issue in 2009. The higher a point, the more right-wing populist parties are relative to non-populist parties 5 to 10 years later.

Voters are more right-wing than MEPs on all cultural issues, and populists are more right-wing than non-populist parties on these issues too. The same is true for the EU dimension. Similarly, voters are more left-wing than MEPs, and populists are also more left-wing on these issues than non-populists. The only exception is State Intervention, where voters are more right-wing than MEPs, but populists are more left-wing than non-populists. Still, on 10 of the 11 issues, populist parties differ from non-populist parties as if they reacted to the ARG.

The correlation between the ARG and the differences between populist and mainstream parties is about 0.75 and highly significant ($p \approx 0.007$). I also estimated a binary regression of the form $\Delta \text{Pop} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \text{ARG}_i + \varepsilon_i$ where ΔPop indicates differences between populist and mainstream parties. I use robust standard errors. The intercept turns out to be small and insignificant while β is estimated to be about 1.5 and highly significant. Hence, higher ARGs

Figure 16: Relationship between ARGs and Differences between Populists and Non-Populists



Note: ARGs refer to those who voted in the 2009 EP election and MEPs who were elected in 2009. Higher values on the horizontal axis indicate that voters were more right-wing compared to MEPs. Estimates come from regression equation 3. Differences between populists and non-populists are based on regression equation 5. The vertical axis shows the size of the coefficient on the populist-indicator. Colors indicate policy dimensions. The upward sloping black line comes from a linear regression. It is surrounded by a 95% confidence band.

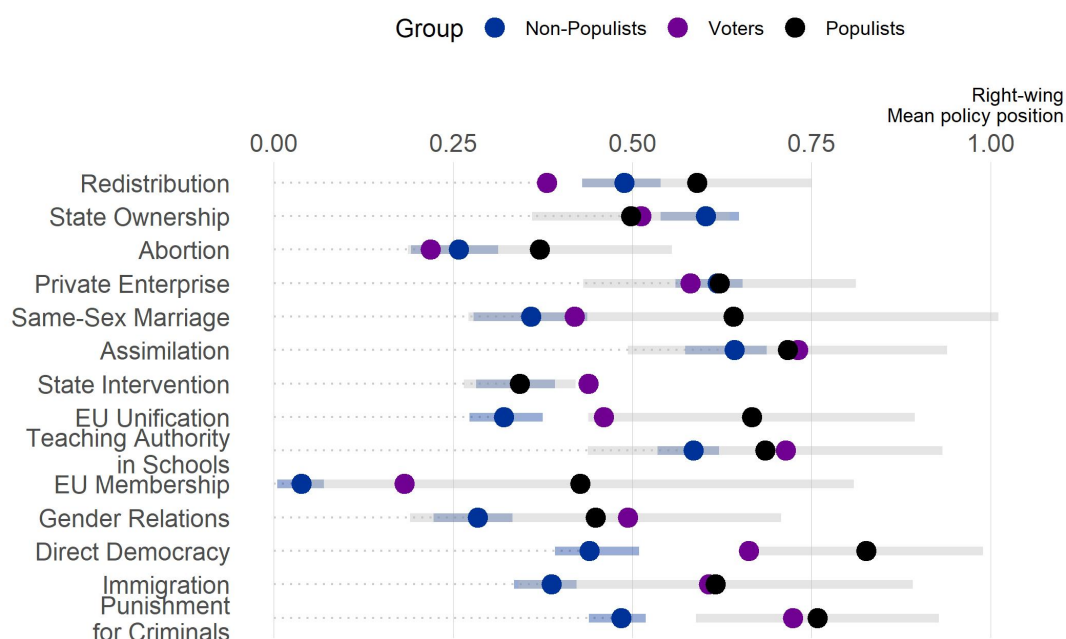
Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 and Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

on a topic translate into a larger difference between populists and non-populists. Moreover, the fact that β is larger than 1 shows that populists overshoot. Differences between them and mainstream parties are larger than differences between voters and parliaments.

How do attitudes of populist parliamentarians compare to attitudes of voters? Figure 17 depicts mean attitudes of populist MEPs, non-populist MEPs and voters. The vertical axis shows different policy issues. The horizontal axis shows the positions of voters and MEPs.

The attitudes of the mean populists are not much closer to the attitudes of the mean voter than the attitudes of the mean non-populist are to the attitudes of the mean voter. On five topics (redistribution, abortion, same-sex marriage, EU unification, and EU membership), the mean non-populist MEPs are closer to the mean voter than the mean populist MEPs. On six issues (state ownership, assimilation, teaching authority in schools, gender relations, immigration, and punishment for criminals), the mean populist is closer to the mean voter. On three topics (private enterprise, state intervention, and direct democracy), the mean populist and non-populist are

Figure 17: Mean Policy Attitudes of Voters, Populist MEPs and Non-Populist MEPs by Policy Issue



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy issues. The horizontal axis shows the positions of voters and MEPs. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Dots indicate the mean-attitudes of voters, MEPs who belong to populist parties and MEPs who do not belong to populist parties. Data is pooled across Europe. 95% confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the country level.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

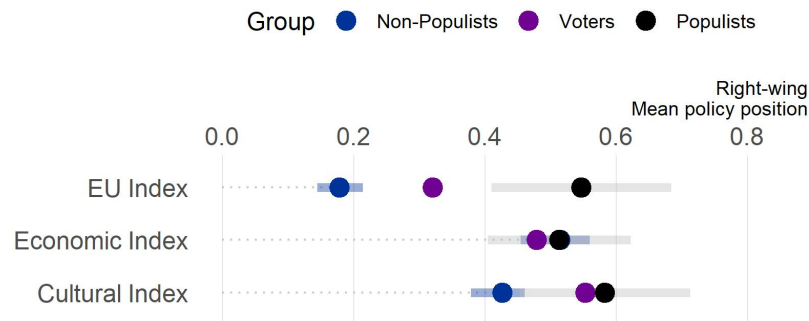
similarly close to the mean voter.

Many representation gaps feature that all parties differ from voters in the same direction. Hence, populists could increase representation even though being positioned far away from the mean voter if they differ from voters in the opposite direction than non-populists. This would enable a large share of voters to choose parties much closer to them regarding policy attitudes. Figure 17 shows that on half of the issues, populists differ from voters in the same direction. On the other half, the mean populist is positioned on the other side of the mean voter than the mean non-populist.

Figure 18 shows results for the three policy dimensions. Populists' policy preferences are close to those of non-populist MEPs regarding economic variables. On the cultural dimension, the mean populist differs from the mean voters in the other direction than the mean non-populists, but he is much closer to the mean voter than the mean non-populist MEP is. On the EU dimension, attitudes of populists and non-populists differ most strongly. Mean MEPs

of both types differ strongly from the mean voter whose attitudes are located between their attitudes.

Figure 18: Mean Policy Attitudes of Voters, Populist MEPs and Non-Populist MEPs by Policy Dimension



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy dimensions. The horizontal axis shows the positions of voters and MEPs. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Dots indicate the mean-attitudes of voters, MEPs who belong to populist parties and MEPs who do not belong to populist parties. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

Overall, evidence regarding the representation claim of populists is mixed. Gaps between MEPs from populist parties and voters are large on many issues. On some issues, populist MEPs overshoot; on others, they are even further away from voters than mainstream MEPs. On the EU dimension, they can help to make parliaments more representative of voter attitudes, but the mean-populist is much more opposed to EU integration than the mean voter. Economically the evidence on the position of populists is conflicting. Data from the CHES suggests that they are more left-wing than mainstream MPs, while populist MEPs have similar attitudes as mainstream MEPs. In any case, populists might not be needed to increase representation on the economic dimension, given representation gaps are relatively small, and there exist high valence parties to the right and the left of the mean voter. The representation claim of populists is strongest on the cultural dimension. The mean populist MEP is culturally close to the mean voter. This is also the case for individual issues that are important to many voters, like immigration, punishment for criminals, assimilation, and gender relations.

However, given that the Representation Intention of populists is high, only about a third of Attitude Representation Gaps will translate into Decision Representation Gaps. Populists

seem to try to implement the attitudes of voters even if this conflicts with their personal views. This could explain the conflicting evidence on the economic position of populists based on the CHES and the EES data. Populist parties might advocate for left-wing economic policies even though they do not believe in them.

The representation claim is wrong taken literally as populists have attitudes far away from those of voters on many issues and even 31% of populist MPs seem to disregard the opinion of their voters. Still, the representation claim contains a kernel of truth. Combining evidence on Representation Intention and Attitude Congruence shows that populists do represent voters well on cultural issues where representation gaps have been largest, and they provide an alternative to the uniform pro-EU stance of mainstream parties which many voters consider to be too integration friendly. In sum, the populist narrative contains a large kernel of truth even though it is exaggerated and simplified. This suggests that populists might be seen as political activists who joined politics to close representation gaps and who receive votes from the many citizens who have very different policy attitudes than mainstream politicians.

8 Conclusion

Representative democracies build on the idea that voters elect members of the parliament (MPs), which in turn represent the voters' interests. In this paper, I explore the degree to which MPs in Europe actually represent their voters. I find that representation is low on many issues. Moreover, I explore the structure of representation and find that representation is lowest on cultural issues, particularly on issues related to immigration. Their existence can largely be explained by an advantage in perceived competence that parties on the cultural left enjoy.

Even if RGs are not directly a problem, they are still likely to cause vote abstention, a lack of trust in legal institutions and democracy, and boost the rise of populism. Most scientists and policymakers consider the first three problems, while many consider the rise of populism a problem. Reducing RGs might mitigate these phenomena. Most papers that aim at fighting populism suggest making economic growth more inclusive and increase redistribution (Guriev, 2019).

My results underline the importance of redistribution as voters are more in favor of it than MPs. Increasing redistribution could therefore close a representation gap. However, fixing the economy is only one part of the solution. The largest RGs exist on cultural topics. If policymakers want to mitigate the rise of populism, they also have to shift to the right on many cultural issues, in particular immigration and related topics. One example of how this can be executed in practice is the case of Mette Frederiksen. Frederiksen, leader of the Social Democrats in Denmark, shifted her party sharply to the right on cultural issues in response to

the ever-growing right-wing populist Danish People's Party (Orange, 2019). Subsequently, her party came in first place in the general election in 2019, while social democratic parties in other countries basically vanished. In mid-2022, Frederiksen's party still tops the polls, being more than 10 percentage points ahead of the second strongest party, while the right-wing populists have been marginalized in Denmark.

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A Are Representation Gaps a Problem?

Whether a representation gap is a problem or not likely depends on contextual factors. Hence, some RGs might be a problem, while others are not. As far as I know, there is very little research on whether RGs are a problem and how this depends on contextual factors. Factors that might be important include how large and systematic RGs are. Small RGs are unlikely to have large negative welfare effects. Similarly, if there exist RGs in opposite directions on similar topics like state intervention and state ownership, RGs might effectively cancel out. On the other hand, large and systematic RGs, like those documented above for cultural issues, are more likely to be a problem.

Another factor is the degree to which some policy attitudes are objectively superior to others. For instance, if the attitudes of voters only differ from those of parliamentarians because voters are misinformed, RGs are less likely to be a problem. RGs are more likely to be a problem if they are due to differences between politicians and the population regarding deep preferences like fairness ideals (Cappelen et al., 2020), risk aversion (Heß et al., 2018) or moral universalism (Enke, 2020). Recent research has indeed found that the perceptions of most Europeans about immigrants are too negative (Alesina et al., 2018; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Margalit, 2019). Similarly, research in behavioral economics has uncovered numerous cognitive biases and shown that most people make predictable mistakes that might justify disregarding their opinions under some circumstances. However, the decision-making of politicians suffers from biases too. A seminal study Sheffer et al. (2018) shows that politicians in Belgium, Canada, and Israel exhibit several cognitive biases to an if anything, *larger* extent than non-politicians. This suggests that letting politicians instead of voters decide makes biased decision-making more likely. Moreover, there is evidence that deep preferences of politicians and voters differ. For instance, Heß et al. (2018) show that German MPs are significantly more risk-loving than the average German citizen across several domains of risk-taking. This suggests that risky decisions like opening the country to large-scale immigration might result from differences in risk attitudes.

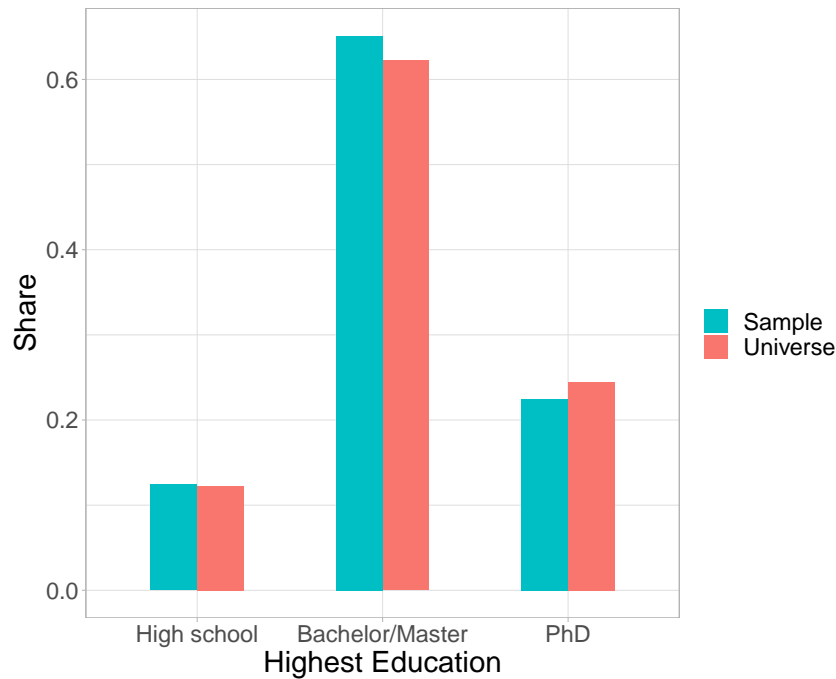
Even if a representation gap results from differences in deep preferences between voters and MPs, it might not be problematic. One justification could be that MPs try to protect minority rights from a "tyranny of the majority". However, section G.2 shows that this is not the case in modern Europe.

B Checking Data Quality

In this section I provide two checks of quality for the EES Candidate Survey data. First, I compare the sample MEPs to the universe of MEPs, all MEPs who served between 2009 and 2014, regarding several demographic variables. Data on these variables are taken from (Beauvallet et al., 2014). In 2009 66% of all newly elected MEPs were male, and 34% were female. The proportions in the sample are nearly identical. Figure 19 visualizes the representativeness of the sample-MEPs concerning the highest educational attainment. As can be seen, most MEPs are highly educated. More than 20% of all 2009 MEPs had a Doctoral degree, and only about 12% had no University-degree. This strong selection can be replicated well by the sample used in my analysis. In figure 20 I compare the distributions of occupations previously held by the sample-MEPs to the distribution of occupations held to be the universe of MEPs prior to becoming MEPs. Most noteworthy, the vast majority of MEPs have worked in two out of the 12 occupation-categories prior to becoming MEP: "higher administrative jobs" like senior executive or political aide and "professional and technical jobs" like scientist, "journalist", or teacher. Other occupations like manual workers, the clerical, farm service, and sales sectors are rare. Figure 20 reveals that the sample distribution of the previous occupation is quite close to the actual one. Figure 21 shows country of origin fractions of sample MEPs and the universe of MEPs. The sample is broadly representative of the universe. However, MEPs from some countries like Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium are over-represented, while representatives from Spain and Poland are underrepresented in the data. I weight to adjust for this in the main analysis. Overall, the sample seems to represent the universe of MEPs well along key demographic dimensions.

Second, I check how the EES Candidate Survey data correlates with an established and validated data-source. I calculate the ideological positions of parties for various issues based on the EES Candidate Survey data by taking for each party and issue simple means of the positions of all of its candidates. One established data-source for the ideological positioning of parties is the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). The CHES does not enable ideological comparison between parties and voters because it does not include data on voters ideological positions. However, it is well suited for comparing different parties Jolly et al. (2022). It also includes data on the ideological positioning on issues that are similar to those from the EES. Both data-sources include an "Redistribution" issue which I match. I match the "position on immigration policy" issue from the CHES to the "Immigration" issue from the EES. I match the "position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers" issue from the CHES to the "Assimilation" issue from the EES. I match the "position on social lifestyle (e.g. homosexuality)" issue from the CHES to the "Same-Sex marriage" issue from the EES. The CHES contains a "position on

Figure 19: MEP-sample representativeness regarding education



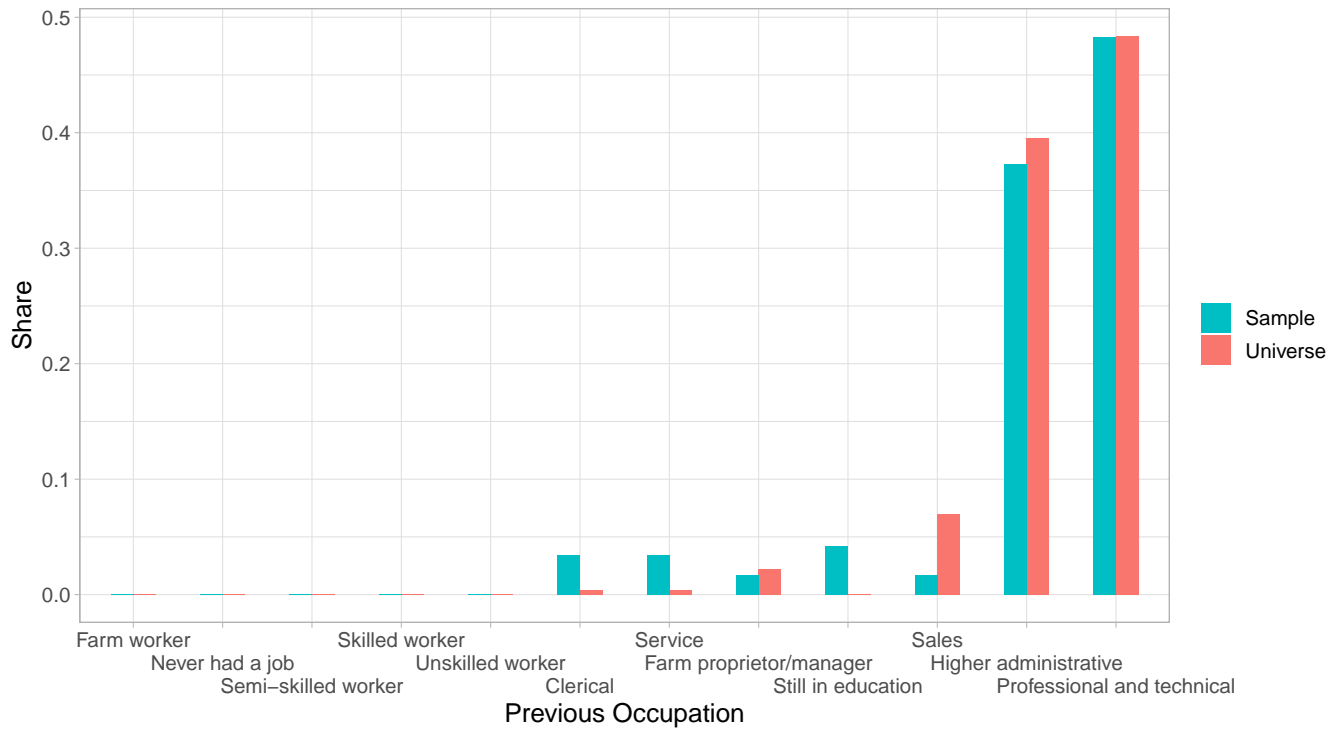
Note: This figure compares the distribution on educational attainment of the universe of MEPs to the distribution on educational attainment of the sample of elected candidates from the Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study).

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study) and [Beauvallet et al. \(2014\)](#)

deregulation" issue while the EES contains positions on the related topics of "State Intervention", "State Ownership" and "Private Enterprise". I use a simple mean of the three latter variables as the "Deregulation" measure for the EES. I obtain a measure based on the CHES and a measure based on the EES for each of these issues that varies by party. This matched data includes issue positions measured from both data sources on 149 European parties. If the EES data is valid, correlations between these two measures should be high on each issue. Figure 22 shows correlation coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals on the vertical axis. Issues are depicted on the horizontal axis. Correlations are always above 0.6 and highly significant.

Another concern regarding the validity of the EES data might be that it does not contain enough policy items to enable estimates of positions on broad political dimensions. The CHES contains estimates of parties positions on broad economic, cultural and EU dimensions. Policy experts were asked to estimate the "overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration", "position of the party in 2010 in terms of its ideological stance on economic issues" and the "position of the party in 2010 in terms of its ideological stance on democratic freedoms and rights". All three refer to general policy dimensions rather than specific policy issues and

Figure 20: MEP-sample representativeness regarding occupation



Note: This figure compares the distribution of previous occupation of the universe of MEPs to the distribution on previous occupation of the sample of elected candidates from the Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study).

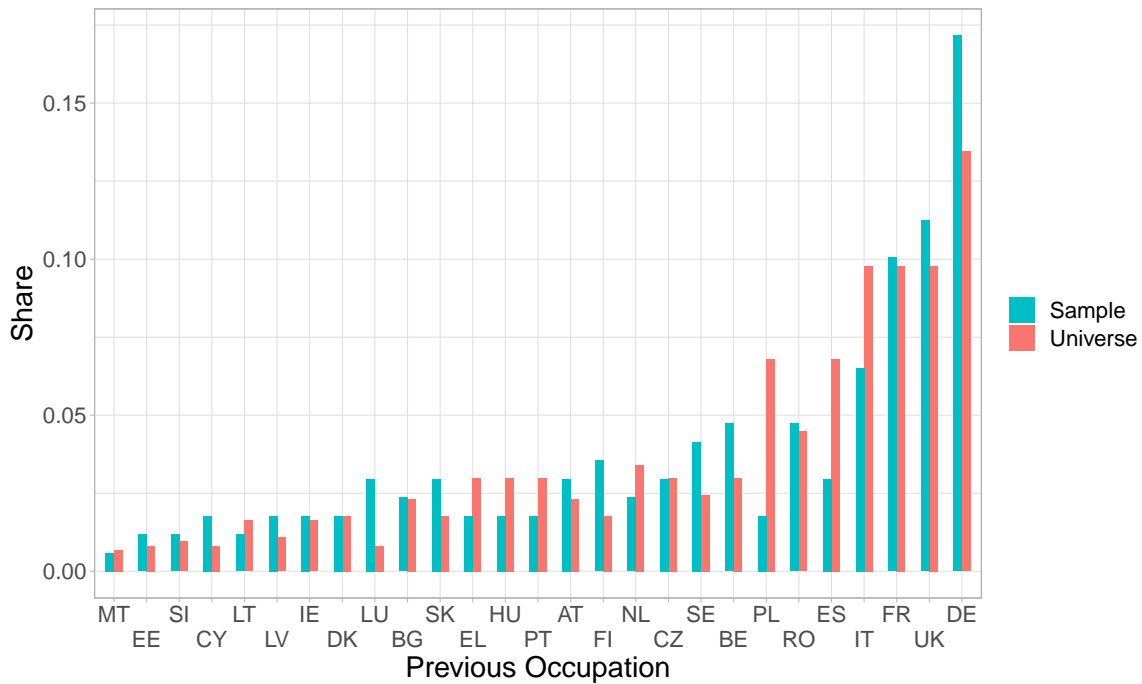
Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study) and [Beauvallet et al. \(2014\)](#)

thereby capture the three dimensions I consider in the paper. If the indexes I calculate based on the EES data is valid these Indexes should correlate with these variables from the CHES. Figure 22 shows that this is the case. The correlations coefficients for all three dimensions are between 0.7 and 0.8 and highly significant.

C Descriptive statistics of the Referendum Dataset

Figure 23 shows the number of all 126 referendums by policy issue. The horizontal axis shows all 14 issues in the data set, including economic topics like state intervention and redistribution, cultural variables like assimilation and gender relations, and EU-unification. Overall, the topics have substantial overlap with the issues analyzed in the previous sections. The vertical axis in figure 23 shows the number of referendums in the dataset who belong to this topic. As can be seen, the most frequent category is state interventions. This is followed by three cultural variables (assimilation, punishment for criminals, and immigration). For all topics except protectionism, there are at least three referendums in the dataset. Out of the 126 referendums since 1870, about 39% of the initiatives were right-wing. However, the right-wing

Figure 21: MEP-sample representativeness regarding country of election



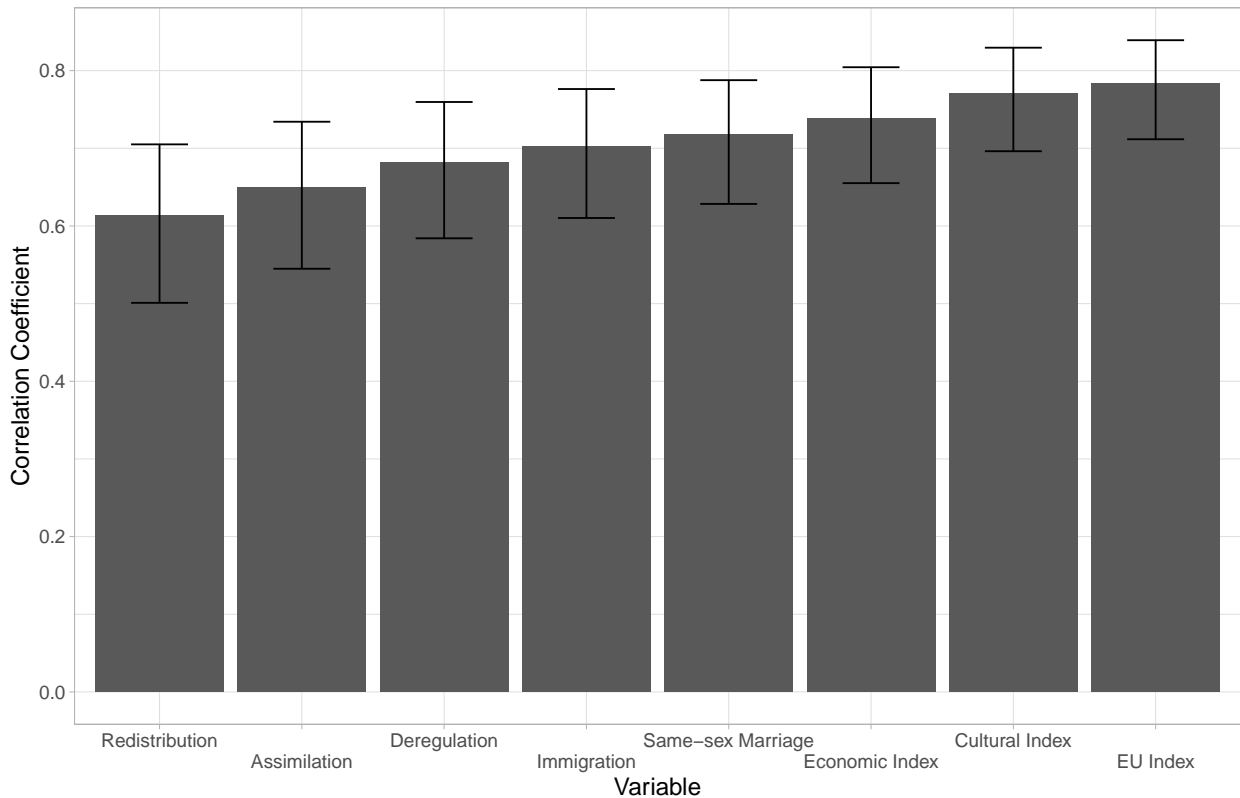
Note: This figure compares the distribution of country of election of the universe of MEPs to the distribution of country of election of the sample of elected candidates from the Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study).

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study) and [Beauvallet et al. \(2014\)](#)

share of referendums varies substantially by topic category. Among the 75 cultural referendums, about 61% were right-wing. In contrast, only 3 of the 46 referendums on economic topics (about 7%) were right-wing. Finally, none of my dataset's five referendums on EU-unification were right-wing.

Figure 24 provides information on the topics of referendums over time. For each decade (beginning in the 1890s), it shows the absolute number of referendums in Culture, the Economic and EU-Unification as a stacked area chart. As can be seen, the use of referendums became more frequent over time. This can be attributed to the rise of referendums on cultural topics. In contrast, referendums on economic matters seem to have become less frequent in recent decades. Referendums on EU-Unification were, of course, non-existent before the existence of the EU but also became less frequent recently.

Figure 22: Correlations between MEP Survey Data and Expert Survey Data



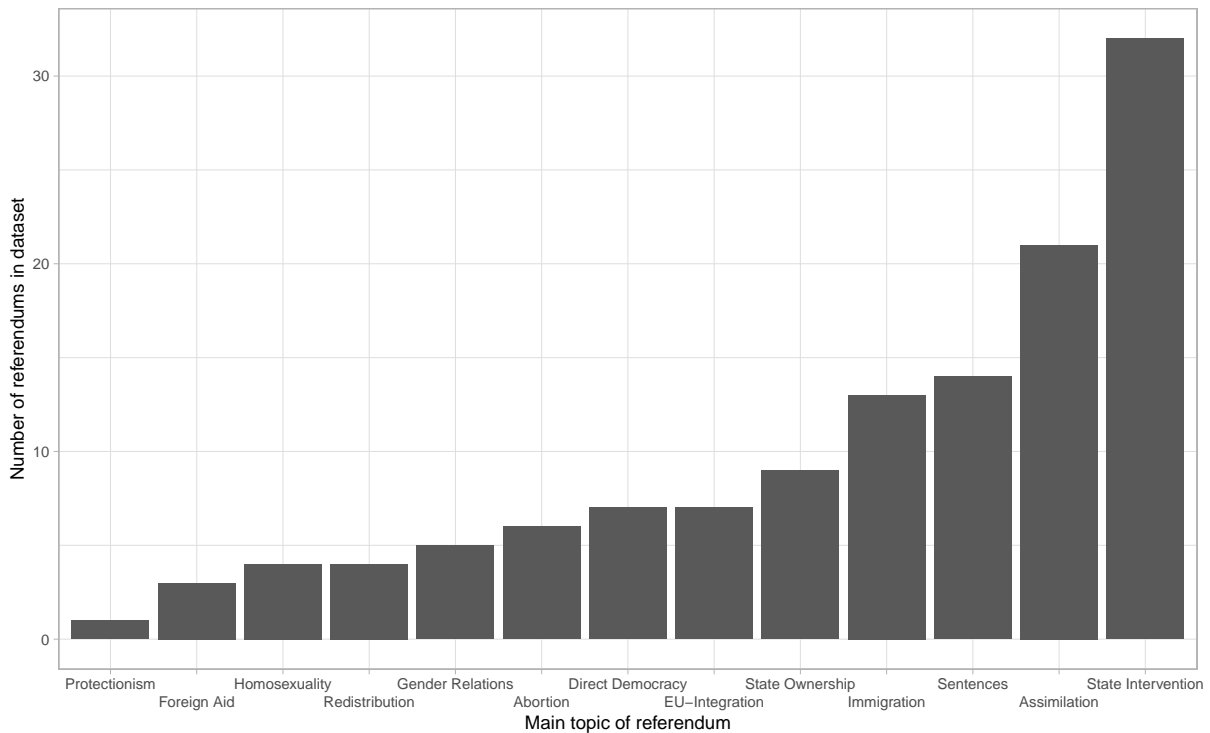
Note: This plot shows the correlation coefficients of two measures for party positions by issue. To generate the first measure I calculate the position of European parties as the mean of the political positions of all MEPs that are member of this party based on the Candidate Study of the European Election Study 2009. I use data on all candidates. The second measure is taken from the 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. All correlations are cross-party correlations of these two measures based on 149 parties. Each bar corresponds to the correlation regarding the political issue depicted on the horizontal axis. "Deregulation" is contained as a category in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. For the Candidate Survey I calculate it as the mean of the variables "Private Enterprise", "State Ownership" and "State Intervention". I also depict 95% confidence intervals.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study) and 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey

D Decision Representation Gaps over Time

Figure 25 displays Decision Representation Gaps for the three main dimensions over time. I pool data for decades. The dataset contains data on referendums on EU-Unification for two decades: the 1990s and the 2000s. In both decades, voters were about 15 pp. more likely to choose the Anti-EU option than MPs. Data for the cultural and the economic dimension is more extensive. As can be seen, their time trends differ strongly. In all but one decade, there existed a positive cultural DRG, i.e., voters were more right-wing culturally than MPs. Only in

Figure 23: Number of referendums in dataset by topic



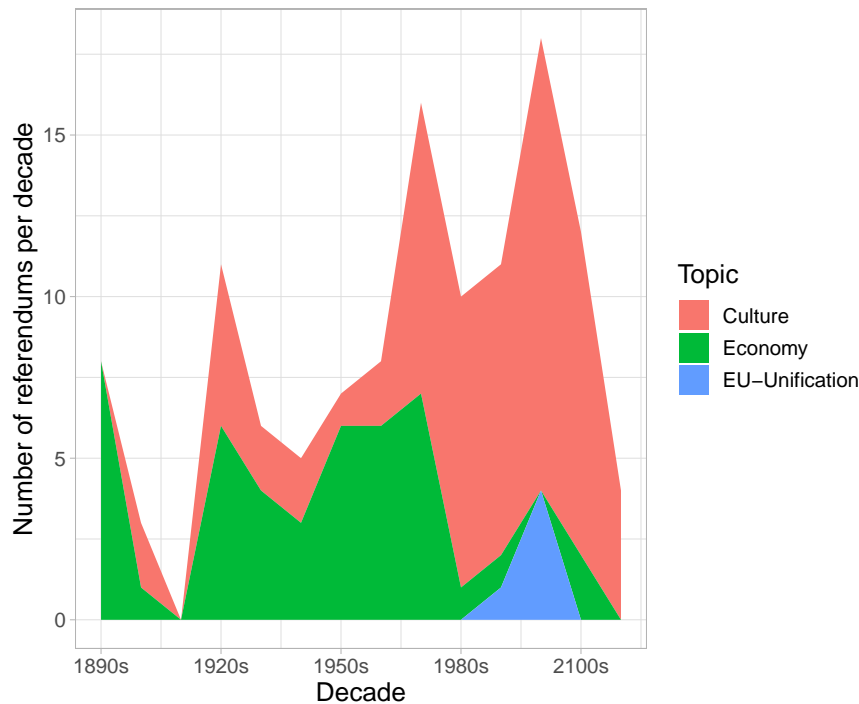
Note: This bar-charts shows how many referendums of each narrow topic are contained in the dataset.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

the 1920s were MPs more right-wing than their voters. Hence, the cultural DRG is qualitatively very persistent over a long period of time. In recent decades it seems to have shrunk somewhat, but it was still positive in the first years of the current decade.

In contrast, DC of the economic dimension seems to have undergone a major transformation since the 1980s. At the end of the 19th century and during most of the 20th century, MPs were less market-oriented than their voters. In fact, the DRG was similarly pronounced regarding economic as regarding cultural issues. But beginning in the 1980s, the DRG switched signs. In the 80s, the 90s, and the 2010s (data for the 2000s is missing), MPs were much more likely to favor market-oriented solutions than voters. This qualitative change lines up well with anecdotal evidence. Many authors have argued that beginning in 1979, with the electoral victories of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA, a new era of economic policymaking began. In this era, market-oriented approaches became common, with former left-wing parties also adopting pro-market stances.

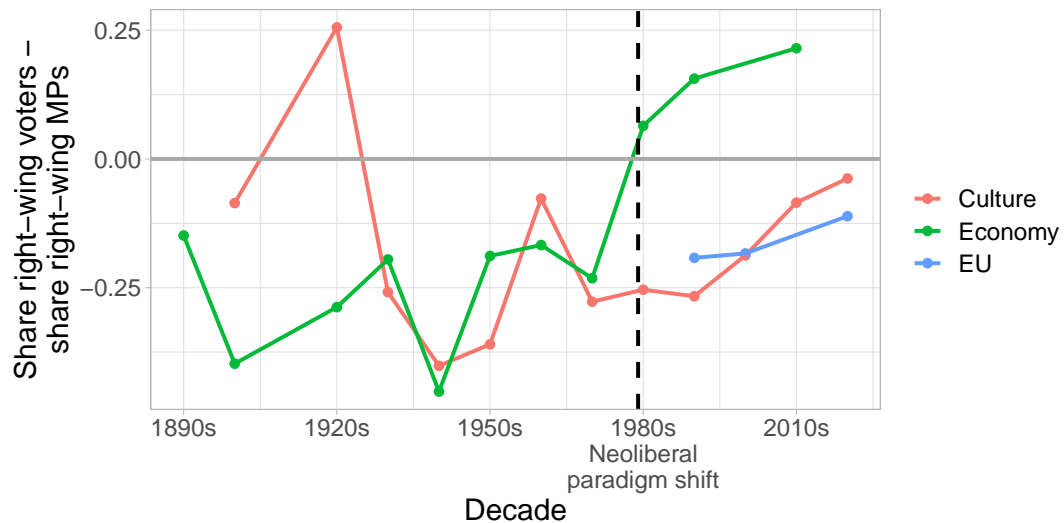
Figure 24: Number of referendums by time and topic



Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade and the vertical axis the number of referendums. Colors indicate the issue-topic. The area-chart is stacked.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

Figure 25: Decision Representation Gaps (voters vs MPs) over time



Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade and the vertical axis the number of referendums. Colors indicate the issue-topic. Positive values indicate that MPs voted to a larger percentage for the left-wing option than voters. The interpretation for negative values is analogous.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

E Calculating Decision Congruence by Comparing Voters with Parties

Differences between voters and MPs do not necessarily imply differences between voters and parties as a whole. For instance, party structures could give more weight to the opinions of party members which are closer to the electoral center. Because many important policy decisions are not directly made by individual MPs but by parties, it is important to compare parties and voters. My dataset contains information on official party recommendations for nearly all parties on all referendums. That makes it possible to make parties and voters much more comparable. Formally, let R be a referendum with two options $\in \{yes, no\}$. Let the vote of voter k be denoted by $v(k)$. $v(k) = \text{"yes"}$ indicates that k is in favor of the referendum initiative and $v(k) = \text{"no"}$ indicates that he is opposed to it. Let $d(R) \in \{right, left\}$ be the direction of the initiative. $d(R) = \text{"right"}$ mean that the initiative aims to push policymaking to the political right. Let there a set of voters V . Let $rec(j)$ be the alternative that party j officially recommends to voters. Let there be set of parties P and let $s(p)$ be the vote share in the last national election that party p got. I label DRG_r^P the Decision Representation Gap between voters and parties on referendum r and calculate it as:

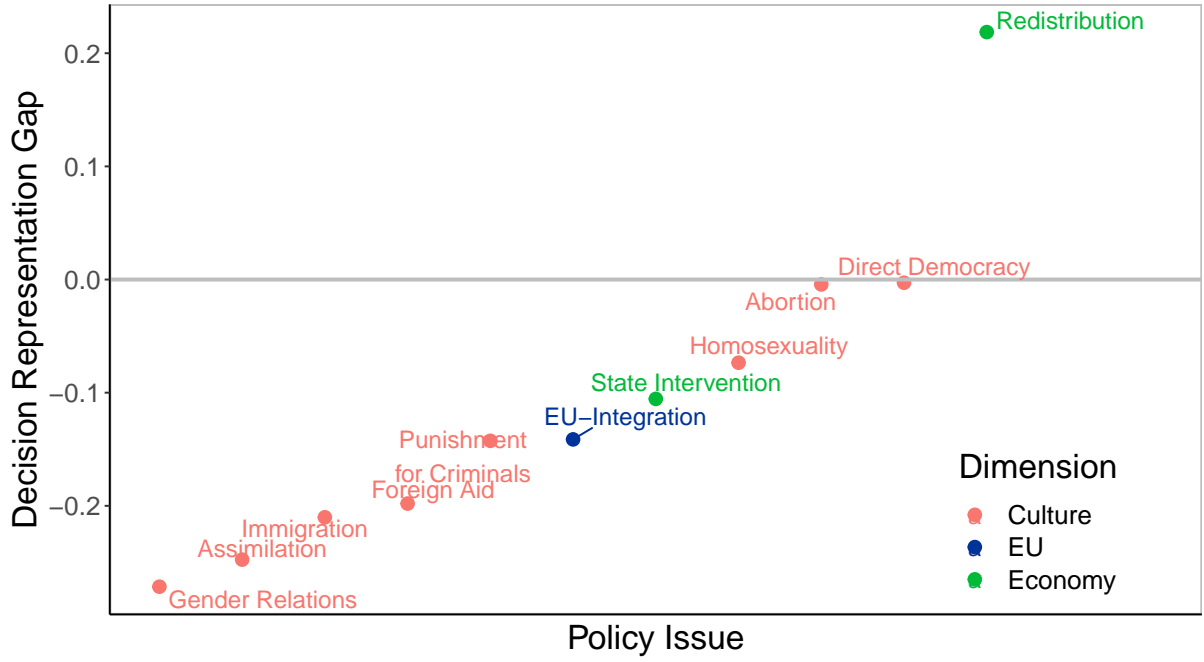
$$DRG_r^P = \begin{cases} \frac{\sum_{i \in V} \mathbb{1}[v(i) = yes]}{|V|} - \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = yes] \cdot s(p), & \text{if } r \text{ is left-wing} \\ \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = yes] \cdot s(p) - \frac{\sum_{i \in V} \mathbb{1}[v(i) = yes]}{|V|}, & \text{if } r \text{ is right-wing} \end{cases}$$

Figure 26 shows average DRG_r^P by policy issue. Results resemble those in figure 7 which compares voters and MPs. Figure 27 shows how DRGs vary over time by dimension, comparing parties and voters. Results look similar to those in figure 25 where I compare voters to MPs. Overall these results highlight that the attitudes of MPs are a good indicator for the position of their party and the robustness of the DC results.

F A Stylized Model with Policy Motivated Candidates and Heterogeneous Valence - Proofs

The setup of the model is as follows: There is a continuum of voters. Policy attitudes are distributed on a single continuous policy dimension according to CDF $A(\cdot)$ which I assume to be invertible. The attitude of voter i is denoted by a_i . Candidates, L, and R, announce policy positions x_L and x_R . The final policy is denoted by x . The utility of voter i is given by $w_{i,L}(x) = \lambda_L - (a_i - x)^2$ and his utility if R is elected equals $w_{i,R}(x) = \lambda_R - (a_i - x)^2$. λ denotes the valence of a candidate. I assume that $\lambda_L \geq \lambda_R$. The utility of candidate L

Figure 26: DC between Swiss voters and Swiss Parties on several Political Issues



Note: The vertical axis depicts Decision Representation Gaps. The horizontal axis refers to policy issues. Higher values indicate that parties, weighted with their vote share in the most recent national election, supported the left-wing alternative in the referendum to a larger extend.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

equals $u_L = -(a_L - x)^2$ where a_L is the policy attitude of candidate L. The utility of candidate R equals $u_R = -(a_R - x)^2$ where a_R is the policy attitude of candidate R. I assume that $a_L < A(0.5)^{-1} < a_R$. I will prove that in every equilibrium of this game the final policy is biased away from the bliss point of the median voter toward the bliss point of L. Formally, $x_L \leq x < A(0.5)^{-1}$. Proof:

Suppose for sake of contradiction that there is an equilibrium in which $x > A(0.5)^{-1}$. Suppose candidate L chooses $x_L = A(0.5)^{-1}$. If $x_R = A(0.5)^{-1}$ every voter votes for L because

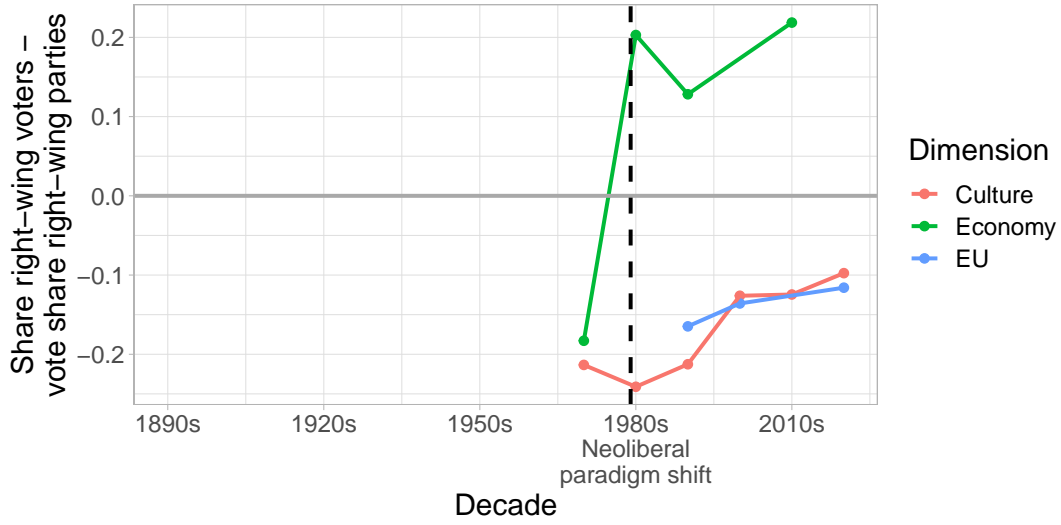
$$\lambda_L > \lambda_R$$

$$\lambda_L - (a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 > \lambda_R - (a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2$$

$$\lambda_L - (a_i - x_L)^2 > \lambda_R - (a_i - x_R)^2$$

$$w_{i,L}(a_i) > w_{i,R}(a_i)$$

Figure 27: DC (voters vs parties) over time



Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade and the vertical axis the number of referendums. Colors indicate the issue-topic. Positive values indicate that parties (weighted with their vote share in the last national election) voted to a larger percentage for the left-wing option than voters. The interpretation for negative values is analogous. Data is only available beginning in the 1970s.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset.

If $x_R > A(0.5)^{-1}$ then $\forall i$ with $a_i \leq A(0.5)^{-1}$

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_L - (a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 &> \lambda_R - (a_i - x_R)^2 \\ w_{i,L}(a_i) &> w_{i,R}(a_i)\end{aligned}$$

because $\lambda_L > \lambda_R$ and $(a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 > (a_i - x_R)^2$. Similarly, if $x_R < A(0.5)^{-1}$ then $\forall i$ with $a_i \geq A(0.5)^{-1}$

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_L - (a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 &> \lambda_R - (a_i - x_R)^2 \\ w_{i,L}(a_i) &> w_{i,R}(a_i)\end{aligned}$$

because $\lambda_L > \lambda_R$ and $(a_i - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 > (a_i - x_R)^2$. Hence, choosing $x_L = A(0.5)^{-1}$ ensures that L gets elected. Moreover, $u_L(A(0.5)^{-1}) > u_L(x) \Leftrightarrow -(a_L - A(0.5)^{-1})^2 > -(a_L - x)^2$. Hence, deviating to $A(0.5)^{-1}$ is profitable for L if $A(0.5)^{-1}$ is closer to a_L than x is to a_L . Hence, L has a profitable deviation which contradicts that x can be smaller than $A(0.5)^{-1}$ in an equilibrium.

Now suppose for sake of contradiction that there is an equilibrium in which $x = A(0.5)^{-1}$. Then either $x_L = A(0.5)^{-1}$ or $x_R = 0.5$ or both. I will show that in each case L has a profitable

deviation. Any voter i votes for candidate L iff

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_L - (a_i - x_L)^2 &\geq \lambda_R - (a_i - x_R)^2 \\ \lambda_L - \lambda_R &\geq (a_i - x_L)^2 - (a_i - x_R)^2 \\ \lambda_L - \lambda_R &\geq -2a_i x_L + x_L^2 + 2a_i x_R - x_R^2 \\ \lambda_L - \lambda_R + x_R^2 - x_L^2 &\geq 2a_i(x_R - x_L)\end{aligned}$$

which is equivalent to

$$\begin{aligned}a_i &\leq \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R + x_R^2 - x_L^2}{2(x_R - x_L)} \\ a_i &\leq \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R}{2(x_R - x_L)} + \frac{(x_R + x_L) \cdot (x_R - x_L)}{2(x_R - x_L)} \\ a_i &\leq \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R}{2(x_R - x_L)} + \frac{(x_R + x_L)}{2}\end{aligned}$$

if $x_L \leq x_R$ and

$$a_i \geq \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R}{2(x_R - x_L)} + \frac{(x_R + x_L)}{2}$$

if $x_L \geq x_R$. If $x_R = A(0.5)^{-1}$ candidate L can ensure that the majority of votes for him by choosing a x_L sufficiently close to $A(0.5)^{-1}$ such that the expression on the right hand side equals $A(0.5)^{-1}$. This is possible because the numerator of the first term is positive by assumption.

If $x_R < A(0.5)^{-1}$, L could choose $x_L = x_R$ in which case every voter votes for him because $\forall a_i$.

$$\begin{aligned}\lambda_L &> \lambda_R \\ \lambda_L - (a_i - x_L)^2 &> \lambda_R - (a_i - x_R)^2 \\ w_{i,L}(a_i) &> w_{i,R}(a_i)\end{aligned}$$

Finally, assume $x_R > A(0.5)$. Then any x_L such that $|x_L - A(0.5)| < |x_R - A(0.5)|$ constitutes a profitable deviation. For any such x_L the median voter prefers to vote for L because x_L is closer to his attitude and $\lambda_L > \lambda_R$. The same holds for all voters with $a_i < A(0.5)$. Hence, L wins. Moreover, L prefers $x = x_L$ to $x = x_R$ because if $A(0.5)$ is closer to x_L than to x_R any $a < A(0.5)$ must be closer to x_L than to x_R too and $a_L < A(0.5)$.

Hence, L has a profitable deviation in each case when $x = A(0.5)$ and when $x < A(0.5)$. Therefore, in any equilibrium $x \geq A(0.5)$.

G Other Possible Causes of Representation Gaps

G.1 Perceived Importance of Political Issues

A potential explanation for representation gaps is that they arise on issues that voters do not care about. I measure perceived importance of a policy issue through the following survey item which was given to MEPs and citizens:

What do you think is the most important problem facing [COUNTRY] today?

Similar questions were also asked concerning the second and third most important problems. Answers were open-ended and recorded verbatim. They were then allocated into 146 categories. I have data on the first, second, and third most important categories for each subject. Some of these categories are broad, like "Economic conditions". However, many categories are more specific, like "Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy." Figure 28 shows word clouds of the 40 most frequent categories of voters and the 36 most frequent categories for MEPs. A clear plurality of voters named unemployment as the most important issue in their country. This makes sense as this question was asked in 2009 when unemployment rates in many EU countries were high. Unemployment is followed by "Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy", "Economic Conditions" and "National employment policies". The specific category that is next in line is "Immigration". For MEPs "Economic Conditions" is the most frequent response. This is followed by "Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy", "Unemployment", "Climate Change" and "Executive and Administrative Efficiency; Efficient government".

To compare voters and MEPs quantitatively, I construct an Importance Index, $II_{g,i}$, which measures how important a group g considers an issue i to be. Let "share most important $_{g,i}$ " denote the weighted share of respondents who consider topic i most important and suppose similar definitions for the second and third most important topic. All three shares are weighted to adjust for differences in population between countries. I define $II_{g,i}$ as

$$II_{g,i} = \frac{1}{6} [3 \cdot \text{share most important}_{g,i} + 2 \cdot \text{share 2nd most important}_{g,i} + \text{share 3rd most important}_{g,i}]$$

$II_{g,i}$ is distributed between zero and one, where one means that all subjects of group g indicate that issue i is the first, second, and third most important problem. It equals zero if no subject in group g considers issue i as belonging to the three most important problems. To make the Issue Importance index and ARGs comparable, I manually match issues relating to the two variables. I am able to do this for ten out of the 14 issues that I could calculate the ARG for. Figure 29 compares the Issue Importance index to ARGs. Issues are shown on the horizontal axis. The height of the blue bars indicates the Issue Importance index for MEPs, while the purple bars

(a) Voters (b) MEPs

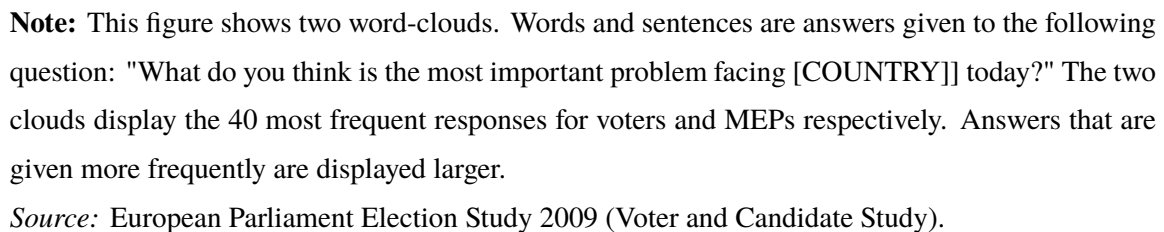
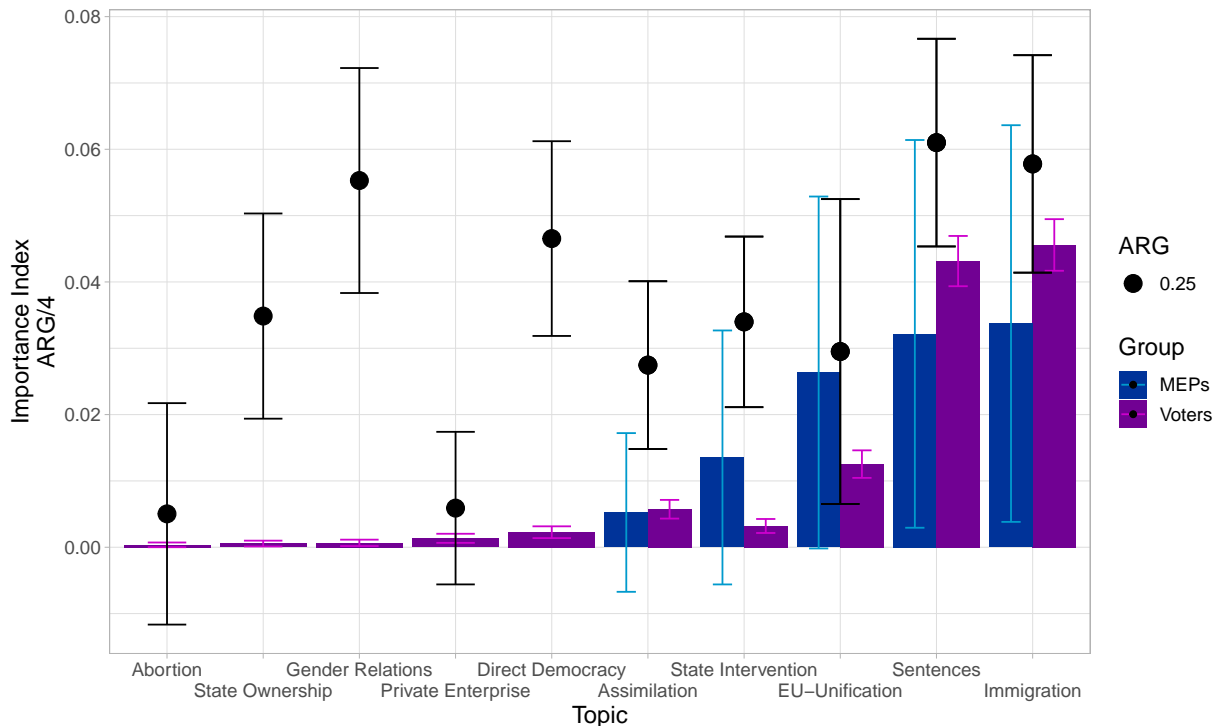

$$a_i = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{Voter}]_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Figure 29 reveals that MEPs and voters tend to find the same topics important. Both groups agree that Immigration, Punishment for Criminals, and EU-Unification are the most important of the ten issues. All other topics are of much less concern to either group. Voters find immigration and punishment for criminals somewhat more important than MEPs, and MEPs find EU-Unification more important than voters, but these differences are not precisely estimated. Immigration and punishment for criminals are the two topics where ARGs are the largest. This exemplifies the more general result that the perceived importance of topics is not

Figure 29: Importance of policy issues as perceived by voters and MEPs compared to ARG



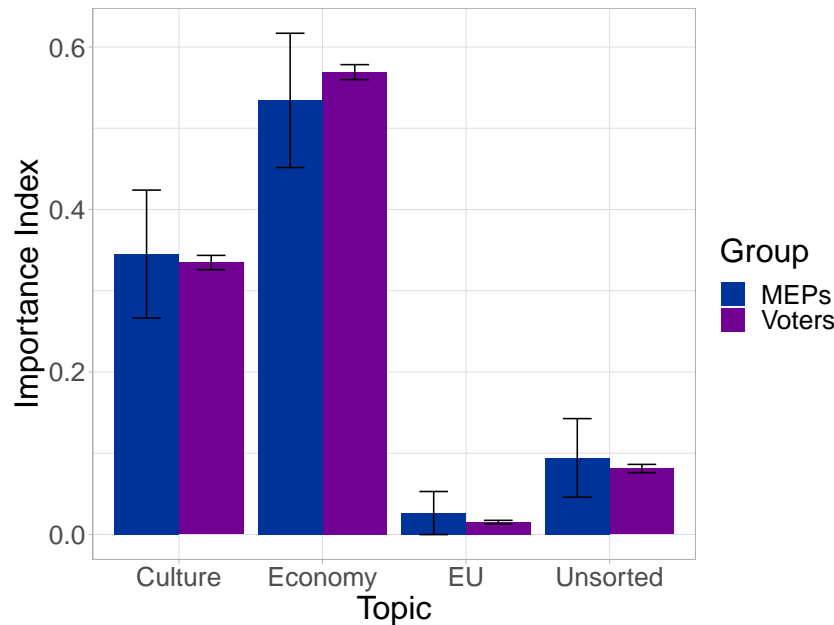
Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of political topics. Topics are shown on the horizontal axis while the importance index is shown on the vertical axis. Black dots represent the absolute value of the Attitude Representation Gap by topic divided by four. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values.

Source: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study).

negatively correlated with ARGs. If anything, the association is positive.

How important are the three political dimensions relative to each other in the eyes of voters and MEPs? To answer this question, I manually classify each of the 146 categories as either cultural, economic, or EU-related. For most issues like unemployment or gender relations, this is straightforward. Some issues could be classified into several dimensions, like globalization. If a topic could be classified just as well in either dimension, I label it as "Unsorted". Figure 30 shows the Importance Index for the four categories. Again, results for voters and MEPs are similar. Unsorted issues are relatively unimportant to voters and MEPs. Although economic topics are more important to both groups, cultural topics are of great importance to both groups too. MEPs find topics related to the EU more important than voters, but both groups find them much less important than cultural or economic topics. This suggests that reducing the policy space in European countries to a two-dimensional Economy-Culture Space captures most issues that are important to voters and MEPs. It also shows that the large cultural ARGs matter to voters. Overall the results suggest that voters and MEPs have similar attitudes on which topics

Figure 30: Distribution of voters and MPs in the culture-economy policy space



Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of political dimension. Dimensions are shown on the horizontal axis while the importance index is shown on the vertical axis. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values.

Source: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study).

are important. However, they disagree on the policies that should be done on these topics.

G.2 Do Parliamentarians Try to Protect Minorities from a Tyranny of the Majority?

Another explanation for ARGs is that parliamentarians want to protect groups they perceive as vulnerable. If this was the case one would expect that groups like immigrants, women, and the poor have very different policy attitudes than natives, men, and the rich on immigration, gender relations, and redistribution, respectively. Moreover, one would expect that MPs hold attitudes in between these group attitudes, which could be far away from the mean of all voters. As can be seen from figure 6 MEPs do not hold policy attitudes between those of immigrants and natives, men and women, or the rich and the poor on any policy dimension.

Still, policy dimensions are an aggregate of many issues. It is more reasonable to consider topics where the conflict of interest between the structural minority and structural majority group is most obvious. Figure 31 compares the mean positions of the poor, those with medium standard of living, the rich and MEPs regarding redistribution, the mean attitudes of natives,

immigrants, and MEPs on immigration and assimilation, and the mean attitudes of men, women, and MEPs on gender relations.

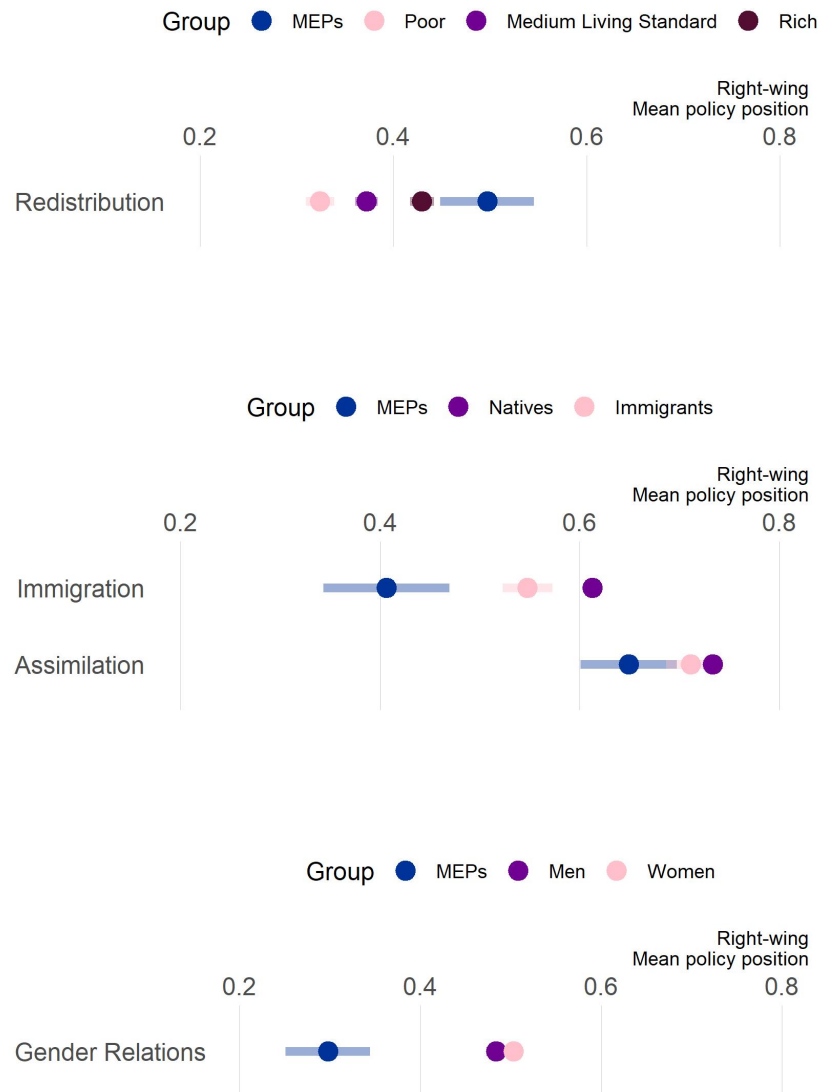
The mean attitude of MEPs is in no case between the mean attitude of the structural minority and the mean attitude of the structural majority. Reassuringly, the poor are most in support of redistribution while those with a medium living standard are more opposed to it, albeit not as much as the richest third of the Europeans. However, the mean attitude of MEPs does not lie between these values. Rather, MEPs are significantly more opposed to redistribution than the rich. On immigration and assimilation, immigrants are more left-wing than natives. However, contrary to balancing the attitudes of these groups, MEPs have mean attitudes that are far more left-wing than those of immigrants. In fact, the position of immigrants is much closer to those of "ordinary" natives than to those of MEPs. On gender relations, men and women hold similar mean attitudes that do not differ significantly. If anything, women are more right-wing on that topic. MEPs are far to the left of both groups.

This evidence is not consistent with the idea that MEPs deviate from the attitudes of the mean voter to protect structural minorities. The opposite is the case. If they chose the position of the mean voter, their attitudes would be much closer to those of structural minorities than they are currently. These results also provide additional evidence that in democracies, structural majorities can end up in a situation in which they are disadvantaged relative to structural minorities, as attitudes of MEPs are much closer to those of immigrants than those of natives. Finally, these results put the magnitude of ARGs into perspective. On redistribution, the difference between the mean attitude of MEPs and all voters is larger than the difference between the mean attitude of the poor and the mean attitude of the rich. On immigration and assimilation, differences between MEPs and the mean voter are much larger than the mean differences between natives and immigrants. Finally, mean attitudes between MEPs and voters on gender relations amount to about 20 percentage points, while mean attitudes of men and women differ, if anything, by one percentage point. Hence, ARGs are quantitatively important.

G.3 Lobbying

I define lobbying as influences of organized groups on parties. Such organized groups might influence politicians through campaign contributions, in which case it can be optimal even for office seeking politicians to cater to the lobbyist's demands (Grossman and Helpman, 1996). A more lenient view of lobbying is that lobbyists primarily provide expert information to politicians, which enables the latter to make informed decisions. But even if lobbyists mainly inform politicians, such information might be selective and can bias politician decision making even when politicians update rationally in the Bayesian sense (Kamenica and Gentzkow, 2011).

Figure 31: Mean Attitudes of Selected Groups of Voters and MEPs by Topic



Note: The vertical axis depicts the topics of four policy attitude items. Dots represent the mean position of various groups. Higher values indicate that the mean attitude is more right-wing. The three panels show the attitudes of different groups. MEPs always refer to elected MEPs. Other groups are always subsets of those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament election. In the first panel, I divide voters by the self-assessed standard of living of their families. The three groups are similarly large. In the second panel, I distinguish between subjects who state that both parents have been born in the country and those who state that not both of their parents have been born in the country. In the third panel, I distinguish between men and women. I always weigh to account for differences in population size between countries. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Source: own calculation based on data from the European Election Study 2009.

While lobbyists have a bad image in public, the empirical literature on their effects, specifically on whether their actions reduce social welfare or not, is not conclusive (Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020). Accordingly, whether or not lobbyism can explain the RG pattern is an open question that requires an empirical investigation.

If lobbyism is a main contributor of the representation gap, one would expect that candidates who are more closely related to lobbyists are more biased relative to the population than those who are less closely related to lobbyists. My attitude data includes six measures for relatedness to lobbyism by candidates. These measures include whether the candidate was encouraged to run for election by a lobbyist, whether the candidate himself was a lobbyist in the past, the number of hours per week the candidate spent with visits at firms or clubs, the number of hours per week the candidate's team spent with visits at firms or clubs, the amount donated to the candidate from outside his party and whether he plans to leave politics within the next ten years. The idea behind the last measure is to measure whether a candidate has been offered positions outside politics by lobbyists akin to the "revolving door" phenomenon (Blanes et al., 2012). While it is hard to single out candidates who have made such agreements it is unlikely that those who plan to stay in politics for the next ten years have made such agreements. Hence, the share of those who have made such agreements should be smaller among those who plan to stay in politics than among those who plan to leave politics. Clearly, it is necessary to condition the analysis on relatively young (I use below 50 years as the threshold) candidates when using the last measure.

None of these measures is a perfect measure for lobbyist influence on a candidate, particularly because they all rely on self-reports. However, if lobbyists bias policymaking away from the electorate, one would expect that at least most of these indicators correlate positively with the magnitude of the candidate's bias. I test this using simple regressions. As these variables measure similar concepts, including several of them into one regression equation would lead to a "bad control" problem, and bias estimates (Cinelli et al., 2020). Hence, I run individual regressions of the following type:

$$Bias_{i,d} = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot Lobbyism_i + \theta \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (6)$$

As before, $Bias_{i,d}$ is the bias of candidate i regarding the index for dimension d . $Lobbyism_i$ is one of the measures described above and C_i is the full set of demographic control variables used in and described below specification 7. For each dimension I run one unconditional regression and one conditional on demographic control variables which results in six regressions for each lobbyism measure. If lobbyism is a major driver of the RG one would expect positive and significant coefficients on them.

The results of these regressions are depicted in the tables 5 tp 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Most of the

lobbyism variables are insignificant at conventional levels, and most point estimates are very small. Estimates that are positive and significant occur in only 1 out of the 24 cases, personal firm visits, but the estimate is very small. Most coefficients are precisely estimated and one to two orders of magnitude too small to account for the RG pattern if taken literally. Moreover, estimates are negative and significant in three cases. Furthermore, the measures that are arguable most clean and direct, like encouragement by lobbyists and whether the candidates have been lobbyists themselves, there is no positive and significant estimate. Hence, this evidence does not fit well with the explanation that lobbyism is a main driver of the RG pattern.

G.4 Does Becoming Elected Affect the Policy Attitudes of MPs?

The political science literature on representation has usually interpreted representation gaps causally. That is, becoming an MP is assumed to alter one's policy preferences, for instance, through acquiring new information (Kertzer, 2020). Despite this interpretation, most estimates of RGs have been unconditional, which prevents causal claims (Kertzer, 2020). Recently, Kertzer (2020) made a first step in establishing causality by estimating RGs in the USA, controlling for a number of demographic variables. His results suggest that about half of the RG can be explained by the selection of MPs based on demographic variables. In this section, I will make a few steps forward to assess the extent to which RGs are causal by comparing MP candidates with MPs and using an arguably more causal design. Above and beyond this theoretical contribution, understanding whether the RG is causal or based on selection is also important for welfare considerations. If the gap is causal, it might be driven by MPs' superior information, which would imply that the gap should not be seen as a problem. This is less true if the RG is just due to the selection of a particular group of people into positions of power.

First, I compare voters, elected MEPs, and unelected MEP candidates by estimating the following specification by OLS:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \mathbb{1}[Candidate]_i + \beta_2 \cdot \mathbb{1}[Elected]_i + \theta \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (7)$$

where Y_i is a policy-attitude, $\mathbb{1}(candidate)_i$ equals one if the individual was a *candidate* for the European Parliament and 0 otherwise, $\mathbb{1}[Elected]_i$ equals one for all candidates that were elected and zero for all other subjects, including non-candidates. Finally, C_i is a vector of control variables and ε_i is the error term. I am interested in β_1 and β_2 . The control variables include a large set of categorical variables like occupation categories, religion categories and the level of urbanisation of the place of residence.

For any policy issue, the coefficients β_1 tells us how unelected candidates differ from voters regarding that attitude. β_2 tells us how elected MEPs differ from unelected MEPs. A causal effect of becoming an MEP should be part of β_2 . I do not claim, however, that β_2 only

contains this causal effect as unobserved differences between elected and unelected candidates, or selection by voters might contaminate this causal effect. By controlling for an extensive set of demographic controls, I will do my best to account for demographic differences. Even though estimates should be taken with a grain of salt, something might be learned about whether the RG is causal or not.

If differences in attitudes between voters and elected MEPs result mainly causally from candidates becoming MEPs, than one would expect that β_2 is large and highly significant while β_1 should be small in comparison. In contrast, if differences result mainly from selection of citizens with particular attitudes into politics, the opposite should be the case. Most of the differences between voters and elected MEPs should be explained by β_1 while β_2 should be insignificant. Moreover, a strong role of selection would indicate that controlling for demographic characteristics should decrease β_1 . In contrast, if the RG arises mainly due to a causal effect of becoming MEP, β_1 should remain large and significant independent of the inclusion of controls. Let's put these predictions to the test. Table 2 show estimates of specification 7 for Y_i equal to the cultural index in columns 1 and 2, the economic index in columns 3 and 4 and the EU index in columns 5 and 6. For each index, the first column shows the unconditional estimates while in the second I add a large set of fine-grained controls. I only report β_1 and β_2 for readability.

Column 1 confirms the results of the prior analysis. The difference regarding the cultural index can be found by adding the MEP indicator and the MEP candidate indicator. As can be seen, MEPs are much more left-leaning on cultural issues than Europeans. The difference amounts to more than 11% of the range of the outcome variable and is highly significant. Moreover, note that basically all of this difference stems from the candidate indicator ($\beta_2 = -0.118$) while the elected-MEP indicator is close to zero (even positive) and far from being significant at conventional levels. Hence, MEP candidates and elected MEPs have, on average, nearly the same attitudes regarding cultural issues. This evidence is hard to bring in line with a strong causal effect of becoming an MEP. Rather, the support from which MEPs are elected already seems to differ from the population. This holds after including a rich set of demographic control variables. This reduces the coefficient on the candidate indicator by about 40%, but it still stays large and highly significant. In contrast, the indicator for elected MEPs remains insignificant and close to zero. This suggests that a strong causal effect of becoming an MEP on cultural attitudes is unlikely. However, even after conditioning on a very large set of demographic differences, large and highly significant ARG remains. This suggests that selection into politics might also occur with respect to other variables, like policy attitudes.

As shown above, ARGs are small for Europe as a whole on the economic dimension. This is consistent with the results displayed in column 3 in table 2. MEP candidates are somewhat more

left-leaning than voters, while the elected are significantly more right-wing than candidates. A Wald test confirms that the sum is not significantly different from zero. After including controls β_2 loses its significance while β_1 becomes significant. Again, this is hard to bring in line with a strong causal effect of becoming elected. Such an effect should persist and probably become estimates more precisely as more controls are included. This also suggests that MEPs and MEP candidates are quite similar regarding their attitudes. Unconditionally MEP's economic policy attitudes closely resemble those of the average European. But they are more left-leaning on economic issues than Europeans with otherwise similar demographic characteristics. While the highly educated and wealthy tend to be more market-oriented than the society as a whole, MEP candidates are not. This does suggest that there is some relevant selection taking place from the higher strata of society to MEP candidates and is consistent with a well-functioning political screening process concerning economic attitudes in the EP.

Columns 3 and 4 focus on EU-Unification. Unconditionally, elected MEPs are more left-leaning than voters. This can be largely attributed to elected MEPs who are much more in favor of EU integration than candidates in general. However, after accounting for demographic differences between elected and unelected candidates, the latter difference becomes insignificant. In fact, including demographic controls renders β_1 and β_2 insignificant. This again speaks against the causal hypothesis because the causal effect should be estimated more precisely if more controls are included.

In sum, the evidence for all dimensions suggests that ARGs are due to selection and not due to causal effect of becoming an MEP. RGs do not arise once an MEP is elected but are already nearly fully present at the support from which MEPs are selected. Much of the differences between candidates and MEPs on the one side and voters on the other side can be explained through demographic differences. However, even after controlling for these differences a significant and large gap remains unexplained.

While the results so far clearly speak against a large causal effect, I want to propose one last specification which addresses two shortcomings of the specifications used until now. First, note that one might not expect an effect of election on attitudes for MEPs who already served as MEPs before. Hence, it seems reasonable to only include MEPs in the sample that have not served as MEPs before. Second, the set of controls used above misses crucial variables. For instance, it is reasonable to assume that party support raises the chances of election. Not accounting for such differences might bias estimates of the effect of election.

To address both shortcomings, I drop voters from the analysis and focus on the comparison of elected and unelected MEPs. Moreover, instead of using attitudes directly as the dependent variable, I define a new variable: the Bias of an MEP candidate. Let $a_{c,i}$ be the attitude of MEP candidate c on issue i and let \bar{a}_i be the European mean attitude of voters on issue i . I define the

bias of candidate c regarding attitude a as

$$Bias_{c,a} = |a_{c,i} - \bar{a}_i|$$

Hence, $Bias_{c,a}$ measures the political distance on policy variable v to the European mean voter.

I estimate the following equation by OLS:

$$Bias_c = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \mathbb{1}[Elected]_c + \theta \cdot C_c + \varepsilon_c \quad (8)$$

I am interested in β_1 . As before, C_c is a vector of control variables. I control for the following demographic variables: age, gender, categories for marital status, categories for hometown size, occupation categories, education. These variables constitute a subset of those employed in specification 7. I do this for two reasons. First, the number of observations is substantially lower here. Second, MEP candidates are already very similar demographically. Differences between them are larger regarding their standing within their party and the support they got from other political actors. Accordingly, I prefer to include controls for these factors. Hence, I additionally include the following controls: the number of those who helped to organize the campaign of the candidate, dummies for whether they were encouraged to run for office by a sitting MEP, a retired MEP, some other community leader, a lobbyist, their spouse, another family member, someone else, by someone from outside their party or from no one. Importantly, the data includes a variable that measures the chances of being elected as assessed by the survey administrators. The categorization is based on the candidate's list position in relation to the potential number of seats won by his or her party. For countries with completely open lists or equivalent systems, all candidates were set on the same list position. The potential seats are based on pre-election seat predictions made by [Hix and Noury \(2009\)](#). To incorporate uncertainty, the standard deviation of discrepancy between the predictions and the seats that were actually won was calculated for each country. Candidates with a list position below the predicted seats minus one standard deviation (rounded) were classified as save. Candidates with a list position above the predicted seats plus one standard deviation (rounded) were classified as unpromising. All other candidates were classified as doubtful. I include this measure as a categorical variable in the regression. Although it is coarse, comparing candidates within one category helps to mitigate selection bias.

Table 3 shows the results. As can be seen, the results of the previous exercises are confirmed. Neither specification shows a significant coefficient on the elected indicator. Taken together, these results provide strong evidence against a causal impact of becoming elected. Moreover, they suggest that differences in attitudes are probably not an artifact of MPs interpreting questions differently than voters. Finally, note that as most candidates already differ from the population, it is difficult for voters to reduce ARGs through voting.⁷

⁷Again, the results hold when using MP data.

G.5 At which Stage of Political Selection do Representation Gaps arise?

There are two reasons for why it is important to find out at what stage the RG appears. First, assume that one wants to mitigate the RG. If there is no difference in attitudes between MP candidates and voters but between elected MPs and voters, mitigating the RG is relatively easy. Parties could achieve this by simply placing candidates that resemble the attitudes of the population higher on the ballot lists. Alternatively, voters could mitigate the RG by voting for candidates at low places on the ballot lists. If, on the other hand, candidates differ as much from voters as elected MEPs, neither of these policies will mitigate the RG. Instead, much more fundamental reforms would be necessary that change already who becomes an MP candidate.

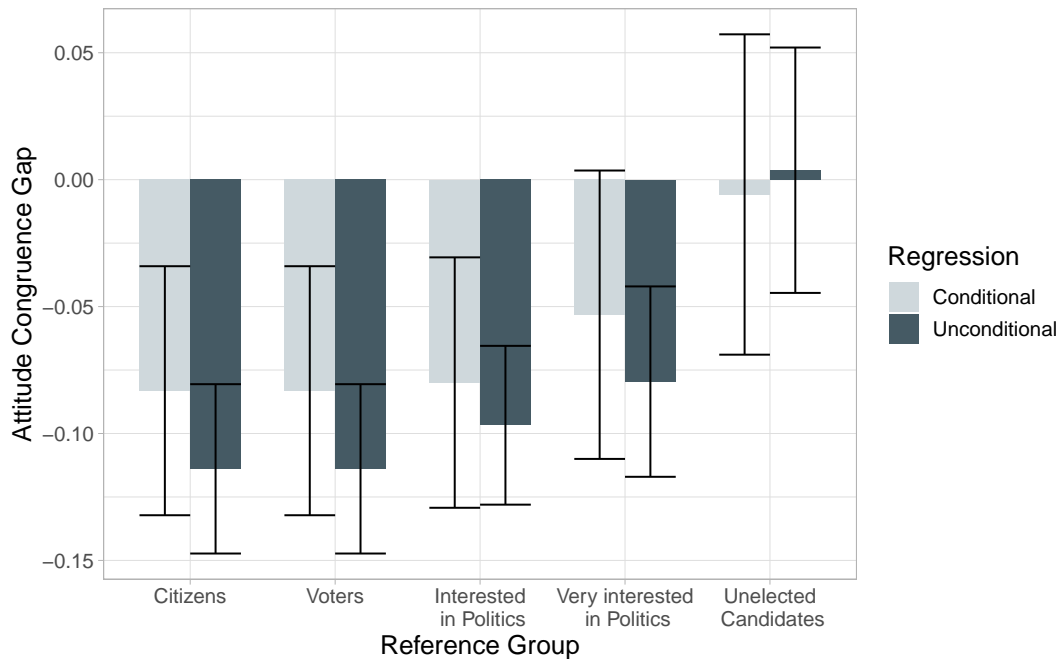
To locate where the RG arises, I focus on the ARG. The rich survey-level data allows to re-estimate ARGs for various sub-groups. That is, I will compare attitudes of MEPs with several sets of actors who are incrementally closer to MEPs. Formally, I estimate regressions of the following form by OLS

$$Index_{i|i \in MUG} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}(MEP)_{i|i \in MUG} + \gamma \cdot X_{i|i \in MUG} + \varepsilon_{i|i \in MUG}$$

where $Index_{i|i \in G}$ is the (cultural/economic/EU) index value of individual i which belongs either to the group M of elected MEPs or to another reference group (G), $\mathbb{1}(MEP)_{i|i \in MUG}$ equals one if $i \in M$ and zero otherwise and $X_{i|i \in MUG}$ is a vector of control variables. I am interested in β , which measures the AC between MEPs and the reference group. In the following, I will vary the reference group G . I will consider the following groups: citizens, voters, those who are interested (but not very interested) in politics, those who are very interested in politics, and unelected MEP candidates. For each of these groups, I estimate one unconditional regression and one regression conditionally on the large set of demographic characteristics. These include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation categories, dummies for the highest education degree, dummies for the size of the town of residence, dummies for the perceived own social class, immigration background, dummies for the religious denomination, dummies for religiosity and dummies for living standard. Figure 32 shows estimates for β for the resulting $5 \cdot 2$ estimates for the cultural index together with 95% confidence intervals. For instance, the ARG as estimated above is displayed as the unconditional estimate when voters are taken as the reference group. As can be seen, estimates for AC are similar when citizens or voters are used. Including a very large set of demographic characteristics as controls seems to reduce the ARG somewhat, but it stays large and significant.

A key step toward becoming an MEP is to get involved in politics. A first step in doing so is to find an interest in politics. In the third and fourth pairs of bars, I use subjects who stated that they were interested and very interested in politics, respectively, as the reference group. The ARG seems to decrease somewhat, especially if one considers those who are very interested

Figure 32: Stages of the ARG on cultural issues



Note: This figure shows five pairs of estimated regression coefficients on the MEP-indicator from specification G.5. For each pair the dataset is restricted to a particular group, denoted on the horizontal axis. For instance, in the third pair of regressions only voters who stated to be interested (but not very interested) in politics were included in the sample, together with elected MPs. For each pair a unconditional regression and a conditional regression is shown. Control variables for the conditional variant include age, gender, the year of election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories and occupation categories.

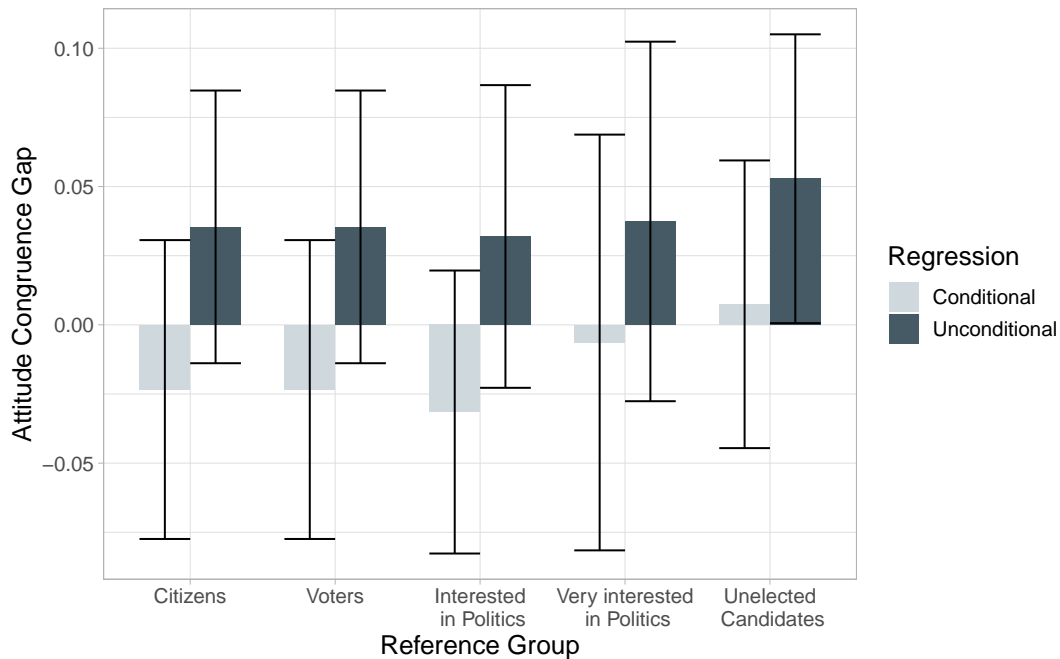
Source: own calculation based on data from the EES.

in politics. Still, ARGs remain large and significant. Only also accounting for demographic differences between MEPs and the very interesting results in an ARG that is not significant at the 5% level.

Clearly, only a very small share of those who are very interested in politics ever become MP candidates. Unfortunately, I do not have data on stations between these two positions, such as data on party membership. However, I have data on MEP candidates who were not elected. Both types of candidates were asked at similar points in time after the election, which fosters comparability. By comparing elected and unelected MEPs, inferences can be drawn on whether the ARG arises at this last stage. As can be seen, by the last pair of estimates, unelected candidates do not differ notably from elected MEPs, neither unconditionally nor after accounting for (small) demographic differences.

Overall, it appears that the ARG decreases monotonically as the reference group gets closer

Figure 33: Stages of the ARG on economic issues



Note: This figure shows five pairs of estimated regression coefficients on the MEP-indicator from specification G.5. For each pair the dataset is restricted to a particular group, denoted on the horizontal axis. For instance, in the third pair of regressions only voters who stated to be interested (but not very interested) in politics were included in the sample, together with elected MPs. For each pair a unconditional regression and a conditional regression is shown. Control variables for the conditional variant include age, gender, the year of election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories and occupation categories.

Source: own calculation based on data from the EES-

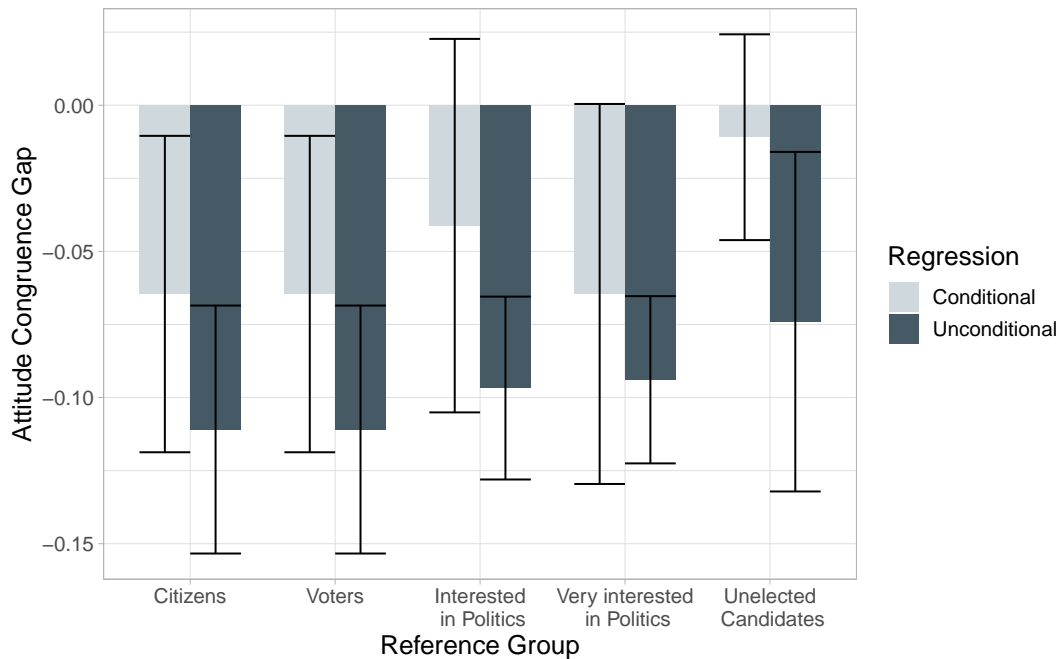
to the group of MEPs. By far, the largest jump happens between those who are very interested in politics and the MEP candidates. This suggests that parties are responsible for a large part of the ARG as their role in politics is to turn those interested in politics into politicians.⁸

Figure 33 shows a similar analysis for the economic dimension. However, the pattern looks very different. As shown before, voters and MPs do not significantly differ on the economic dimension. This is still true after including demographic controls into the regression. The same is true for voters and all other reference groups considered. If anything, unelected MEP candidates are more left-leaning on economic topics unconditionally, but this difference vanishes as I account for demographic differences between the two groups. These results might have been expected. As there was no ARG, to begin with, there is no stage at which it could arise.⁹

⁸Performing a similar analysis using the sample of national MPs yields very similar results.

⁹Results look somewhat different if focusing on national MPs. As shown above, voters are more left-leaning than

Figure 34: Stages of the ARG on EU-related issues



Note: This figure shows five pairs of estimated regression coefficients on the MEP-indicator from specification G.5. For each pair the dataset is restricted to a particular group, denoted on the horizontal axis. For instance, in the third pair of regressions only voters who stated to be interested (but not very interested) in politics were included in the sample, together with elected MPs. For each pair a unconditional regression and a conditional regression is shown. Control variables for the conditional variant include age, gender, the year of election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories and occupation categories.

Source: own calculation based on data from the EES.

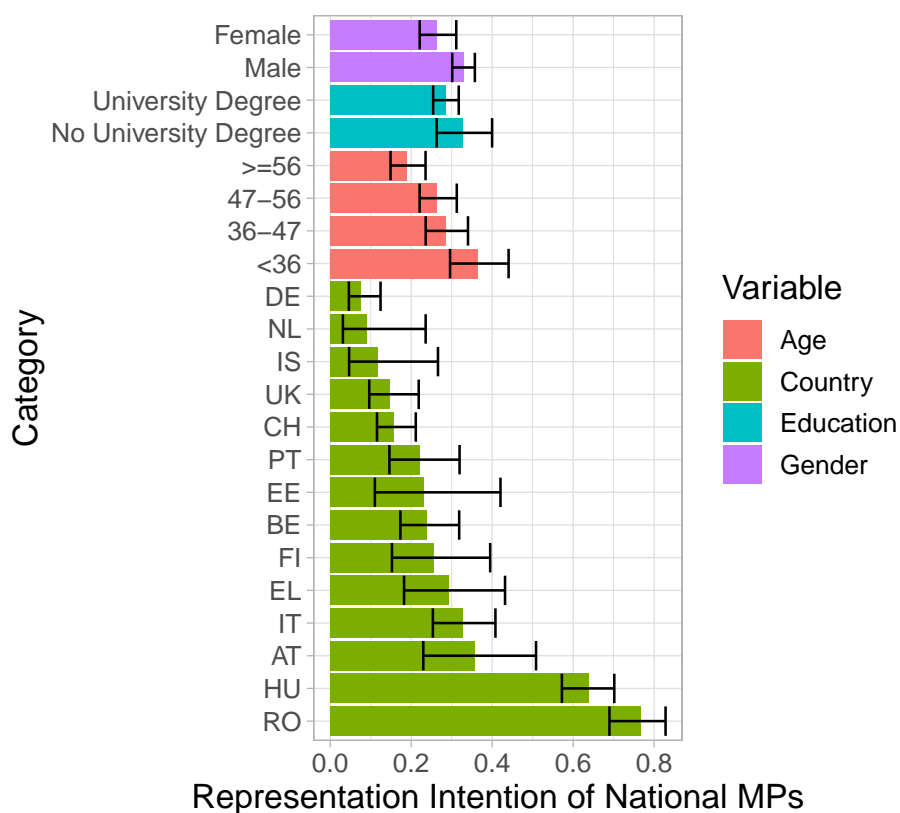
Finally, figure 34 shows results for the EU dimension. The pattern resembles the pattern concerning the cultural dimension. Overall, accounting for demographic differences reduces the ARG even though it remains significant for most reference groups. The unconditional ARG decreases monotonically as reference groups become more similar to elected MEPs. Insignificant ARGs are only found for unelected candidates and those who are interested in politics with similar demographics as the elected MEPs.¹⁰

MPs on economic topics. This ARG vanishes if reference groups become more similar to elected MEPs but are not reduced by accounting for demographic differences.

¹⁰The findings look similar if one focuses on national MPs. A difference is, however, that there elected and unelected MPs differ strongly.

H Additional Figures

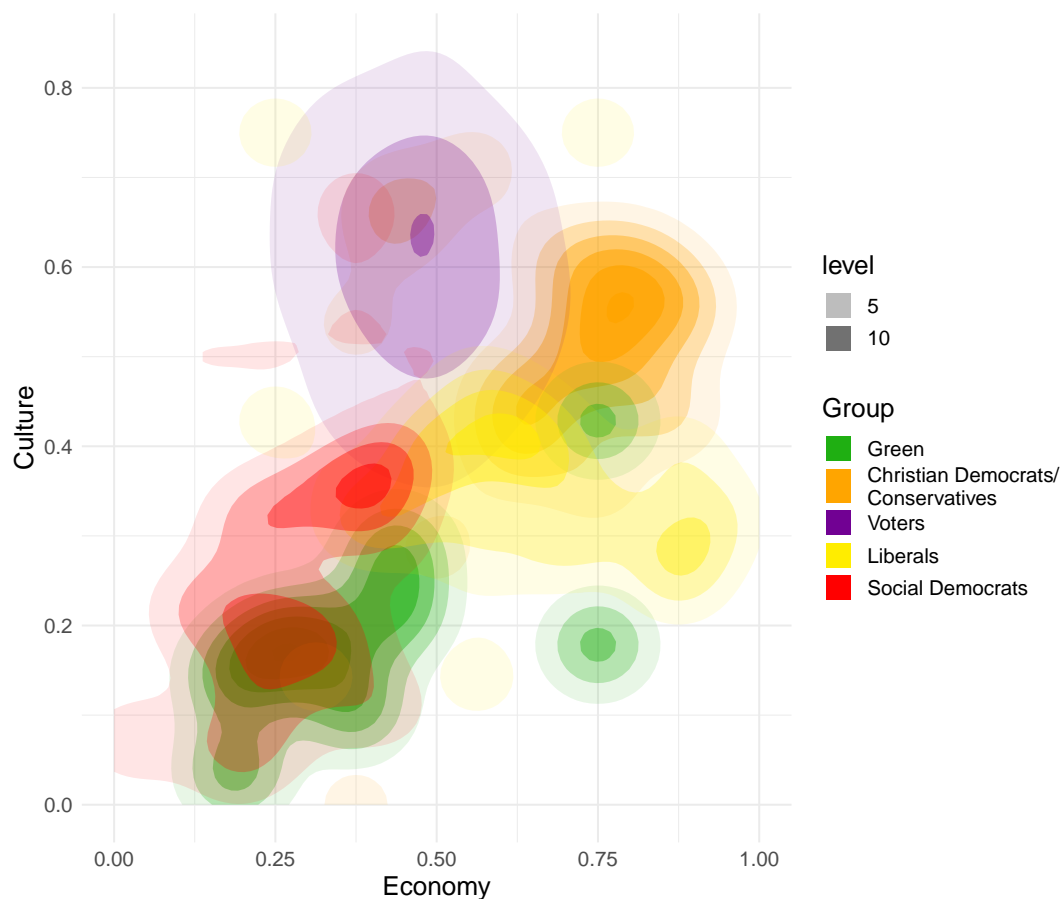
Figure 35: Representation Intention of national MPs by demographic group



Note: This bar-charts illustrate the responses of a MEP-sample to the following question: "An MP in a conflict between own opinion and the constituency voters should follow:" Possible answers included own opinion" and "voter opinion". Bars indicate the share that chose "voters opinion". The vertical axis shows different demographic groups. I also depict 95% confidence intervals.

Source: own calculation based on data from the European Election Study 2009.

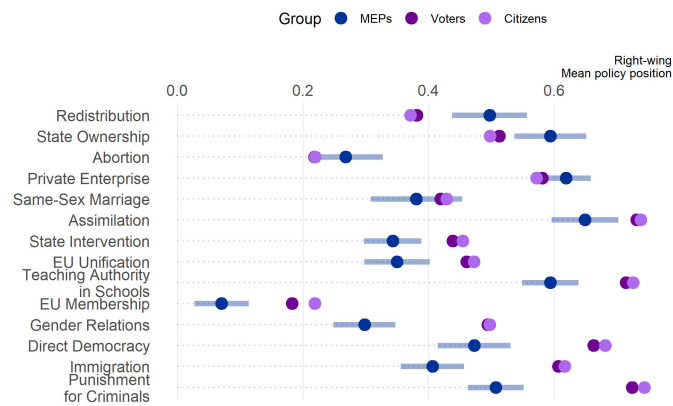
Figure 36: Distribution of voters and MPs of several party groups in the culture-economy policy space



Note: The level of transparency indicates the density. The density is higher in less transparent areas. Colors indicate the group that the density relates to. Attitudes on the cultural dimension are shown on the vertical axis while the horizontal axis shows attitudes regarding the economy dimension. Higher values indicate a stance that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Source: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study).

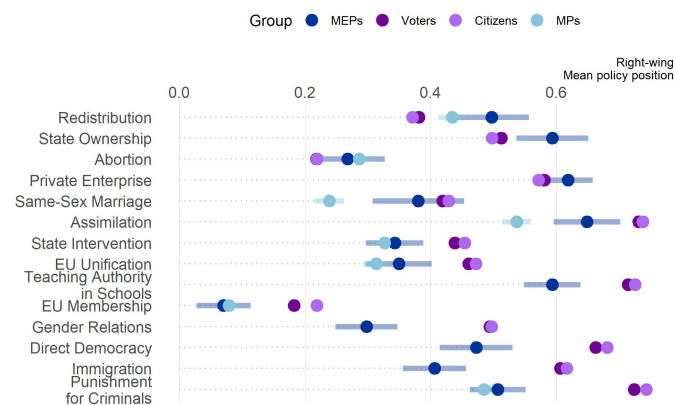
Figure 37: Comparing mean attitudes of voters, MEPs and citizens by issue



Note: This figure shows a dumbbell plot. Different policy issues are shown on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the mean positions of three groups: citizens, MEPs and voters. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

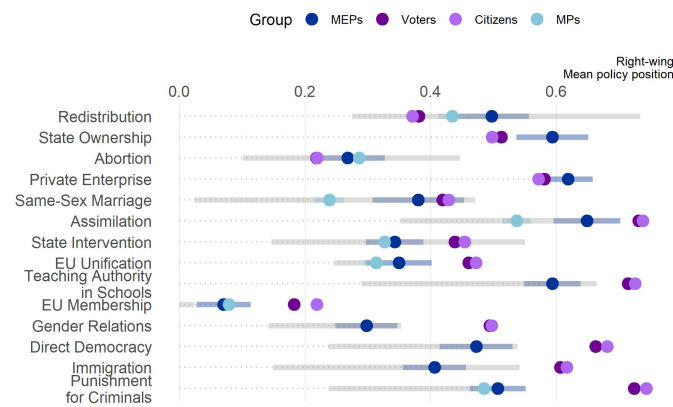
Figure 38: Comparing mean attitudes of voters, MEPs, citizens and national MPs by issue



Note: This figure shows a dumbbell plot. Different policy issues are shown on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the mean positions of three groups: citizens, MEPs and voters. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

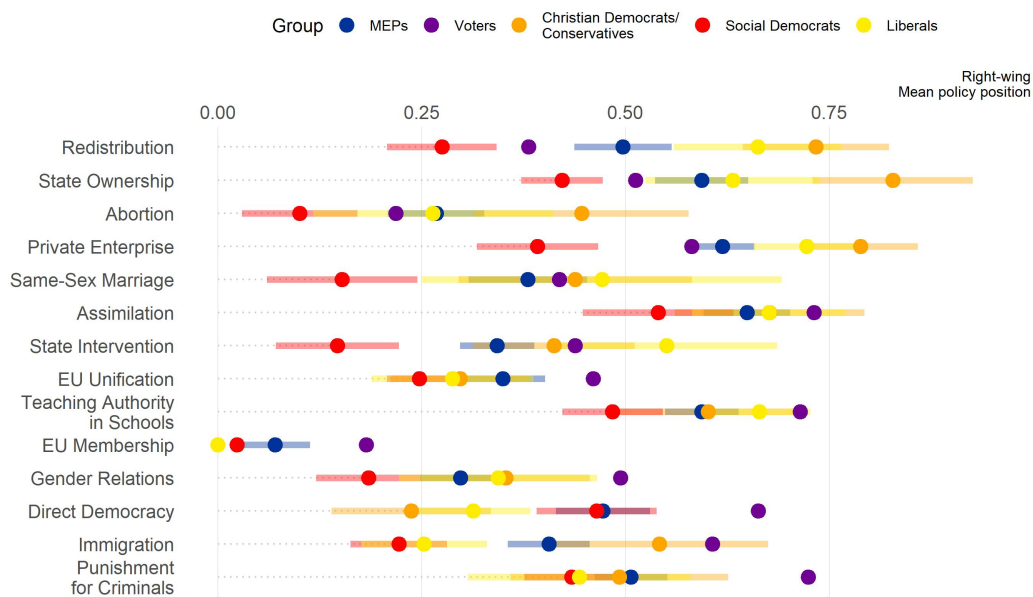
Figure 39: Comparing mean attitudes of voters, MEPs, citizens and national MPs with the covered policy space by issue



Note: This figure shows a dumbbell plot. Different policy issues are shown on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the mean positions of three groups: citizens, MEPs and voters. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

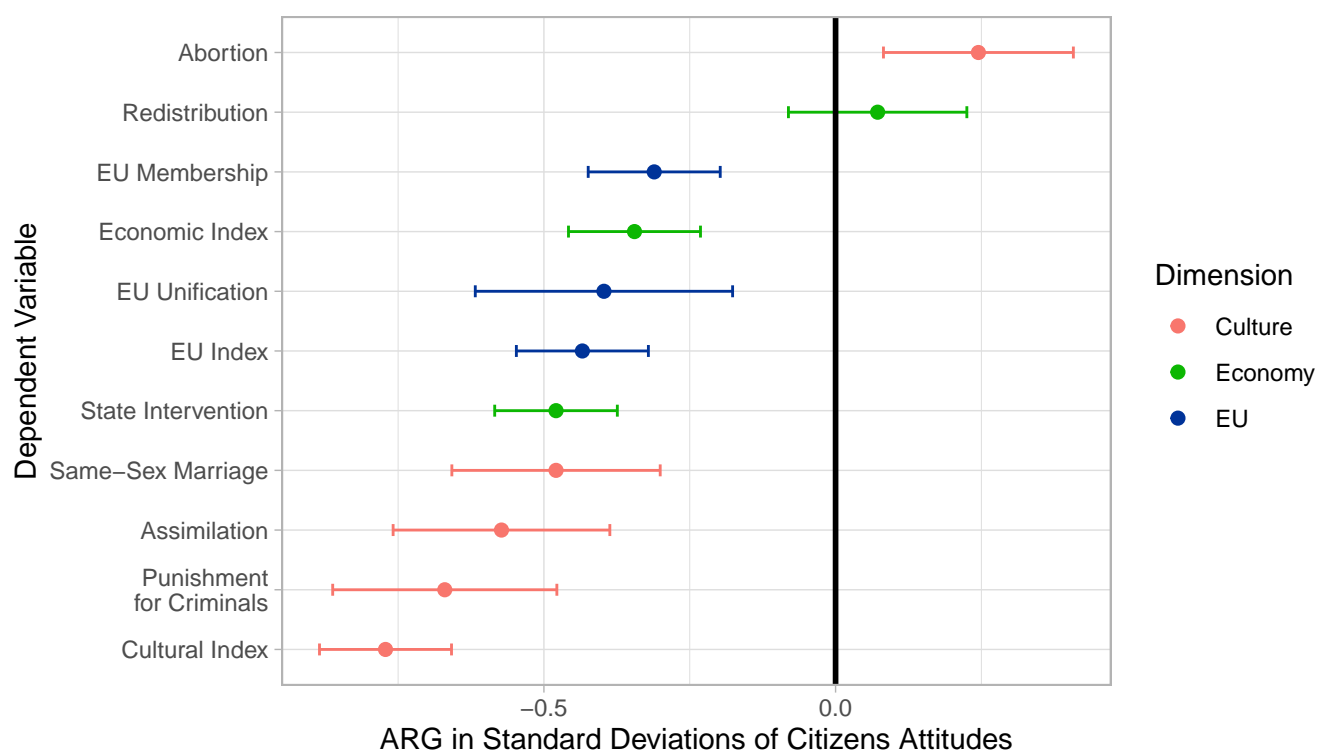
Figure 40: Voters attitudes compared to the covered policy space and party groups



Note: This figure shows a dumbbell plot. Different policy issues are shown on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the positions of voters and politicians. All variables were scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing. Dots indicate the mean-attitudes of voters, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals and Greens respectively. Grey lines visualize the covered policy space. The covered policy space is the space between the attitudes of the most left-wing and the most right-wing party group on a given issue. I consider the following party groups: Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals, Greens. Data is pooled across Europe.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter and Candidate Study)

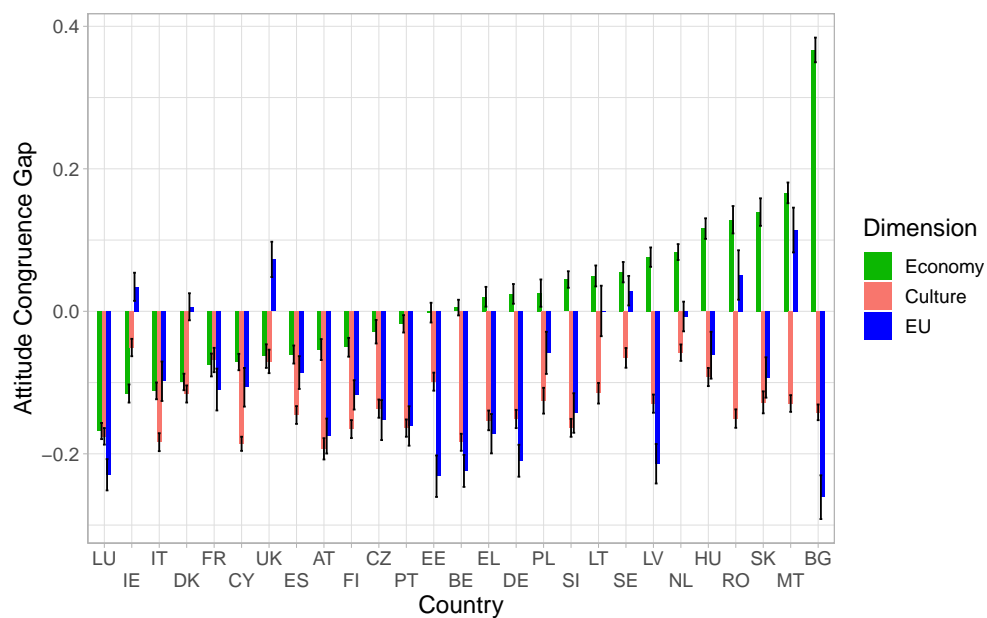
Figure 41: Representation gaps in standard deviations of citizen attitudes by issue



Note: The vertical axis shows different policy issues or policy dimensions. The horizontal axis shows OLS estimates for β 's from specification 2. Regressions compare national MPs with a representative sample of those who voted in the European Parliament election. All variables were scaled to have a standard deviation of 1. Higher values indicate that voters are more right-wing on an issue than MEPs. 95% confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the country level.

Datasources: European Parliament Election Study 2009 (Voter Study), Swiss Election Study 2007 (Voter Study) and Comparative Candidate Study

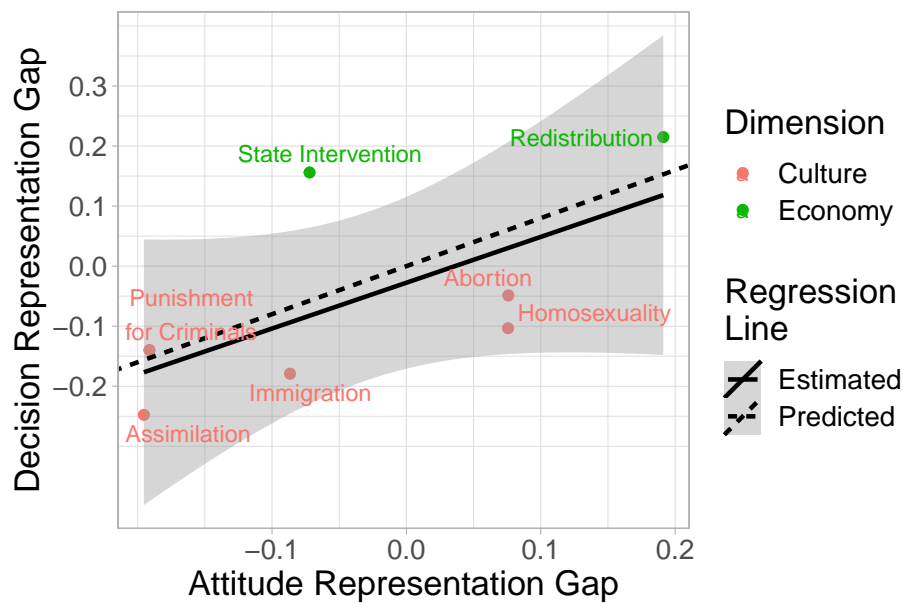
Figure 42: Attitude Congruence Gaps by country and Dimension



Note: This bar-charts illustrate the responses of a MEP-sample to the following question: ...

Source: own calculation based on data from the European Election Study 2009.

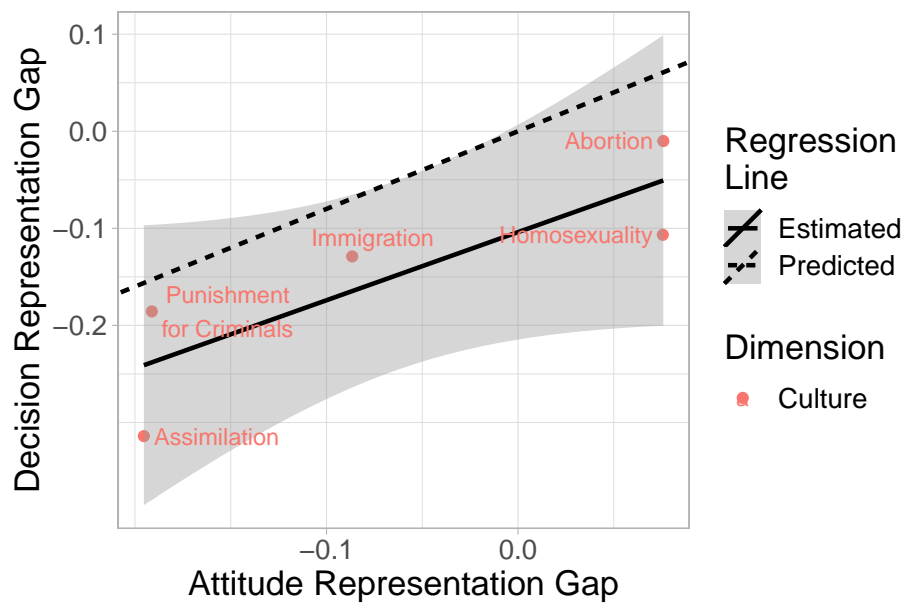
Figure 43: Actual and Predicted Relationship between DRG and ARG using referendums between 1992 and 2022



Note: The horizontal axis shows ARGs calculated from 2007 survey data from Switzerland. The vertical axis depicts DRGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs of the lower house of the federal assembly of Switzerland and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of DRGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 1992 and 2022. Both types of representation gaps compare the shares voters and MPs with a right-wing stance. Topics of survey and referendum data were classified into categories by hand. The solid line is the relationship predicted by formula 1. The solid line is a fitted line from a linear regression and a 95% confidence band.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset, the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 and the CCS I.

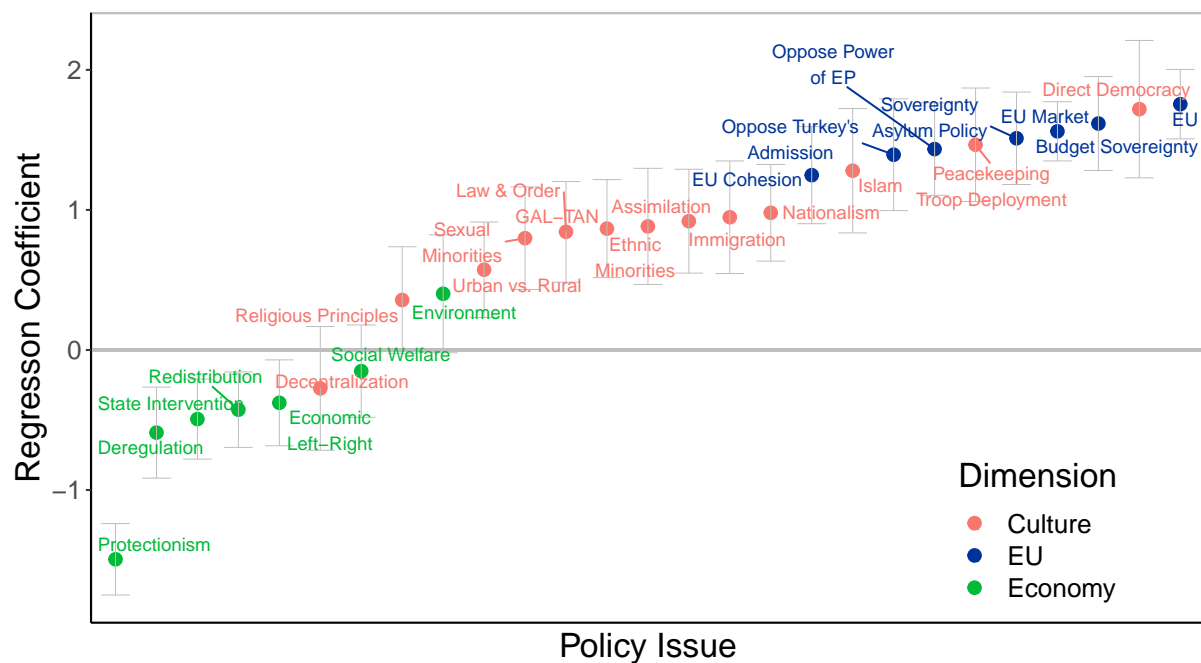
Figure 44: Actual and Predicted Relationship between DRG and ARG using referendums between 2002 and 2012



Note: The horizontal axis shows ARGs calculated from 2007 survey data from Switzerland. The vertical axis depicts DRGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs of the lower house of the federal assembly of Switzerland and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of DRGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 2002 and 2012. Both types of representation gaps compare the shares voters and MPs with a right-wing stance. Topics of survey and referendum data were classified into categories by hand. The solid line is the relationship predicted by formula 1. The solid line is a fitted line from a linear regression and a 95% confidence band.

Source: own calculation based on the original referendum dataset, the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 and the CCS I.

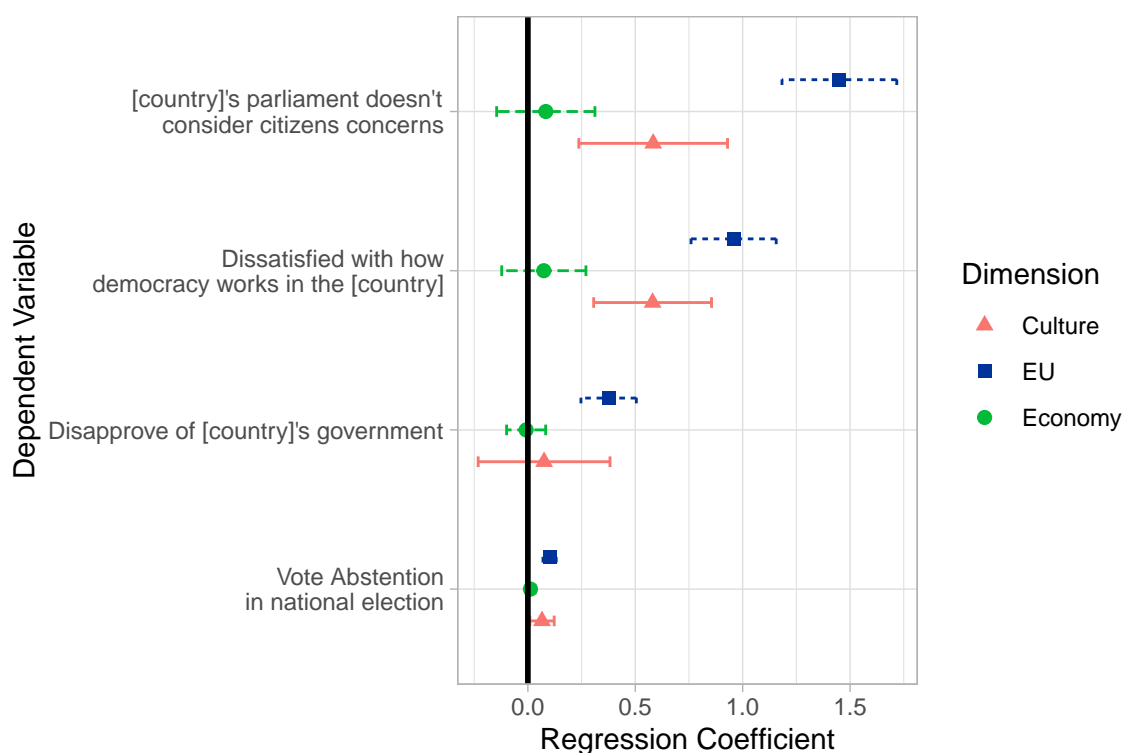
Figure 45: Issue-positioning of populist parties relative to non-populist parties accounting for vote shares



Note: This figure is based on regression equation 5. Each shows the coefficients on the populist indicator for a different dependent variable. Parties have been weighted with their vote-share in the last national election before the observation. The text next to each variable indicates the dependent variable used. These dependent variables are arranged on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis shows the size of the coefficient on the populist-indicator. Colors indicate the topic-group an issue belongs to. Coefficients are surrounded by 95% confidence intervals.

Source: own calculation based on the CHES.

Figure 46: Association between Representation and Attitudes toward Democracy at the National Level



Note: This figure shows a coefficient plot. It depicts estimates for β_d from different versions of regression equation 4. The vertical axis shows different dependent variables. Colors indicate the policy dimension d on which the difference between attitudes of voters and the mean national MP of their country is calculated. The horizontal axis shows the magnitude of coefficients. All regressions condition on a large set of demographic characteristics. Data is pooled for 15 EU countries. Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

Source: own calculation based on the EES.

I Tables

Table 11: List of populist parties

Partyname	Abbreviation	Country
Vlaams Belang	VB	Belgium
Dutch Labour Party	PVDA	Netherlands
Peoples Movement Against the EU	FolkB	Denmark
National Democratic Party of Germany	NPD	Germany
Alternative for Germany	AfD	Germany
Human Environment Animal Protection	DieTier	Germany
Coalition of the Radical Left	SYRIZA	Greece
Communist Party of Greece	KKE	Greece
Popular Orthodox Rally	LAOS	Greece
Independent Greeks	ANEL	Greece
Popular AssociationGolden Dawn	XA	Greece
We Can	Podemos	Spain
National Rally (formerly Front National)	FN	France
Left Party	PG	France
We Ourselves	SF	Ireland
Socialist Party	SP	Ireland
People Before Profit Alliance	PBPA	Ireland
Communist Refoundation Party	RC	Italy
Northern League	LN	Italy
Five Star Movement	M5S	Italy
Party for Freedom	PVV	Netherlands
Green Party	GREEN	United Kingdom
UK Independency Party	UKIP	United Kingdom
Earth Party	MPT	Portugal
Freedom Party of Austria	FPO	Austria
Team Stronach for Austria	TeamStronach	Austria
True Finns	PS	Finland
Sweden Democrats	SD	Sweden
Pirate Party	PIRAT	Sweden
VMROBulgarian National Movement	VMRO-BND	Bulgaria
Attack	ATAKA	Bulgaria

Continued on next page

Table 11 – *Continued from previous page*

Partyname	Abbreviation	Country
National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria	NFSB	Bulgaria
Bulgaria without Censorship	BBT	Bulgaria
ANO 2011, Action of Dissatisfied Citizens	ANO2011	Czech Republic
Dawn of Direct Democracy	USVIT	Czech Republic
Estonian Free Party	EVE	Estonia
JobbikMovement for a Better Hungary	JOBBIK	Hungary
Latvian Russian Union	LKS	Latvia
For Latvia from the Heart	NSL	Latvia
Latvian Association of Regions	LRA	Latvia
The Way of Courage	DK	Lithuania
Congress of the New Right	KNP	Poland
United Poland	SP	Poland
Peoples PartyDan Diaconescu	PP-DD	Romania
Ordinary People and Independent Personalities	OLaNO	Slovakia
Croatian LabouristsLabour Party	HL-SR	Croatia
Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starcevic	HSP-AS	Croatia
Alternative Democratic Reform Party	ADR	Luxembourg
The Left	DL	Luxembourg

Table 1: Information on Policy Attitude Variables

Variable Name	Question Wording	Question Type	Dimension	Included in
Assimilation	Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY].	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
Private Enterprise	Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY]'s economic problems.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES
Same-Sex Marriage	Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
State Ownership	Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES
Abortion	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
State Intervention	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES/CCS
Punishment for Criminals	People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
Redistribution	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES/CCS
Teaching Authority in Schools	Schools must teach children to obey authority.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES
Direct Democracy	EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES
Gender Relations	A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES
Immigration	Immigration to [COUNTRY] should be decreased significantly.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES
EU Unification	Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion?	10 point from "has gone too far" to "should be pushed further"	EU	EES/CCS
EU Membership	Generally speaking, do you think that [COUNTRY]'s membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	3 Options: 1) "Good thing" 2) "Bad thing" 3) "Neither"	EU	EES/CCS

Column one shows the wording for each policy attitude variable that I use in the paper. The wording is taken from the English version of the study. Questions were translated into the national language for other versions. [COUNTRY] is an placeholder for the name of the country the version of the survey was administered in. Variable Name refers to the names I use in the paper when referring to the items. Classification into the Dimensions "Culture", "Economy" and "EU" was done by me. Wording was identical in the EES and CCS surveys for all items with one exception. In the CCS the question for the "Punishment for Criminals" variable read as: "People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences".

Table 2: Comparing attitudes of Voters, MEPs and MEP-Candidates

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	cultural_index		economic_index		eu_index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 [MEP Candidate]	−0.118*** (0.018)	−0.070*** (0.012)	−0.022 (0.018)	−0.041** (0.017)	−0.042 (0.028)	−0.005 (0.024)
1 [Elected]	0.004 (0.023)	−0.018 (0.026)	0.057** (0.027)	0.012 (0.031)	−0.069*** (0.027)	−0.028 (0.020)
Demographic Controls	X		X		X	
Observations	17,311	15,599	17,705	15,928	18,864	16,928
R ²	0.063	0.404	0.003	0.207	0.007	0.233

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. 1 [MEPCandidate] equals one if respondent *i* was a candidate for the 2009 EP elections. 1 [Elected] equals one if *i* was elected to the EP. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Regressions are weighted for population and country share of representatives in the EP. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard.

Table 3: Comparing attitudes of MEPs and MEP-Candidates

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\mathbb{1}[\text{Elected}]$	0.005 (0.010)	0.005 (0.010)	−0.020 (0.023)	−0.020 (0.023)	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)
Age	−0.0004*** (0.0002)	−0.0004*** (0.0002)	−0.0004 (0.0004)	−0.0004 (0.0004)	−0.0002 (0.001)	−0.0002 (0.001)
Gender	−0.025* (0.015)	−0.025* (0.015)	0.012* (0.007)	0.012* (0.007)	0.013 (0.025)	0.013 (0.025)
Only Inexperienced Candidates		X		X		X
Observations	1,084	906	1,104	926	1,120	936
R ²	0.077	0.095	0.040	0.045	0.101	0.123

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. $\mathbb{1}[\text{MEPCandidate}]$ equals one if respondent *i* was a candidate for the 2009 EP elections. $\mathbb{1}[\text{Elected}]$ equals one if *i* was elected to the EP. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Regressions are weighted for population and country share of representatives in the EP. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard.

Table 4: Using valence to predict Attitude representation gaps

	<i>Dependent variable: Right-wing ARG</i>				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Valence Advantage Right	0.174*** (0.026)	0.173*** (0.026)	0.172*** (0.026)	0.174*** (0.028)	0.117*** (0.033)
Democracy Index		-0.017 (0.046)		0.061 (0.180)	0.089 (0.168)
Control of Corruption			-0.008 (0.016)	-0.012 (0.069)	-0.017 (0.064)
Constant	-0.055*** (0.014)	-0.036 (0.054)	-0.048** (0.021)	-0.089 (0.154)	-0.153 (0.144)
Other Controls				✓	✓
Dimension Dummies					✓
Observations	78	78	78	78	78
R ²	0.375	0.376	0.377	0.379	0.481

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. All regressions include a constant.

Table 5: The relationship between campaign donations and bias of MEPs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Campaign Donations in Mill.	0.0005 (0.002)	0.0001 (0.003)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.0001 (0.003)	−0.0001 (0.003)
Demographic Controls	X		X		X	
Observations	756	679	759	681	763	688
R ²	0.0001	0.401	0.0004	0.289	0.00000	0.317

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country. Campaign contributions in millions.

Table 6: Comparing the biases of MEPs who were and were not encouraged to run by lobbyists

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 [encouraged by lobbyist]	0.008 (0.021)	0.005 (0.018)	0.012 (0.012)	0.007 (0.010)	−0.015 (0.015)	−0.020 (0.014)
Demographic Controls	X		X		X	
Observations	1,266	1,129	1,288	1,144	1,304	1,158
R ²	0.0003	0.382	0.001	0.260	0.001	0.282

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country.

Table 7: Relationship between biases of MEPs and frequency of personal visits at firms and clubs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number firm visits of MEP	0.001 (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)
Demographic Controls		X		X		X
Observations	1,152	1,018	1,166	1,027	1,169	1,043
R ²	0.004	0.391	0.001	0.256	0.003	0.291

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country.

Table 8: Relationship between biases of MEPs and frequency of visits of their teams at firms and clubs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number of firm visits by campaign team	−0.00002*** (0.00001)	0.0004 (0.001)	−0.00001 (0.00001)	0.001 (0.001)	−0.0001*** (0.00001)	−0.001 (0.0005)
Demographic Controls		X		X		X
Observations	873	766	879	769	878	781
R ²	0.0001	0.433	0.0001	0.310	0.001	0.324

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country.

Table 9: Comparing biases of MEPs that were lobbyists with biases of MEPs that were not lobbyists

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 [MPE was a lobbyist]	0.006 (0.022)	−0.0004 (0.022)	−0.034** (0.015)	−0.025 (0.022)	−0.004 (0.017)	0.014 (0.020)
Demographic Controls		X		X		X
Observations	1,086	981	1,101	993	1,116	1,005
R ²	0.0001	0.390	0.004	0.284	0.00003	0.297

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country.

Table 10: Comparing biases of young MEPs that plan and not plan to leave politics soon

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 [MEP plans to leave politics]	0.015 (0.017)	0.013 (0.017)	−0.031 (0.019)	−0.030* (0.017)	0.008 (0.021)	0.004 (0.026)
Demographic Controls	X		X		X	
Observations	649	589	664	601	672	605
R ²	0.001	0.488	0.003	0.333	0.0002	0.319

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardised such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes all responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election, those who voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election. Data only includes data from countries where data is available for all three groups. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, perceived own social class, immigration background, religious denomination, religiosity and living standard and country.