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Political Representation Gaps in Europe

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Political Representation Gaps in Europe

GUENTHER Laurenz R.K.

Abstract

Do parliaments in representative democracies represent the policy attitudes of their voters? I examine this question using data on the policy attitudes of 2,074 parliamentarians and 31,461 citizens who are representative of 27 European countries. Parliamentarians are much more culturally liberal than voters in nearly all countries, while they tend to be more market-oriented than voters on economic issues. These attitude differences likely translate into deviations of policymaking from voters' attitudes because most parliamentarians state to decide according to their own attitudes. I verify that the actual decisions of parliamentarians deviate from voter attitudes by comparing voters' and parliamentarians' voting decisions in referendums. Lack of representation is associated with distrust in democratic institutions, vote abstention, and the ideological positioning of populist parties, which fill empty policy space. I show how these results help to understand the characteristics and rise of populism. Finally, I build a formal model to explain why voters elect parliaments who do not represent their attitudes.

Abbreviations

RG — Representation Gap

MP — Member of Parliament

MEP — Member of the European Parliament

EU — European Union

CCS — Comparative Candidate Survey

EES — European Election Study

CHES — Chapel Hill Expert Survey

ARG — Attitude Difference

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1 Introduction

Representative democracies build on the idea that voters elect members of parliament (MPs), who in turn represent the policy attitudes of voters (Golder and Stramski, 2010). The extent to which MPs' policy *decisions* align with voters' attitudes is called substantive representation, while the lack thereof is referred to as a representation gap (Pitkin, 1967; Andeweg, 2012). This paper estimates the extent of substantive representation in Europe and documents large, significant, and systematic representation gaps. It also examines how representation gaps can arise despite political competition, and assesses their relationship with the rise of populism and distrust in democratic institutions.

The main analysis builds on a survey dataset I compiled from several existing anonymized MP and voter surveys. This dataset contains the policy attitudes regarding a wide range of political issues of 31,461 citizens (27,852 of which are voters) and 2,074 parliamentarians. The samples are representative of the underlying universes of citizens and voters of 27 European countries as well as 15 national European parliaments and the European parliament, respectively. A key advantage of this dataset is that responses of citizens and parliamentarians were elicited through identical items, enabling comparability.

I find that the policy attitudes of MPs and their voters differ strongly, significantly, and systematically. MPs are much more liberal/left-wing on nearly all cultural issues in nearly all 27 countries. Attitude differences regarding immigration and punishment for criminals are particularly large. On a cultural issue index, the distance between the mean voter and the mean MP is more than half of the distance between the mean social democratic and the mean conservative MP. Alternatively, the average MP is about three-quarters of a standard deviation of citizen attitudes more left-wing than the average voter. Moreover, the average MP of any established party family is culturally further to the left than the average voter. In the economic policy dimension, MPs tend to be more market-oriented and anti-redistribution than voters. The largest economic attitude differences regard redistribution, where differences between voters and MPs resemble those of the poor and the rich. However, attitude differences in the economic dimension tend to be smaller than in the cultural dimension. Furthermore, they are strongly heterogeneous across countries. Moreover, social democratic MPs are more state-oriented on economic issues than the average voter, while liberal and Christian democratic MPs are more market-oriented. Thus, the average voter has established voting options to their left and right on economic issues but only to their left on cultural topics.

Attitude differences matter because, as I show, most MPs base their decisions on their own attitudes rather than on the attitudes of their voters. When asked whether a parliamentarian should follow the opinion of their voters or their own opinion, 69% of national MPs and 84% of members of the European Parliament state that the parliamentarian should follow their own opinion.

To compare *decisions* rather than attitudes of parliaments to the attitudes of voters, I develop an estimation framework. It formalizes the idea that attitude differences result in representation gaps to the extent that MPs decide according to their own attitudes rather than according to the attitudes of their voters. Consequently, the framework takes both attitude differences between voters and MPs and the extent to which MPs aim to implement voters' attitudes as arguments. Estimates of representation gaps based on this framework are very similar to attitude differences between MPs and voters. To validate these survey-based estimates, I use a second, hand-collected dataset on politi-

cians' and ordinary citizens' voting and initiation behavior in 126 Swiss referendums. Differences in voting behavior in referendums between Swiss MPs and voters closely resemble representation gaps as estimated from survey data. Moreover, this dataset reveals that representation gaps can be stable over many decades.

The existence of representation gaps is robust to many alternative specifications. For example, representation gaps are larger when comparing citizens instead of voters to MPs, and they are not driven by MPs or voters with extreme attitudes. They are also larger on issues that both voters and parliamentarians find more important. Demographic characteristics can explain 30–40% of representation gaps, and the remaining gaps significantly differ from zero.

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

To explain how representation gaps can be stable despite electoral competition, I build a stylized model of electoral competition between two parties akin to that used in Downs (1957). Motivated by my empirical findings, I alter the utility function of the parties relative to Downs (1957) and standard probabilistic voting models such that they are not motivated by winning the election but only by the implemented policy. My model also assumes that voters see parties as differentially competent, as I verify empirically. I prove that 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 perceived competence advantage. It also profits from this shift because it is policy-motivated. The model makes testable predictions about the distribution of European parties' perceived competence. For instance, it predicts that culturally left-wing parties are considered more competent than culturally right-wing parties, which enables the former to win elections despite positions far from the electoral center. I find strong empirical support for all of these predictions.

In contrast, I find no empirical evidence in favor of several alternative explanations, including lobbyism, a desire of politicians to protect minorities from a "tyranny of the majority," or the possibility that MPs' policy attitudes change when they get elected.

Finally, I examine the relationship between representation gaps and two crucial political developments: distrust in democratic institutions and the rise of populism. Even after controlling for demographic characteristics, I find that citizens whose policy attitudes differ more from their representatives have less trust in democratic institutions and are less likely to vote. In the public discourse, populists claim to be a reaction to representation gaps (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). According to their narrative, policymaking deviates from the people's policy preferences. Populists claim to be aware of these representation gaps and to have entered politics to fill them. I test the claims contained in this "populist narrative." I find that populist MPs are more likely to correctly identify representation gaps and to state that an MP should follow the opinion of their voters than non-populist MPs. Moreover, 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 attitudes of populist MPs are, in contrast to those of non-populist MPs, close to voters' attitudes on cultural issues. These findings are consistent with the populist narrative and the claim that populists are a reaction to representation gaps.

Consequently, my findings help to clarify the rise and characteristics of populist parties.[1] Recent studies have shown empirically that factors like trade exposure (Colantone and Stanig, 2018a, 2018b; Autor et al., 2020), economic insecurity Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch (2016), Algan et al. (2017), Fetzer (2019), and Gabriel, Klein, and Pessoa (2022) and immigration (Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller, 2017; Harmon, 2018; Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm, 2019; Hangartner et al., 2019; 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, 2022). There is no conclusive evidence that crises generally lead to populist voting. For instance, popular government support usually increases temporarily during international crises (Mueller, 1970) and the Covid pandemic increased government support and trust in political institutions (Esaiasson et al., 2021; Kritzinger et al., 2021).

Why do only certain events strengthen challenger parties, and not other established parties? Why do these challenger parties see the "pure people" in a struggle with the "corrupt elite," hold right-wing cultural positions, and have anti-media and anti-expert attitudes (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017)? Representation gaps offer an explanation. Suppose that voters vote for parties close to them in policy space on issues that are relevant at the moment (Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2018). If representation gaps exist, challenger parties can fill empty policy space and will ultimately rise. Because established parties are more market-oriented and culturally left-wing than voters, challenger parties are more state-oriented and culturally right-wing than established parties. More specifically, this line of reasoning suggests that restrictive immigration policies, stricter sentencing, and increased redistribution decrease the vote share of populist parties. Indeed, recent studies have found that increased redistribution weakens populists (Albanese, Barone, and Blasio, 2022), (large) increases in immigration strengthen populists (Barone et al., 2016; Becker and Fetzer, 2016; Halla, Wagner, and Zweimüller, 2017; Dinas et al., 2019; Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm, 2019; Edo et al., 2019; Hangartner et al., 2019; Ajzenman, Aksoy, and Guriev, 2022; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022), and being soft on crime leads to more right-wing voting (Drago, Galbiati, and Sobbrio, 2020).[2]

Challenger parties likely rise especially quickly when issues become relevant where representation gaps are large, but not when issues become relevant where no representation gap exists. Representation gaps are particularly large when it comes to redistribution and immigration, which explains why the populist vote share rose especially quickly during the global financial crisis and the refugee crisis that highlighted inequality and immigration. This explanation complements recent evidence that increased relevance of cultural topics makes cultural attitudes stronger drivers of policy views (Bonomi, Gennaioli, and Tabellini, 2021) and that changes in voters' issue priorities are the main driver behind the rise of the populist right (Danieli et al., 2022).

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1. Surveys on populism are provided by Berman (2021) and Guriev and Papaioannou (2022). Several recent papers have also argued that the rise of populism is partly due to mainstream parties failing to represent voters' policy attitudes (Berger, 2017; Grzymala-Busse, 2019; Lindner et al., 2020; Berman and Kundnani, 2021; Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, 2021; Bó et al., 2023). However, these papers have not estimated representation gaps.

2. My findings suggest that closing other representation gaps might reduce the vote share of populist parties too. I am not aware of studies that have examined whether this is the case.

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. Given that representation gaps exist, this statement contains a kernel of truth, and it is likely to damage the reputations of their rivals. This explains why challenger parties propagate the populist narrative.

Moreover, representation gaps help to explain why many citizens vote for populist parties, even though it has been shown that having populists in power reduces economic growth (Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2016) and damages democratic institutions (Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2016; Bellodi, Morelli, and Vannoni, 2021; Morelli, Nicolò, and Roberti, 2021; Docquier, Peluso, and Morelli, 2022). My results indicate that many voters are faced with two similarly unattractive options because they must choose between established parties that do not implement the policy attitudes of the voters and populists who threaten democratic institutions. Some voters, particularly those more distant from the culturally left-wing established parties, might consider populists the lesser evil.

The fact that policymaking is generally incongruent with mass attitudes also helps to explain why populist parties can be strong in countries not affected by crises. Hence, just sitting out or preventing crises might not eliminate populism. The current paper highlights another policy alternative: established parties could close representation gaps. They could do so either by convincing the public that their policies were in the public's interest or by changing policymaking. Which alternative is preferable depends on whether representation gaps result from information- or value differences between voters and MPs. Because, as I show, representation gaps persist even when comparing MPs to the educated or those very interested in politics, value differences seem to be at least partly responsible for representation gaps.

The present paper also adds to the theoretical political economy literature. I show empirically that voters consider some parties much more competent than others, and that most politicians are policy-motivated. While it is well known that adding these insights individually to the stylized model of Downs (1957) does not produce representation gaps (Persson and Tabellini, 2002), I show that adding both at the same time does. Predictions of a model that incorporates both insights, are well supported by an empirical analysis. At the same time, these modifications do not notably increase the model's complexity. Therefore, it might prove useful to modify other models of electoral competition in the same way.

Finally, this paper contributes to the literature on representation. Economists have focused on the numerical representation of sociodemographic groups in positions of power, called descriptive representation (Golder and Ferland, 2017).[3] In contrast, I focus on substantive representation. My empirical analysis reveals that the association between descriptive and substantive representation is weak. Whether descriptively overrepresented 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 numerically underrepresented group that is systematically disadvantaged substan-

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3. Studies have primarily focused on women (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2009; Duflo, 2012; Besley et al., 2017) and ethnic minorities (Pande, 2003; Banerjee and Pande, 2007; Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2015), often in developing countries. Recent papers have examined descriptive representation regarding socioeconomic background in Europe (Bó et al., 2017, 2023).

tively is 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 be desirable because they might not be underrepresented substantively.

Outside of economics, most research on substantive representation stems from political science.[4] The present paper makes a methodological contribution to this literature by presenting a stylized formal framework to define and estimate substantive representation from survey data. A formal framework might be useful because existing studies use identical terms to refer to similar but different concepts (Kertzer, 2022). The framework formalizes the insight that attitude differences between voters and MPs matter little if MPs base their decisions on voters' attitudes. Therefore, the framework uses information on attitude differences and the intention of politicians to implement their voters' attitudes. In contrast, most previous studies only assess attitude differences (Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema, 2012; Ferland, 2016; Dalton, 2017; Kübler and Schäfer, 2022).

Moreover, I investigate several potential causes of representation gaps that have not been examined to date. These include the cause primarily investigated in the present paper, namely an interaction of heterogeneous perceived competence and policy-motivated politicians. Finally, this study demonstrates the relevance of representation gaps for the debates on political trust and populism.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 4.2 presents the estimation framework of substantive representation. After that, Section 2 derives theoretical predictions. Section 3 provides an overview of the data used in the empirical part of the paper. Within this empirical part, Section 4 documents the pattern of substantive representation in Europe, Section 5 examines potential causes of this pattern, and Section 6 relates representation gaps to political trust and populism. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2 Theoretical Predictions of Standard Models

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 (Persson and Tabellini, 2002).

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4. See Kertzer (2022) for a recent discussion and meta-analysis. Most studies focus on single countries (Bühlmann, Widmer, and Schädel, 2010; Andeweg, 2012; Holmberg, 2012; Andreadis and Stavrakakis, 2017; Schakel and Hakhverdian, 2018; Hakhverdian and Schakel, 2022; Jaime-Castillo and Coller, 2022; Lesschaeve, 2022) and/or estimate substantive representation at one point in time (Costello et al., 2021; Hakhverdian and Schakel, 2022; Lesschaeve, 2022). Coverage of European countries is particularly low (Shapiro, 2011). Notable exceptions are Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema (2012) and Dalton (2017), who compare policy *attitudes* of candidates to the European Parliament and European voters, and Evans and Hall (2019), who analyze whether the positions of parties and voters *change* in the same direction over time.

In European countries more than two parties compete in a policy space that has been found to be multidimensional by empirical studies (Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012). Probabilistic voting models are the standard way to model electoral competition in such situations (Hinich, Ledyard, and Ordeshook, 1972; Coughlin and Nitzan, 1981). 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 (Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Adams, 1999; Lin, Enelow, and Dorussen, 1999; McKelvey and Patty, 2006; Norman Schofield, 2007). This implies that the mean positions of parliamentarians and voters are identical. Hence, RGs in terms of means are predicted to be small. Convergence of all parties to the mean is sufficient but not necessary for small RGs. Candidates could position themselves symmetrically around the electoral mean, which could result in low RGs in terms of means. 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; Norman Schofield, 2007; Schofield and Zakharov, 2010).[5] 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, Enelow, and Dorussen, 1999) and heterogeneity in perceived competence of the candidates (Norman 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 representation gaps regarding the mean should be nonexistent or at least small and not systematic.

3   Data

The main analysis builds on a survey-based dataset that I generated by harmonizing comparable surveys among parliamentarians and citizens. Survey data on MPs come from the European Candidate Study 2009 (Weßels, 2013) and wave one of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) (CCS, 2016). Both surveys were conducted in a combined effort of local institutions with much experience in collecting MP data. The European Candidate Study 2009 was fielded to nearly all candidates for the 2009 European Parliament, while the CCS was fielded to nearly all candidates to national parliaments for all elections between 2005 and 2013 in the following European countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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5. There are deterministic and probabilistic spatial voting models. Under deterministic voting, the probability that a voter votes for any candidate is one if he is closest to the voter and zero 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 (Plott, 1967; Eaton and Lipsey, 1975; McKelvey and Wendell, 1976; N. Schofield, 1978; McKelvey, 1979; Cohen and Matthews, 1980; Norman Schofield, 1983; McKelvey and Schofield, 1987; Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Banks, 1995; Saari, 1997). 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.

All responses were elicited several months after the election and include information on whether the candidate was elected, which enables me to identify elected members of parliament. The European Candidate Study includes information on 6,558 candidates from 260 parties which implies a response rate of 20.5% overall, and information on 169 out of the 736 elected MEPs that made up the 2009-2014 European Parliament which is equal to a response rate of MEPs of 23%. The CCS data contains data on 14,392 candidates at a response rate of 40.81% and 1,905 elected national MPs.

Data on voter attitudes come from the European Voter Study 2009 (Egmond et al., 2017) and the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 (Selects, 2009). The European Voter Study 2009 was conducted alongside the European Candidate Study 2009 and designed to match it as closely as possible. The timing, structure, and wording of all policy-attitude questions are identical. The Voter Study was fielded to a representative probability sample of roughly 1,000 citizens in each 27 EU country in 2009. I add data on a representative sample of 4,392 Swiss voters from the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 because the European Voter Study 2009 does not contain data on Swiss voters.

The combined dataset includes policy attitudes and demographic data about 2,074 elected European Parliamentarians and 31,461 citizens from 27 European countries. Citizens are representative of the respective adult population and, as shown in Appendix D, sample parliamentarians are representative of the universe of parliamentarians.

The European Candidate Study 2009 and the European Voter Study 2009 include 14 identical policy attitude 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, 10 were elicited on a 5-point Likert scale, one had three answer opportunities, and one had 11 answer opportunities. Table I.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. Of these 14 items, seven overlap precisely with items given to national MPs. These include assimilation, same-sex marriage, abortion, state intervention, redistribution, EU unification, and EU membership. The items on punishment for criminals that MEPs and voters saw differ slightly from the one that national MPs responded to. Voters and MEPs were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

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

National MPs were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a slightly different assertion:

People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.

Nonetheless, I compare the responses of national MPs and voters on that item because, as I show, the difference in formulation likely creates a bias that works against my finding.

I also use the 2014 and 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) (Polk et al., 2017; Jolly et al., 2022). The CHES contains estimates of established policy experts of positions of various European parties on several policy issues, such as redistribution and immigration, many of which match policy

issues from the survey dataset. Appendix D shows that measures for party positions based on the candidate survey data are highly correlated with measures for party positions based on the CHES, which suggests that candidate surveys provide valid data.

To estimate representation gaps from behavioral data, I make use of an original referendum dataset. In principle, referendums are ideal for comparing the decisions of voters, MPs, and parties because voters and MPs are confronted with the same well-defined issue, which enables comparability. 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 Swiss citizens who voted in 2009 on that initiative voted in favor of it. 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 it. 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 for estimating RGs, 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 was responsible for the disagreement. Second, to enable comparability with survey data, these topics should match the topics of the survey data. Third, it must be clear whether a yes or a no vote indicates a right-wing or left-wing position. To the best of my knowledge, no available dataset on referendums fulfills these conditions. Hence, I created it by building on the database Swissvotes (Swissvotes, 2021). Swissvotes is the primary data source for referendums in Switzerland. It contains information on all referendums in Switzerland since 1884. Among this information are the numbers of 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 the 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. Therefore, I recorded up to three topics for each initiative. This procedure resulted in 126 classified referendums over 130 years. I also coded 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, I coded the Minaret Referendum as mainly belonging to the "assimilation" topic, matching a category from the survey data, and as a right-wing initiative. Classifying referendums as right-wing or left-wing is simple in most cases. However, I also included a variable that captures how clear the classification was. Finally, I coded whether the referendum was initiated by the parliament, "ordinary" citizens, or whether it resulted from an interaction of the two groups. A discussion on descriptive statistics of the referendum dataset can be found in Section E.1 in the appendix.

4   Estimating Political Representation Gaps

4.1   Attitude Differences between Voters and Parliamentarians

4.1.1   Attitude Differences by Issue.   Figure 1 depicts attitude distributions of European voters and parliamentarians by policy issue. Values on the horizontal axis correspond to answer options asked in the surveys. All attitudes are scaled such that higher values are more right-wing/conservative/anti-EU. For instance, the highest value in the "Immigration" subplot refers to strong agreement with the statement that immigration should be decreased. Regarding the variable EU referendums, high values indicate a preference for EU referendums. The data is based on survey-responses of 27,852 European voters and 2,074 European parliamentarians.[6] Observations are weighted to adjust for population size differences between countries.

Attitude differences between voters and parliamentarians are reflected in different shapes of the distributions. Figure 1 shows that the magnitude of attitude differences strongly depends on the policy issues. For instance, voters and parliamentarians have almost identical attitudes regarding the role of private enterprise in the economy but hold opposing views on immigration, where attitude distributions have a very different shape and most voters (strongly) agree with the statement that immigration should be reduced while majority of parliamentarians (strongly) disagrees. Distributions differ most regarding assimilation, immigration, sentences for criminals, teaching authority in schools and gender relations.

Attitude differences on individual issues might cancel out if they go in opposite directions on similar issues. For instance, if voters were more opposed to immigration but less in favor of assimilation than parliamentarians, one could argue that representation on topics related to immigration is high. However, Figure 1 shows that voters are more opposed to immigration and simultaneously more in favor of tough assimilation policies than parliamentarians. This hints at systematic attitude differences on immigration-related topics.

To examine how systematic attitude differences are, I classify individual issues into broader policy dimensions. It is well established that political parties package their distinct viewpoints on multiple issues together and that knowing the political attitudes of citizens on a few issues enables one to predict their attitudes on most issues well (Hinich and Munger, 1994; Kitschelt, 1994; Aldrich, 1995; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012; Enke, 2020; Enke, Rodríguez-Padilla, and Zimmermann, 2022). Hence, reducing high-dimensional policy spaces into simpler ones with fewer dimensions simplifies analysis, without strongly decreasing explanatory power.

Most studies find that the policy space in Europe is best described as either two- or three-dimensional, (Norman Schofield, 1993; Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006; Marks et al., 2006; Henjak, 2010; Stoll, 2010; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012; Lijphart, 2012; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Inglehart, 2018; Jackson and Jolly, 2021; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2022). The two main dimensions nearly all studies document are the classical economic left-right axis

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6. Here, I pool national and EU parliamentarians. The data includes 169 members of the European parliament and 1,905 members of the national parliament. Figure Figure H.3 shows that these two groups of parliamentarians have similar policy attitudes.
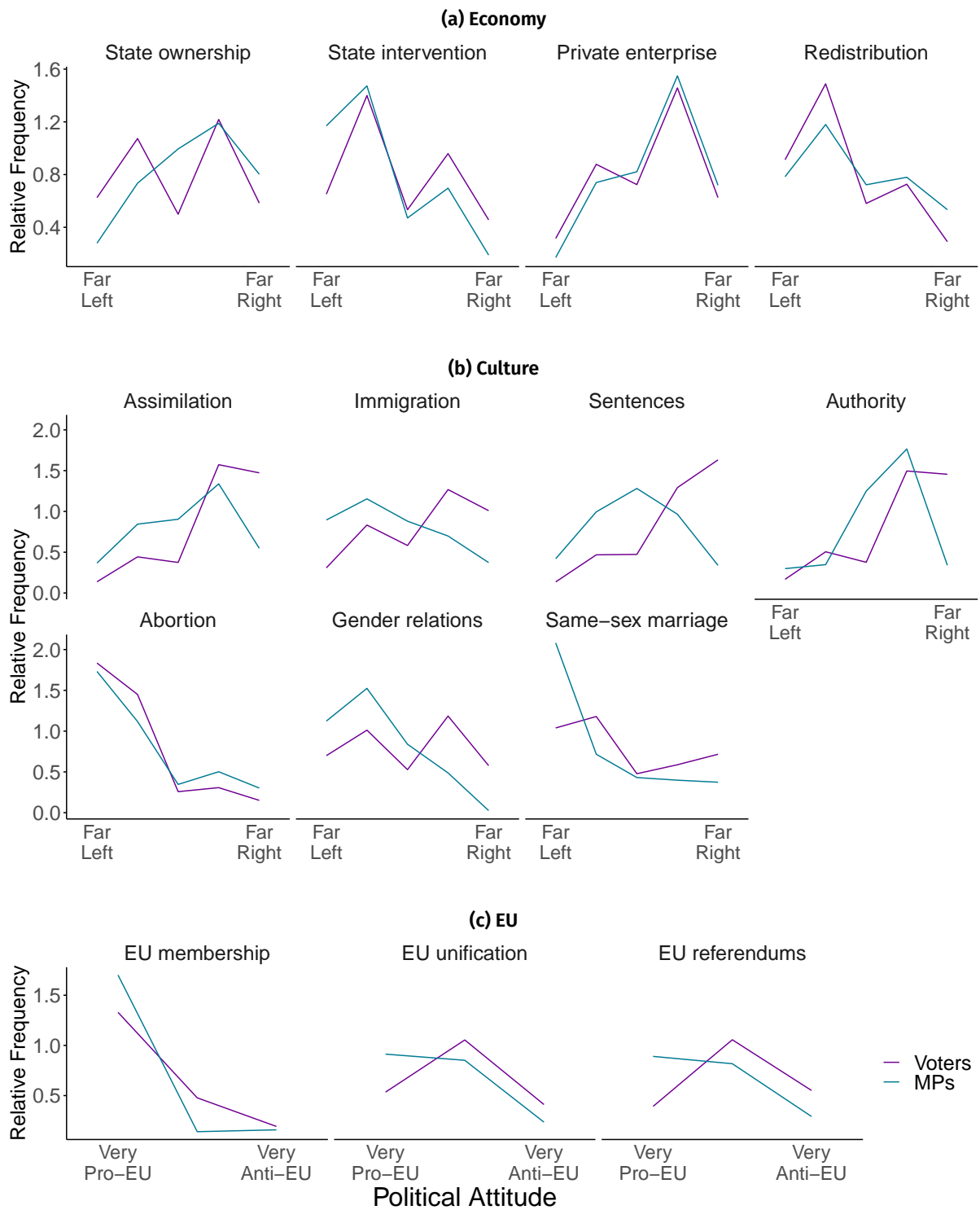
Figure 1. Attitude Differences between Voters and Parliamentarians

Note: Individual sub-plots show the attitude distributions of parliamentarians and citizens who either voted in the most recent national or EU parliament election before the survey. The Panels (a), (b), and (c) contain economic, cultural, and EU issues, respectively. The figure includes responses from 141 MEPs, 1,805 MPs, and 26,500 voters, but the number of respondents varies by issue. Respondents are weighted according to the population size of their country. Responses of national parliamentarians are not available for "private enterprise," "state ownership," "authority," "gender relations," "immigration," and "EU referendums."

(Downs, 1957), and a cultural dimension which contrasts liberal cultural positions, like multiculturalism with traditional/conservative ones, like strict punishment for criminals (Inglehart, 2015). It is

more contested whether one should consider a separate pro-anti EU dimension or not (Hix and Lord, 1997; Hooghe and Marks, 1999; Kreppel and Tsebelis, 1999; Tsebelis and Garrett, 2000; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2019). Appendix A suggests that EU attitudes might be subsumed into the cultural dimension.

Because all attitude variables used here are easy to classify into three dimensions, I do so manually, as displayed by Figure 1. Panels refer to the three policy dimensions and contain the variables classified to this dimension. Appendix A examines the validity of this theory-based categorization empirically. Reassuringly, attitudes correlate higher within than across dimensions and nearly all correlations within dimension are positive and significant. Cultural and EU attitudes correlate positively and significantly with each other, while they are less strongly and systematically related to economic attitudes. Appendix A shows that the main results, to be discussed later, change little if I aggregate issues through a principal component analysis.

Distinguishing between economic, cultural and EU issues reveals a pattern. As Figure 1 shows, attitude differences between voters and MPs are small and not systematic regarding economic issues. Voters are somewhat more in favor of major public services and industries being in state ownership but a bit less in favor of the state intervening in the economy generally. Moreover, voters are more in favor of redistribution than MPs while both groups have nearly identical attitudes regarding the importance of private enterprise to the economy. In contrast, voters are more conservative/anti-EU than MPs regarding all but one non-economic issues. The single exception is the issue of abortion, which very few voters or MPs consider important as shown in Figure G.2. Moreover, the largest attitude differences, on immigration and sentences for criminals arise on cultural topics and both topics are considered very important by voters and MPs alike (Figure G.2). Moreover, both items refer to the direction of policymaking, whether immigration should be reduced and whether criminals should be punished harsher respectively. Figure 1 reveals that voters are not just a bit less in favor of immigration than MPs. In contrast, most of them favor a reduction while a majority of MPs is opposed to such a reduction. Hence, voters and MPs disagree about the direction of policymaking regarding the individual issue that both groups consider most important (Figure G.2). Similarly, an overwhelming majority of voters favor tougher punishments for criminals while more MPs oppose than approve this policy change. Finally, as attitudes regarding cultural and EU topics except abortion correlate positively with each other, attitude differences appear to be systematic — MPs generally have attitudes on non-economic issues that are much more liberal/pro-EU than those of voters.

4.1.2 Aggregating Issues into Policy Dimensions.   As the key distinction between issues appears to be between economic and non-economic ones, I calculate two indexes for either policy dimension to simplify the analysis. I will label the non-economic dimension "cultural."

Formally, I calculate the attitude of any survey participant s on dimension $d \in \{Economy, Culture\}$ as

$$attitude_{s,d} = \sum_{i \in d} attitude_{s,i} \cdot importance_i. \tag{1}$$

Here, $importance_i$ is an index that measures the perceived importance of issue i by voters. Aggregating issues in dimensions makes it necessary to consider how individual issues should be weighted and the perceived importance is a natural candidate. In the surveys I use all participants were asked to

name the three issues that are most important to them. From this data I calculate an index for the perceived importance of issues as shown in greater detail in Section G.1. As shown there, voters and MPs rank the importance of issues in the same order. Attitude differences are, if anything, larger on issues that voters or MPs find more important and both, economic and non-economic issues are considered important by either group. Because the surveys among national MPs did not include the items for "private enterprise," "state ownership," "authority," "gender relations," "immigration," and "EU referendums," I restrict my analysis in the proceeding main part of the paper to the remaining two economic and six non-economic issues.

Figure 2 depicts attitude densities of voters and MPs in the two-dimensional economy-culture policy space. Higher values on either dimension indicate attitudes that are more right-wing/conservative. Figure 2 does not measure whether voters or MPs are right-wing or left-wing in absolute values because the attitudes, measured through survey responses, depend on the formulation of the question. In contrast, the figure is used to illustrate attitude *differences* between voters and MPs.
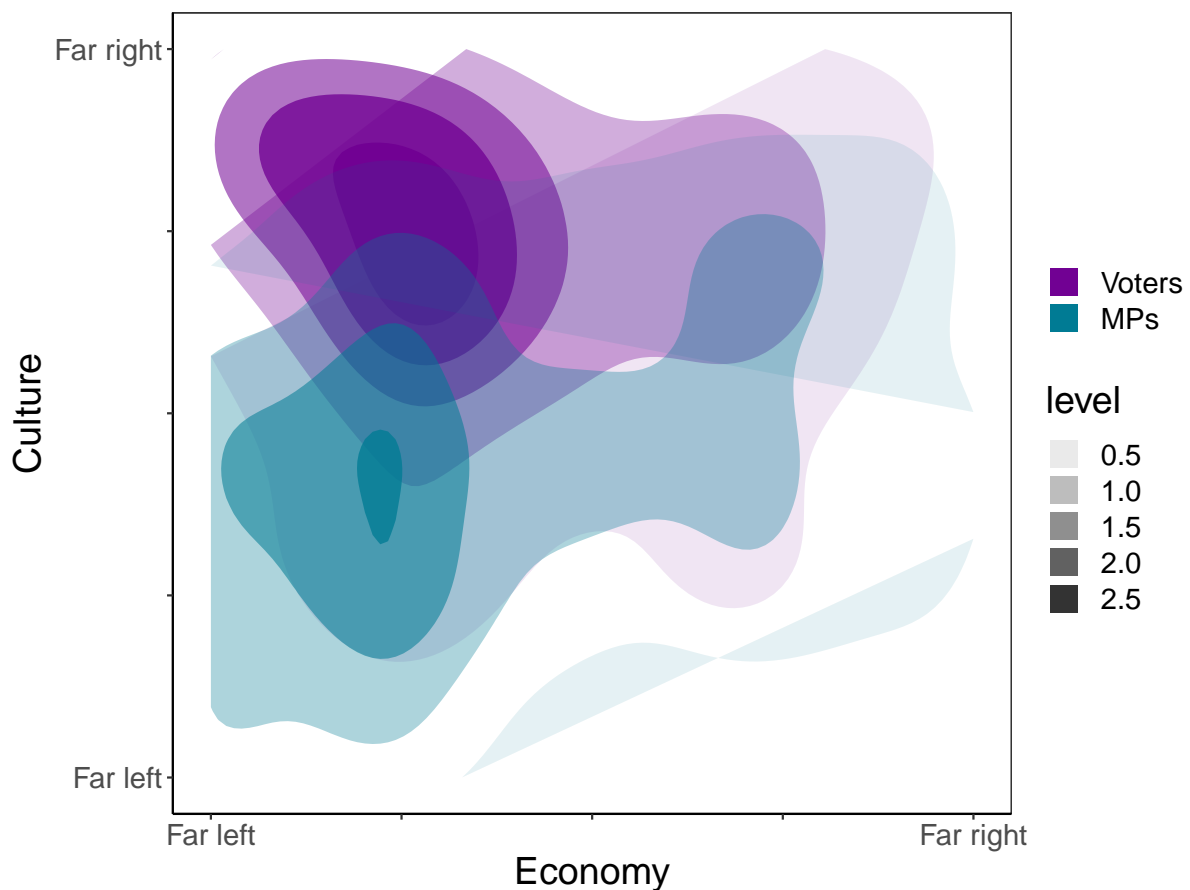
Figure 2. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians
Note: The Economy axis measures an attitude index for economic issues. The Culture axis measures an index for non-economics issues as calculated in Equation 1. The density is higher in less transparent areas. Data is pooled across Europe and includes attitudes of 127 MEPs, 738 national MPs and 19,813 voters.

The distribution of voter attitudes is unimodal. Most attitudes form a major cluster at this mode, in the upper-left part of the figure while the attitudes of the remaining voters are mainly spread out throughout the remaining upper half. This simple structure makes it easy for parties to determine

the vote-maximizing policy positions in the center of the voter distribution and makes a convergent equilibrium more likely in standard models (Plott, 1967; McKelvey and Wendell, 1976; McKelvey, 1979; McKelvey and Schofield, 1987; Norman Schofield, 2007). The distribution of MPs has a similar shape. It too is unimodal and most attitudes form a single large cluster around this mode. Again, the remaining attitudes are spread out, although there appears to be a weak positive correlation between the economy and culture indexes which is not visible for voters. However, the key difference between the two distribution is not their shape but their position in the figure. The distribution of voter attitudes is located much higher than the one for MPs. This illustrates that voters are much more culturally conservative overall than their representatives. In contrast, their horizontal positions are very similar, indicating that voters and MPs hold similar economic attitudes overall. These results reinforce the impression of a systematic and large representation gap on non-economic issues, but not on economic topics. Figure H.1 and Figure A.2 in the appendix show that the same results are obtained when weighting all issues within a dimension equally or when aggregating issues using a principal component analysis.

4.1.3 Statistical Significance of Attitude Differences. To examine the statistical significance of attitude differences and make their magnitude easier to interpret, I calculate z-scores of all attitude variables by dividing them by the standard deviation of citizen attitudes. I then estimate regressions of the following form by OLS:

$$z(a)_{i,s} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_{i,s} + c_s + \varepsilon_{i,s}. \tag{2}$$

$z(a)_{i,s}$ is the z-score of subject s on issue i, $\mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_{i,s}$ equals one if s is an elected parliamentarian and zero if s is a voter and c_s indicates a set of country-fixed effects. Consequently, β is a descriptive measure for attitude differences between voters and MPs within a country, expressed in standard deviations of attitudes.

Figure 3 shows β's and 95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered at the country level for all 14 policy issues. Higher values indicate that MPs are more right-wing on an issue than voters. I also display differences for various indexes. The "weighted narrow" indexes refer to those calculated using Equation 1 and are labeled narrow because I restricted the number of attitude variables to compare voters and national MPs. Wide indexes include more variables but compare voters to members of the European parliament only. I also present unweighted indexes and an cultural index that does not include EU-related issues (labeled "Weighted cor cultural index").

Regarding cultural issues, MPs are more liberal than voters on nearly all issues. The only exception is abortion, where MPs are estimated to be a bit more conservative. However, this difference is not significant at the 5% level. Attitude differences on all other cultural issues are significant and large. The mean MP is 26% to 68% of the respective attitude standard deviation more liberal than the mean voter in his country. Differences are smallest regarding EU unification, EU membership and same-sex marriage, and largest regarding EU referendums, immigration and sentences for criminals. Attitude differences regarding cultural indexes are larger, partly because standard deviations of indexes are smaller than those of individual issues. Reassuringly, estimates for all cultural indexes are highly significant and quantitatively similar, ranging from 71% to nearly 90% of a standard deviation. Differences on weighted indexes tend to be larger than those on unweighted ones because
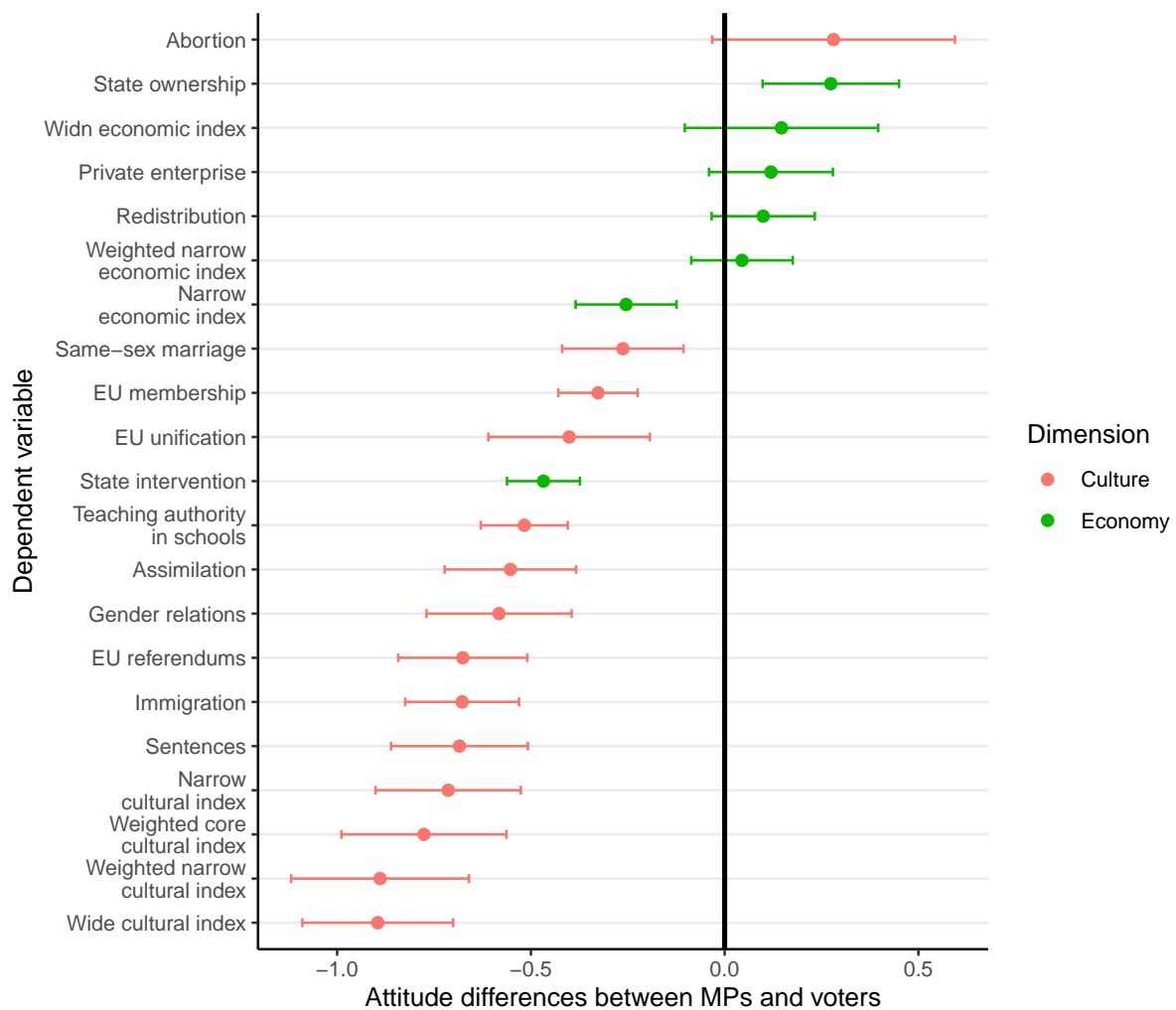
Figure 3. Attitude Differences between Voters and MPs by Issue
Note: The vertical axis shows different policy issues or policy dimensions. The horizontal axis shows OLS estimates for β's from Equation 2. All variables were scaled to have a standard deviation (in terms of citizen attitudes) of one. Higher values indicate that MPs are more right-wing on an issue than voters. 95% confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the country level.

attitude differences are larger on issues that voters consider more important as described in detail in Section G.1.

Attitude differences on economic issues are smaller and less systematic. Voters are significantly more in favor of state ownership of major public services but more opposed to state intervention in general. They seem to favor more redistribution and private enterprise than MPs but differences are not statistically significant. Likewise, estimates for the economic index depends more on its calculation. Using the unweighted average of all four economic issues results in attitude differences that are insignificant. This definition has the drawback, that data is only available for voters and members of the European parliament. Including national MPs requires to narrow the set of issues to redistribution and state intervention. Taking their unweighted average results in a small but positive and significant estimate. However, adjusting for the fact that voters consider redistribution as much more important than state intervention leads to insignificant differences.

Figure H.3 in the appendix shows mean positions of national MPs, members of the European parliament, voters and citizens individually. MEPs and national MPs tend to have similar attitudes but MPs are a bit further away from voters and citizens on most issues. Moreover, attitudes of MPs and MEPs differ more from those of citizens than from those of voters. Hence, focusing on citizens instead of voters implies even larger attitude differences between parliamentarians and the people.

4.2 From Attitude Differences to Representation Gaps

Substantive representation and representation gaps refer to the degree of congruence between the *decisions* of parliamentarians and the policy attitudes of voters. In contrast, the previous analysis, as well as most previous studies, compare *attitudes* of parliamentarians to attitudes of voters. A key concern is that MPs decide not based on their own attitudes, but on the attitudes of voters. If this was the case, representation gaps could be small despite large attitude differences.

4.2.1 The Representation Intention of Parliamentarians. To examine this possibility I use an item contained in the politician surveys and asks parliamentarians directly what they would do if their policy attitudes differed from that of their voters. MEPs were asked the following question:

How should, in your opinion, a member of European Parliament vote if his/her own opinion does not correspond with the opinion of her/his voters?

Possible answers included "Should vote according to her/his own opinion" and "Should vote according to her/his voters' opinion." National MPs were asked:

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

Possible answers included "own opinion" and "voter opinion." All surveys were anonymous. 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.

Despite that, of the 72% of MEPs who answered the question, about 84% stated that the MEP should follow their own opinion. Similarly, of the approximately 77% of national MPs that responded, about 69% stated that the national MP should follow their own opinion rather than the opinion of their voters. This indicates that the attitudes of MPs translate into decisions, which suggests that attitude differences translate into representation gaps.

Figure H.2 in the appendix depicts the average representation intention of various demographic subgroups of national MPs. Male, less educated and younger MPs have higher representation intention. 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 average representation intention exist in Germany, the Netherlands, Island, the UK, and Switzerland. The highest are 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 average representation intention is not driven by specific demographic groups but a majority position in all demographic groups and in most countries.

4.2.2 A Formal Framework for Estimating Representation Gaps. To derive quantitiative estimates for representation gaps I build a formal framework that combines information on attitude differences and the representation intention of MPs. Consider a particular single policy dimension d. Different values on d refer to different ordered policy alternatives. Voters and MPs have preferences over policy alternatives. The set of voter attitudes is denoted by X_V, the set of MP attitudes is denoted by X_{MP}, and mp is the index for MPs. MPs implement a policy. When doing so, they need not support a policy that coincides with their own attitudes. There are two types of MPs: MPs of type p(olicy motivated) only care about their own attitudes on d. MPs of type r(epresentation motivated) only care about representing the attitudes of voters. Let the representation intention of the parliament (RI) be the share of MPs that are representation motivated: $RI = \frac{\#r}{\#p+\#r} = 1 - \frac{\#p}{\#p+\#r}$. I define a representation gap (RG) for a given dimension d and metric $m(\cdot)$ as

$$RG_m^d := m(\text{policy alternatives supported by MPs}) - m(X_V).$$

Because standard probabilistic voting models make predictions about representation gaps in terms of means, I assume that m is the ordinary mean with equal weights in the main text, but results can be generalized to any metric. To match the mode to the data later, I assume that MPs of type r support the policy decision preferred by the overall mean voter.[7] Then

$$
\begin{aligned}
RG_{mean}^d &= \text{mean}(\text{policy alternatives supported by MPs}) - \text{mean}(X_V) \\
&= \text{mean}(X_V) \cdot \frac{\#r}{\#p + \#r} + \text{mean}(X_{MP}|mp \in p) \cdot \frac{\#p}{\#p + \#r} - \text{mean}(X_V) \\
&= [\text{mean}(X_{MP}|mp \in p) - \text{mean}(X_V)] \cdot (1 - \text{RI}) \qquad (3)
\end{aligned}
$$

Equation 3 proposes a way to measure representation gaps from data on attitudes of MPs and voters. The representation is zero if the means of voters' and MP's attitudes are identical. It can be positive or negative, making it possible to identify which direction MPs differ from voters.[8]

4.3 Estimates of Representation Gaps

4.3.1 Representation Gaps by Country. Figure 4 combines information on representation intention and attitudes differences between MPs and voters through Equation 3 to estimate representation gaps for 27 European countries and the European Union taken as a whole. Regions are displayed on the horizontal axis. The heights of the bars indicate the magnitude of the representation gaps, which are measured in standard deviations of citizen attitudes. Positive values indicate that parliamentarians of the respective country tend to be more right-wing/conservative/anti-EU regarding the dimension than voters, while a negative representation gap shows the opposite result. A value of zero indicates that there is no representation gap. I pool national MPs and MEPs to increase the sample size and because MEPs and national MPs have very similar policy attitudes, as shown in Figure H.3 in the appendix. In the case of the EU as a whole, I exclude national MPs. There, I also weigh to adjust for population sizes in order to compare representative samples of MEPs with a representative sample of voters from the EU.

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7. To the extent that MPs support the policy preferred by their own voters my estimates for representation gaps are likely biased downward.

8. Appendix B discusses how this measure differs from other measures used in the political science literature.
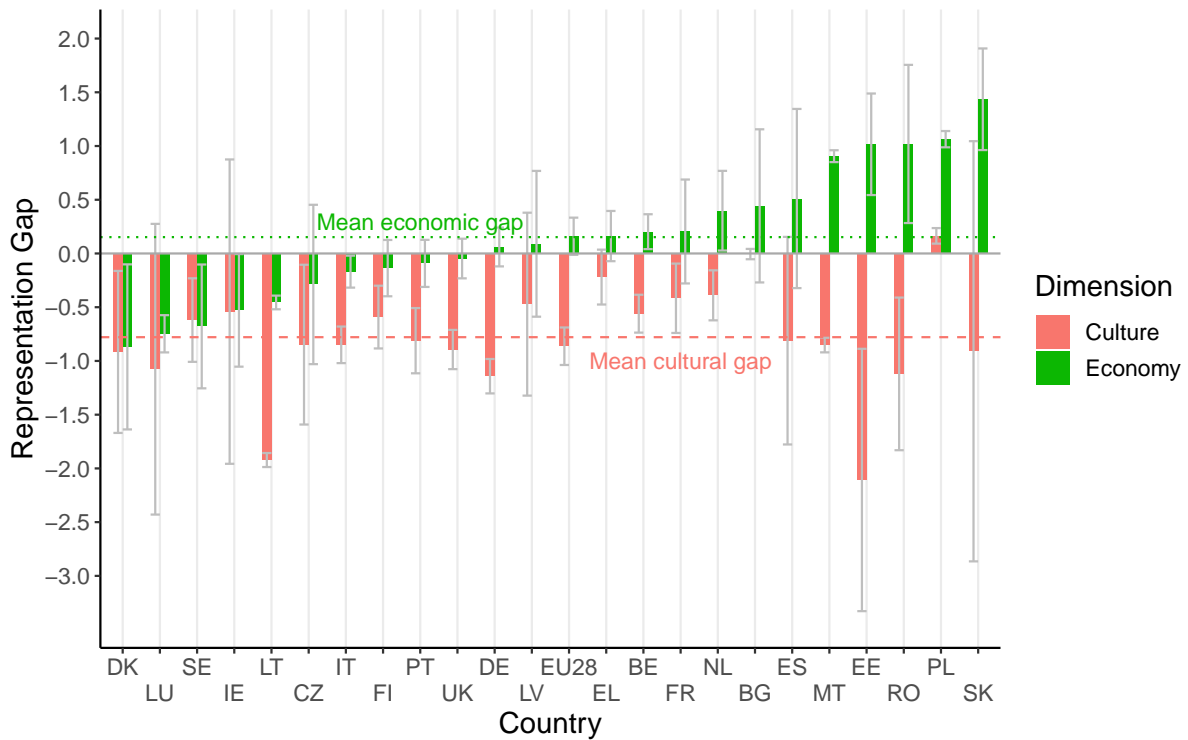
Figure 4. Representation Gaps by Country and Policy Dimension
Note: Bars show representation gaps by country and dimension between voters and parliamentarians (MPs and MEPs) from the same country. The larger the value, the more right-wing parliamentarians are compared to voters from their country. Representation gap estimates and 95% confidence intervals come from regressions resembling Equation 2 but for each country individually.

Cultural representation gaps are negative in all regions except Poland, indicating that policy-making is more left-wing than voters prefer in nearly all European countries and the EU as a whole. This difference is significant at the 5% level in 14 out of the 23 countries considered. The difference is quantitatively similar in another 6 countries but not significant due to a lower number of MP respondents. Magnitudes for most countries are substantial. In the average country, policymaking is abut 78% of a standard deviation of citizen attitudes more left-wing than voters prefer. The cultural representation gap concerning the European Parliament is estimated using data on MEPs and those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament election only and close to the average national representation gaps.

On economic topics, policymaking is about 15% of a standard deviation more right-wing than voters prefer in the average country. In contrast, economic representation gaps differ strongly by country. They are negative in 10 countries, positive in 13 countries, and slightly positive in the EU as a whole. Moreover, economic representation gaps are smaller but still sizeable than cultural ones in absolute value for most countries. They are the largest in eastern European countries, where policymaking is significantly more right-wing than voters prefer. Consistent with the finding that most parliamentarians are policy-motivated, Figure H.5 in the appendix shows that attitude differences between voters and parliamentarians look very similar to representation gaps in all countries.

The fact that parliaments are more culturally liberal than voters in nearly all countries suggests that factors common to all countries are important drivers of these gaps. In contrast, economic rep-

resentation gaps, which differ strongly between countries, might be better explained by factors that differ between countries.

4.3.2 Representation Gaps by Party. Figure 5 compares the policy-positions of European parties relative to the national mean voter. Each symbol refers to the policy position of one party, estimated as the mean position of parliamentarians belonging to this party. A position below the horizontal line at zero indicates that the corresponding party is more culturally liberal than the mean voter of its country. Similarly, a position to the right of the vertical line at zero reveals that the corresponding party is economically more right-wing than the mean voter of its country. The size of the symbol measures the number of MPs used to calculate the policy position.
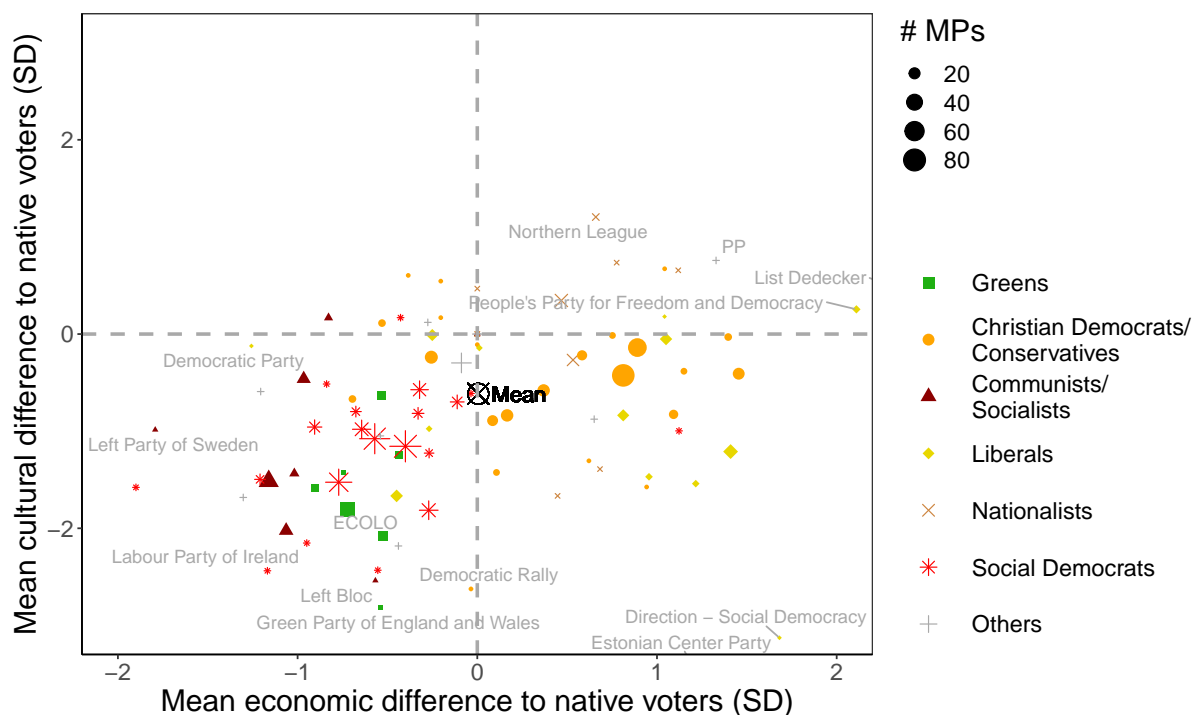
Figure 5. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Party
Note: This plot compares the position of European parties relative to the position of the national mean voter in the 2D culture-economy space. Different symbols refer to different party families. The size of the symbol measures the number of MPs used to calculate the policy position. There are a few parties with positions outside the boundaries of this figure, but all of them rely on few observations and are therefore measured imprecisely. I omit them here for clearness.

Looking at the classical economic left-right dimension reveals the expected pattern. Communists and socialists are the most left-wing, followed by green and social democratic parties. Nearly all parties of these party families are economically more left-wing than the overall mean voter of their country. Christian democratic and conservative parties are more right-wing than the national mean voter, and liberal parties are even more right-wing economically. Overall, a similar number of parties is located to the economic left and the economic right of the national mean voter, and parties are spread out (equally) wide to the left and the right. Consequently, the average position of all European parties is located very closely to the national mean voter.

In contrast, the vast majority of parties are culturally more liberal than the overall mean voter in their country. Even most Christian democratic and conservative parties, which are seen as the

main traditional center-right parties in most European countries, are center-left when focusing on the cultural dimension. Moreover, parties are spread out much farther in the direction of extremely culturally liberal positions than in the direction of extreme conservatism. The most prominent party family that tends to be more culturally conservative than national voters are nationalists, who, however, tend to be closer to the overall mean voter in this dimension than social democratic, green or socialist parties. Consequently, the mean party is clearly more culturally liberal than the overall mean voter of its country.

Reassuringly, Figure H.4 in the appendix shows that parliamentarians of the major European party groups are not only to the left of the mean voter regarding the cultural and EU dimension in general but also on most cultural issues individually.

4.3.3 Unequal Representation of Demographic Groups.   The European Parliament, like most parliaments, numerically over-represent those with a high living standard, men, natives, the old, and the educated. Are the these groups also better represented substantively by the European Parliament? Figure 6 helps to answer this question. It depicts representation gaps and 95% confidence intervals by demographic group and policy dimension. Data is pooled for all 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 representation gaps on the three political dimensions. Higher absolute values indicate a larger representation gap 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 policymaking of the European Parliament and negative values have an analogous interpretation. 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 reveals little heterogeneity between various demographic subgroups regarding the economic dimension. Men and women, those living in rural or urban areas, immigrants and natives, and the educated and uneducated are all similarly well represented substantively by the policymaking of the European Parliament. However, the rich are much better represented substantively than the poor, Christians are better represented than those without a denomination or Muslims, and the old are better represented than the young. In general, the numerically over-represented groups, the rich, men, natives, the old, and the educated, are also substantively better represented in four out of five cases. The only exception is the uneducated, who are better represented substantively than the educated.

In the cultural dimension, the largest differences between subgroups arise regarding education, not income. The attitudes of the rich, nonreligious, the young and the educated are notably better represented than those of the poor, the religious, the old and the uneducated. In contrast, there is no notable difference in representation gaps between immigrants and natives, as well as men and women. Hence, the numerically over-represented group is better represented substantively in two out of five cases and in one case it is much worse represented substantively.

Taken together, these findings show that numerical over-representation does not necessarily lead to substantive over-representation. In particular, the relationship depends on the policy dimension
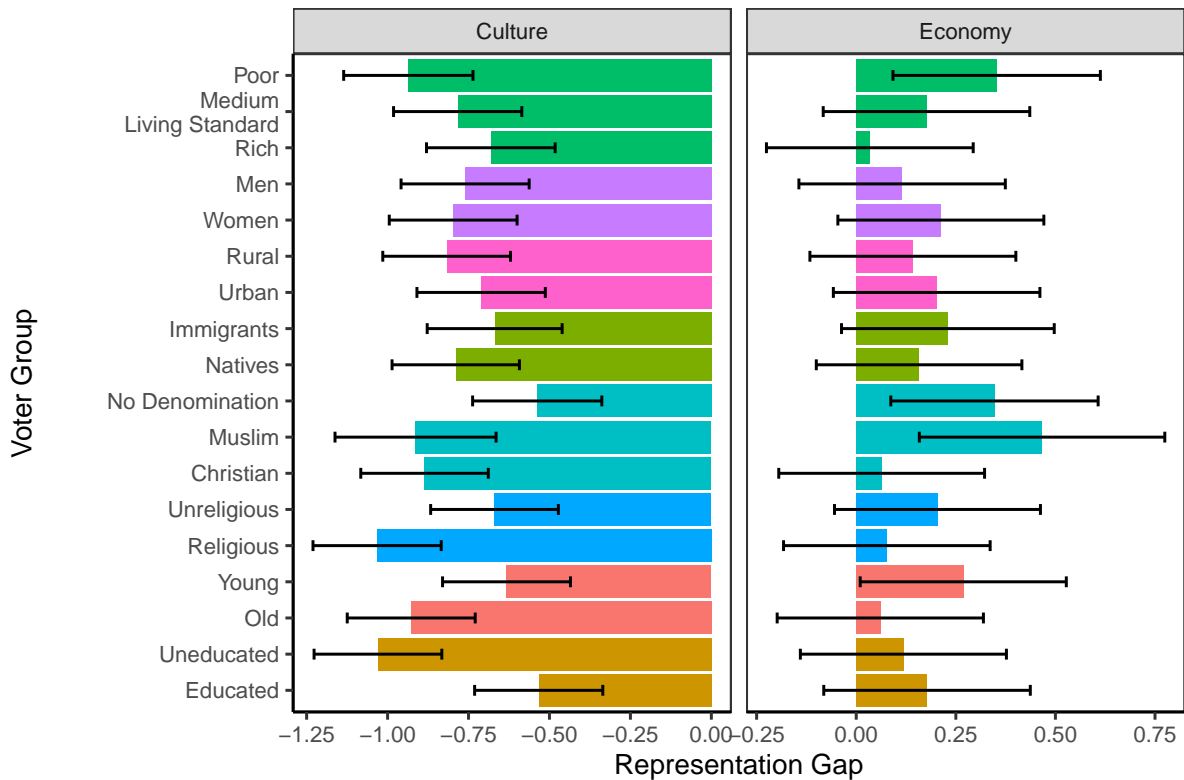
Figure 6. Representation Gaps by Voter Group

Note: The horizontal axis shows representation gaps in means between demographic subgroups of those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament elections and members of the European Parliament. The vertical axis displays the demographic subgroups. 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.

and the demographic variable. While numerical and substantive representation seems to be positively related in the economic dimension, this is less the case in the cultural dimension.

Figure 6 also helps to examine the origins of representation gaps. On the one hand, representation gaps 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 representation gaps go 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 representation gap. In such a model, parliamentarians balance group interests in a biased way. On the other hand, representation gaps 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 more left-wing in the economic dimension than MEPs. At the same time, all groups are significantly more right-wing in the cultural dimension than MEPs. This is evidence against the formerly mentioned "balancing" models and is consistent with the low representation intentions of parliamentarians.

4.4 Validating Survey-Based Estimates with Referendum Data

Estimates based on survey data might lead to biased results for several reasons (Heckman, Jagelka, and Kautz, 2021). For instance, politicians might interpret questions differently than voters or have stronger incentives than citizens to give "politically correct" responses. Hence, it is essential to validate survey-based data with behavioral data, which are less vulnerable to biases. When voting on referendums, MPs and voters make decisions with real political consequences, mitigating potential biases. Consequently, this section calculates representation gaps between voters and parliamentarians by comparing their voting behavior on referendums and uses these estimates to examine where survey-based estimates are reliable.

To this end, I restrict the analysis to Switzerland because it is the only European country with a sufficiently large number of referendums. Hence, I add a dataset that includes information for 126 Swiss 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 representation gap for a referendum r as

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

To calculate the representation gap for a policy issue i, I take the mean with equal weights of all RG_r belonging to issue i, matching the categories in the survey data. To do so, I pool referendum data from a 20-year time window around the date surveys were administered.

Referendum data only contains information on yes-no decisions. To make the Likert-scale data from the surveys 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 attitude differences regarding the punishment of criminals as the share of Swiss voters who agree or strongly agree that punishment for criminals should be more severe minus the share of Swiss MPs who agree or strongly agree with that statement.

Figure 7 shows a scatter-plot of survey-based estimates of representation gaps ($\hat{RG}$) and estimates based on referendum voting (RG) by issue. The horizontal axis shows the estimate for representation gaps on an issue based on survey data, while the vertical axis shows the corresponding estimate as estimated from referendum voting. The graph also displays a 45° line on which all data points would lie if the two measures were exactly the same. The better this line describes the relationship between the two measures, the more reliable the survey data. Reassuringly, the two measures are positively associated, and the 45° line describes their relationship well. This suggests that survey-based estimates are a reliable indicator of representation gaps.

In Figure 7, I aggregate referendums from 1997 until 2017 because the number of topics for which I can calculate the representation gap decreases when smaller time intervals are chosen. Figure H.6 and Figure H.7 in the appendix show that the results change little if one chooses a 10-year or a 30-year time window around 2007. Moreover, Section E.2 in the appendix shows estimates for Swiss representation gaps on all issues that could be identified from the referendum data, including those that could not be matched to issues from the survey data. Consistent with my other results,
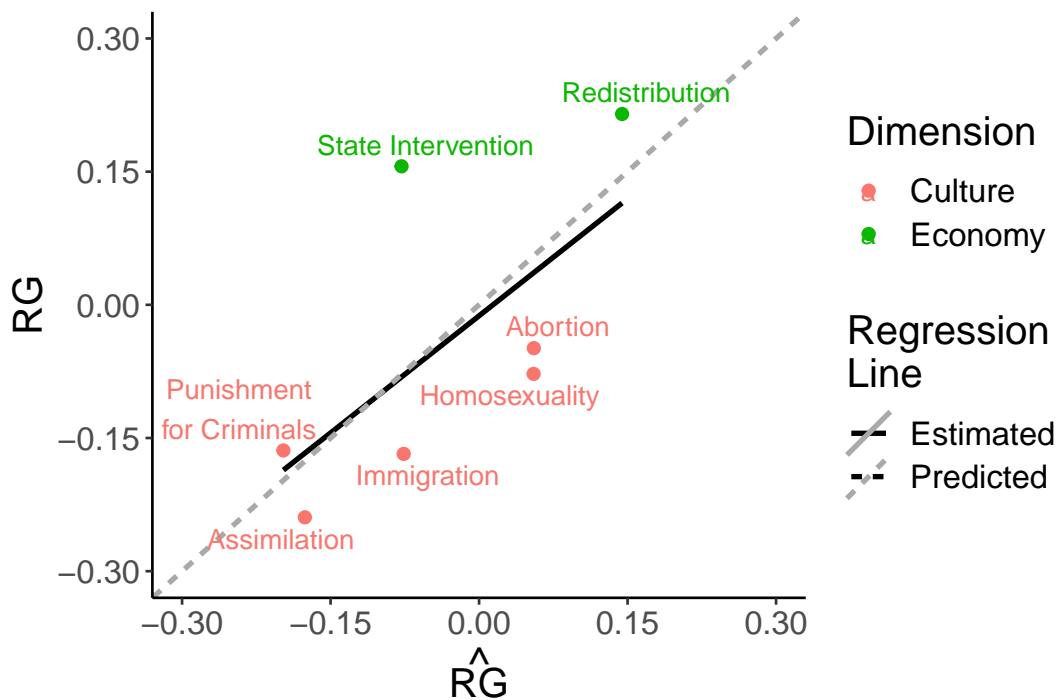
Figure 7. Estimates for Representation Gaps Based on Survey and Referendum Data (1997–2017)
Note: The horizontal axis shows RGs calculated from 2007 Swiss survey data. The vertical axis depicts RGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of RGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 1997 and 2017. The figure also shows a dashed 45° line and a fitted line from a binary regression.

voters are consistently more right-wing on cultural and EU-related issues than MPs, while the pattern is more mixed on economic issues. Section E.4 in the appendix shows that these results are similar if voters' actual votes are compared to the vote recommendations of parties.[9]

A potential problem of using referendum voting as a measure for representation gaps is that the idea behind referendums is to let voters decide. Hence, MPs might vote based on their personal policy attitudes in referendums but follow voters' attitudes in other decisions. That would imply that the estimates provided by this section are estimates for the attitude differences, not for the representation gaps between voters and MPs. Under this interpretation, the results 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 robustness of representation gaps. However, it would not include the representation intention.

A measure that mitigates this concern is initiation behavior. Referendums can be initiated by different actors. In some cases, the government or the parliament can call for a referendum. Examples include changes in 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. For instance, referendums have to be held when an initiative for a referendum has collected a certain

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9. Appendix Section E.3 shows how representation gaps 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 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 then, they have been more market-oriented than voters.

number of signatures. There are also mix-versions. For example, citizens may call for a referendum after the parliament makes a decision with which they disagree. Similarly, the parliament may offer counter-proposals to referendum initiatives put forward by the people. If an actor initiates a referendum on an initiative that would push policymaking to the right, this is evidence of a right-wing move of this actor. Moreover, deciding on which initiatives to hold a referendum on is not purely left to voters. Hence, MPs are more likely to incorporate the representation intention when deciding whether to propose left-wing or right-wing initiatives.

Section E.5 in the appendix shows that "ordinary" citizens and MPs initiate different types of referendums. Citizens mostly initiate referendums that enable a cultural shift to the right, like stricter immigration measures, while most proposals put forward by MPs would push the country culturally to the left. This difference is highly significant. In contrast, there is no significant difference in initiation behavior on economic issues. Hence, initiation differences are similar to attitude and voting differences, suggesting that survey-based estimates for representation gaps are reliable.

5 Potential Causes of Representation Gaps

In standard models, electoral competition forces candidates to adopt positions close to the electoral center (Downs, 1957; Persson and Tabellini, 2002; Norman Schofield, 2007). Why doesn't that happen? And why do voters vote in such a way that representation gaps emerge?

There are many potential reasons why electoral competition does not force candidates to implement the policy attitudes of voters. Appendix G shows that many of these factors are unlikely to explain the existence of the representation gaps documented by this paper. These factors include that voters or MPs find some policy dimensions unimportant (Section G.1), the intention of parliamentarians to protect minority groups from a "tyranny of the majority" (Section G.2), lobbyism (Section G.3), a causal effect of being elected as a parliamentarian on policy attitudes (Section G.4), and the intention of parliamentarians to represent citizens at large or only those who are very interested in politics (Section 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.

5.1 A Model That Can Explain Representation Gaps

The stylized model presented in this section abstracts from many features of electoral competition in Europe to focus on a particular mechanism. Consider as a reference point a model resembling 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. Each voter casts his 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. Finally, 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 $x_L = x_R = A^{-1}(0.5)$; they both announce the attitude of the median voter. Hence, the baseline model without valence heterogeneity and a representation intention of one does not feature a representation gap. Intuitively, if one candidate announces a policy position that does not equal $A^{-1}(0.5)$, then the other candidate wins for sure by announcing $A^{-1}(0.5)$ because the half of the electorate that is on the opposite side from $A^{-1}(0.5)$ as the other candidate and the median voter will vote for the candidate at the median position.

The evidence discussed in Section 4.2.1 suggests that candidates are primarily motivated not by winning but by implementing their own policy attitudes.[10] 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 $a_L < A^{-1}(0.5) < a_R$. Again, there exists a unique Nash Equilibrium in dominant strategies in which both candidates announce the attitude of the median voter $A^{-1}(0.5)$.

To see why consider the case in which a_L is closer to $A^{-1}(0.5)$ than a_R is to $A^{-1}(0.5)$. 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 $A^{-1}(0.5)$ and closer to $A^{-1}(0.5)$ 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 $A^{-1}(0.5)$. In this manner, both candidates can be thought of as outbidding each other until they both announce $A^{-1}(0.5)$ as their policy positions which is implemented with certainty.[11] 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. 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). Let the valence of candidate L be denoted by λ_L and the valence of candidate R by $\lambda_R < \lambda_L$. I follow Norman 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. 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.

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 $a_L \leq x_L < A^{-1}(0.5)$ such that the median voter and all voters with $a_i < A^{-1}(0.5)$ vote for L who therefore wins the election. So L can ensure the final policy is 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. This simple model illustrates that heterogeneous valence and low RI are both needed to lead to

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10. Models in which candidates are solely policy-motivated, i.e., RI=0, have been introduced by Wittman (1977) and Calvert (1985).

11. A formal proof can be found in Persson and Tabellini (2002).

an RG. Low representation intention makes candidates willing to bias policy positions away from the electoral center. Heterogeneous valence allows the higher valence party to get elected despite competition from candidates who are closer to the electoral center.

In the model, policy outcomes are always biased toward the bliss point of the party that has the higher valence. Hence, the systematic representation gaps documented by the paper at hand can only be explained by systematic valence differences between parties. Viewed differently, the model predicts that left-wing parties are seen as more competent than right-wing parties by voters on country-dimension pairs where policy making is more left-wing than voters prefer and vice versa. Due to the complex country-dimension structure of representation gaps shown in Figure 4, valence differences between left-wing and right-wing parties are predicted to follow a very specific pattern. For instance, cultural left-wing parties are predicted to have a valence advantage compared to cultural right-wing parties in most countries while economic left-wing parties are predicted to have a valence advantage compared to economic right-wing parties in about half of the countries.

5.2 Testing the Valence Hypothesis

It is possible to test these prediction using the survey data. 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

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

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

Let c be a country and d a dimension $\in \{\text{Culture, Economy}\}$. 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

$$VR_{c,d} = \left| \sum_{p \in PR_{c,d}} valence_{p,d}^c \right| - \left| \sum_{p \in PL_{c,d}} valence_{p,d}^c \right|. \tag{4}$$

Hence, I calculate the valence share in country c that all right-wing parties have combined and subtract the shares 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 might be culturally right-wing but economically left-wing. The measure is distributed between -1 and 1, and higher values indicate that right-wing parties are seen as more competent compared to left-wing parties.

Figure 8 compares representation gaps with $VR_{c,d}$ by country and policy dimension. The horizontal axis shows country abbreviations. The vertical axis relates to the valence measure and the
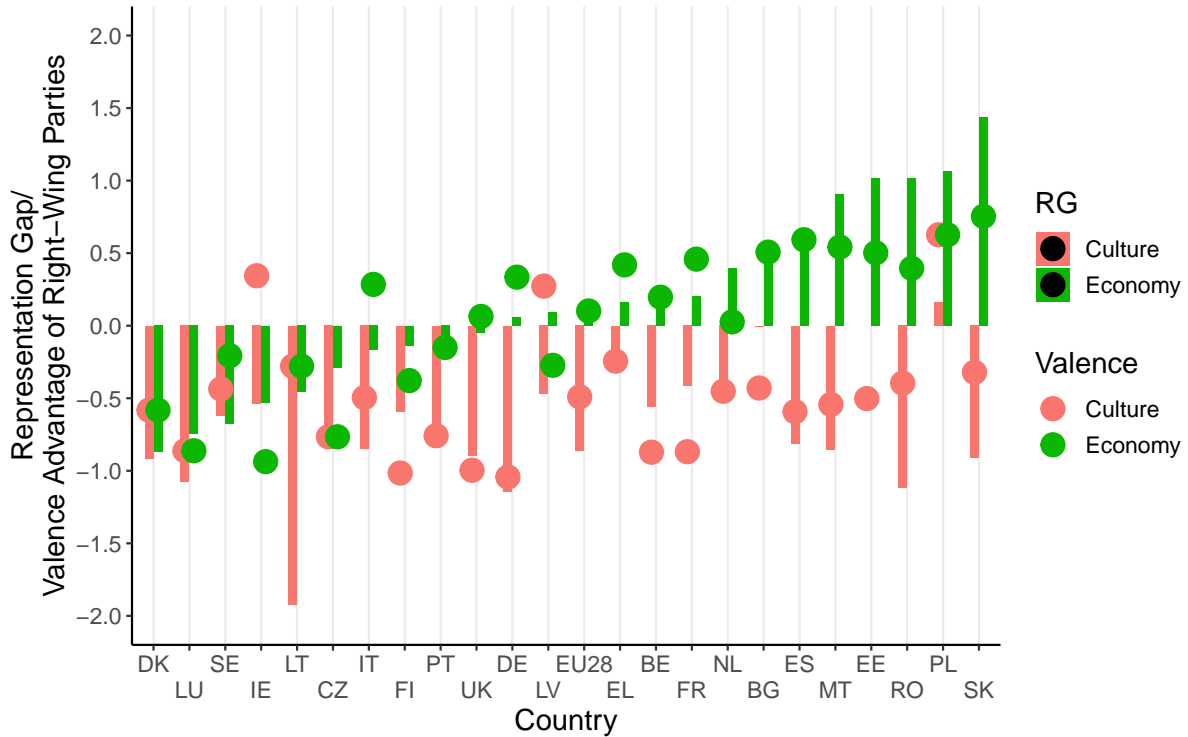
Figure 8. Comparing the Valence Measure with Representation Gaps
Note: The horizontal axis shows country abbreviations. The vertical axis shows two variables: the representation gap and $VR_{c,d}$ from Equation 4. Bars show values for the representation gap. Points show values for $VR_{c,d}$. Colors indicate the dimension for both measures in the same way.

Attitude representation gap. Consistent with the model, the valence measure is negative for the cultural dimension in all but three countries, including the only country with a positive representation gap. Thus, parties that are culturally left-wing relative to voters combine more valence than culturally right-wing parties. As predicted, the pattern is more even regarding the economic dimension. The measure is positive in 14 and negative in nine countries. Moreover, parties that are economically more right-wing than voters tend to unite more valence than those on the left of voters.

To examine whether the valence advantages of right-wing parties correlate with the RG between countries *within* a dimension, one can compare the points to the bars in Figure 8. Points and bars seem to be positively correlated. This can be seen most easily in the economic dimension, where points track bars closely. In particular, when the valence measure is negative, the RG is also mostly negative, while the RG is usually positive when the valence measure is positive. To assess this relationship formally, I estimate the following equation by OLS:

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

$\mathbf{X}_{c,d}$ is a vector of control variables. I divide all variables by their standard deviation to make results easier to interpret. Standard errors are clustered on the country levels. Table I.2 shows the results. The highly significant estimate for β in column (1) shows that an increase in the valence advantage of the political right by one standard deviation is associated with policymaking that is about one standard deviations more to the right of the mean voter. The R^2 from this binary regression is about 0.54, which shows that valence alone can account for much of the variation in representation gaps.

The association is robust to the inclusion of several control variables which might influence representation gaps, like a democracy index and a measure for corruption of which data is taken from the World Bank. Moreover, none of these other variables is significant in any specification and the coefficient on valence is the largest of all coefficients in all specifications. Apart from documenting the robust association between representation gaps and valence, this indicates that institutional factors are not a key driver of representation gaps. 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 stays large and highly significant. Overall, these results are consistent with the hypothesis that differences in valence are an important driver of representation gaps.

A key concern with the valence measure is that valence cannot be completely disentangled from proximity in policy space. Subjects might believe that a party is competent because it expresses views that are similar to those of the subject. This would imply that the valence measure mixes the perceived valence of a party and proximity in policy space between voter and party. While I cannot rule out that my measure does mix up these two factors, this bias strengthens my conclusions instead of invalidating them. Assume that valence and position in policy space are identical measures. Given that voters find left-wing parties more competent than right-wing parties, their attitudes should align with those of left-wing parties. In contrast, I find that most voters find left-wing parties more competent but are at the same time more right-wing than parliaments. Hence, a positive correlation between valence and proximity in policy space cannot explain the pattern described in Table I.2 and would lead to a downward bias of β.

6 Potential Consequences of Representation Gaps

6.1 Political Trust

Representation gaps might make citizens believe that the parliament does not consider their concerns which could in turn lead to reduced trust in democratic institutions. The previous analysis has also shown that in the cultural dimension, all established party families are more left-wing than the average voter. Citizens who are more conservative than established parties on these dimensions 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 parties to the right and the left of voters on the economic dimension, a representation gap there is less likely to cause vote abstention.

To test these predictions, I compare the extent to which citizens, whose attitudes are differently well represented, trust political institutions, are satisfied with them, and are willing to vote. 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 several outcome variables of interest y_i on this variable using OLS:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_d \cdot |\Delta_{i,d}| + \theta \cdot \mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i. \tag{5}$$

$\mathbf{X}_i$ includes the following control variables: age, gender, degree of religiosity, marital status, city size, living standard, social class, occupation, education, immigration background, and religious denomination. To simplify the interpretation, I standardize all dependent variables except the voting indicator and divide all $|\Delta_d|$ by the standard deviation of citizen attitudes regarding the corresponding dimension index. Consequently, β_d, which measures by how many standard deviations y_i differs between a citizen and another citizen with similar demographics but policy attitudes that are a standard deviation of attitudes further away from those of the mean MEP. Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

In principle, I am interested in the causal effect of $|\Delta_{i,d}|$ on y_i. However, Equation 5 estimates a correlation. Including $\mathbf{X}_i$ can help mitigate omitted variable bias but cannot account for reversed causality. Reversed causality is likely to bias estimates for β_d upward, while measurement error likely leads to a bias in the opposite direction. Hence, the causal effect might be larger or smaller than β_d.

Figure 9 shows the β_d coefficients and 95% confidence intervals by democracy attitude variable y and policy dimension d. Results are consistent with the expectations. Most coefficients are positive and statistically significant. Voters with an additional bias from the mean MEP on cultural issues of one standard deviation are about 0.13 standard deviations more likely to believe that the European Parliament does not consider the concern of the citizens. Associations are the larger for the cultural than for the economic dimension.

The strongest associations emerge regarding whether the European Parliament considers the opinions of its citizens. Those with different policy attitudes than the mean MEP are much more likely to think that it doesn't consider the concerns of its citizens. Moreover, citizens with different attitudes than the mean MEP are less likely to trust EU institutions, more likely to be dissatisfied with how democracy works in the EU, and to believe that decisions made by the EU are not in the interest of their country.

The association with voting in the 2009 European Parliament 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. The association regarding the cultural dimension is estimated to be positive but weaker and insignificant. The association regarding the economic dimension is insignificant and estimated to be negative.[12]

Figure H.10 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.

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12. Bakker, Jolly, and Polk (2020) find, using a different methodology, whether ideological in-congruence between parties and voters is associated with lower political trust and increased vote-shares for anti-establishment parties.
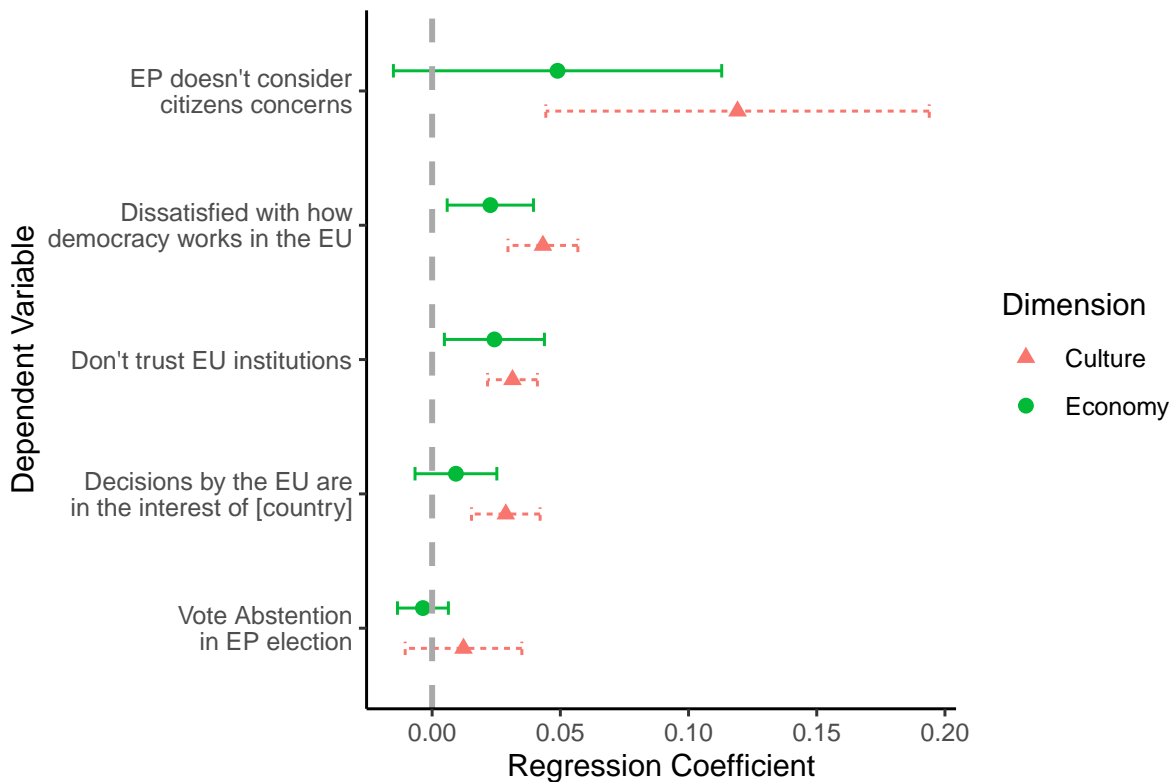
Figure 9. Association between Representation and Political Trust

Note: This figure shows a coefficient plot. It depicts estimates for β_d from different versions of regression Equation 5. 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.

6.2   Populism as a Reaction to Representation Gaps

The inclusion of valence and politically motivated candidates in the Downs (1957) framework explains why neither existing parties nor voters deviate from an equilibrium that has representation gaps. But why do new parties not fill the representation gaps and consequently rise? Indeed, in recent decades, a new group of challenger parties, the populists, have achieved remarkable electoral success. Could the rise of populism be a consequence of representation gaps?

6.2.1 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 (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022).

According to the populist narrative the people and the elite are caught in a struggle. The elite governs in a way that is not congruent with the policy preferences of the people. Seeing this, populists

enter politics to replace the elite and better represent the policy preferences of the people (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022).

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 most scholars 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 (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). I follow this literature. Data for classification is taken from the CHES. In one CHES item, 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 it possible to examine temporal stability.

I label all parties as populists who score more than one standard deviation above the mean on this item. This procedure results in a set of 50 parties which are classified as populist in 2014. While one could use other thresholds, this approach results in a set of populist parties that is large and plausible. Populist parties are listed in Table I.11. 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 includes 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. An 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. However, it was only included in the 2019 CHES. Reassuringly, the correlation between the two measures is about 0.78.

6.2.2 Testing the Populist Narrative. 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 representation gaps 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 (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017).

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 in 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 in the cultural and the EU dimension, and many populists focus on cultural topics like immigration, policy toward minorities, or punishment of 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 in 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 representing the citizens' attitudes at large and aim to fill policy space for idealistic reasons. Similarly, citizens who do not feel represented might become politicians to represent their own attitudes and like-minded people (Bó et al., 2023). On the other hand, an opportunistic politician who wants to acquire power might fill empty policy space to maximize his vote share. But do populists indeed fill representation gaps?

6.2.3 Testing the Representation Claim of the Populist Narrative. If populists react to representation gaps, they should be relatively likely to believe in low substantive representation. To test this, I compare the responses of national MPs belonging to populist and non-populist parties to the following item:

> *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."

Figure 10 visualizes the response distributions of populist and non-populist MPs. Populists are much more likely than non-populists to believe that attitude differences 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 attitude differences found by this study, populist MPs have a more realistic perception of representation in Europe than non-populist MPs. Overall, this suggests that populists truly perceive attitude differences to be large which is consistent with their narrative. Figure H.8 in the appendix shows similar results for MEPs.
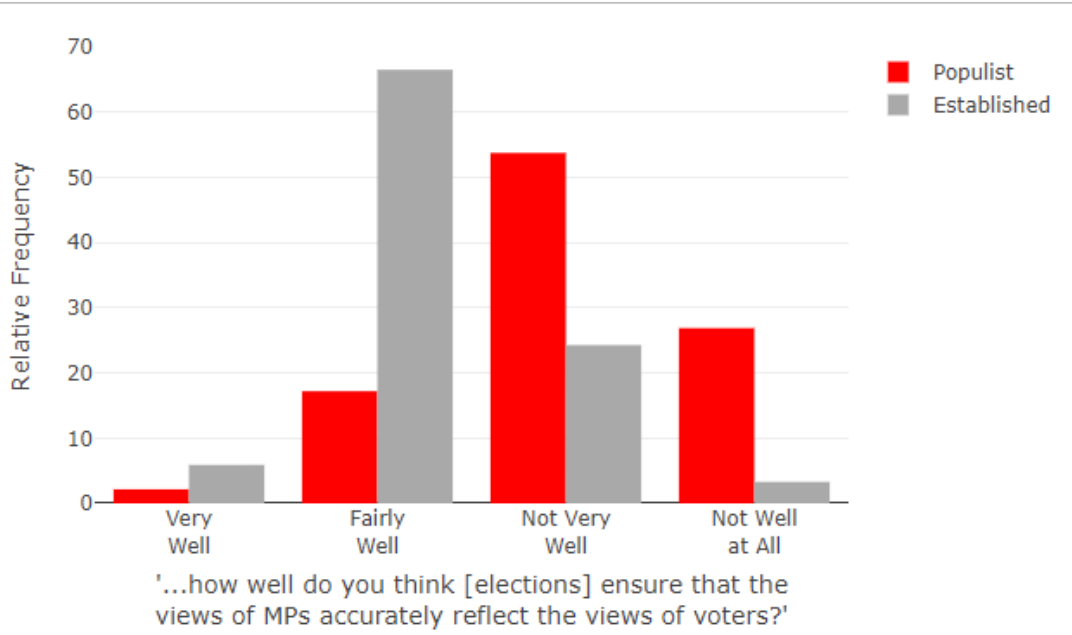
Figure 10. Perceptions of Attitude Representation Gaps by Populist and Non-populist MPs
Note: This figure depicts two histograms that visualize answer frequencies among parliamentarians from populist and non-populist parties to the following statement: "Thinking about how elections in [country] work in practice, how well do you think they ensure that the views of MPs accurately reflect the views of voters?" Results are based on national MPs.

The populist narrative further asserts that populists do represent citizens. To examine this, I first analyze their representation intention. Of the 1,366 national MPs belonging to non-populist parties, 978, or about 72%, said that an MP should vote according to his own opinion. In contrast, 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 < 0.0001). 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 eight MEPs belonging to populist parties, four stated that an MEP should vote according to his own opinion, and four stated that an MEP should vote according to the opinion of his voters. Fisher's exact test reveals that this difference is significant, too (p ≈ 0.024). 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 estimate the following regression equation for several political issues individually by OLS:

$$Y_{p,t,i} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{Populist}]_{p,t} + \delta_t + \theta_c + \varepsilon_{p,t,i}. \tag{6}$$

$Y_{p,t,c,i}$ is the political position of party p (in country c) at time t on issue i. $\mathbb{1}[\text{Populist}]_{p,t}$ 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. I pool data from the 2014 and 2019 CHES to estimate this model and use all policy issues included in

either of the two surveys while 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 one.

I then estimate Equation 6 for each i individually. As a result, β_i measures descriptively how many standard deviations of party positions the average populist party is more right-wing on issue i than the average mainstream party, controlling for time and country effects.
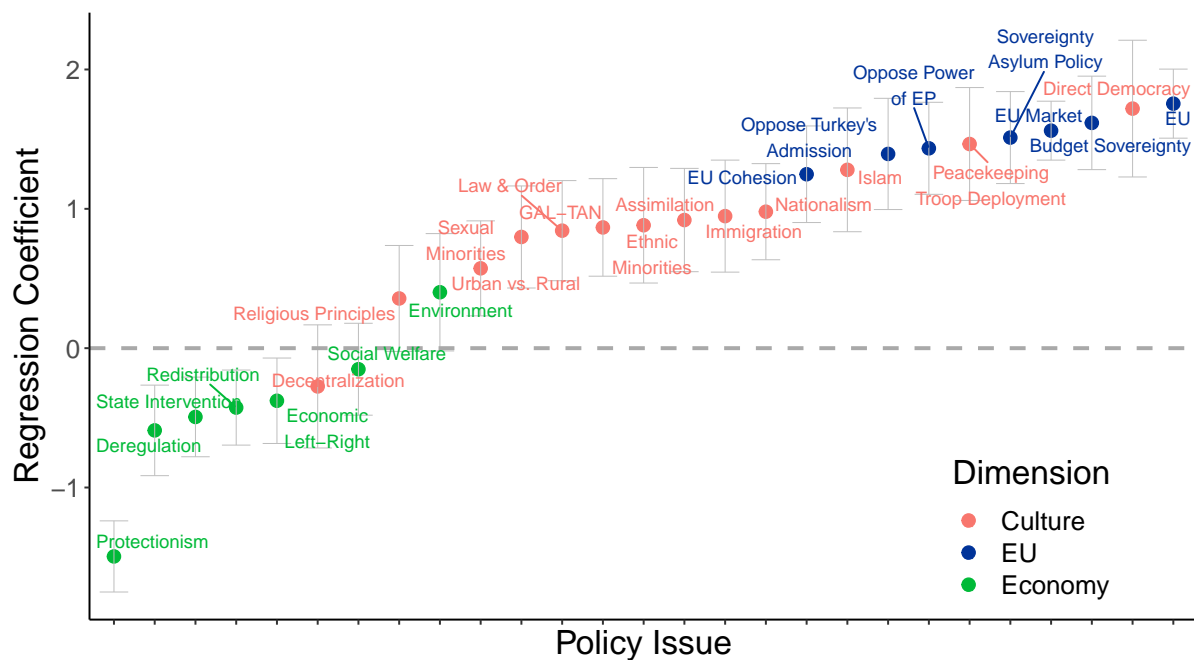
Figure 11. Issue-Positioning of Populist Parties Relative to Non-populist Parties

Note: This figure is based on regression Equation 6. Each dot shows the coefficient on the populist indicator for a different dependent variable. The text next to each variable indicates the dependent variable used. The vertical axis shows the size of the coefficient. Colors indicate policy dimensions. Coefficients are surrounded by 95% confidence intervals. Standard error are clustered at the country level.

Figure 11 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. Nearly all estimates are significant and quantitatively large. Populist parties are significantly more right-wing than non-populist parties regarding nearly all cultural and EU-related issues. In contrast, populists are more left-wing on all but one economic issue, while differences tend to be smaller than for cultural and EU issues, which are distinguished here. Figure H.9 in the appendix shows that results change little if parties are weighted with their vote share in the last national election. This pattern resembles the representation gap pattern documented above. Even the magnitudes of differences between 1) populists and established parties and 2) voters and established parties, on the other hand, are similar.

To assess more directly whether populists are close to voters in policy space, Figure 12 displays the political positions of populists and mainstream parties in the 2D culture-economy space. The figure is very similar to the Figure 5 except that here I focus on the distinction between populists and other parties.
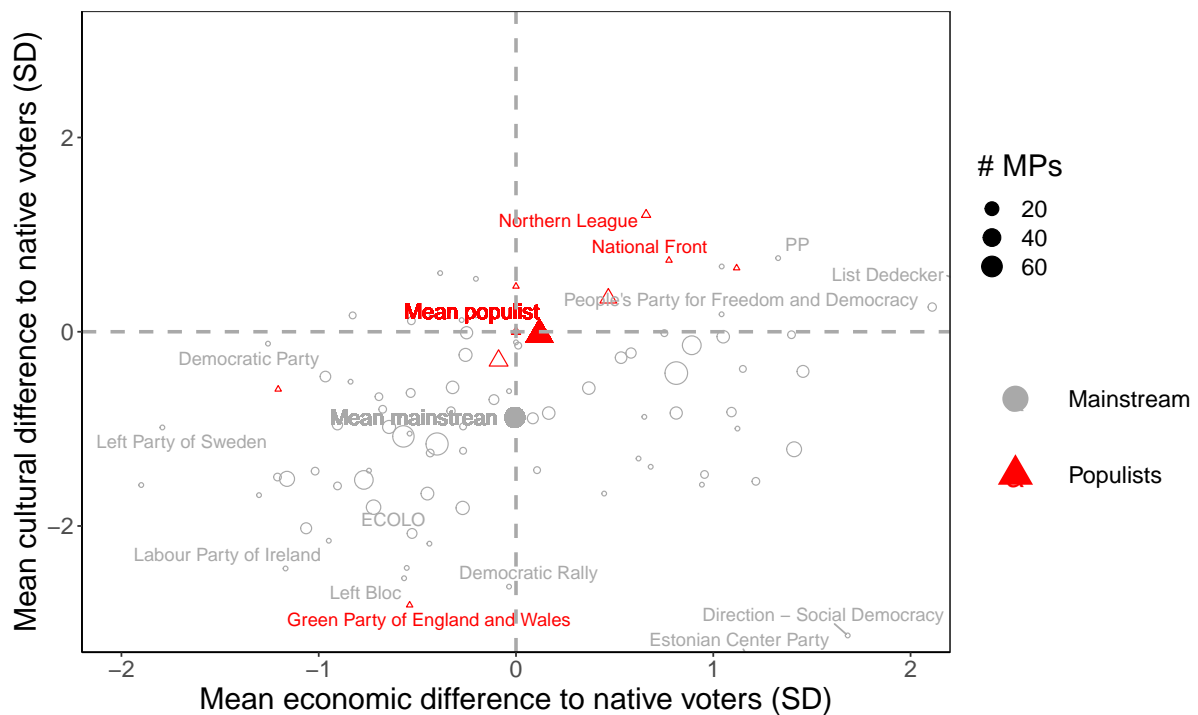
Figure 12. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Populist and Non-populist Parties
Note: This plot compares the position of European parties relative to the position of the national mean voter in the 2D culture-economy space. The figure distinguishes populist from non-populist parties. The size of the symbol measures the number of MPs used to calculate the policy position. There are a few parties with positions outside the boundaries of this figure, but all of them rely on few observations and are therefore measured imprecisely. I omit them here for clearness.

As can be seen, nearly all mainstream parties have policy positions below the horizontal line at zero — they are more culturally liberal than the overall mean voter in their country. Consequently, the mean mainstream party is about one standard deviation of citizen attitudes more culturally liberal than the mean voter. In contrast, populist parties hold policy positions that are very close to those of the mean voter on average. Hence, populists, on average, fill the cultural representation gap.

However, this is not true for all populist parties. While most, like the national front, can be seen as cultural center-right parties, some populist parties are culturally very liberal compared to the national voters of their country. Overall, these results suggest that populists behave in a way consistent with standard spatial models (Downs, 1957; Norman Schofield, 2007). They offer distinct policy positions that are, on average, close to those preferred by the mean voter. It is, therefore, easy to bring in line with spatial models that populists increasingly attract votes. In contrast, mainstream parties hold positions that are systematically biased relative to voters. Hence, they are the only actors whose behavior is not in line with standard spatial models of electoral competition.

Considering the evidence on all claims of the populist narrative in combination shows that much of it is true, even though populists often exaggerate and oversimplify it. This is consistent with the idea that the main implication of the populist narrative, their claim to be a reaction to representation gaps, is true too.

7 Conclusion

Representative democracies build on the idea that voters elect parliamentarians, which in turn, represent the voters' interests. In this paper, I explore the degree to which parliamentarians in Europe actually represent their voters. I document large representation gaps. For example, on an index of cultural issues, the mean parliamentarian is between half of a standard deviation and one standard deviation more left-wing than his voters in most countries. Moreover, I explore the structure of representation and find that representation gaps are largest on cultural issues, like immigration or gender relations. Their existence can largely be explained by an advantage in perceived competence that parties on the cultural left enjoy.

The question arises whether representation gaps are problematic or not. My findings are consistent with representation gaps causing vote abstention, distrust in democratic institutions, and the rise of populism, which many scientists consider problems (Otten et al., 2017; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2021; Docquier, Peluso, and Morelli, 2022; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). Still, the evidence presented here is far from conclusive, and, to the best of my knowledge, there has been very little research on this question. Hence, examining under what conditions representation gaps are desirable or undesirable from a welfare perspective is an exciting avenue for further research.

Assuming that policymakers try to reduce representation gaps, they could do so in two ways. First, they could change voters' policy attitudes, for instance, through information campaigns. Second, they could change policymaking directly to align with the voters' attitudes. Which alternative is preferable strongly depends on whether representation gaps result from information asymmetries or value differences between voters and parliamentarians. For instance, if a representation gap results because the public misses crucial information on a topic that politicians have, information interventions seem to be appropriate. In contrast, politicians might have different deep values or preferences, like their religious beliefs or structural parameters like risk aversion or patience. In this circumstance, a representation gap is more likely to signify a need for reform.

Interestingly, recent studies have shown that European voters hold large misperceptions about immigration, where the representation gap is particularly large (Barrera et al., 2020; Grigorieff, Roth, and Ubfal, 2020; Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva, 2023). This is consistent with representation gaps arising due to a lack of information on the part of voters. However, Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021) note that immigration attitudes are very stable over time and robust to major shocks, making it unlikely that they are easily susceptible to information. Consistent with this observation, many experimental studies find that providing subjects with information about immigrants does not strongly affect their immigration attitudes (Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin, 2019; Barrera et al., 2020; Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva, 2023). Moreover, Chapter two of this dissertation (Günther, 2023) shows that most Europeans would be opposed to immigration by asylum seeker if they were informed about their true characteristics. This casts doubt on the idea that anti-immigration attitudes are mainly due to misperceptions and, thereby, the hypothesis that asymmetric information is responsible for the immigration representation gap. At the same time, Heß et al. (2018) show that German parliamentarians are 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 between voters and politicians.

Still, assessing this question directly requires data about the preferences and information of parliamentarians and voters, which, to my best knowledge, does not exist yet. Moreover, other representation gaps could be explained by information asymmetries, even if the immigration representation gap is the result of value differences. Therefore, examining whether representation gaps are due to information asymmetries or value differences seems to be a another avenue for future research.

Finally, representation gaps can help to explain the characteristics of populist parties. One example of this is the combination of right-wing cultural and left-wing economic policy positions they supply. Comparing the findings presented here to research in political science and psychology suggests that their anti-media and anti-expert stance are related to representation gaps too. The representation gaps documented here closely resemble the media biases identified by Puglisi and Snyder (2015) while Haidt and Lukianoff (2018) shows that experts tend to be more socially left-wing than the population. Thus, examining the relationship between political representation gaps, media bias, and a potential "expert bias" might be another promising starting point for further research.

Appendix A The Dimensionality of the European policy Space

Figure A.1 depicts a correlation matrix of all 14 attitude variables, based on all citizens of 27 EU countries and weighted to adjust for population size differences between countries. Colored boxes contain the correlation coefficients of variables belonging to the same policy dimension. Insignificant correlations are not shown. All variables are scaled such that higher values indicate attitudes that are more economically right-wing, culturally conservative or anti-EU. The only variable that is not straightforward to classify is the attitude regarding EU referendums. I classify a preference in favor of binding EU referendums as anti-EU, because referendums create an additional hurdle for EU integration.

All significant correlation coefficients between cultural variables are positive, and most are in the range of 0.2-0.4. All but one cultural variables correlate (positively) significantly with all other cultural variables. The only exception is the rejection of abortion rights for women, which is (positively) significantly related to a preference for traditional gender roles and opposition to same-sex marriage but not significantly correlated with any other cultural attitude. Correlations of cultural variables with non-cultural variables tend to be weaker in magnitude, and some are negative. Similarly, all EU attitudes are positively and significantly correlated with each other. In particular, a preference for EU referendums correlates positively with opposition to EU unification and EU membership. Anti-EU attitudes correlate positively, but less strongly, with conservative attitudes regarding all cultural variables, except for abortion. Correlations with economic attitudes are weaker in magnitude and less systematic. Out of the six correlation coefficients between the four economic variables, four are significantly positive, one is significantly positive but small in magnitude, and one is insignificant. Correlations with non-economic variables tend to be smaller and less systematic. Overall, this evidence is consistent with the previous literature and suggests that economic attitudes should be distinguished from cultural ones. The evidence speaks less clearly for a distinction between cultural and EU attitudes. While they correlate stronger with each other, most Europeans opposed to the EU are also generally culturally conservative.

Table A.1. Correlations of attitude variables with the first 5 principal components of the European policy space

	Dim.1	Dim.2	Dim.3	Dim.4	Dim.5
State intervention	0.405	0.355	-0.201	0.505	0.607
Redistribution	-0.046	0.279	0.692	0.581	-0.261
Assimilation	0.660	0.059	-0.144	0.096	-0.502
Sentences	0.682	0.087	-0.320	0.039	-0.213
Abortion	0.130	0.574	0.453	-0.533	0.132
Same-sex marriage	0.565	0.459	-0.022	-0.230	0.007
EU membership	0.571	-0.501	0.273	-0.083	0.290
EU unification	0.559	-0.495	0.401	-0.039	0.058

Alternatively to sorting issues directly in dimensions, one could perform an empirically driven approach, using a principal component analysis. To mirror the analysis in Section 4.1.2, I focus on the eight issues that voters, members of the European parliament and national MPs were asked about. The principal component analysis reveals the first policy dimension to explain about 26%
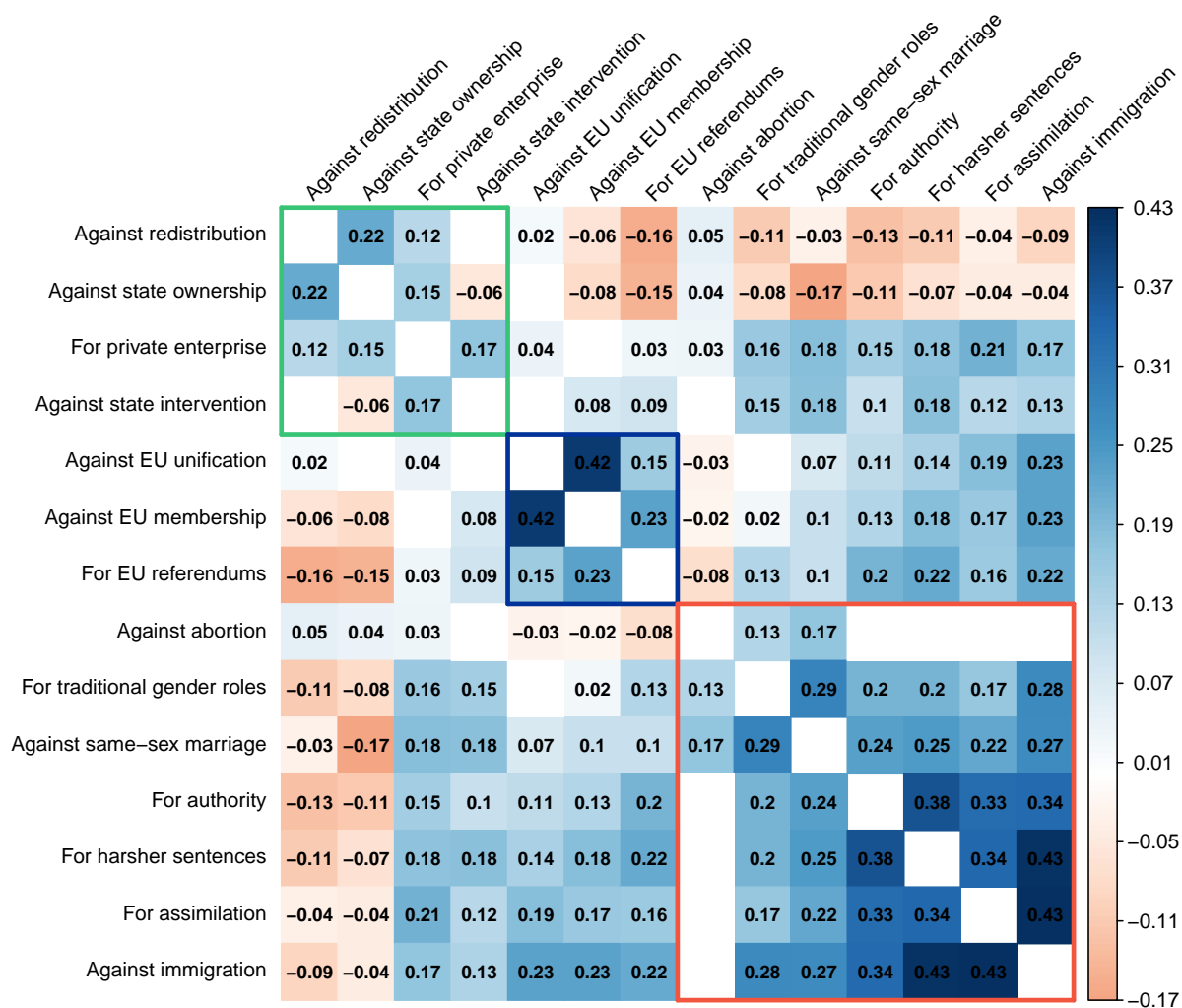
Figure A.1. Correlation Matrix of Policy Attitudes

Note: Numbers indicate correlation coefficients between the corresponding policy attitudes on the vertical and horizontal axis. Correlations of a variable with itself and correlations that are not significant at the 1% level are not shown. The sample includes citizens of 27 European countries who either voted at the 2009 Europen election or the most recent national election. Estimates are weighted to adjust for population differences between countries. Colored squares comprise variables classified as economic (green), cultural (red) and EU-related (blue).

of attitude variance. As sown in table, Table A.1 this dimension correlates strongly and positively with non-economic variables. It correlates strongest with a desire for more severe sentences and a preference for assimilation of immigrants. Hence, I interpret it as cultural conservatism. The second dimension extracted by the principal component analysis explains about 16% of attitude variation and is most strongly correlated with pro EU and anti-abortion attitudes. However, it also correlates with economically right-wing attitudes. Overall, I interpret this dimension as pro-market and pro-EU.

Figure A.2 depicts the resulting two-dimensional attitude density distributions of voters and MPs. Results resemble those of teh theory-based classification of issues into dimension presented
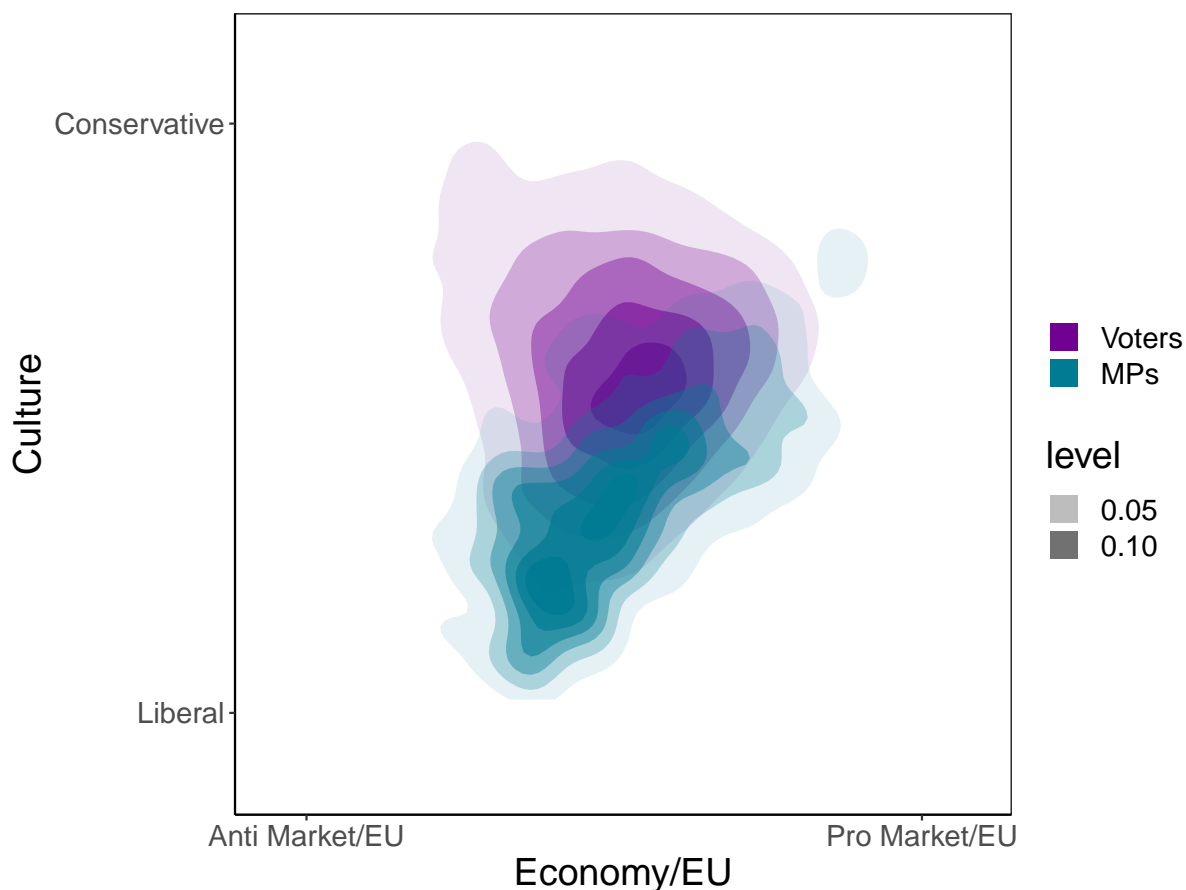
Figure A.2. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians Based on Principal Component Analysis

Note: The two attitude dimensions result from a principal component analysis of individual policy attitudes. The density is higher in less transparent areas. Data is pooled across Europe and includes attitudes of 127 MEPs, 738 national MPs and 19.813 voters.

in Section 4.1.2. The most striking result is that the density of MP attitudes is located much lower than the distribution of voter attitudes. This indicates that MPs are more culturally liberal than their voters. In contrast, attitude distributions are similar regarding the economic/EU dimension.

Appendix B   Relationship between the Estimation Framework and Previous Approaches

The two most prominent concepts of substantive representation used by political scientists are responsiveness and congruence. Policy responsiveness refers to whether the attitudes of voters and MPs change in the same direction over time. Policy responsiveness is perfect if the attitudes of voters and MPs are extremely different at any point in time but move parallel over time (Beyer and Hänni, 2018). In contrast, my measure compares policymaking to the attitudes of voters at a given point in time. Moreover, it can be calculated for consecutive points in time to make trends and levels of policymaking and voter attitudes comparable.

The literature on congruence has measured how similar the policy attitudes of politicians and voters are. In 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. To the best of my knowledge, this literature has compared the attitudes of all MPs, and often those of all MP candidates, with those of voters without considering the role of policy-motivation. This might lead to biased estimates because it ignores that MPs do not need to have the same attitudes as voters to act in their interests. For instance, in standard models of electoral competition, voters can punish MPs who do not implement their 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; Sappington, 1991; Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin, 1999). Consequently, I integrate policy-motivation into my framework. Moreover, I validate my estimation framework with real-world decision data.

Appendix C   Are Representation Gaps are 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. 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, Falch, and Tungodden, 2020), risk aversion (Heß et al., 2018) or moral universalism (Enke, 2020; Enke, Rodríguez-Padilla, and Zimmermann, 2022). Recent research has indeed found that the perceptions of most Europeans about immigrants are too negative (Grigorieff, Roth, and Ubfal, 2020; Facchini, Margalit, and Nakata, 2022; Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva, 2023). 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. Sheffer et al. (2018) show 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 example, 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 also 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 inherently 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. Yet another justification for RGs could be that politicians act as opinion leaders or anticipate

long-run trends in attitude change and make political decisions that will be congruent with the attitudes of future generations. For instance, European have become increasingly culturally liberal during the last decades (Inglehart, 1971, 2015). As a result, many policies that would have been more culturally conservative than desired by voters several decades ago are now supported by most voters. The present paper cannot rule out this possibility. Time will tell whether voters will follow politicians to close representation gaps in the long run.

Appendix D   Data Quality

In this section, I provide two quality checks of 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, Lepaux, and Michon (2013).

In 2009 66% of all newly elected MEPs were male, and 34% were female. The proportions in the sample are nearly identical. Figure D.1 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 D.2, 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," which include senior executive or political aide, and "professional and technical jobs," which incorporate scientists, journalists, and teachers. Very few MEPs have worked as manual workers, clerics, farmers, or in the sales sector. Figure D.2 reveals that the sample distribution of the previous occupation is quite close to the actual one. Figure D.3 shows the 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 weigh to adjust for this in the main analysis. Overall, the sample represents 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 means with equal weights 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).

Moreover, it includes data on the ideological positioning on issues that are similar to those from the EES. Both data sources include a "redistribution" issue which I match. Moreover, I match the "position on immigration policy" issue from the CHES to the "immigration" issue from the EES, the
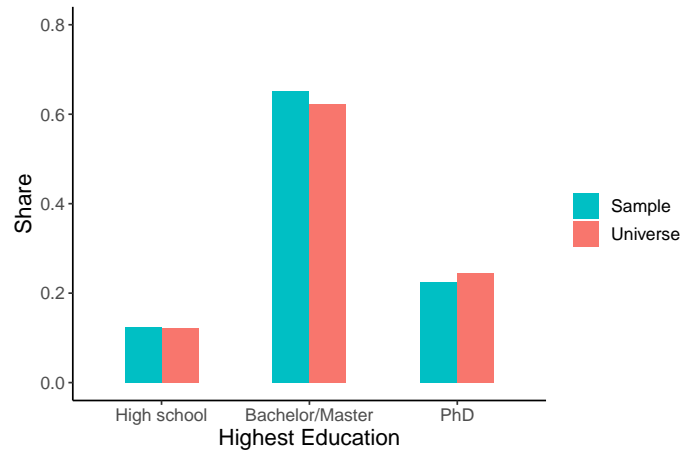
Figure D.1. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Education

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).
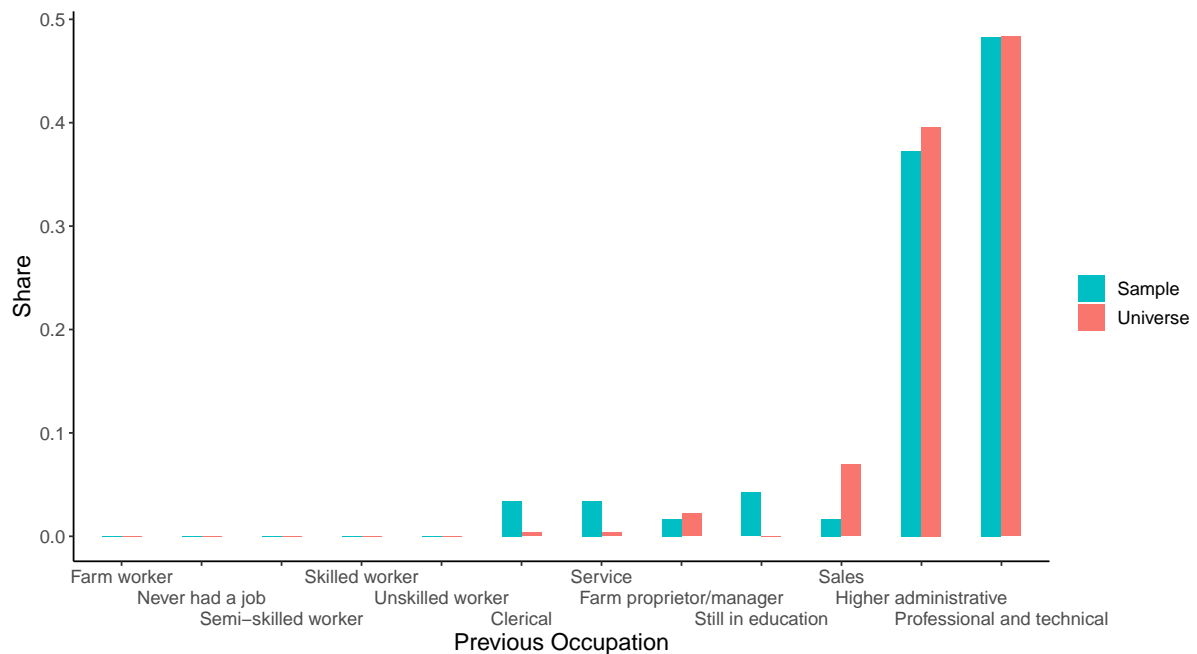
Figure D.2. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Occupation

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).

"position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers" issue from the CHES to the "assimilation" issue from the EES, and 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 deregulation" issue, while the EES contains positions on the related topics of "state intervention," "state ownership," and "private enterprise." I use the mean with equal weights 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 for 149 parties. If the EES data is valid, correlations between these two measures should be high on

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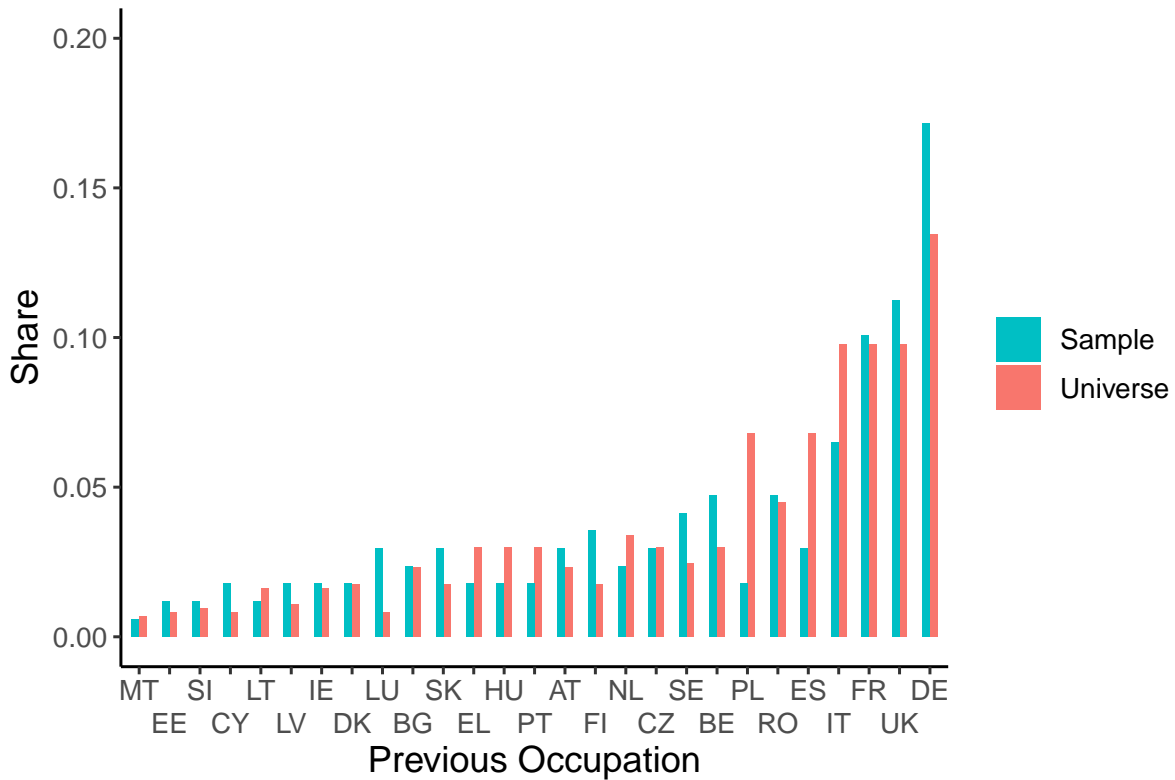
Figure D.3. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Country of Election
Note: This figure compares the distribution of country of election of the universe of MEPs to the distribution of country of election of the sample of elected candidates from the Parliament Election Study 2009 (Candidate Study).

each issue. Figure D.4 visualizes correlation coefficients surround by 95% confidence intervals on the horizontal axis by policy issue. 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," the "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 thereby capture the three dimensions I consider in the paper. If the indexes I calculate based on the EES data are valid, they should correlate positively with these broad CHES variables. Figure D.4 shows that this is the case. The correlation coefficients for all three dimensions are between 0.7 and 0.8 and are highly significant.
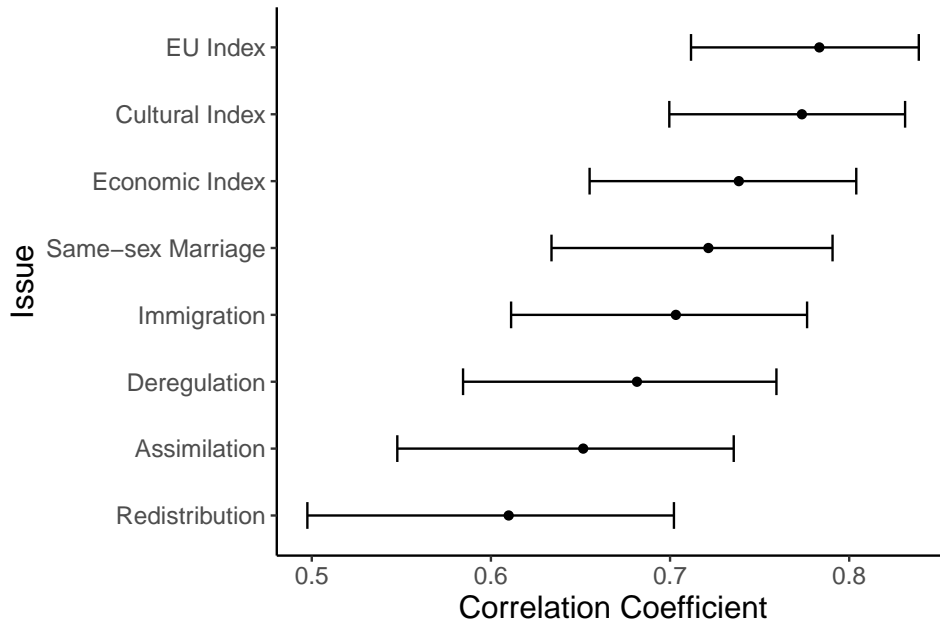
Figure D.4. Correlations between MEP Survey Data and Expert Survey Data
Note: This plot shows cross-party correlation coefficients of two measures for party position by issue. Each point corresponds to the correlation regarding the political issue depicted on the horizontal axis. I also depict 95% confidence intervals.

Appendix E   Referendum Data Details

E.1   Descriptive Statistics

Figure E.1 shows the number of all 126 referendums by policy issue contained in the referendum dataset. The topics have substantial overlap with the survey data issues. The vertical axis in Figure E.1 shows the number of referendums in the dataset who belong to a topic. As can be seen, most referendums have been held on whether the state should intervene in an industry. The next frequent categories are assimilation, punishment for criminals, and immigration. For all topics except protectionism, there are at least three referendums in the dataset.

Of the 126 referendums that have been held since 1870, about 39% of the initiatives were right-wing. However, the right-wing share of referendums varies substantially by policy dimension. 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 integration was anti-EU-integration.

Figure E.2 provides information on the topics of referendums over time. For each decade (beginning in the 1890s), it shows the absolute number of cultural, economic, and EU referendums 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 have become less frequent in recent decades. Referendums on EU integration have only been held since the existence of the EU and also became less frequent recently.
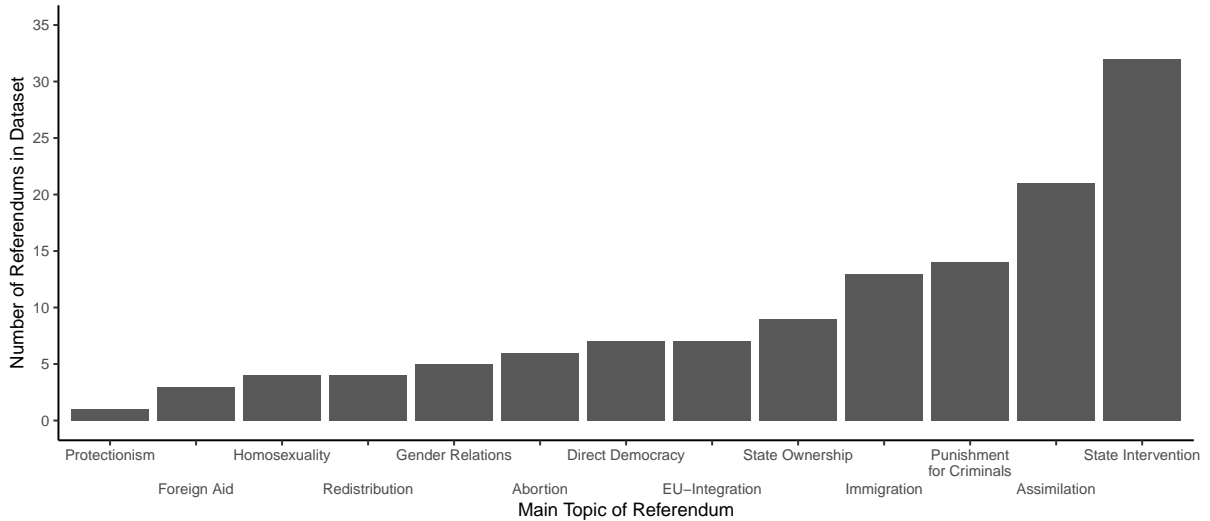
Figure E.1. Number of Referendums by Topic

Note: This bar-charts shows how many referendums of each topic are contained in the referendum dataset.
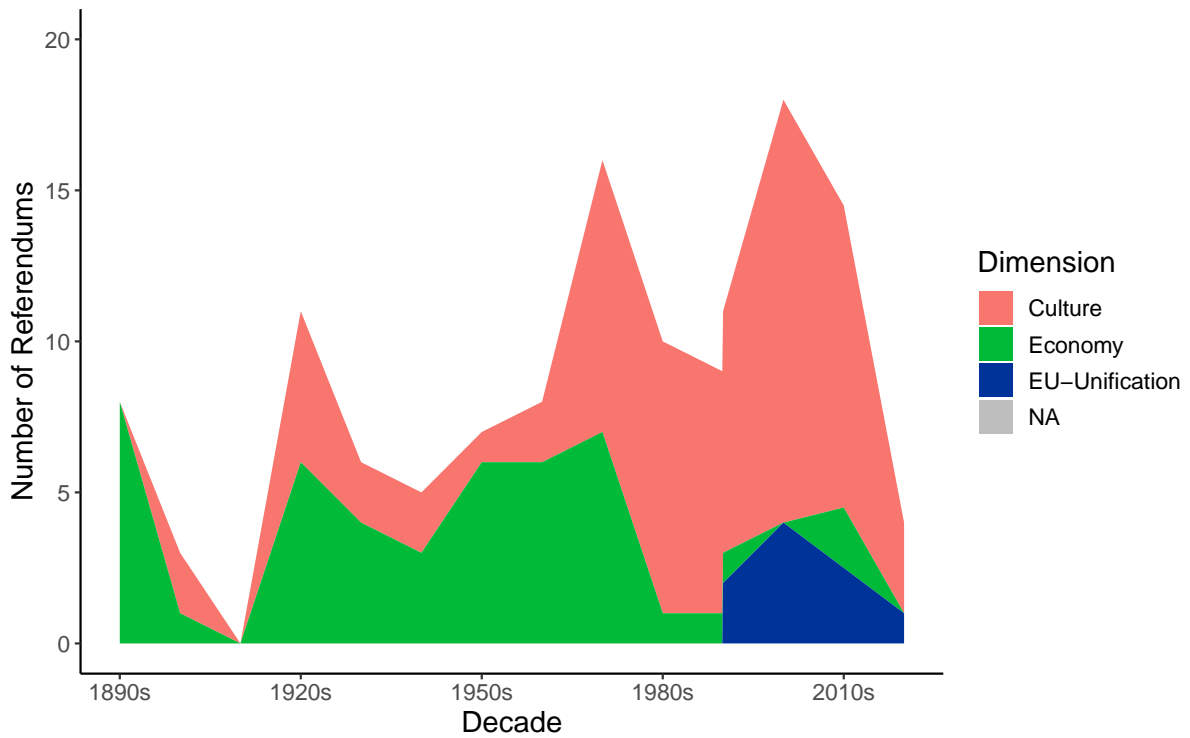
Figure E.2. Number of Referendums by Dimension and Time

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.

E.2 Representation Gaps for all Policy Issues

I calculate the representation gap for a referendum r as

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

To make estimates for RGs based on referendums and survey data comparable I take the mean with equal weights of all RG_r belonging to a policy issue. Figure E.3 depicts these average RGs on the vertical axis and policy issues on the horizontal axis. Higher values indicate that MPs are more right-wing compared to voters.

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 RGs 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.

Figure E.3. Representation Gaps between Swiss Voters and Swiss MPs by Issue
Note: The vertical axis depicts 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. Data is pooled over time.

E.3 Representation Gaps over Time

Figure E.4 displays representation gaps for the three policy dimensions over time, pooling data for decades. The dataset contains data on referendums on EU issues 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 economic dimensions are more extensive. As can be seen, their time trends differ strongly. In all but one decade, positive cultural RGs existed, i.e., voters were more culturally right-wing than MPs. Only in the 1920s were MPs more right-wing than their voters, and this data point relies on relatively few referendums. Hence, the cultural RG is qualitatively persistent over a long period of time. In recent decades it has decreased, but it was still positive in recent years.

In contrast, economic RGs 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 RG was similarly pronounced regarding economic as regarding cultural issues. But beginning in the 1980s, the RG 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

Figure E.4. Representation Gaps (Voters vs MPs) Over Time
Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade. Positive values indicate that MPs voted more right-wing on referendums belonging to a given dimension within a given decade.

new era of economic policymaking began. In this era, market-oriented approaches became common, with former left-wing parties also adopting pro-market stances (Benedetto, Hix, and Mastrorocco, 2020).

E.4 Calculating Representation Gaps 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. Hence, it is important to compare voters to parties. The referendum dataset contains information on official party recommendations for nearly all parties on all referendums. That makes it possible to compare the voting decisions of voters to party decisions. Formally, let r be a referendum with two options $\in \{yes, no\}$. Let the vote of voter k be denoted by $v(k)$. $v(k)$="yes" indicates that k is in favor of the referendum initiative and $v(k)$="no" indicates that he is opposed to it. Let $d(R) \in \{right, left\}$ be the direction of the initiative. $d(R)$ ="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. Finally, 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 RG_r^P the representation gap between voters and parties on referendum r and calculate it as:

$$
RG_r^P = \begin{cases} \dfrac{\sum_{i \in V} \mathbb{1}[v(i) = yes]}{||V||} - \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = yes] \cdot s(p), & \text{if r is left-wing,} \\[4ex] \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = yes] \cdot s(p) - \dfrac{\sum_{i \in V} \mathbb{1}[v(i) = yes]}{||V||}, & \text{if r is right-wing.} \end{cases}
$$

Figure E.5 shows the average RG_r^P by policy issue. Results resemble those in Figure E.3, which compares voters and MPs. Figure E.6 shows how RGs vary over time by dimension, comparing parties

and voters. Results look similar to those in Figure E.4 where I compare voters to MPs. Overall these results highlight that the attitudes of MPs are a good indicator of their party's position and therefore illustrate the robustness of the results in the main text.
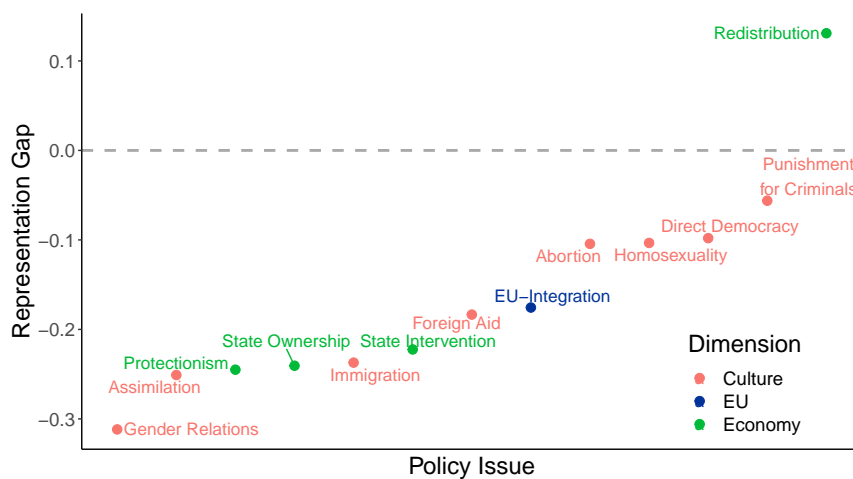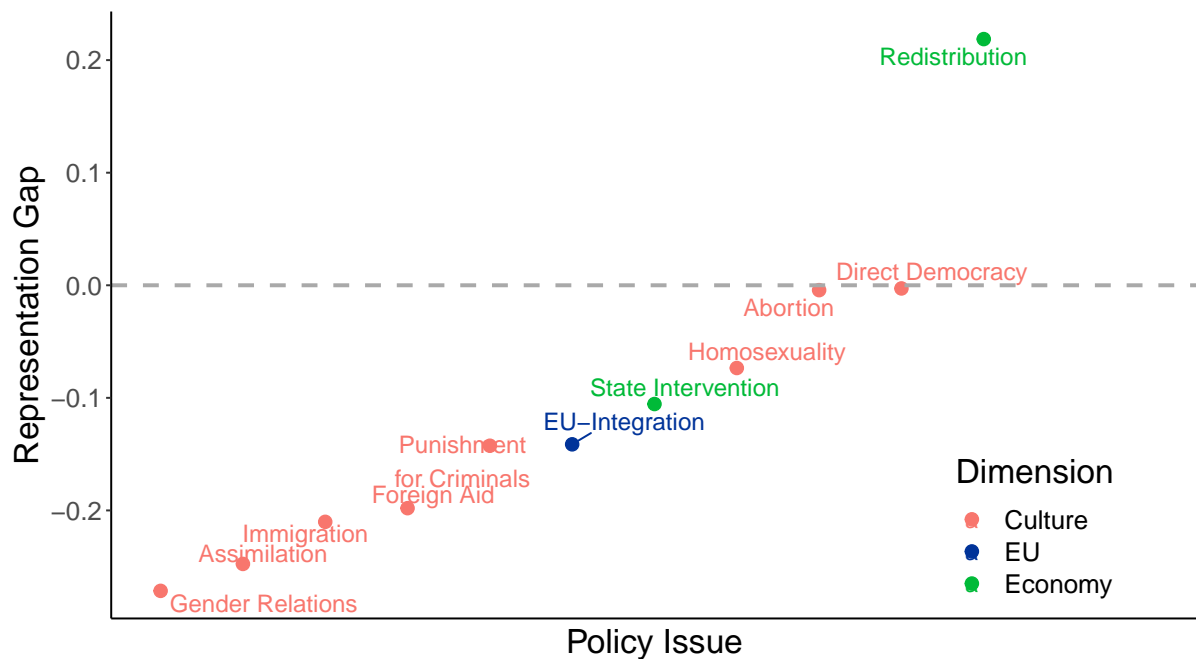

Figure E.5. Representation Gaps between Swiss Voters and Swiss Parties by Political Issue
Note: The vertical axis depicts representation gaps. The horizontal axis refers to policy issues. Higher values indicate that parties, weighted with their vote share in the most recent national election, supported the left-wing alternative in referendums to a larger extend than voters in general.
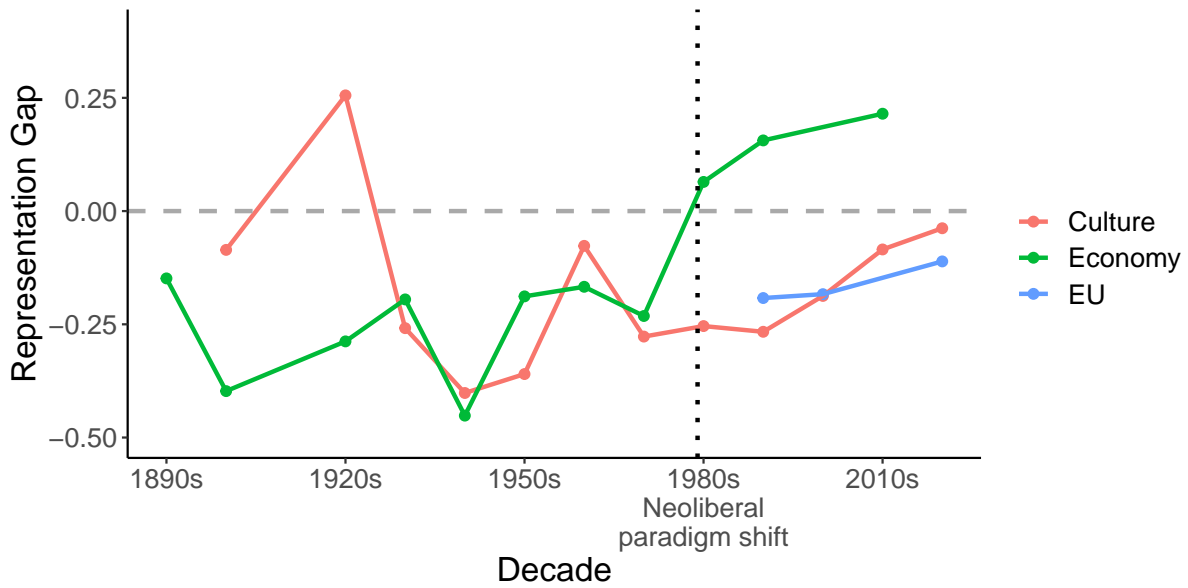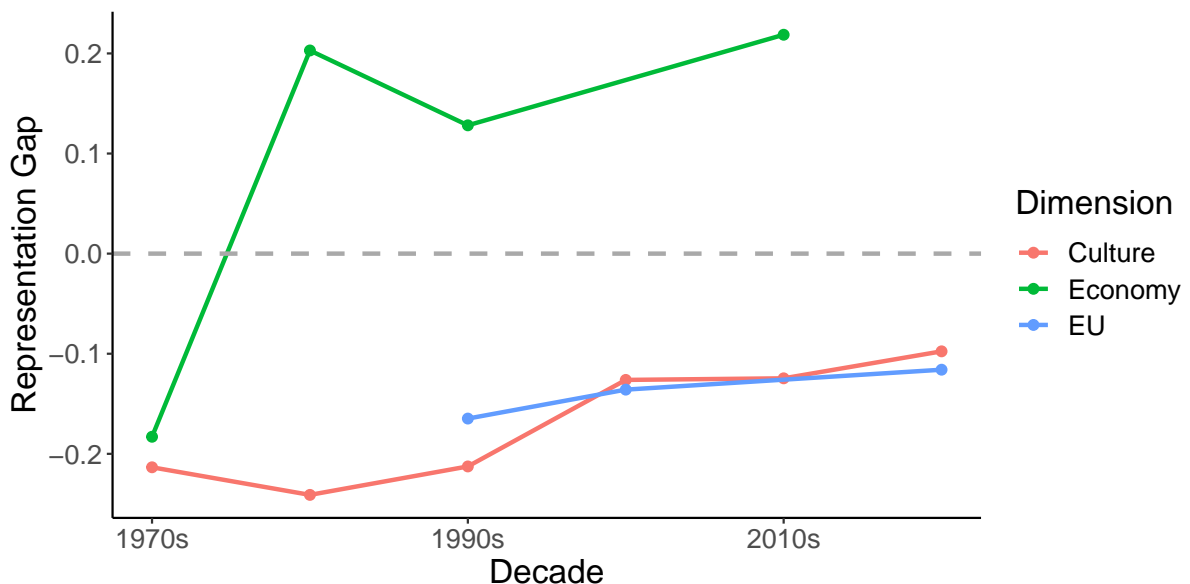

Figure E.6. Representation Gaps (Voters vs. Parties) Over Time
Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade. Positive values indicate that parties, weighted with their vote share in the most recent national election, voted more right-wing on referendums than voters in general. Data is only available beginning in the 1970s.

E.5 Differences in Referendum Initiation Behavior between Voters and MPs

The existence of a RG 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 previous analysis suggests that such a RG exists regarding cultural topics and, to a lesser degree, regarding EU issues but not regarding economic topics.

None of the EU-related referendums have been initiated by citizens. Hence, to test this prediction, I focus on the comparison between cultural and economic referendum initiatives. Figure E.7 shows the share of initiatives with a right direction by originator of the initiative and dimension. 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.
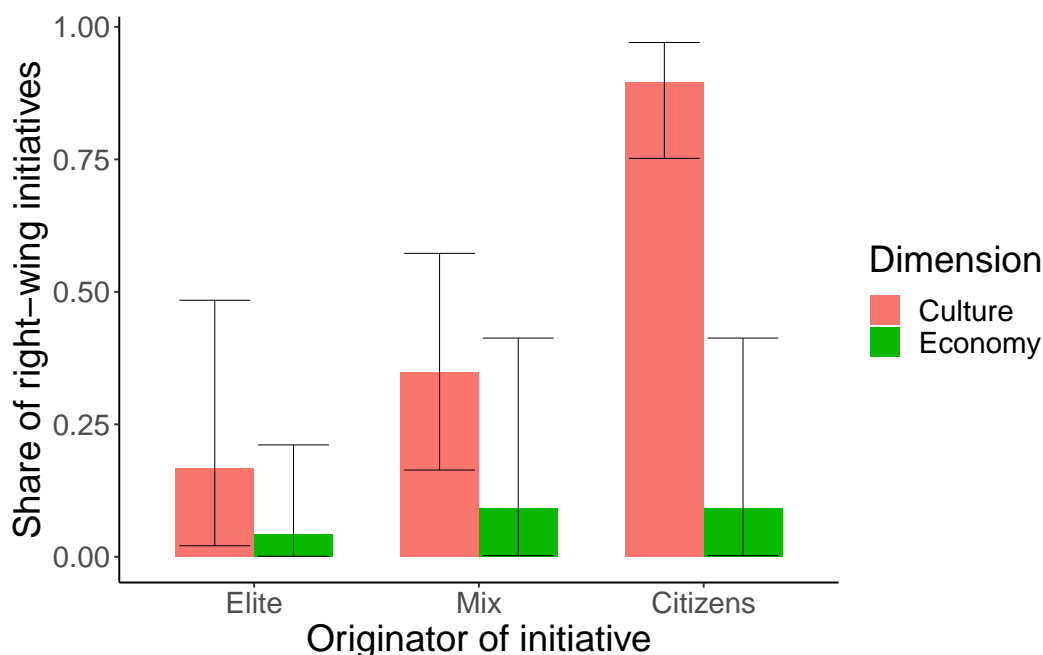
Figure E.7. Share of Right-Wing Initiatives by Originator
Note: This figure shows the share of referendums with a right direction by originator. It is based on all referendums in the dataset on a cultural or economic topic. Confidence intervals are based on an exact binomial test.

Figure E.7 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. Reassuringly, the share of right-wing initiatives that resulted from an interaction of the elite and citizens is similarly large. The pattern looks very different for cultural topics. Only about 16% of the referendums initiated by the elite are right-wing. That suggests that the elite overwhelmingly proposes initiatives that are steps to the cultural left. This is qualitatively different for ordinary citizens. About 90% of the 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. In sum, 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.

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

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 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, in every equilibrium $x < A(0.5)^{-1}$.

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

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

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

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

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 $a_i \geq A(0.5)^{-1}$

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

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 $x > A(0.5)^{-1}$ 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 $x_R = A(0.5)^{-1}$, or both. I will show that in each case L has a profitable deviation. Any voter i votes for candidate L iff

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

which is equivalent to

$$a_i < \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R + x_R^2 - x_L^2}{2(x_R - x_L)}$$
$$a_i < \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R}{2(x_R - x_L)} + \frac{(x_R + x_L) \cdot (x_R - x_L)}{2(x_R - x_L)}$$
$$a_i < \frac{\lambda_L - \lambda_R}{2(x_R - x_L)} + \frac{(x_R + x_L)}{2}$$

if $x_L \leq x_R$ and

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

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 x_L sufficiently close to $A(0.5)^{-1}$ such that the expression on the right hand is a bit smaller than $A(0.5)^{-1}$. This is possible because the numerator of the first term is positive by assumption and the policy space is continuous.

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

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

Finally, assume $x_R > A(0.5)^{-1}$. Then any x_L such that $|x_L - A(0.5)^{-1}| < |x_R - A(0.5)^{-1}|$ 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 $a_i < A(0.5)^{-1}$. Hence, L wins. Moreover, L prefers $x = x_L$ to $x = x_R$ because if $A(0.5)^{-1}$ is closer to x_L than to x_R any $a < A(0.5)^{-1}$ must be closer to x_L than to x_R too and $a_L < A(0.5)^{-1}$.

Hence, L has a profitable deviation in each case when $x = A(0.5)^{-1}$ and when $x > A(0.5)^{-1}$. Therefore, in any equilibrium $x < A(0.5)^{-1}$. $\qquad\square$

Appendix G   Other Potential 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. Hence, I have data on each subject's first, second, and third most important issues. Some of these issues are broad, like "Economic conditions." However, many are more specific, like "Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy."

Figure G.1 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 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."

(a) Voters   **(b)** MEPs
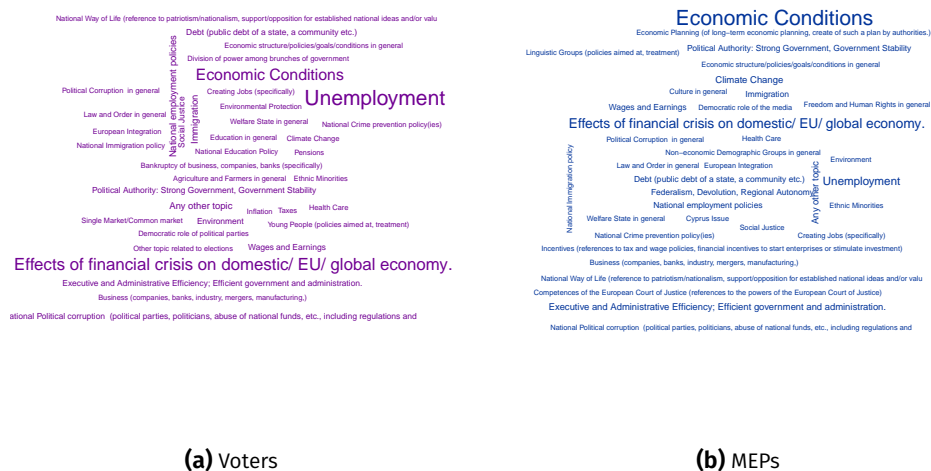
Figure G.1. Word Clouds of Topics Considered to Be Most Important by Voters and MEPs
Note: This figure shows two word-clouds. Words and sentences are answers given to the following question: "What do you think is the most important problem facing [COUNTRY] today?" The two clouds display the 40 most frequent categories of voters and the 36 most frequent categories for MEPs. More frequent responses are displayed larger.

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.

$$II_{g,i} = \frac{3 \cdot \text{share most imp.}_{g,i} + 2 \cdot \text{share 2nd most imp.}_{g,i} + \text{share 3rd most imp.}_{g,i}}{6}. \qquad \text{(G.1)}$$

$II_{g,i}$ is distributed between zero and one, where one means that all subjects of group $g \in \{\text{voters}, \text{MEPs}\}$ 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 attitude differences (ARG) comparable, I manually match issues relating to the two variables. I am able to do this for 10 out of the 14 issues that I could calculate the ARG for.

Figure G.2 compares $II_{g,i}$ to ARGs. Issues are shown on the horizontal axis. The height of the blue bars depicts $II_{\text{MEPs},i}$, while the purple bars show $II_{\text{voters},i}$. For any policy issue i and attitude on that issue a_i, the ARG is the estimate for β from the following regression:

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

The regression is weighted to adjust for population differences between countries. Due to the weighting, the figure compares a representative sample of those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament election with a representative sample of MEPs. Larger values indicate that MEPs are more right-wing relative to voters. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values. To make ARGs and the importance index quantitatively comparable, I divide all ARGs by four.

Figure G.2 reveals that MEPs and voters tend to find the same topics important. Both groups agree that immigration, punishment of criminals, and EU unification are the most important issues. Voters find immigration and the punishment of criminals somewhat more important than MEPs, and MEPs find EU unification more important than voters, but these differences are not precisely estimated. Immigration and the punishment of criminals are the two topics where ARGs are the largest. This exemplifies the more general result that the perceived importance of topics is not negatively correlated with ARGs. If anything, the association appears to be 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 G.3 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 are important while disagreeing on how one should deal with them.
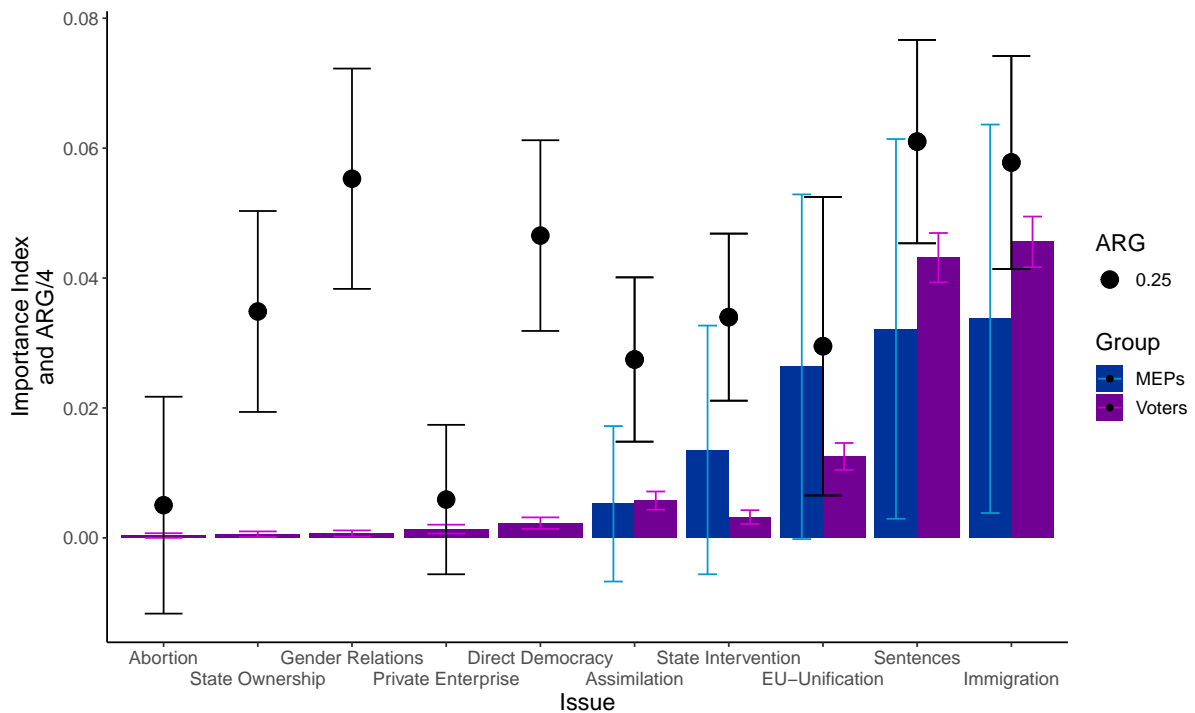
Figure G.2. Perceived Importance of Policy Issues by Voters and MEPs Compared to Attitude Differences Between Voters and MEPs

Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of issues ($II_{g,i}$), defined in Equation G.1. Issues 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 issue divided by four. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values.

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

Another explanation for representation gaps is parliamentarians trying to protect groups they perceive to be vulnerable. If this were the case, one would expect groups like immigrants, women, and the poor to have very different policy attitudes than natives, men, and the rich on immigration, gender relations, and redistribution, respectively. Moreover, one would expect that parliamentarians hold attitudes between these groups' attitudes to balance their conflicting attitudes. Finally, one would expect that parliamentarians have attitudes close to the attitudes of the group perceived to be vulnerable relative to that group's share among the population.

For instance, most natives might hold much more conservative attitudes regarding immigration and assimilation, while most immigrants might be liberal regarding these topics. Representing the mean voters' attitude would mean weighting the attitudes of natives and immigrants according to their relative size, which would put much more weight on natives' attitudes. Therefore, parliamentarians might fear representing the mean voter will effectively suppress immigrants' attitudes. To prevent this, they might overweight the attitudes of immigrants, thereby effectively shifting their policymaking away from the attitudes of the mean voter. Their policymaking would still likely be between the mean attitudes of natives and immigrants.

Inconsistent with this potential explanation, Figure 6 in the main text shows that the policymaking of MEPs is not between the attitudes of immigrants and natives, men and women, or the rich and
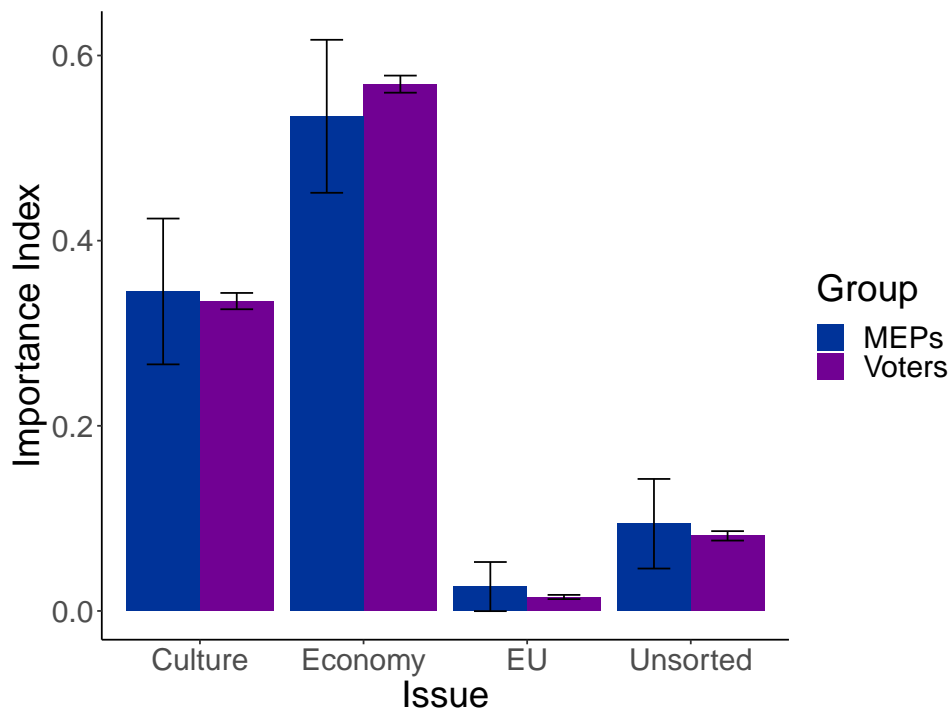
Figure G.3. Perceived Importance of Policy Dimensions by Voters and MEPs
Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of political dimensions ($II_{g,i}$), defined in Equation G.1. Dimensions are shown on the horizontal axis while the importance index is shown on the vertical axis. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values.

the poor on any policy dimension. In contrast, policymaking is biased relative to the mean attitude of each group in the same direction.

However, Figure 6 provides results for aggregated policy dimensions, while parliamentarians might protect groups only on specific issues. Hence, it is more reasonable to consider topics where the conflict of interest between the structural minority and structural majority group is most obvious. To this end, Figure G.4 compares the mean positions of the poor, those with a medium standard of living, the rich and MEPs regarding redistribution, the mean attitudes of natives, those with an immigration background, and MEPs on immigration and assimilation, and the mean attitudes of men, women, and MEPs on gender relations.[13]

The mean attitude of MEPs does not lie between the mean attitude of the structural minority and the mean attitude of the structural majority regarding any topic. 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

13. Figure G.4 shows attitudes instead of policymaking of MEPs for simplicity. Attitudes and policymaking of MEPs are very similar as shown in the main text.
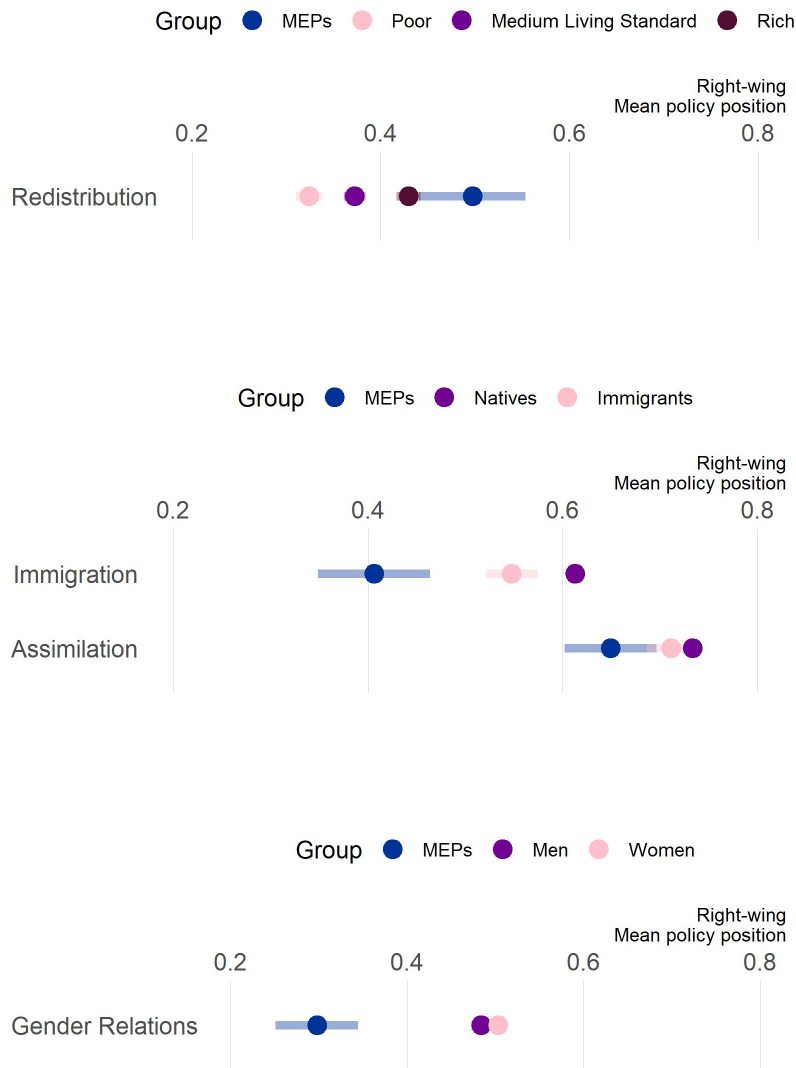
Figure G.4. Mean Attitudes of Selected Voter and MEP Groups by Topic
Note: The vertical axis depicts political issues. Dots represent the mean attitudes of various groups regarding the respective issue. Higher values indicate that the mean attitude is more right-wing. The three panels show the attitudes of different groups. Groups other than MEPs constitute subsets of those who voted in the 2009 European Parliament election. I always weigh to account for differences in population size between countries. Bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

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 evidence that in democracies, structural majorities can end up in a situation where they are disadvantaged relative to structural minorities because the attitudes of MEPs are much closer to those of immigrants than those of natives. Finally, these results put the magnitude of attitude differences between voters and parliamentarians into perspective. Regarding

redistribution, the difference between the mean attitude of MEPs and all voters[14] is larger than the difference between the mean attitude of the poor and the mean attitude of the rich. Regarding 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 do not differ notably.

G.3 Lobbyism

Organized lobby 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). To my knowledge, it has not yet been examined whether lobbyism leads to representation gaps. Most closely related to this question, the empirical literature on whether their actions reduce social welfare or not is not conclusive (Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020).

If lobbyism was a main contributor of the representation gap, one would expect that attitudes of parliamentarian (candidates) who are more closely related to lobbyists are more biased relative to the attitudes of their voters than candidates who are less closely related to lobbyists.[15]

The survey 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 to 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 10 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 i Vidal, Draca, and Fons-Rosen, 2012). While it is hard to single out candidates who made such agreements, it is unlikely that those who plan to stay in politics for the next 10 years did. Hence, the share of those who have made such agreements should be smaller among those who plan to stay in politics than those who plan to leave politics. When using the last measure, it is necessary to condition the analysis on relatively young (I use below 50 years as the threshold) candidates.

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 OLS 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, Forney, and Pearl, 2020). Hence, I run individual regressions of the following type:

$$Bias_{i,d} = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot Lobbyism_i + \theta \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_i, \tag{G.2}$$

14. The mean attitude of all voters is close to that of voters with a medium living standard, as all three groups are similarly large.

15. This section uses data on all candidates instead of data on elected parliamentarians only to gain precision. Attitudes of unelected and elected candidates do not differ notably as shown in Section G.4.

where

$$Bias_{i,d} = |a_{c,i} - \overline{a_i}|$$

is the bias of candidate i relative to the mean voter regarding dimension d. $Lobbyism_i$ is one of the measures described above and C_i contains a large number of demographic control variables. For each dimension I run one unconditional regression and one conditional on demographic control variables which results in six regressions for each lobbyism measure.

The results of these regressions are depicted in Table I.5, Table I.6, Table I.7, Table I.8, Table I.9 and Table I.10. Most of the lobbyism variables are insignificant at conventional levels, and most point estimates are very small. Only one of the 24 estimates is significant and positive (personal firm visits), but the estimate is very small. Moreover, three estimates are significant and negative. Most coefficients are precisely estimated, and one to two orders of magnitude too small to account for representation gaps if taken literally. Furthermore, there is no positive and significant estimate among the measures that are arguably most clean, like encouragement by lobbyists and whether the candidates have been lobbyists themselves. In sum, this evidence does not fit well with the explanation that lobbyism is a main driver of representation gaps in Europe.

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

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, 2022). Despite this interpretation, most estimates of RGs have been unconditional, which prevents causal claims (Kertzer, 2022). Recently, Kertzer (2022) made a first step in establishing causality by estimating RGs in the USA, controlling for several demographic variables. His results suggest that about half of the representation gaps, there can be explained by the selection of MPs based on demographic variables. In this section, I make a few steps forward to assess the extent to which RGs are causal.

Understanding whether the RG is causal or based on selection is important for welfare considerations. If the gap is causal, it might be driven by MPs' superior information, implying 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.

In a first step of the analysis, I compare voters, elected MEPs, and unelected MEP candidates by estimating the following specification by OLS:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{Candidate}]_i + \beta_2 \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{Elected}]_i + \theta \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_i, \tag{G.3}$$

where Y_i is a policy-attitude, $\mathbb{1}[\text{Candidate}]_i$ equals one if the individual was a *candidate* for the European Parliament and zero otherwise, $\mathbb{1}[\text{Elected}]_i$ 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. 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.

I am interested in β_1 and β_2. For any policy issue, β_1 measures how the attitudes of unelected candidates and voters differ, while β_2 quantifies how elected MEPs differ from unelected candidates.

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 decreases β_1.

Let's put these predictions to the test. Table I.3 show estimates of Equation G.3 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.

Attitude differences between voters and elected MEPs can be seen by adding the MEP indicator and the MEP candidate indicator. Reassuringly, this analysis finds that MEPs are much more left-leaning on cultural issues than voters. 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, far from being significant at conventional levels, and even positive. 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, people from which MEPs are elected already hold very different attitudes than voters. 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, too, 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 attitude differences remain. This suggests that selection into politics might also occur concerning other variables, such as moral values.

As shown in the main text, attitude differences between MEPs and European voters are small in the economic dimension. This is consistent with the results displayed in column (3) in Table I.3. MEP candidates are somewhat more left-leaning than voters, while the elected are significantly more right-wing than the 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. This 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 society as a whole, MEP candidates are not. This suggests that selection is 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 European Parliament.

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, in-

cluding 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 speaks against a large causal effect of becoming an MEP. RGs do not arise once an MEP is elected but are already nearly fully present at the population of candidates 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 representation gap between MEPs and voters remains unexplained.

While the results so far speak against a large causal effect, I propose another specification which addresses two shortcomings of Equation G.3. First, 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 $\overline{a_i}$ be the European mean attitude of voters on issue i. I define the bias of candidate c regarding attitude a as

$$Bias_{c,a} = |a_{c,i} - \overline{a_i}|.$$

Hence, $Bias_{c,a}$ measures the political distance regarding attitude a to the European mean voter. I estimate the following equation by OLS:

$$Bias_c = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{Elected}]_c + \theta \cdot C_c + \varepsilon_c. \tag{G.4}$$

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 Equation G.3. 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. I also control for the chances of being elected as assessed by the survey administrators. Chances are estimated based on the candidate's list position relative to the potential number of seats won by their party (Hix and Noury, 2009). Hix and Noury (2009) classified candidates with a list position below the predicted seats minus one standard deviation as safe, those positioned above the predicted seats plus one standard deviation as unpromising, and all other candidates 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 I.4 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 are more consistent with the selection of citizens with specific policy attitudes into politics than with a causal effect of getting elected. Moreover, they suggest that attitude differences are probably not an artifact of elected parliamentarians interpreting questions differently than voters. Finally, as most candidates already differ from the population, it is difficult for voters to reduce representation gaps through voting.

G.5 At Which Stage Of Political Selection Do Representation Gaps Arise?

One can think of citizens having to complete several stages until they become parliamentarians. First, they have to join a political party. Second, they have to rise in the ranks of this party to be nominated as a candidate for parliament. Finally, they have to get elected. At which stage of this political selection process do representation gaps emerge?

To locate where RGs arise, I focus on attitude differences. The rich survey-level data makes estimating attitude differences for various sub-groups possible. Hence, I compare the attitudes of MEPs with several sets of actors who are incrementally closer to MEPs. Formally, I estimate regressions of the following form by OLS:

$$Index_{i|i \in M \cup G} = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MEP}]_{i|i \in M \cup G} + \gamma \cdot X_{i|i \in M \cup G} + \varepsilon_{i|i \in M \cup G},$$

where $Index_{i|i \in M \cup G}$ 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), $\mathbb{1}(MEP)_{i|i \in M \cup G}$ equals one if $i \in M$ and zero otherwise and $X_{i|i \in M \cup G}$ is a vector of control variables. I am interested in β, which measures attitude differences between MEPs and the reference group.

To examine different stages of the political selection process I vary the reference group G. I 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 G.5 shows estimates for β for the resulting estimates for the cultural index together with 95% confidence intervals. Attitude differences. Attitude differences between voters and parliamentarians are very similar to the representation gaps estimated in the main party of the paper. Using voters or citizens as the reference group does not lead to notably different estimates. When using voters or citizens as the reference group, including an extensive set of demographic characteristics as controls reduces attitude differences somewhat, but it stays large and significant. Hence, attitude differences regarding cultural issues do not result from demographic differences between parliamentarians and voters or citizens, like different educational attainment or age.

Figure G.5. Attitude Differences of Selected Groups to MEPs on Cultural Issues

Note: This figure shows estimates of β from Section G.5 for different reference groups G and the cultural index as the dependent variable. Coefficients compare the cultural attitudes of MEPs to the attitudes of reference groups displayed on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis measures attitude differences. Higher values indicate that members of the reference group are more conservative regarding cultural issues than MEPs. Control variables used to generate the conditional estimates include age, gender, the year of the election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories, and occupation categories.

The first step toward becoming an MEP is to get involved in politics. To do so, one has to find an interest in politics. The third and fourth pairs of bars in Figure G.5 compare the cultural attitudes of MEPs to those who stated that they were interested and very interested in politics, respectively. Focusing on unconditional estimates shows that attitude differences decrease relative to the MEP-voter comparison. Still, even those who are very interested in politics have attitudes closer to those of voters in general than members of the European Parliament. Moreover, they are significantly more conservative than MEPs. Hence, attitude differences can not be explained by parliamentarians trying to represent those interested in politics.

Those who are interested in politics and have similar demographic characteristics as voters and citizens with similar demographics as MEPs. However, those who are very interested in politics and have similar demographics as politicians are closer to MEPs. Their attitudes are about halfway between those of voters in general and MEPs.

Among those who are very interested in politics and join a party, a few rise high enough in the ranks of their party to become candidates for the parliament. The last two bars in Figure G.5 compare the attitudes of elected MEPs and candidates who were not elected. Unelected candidates do not differ notably from elected MEPs, neither unconditionally nor after accounting for (small) demographic differences.
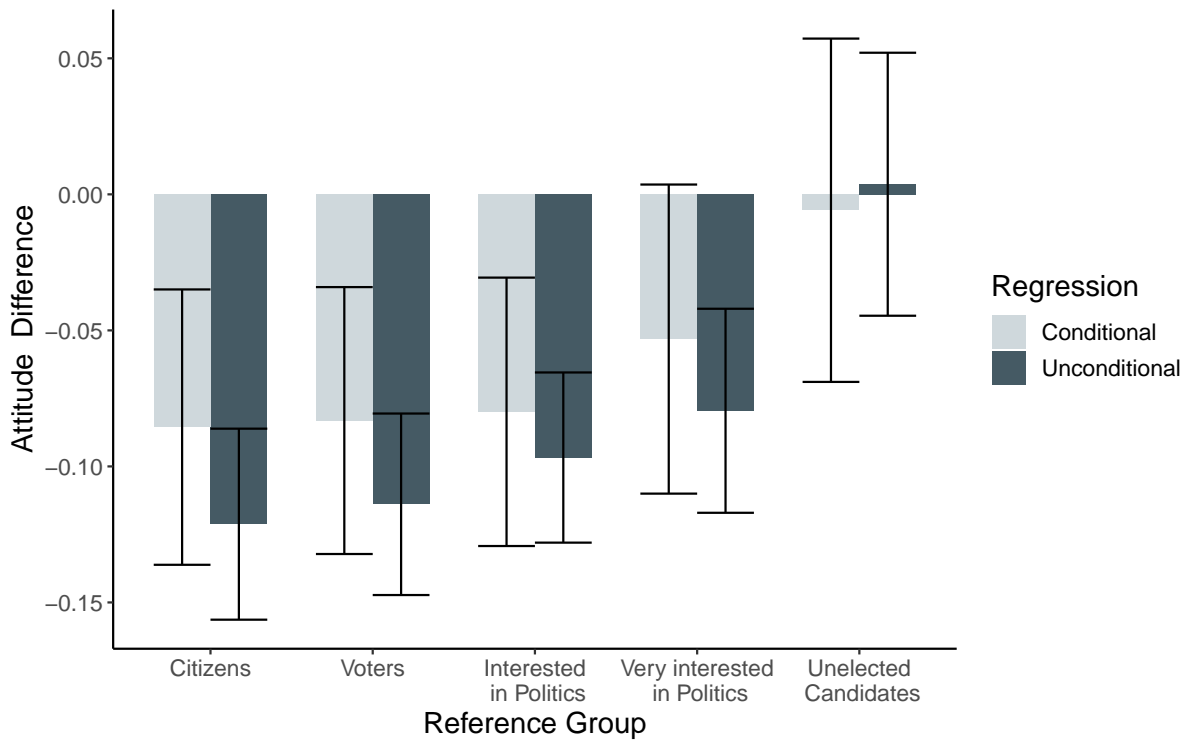
Figure G.6. Attitude Differences of Selected Groups to MEPs on Economic Issues
Note: This figure shows estimates of β from Section G.5 for different reference groups G and the economic index as the dependent variable. Coefficients compare the economic attitudes of MEPs to the attitudes of reference groups displayed on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis measures attitude differences. Higher values indicate that members of the reference group are more right-wing regarding economic issues than MEPs. Control variables used to generate the conditional estimates include age, gender, the year of the election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories, and occupation categories.

In sum, Figure G.5 shows that attitude differences to MEPs decrease monotonically as the reference group gets closer to the group of MEPs. By far, the largest decrease happens between those very interested in politics and the MEP candidates. This suggests that parties are responsible for a large part of attitude differences and representation gaps, as their role in politics is to turn those interested in politics into politicians.[16]

Figure G.6 shows a similar analysis for the economic dimension. The pattern looks very different. As shown in the main text, the attitudes of voters and parliamentarians do not differ significantly in the economic dimension overall. This is still true after including demographic controls in 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 after accounting for demographic differences.

Finally, Figure G.7 shows results for the EU dimension. The pattern resembles the pattern concerning the cultural dimension. Overall, accounting for demographic differences reduces attitude differences even though they remain significant regarding most reference groups. The unconditional attitude differences decrease monotonically as reference groups become more similar to elected MEPs. Insignificant attitude differences are only found for unelected candidates and those who are inter-

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16. Performing a similar analysis using the sample of national MPs yields very similar results.
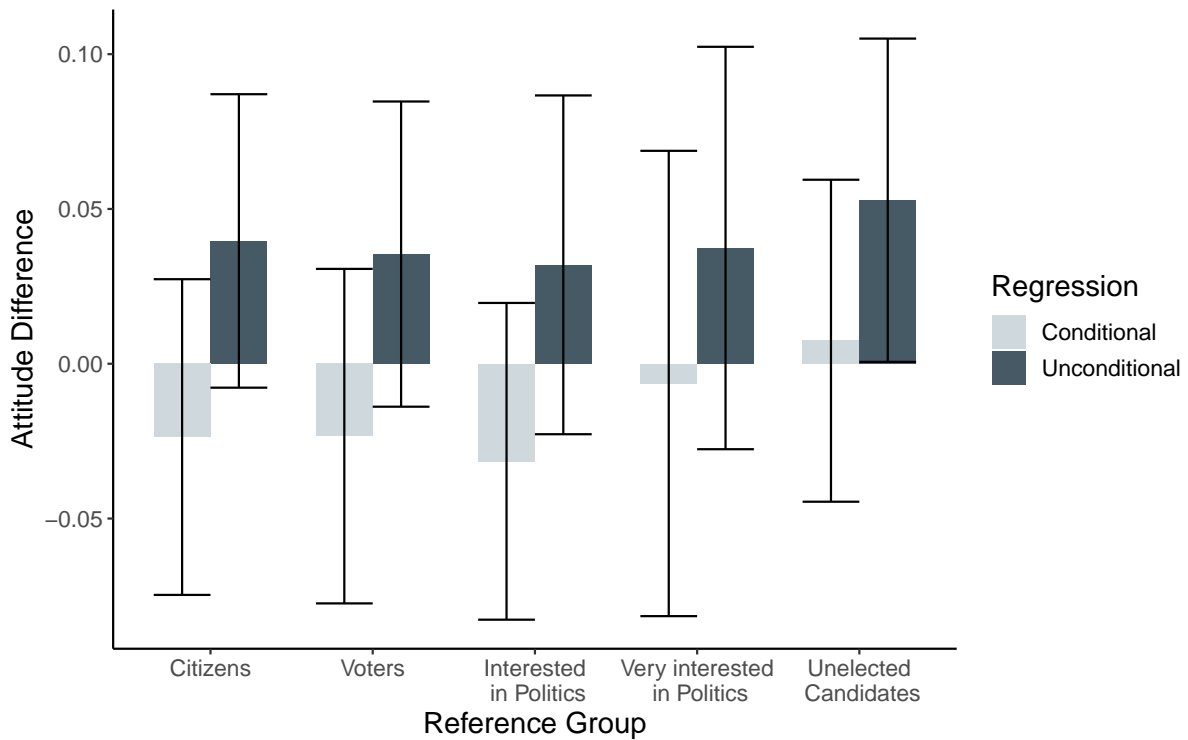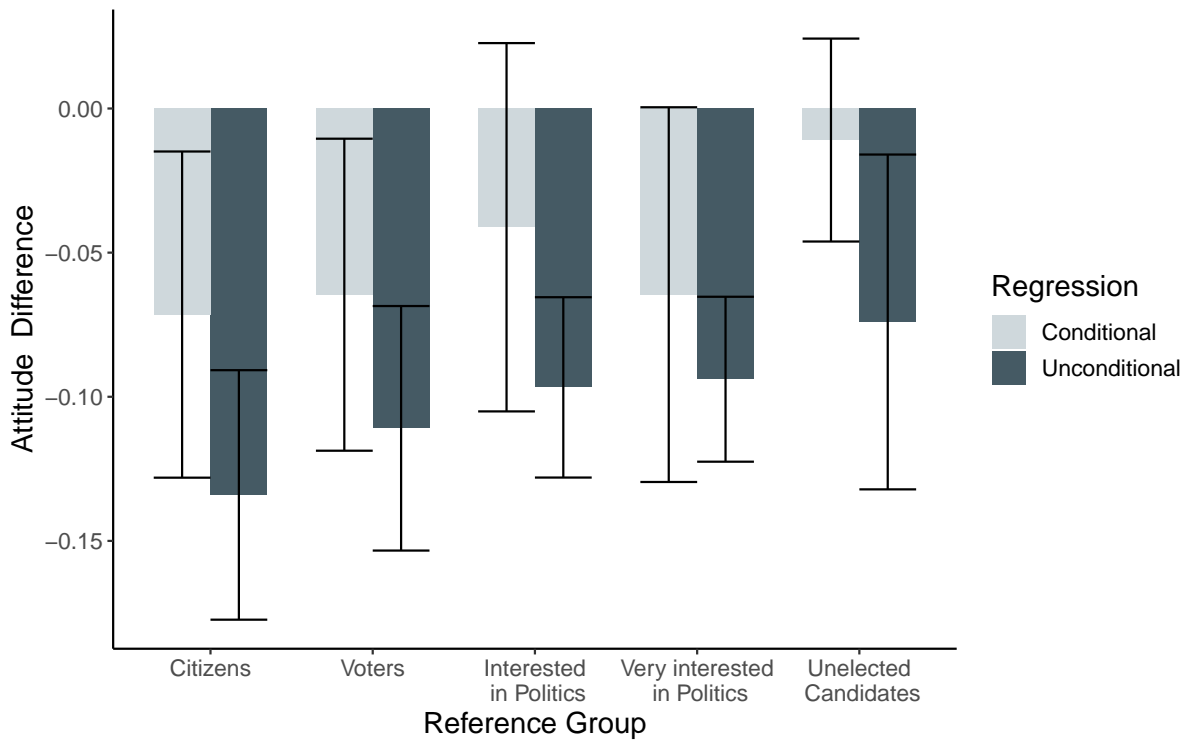
Figure G.7. Attitude Differences of Selected Groups to MEPs on EU-Related Issues

Note: This figure shows estimates of β from Section G.5 for different reference groups *G* and the EU index as the dependent variable. Coefficients compare EU-related attitudes of MEPs to the attitudes of reference groups displayed on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis measures attitude differences. Higher values indicate that members of the reference group are more anti-EU than MEPs. Control variables used to generate the conditional estimates include age, gender, the year of the election, categories for marital status, categories for town size, religion categories, and occupation categories.

ested in politics with similar demographics as the elected MEPs. The most crucial difference to the results for the cultural dimension is that, unconditionally, the EU attitudes of elected and unelected MEP candidates differ strongly. Hence, attitude differences in the EU dimension do not arise within parties but after candidates get elected. This difference appears to be driven by selection based on observable demographic characteristics because controlling for them renders the attitudes of elected and unelected candidates very similar.
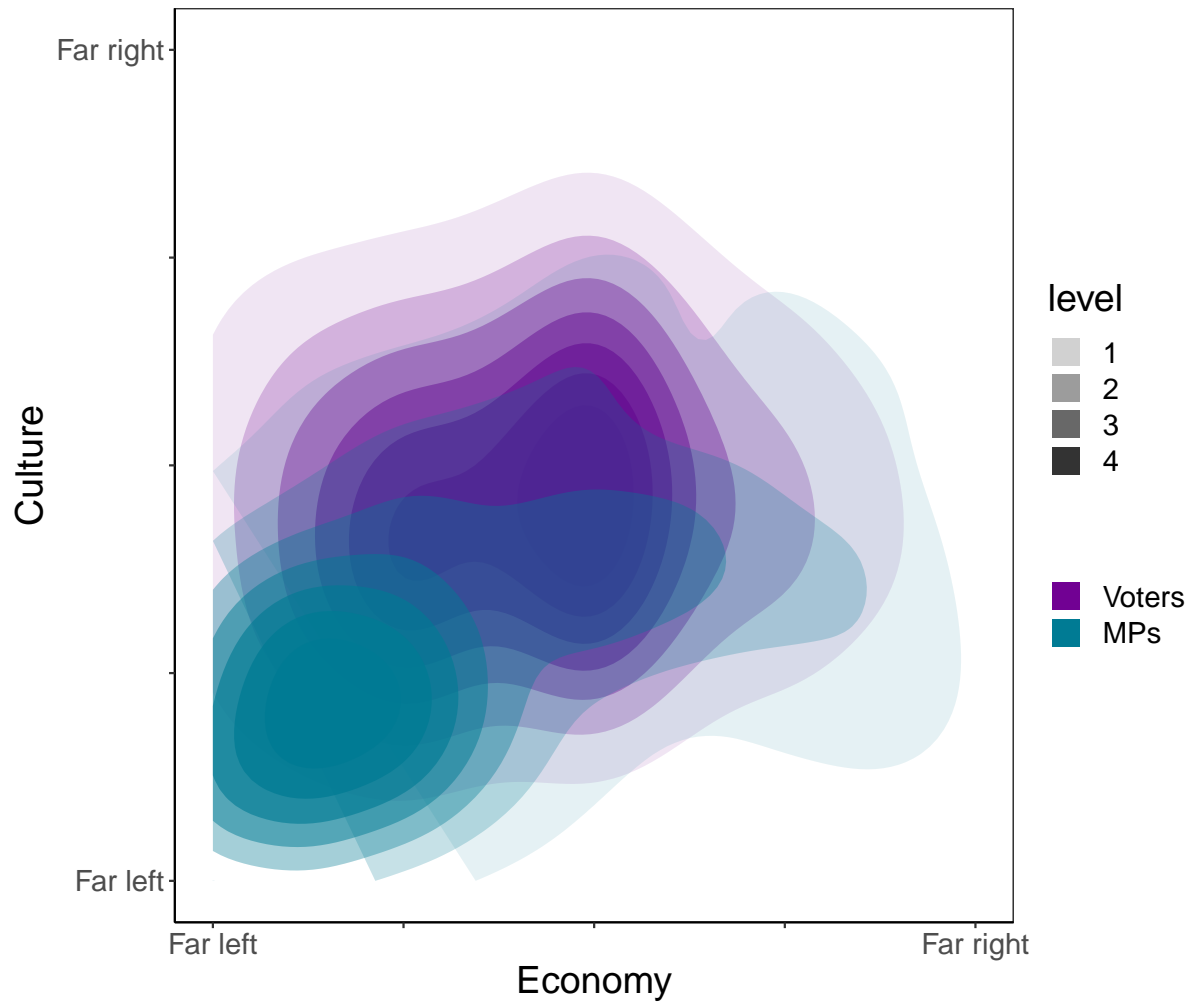
Figure H.1. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians Using Equal Weights for Issues
Note: The Economy axis measures an attitude index for economic issues. The Culture axis measures an index for non-economics issues as calculated similarly as in Equation 1 but with equal weights for all issues. The density is higher in less transparent areas. Data is pooled across Europe and includes attitudes of 127 MEPs, 738 national MPs and 19.813 voters.
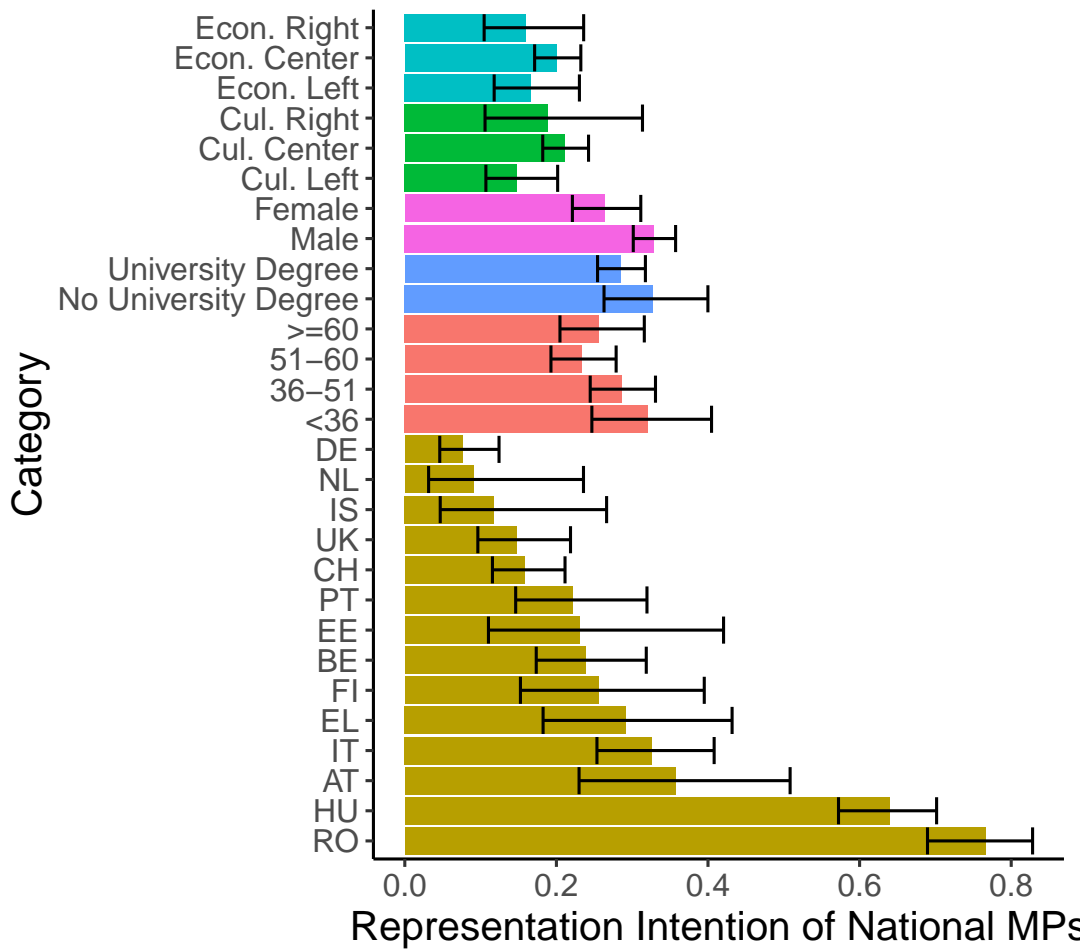
Figure H.2. Representation Intention of National MPs by Demographic Group

Note: This bar-charts illustrate the responses of an MP-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 of MPs. I also depict 95% confidence intervals.
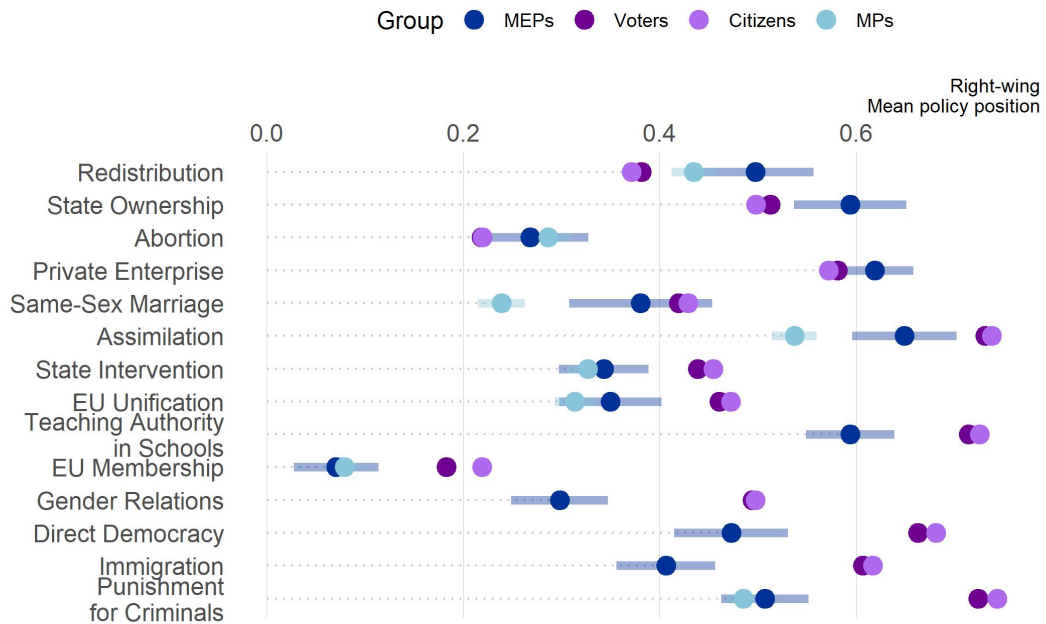
Figure H.3. Mean Attitudes of Voters, MEPs, Citizens and National MPs by Issue

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. All variables are scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a more right-wing position. Data is pooled across Europe.
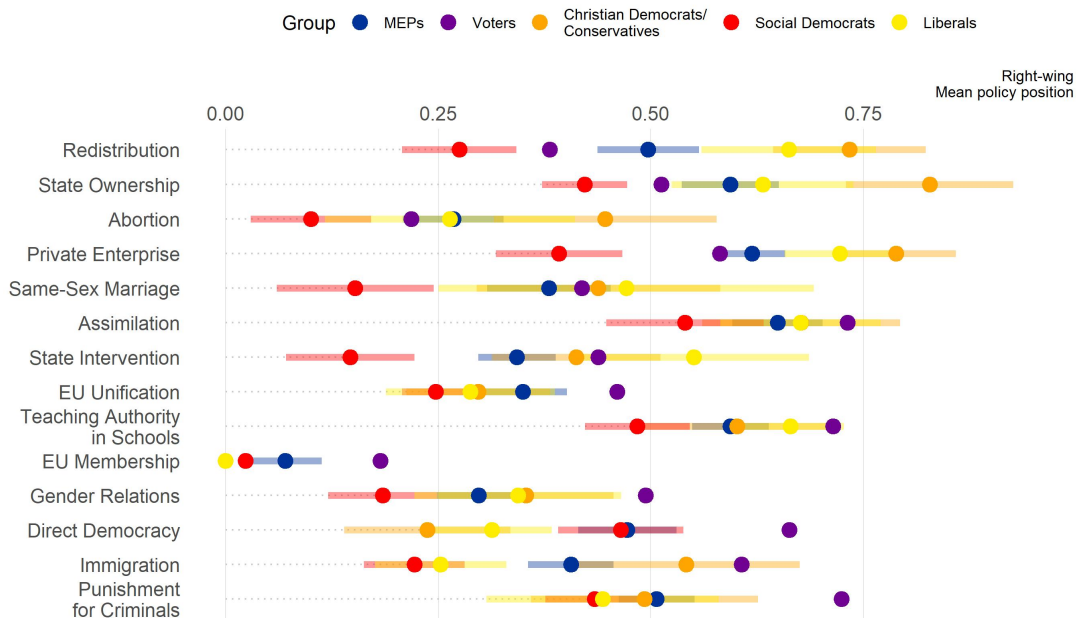
Figure H.4. Mean Attitudes of Voters and MEPs of Several Party Families by Issue

Note: This figure shows a dumbbell plot. Different policy issues are shown on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the mean attitudes of voters and politicians from various party families. All variables are scaled to range from zero to one and such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing.
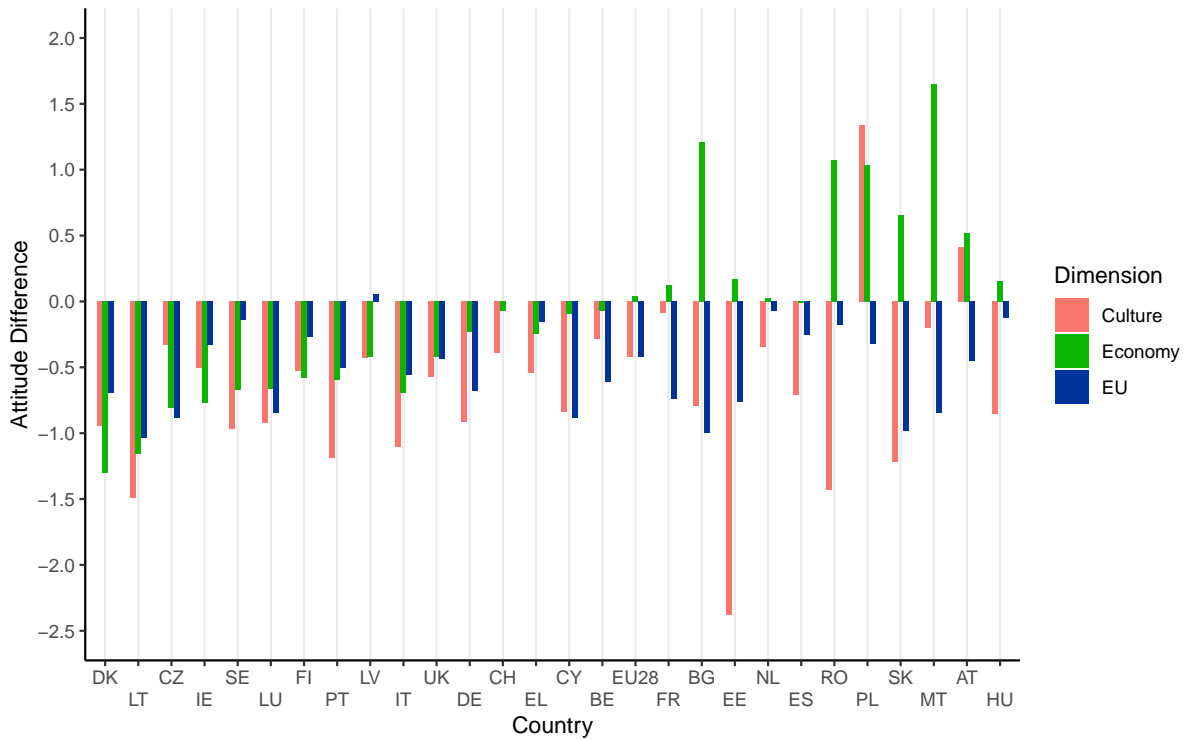
Figure H.5. Attitudes Differences between Voters and Parliamentarians by Country

Note: Bars show attitude differences by country and policy dimension between voters and parliamentarians (MPs and MEPs) from the same country. The larger the value, the more right-wing parliamentarians are compared to voters from their country. Data for Slovenia is missing.
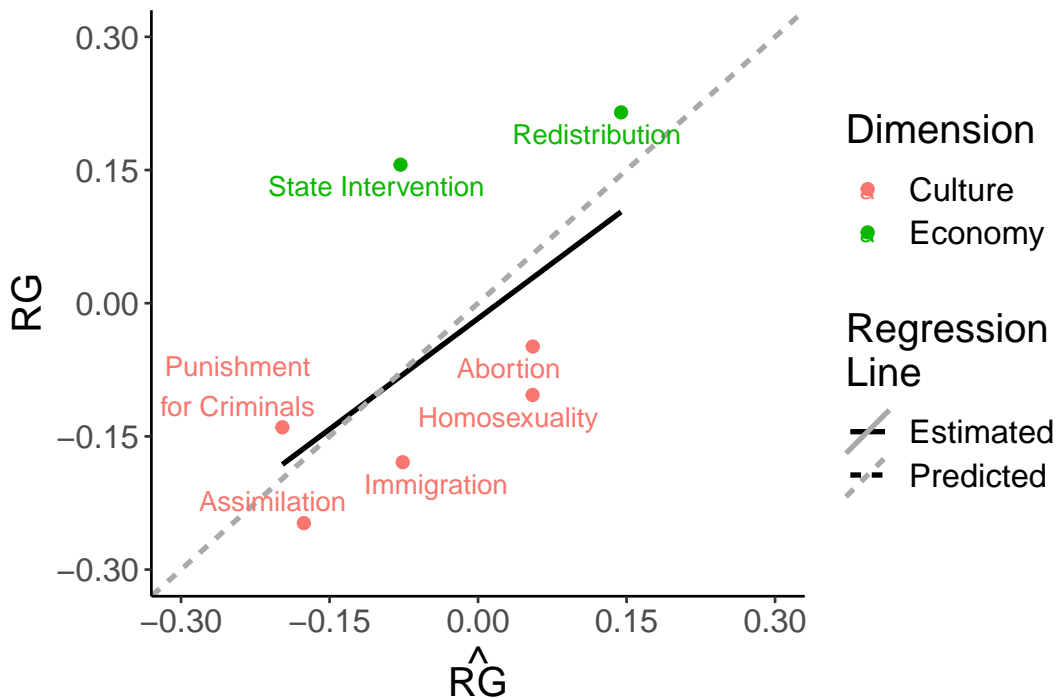
Figure H.6. Estimates for Representation Gaps Based on Survey and Referendum Data (1992–2022)

Note: The horizontal axis shows RGs calculated from 2007 Swiss survey data. The vertical axis depicts RGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of RGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 1992 and 2022. The figure also shows a dashed 45° line and a fitted line from a binary regression.
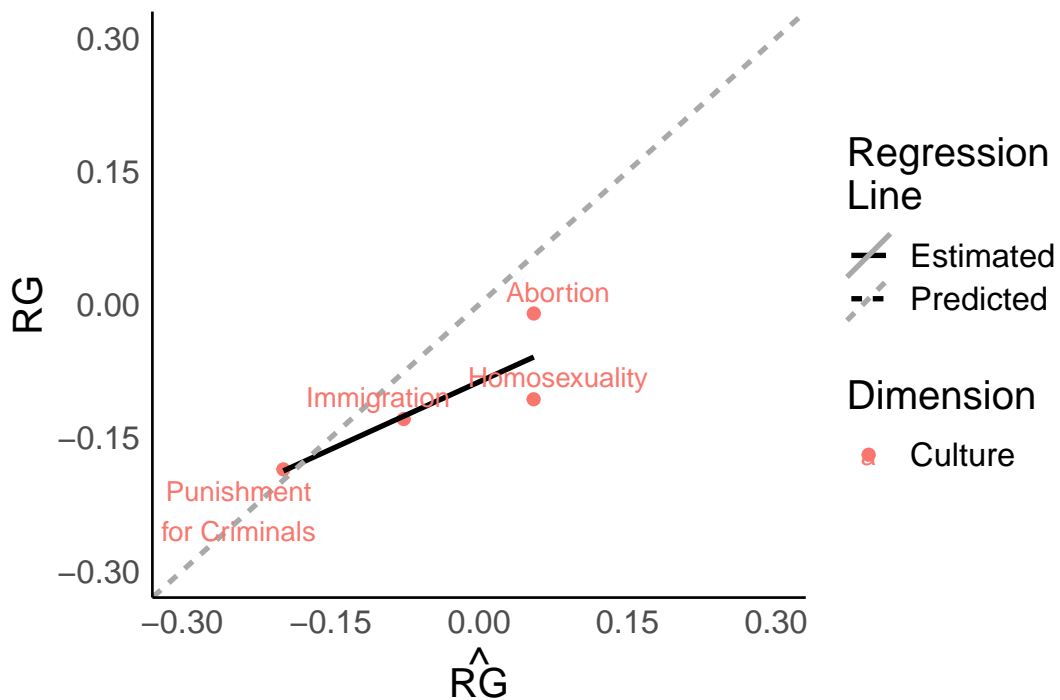
Figure H.7. Estimates for Representation Gaps Based on Survey and Referendum Data (2002–2012)
Note: The horizontal axis shows RGs calculated from 2007 Swiss survey data. The vertical axis depicts RGs calculated from referendum votes of MPs and ordinary citizens. I take the unweighted means of RGs in all referendums belonging to a topic between 2002 and 2012. The figure also shows a dashed 45° line and a fitted line from a binary regression.
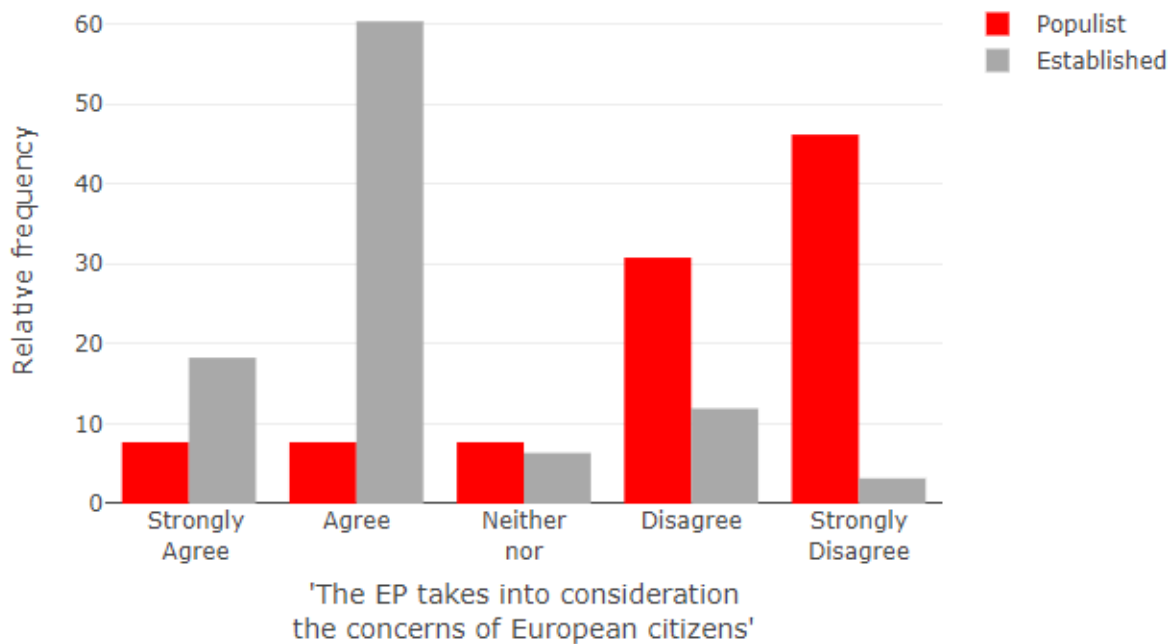
Figure H.8. Assessment of Political Representation by Populist and Non-populist MEPs
Note: This figure depicts two histograms referring to answers of MEPs to the following statement: "The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens."
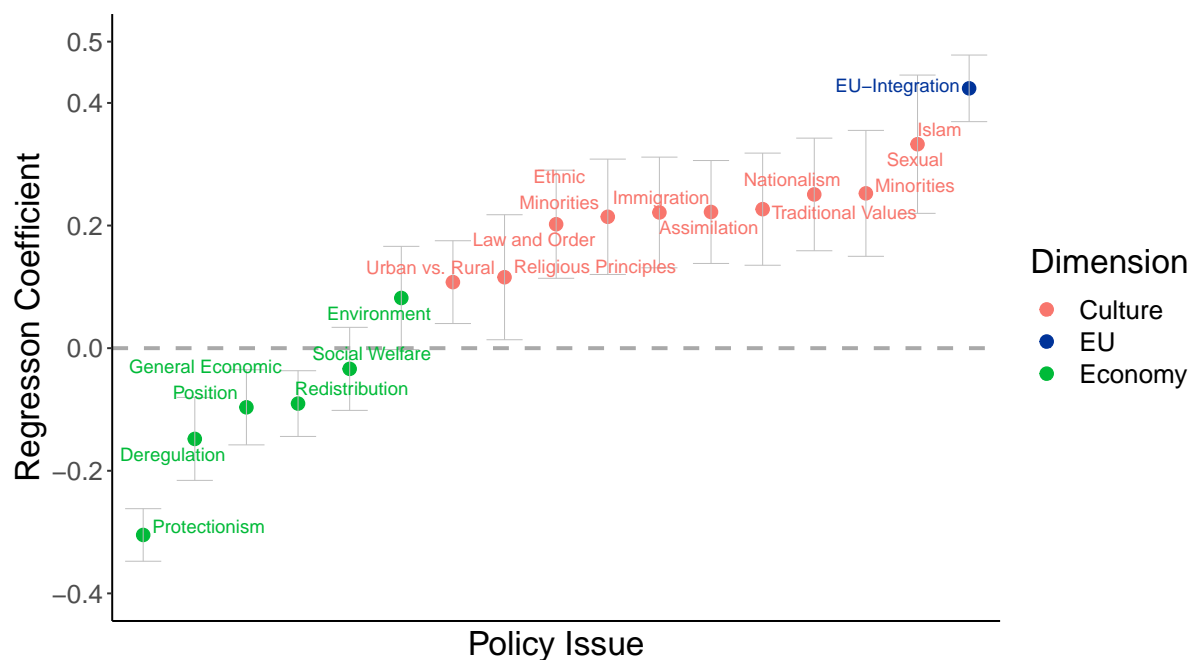
Figure H.9. Issue-Positioning of Populist Parties Relative to Non-populist Parties Weighted With Vote Shares

Note: This figure is based on Equation 6. Each dot shows β_i for a different dependent variable/policy issue. These issues are arranged on the horizontal axis. Parties are weighted with their vote-share in the last national election before the observation. Higher values mean that populists are more right-wing than non-populist parties. Coefficients are surrounded by 95% confidence intervals.
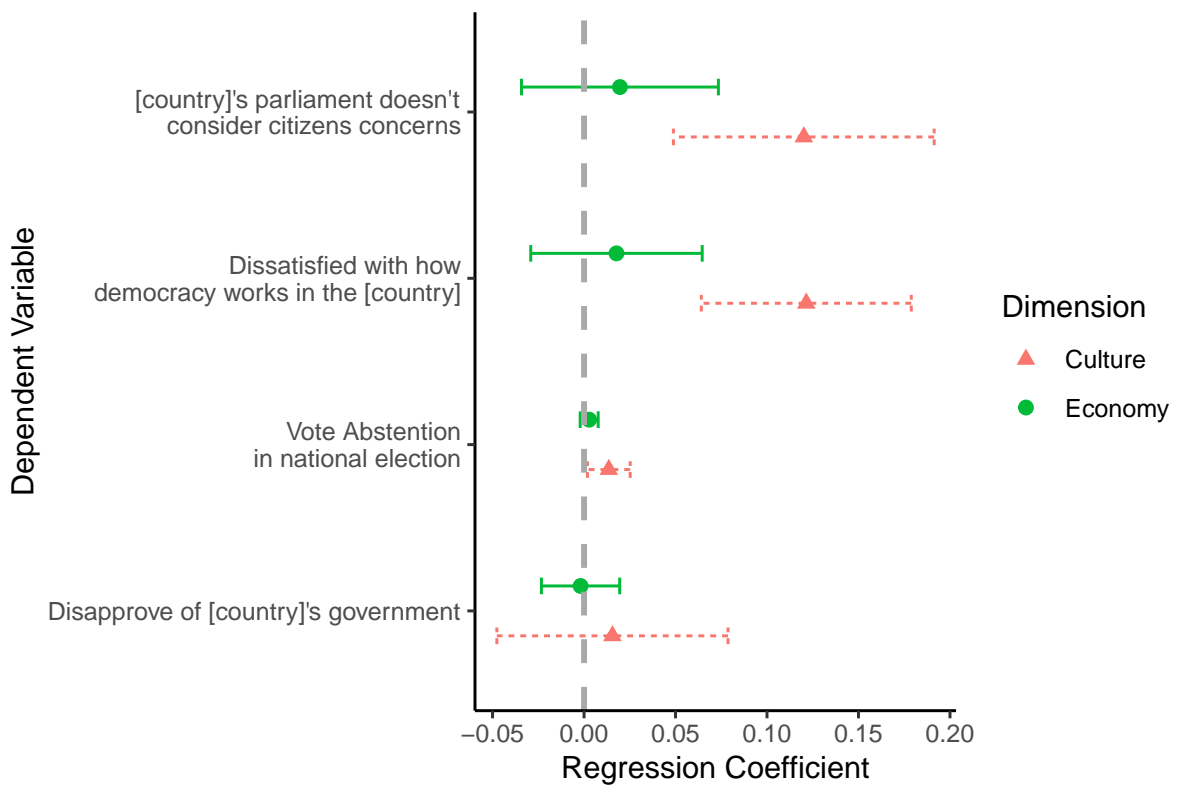
Figure H.10. Association between Representation and Political Trust at the National Level

Note: This figure is based on Equation 6 and shows a coefficient plot. It depicts estimates for β_d from versions of Equation 5 with different dependent variables, which are arranged on the vertical axis. 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.

Appendix I   Additional Tables

Table I.1. Information on Policy Attitude Variables

Variable Name	Question Wording	Question Type	Dimension	Included in
Private Enterprise	Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY]'s economic problems.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES
State Ownership	Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES
State Intervention	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES/CCS
Redistribution	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.	5 point Likert	Economy	EES/CCS
Assimilation	Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY].	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
Same-Sex Marriage	Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.	5 point Likert	Culture	EES/CCS
Abortion	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.	5 point Likert	Culture	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
Teaching Authority in Schools	Schools must teach children to obey authority.	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 Referendums	EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum.	5 point Likert	EU	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

Note:

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. 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 I.2. Using Valence to Predict Representation Gaps

	Dependent variable: Right-wing Representation Gap				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Valence Advantage Right	0.995***	1.010***	1.021***	1.030***	0.731***
	(0.144)	(0.168)	(0.170)	(0.182)	(0.141)
Democracy Index		0.074		−0.604	−0.517
		(0.234)		(0.446)	(0.554)
Control of Corruption			0.044	0.113	0.123
			(0.089)	(0.284)	(0.274)
Political Stability				0.113	0.099
				(0.094)	(0.113)
Government Effectiveness				0.267	0.191
				(0.237)	(0.275)
Regulatory Quality				−0.263	−0.352
				(0.527)	(0.488)
Rule of Law				0.016	−0.004
				(0.338)	(0.395)
Economic Dimension					0.534***
					(0.140)
Constant	−0.098	−0.180	−0.139	0.414	0.206
	(0.060)	(0.272)	(0.109)	(0.438)	(0.438)
Observations	46	46	46	46	46
R^2	0.535	0.536	0.538	0.549	0.643

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. The dependent variable is positive if policymaking is more right-wing than preferred by voters. Valence Advantage Right is positive if right-wing parties are seen as more competent by voters than left-wing parties. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.3. Comparing Attitudes of Voters, MEPs and MEP-Candidates

	Dependent variable:					
	Cultural Index		Economic Index		EU Index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\mathbb{1}$[MEP Candidate]	−0.118***	−0.070***	−0.022	−0.041**	−0.042	−0.005
	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.024)
$\mathbb{1}$[Elected]	0.004	−0.018	0.057**	0.012	−0.069***	−0.028
	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.020)
Demographic Controls		✓		✓		✓
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: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. $\mathbb{1}$[MEP Candidate] equals one if the respondent was a candidate for the 2009 EP election. $\mathbb{1}$[Elected] equals one if he was elected to the European Parliament. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliamentary election and those who voted at the 2009 European Parliament election. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Regressions are weighted for population and country share of representatives in the European Parliament. 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, living standard, and country. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.4. Comparing Attitudes of MEPs and MEP-Candidates

	Dependent variable:					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\mathbb{1}$[Elected]	0.005	0.005	−0.020	−0.020	0.006	0.006
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Age	−0.0004***	−0.0004***	−0.0004	−0.0004	−0.0002	−0.0002
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender	−0.025*	−0.025*	0.012*	0.012*	0.013	0.013
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Only Inexperienced Candidates		✓		✓		✓
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: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs after elected MEPs officially started working as MEPs after the 2009 European Parliament election. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. Regressions are weighted for population and country share of representatives in the European Parliament. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.5. The Relationship between Campaign Donations and Bias of MEPs

	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Campaign Donations in Mill.	0.0005	0.0001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.0001	−0.0001
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Demographic Controls		✓		✓		✓
Observations	756	679	759	681	763	688
R^2	0.0001	0.401	0.0004	0.289	0.00000	0.317

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is intuitively more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.6. Comparing the Biases of MEPs Who Were and Were Not Encouraged to Run by Lobbyists

	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\mathbb{1}$[encouraged by lobbyist]	0.008	0.005	0.012	0.007	−0.015	−0.020
	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Demographic Controls		✓		✓		✓
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: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.7. Relationship between Biases of MEPs and Frequency of Personal Visits at Firms and Clubs

	Dependent variable:					
	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		✓		✓		✓
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: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. $* p < 0.1$, $** p < 0.05$, $*** p < 0.01$.

Table I.8. Relationship between Biases of MEPs and Frequency of Visits of Their Teams at Firms and Clubs

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

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. $* p < 0.1$, $** p < 0.05$, $*** p < 0.01$.

Table I.9. Comparing the Bias of MEPs Who Used to Be Lobbyists with That of Other MEPs

	Dependent variable:					
	Cultural Bias		Economic Bias		EU Bias	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\mathbb{1}$[MPE was a lobbyist]	0.006	−0.0004	−0.034**	−0.025	−0.004	0.014
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.020)
Demographic Controls		✓		✓		✓
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: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. $* p < 0.1$, $** p < 0.05$, $*** p < 0.01$.

Table I.10. Comparing Biases of Young MEPs That Plan and Not Plan to Leave Politics Soon

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

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions. All variables are standardized such that they range between zero and one and such that higher values indicate an attitude that is more right-wing. Data includes responses from elected and unelected MEPs. 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, living standard, and country. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table I.11. List of Populist Parties

Partyname	Abbreviation	Country
Vlaams Belang	VB	Belgium
Dutch Labour Party	PVDA	Netherlands
People's 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 Association—Golden 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
VMRO—Bulgarian National Movement	VMRO-BND	Bulgaria
Attack	ATAKA	Bulgaria
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
Jobbik—Movement 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
People's Party—Dan Diaconescu	PP-DD	Romania
Ordinary People and Independent Personalities	OLaNO	Slovakia
Croatian Labourists–Labour Party	HL-SR	Croatia
Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starcevic	HSP-AS	Croatia
Alternative Democratic Reform Party	ADR	Luxembourg
The Left	DL	Luxembourg

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