Political Representation Gaps and Populism*

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Abstract

Research on the rise of populism has largely neglected the explanation populists themselves provide: they allegedly fill "political representation gaps" —differences between the policymaking by mainstream parties and the will of "the people." I study 1) whether representation gaps exist, 2) their potential causes, and 3) their relationship with populism. To this end, I analyze the responses of about 27,000 citizens and 1,000 parliamentarians from 27 European countries to identical survey policy questions, which I compile and verify to be indicative of real-world behavior. I find that, while policymaking represents the economic attitudes of citizens relatively well, there exist large representation gaps on cultural issues in nearly all European countries. Part of their cause seems to be that party members who are relatively educated and hold liberal moral values are more likely to become parliamentary candidates. As I show theoretically and empirically, voters do not eliminate representation gaps through voting because they consider culturally conservative parties to be incompetent. I find that representation gaps are nevertheless associated with political dissatisfaction. Populists are particularly likely to perceive them and right-wing populists fill cultural representation gaps. In turn, unrepresented citizens are especially likely to vote for right-wing populists and cultural representation gaps predict their electoral success. Finally, I show that the recent rise of populism coincided with an increase in representation gaps.

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1 Introduction

Populists are often defined as politicians who claim that "corrupt" established parties do not represent the policy attitudes of the "pure and homogeneous" people (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). I refer to such a lack of representation as a "political representation gap." Populists explain their own increasing electoral success through their alleged ability to close these representation gaps (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017).

Partly because of the unparalleled electoral rise of populists in recent decades (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022), partly because populist parties in office exert negative effects on the economy and democratic institutions (Bellodi, Morelli, and Vannoni, 2021; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2021), a vast literature investigates the causes for the rise of populism. However, the literature has largely neglected the reason populists themselves put forward as an explanation for their rise: the existence of political representation gaps. For instance, a recent and comprehensive survey (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022) does not even include the term "representation." This paper is dedicated to the questions whether 1) representation gaps indeed exist, if so, 2) how they emerge, and 3) whether they can help to explain the rise of populism.

To examine these questions I compare responses to identical policy statements by voters and politicians from anonymous surveys around 2009. This type of data has been rarely used by researchers, although survey responses of politicians are highly predictive of their behavior (Saiegh, 2009; Fisher and Herrick, 2013). My survey dataset, which I compiled from various sources, contains responses regarding a wide range of political issues of 27,069 citizens (24,827 of which are voters) and 994 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. I validate the parliamentarian data with the two most established datasources for party positions, the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (Polk et al., 2017; Jolly et al., 2022) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., Manifesto Project Dataset). Relative to these sources, the key advantage of my data is that responses of citizens and parliamentarians were elicited on the same scale, which enables me to estimate representation gaps. I show that political representation gaps —differences between *decisions* of parliamentarians and attitudes of voters— can be reliably measured by comparing the survey-elicited attitudes of parliamentarians and voters. First, most parliamentarians state to base their decisions on their own attitudes rather than of those of their voters and this tendency is stronger among more senior parliamentarians. Second, I use a hand-collected dataset on politicians' and ordinary citizens' voting behavior in Swiss referendums. Differences in voting behavior between Swiss MPs and voters closely resemble representation gaps as estimated from survey data. Consequently, my data allows me to reliably estimate the policy space and, in particular, representation gaps, around 2009, just before the rise of populism intensified (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022).

I estimate large, significant, and systematic representation gaps in nearly all European countries. Representation gaps are largest on cultural topics, where parliamentarians are much more liberal than the electoral center and even most Christian democratic parties are

more liberal than the mean voter. In the average country, these cultural representation gaps amount to nearly one standard deviation of citizen attitudes and are even larger regarding some cultural sub-issues, particularly immigration. In contrast, representation gaps on economic topics are much smaller and differ strongly by country. The existence of cultural representation gaps is robust to many alternative specifications. For example, they are larger when comparing citizens instead of voters to MPs. They are also larger on issues that both voters and parliamentarians find more important.

I examine the causes of representation gaps by studying the supply and demand for representation. On the supply side, I find that parties play a major role in creating representation gaps. While citizens, voters, and party members hold similar policy attitudes, (unelected) candidates and parliamentarians have very different opinions. This implies that, when viewed as a function, parties turn a representative input of members into a very unrepresentative output of candidates for parliament. About 30% of the representation gaps can be explained by demographic differences between voters and parliamentarians, but the remaining gaps stay large and significant. I provide evidence that information asymmetries and different moral values explain independent parts of representation gaps, above and beyond what demographic differences can account for. This suggests that voters have to choose from a set of candidates whose policy positions are already very unrepresentative of the population due to unrepresentative demographic characteristics and moral values, as well as a relatively high level of informedness.

My preferred explanation for why voters do not undo representation gaps through voting is that they do not only demand political representation but also competent policymakers. To test this explanation I develop a Downsian model Downs (1957) with policy-motivated candidates and heterogeneous perceived competence. 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. The model makes testable predictions about the distribution of European parties' perceived competence. For instance, it predicts that culturally liberal parties are considered more competent than culturally conservative ones.My empirical analysis supports all predictions.

In contrast, I find no empirical evidence in favor of several alternative explanations, including lobbyism, or a desire of politicians to protect minorities from a "tyranny of the majority." I also show that many political institutions, like the proportionality of the voting system, are uncorrelated with representation gaps. Moreover, greater polarization between parties or similar dispersion-based arguments cannot explain the gaps documented here because I find the distribution of policymaking to be shifted relative to the attitudes of voters.

Finally, I relate representation gaps to populism, by studying its demand and supply. On the demand side, I show that citizens whose policy attitudes are less well-represented by their national parliaments are less likely to believe that their parliament considers the concerns of its citizens and are less satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, even after controlling for many demographic characteristics. Regarding the supply side, I show that populists have a more realistic perception of representation gaps than main-

stream politicians and are more likely to prioritize the attitudes of their voters over their own. Moreover, right-wing populists fill cultural representation gaps, even though they are economically more market-oriented than the electorate. Other groups of populists do not fill representation gaps.

I present three empirical facts suggesting that the demand and supply for closing the representation gaps match. First, citizens who are less well-represented are more likely to vote for populists after controlling for demographic characteristics and this association is entirely driven by voting for right-wing populists. Second, countries with larger representation gaps in 2009 subsequently faced stronger increases in populist vote shares and this is also driven by right-wing populists. Lastly, representation gaps have generally increased since 2009, together with the vote share of populist parties. I find that these increases are driven by the increased perceived relevance of immigration, where the representation gap is particularly large. Taken together, these results are consistent with the idea that right-wing populists rose because they proposed culturally conservative policies that many citizens demanded but no other party group supplied.

Consequently, my findings help to clarify the rise and characteristics of populist parties. Several 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 and therefore do not examine this idea empirically. In contrast, most recent studies in populism 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 culturally left-wing than voters, challenger parties need to be more culturally conservative than established parties to profit from representation gaps. More specifically, this line of reasoning suggests that restrictive immigration policies and stricter sentencing decrease the vote share of populist parties. Indeed, recent studies have find that (large) increases in immigra-

tion 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).[1]

Such 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 largest on immigration, which explains why the populist vote share rose especially quickly during the refugee crisis. This 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). 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. Hence, I interpret the narrative populists tell as a rhetorical argument that helps them to make their comparative advantage —representation— salient.

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 create representation gaps 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. I provide suggestive evidence that information asymmetries and differences in moral values contribute independently to representation gaps, which indicates that part of them might be in the interest of citizens while another part is likely not.

The present paper also adds to the theoretical political economy literature. I provide empirical evidence that most politicians are not office-motivated, as often assumed, but

1. 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.

mainly care about implementing policies that they believe are right. It might therefore often be preferable for theorists to assume policy-motivated politicians, particularly because this assumption need not make models more complex. Assuming policy-motivated politicians is of special importance when modeling the rise of populism or political representation. I show that representation gaps can be explained by a very simple Downsian (Downs, 1957) model with policy-motivated candidates and heterogeneity in how competent candidates are believed to be, which I also verify empirically. In addition to being simple and based on empirically verified assumptions, the model makes predictions that I empirically show to be true too. Hence, it might serve as a useful point of departure for theorists. Moreover, I provide several pieces of evidence that rule out many competing models. For instance, probabilistic voting models with office-motivated candidates can in principle explain representation gaps if some citizens are more responsive to policy positions than others (Persson and Tabellini, 2002). However, according to such models, representation gaps cannot be exploited to gain voters while my evidence suggests that parties can do so.

In general, the results presented here suggest that it might be worth analyzing politicians, particularly those *not* belonging to populist parties, from the perspective of behavioral economics. I provide evidence that moral values like moral universalism (Enke, 2020; Enke, Rodríguez-Padilla, and Zimmermann, 2022) and a perception to know better what is right for citizens are important motivations of politicians. In contrast, behavioral models of electoral competition have so far nearly exclusively focused on voters or populist politicians (Bernhardt, Krasa, and Shadmehr, 2021; Bonomi, Gennaioli, and Tabellini, 2021; Levy, Razin, and Young, 2022).

Finally, this paper contributes to the literature on representation. Economists have focused on the numerical over- or under-representation of demographic groups in positions of power (Golder and Ferland, 2017).[2] In contrast, I focus on representation of policy attitudes. My results show that numerical over-representation in parliament does not necessarily lead to high representation of policy attitudes. For instance, even though relatively conservative groups like men, natives and the old are over-represented in most European parliaments, policymaking is more liberal than voters prefer. Hence, numerical representation is not always a useful indicator of whose policy preferences are represented.

Outside of economics, most research on representation of attitudes stems from political science.[3] The present paper contributes to this literature by i) showing that politicians prioritize their own attitudes over those of their voters, ii) validating survey-based estimates

2. 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 representation regarding socioeconomic background in Europe (Bó et al., 2017, 2023).

3. 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; Kübler and Schäfer, 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),

of representation gaps with estimates based on real-world behavior and iii) compiling a far greater dataset than existing studies which enables cross-country analyses. Moreover, I investigate potential causes and consequences of representation gaps in much more detail.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the data. Section 3 explains how I measure representation gaps and provides the corresponding estimates. Section 4 examines potential causes of representation gaps, and Section 5 relates them to populism. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 Data

The main analysis builds on a survey dataset that contains responses of parliamentarians (MPs) and voters to identical policy statements. Such surveys are seen as a valid but underutilized measure of policy positions by political scientists (Laver, 2014).[4]

2.1 Where Do the Surveys Come From?

Parliamentarian survey data come from the European Candidate Study 2009 (Weßels, 2013) and wave one of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS, 2016). Both datasets contain many sub-surveys that were conducted by experienced local institutions. The European Candidate Study 2009 was fielded to nearly all candidates for the 2009 *European* Parliament, while the Comparative Candidate Survey was fielded to nearly all candidates to *national* parliaments for all elections between 2005 and 2013 in 19 European countries. All responses were elicited anonymously several months after the election. The data include information on whether the candidate was elected, which enables me to identify elected members of parliament.

Data on voter attitudes come from the European Voter Study 2009 (Egmond et al., 2017) which was conducted alongside the European Candidate Study 2009 and designed to match it as closely as possible. The authors sampled from the general adult population of each EU member states in 2009 using random dialing techniques. This resulted in a sample of roughly 1,000 citizens for each of the 27 EU countries.

2.2 How Comparable Are the Items across Surveys?

The European Candidate Study 2009 and the European Voter Study 2009 have 14 policy attitude items in common. Subjects were asked who much they agreed or disagreed with

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.

4. Part of this under-usage might be explained by the fact that parliamentarian have not been consolidated into a single easily accessible resource (Laver, 2014). The paper at hand helps to mitigate this obstacle by harmonizing and merging data of MP (candidate) surveys with corresponding voter surveys.

statements like "Immigration to [Country] should be reduced significantly." Items refer to a diverse set of policy issues such as redistribution, immigration, state-intervention or gender relations. Table G.1 provides details. Of these 14 items, seven overlap precisely with items given to national MPs, six of the 14 items are not included in the national MP survey and there is one borderline case: 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/disagreed with a slightly different assertion:

> *People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.*

In the analysis, I will include these items and treat them as identical, because, as I show, the difference in formulation creates a bias that works against my finding. Hence, the responses of citizens and MEPs can be compared using 14 items while comparisons with national MPs is limited to eight items.

2.3 Exclusion Criteria

I exclude observations from my analyses because of missing responses and failed quality checks. As recommended by the authors of the European Candidate Study, I exclude respondents who fail a reliability criterion (Weßels, 2013). Regarding missing observations, the two most important cases are a lack of information on which candidates were elected and a lack of data on some variables when calculating indexes. I exclude data on all sub-surveys where information on which parliamentary candidates were elected is missing. When calculating indexes based on individual policy items, I exclude all observations that do not include responses to each item contained in the corresponding index.

2.4 The Final Dataset

The final survey dataset includes information on 24,827 voters and 994 elected parliamentarians. The comparison between these two groups is at the center of this paper. Moreover, the dataset includes information on over 2,000 non-voting citizens and nearly 7,000 non-elected candidates for parliament, which I will use in some exercises.

As Table G.2 in the appendix shows, the data includes responses of MEPs and voters for 26 countries but numbers of elected MEPs are often low. In addition, the dataset includes data on national MPs for eight countries. While MEP and voter responses were elicited at the same time, some MP responses were elicited earlier or later. However, most temporal differences are small and not systematic. Notably, the data provides a snapshot of European policy spaces around 2009 before the rise of populism intensified (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022).

2.5 Survey Data Validity

Surveys are a valid source of information only if they are well-designed (Stantcheva, 2023). This subsection addresses concerns regarding the final survey-dataset.

2.5.1 Representativeness of the Parliamentarian Sample. The response rates of the parliamentarian surveys varies between 16% and 48%. However, Fisher and Herrick (2013) find no significant representational bias in surveys with even lower response rates. Nonetheless, I check the representativeness of the MEP sample, where the response rate is relatively low (about 18%). Section B.1 shows that the sample is representative regarding many dimensions, in particular, party-group affiliation.

2.5.2 Survey-specific Concerns. Three other reasonable concerns are that parliamentarians strategically misreport their attitudes, that they report their party's position and that their reports are not related to their decisions. First, parliamentarians have no incentive to misreport because responses are anonymous. Second, they were asked explicitly for their personal attitudes, which was sometimes contrasted in the surveys with questions about their party's positions. Third, previous research has found that responses in nine South American parliamentarian surveys are strongly related to their roll-call-voting (Saiegh, 2009).

However, European parliamentarian surveys have not been validated so far. Moreover, previous research has only shown that surveys among parliamentarians yield valid results, not that differences in survey responses between MPs and voters are a valid measure of representation gaps. Consequently, I perform two corresponding validation exercises.

First, I validate the parliamentarian data with the two most established datasources for party positions, the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (Polk et al., 2017; Jolly et al., 2022) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al., Manifesto Project Dataset). Neither of these datasources estimates party positions on the same scale as citizen surveys, making it difficult to measure representation gaps. However, it is possible to compare party-level estimates based on these datsources to party-level estimates based on MP survey data. Section B.2 shows that measures for party positions based on MP survey data correlate highly and significantly with both other measures. This indicates that survey responses of MPs are related to the *behavior* of their parties.

Second, I add a dataset on the initiation- and voting decisions in referendums by parliamentarians, parties, the government, the media, and voters. Because Switzerland is the only European country with a sufficiently large number of referendums, I build the dataset based on Swissvotes (Swissvotes, 2024). Swissvotes is the primary data source for referendums in Switzerland and contains information on all referendums in Switzerland since 1884, including the vote shares by the general population, parliamentarians as well as official recommendations by parties and the government and a measure for media tone.

Referendums are ideal for estimating representation gaps because voters and MPs are confronted with the same well-defined issue, which enables comparability since decisions in referendums have real consequences. However, to estimate representation gaps in a way that

mirrors the survey-based estimates, referendums have to be matched to the issues contained in the surveys and it must be clear whether a yes vote indicates a right-wing or left-wing decision. Because Swissvotes does not provide this information I classify referendums by hand and add a left-right indicator.

The resulting referendum dataset contains information on 82 referendums between 1970 and 2024. Section B.3 compares estimates of representation gaps based on this dataset to survey-based estimates using data on Swiss national MPs from the Comparative Candidate Study and a representative sample of 4,392 Swiss voters from the Swiss Electoral Studies 2007 (Selects, 2009). Reassuringly, Section B.3 finds that survey-based estimates are very similar to those based on referendums. Moreover, voters are more likely to initiate referendums on a right-wing policy change than MPs on exactly the topics where they are more likely to hold right-wing attitudes, according to the survey data.

Finally, Section B.3 shows that gaps between voters and parliamentarians closely resemble gaps between voters and parties while representation gaps between voters and the government are larger. This suggests that the gaps estimated in the main part of the paper are indicative of representation gaps between voters and the political elite in general.

2.6 Auxiliary Data

I use four other auxiliary datasources: first, I use a measure for the disproportionality of national voting systems from Gandrud (2021). Second, I employ a set of governance indicators from the world bank (Kaufman and Kraay, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023 Update). Third, I rely on the frequently used PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2023a) to classify parties as populist or mainstream. Finally, I use the 2014 version of the European Parliament Election Voter Study (Schmitt et al., 2016) to estimate the evolution of representation gaps over time.

3 Estimates of Political Representation Gaps

3.1 Attitude Differences between Voters and Parliamentarians

3.1.1 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. Observations are weighted to adjust for population size differences between countries and I pool data on all elected parliamentarians.

Figure 1 shows that the magnitude of attitude differences, reflected in different shapes of the distributions, strongly depends on the policy issue. For instance, voters and parliamentarians have almost identical attitudes regarding the role of private enterprise in the

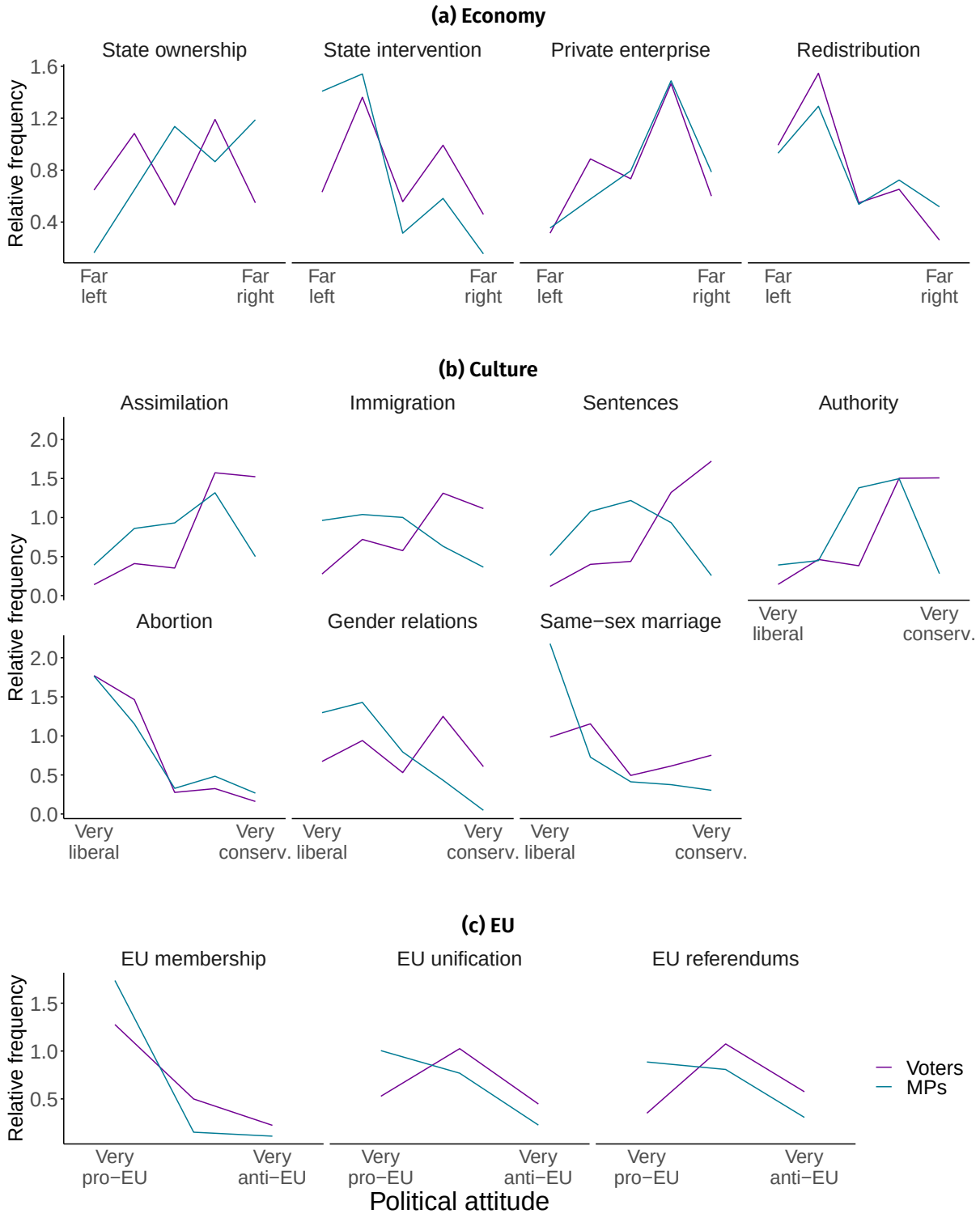

Figure 1. Attitude Differences between Voters and Parliamentarians

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. Data 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."

economy but hold opposing views on immigration, where most voters agree with the statement that immigration should be reduced while a majority of parliamentarians disagrees. Distributions differ most regarding immigration, sentences for criminals, assimilation, teaching authority in schools and gender relations.

Attitude differences on individual issues might cancel out if they go in opposite directions on similar issues. To examine how systematic attitude differences are, I classify individual issues into broader policy dimensions. It is well established that political parties package their positions 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). Consequently, reducing the dimensionality of policy spaces does not reduce explanatory power strongly while simplifying the analysis (Laver, 2014). Most studies find that policy spaces in Europe are best described as either two- or three-dimensional, (Kriesi et al., 2006; Henjak, 2010; Stoll, 2010; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2012; Kitschelt and Rehm, 2014; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Jackson and Jolly, 2021; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk, 2022). The two main dimensions, also distinguished recently by economists (Bonomi, Gennaioli, and Tabellini, 2021; Danieli et al., 2022), are the classical economic left-right dimension and a cultural dimension which contrasts liberal cultural positions, like multiculturalism with conservative ones, like strict sentences 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).

Because all attitude variables used here are easy to classify into these three dimensions, I do so manually, as displayed by the different panels of Figure 1. 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. Moreover, 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. On some issues, voters tend to be more right-wing while they are more left-wing on others and these differences are rather small.

In contrast, voters are more conservative/anti-EU than MPs regarding all cultural or EU issues with the exception of abortion. Hence, attitude differences on non-economic topics are systematic. Furthermore, the largest attitude differences, on immigration and sentences, arise on cultural topics. Notably, the survey items regarding these two issues refer to the direction of policymaking —whether immigration should be reduced and whether criminals should be punished more harshly. Hence, Figure 1 reveals that most voters favor a reduction

in immigration and harsher punishments while a majority of MPs oppose these policies. Thus, voters and MPs disagree about the direction of policymaking.

3.1.2 Aggregating Issues into Policy Dimensions. Appendix A suggests that EU attitudes might be subsumed into the cultural dimension due to their high correlations with each other. Moreover, Appendix D shows that cultural and economic topics are seen as much more important by voters and parliamentarians than EU topics, which speaks against treating EU issues as a policy dimension on par with the other two. Hence, I pool EU and cultural issues and calculate two indexes for cultural/EU, labeled "cultural," and economic issues respectively to simplify the analysis. Formally, I calculate the attitude a_i of any survey participant i on dimension $d \in \{Economy, Culture\}$ as

$$a_{i,d} = \sum_{t \in d} a_{i,t} \cdot importance_t. \tag{1}$$

$importance_t$ is an index that measures the perceived importance of topic t 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 (Laver, 2014). In the surveys all participants were asked to name the three issues that are most important to them. I calculate the index for the perceived importance of topics ($importance_t$) from this data, as discussed in detail in Appendix D. As shown there, voters and MPs rank the importance of issues similarly. Moreover, attitude differences are, if anything, larger on issues that voters or MPs find more important. For instance, abortion, where attitude differences are small, is considers least important while immigration, where attitude differences are largest, is considered most important. Because the surveys among national MPs did not include the items "private enterprise," "state ownership," "authority," "gender relations," "immigration," and "EU referendums," I restrict my analysis to the remaining two economic (redistribution and state intervention) and six non-economic issues, unless noted otherwise.

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.[5]

The distribution of voter attitudes is unimodal and most voters hold attitudes close to the mode. The attitudes of the remaining voters are chiefly spread out throughout the upper half of the figure. This simple structure makes it easy for parties to determine the vote-maximizing policy positions and a convergent equilibrium more likely in many models (Plott, 1967; McKelvey and Wendell, 1976; McKelvey, 1979; McKelvey and Schofield, 1987; Schofield, 2007). The distribution of MPs has a similar shape. It is also unimodal and most attitudes form a cluster around this mode. However, the key difference between the two distribution is not their shape but their position. The distribution of voter attitudes is located

5. 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.

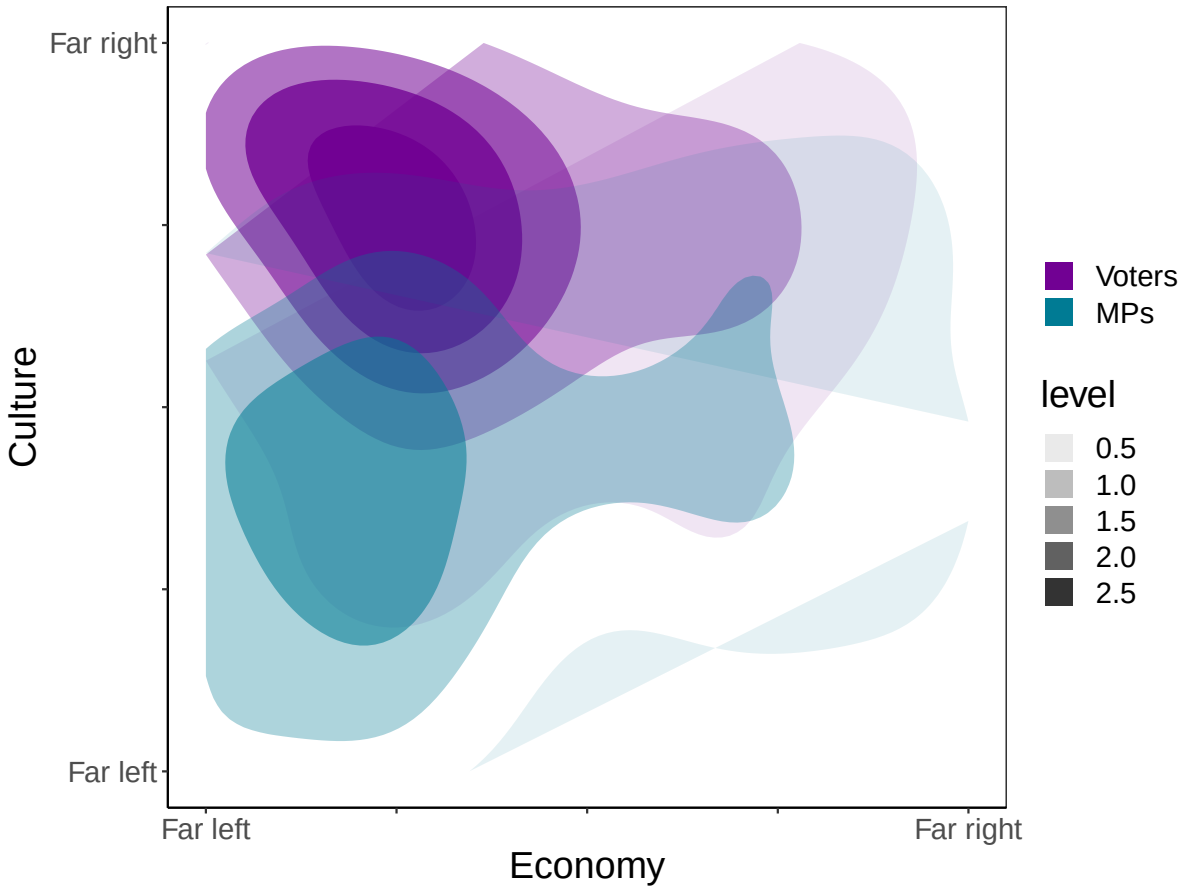

Figure 2. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians

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.

much higher than the one for MPs. This illustrates that voters are much more culturally conservative than their representatives. In contrast, their horizontal positions are similar, indicating that voters and MPs hold similar economic attitudes. These results reinforce the impression of a systematic and large representation gap on non-economic issues, but not on economic topics. Figure F.2 and Figure A.2 in the appendix show that similar results are obtained when weighting all issues within a dimension equally or when aggregating issues using a principal component analysis.

3.1.3 Quantitative Estimates of Attitude Differences. To make the magnitudes of attitude differences easier to interpret, I calculate z-scores of all attitude variables by using the standard deviation of EU-wide citizen attitudes. I then estimate regressions of the following form by OLS:

$$z(a)_{i,t} = \alpha_t + \beta_t \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_{i,t} + c_i + \varepsilon_{i,t}. \tag{2}$$

$z(a)_{i,t}$ is the z-score of individual i on topic t, $\mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_{i,t}$ equals one if i is an elected parliamentarian and zero if i is a voter and c_i indicates a set of country-fixed effects. Consequently,

β_t descriptively measures attitude differences on topic t between voters and MPs within a country, expressed in standard deviations of attitudes.

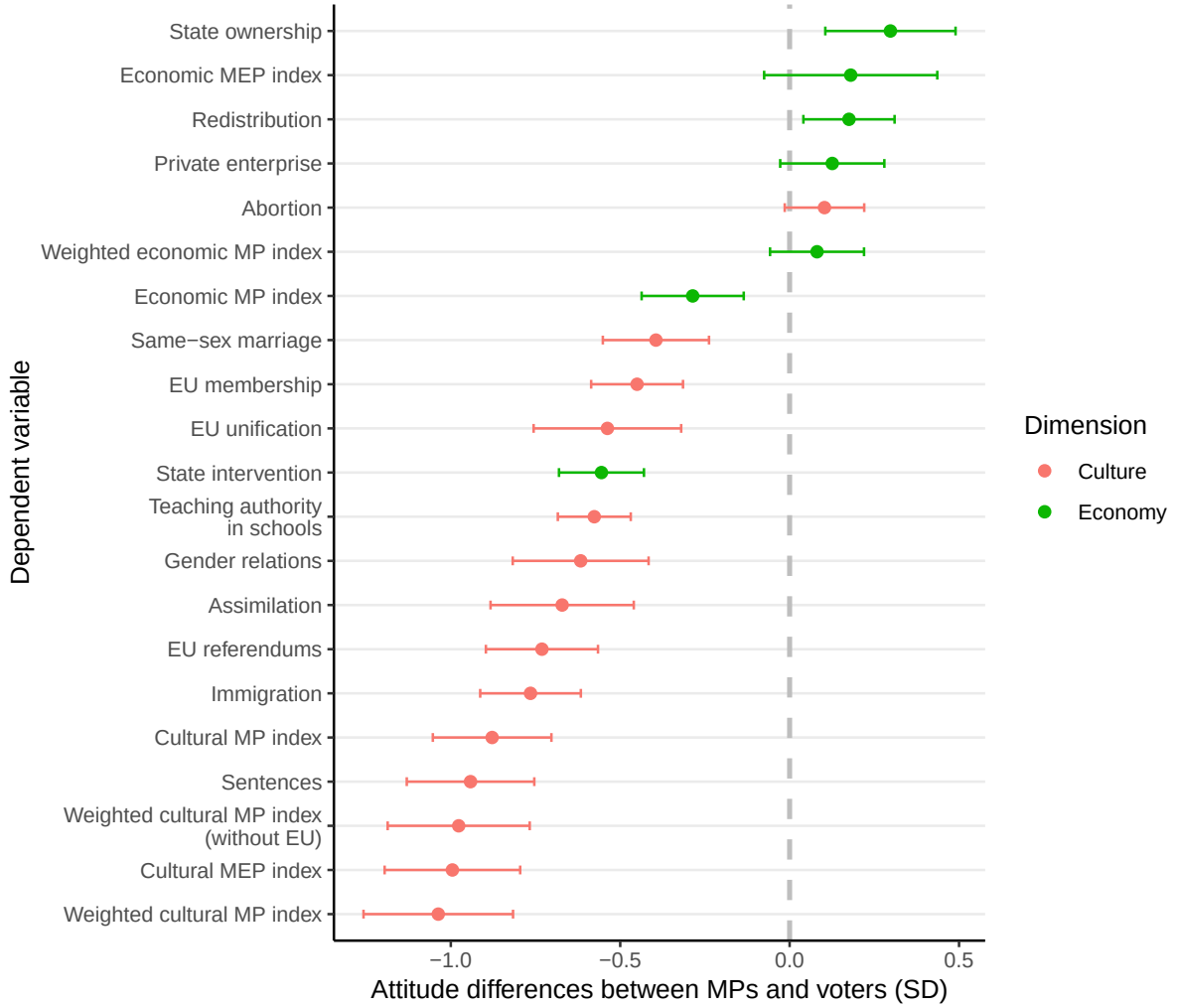

Figure 3. Attitude Differences between Voters and MPs by Issue

Note: 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.

Figure 3 shows β_t's and 95% confidence intervals. Higher values indicate that MPs are more right-wing than voters. I also display results for various indexes. MEP indexes use attitudes on all variables but do not include responses of national MPs. The main indexes used in this paper are the weighted cultural MP index and the weighted economic MP index.

The mean MP is significantly more liberal than the mean voter on all cultural issues but abortion. Attitude differences regarding cultural indexes are even 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. Differences on weighted indexes tend to be larger than those on unweighted ones because attitude differences are larger on issues that voters consider more important (Appendix D). Attitude differences on economic issues are smaller and less systematic.

3.2 From Attitude Differences to Representation Gaps

Representation gaps refer to the 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.

3.2.1 The Representation Intention of Parliamentarians. To test this possibility I use an item contained in the politician surveys which 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." I refer to parliamentarians who respond with "voter opinion" as having a high representation intention while those who respond with "own opinion" as having a low representation intention. Notably, the anonymity of the surveys mitigates concerns that responses are biased by, for instance, social desirability bias.

Only about 16% of the MEP respondents stated that the MEP should follow the opinions of his voters and this share is only slightly higher among national MPs (about 19%). Figure F.4 in the appendix depicts the representation intention of MP subgroups. The representation intention sharply decreases with the seniority and experience of MPs. Assuming that more senior and experienced parliamentarians have a particularly strong impact on policy decisions, this implies that the unweighted proportions just presented even underestimate the extent to which parliamentarians prioritize their own attitudes. Overall, this evidence suggests that the attitudes of MPs translate into decisions, which suggests that attitude differences translate into representation gaps.

3.2.2 Representation Gap Measures. My main measures for representation gaps are differences between voter attitudes and parliamentarian *behaviors*. Let i be a survey respondent and $\mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_i$ equal 0 if i is an "ordinary" citizen and 1 if he is an MP (candidate). I measure the attitudes of citizens (and voters) on each dimension d$\in$ {*Economy*, *Culture*} using the attitude indexes ($a_{i,d}$) defined in Equation 1. To estimate the behavior of parliamentarians I combine information on the attitude indexes with their representation intentions. Formally, let $\overline{a}_{c,d}^{voter}$ be the mean attitude of MP i's voters on dimension d and

$r_i \in \{\text{Policy motivated}, \text{Representation motivated}\}$ indicate whether i bases his behavior on his own attitudes or on the attitudes of his voters. I define his behavior $b_{i,d}$ as

$$b_{i,d} = \begin{cases} a_{i,d} & \text{if } r_i = \text{Policy motivated} \\ \bar{v}_{i,d} & \text{if } r_i = \text{Representation motivated.} \end{cases} \tag{3}$$

Building on the attitudes of voters and the behaviors of MPs ($b_{i,d}$), I estimate three types of representation gap measures. To ease interpretation, I transform all of these variables into z-scores, using the standard deviation of EU-wide citizen attitudes.

First, I calculate the bias of MP (candidates) relative to the national mean voter. Formally:

$$bias_{i,d}^{MP} = b_{i,d} - \bar{a}_{c,d}^{voter}, \tag{4}$$

where c indicates i's country. Positive values of $bias_i^{MP}$ indicate that i is more right-wing than the national mean voter on dimension d and negative values mean that he is more left-wing.

Second, I calculate the *absolute* bias of citizens and voters relative to the national mean MP. Formally

$$|bias_{i,d}^{\text{voter}}| = |\text{a}_{i,d} - \bar{b}_{i,d}^{MP}|, \tag{5}$$

where $\bar{b}_{i,d}^{MP}$ is the mean behavior of national MPs of citizen i. Higher values indicate that the attitude of voter i differs more strongly from the mean behavior of his national parliamentarians. I make use of the two type of bias variables later.

To estimate representation gaps between parliaments and voters overall, I calculate variables labeled $index_{i,d}$, which are equal to the attitude of i if i is a voter and equal to his estimated behavior ($b_{i,d}$) if he is an MP. Then, I estimate the following equations by OLS:

$$z(index_{i,d}) = \alpha_d + \beta_d \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MP}]_i + \varepsilon_{i,d}. \tag{6}$$

My estimate for representation gaps on dimension d is β_d. Using regressions has the advantage that I can control for additional variables, like demographic variables, which I do in Section 4.2. Section B.3 and Section B.2 show that Equation 6 yields valid estimates for the behavior of parliamentarians and the parties they belong to by validating them with representation gaps estimated from real decisions. When calculating representation gaps within country, I always weigh to generate representative samples within each country. When pooling observations across countries, I either adjust for different population sizes in addition or include country indicators as controls. Unless noted otherwise, I compare *elected* parliamentarians with voters.

β_d estimates the (conditional) mean difference regarding voter attitudes and MP behavior in standard deviations. Because I scale all variables such that higher values mean that attitudes and behaviors are more right-wing/conservative, a positive β_d means that MPs are more right-wing/conservative than voters. Similarly, a negative β_d indicates that MPs are more left-wing/liberal than voters.

Unless noted otherwise, regressions are unconditional or only include country indicators. In this case, representation gaps estimate descriptively how the behavior of actual

parliamentarians differs from the attitudes of their voters, reflecting the degree of representation actually occurring. This also means that representation gaps do not take into account other differences between parliamentarians and voters, like, for instance, demographic differences.[6] In particular, this implies that representation gaps are not necessarily problematic, as they might reflect misinformation of voters.

3.3 Estimates of Representation Gaps

3.3.1 Representation Gaps by Country. Figure 4 displays representation gap estimates based on Equation 6 for all countries for which data is available and the EU as a whole. I pool elected national MPs and MEPs to increase the sample size and because MEPs and national MPs have similar policy attitudes compared to voters as shown in Figure F.1. 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.

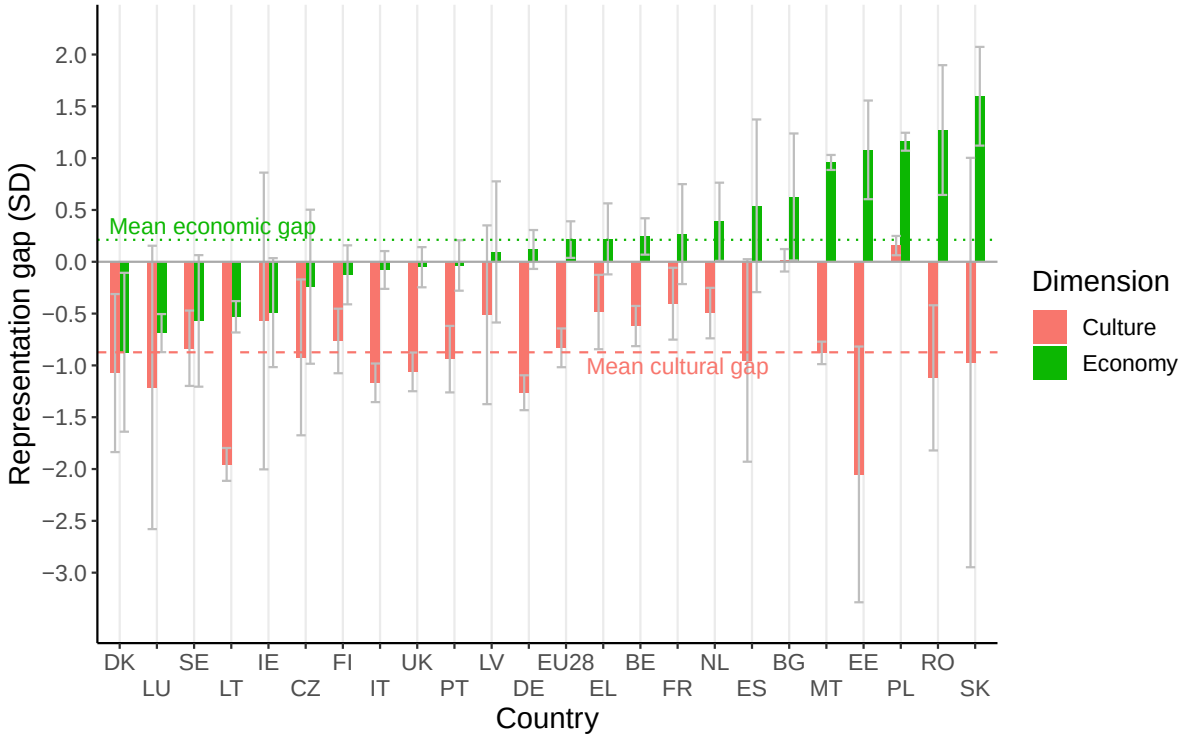

Figure 4. Representation Gaps by Country and Policy Dimension

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 6 but for each country individually.

Cultural representation gaps are negative in all countries except Poland and Bulgaria, indicating that policymaking is more left-wing than voters prefer in nearly all European

6. Section 4.2 examines empirically to what extent differences regarding demographic variables, information, and moral values can explain representation gaps.

countries and the EU as a whole. Magnitudes for most countries are substantial. In the average country, policymaking is about 87% of a standard deviation more liberal than voters prefer.

On economic topics, policymaking is about 21% of a standard deviation more right-wing than voters prefer in the average country. However, 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 tend to be smaller than cultural ones in absolute values, even though they are still sizable. They are the largest in eastern European countries, where policymaking is significantly more right-wing than voters prefer.

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

3.3.2 Representation Gaps by Party. Figure 5 compares the policy-positions of European parties relative to the overall national mean voter.[7] To this end, I calculate the bias of a party as the mean bias of its parliamentarians (defined in Equation 4). Consequently, a position below the horizontal zero line indicates that the party is more culturally liberal than the mean voter of its country and a position to the right of the vertical zero line reveals that the party is economically more right-wing than the national mean voter.

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 (similarly) 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 further in the direction of extremely culturally liberal positions than in the direction of extreme conservatism. The only party family that tends to be more culturally conservative than national voters are nationalists, who, however, tend to be closer to the national mean voter in this

7. Figure F.5 in the appendix shows results when party positions are estimated using all candidates instead of elected parliamentarians and Figure F.6 compares the policy positions of parties based on elected parliamentarians to their own mean voter.

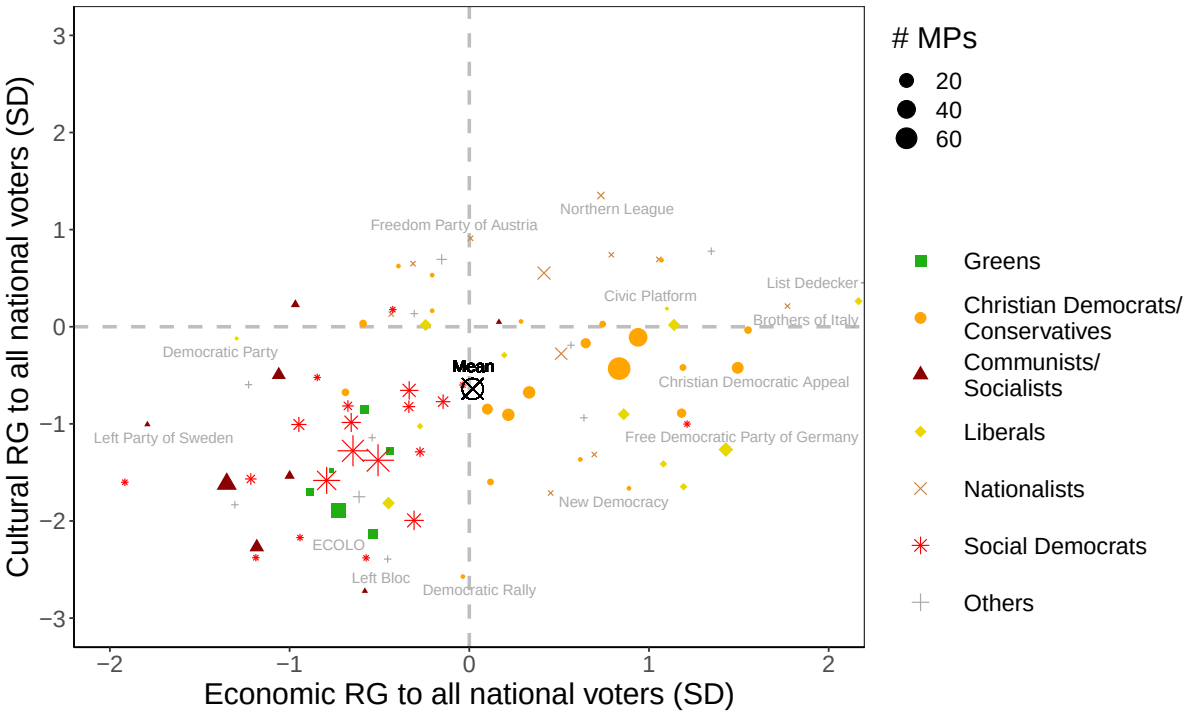

Figure 5. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Party

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. For clarity, I omit a few parties whose cultural index is smaller than -3. All of them rely on few observations and are therefore measured imprecisely.

dimension than social democratic, green, or socialist parties. Consequently, the mean party is much more culturally liberal than the overall mean voter of its country.

These results show that most uncovered policy space is located in culturally conservative positions. While about half of the electorate demands such policies, only very few parties supply them, most of which are nationalists. Hence, one might have predicted in 2009 that culturally conservative parties have a particularly high potential to attract voters in the future. If voters would start voting mainly based on their cultural congruence with party positions, Equation 4 suggests that in many countries about half of the electorate might vote for nationalists.

4 Potential Causes of Representation Gaps

In many frequently used models of electoral competition parties position themselves at the electoral center, or symmetrically around it (Black, 1948; Downs, 1957; Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Adams, 1999; Lin, Enelow, and Dorussen, 1999; McKelvey and Patty, 2006; Schofield, 2007; Schofield and Zakharov, 2010). In models of multidimensional competition, this electoral center is often defined as the vector of mean attitudes on each dimension (Caplin and Nalebuff, 1991; Adams, 1999; Lin, Enelow, and Dorussen, 1999; McKelvey and

Patty, 2006; Schofield, 2007; Schofield and Zakharov, 2010). The results presented here are inconsistent with this prediction. Moreover, they are not driven by the fact that I compare the means of voters and politicians. Figure F.3 shows that differences in medians tend to be even larger than mean differences. This raises the question of why representation gaps exist and how existing models can be modified to account for their existence.Before discussing the demand and supply sides of representation and presenting a model that can explain the existence of representation gaps, I summarize which factors cannot explain them.

First, representation gaps do not arise because voters find some issues unimportant. As shown in Appendix D, attitude differences (representation gaps are similarly large) are, if anything, *larger* on issues that voters and parliamentarians find more important.

Second, a tendency of politicians to hold more or less extreme policy positions than voters, or traditional parties locating close to the electoral center, as suggested by Berman and Kundnani (2021), cannot explain the representation gaps documented above. These arguments could only explain policy positions of parliamentarians being more or less *dispersed* than those of voters.[8] In contrast, as I show, the distribution of policies supported by parliamentarians is *shifted* toward culturally liberal positions relative to voters. Similarly, disproportional voting systems could explain that extreme voters are not represented but not that mean policymaking differs from the mean attitudes of voters in nearly all countries. Moreover, large cultural representation gaps also exist in countries with very proportional voting systems like Denmark or the Netherlands and Table 1 shows that an index of disproportionality is unrelated to representation gaps.

Third, parliamentarians trying to represent all citizens instead of voters cannot explain representation gaps because attitude differences between parliamentarians and citizens are *larger* than those between parliamentarians and voters, as shown in Figure 7.

Fourth, Section E.1 examines whether representation gaps are caused by an attempt of MPs to protect minority groups from a "tyranny of the majority" (De Tocqueville and Reeve, 1889). According to this explanation, parliamentarians hold attitudes that are a weighted mean of the average (structural) majority attitude and the average attitude of the corresponding minority but put a weight on the average minority attitude that is larger than its relative population size. However, Figure E.1 in Section E.1 contradicts this hypothesis. Parliamentarians are more opposed to redistribution than the rich, which are in turn more opposed to redistribution than the poor. They are more in favor of immigration and opposed to assimilation than immigrants themselves and they are much more liberal on gender relations than women. In general, attitude differences between citizens belonging to the (structural) majority group (the rich, natives, men) and the corresponding (structural) minority group are *smaller* than attitude differences between parliamentarians and the (structural) minority. Hence, policymaking would be *closer* to what minorities want if policymaking would follow the attitudes of majorities compared to those of parliamentarians.

8. I find that the positions of parliamentarians are more dispersed.

Fifth, large companies or other powerful actors might bias policymaking through lobbyism. This explanation does not convince on second thought because the largest representation gaps emerge on cultural issues while most actors have an incentive to bias economic policymaking. Still, Section E.2 examines this explanation by comparing the attitudes of parliamentarians with and without self-reported connections to lobbyists. I find all connection measures to be uncorrelated with political attitudes on either policy dimension, which speaks against lobbyism as a major cause of representation gaps.

Finally, probabilistic voting models with office-motivated candidates can explain representation gaps if it is vote-share maximizing to create them by giving lower weight to the policy attitudes of some voters (Persson and Tabellini, 2002). Consequently, these models predict that representation gaps cannot be exploited to gain vote shares. However, Section 5.3.2 shows that representation gaps predict the rise of challenger parties which suggests that representation gaps can be exploited.

The main text focuses on the explanation that seems most likely to me due to a plausible theoretical argument and support from an empirical analysis. This explanation combines an analysis of the demand side —the voters— and an investigation of the supply side —the politicians. The demand-side analysis explains why voters vote such that representation gaps emerge. I find that voters are confronted with a choice between culturally liberal parties, perceived as competent, and culturally conservative parties, seen as incompetent. Because voters value competence, culturally liberal parties have a competitive advantage that they exploit to create representation gaps. The supply-side analysis investigates why culturally liberal parties want to create representation gaps and why they are seen as relatively competent. I find that culturally liberal parties try to create representation gaps because they are policy-motivated. Their competence-advantage might be explained by a comparatively higher likelihood of culturally liberal people to rise within parties.

4.1 The Demand Side of Representation Gaps

4.1.1 A Model That Can Explain Why Voters Allow Representation Gaps to Exist. The stylized model presented here abstracts from many features of electoral competition to focus on a particular mechanism. 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 the candidates 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.

This model differs from most other models of electoral competition due to the combination of two empirically motivated assumptions. First, I assume that candidates are motivated by implementing their attitudes, not by winning the election.[9] I add this assumption by mod-

9. Models with policy-motivated candidates have been introduced by Wittman (1977) and Calvert (1985).

ifying the utility functions of the candidates. Let the utility of candidate L be $u_L = -(a_L - x)^2$ where a_L is the commonly known policy attitude of candidate L. The utility for R is defined similarly. Assume $a_L < A^{-1}(0.5) < a_R$. The ability of candidates to implement their preferred policies depends on them winning the election. Still, in my model, this dependency functions as a constraint on their behavior, not as their motivation. Similarly, I assume that candidates are perceived as differently competent by voters[10], and I follow the literature in referring to this competence as valence (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 Schofield (2007) by capturing valence directly in the utility function of the voters. Consequently, 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 $w_{i,R}(x) = \lambda_R - (a_i - x)^2$. Valence differences refer to the perceptions of voters which need not be correct. For instance, media bias, as documented Section B.3, might produce misperceptions about which party is more competent. The model is agnostic about the origin of valence perceptions.

Appendix C 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. Hence, L can always ensure the final policy is biased away from the median voter toward his bliss point. Moreover, L has an incentive to do so because he is policy-motivated.

This simple model illustrates that a *combination* of heterogeneous valence and policy-motivatedness can produce representation gaps. Policy motivation makes candidates willing to bias policy positions away from the electoral center and heterogeneous valence allows the higher valence candidate to get elected despite competition from candidates who are closer to the electoral center. Comparing this model to similar versions without any of the two key assumptions reveals that both assumptions are needed to generate representation gaps in this setup. If candidates are office-motivated, that is, their utilities equal one if they are elected and zero if they are not elected, the median voter theorem applies (Black, 1948; Downs, 1957), which implies that there is no representation gap. Similarly, a version of the model with policy-motivated candidates but equal valence also features convergence to the median voter (Persson and Tabellini, 2002).

In my model with policy-motivated candidates and heterogeneous valence, policy outcomes are always biased toward the bliss point of the party with higher valence. Hence, the systematic representation gaps documented by this paper 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 policymaking 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 are predicted to follow a very specific pattern.

10. I provide evidence for this assumption below.

4.1.2 Testing the Model. These predictions can be tested using the survey data. To this end, I calculate a measure for heterogeneity in valence and relate it to representation gaps. I calculate the valence measure from a survey item in the voter surveys. Respondents 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. Let p be a party and c the corresponding county. In a first step, I calculate $valence_p^c$ as the share of people in the country of party p that think party p is best at dealing with the national problem they consider most important. I interpret $valence_p^c$ as the perceived valence of party p by the electorate in country c. To define the measure for heterogeneity in valence, let d a dimension $\in$ {Culture, Economy}, P_c the set of parties in country c, and $PL_{c,d}$ the set of parties in country c that are more left-wing than the mean voter on dimension d, and $PR_{c,d}$ the set of parties that are more right-wing. I define the valence advantage of right-wing parties in country c on dimension d as

$$VR_{c,d} = \left| \sum_{p \in PR_{c,d}} valence_{p,d}^c \right| - \left| \sum_{p \in PL_{c,d}} valence_{p,d}^c \right|. \tag{7}$$

$VR_{c,d}$ might take on different values for different dimensions, 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 unite more valence than left-wing parties.

Figure 6 compares representation gaps with $VR_{c,d}$ for country-dimension pairs. The figure is separated into 4 quadrants depending 1) on whether $VR_{c,d}$ is positive or negative and 2) on whether the representation gap is positive or negative. The model developed in Section 4.1.1 predicts that whenever the right-wing parties have a perceived valence-advantage, they use this advantage to bias policy making to the right, thereby creating a right-wing representation gap. Hence, all points for which $VR_{c,d}$ is negative should lie in the upper-right quadrant where the representation gap is positive. Similarly, whenever left-wing parties have a perceived valence advantage ($VR_{c,d}<0$), the model predicts that the representation gap is negative. Overall, the model predicts that all points lie either in the upper-right or the lower-left quadrant. I visualize this by adding stripes to the other two quadrants. Furthermore, the model predicts a positive correlation between the two variables because politicians use larger valence-advantages to bias policy making more toward their own attitudes.

Figure 6 shows that out of the 46 points, the model classifies 42 correctly. Moreover, two of the four points that lie in the shaded area are close to the border and the other two are measured imprecisely. The figure also reveals that in most countries, parties that are more culturally conservative than the national mean voter unite more valence than culturally liberal parties. As shown in Figure 6, most of these parties are nationalists, which might indeed be relatively incompetent as indicated by recent evidence (Bó et al., 2023). In the economic dimension, this pattern is reversed. Finally, there appears to be a strong positive correlation as predicted by the model.

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

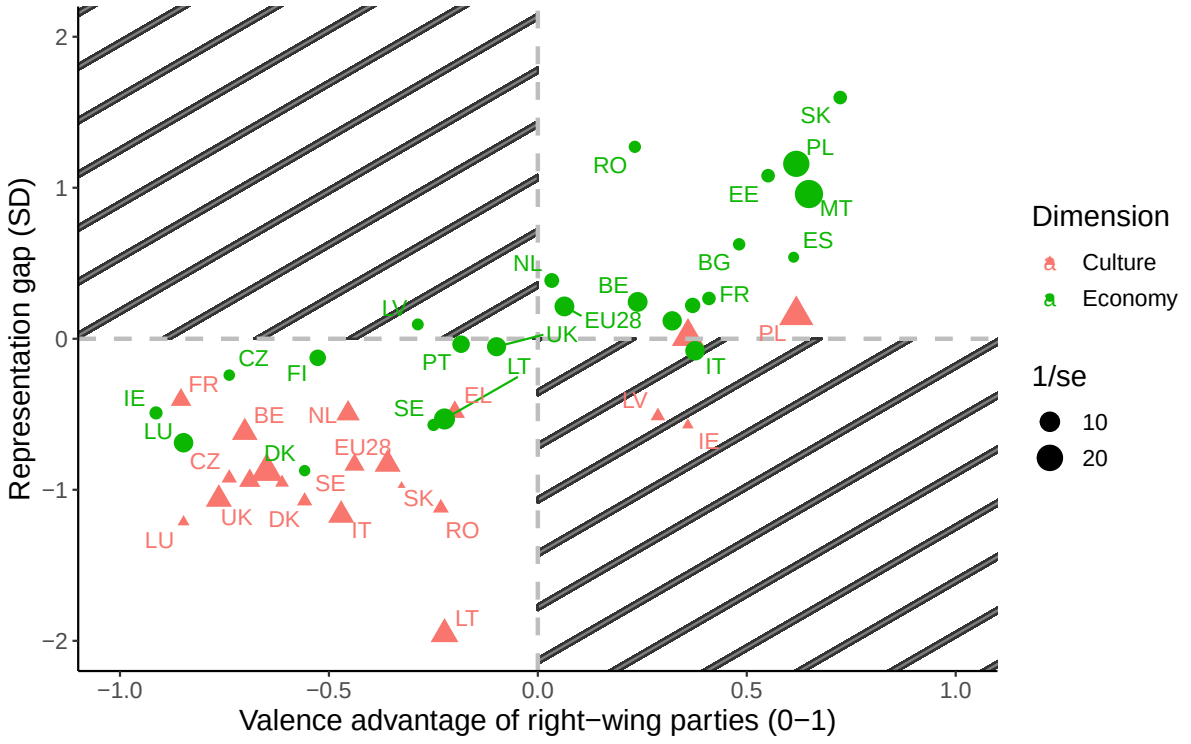

Figure 6. Comparing the Valence Measure with Representation Gaps

Note: The horizontal axis shows $VR_{c,d}$ from Equation 7, which can range from -1 to 1. Representation gaps are expressed in standard deviations of citizen attitudes (EU-wide). Each point refers to a country-policy dimension combination. The model presented in Section 4.1.1 predicts all points to lie in the quadrants without stripes. Point sizes are inversely proportional to the standard error of the representation gap estimate.

the valence measure mixes the perceived valence of a party and proximity in policy space between voter and party. While I cannot rule this out, this explanation cannot explain the findings depicted in Figure 6. Most voters are more culturally right-wing than most parties but at the same time, the vast majority think that culturally left-wing parties are best at dealing with the most important problem. If the valence measure was purely (or even mainly) about the spatial position of voters, most voters would have to consider right-wing parties more competent because they are closer to them spatially.

To assess the correlation visible from Figure 6 formally, I estimate the following equation by OLS:

$$RG_{c,d} = \alpha + \beta \cdot VR_{c,d} + \theta \cdot \mathbf{X}_{c,d} + \varepsilon_{c,d}, \tag{8}$$

where $RG_{c,d}$ is the representation gap in country c on dimension d and $\mathbf{X}_{c,d}$ is a vector of other variables that might explain variation in representation gaps. I divide all variables by their standard deviation to make estimates comparable.

Table 1 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 1.1 standard deviations more to the right of the mean voter. The R^2 from this binary regression is 0.55, which shows that valence alone can account for more than half of the variation in representation gaps. This association is

Table 1. Predicting Representation Gaps with Valence Heterogeneity

	Dependent variable: Representation Gap (SD)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$VR_{c,d}$ (SD)	1.129***	1.130***	1.198***	1.193***	1.189***	0.803***
	(0.154)	(0.156)	(0.173)	(0.171)	(0.173)	(0.171)
Disproportionality (SD)		−0.031				−0.037
		(0.083)				(0.076)
Rule of law (SD)			0.081			0.051
			(0.092)			(0.296)
Control of corruption (SD)				0.079		0.037
				(0.091)		(0.251)
Regulatory quality (SD)					0.071	−0.116
					(0.092)	(0.234)
𝟙[Dimension=Economy]						0.727***
						(0.159)
Constant	−0.124	−0.078	−0.267	−0.211	−0.360	−0.238
	(0.086)	(0.150)	(0.184)	(0.132)	(0.319)	(0.503)
Observations	46	46	46	46	46	46
R^2	0.550	0.551	0.558	0.558	0.556	0.713

Note: This table shows the results of Equation 8. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. The dependent variable is positive if policymaking is more right-wing than voters prefer. $VR_{c,d}$ is positive if voters see right-wing parties as more competent than left-wing parties. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

robust to the inclusion of several control variables of the national institutional quality taken from the World Bank. Notably, column (2) includes the Gallagher Index of voting system disproportionality, a key characteristic of voting systems (Gallagher, 1991; Carey and Hix, 2011). No institutional variable is significant in any specification and the coefficient on valence is the largest coefficient in all specifications. Apart from documenting the robust association between representation gaps and valence, this suggests that institutional factors are not a key driver of representation gaps.

Column (6) includes all institutional variables and an indicator for the political dimension. Consequently, β is estimated using only variation within each of the political dimensions. β stays large and highly significant but decreases in magnitude, which shows that valence heterogeneity can explain variation in representation gaps within and across dimensions. Overall, these results are consistent with the hypothesis that differences in valence are an important driver of representation gaps.

4.2 The Supply Side of Representation Gaps

Why do culturally liberal parties combine more valence than culturally conservative ones? And why are politicians policy-motivated? To answer these questions I first examine at which stage of political selection representation gaps arise.

4.2.1 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. Where in this selection process do representation gaps emerge?

To answer this question, I calculate representation gaps between parliaments and several comparison groups, which become incrementally more similar to parliamentarians. Formally, I estimate regressions of the following form by OLS:

$$index_{i,d|i\in M\cup R} = \alpha_{d,R} + \beta_{d,R} \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MEP}]_{i,d|i\in M\cup R} + \gamma_{d,R} \cdot X_{i,d|i\in M\cup R} + \varepsilon_{i,d|i\in M\cup R}, \quad (9)$$

where $index_{i,d|i\in M\cup R}$ is the cultural/economic index of individual i which belongs either to the group M of Members of the European parliament[11] or to another reference group (R), $\mathbb{1}[\text{MEP}]_{i,d|i\in M\cup R}$ equals one if $i \in M$ and zero otherwise and $X_{i,d|i\in M\cup R}$ is a vector of control variables. I am interested in $\beta_{d,R}$, which measures the representation gap between MEPs and the comparison groups.[12] For each comparison group, I estimate one unconditional regression and one regression conditionally on the large set of demographic characteristics.[13]

Figure 7 shows the resulting $\beta_{d,R}$ estimates. Because elected MEPs are always the reference category, positive values indicate that the comparison group is more left-wing/liberal than parliamentarians (with similar demographics in case of the conditional estimates).

The unconditional estimates for the cultural dimension reveal that citizens, voters, and party members all face similar representation gaps. This shows that representation gaps probably do not result from parliamentarians trying to represent all citizens or party members. Moreover, it suggests that representation gaps are not the result of self-selection into political parties. In contrast, party members are representative of voters and citizens regarding their attitudes.

The estimate for candidates is much smaller in absolute values, indicating that candidates for parliament have attitudes that are much more similar to those of elected parliamentarians and already very different from those of citizens, voters, or party members. Thinking of parties as functions, this means that they take as input members who are representative of voters and citizens and produce an output of candidates for parliament, which is very unrepresentative of these groups. This evidence cannot establish whether party guidelines, leaders, or other factors turn the representative input of members into an unrepresentative output of candidates or whether members with unrepresentative attitudes are more

11. I focus on MEPs and exclude national parliamentarians because this section controls for demographic characteristics and those are less comparable between voters and national MPs.

12. Because the citizen surveys do not ask citizens whether they are members of a political party, I code all citizens as party members who state that they feel "very close" to a political party in contrast to feeling "fairly close" or being "merely a sympathizer."

13. Control variables include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation categories, age at which respondents stopped their education, city size, self-assessed living standard, a dummy for immigration background and country indicators.

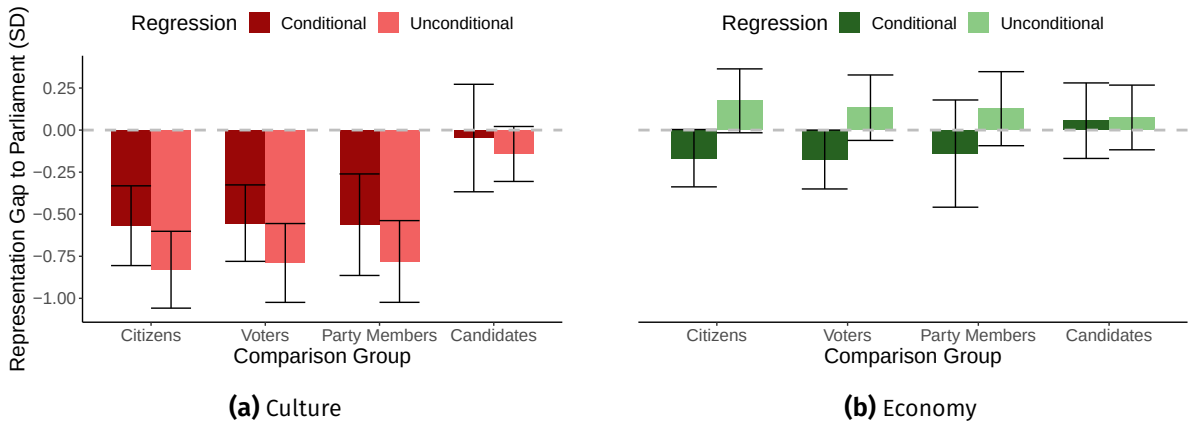

Figure 7. Representation Gaps Between Selected Groups and Their MEPs

Note: This figure shows estimates of β_R from Equation 9 and 95% confidence intervals for different reference groups *R*. The reference category is elected MEPs, and "Candidates" refers to candidates for the European parliament. Voters are those who voted in the corresponding European Parliament election (2009). All estimates, including the unconditional ones, are within-country. Higher values indicate that reference group members are more right-wing/conservative than their parliament. The vertical axis unit is the EU-wide standard deviation of citizen attitudes. Conditional estimates include a large set of demographic control variables.

likely to self-select upward in the party hierarchy. However, the evidence reveals that what is happening inside parties is key for creating representation gaps.

The conditional cultural estimates show that demographic differences between parliamentarians and voters, including differences in educational attainment, cannot fully explain the cultural representation gap. Consistent with the conjectures of previous research (Bovens et al., 2017), controlling for a large battery of demographic characteristics reduces the representation gaps regarding voters by about 30%. The variable most relevant for this effect is educational attainment. However, the statistically significant lion's share of the cultural representation gap is not explained by the combination of all demographic controls, indicating that parliamentarians are more than half of a standard deviation more culturally liberal than even voters, citizens, or party members with very similar demographic characteristics.

The panel on the right presents the same information for the economic dimension. Here too, representation gaps regarding citizens, voters, and party members are similar. However, the policy positions of elected MEPs are not closer to those of candidates than to the other groups. Instead, all groups are more left-wing than elected MEPs to the same extent. Interestingly, conditioning on demographic characteristics changes the signs of the representation gaps for citizens, voters, and party members. For instance, while citizens overall are economically more left-wing than MEPs, citizens with similar demographic characteristics as MEPs are more right-wing than MEPs. However, these conditional representation gaps are all smaller than a quarter of a standard deviation.

4.2.2 Who Wants to Become a Politician? Because cultural representation gaps are particularly large and demographic differences explain relatively little variation in them, this section examines which factors other than demographic characteristics might help to explain

the cultural representation gap. To this end, I consider the role of moral values and political knowledge. Regarding moral values, this section entertains the idea that party members might self-select upward based on their level of "moral universalism" (Enke, 2020; Enke, Rodríguez-Padilla, and Zimmermann, 2022), which measures how people trade off the well-being of their in-group and out-group members, with more universalist people viewing in-group and out-group more equally. Moral universalism correlates strongly with many policy attitudes and it is negatively associated with conservative cultural attitudes (Enke, 2020; Enke, Rodríguez-Padilla, and Zimmermann, 2022). Hence, self-selection based on moral universalism could explain that MPs tend to be more liberal than voters regarding nearly all cultural issues. Such self-selection would also create representation gaps in any country and most parties, independent of the institutional environment. Moreover, it would explain why adjusting for demographic differences only reduces the cultural representation gap to a limited extent. Finally, moral universalism is a moral value. Hence, universalist parliamentarians likely view universalist/liberal policies as morally correct and are therefore unwilling to sacrifice them even if this implies decisions which their voters disagree with. Hence, a moral foundation of policy attitudes of MPs can explain their policy-motivation.

But why would people with high moral universalism try harder than others to become candidates for parliament? National and European parliamentarians have the task to foster the well-being of their voters, or arguably even the well-being of larger social groups. By definition people with low moral universalism care much more about their friends' and families' well-being than about the well-being of strangers. Hence, the task of a parliamentarian is morally unattractive for people with low moral universalism. Because MPs in advanced democracies are often payed less than their outside option (Bó et al., 2017), there is little reasons for people with low moral universalism to become a parliamentarians. In contrast, the job is very attractive for people with high moral universalism who, by definition, deeply care about the well-being of strangers.

This explanation makes the testable predictions that 1) parliamentarians are more universalist than voters and that 2) adjusting for this difference significantly reduces the cultural representation gap. To test these predictions I use an item contained in the MEP and citizen surveys. It reads "Do you see yourself as.." with the answer options "[Nationality] only," "[Nationality] and European," "European and [Nationality]" and "European only." The item contrasts self-identification with a narrow social group with self-identification with a larger one that contains the narrow group. Because people tend to identify with groups they see positively (Bénabou and Tirole, 2011; Shayo, 2020) respondents who see themselves more as European likely have a relatively more positive view of Europeans in general compared to their own compatriots in particular than respondents who see themselves more as nationals. Hence, even though the item is far from being an optimal measure of moral universalism, it is plausibly positively correlated with it.

Regarding information, it is reasonable to assume a positive association between holding high political office and being well-informed about politics. Moreover, one might hypothesize based on recent evidence that most misperceptions, like for instance biased beliefs about the characteristics of immigrants, foster cultural conservatism (Alesina, Miano, and

Stantcheva, 2023). Consequently, the selection of better-informed people into parliaments might also help to explain representation gaps. Selection based on information is also likely a general phenomenon that occurs in most institutional contexts and it can explain why parliamentarians prioritize their own attitudes —because they think they know better, possibly preventing voters from making errors. To measure how well citizens are informed about politics I use the fact that the citizen survey asked them seven knowledge questions about politics, like how many members their parliament has or how many member states the EU has. I calculate an index based on the number of questions answered correctly. Parliamentarians were not asked these questions. However, since most of them ask for basic facts each politician should know, I assume that all parliamentarians have a full score.

In contrast, I can test directly whether parliamentarians are more universalist than voters. Nearly 9% of citizens and voters see themselves as "European and [Nationality]" or "European only. Among MEPs, this share is significantly higher at about 21% ($p < 0.001$), confirming prediction 1). To test to what extent universalism or informedness can explain representation gaps, I estimate the following regression equation by OLS:

$$\text{Cultural index}_i = \alpha + \beta \cdot \mathbb{1}[\text{MEP}]_i + \theta_1 \cdot MU_i + \theta_2 \cdot In_i + \eta \cdot X_i + \varepsilon_i, \tag{10}$$

where $\mathbb{1}[\text{MEP}]$ equals one for those elected in the 2009 European Parliament election and 0 for "ordinary" EU citizens who voted in the election, MU_i measures how universalist responded i is, In_i is the index of how informed i is and X_i includes the same demographic control variables used above. Consequently, θ_1 and θ_2 estimate the conditional correlations between moral universalism and the information index with the cultural index respectively. β measures the conditional representation gap. If moral universalism or informedness help to explain representation gaps one would expect their θ to be positive and significant and β to be reduced once their are added to the list of controls.

Column 1) in Table 2 measures the unconditional representation gap between members of the European Parliament and voters. Column 2) includes moral universalism, and column 3) the information index. As can be seen, both measures are strongly and significantly negatively related to cultural conservatism, consistent with the respective predictions. Moreover, controlling for either variable reduces the representation gap notably. However, large conditional representation gaps remain in either case. For reference, column 4) includes a large set of demographic controls that reduce the representation gap more strongly than either moral universalism or the information index. Finally, column 5) includes all variables in the regression and shows that moral universalism and the information index remain strongly and negatively correlated with cultural conservatism even after conditioning on many demographic variables. Moreover, their inclusion further reduces the representation gap.[14]

Inferring the relative importance of demographic variables, moral universalism, and information is difficult because these classes of variables are treated unequally by Table 2. The

14. However, the lion's share of the representation gap remains significant as the inclusion of all variables can only explain about 43% of the cultural representation gap.

Table 2. Explaining Representation Gaps with Demographic Characteristics, Preferences and Informedness

	Dependent variable: cultural index (SD)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
𝟙[MEP]	−0.790***	−0.694***	−0.614***	−0.553***	−0.454***
	(0.120)	(0.123)	(0.126)	(0.116)	(0.119)
Moral universalism (0-1)		−0.761***			−0.607***
		(0.084)			(0.071)
Information index (0-1)			−0.360***		−0.204***
			(0.075)		(0.062)
Constant	2.669***	2.878***	3.241***	2.704***	3.286***
	(0.0003)	(0.022)	(0.055)	(0.335)	(0.451)
Country indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic controls				✓	✓
Observations	16,359	16,132	16,359	15,000	14,797
R^2	0.105	0.138	0.114	0.199	0.220

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions based on Equation 10. Higher values of the dependent variable indicate that the respondent is more culturally conservative. 𝟙[MEP] equals one for those elected in the 2009 European Parliament election and 0 for "ordinary" EU citizens who voted in the election. Regressions are weighted to obtain representative samples within each country. Demographic controls include age, gender, categories for marital status, occupation, highest education degree, size of the town of residence, immigration background, religiosity, and perceived living standard. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

regressions include a large set of often fine-grained demographic variables but only a single measure for political informedness and a single measure for moral universalism which is particularly coarse. However, the fact that these primitive measures both remain significant and reduce representation gaps above and beyond what demographic differences can explain, is consistent with the idea that politicians select upward within parties not only based on demographic characteristics but also based on their moral values and their informedness and that this selection contributes to attitude differences between parliamentary candidates and voters.

4.3 Combining the Demand and the Supply Side of Representation

Combining the insights of the demand and supply-side analyses hint at the following explanation for representation gaps: due to selection based on demographic characteristics, moral values, and knowledge, culturally liberal politicians dominate parties and, in particular, they are over-represented among candidates for parliament. Due to the larger supply of liberal politicians, liberal parties are more numerous and competent. They use this advantage to bias policy-making toward their own attitudes partly because they believe their positions to be morally right and partly because they think representation gaps reflect voters'

lack of informedness. Most voters vote for culturally liberal parties even though this creates representation gaps because they find them relatively competent.

Even though such voting might be utility-maximizing for voters when forced to choose between competence and representation gaps on the one hand and incompetence and representation on the other hand, representation gaps might still have important effects, for instance, by creating dissatisfaction among voters and making space for the entry of new challenger parties.

5 Potential Consequences of Representation Gaps

The following analysis examines 1) whether representation gaps represent an unsatisfied demand for specific policy positions and 2) the relationship to the positions supplied by populists.

5.1 Representation Gaps and the Demand for Populism

Many citizens perceive representation gaps. When asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement "the [National] parliament takes into consideration the concerns of [National] citizens." only about 11% agreed strongly and about 39% agreed, while nearly 22% disagreed, and about 13% even disagreed strongly.[15] Hence, over a third of Europeans think that their national parliament does not even *consider* their concerns. To examine who perceives representation gaps, I estimate the following equations by OLS:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_{\text{culture}} \cdot \text{cultural index}_i + \beta_{\text{economy}} \cdot \text{economic index}_i + \theta \cdot \mathbf{X}_i + \varepsilon_i, \qquad (11)$$

where y_i either measures the perception of representation gaps based on the item just presented or subject i's stated dissatisfaction with how democracy works in their country and X_i includes the same set of demographic control variables used above. Because I study the demand for representation gaps here, I do not exclude persons who did not vote but pool all citizens.

Columns (1) and (5) of table Table 3 reveal that within country, citizens who are more culturally right-wing are significantly more likely to state that they are dissatisfied with how democracy works in their country and to think that their national parliament does not consider the concerns of the citizens. In contrast, citizens who are more economically right-wing are significantly less likely to be dissatisfied with democracy in their country while there is no significant association with the perception of representation gaps. These perceptions are consistent with the fact that culturally conservative voters and citizens actually are relatively less well-represented by their parliaments. Columns (2) and (6) show that these

15. The remaining respondents answered with "Neither nor." I pool all citizen responses across Europe and weight with population size.

Table 3. Association between Representation and Political Attitudes

	Dependent variable:							
	Dissatisfied with how democracy works in [country] (SD)				Thinks [country]'s parliament doesn't consider citizens concerns (SD)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Cultural index (SD)	0.071***	0.106***		0.063	0.099***	0.133***		0.074*
	(0.018)	(0.028)		(0.040)	(0.019)	(0.045)		(0.043)
Economic Index (SD)	−0.071***	−0.044*		−0.044*	0.009	0.021		0.029
	(0.016)	(0.024)		(0.025)	(0.015)	(0.026)		(0.032)
$\lvert Bias^{voter}_{culture}\rvert$ (SD)			0.117***	0.073*			0.144***	0.105***
			(0.026)	(0.044)			(0.036)	(0.032)
$\lvert Bias^{voter}_{economy}\rvert$ (SD)			0.011	0.022			0.006	−0.002
			(0.024)	(0.024)			(0.022)	(0.027)
Constant	1.580***	1.704***	1.577***	1.456***	0.962***	0.946***	0.934***	0.711***
	(0.035)	(0.068)	(0.109)	(0.118)	(0.038)	(0.071)	(0.118)	(0.127)
Country indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic controls		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Observations	21,177	5,687	5,687	5,687	21,022	5,633	5,633	5,633
R^2	0.201	0.185	0.185	0.189	0.150	0.101	0.103	0.107

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions based on Equation 11. I use data on all citizens. In all columns but (1) and (5) I only use observations that have no missing values regarding any variable used in the table. Demographic controls include include country indicators, age, gender, degree of religiosity, categories of marital status, city size, living standard, occupation categories, age at which their education ended, and immigration background. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the country level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

relationships are not altered notably if demographic controls are included in the regressions. This means that culturally conservative individuals are not dissatisfied because they have specific demographic characteristics.

However, if representation gaps were responsible for dissatisfaction with politics, one would expect the absolute distance between the attitudes of a citizen and policymaking to predict dissatisfaction better than just being conservative. Therefore, columns (3) and (7) predict the dependent variables not by the index variables but by the absolute biases of citizen attitudes from the mean index of his national MPs ($|bias^{voter}_{i,d}|$), as defined in Equation 5. Indeed, the cultural bias has a stronger conditional correlation with the outcome variables than the cultural index, while the coefficient on the economic bias is insignificant. Finally, columns (4) and (8) run a horse race between the indexes and the biases. As can be seen, the cultural bias is significant regarding both outcome variables while the cultural index is only significant in one specification and the coefficients on the cultural bias are also larger. On the economic dimension, where all associations are weaker, the bias is never significant while the economic index is significant in one specification. This suggests that

culturally right-wing people are primarily dissatisfied because their attitudes are really not represented, not because they are right-wing.

While this analysis cannot establish a causal channel, it is consistent with the idea that most citizens who are dissatisfied with policymaking are culturally right-wing and that these people are dissatisfied because their attitudes are not represented. Hence, parties that supply culturally right-wing policies might tap into unsatisfied demand.

5.2 Representation Gaps and the Supply of Populism

The idea of an unsatisfied demand for culturally conservative policy positions lines up well with the political development in Europe after 2009. Since then, a new group of challenger parties had unprecedented electoral successes in nearly all European countries (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). These parties are often referred to as populists and most of them, particularly those who were most successful, focus on cultural issues and are culturally right-wing (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). The remainder of this paper examines whether the policy supply of populists fills representation gaps and entertains the idea that the rise of populism is a symptom of representation gaps.

5.2.1 Defining Populism. I use the frequently employed definition of populism by Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017). According to this definition, populism is a thin ideology. In contrast to full ideologies like liberalism or conservatism, which include policy objectives, populism can be combined with any policy position. Its defining feature 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 I label the populist narrative. According to this narrative, the homogeneous people and the homogeneous elite are caught in a struggle. The elite governs in a way that is not congruent with the policy attitudes of the people. Seeing this, populists enter politics to replace the elite and improve the representation of the people (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017). Hence, representation gaps are a central feature of the populist narrative. This focus on representation is consistent with populism as a thin ideology because substantive ideologies are less suitable for filling representation gaps, which vary across countries and potentially over time. To classify parties as populist, I follow the frequently used PopuList dataset (Rooduijn et al., 2023a; Rooduijn et al., 2023b) which employs this definition.[16]

5.2.2 Testing the Populist Narrative. As they claim in their narrative, populists see it as their task to close representation gaps, which implies that they are a reaction to representation gaps. Hence, one approach to examine whether populists are a reaction to representation gaps is to test the validity of the populist narrative. To this end, this section tests the individual claims contained in it.

16. I also classify parties as populists that are labeled "borderline" cases in the PopuList database.

Before that however, measures for the vague terms "elite" and "the people" are needed. The populists considered here are political parties. Hence, it is reasonable to use high-ranking politicians, and in particular, national and European parliamentarian as a substitute for "the elite." Similarly, I will use national citizens who do not belong to the elite as a substitute for "the people." Sometimes populists seem to exclude ethnic minorities from "the people." However, including them would not alter the considerations presented below.

The populist narrative makes three main claims. First, it makes a "homogeneity claim" when it argues that parliamentarians and citizens are homogeneous groups. Second, it posits a struggle between parliamentarians and the citizens. I will label this the "struggle claim." Finally, the populist narrative makes a "salvation claim" when arguing that the populists entered politics to save national citizens from the parliamentarians.

This paper shows empirically that the "homogeneity claim" contains a moderately large kernel of truth (consider Figure 2) while the "struggle claim" contains a large kernel of truth, but only regarding the cultural policy dimension, on which populists focus (Norris and Inglehart, 2019). As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the mean citizen and the mean parliamentarian often prefer cultural policies that go into opposite direction.

5.2.3 Testing the Salvation Claim of the Populist Narrative. To test whether populists are more likely to perceive representation gaps than established politicians, I examine to what extent national MPs belonging to populist and non-populist parties agree or disagree with the following statement:

Legislation represents the interests of the majority of citizens.

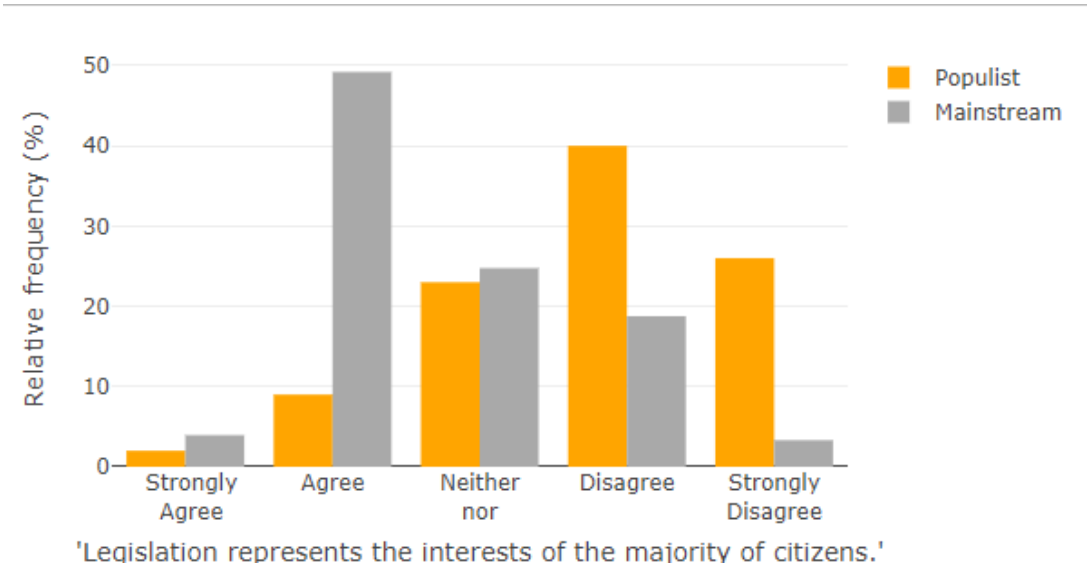

Figure 8. Perceptions of Representation Gaps by Populist and Non-populist MPs
Note: Results are based on national MPs and pooled across the EU.

Figure 8 visualizes the response distributions of populist and non-populist MPs. Most non-populist MPs thinks that legislation does represent the interest of the majority of citizens. In contrast, a majority of populists thinks that legislation does *not* represent the interest of the majority. Hence, populists truly perceive large representation gaps and this

perception differentiates them from mainstream politicians. Given the large representation gaps documented by this study, populist MPs likely have a more realistic perception of representation in Europe than non-populist MPs.

Do populists also offer policy positions that match the demand of voters by filling representation gaps? To test this "salvation claim," I first analyze their representation intention. Faced with the question of whether an MP should vote according to his own opinion or the opinions of his voters, 580, or about 83% of the 699 mainstream national MPs who responded, stated that an MP should vote according to his own opinion. In contrast, out of the 95 populist national MPs, exactly 60%, 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 102 MEPs belonging to non-populist parties, 89 or about 87% stated that an MEP should vote according to his own opinion. Of the 20 MEPs belonging to populist parties, 13 (65%) stated that an MEP should vote according to his own opinion. Fisher's exact test reveals that this difference is significant, too ($p \approx 0.022$). Hence, populists have a higher representation intention than those from non-populist parties. However, even most of them prioritize their own attitudes over those of their voters. This is rather inconsistent with their salvation claim.

Still, populists might fill representation gaps if their own attitudes overlap with representation gaps. To test this, Figure 9 displays the political positions of populists and mainstream parties in the 2D culture-economy space.[17] As before, I calculate the bias of a party relative to the national mean voters as the mean bias of its parliamentarians based on Equation 4.[18]

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, the mean policy position of mainstream parties is close to that of the mean voter on the economic dimension.

Regarding populists, I distinguish between left-wing populists, right-wing populists, and all other populist parties as defined in the PopuList.[19] As Figure 9 shows, this distinction is important because, consistent with populism being a thin ideology, the policy positions of these populist groups are very different. Left-wing populists and "other populists" do not fill representation gaps in the culture-economy space. Both groups supply culturally left-wing policies on average. Only right-wing populists fill representation gaps, but only the cultural one. Most right-wing populist parties are culturally (and economically) right-wing, in contrast to all other party groups considered in this paper. Interestingly, their policy positions are culturally closer to their national mean voters than those of any other group,

17. Figure F.7 shows the results when party positions are estimated from the positions of all candidates.

18. The difference to Figure 5 is that here I distinguish between mainstream parties and various groups of populists instead of between party families.

19. I do not display "anti-EU populists" as an independent category because I do not use an independent EU dimension.

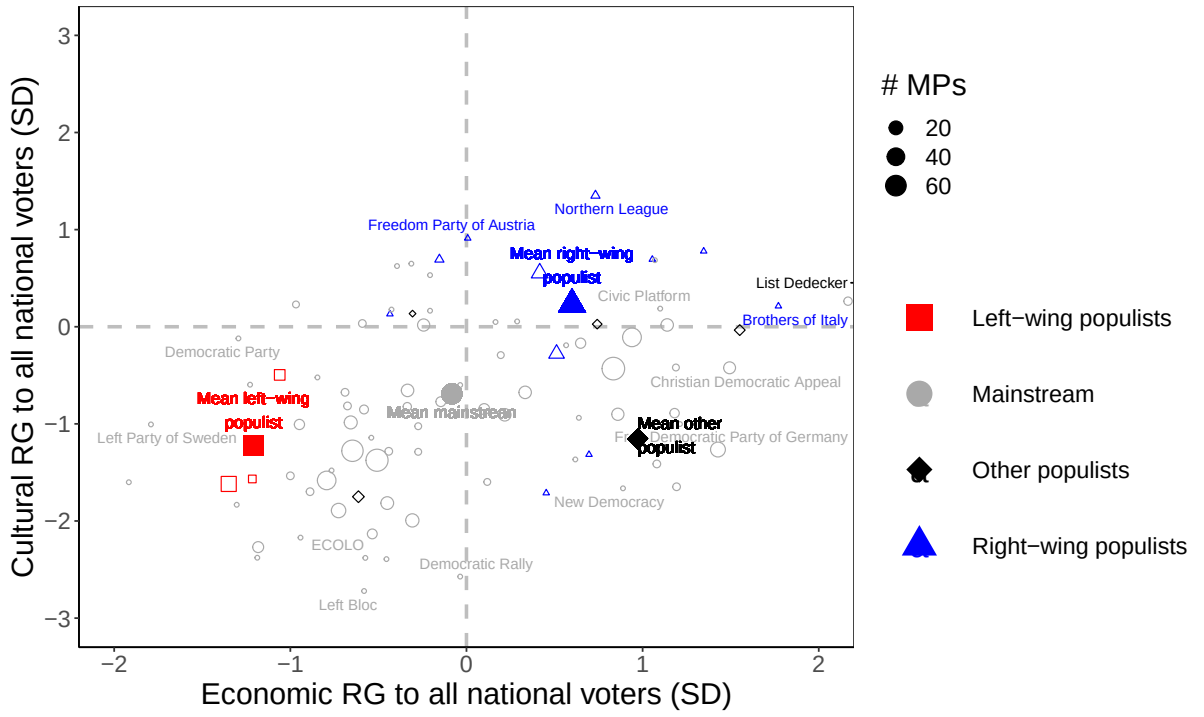

Figure 9. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Populist and Non-populist Parties

Note: This figure compares the policy positions of European parties relative to the position of the national mean voter in the 2D culture-economy space. Estimates of policy positions are based on the mean index of elected members of parliament belonging to the corresponding party. A few parties are positioned outside the boundaries of this figure, but all of them rely on a few observations and are, therefore, measured imprecisely. I omit them for clearness.

including mainstream parties. However, right-wing populists are economically more right-wing than the national mean voter.

Overall, these results suggest that populists behave in a way consistent with standard spatial models (Downs, 1957; Schofield, 2007). They seem to supply policies that match a previously unsatisfied demand. This is exactly the behavior that one would expect political entrepreneurs to behave.

Considering the evidence on all claims of the populist narrative in combination shows that much of it is true, even though populists might exaggerate 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. This in turn provides a simple explanation for why populists tell the populist narrative: representation is their comparative advantage. Hence, making representation gaps salient likely strengthens populists.

5.3 Combining Demand and Supply — the Rise of Populism

Since 2009, when right-wing populists filled representation gaps that mainstream parties had created, the vote share of populists has increased drastically (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). Importantly, this rise was nearly exclusively driven by right-wing populists and came at the expense of mainstream parties. In contrast, the vote shares of other populists, who did not fill representation gaps in 2009, did not increase strongly (Guriev and Papaioannou,

2022). This hints at the possibility that representation gaps played a role in the rise of populism. The following two subsections check the plausibility of this hypothesis.

5.3.1 The Unrepresented Vote for Populists. If citizens, whose policy attitudes differ strongly from those of their national parliaments, recognize that they are not being represented, they might be relatively likely to vote for populist parties because the latter claim to improve representation. Following this line of reasoning, one would expect citizens who are less well-represented to be more likely to vote for populist parties. To test this prediction, I estimate the following regressions by OLS:

$$\mathbb{1}[\text{Votes for populist party}]_{i,t} = \alpha_{t,d} + \beta_{t,d} \cdot |Bias_{i,d}^{voter}| + \theta_{t,d} \cdot c_i + \varepsilon_i, \tag{12}$$

where $\mathbb{1}[\text{Votes for populist party of type t}]_{i,t}$ indicates whether citizen i states that he would vote for a national populist party of type $t \in \{\text{Any, Right-wing, Left-wing, Other}\}$ if there was a national election held at the time of the survey. $|Bias_{i,d}^{voter}|$ measures the absolute distance between the attitude index of i and the mean decision index of his national parliamentarian regarding dimension $d \in \{\text{Culture, Economy}\}$, as defined in Equation 5. Again, I control for a battery of demographic variables and country indicators. The parameters of interest are the $\beta_{t,d}$'s who measure descriptively how many percentage points a European citizen is more likely to vote for populists of type t if his attitudes are one standard deviation further away from the policy making of his national parliament.

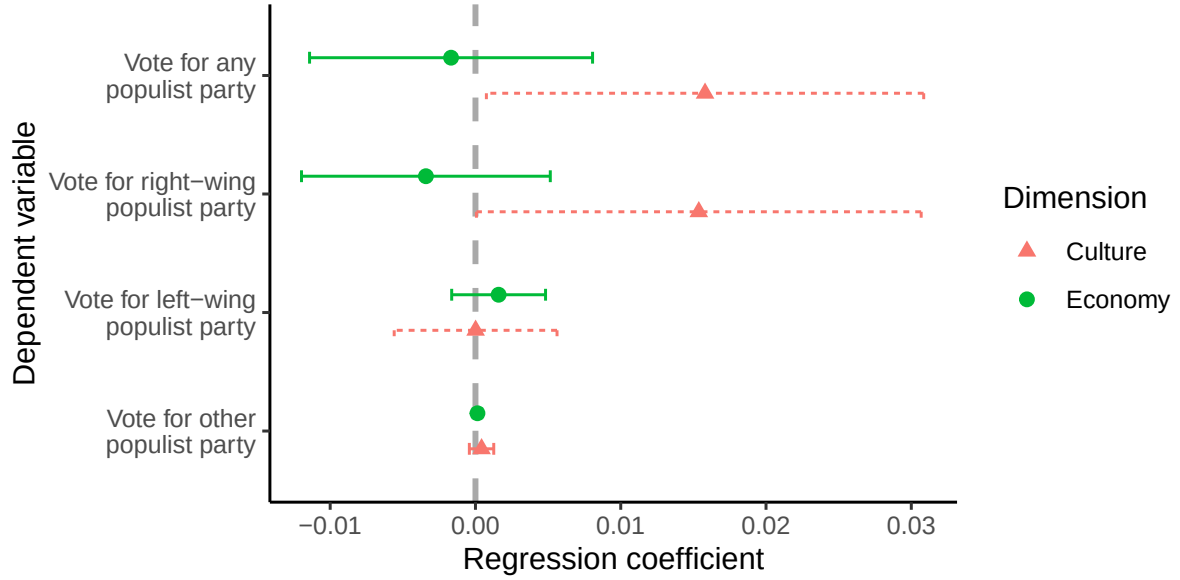

Figure 10. Association between Representation Gaps and Voting for Populist Parties

Note: This coefficient plot depicts estimates for $\beta_{t,d}$ from different versions of Equation 12 and 95% confidence intervals. All regressions condition on a large set of demographic characteristics, including country indicators. Data is pooled for all EU countries. It includes responses of all citizens but excludes responses of parliamentarians and candidates. Responses are weighted to generate representative samples of citizens within each country. Standard errors are clustered at the country level.

Figure 10 displays the resulting $\beta_{t,d}$. Being not represented culturally is associated with voting for any populist party. For the sake of interpretation, consider two groups of 100

people each and similar demographic characteristics such that the first group has policy attitudes close to the average policy making of its parliament while the second group has attitudes that differ from that policy making by one standard deviation. The coefficient $\beta_{Any,Culture}$ implies that the less well represented group contains one or two additional populist voters. For reference, in the average country, just below 6 out of 100 voters stated that they would vote for a populist party (the surveys were conducted in 2009-2010).

As the other coefficients on the cultural representation gap reveal, this association is entirely driven by voting for right-wing populist parties. Those who are not well-represented culturally are not more likely to vote for left-wing or other populist parties. Similarly, being less well-represented on economic attitudes is not associated with populist voting at all. This is consistent with my finding that for most voters there exist mainstream parties to their left and right on the economic dimension, while nearly all mainstream parties are to their left culturally. Citizens who are not well-represented economically can in principle shift policymaking closer to their bliss point by voting for an established party. In contrast, those who are culturally conservative cannot improve their representation by voting for established parties.

5.3.2 Representation Gaps Predict the Rise of Populism. Even though the static model presented in Section 4.1.1 can explain how representation gaps can be sustained in the short run, one might expect that in the long run, parties who exploit representation gaps will rise, for instance, if representation gaps become more salient or relevant over time. Consequently, one would expect representation gaps to predict the rise of populist parties. Because only right-wing populists fill representation gaps and only cultural ones, one would predict that only the rise of right-wing populists is predicted by representation gaps, and only by cultural ones. To test this prediction I estimate the following specification by OLS:

$$(\text{Pop. vote share}_{c,2009+t} - \text{Pop. vote share}_{c,2009}) \cdot 100 = \alpha_t + \beta_t \cdot \text{Cul. RG}_c + \varepsilon_c, \qquad (13)$$

where c indexes countries, the cultural representation gap is calculated based on Equation 6. Because I estimate representation gaps around the 2009 EP election and to foster comparability between countries, I predict the vote share of the 2014 and 2019 EP elections. Hence, $t \in \{5, 10\}$. Moreover, I pool data of all candidates for the 2009 EP and national elections to gain precision. For the same reason, I exclude all countries from the analysis with fewer than 20 candidates in my sample.

Table 4 shows the results. Columns (1) and (5) reveal positive associations between the cultural representation gaps in 2009 and the vote share increase of populist parties in general. Both estimates are economically very large, considering that the vote share of populist parties in 2014 and 2019 were about 23% and 31% respectively. However, only the gain until 2019 is statistically significant. Columns (2) and (6) show that, as expected, the predicted rise of populism is driven nearly exclusively by right-wing populists and this relationship is significant for both years. Still, the coefficient and the R^2 for 2019 are three to four times as large as the ones for 2014 which might partly be explained by populists being

Table 4. Association between cultural representation gaps in 2009 and subsequent populist vote gains

	Dependent variable: Percentage gain of populists in EP election (%)							
	EP election 2014				EP election 2019			
	All	Right-wing	Left-wing	Other	All	Right-wing	Left-wing	Other
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Cultural RG (SD)	9.876	7.714*	−1.985	−3.491	28.788***	25.825***	−3.473	−1.201
	(7.366)	(4.287)	(2.487)	(17.353)	(7.366)	(4.287)	(2.487)	(17.353)
Constant	−1.070	−0.907	2.390	9.351	−10.193**	−7.245**	2.931	6.025
	(4.673)	(2.801)	(2.108)	(8.899)	(4.673)	(2.801)	(2.108)	(8.899)
Observations	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
R^2	0.049	0.073	0.009	0.003	0.241	0.350	0.025	0.001

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions based on Equation 13. The cultural representation gap (RG) is calculated based on Equation 6. Columns (1) and (5) use the percentage gain of all populists as the dependent variable. In columns (2) and (6) it is right-wing populists only, in columns (3) and (7) left-wing populists and in columns (4) and (8) other populists. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

much stronger overall in 2019 than in 2014. Reassuringly, the remaining columns reveal that left-wing populists or other populists did not rise more strongly in countries where cultural representation gaps were larger in 2009. Still, the results should be interpreted with caution because the analysis relies on a sample of only 23 countries.

These results suggest that parties can exploit representation gaps to increase their vote share. This is consistent with the explanation for representation provided by this paper in Section 4.1.1. In contrast, they do not fit well with an explanation based on probabilistic voting models with office-motivated candidates, where its is vote-share maximizing to create representation gaps (Persson and Tabellini, 2002).

5.3.3 Representation Gaps Increased Recently. The vote share of populist parties *increased* sharply since 2009 (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). If representation gaps contributed to this rise, one would expect a corresponding general increase in representation gaps. Such an increase might happen for three reasons. 1) parties might change their policy positions further away from the attitudes of voters, 2) voters might change their attitudes further away from parties and 3) policy issues where representation gaps are relatively larger might become more important to citizens, meaning that the weights on issues with larger gaps increase.

Danieli et al. (2022) find that neither the policy positions of European parties nor the policy attitudes of European citizens changed strongly between 2005 and 2020 and conclude based on this and other evidence that changes in parties' or citizens' policy positions cannot explain the rise of populism. In contrast, they find that the importance citizens put on cultural issues increased strongly, which, as they show, can explain the lion's share of the populist rise.

A potential explanation for the results of Danieli et al. (2022) is that representation gaps on cultural issues are much larger than on economic ones. Consequently, greater perceived importance of cultural issues makes the comparative advantage of right-wing populists — the fact that they are close to the electoral center on cultural issues— more relevant, thereby making them a more attractive voting option.

To test this prediction I examine how the perceived importance of policy issues changed over time. To this end, I calculate, for several policy issues, the share of European citizens who find it to be the most important issue for their country in 2009 and 2014. The data for 2009 is based on the main survey dataset, while I use the next iteration of the EU 2009 voter survey to gather comparable estimates for 2014.[20]

Figure 11 compares the perceived importance of policy issues in 2009 and 2014. Consistent with the results of Danieli et al. (2022), cultural issues became more important in the eyes of Europeans overall, but Figure 11 reveals that this can be nearly entirely attributed to one issue —immigration. Immigration was already considered the most important issue in 2009, but other issues, like sentences and environmental protection, followed closely. Between 2009 and 2014, the share of Europeans who consider immigration to be most important more than doubled to nearly 9%, which made it considered the most important issue by far.

This shift in priorities likely increased the cultural representation gap because immigration is the issue where attitude differences between voters and parliamentarians are the largest. To examine this empirically I calculate new index variables as in Section 3.2.2 but weighting issues with the importance voters attributed to the issues in *2014*. Based on these 2014 indexes, I estimate representation gaps between voters and parliamentarians in 2009 given the issue priorities of citizens in 2014. Under the assumption that policy positions of voters and parties did not change notably, as found empirically by Danieli et al. (2022), this enables me to estimate the representation gap in 2014. Because only MEPs and citizens were asked the immigration question, I restrict my sample to these groups. Moreover, I use the MEP indexes because only the cultural MEP index includes immigration.

Columns (1) and (3) in Table 5 show results for the 2009 representation gaps. Results differ slightly from those obtained above because Table 5 refers to the MEP indexes, while I used the MP indexes above. Reassuringly, however, estimates are very similar to those obtained earlier. In 2009, MEPs were 0.785 standard deviations of citizen attitudes more culturally liberal than voters. On economic topics, they tended to be more right-wing although this representation gap is not significant. Columns (2) and (4) show results for the 2014 indexes. As expected, the cultural representation gap nearly doubled due to the increased perceived importance of immigration. In contrast, the economic representation gap did not change notably.

20. The most recent iteration provides data for 2019. However, data on the question I am analyzing has not yet been harmonized with the two earlier iterations. Including data for 2019 would likely strengthen the results obtained in this section because the perceived importance of immigration likely increased strongly due to the refugee crisis.

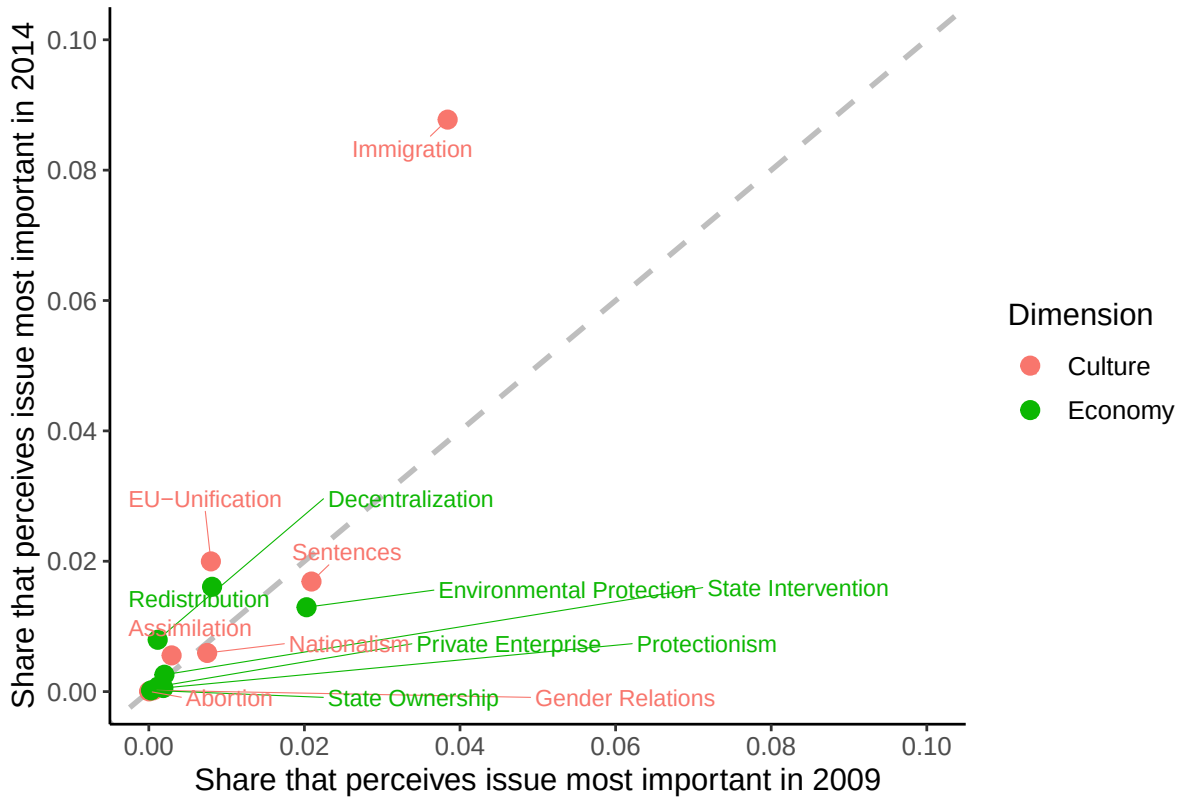

Figure 11. Most important issues according to European citizens in 2009 and 2014

Note: Shares are calculated based on open-ended responses to the survey item "What do you think is the first most important issue or problem facing [country] at the moment?" For each issue depicted in the plot, I calculate the share of Europeans who think this issue is most important. I use data on all EU citizens and weigh them to generate a representative sample of the adult EU population. Importance shares do not sum to 1 because many responses could not be classified to one of the topics and are therefore not depicted here.

In the same time period, the vote share of populist parties in Europe rose by 4-6 percentage points depending on the definition of populism (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). Even though most voters already desired reduced immigration rates, immigration strongly *increased* after 2014, notably during the refugee crisis in 2015/2016. This likely made immigration even more important in the eyes of citizens. Hence, representation gaps likely continued to increase after 2014 which might help to explain the increase in the populist vote share after 2014.

5.3.4 Summing Up — Representation Gaps and the Rise of Populism. Taken together, I suggest the following interpretation of these pieces of evidence: in most European countries policymaking has been more culturally liberal than voters desired before the rise of populism. In contrast, parties represented the economic attitudes of voters well. When voters considered economic issues much more important than cultural ones, mainstream parties could exploit their popular economic policy positions and the fact that voters considered them more competent than populists to sustain culturally liberal policies that they want to implement because they consider them to be morally or objectively right. However, as cultural issues became more important for voters over time, partly because of shocks like

Table 5. Representation gap estimates for 2009 and 2014

	Dependent variable:			
	Cultural index		Economic index	
	2009	2014	2009	2014
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
𝟙[MEP]	−0.785***	−1.404***	0.122	0.278
	(0.104)	(0.181)	(0.105)	(0.195)
Constant	2.744***	5.079***	2.113***	3.523***
	(0.0003)	(0.001)	(0.0003)	(0.001)
Country indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15,250	15,250	16,500	16,500
R^2	0.163	0.155	0.102	0.106

Note: This table shows results from OLS regressions based on Equation 6. Higher values of the dependent variables indicate that the respondent is culturally more right-wing/conservative. 𝟙[MEP] equals one for those elected in the 2009 European Parliament election and 0 for "ordinary" EU citizens who voted in this election. Regressions are weighted to obtain representative samples within each country. Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the country level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

the refugee crisis, the cultural representation gap grew. Seeing increased representation gaps and associated dissatisfaction as their opportunity, right-wing populists increasingly used the populist narrative to make their comparative advantage salient and focused on the subject of immigration, where representation gaps are largest and most quickly increasing. Increased representation gaps made right-wing populist parties more attractive to voters, even though the popular economic positions and competency of mainstream parties still made many voters vote for mainstream parties. Consequently, the vote share of right-wing populists increased.

6 Conclusion

This paper shows empirically that European policymaking is much more culturally liberal than voters prefer. In many European countries, all established political parties have policy positions that are more liberal than those of the mean voter. Citizens who are not represented are dissatisfied with the state of democracy. Right-wing populist parties fill the cultural representation gap and citizens who are not represented by mainstream parties vote for populists. Increases in representation gaps coincide with the rise of populism and countries with larger representation gaps subsequently face stronger increases in populist vote shares. While all these pieces of evidence are correlational, taken together, they provide a plausible explanation for the rise of populism. According to this explanation, right-wing populists rose because they proposed policies that many citizens demanded but no other party group supplied. It is a promising avenue for future research to test this explanation using causal evidence.

Methodologically, the paper at hand uses data rarely employed by economists —a combination of MP and voter surveys. As I show, this type of data is of high quality. It correlates strongly with established measures and real-world behavior. In contrast to established measures, it allows researchers to estimate the representation of political attitudes and to obtain measures of individual politicians rather than parties. Because researchers have made relatively little use of this type of data (Laver, 2014) many interesting questions remain unexplored. For instance, the data could be used to test whether demographic groups who are numerically underrepresented in parliaments are also underrepresented in terms of attitudes. Similarly, while previous studies have shown that only a minority of detached citizens are not represented by established parties in terms of demographic characteristics (Bó et al., 2023), my results suggest that in terms of policy attitudes, the share of unrepresented citizens is much larger.

Furthermore, the paper guides us in modeling electoral competition. Representation gaps seem to be an important feature of the European policy spaces and many existing models cannot explain them. This might partly be because many models assume office-motivated candidates, who often have no incentive to create representation gaps. I provide evidence that most politicians are not office- but policy-motivated. At the same time, models with policy-motivated politicians are not necessarily more complex than those with office-motivated ones.These two facts make a strong case for the increased use of models with policy-motivated candidates. I also show that the introduction of policy motivations interacts with other model features in important ways. The existence of representation gaps cannot be explained by Downsian models with policy-motivated candidates alone, but in combination with heterogeneous valence, it can. Still, while I show that representation gaps can be explained by a simple yet powerful model, there might be other ways to explain them. For instance, it might be interesting to explore under what conditions "citizen-candidate" models (Osborne and Slivinski, 1996) produce representation gaps.

The paper at hand also suggests that insights from behavioral economics are useful to understand the behavior of politicians. While we know much about the demographics and competence of politicians (Bó et al., 2017, 2023), we know much less about their preferences and psychological traits (Heß et al., 2018; Berger and Bosetti, 2020). In particular, future research could examine the possibility suggested by the evidence presented here that people self-select into politics based on psychological traits and moral values, in particular moral universalism.

Moreover, the tendency to be culturally left-wing might not only apply to (mainstream) politicians. I provide evidence that the media is biased relative to voters in the same direction politicians are, but even more strongly in magnitude. Similar media biases are found by Puglisi and Snyder (2015) in the USA while Haidt and Lukianoff (2018) shows that experts tend to be more socially left-wing than the population. Examining the interplay between political representation gaps, media bias, and a potential "expert bias" might be another promising starting point for further research.

My results also raises the question of whether scholars have focused too much on the populist features of populists. The rise of populism in Europe is largely driven by right-wing

populists (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). As shown here, the reason might be that right-wing populists fill more empty policy space than others. Hence, the rise of populism might be due to smart positioning in the policy space rather than being populist. Seen from this perspective, the populist narrative might be little more than an argument populists use to present themselves in a positive light. Consequently, it might be more productive to focus on the substantive policies of populists rather than their rhetoric.

The paper also helps to organize the increasingly multitudinous set of reduced-form studies that examine the effects of various shocks on the strength of populists (Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). Studies have revealed a very complex pattern of shocks that can affect the populist vote share differently, partly for unknown reasons (Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2016; Guriev and Papaioannou, 2022). Representation gaps might help to explain these heterogeneities. Possibly, shocks only lead voters to switch from mainstream to populist parties if they are not satisfied with the way mainstream parties are dealing with the shock. This line of reasoning suggests that the rise of populism is not entirely due to exogenous shocks and outside of the control of mainstream politicians. Rather, populism might be seen as a symptom of representation gaps which implies that mainstream politicians can mitigate or even reverse the rise of populism by filling representation gaps themselves.

Focusing on substantive policies also suggests that populists might be a normal democratic "corrective" (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2012) for representation gaps. This raises the question whether the rise of populism is a problem. While populist rule tends to exert negative effects in terms of lower quality bureaucrats and reduced economic growth (Bellodi, Morelli, and Vannoni, 2021; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2021), this paper suggests that they might also increase substantive representation which is arguably positive (Andeweg, 2012). Hix, Kaufmann, and Leeper (2021) find that Brits are willing so sacrifice huge proportions of the GDP to bring immigration toward their desired level. If voters decide that the implementation of their policy attitudes is worth sacrificing economic growth, it is hard to argue that the rise of populism is a problem. Still, a valid case against this line of reasoning is that populists often damage democratic institutions (Bellodi, Morelli, and Vannoni, 2021; Funke, Schularick, and Trebesch, 2021) which might ultimately lead into a dictatorship where representation gaps are even larger than now.

Similarly, one might argue that representation gaps should not be closed by adjusting the policy positions of parties but by changing the attitudes of citizens. As shown here, representation gaps toward politically informed citizens are smaller which means that they could partly be explained by biased beliefs. Indeed, recent studies have shown that Europeans have biased beliefs about immigrants (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 by 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; Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva, 2023) or even backfires (Barrera et al., 2020). This

suggests that even if part of representation gaps is driven by misinformation, closing the gap through information campaigns is difficult to achieve in practice. Moreover, even the representation gaps between well-informed citizens and parliamentarians are large, and differences concerning moral values explain representation gaps above and beyond what information asymmetries can explain. This suggests that at least part of the gaps are driven by differences in moral values.

In case one tries to reduce representation gaps by adjusting policymaking, this paper suggests that many institutional reforms will be ineffective. For instance, giving the European Parliament more power relative to the European Commission or giving member states more power relative to the European Parliament is unlikely to reduce representation gaps notably because the EU parliament and national parliaments are biased relative to voters in the same way. To reduce representation gaps it is therefore probably key to circumvent any group of high-ranking politicians and to make democracy more direct, for instance through more use of binding referendums.

Finally, my results shed light on the potential future of populism in Europe. Many have predicted that populist parties are ultimately doomed to fail, most famously Inglehart and Norris (2016). In contrast, the results presented here imply that populists have the potential to dominate the European policy space in the long run. Right-wing populists are positioned close to the national mean voter on the cultural dimension. If the cultural dimension continues to increase in perceived importance populists might continue to rise while mainstream parties who do not adopt their policy positions might vanish.

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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. 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	0.429	0.327	-0.112	0.560	0.587
Redistribution	-0.121	0.110	0.743	0.552	-0.286
Assimilation	0.663	0.089	-0.125	0.096	-0.488
Sentences	0.680	0.134	-0.262	0.055	-0.246
Abortion	0.079	0.570	0.513	-0.488	0.134
Same-sex marriage	0.547	0.479	0.038	-0.199	0.008
EU membership	0.581	-0.497	0.243	-0.139	0.289
EU unification	0.554	-0.534	0.355	-0.083	0.038

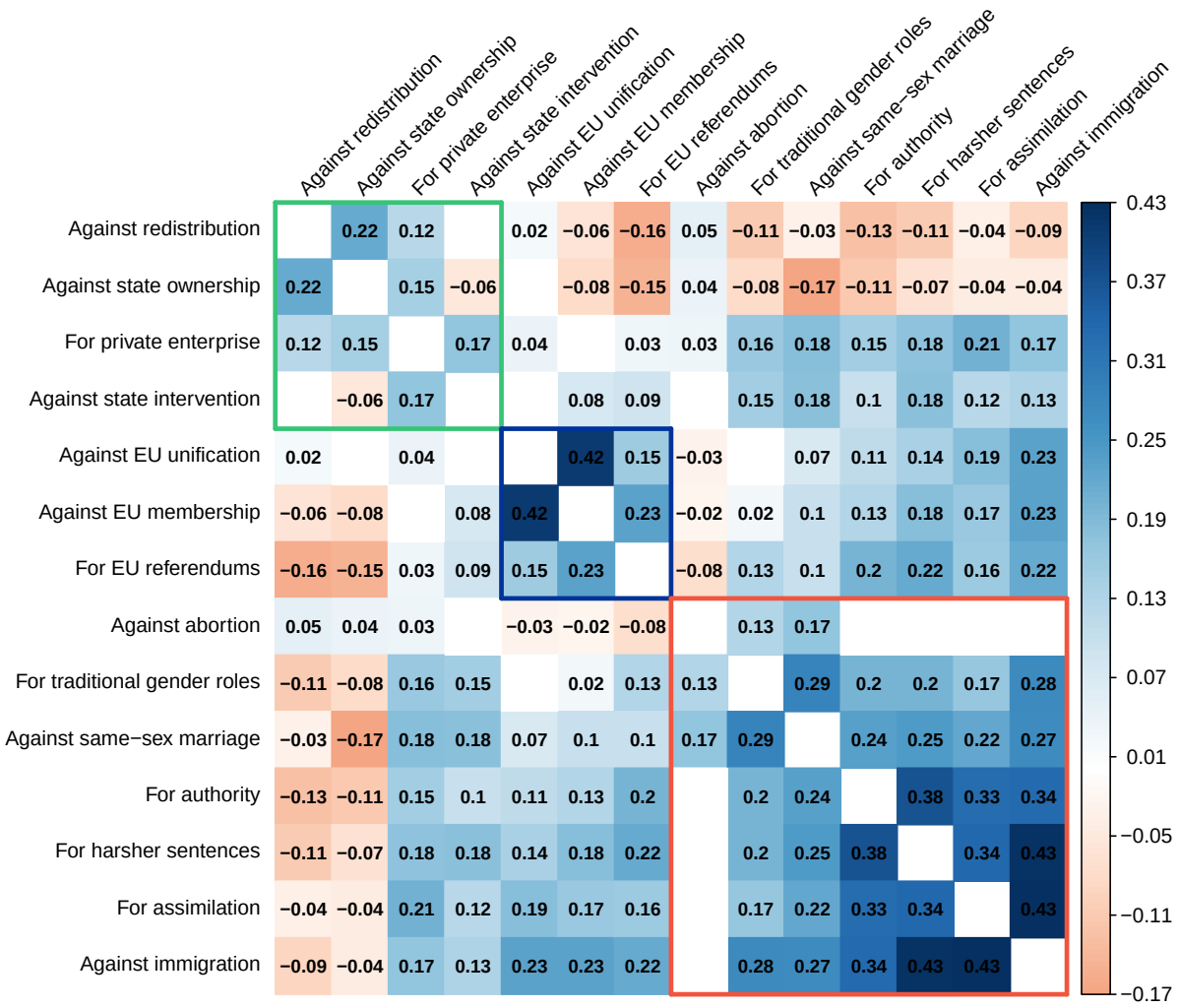

Figure A.1. Correlation Matrix of Policy Attitudes

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).

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 3.1.2, 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% 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 princi-

pal component analysis explains about 15% 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.

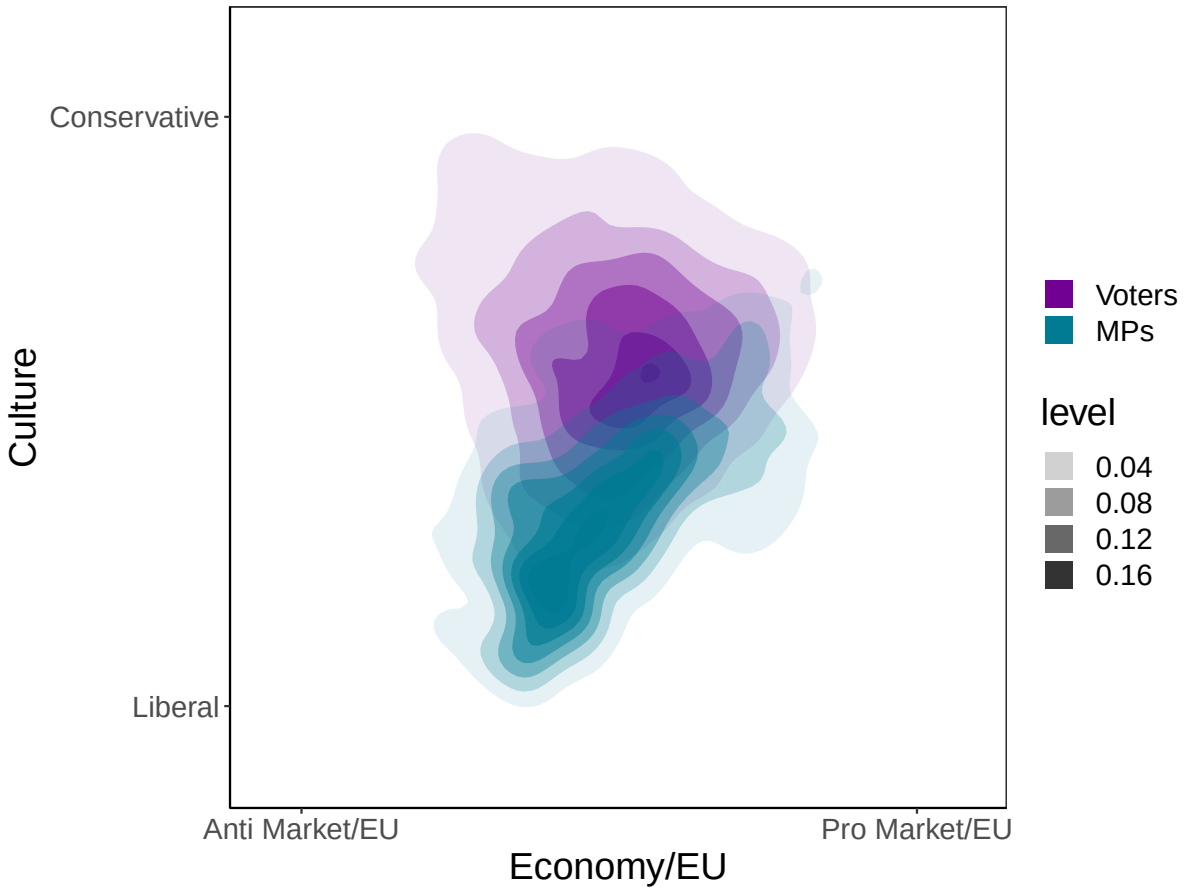

Figure A.2. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians Based on Principal Component Analysis

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.

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 in Section 3.1.2. 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 Data Quality

B.1 Representativeness of the MEP Survey Data

Figure B.1 to Figure B.3 compare the sample MEPs to the universe of MEPs —all MEPs who were elected in 2009— regarding several demographic variables. Data is taken from Beauvallet, Lepaux, and Michon (2013) and the website of the European Parliament[21]

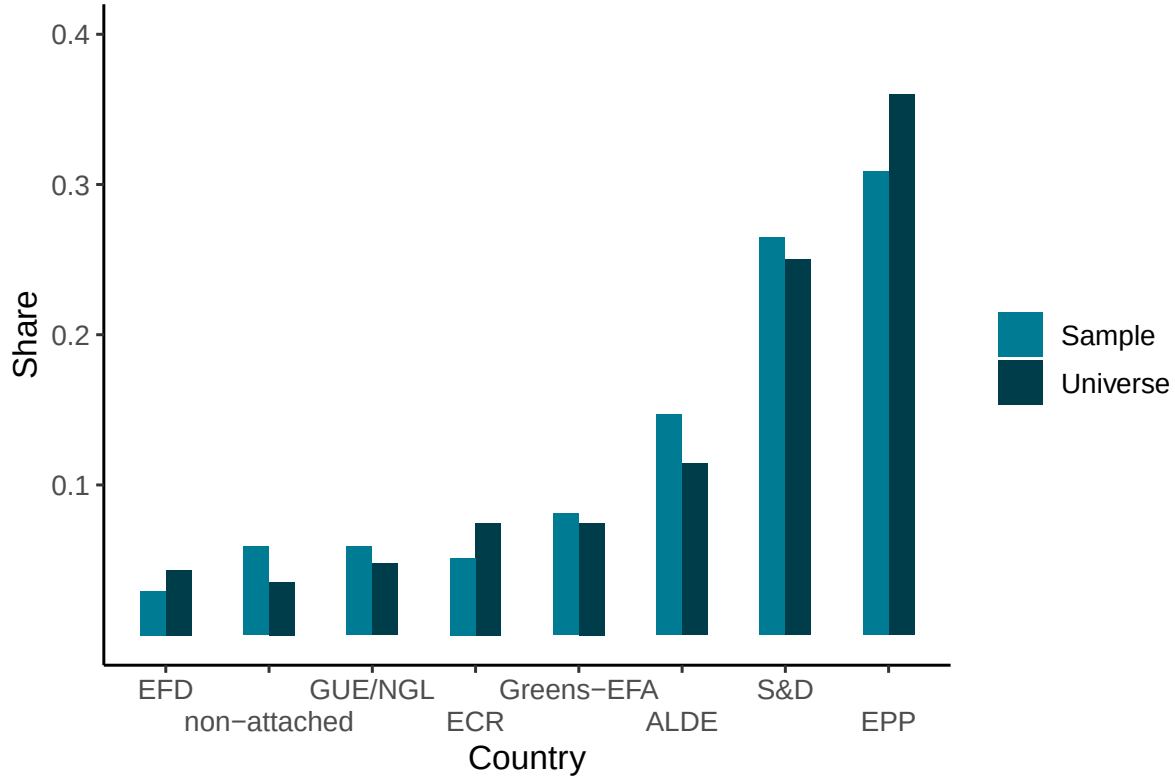

Figure B.1. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Party Group
Note: This figure compares the party group distribution of the MEP universe to the party group distribution of sample MEPs used in the paper.

Perhaps most importantly, estimates of representation gaps might be biased due to self-selection of MEPs based on their political stance into the survey. To examine this possibility Figure B.1 compares the seat shares of all European Parliament party groups based on the 136 sample MEPs to the universe seat share distribution of the 2009 European Parliament. As can be seen, the sample is representative for the full parliament, which mitigates concerns about selection into the sample based on political attitudes. Moreover, the differences between the sample and the universe are not systematic. The two largest differences concern the Christian democratic/Conservative EPP and the Liberal/Centrist ALDE who offer similar policy positions. While the EPP is underrepresented in the sample, ALDE is over-represented.

21. Data can be accessed here.

Representativeness of the sample is even higher among other demographic variables. In 2009 66% of all newly elected MEPs were maleIn the sample, the corresponding share is about 66.42%. Similarly, for about 12.22% of all MEPs a high school degree is their highest educational attainment, while for about 62.22% this is a Bachelor or Master and about 24.44% a Ph.D. In the sample, the proportions are about 12.6%, 64.57% and 22.83% respectively.

Figure B.2 compares 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. 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. Figure B.2 reveals that the sample distribution of the previous occupation is representative.

Figure B.3 assesses representativenes regarding the country of origin of MEPs. Differences between sample and universe are larger than for other demographic variables, which might partly be explained by the fact that the number of different demographic categories is higher regarding countries.

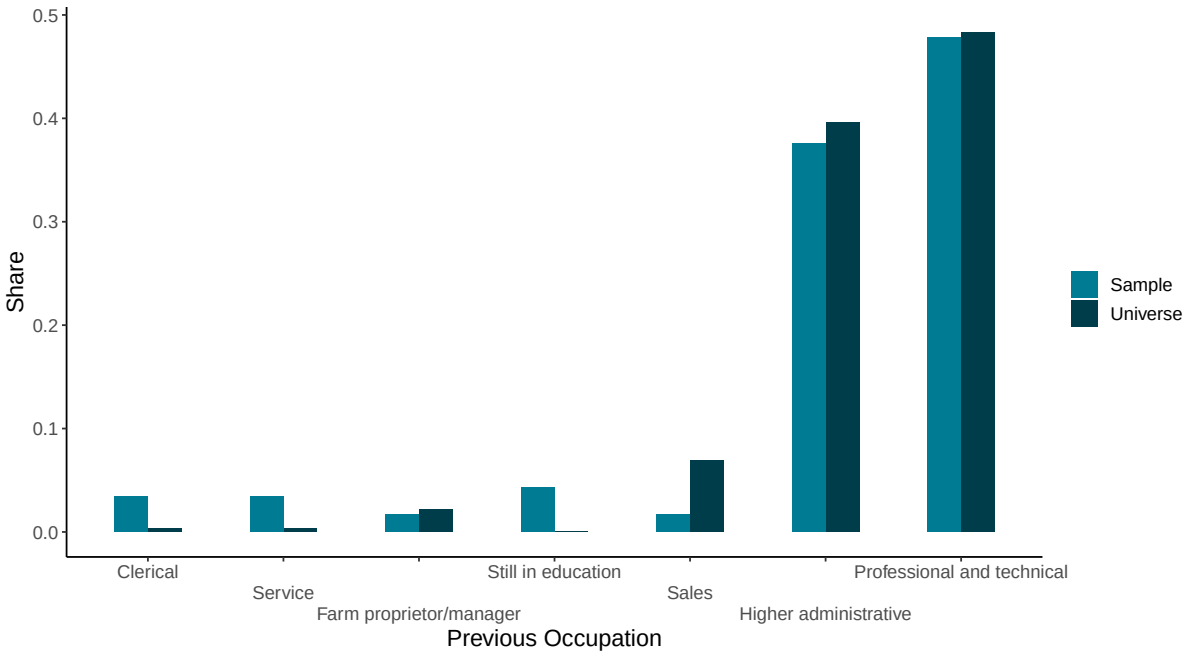

Figure B.2. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Occupation

Note: This figure compares the previous occupation distribution of the MEP universe to the previous occupation distribution on of the sample MEPs used in the paper.

Overall, these results suggest that the sample is broadly representative of the MEP universe. The largest sample biases exist regarding country of origin, which means that within-country comparisons provide important robustness checks.

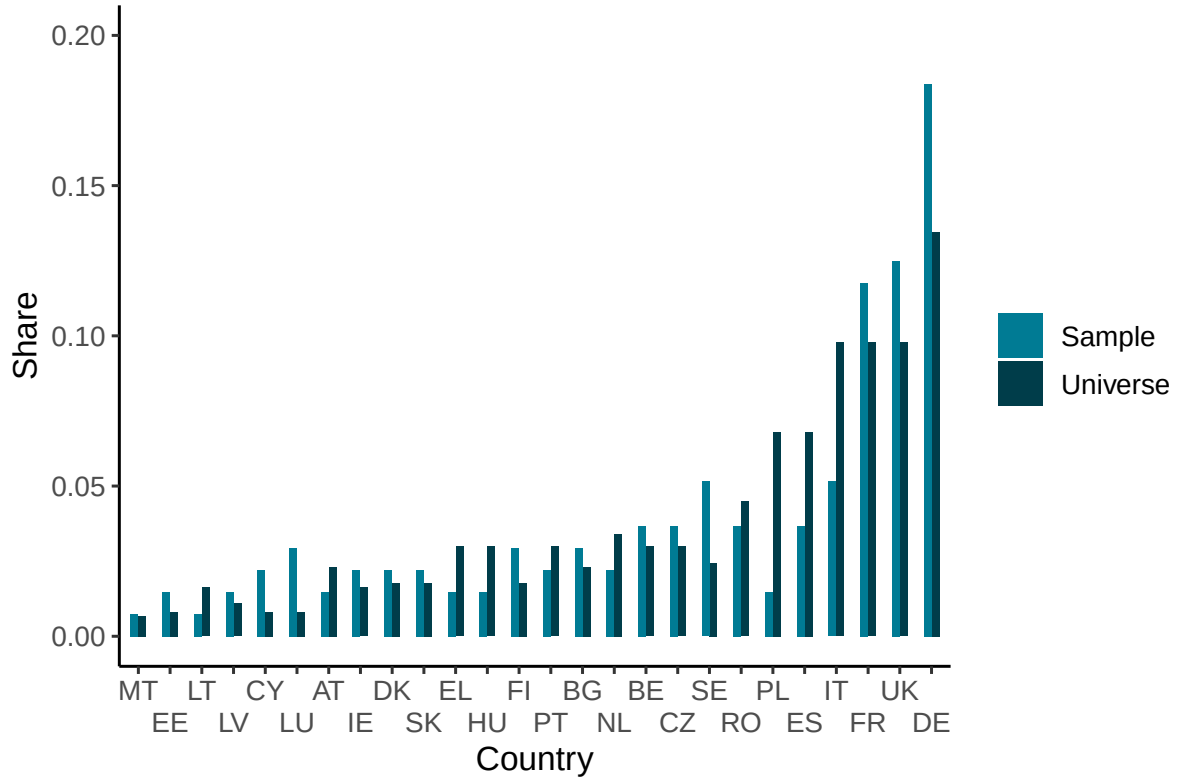

Figure B.3. MEP-Sample Representativeness Regarding Country of Election
Note: This figure compares the country of election distribution of the MEP universe to the country of election distribution of the sample MEPs used in the paper.

B.2 Association of MP Survey Data with Established Datasets

Another way to assess the validity of parliamentarian survey data is to examine its correlation with established and validated data sources. The two most commonly used datasets for party positions are the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES, Jolly et al. (2022)) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP, Lehmann et al. (Manifesto Project Dataset)).

To this end, I calculate the policy positions of parties for various issues based on the combined parliamentarian survey data by taking for each party and issue means with equal weights of the positions of all of its elected parliamentarians. CHES and CMP directly provide party-level data. For both datasets and each party, I use the values closest to 2010 (MP surveys were administered at the end of 2009 to 2010) but exclude observations from the analysis that lie outside the time window from 2006 to 2014. I then match the resulting party-level estimates of all datasets. Table B.1 shows how I match variables. I am able to generate 19 matches in total, including 15 matches between the MP survey data and one of the other datasets for 72 parties. Importantly, I am able to match dimension-level measures for the cultural and economic dimensions of all three datasets. I scale all variables such that higher values indicate a position that is more right-wing/conservative/anti-EU.

The quality of matches varies by variable. For some variables, the measures of different datasets refer to very similar concepts. The CHES measure for redistribution asked experts

Table B.1. Variables Matches between MP surveys, CHES and CMP

Variable name	MP surveys	CHES	CMP
Private enterprise	Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY]'s economic problems. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	NA	Favourable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model. [per401]
State ownership	Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	NA	Privatisation: Positive [per4011] - Privatisation: Negative [per4132] - Nationalisation [per413]- Publicly-Owned Industry: Positive [per4123][1]
State intervention	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	NA	NA
Redistribution	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	Position on redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. [redistribution]	NA
Assimilation	Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY]. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	Position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (multiculturalism vs. assimilation). [multiculturalism]	Multiculturalism: Negative [per608]- Multiculturalism: Positive [per608][2]
Same-sex marriage	Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	Position on social lifestyle (e.g. rights for homosexuals, gender equality). [sociallifestyle].	NA
Abortion	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	NA	NA
Sentences	People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	NA	Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. [per605]
Immigration	Immigration to [COUNTRY] should be decreased significantly. (Strongly agree – strongly disagree)	Position on immigration policy. [immigrate_policy]	NA
EU unification	Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? (Pushed further – gone too far)	NA	NA
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? ("Good thing," "bad thing," "Neither")	NA	NA
Deregulation	Mean of State intervention, State ownership, and Private enterprise (equal weights)	Position on deregulation of markets [deregulation]	NA
Economic index	Mean of State intervention and Redistribution (weighted with perceived importance)	Position in terms of its ideological stance on economic issues [lrecon]	Economy (State <-> Market)[3]
Cultural index	Mean of Assimilation, Abortion, Sentences, EU unification, and EU membership (weighted with perceived importance)	Position in terms of its views on social and cultural values [galtan]	Society (Progressive <-> Conservative)[3]
EU index	Mean of EU unification and EU membership (equal weights)	Overall orientation towards European integration [eu_position]	European Integration (Position)[3]

Note: MP surveys refers to the survey items MPs were given (see Table G.1 for details). CHES refers to the item descriptions of the CHES—Trend File codebook (version 1.3). CMP refers to the measure description from codebook version 2020b. Variable names in square brackets.

[1]According to the manual, Privatisation: Positive measures "Favourable references to privatisation." Privatisation: Negative measures "Negative references to the privatisation system; need to change the privatisation system." Nationalisation measures "Favourable mentions of government ownership of industries, either partial or complete" and Publicly-Owned Industry: Positive measured "Positive references to the concept of publicly-owned industries."

[2]According to the manual, Multiculturalism: Negative measures "The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration. Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society" and Multiculturalism: Positive measures "Favourable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies."

[3]Definitions are taken from the CMP website.

to assess the "position on redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor," while in the MP surveys, MPs were asked whether income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people. In contrast, the CMP measure for sentences (degree of penalty) calculates the share of quasi-sentences that contain "favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime," while the MP survey data measure asked MPs whether "people who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days." These concepts are related but less similar because, in contrast to the MP survey, the CMP measure also refers to tougher actions against domestic crime, which might include more than just harsher sentences. Similarly, the economic index based on the MP survey data includes the redistribution issue (which receives a large weight), while the corresponding CMP measure does not include the issue of redistribution. In general, none of the matches between any pair of measures is perfect, as no pair refers to identical concepts. Hence, it is unreasonable to expect correlations of 1. However, if the datasets provide valid estimates, it is reasonable to expect a positive correlation because all measures within variables are related.

Figure B.4 depicts correlation coefficients between measures of different datasets referring to similar variables. All correlation coefficients are positive and highly significant and the mean correlation is about 0.58. Correlations between MP survey and CHES measures are higher than those between MP survey and CMP measures, which might be because the MP surveys and the CHES are both surveys while the CMP codes sentences in manifestos. All but one correlation regarding the dimension indexes are above 0.6. The single exception is the correlation between the MP survey and CMP measure for the economic index, which might be due to the fact the the CMP measure does not include redistribution while the MP survey measure does. Finally, Figure B.4 reveals that MP survey measures correlate as strong with CHES or CMP measures as CHES and CMP measures correlate with each other. In interpret this as evidence that MP survey data provides valid estimates of policy positions.

A general concern with the MP survey data is that the MP survey data does not contain enough policy items to enable estimates of positions on broad political dimensions. Comparing indexes based on the three datasets mitigates this concern. The CHES asked experts to estimate the "overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration," the "position of the party in terms of its ideological stance on economic issues," and the "position in terms of their views on social and cultural values." Similarly, the CMP indexes are based on many policy issues and, therefore, provide credible measures for policy dimensions. Figure B.4 reveals that correlations between any pair of indexes are high, which suggests that the indexes used in this paper capture overall policy dimensions well.

B.3 Validation of Survey Data with Referendum Data

B.3.1 Voting on Referendums. Estimates based on survey data might lead to biased results for several reasons (Heckman, Jagelka, and Kautz, 2021). Hence, it is essential to validate survey-based data with behavioral data. Consequently, this section validates survey estimates for representation gaps by comparing survey responses of voters and politicians with

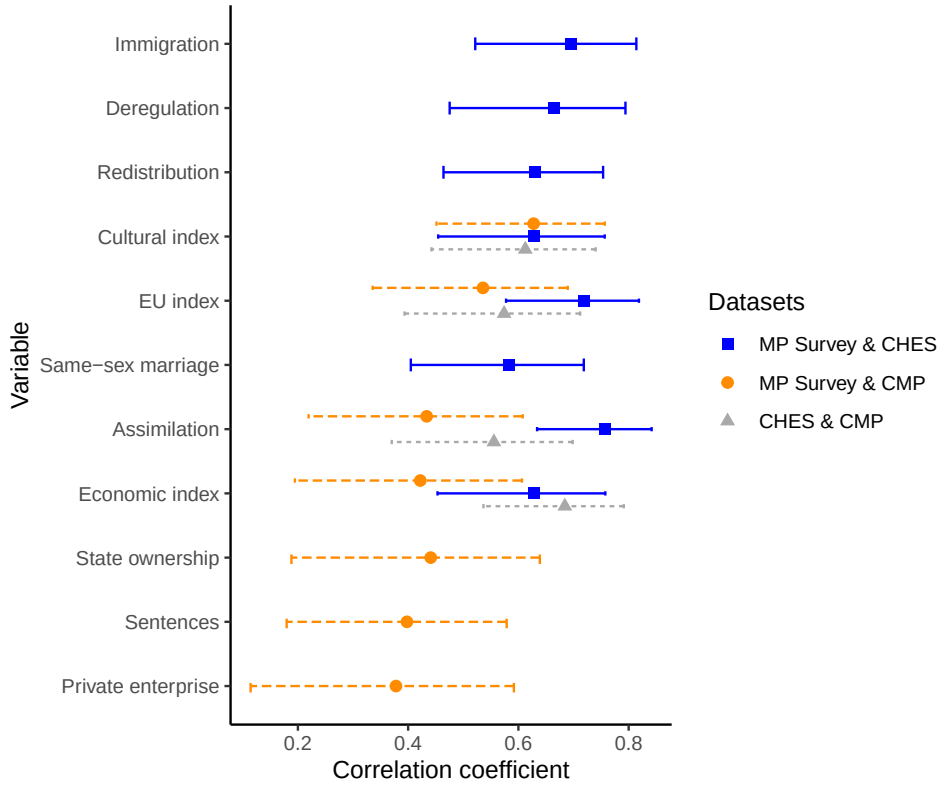

Figure B.4. Correlations between Measures of MP Surveys, the CHES and the CMP

Note: This plot shows correlation coefficients of party position measures based on different datasets. I also depict 95% confidence intervals. The MP survey estimates for Deregulation are based on MEPs only due to data availability. For all other measures I pool national MPs and MEPs. In general, I only use data on elected parliamentarians for the MP survey data.

their behavior in referendums. To this end, I restrict the analysis to Switzerland because it is the only European country with a sufficiently large number of referendums.

As described in Section 2 I use two datasets. First, I use a dataset containing information on the behavior of politicians and voters regarding 82 referendums between 1970 and 2024. While many more referendums have been held in that time interval, the referendums I use have two special properties. First, they were held on a specific issue, matching one of the categories I use in the paper. Second, all referendums are clearly classifiable as left-wing or right-wing in the sense that a passing of the referendum would unambiguously push legislation to the left or right on the issue at hand.

For each referendum I have data on the shares of the voting-age Swiss population and national parliamentarians who voted with yes or no, the shares of parties, weighted with their vote share, who officially positioned themselves in favor of a yes-vote and whether the government officially positioned itself in favor of a yes vote, opposed it or was neutral. From the 2010s onward I also have a measure of media tone, calculated as the share of media articles that take a favorable positions on the referendum proposal Swissvotes (2024). To calculate the representation gap between voters and institution X for a referendum r I first calculate the difference in voting behavior between voters and X — $Diff_r^X$ as follows.

$$Diff_r^{MP} = \Big\{\text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - \text{share of "yes"-voting MPs.}$$

$$Diff_r^{Me} = \Big\{\text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - \text{Media tone measure.}$$

To calculate representation gaps between voters and parties, 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 V be the set of those who vote on referendum r. 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.

$$Diff_r^{Pa} = \left\{ \frac{\sum_{i \in V} \mathbb{1}[v(i) = yes]}{||V||} - \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = yes] \cdot s(p) - 0.5 \cdot \sum_{p \in P} \mathbb{1}[rec(p) = neutral] \right.$$

For the government, I have data on whether it supported or opposed the yes-vote, or whether it took a neutral position but not on the share of members of the government who supported the initiative. Hence, I interpret support of a yes-vote as if the government supported it with unanimity and support of a no-vote as if the government opposed it with unanimity. Consequently, I calculate representation gaps between voters and the government as

$$Diff_r^{Go} = \begin{cases} \text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - 100, & \text{if government recommended "yes"} \\ \text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - 50, & \text{if government was neutral} \\ \text{share of "yes"-voting voters} - 0, & \text{if government recommended "no".} \end{cases}$$

To calculate representation gaps from the $Diff_r$ measures I use the fact that I know whether referendum r was right-wing or left-wing:

$$RG_r^X = \begin{cases} Diff_r^X, & \text{if r is left-wing} \\ -1 \cdot Diff_r^X, & \text{if r is right-wing.} \end{cases}$$

Due to this scaling $RG_r > 0$ means that voters voted more left-wing n referendum r than the comparison group while $RG_r < 0$ indicates that voters voted more right-wing. Finally, I calculate the average representation gaps for the cultural and economic dimension respectively by taking the average with equal weights of all RG_r who belong to an economic or cultural issue.

Second, I use survey data that contains the responses of a representative sample of 3.025 Swiss voters and 145 elected Swiss national parliamentarians. Both types of subjects responded in 2007 to the same items regarding State intervention, Redistribution, Assimilation, Abortion, Same-sex marriage and Sentences which are described in Table G.1. In addition, they were asked to what extent they agree/disagree with the statement

Immigrants are good for the the Swiss economy.

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. Then, I calculate the average economic and cultural representation gaps, weighting for the relative perceived issue importance as in the main part of the paper.

Figure B.5 average representation gaps for all decades since the 1970s. Cultural representation gaps in any decade and regarding any comparison group are negative, indicating that the parliament, parties, the government has been more culturally liberal than voters for the last 54 years, while the media has been more liberal for at least the last 24 years. In contrast, economic RGs have undergone a major transformation. In the 1970s political actors were more left-wing than voters and this representation gap was similarly large as the one on cultural issues. But since the 1980s, the economic representation gap switched signs and from then on all political actors, and later the media, continued to be more market oriented than voters until the present. This lines up well with anecdotal evidence according to which, the electoral victories of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in 1981 ushered in a new era of more market-oriented policymaking with even former left-wing parties adopting pro-market stances (Benedetto, Hix, and Mastrorocco, 2020). Overall, this evidence shows that representation gaps can be stable over many decades, particularly on cultural issues.

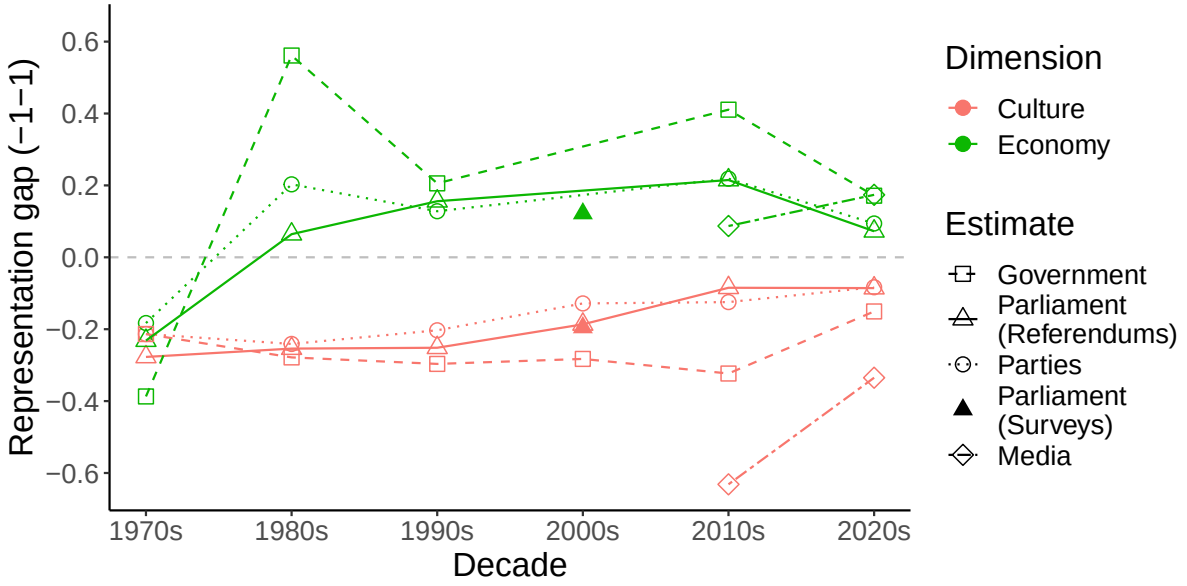

Figure B.5. Representation Gaps Over Time

Note: The horizontal axis shows the decade. Positive values indicate that the institution is more right-wing than voters. Negative values indicate that it is more left-wing. The dependent variable ranges from -1 to 1. Some estimates are missing due to missing data.

Focusing on the 2000s, the time window I analyze in the main part of the paper enables me to compare behavioral with survey-based estimates of the parliament representation gap. Figure B.5 shows that the two estimates are very close regarding the cultural dimension. In the economic dimension, my dataset does not contain referendums that took place in the 2000s which prohibits me from calculating a referendum-based estimate. However, comparing the survey-based estimate for the 2000s with the referendum-based estimates for the 1990s and 2010s suggests that the survey-based estimate is close to where the behavioral one would be.

Comparing different political actors reveals that representation gaps regarding the parliament and regarding parties are very similar. In contrast, representation gaps are notably larger when comparing voters to the government. This is plausible because the culturally conservative Swiss Peoples Party has held with (often more than) one-fifth of the total the most seats in parliament since 1999 while it only held one or zero out of the six seats in the government until recently. The result that the government is more biased relative to voters than the parliament likely carries over to other countries where culturally conservative parties are often excluded from government. This suggests that representation gaps between governments and voters are even larger than the estimates provided in the main part of this paper. In the cultural dimension, only the media is more biased than the government. This media bias might help to explain why voters consider culturally conservative parties to be incompetent and thereby representation gaps themselves. In the economic dimension, the media is similarly biased as political actors.

Notably, the culturally conservative populist Swiss People's Party rose in the polls chiefly in the 1990s when the parliamentary representation gap was relatively large. Thereafter, possibly due to the strengthening of this party, representation gaps decreased. However, one should be careful in drawing trend-related conclusions from Figure B.5 because the issues of referendums differ between decades which mitigates comparability.

B.3.2 Initiation of Referendums. 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 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.

Figure B.6 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.

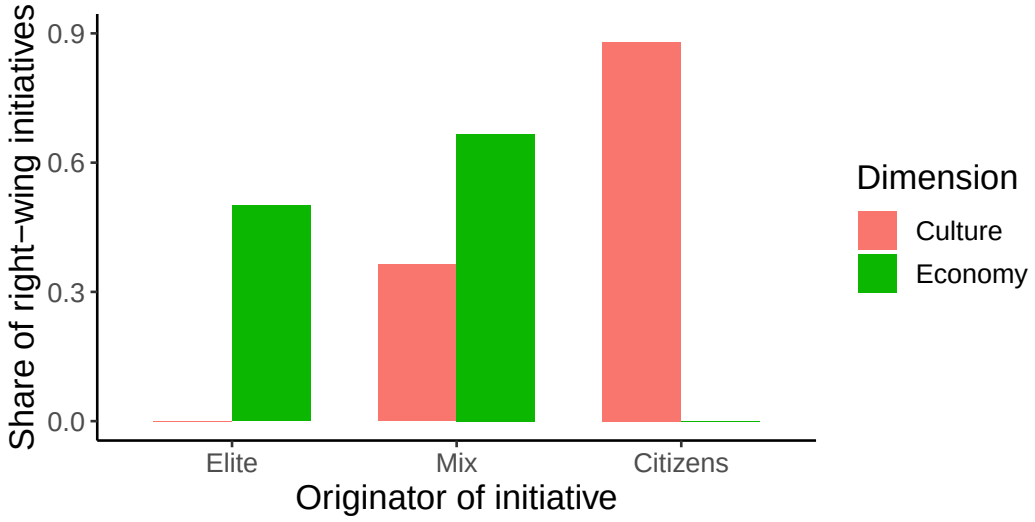

Figure B.6. Share of Right-Wing Initiatives by Originator

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. Results pool all referendums since 1980.

Figure B.6 confirms the expectations. Nearly 90% of referendums initiated by Swiss citizens since 1980 aimed at pushing cultural policymaking further to the right. In contrast, no single referendum initiated by the political elite would have enabled a cultural right shift. Referendums that resulted from an interplay of these actors lie in between, at about 30%. In the economic dimension, half of the referendums initiated by the elites aimed for a right-wing shift. In contrast, none of the referendums initiated by citizens did so. However, the share is highest among those resulting from an interaction of the elite and citizens. This evidence suggests that ordinary citizens and the elite disagree on which direction their country should be heading regarding both policy dimensions.

Appendix C 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 $\lambda_L > \lambda_R$. 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

which is equivalent to

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

if $x_L < x_R$ and

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

if $x_L > x_R$. 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 $\forall a_i$.

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

Finally, assume $x_R > A(0.5)^{-1}$. 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 $x < A(0.5)^{-1}$. □

Appendix D Perceived Importance of Political Issues

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. This section focuses on the comparison between MEPs and voters because responses of national MPs were coded differently or are missing.

To compare issue priorities of 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.

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

$II_{g,i}$ 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 representation gaps 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 can calculate representation gaps for. I calculate representation gaps as in the main text by using Equation 6. However, here I focus on individual policy issues in contrast to dimension indexes. Regressions are weighted to adjust for population differences between countries.

Figure D.1 shows the important indexes (bars) and absolute values of representation gaps (points). 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. It reveals that MEPs and voters tend to find the same topics important. Both groups agree that immigration is the most important issue. However, voters prioritize immigration and sentences more than MEPs, while MEPs prioritize EU unification and state intervention more than voters. There is no strong association between the absolute size of representation gaps and the perceived importance of issues. If anything, representation gaps seem to be larger on issues that are considered more important by either group.

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.[22] For most issues like unemployment or gender

22. Hence, here I divide the broader cultural dimension used in the main text.

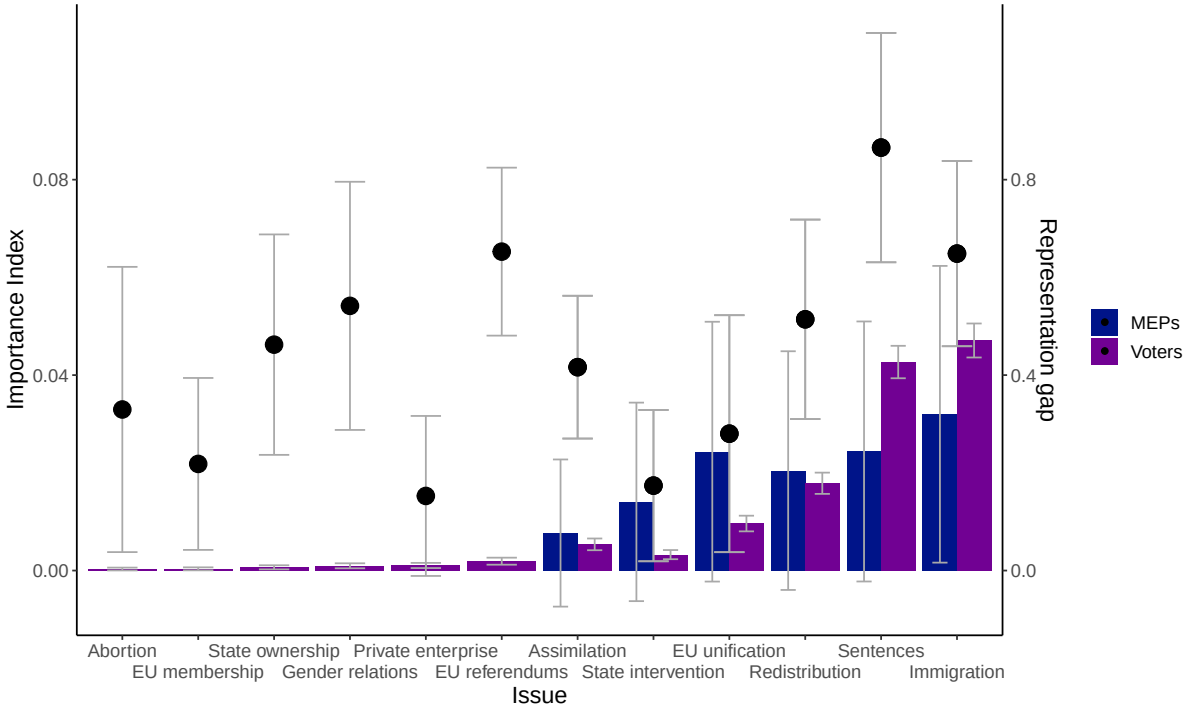

Figure D.1. Perceived Importance of Policy Issues by Voters and MEPs and Representation Gaps
Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of issues ($II_{g,i}$), defined in Equation D.1. Black dots represent the absolute value of the representation gaps. I also depict 95% confidence intervals.

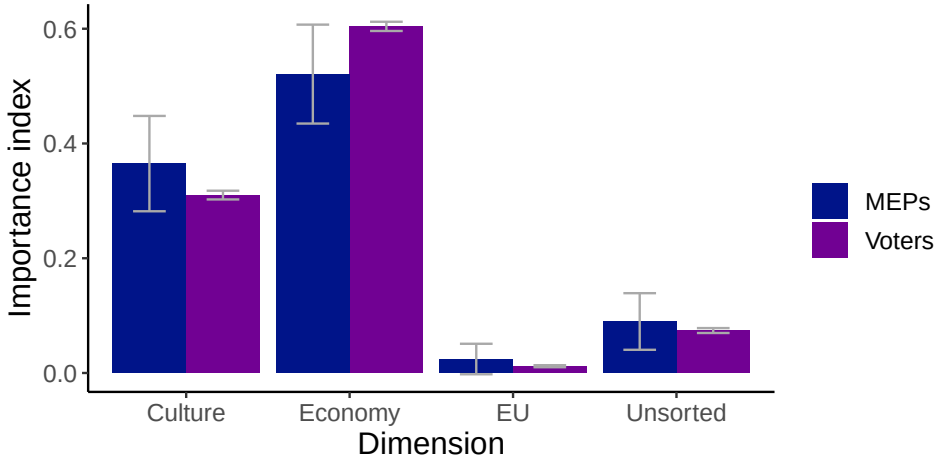

Figure D.2. Perceived Importance of Policy Dimensions by Voters and MEPs
Note: Bars indicate an index of perceived importance of political dimensions ($II_{g,i}$), defined in Equation D.1. I depict 95% confidence intervals around all values.

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 D.2 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 indicates that the large cultural representation gaps might matter to voters.

Appendix E Other Potential Causes of Representation Gaps

E.1 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.

To examine this possibility, O focus on issues where the conflict of interest between the structural minority and structural majority group is most obvious. To this end, Figure E.1 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.[23]

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

23. Figure E.1 shows attitudes instead of policymaking of MEPs for simplicity. Attitudes and policymaking of MEPs are very similar as shown in the main text.

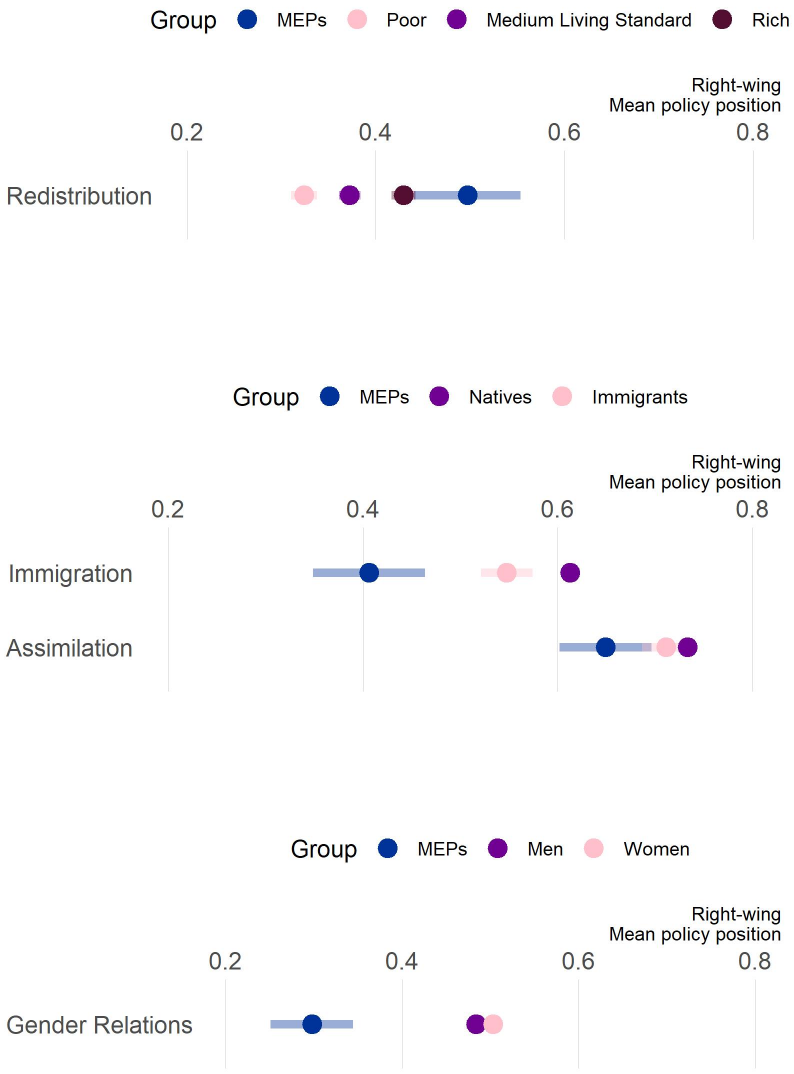

Figure E.1. Mean Attitudes of Selected Voter and MEP Groups by Topic

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.

more opposed to redistribution than the rich. On immigration and assimilation, immigrants are more left-wing than natives. However, contrary to balancing the attitudes of these groups, MEPs have mean attitudes that are far more left-wing than those of immigrants. In fact, the position of immigrants is much closer to those of "ordinary" natives than to those of MEPs. On gender relations, men and women hold similar mean attitudes that do not differ significantly. If anything, women are more right-wing on that topic. MEPs are far to the left of both groups. This evidence is not consistent with the idea that MEPs deviate from the attitudes of the mean voter to protect structural minorities. The opposite is the case. If

they chose the position of the mean voter, their attitudes would be much closer to those of structural minorities than they are currently.

These results also provide 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[24] 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.

E.2 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 is the empirical literature on whether lobbyism reduces social welfare or not, which is not conclusive (Bombardini and Trebbi, 2020).

First, note that the representation gap pattern documented above appears distinct from the pattern one would expect lobbyism to produce. Because most lobbyism is done on the economic dimension, one would expect representation gaps to be particularly large there. In contrast, one might expect cultural representation gaps to be small. However, as shown above, the exact opposite is the case, which raises doubts that lobbying is a good explanation for representation gaps.

Nonetheless, this section examines lobbyism as a potential driver empirically. If lobbyism were a primary contributor to the representation gap, one would expect that the 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.

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 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

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

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, I condition the analysis on relatively young (I use below 50 years as the threshold) candidates.

None of these variables 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 the following regressions:

$$Bias_{i,d} = \alpha_{d,m,c} + \beta_{d,m,c} \cdot Lobbyism_{i,m} + \theta_{d,m,c} \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_{d,m,c}, \tag{E.1}$$

where $Bias_{i,d}$ is the bias of MEP (candidate) i in absolute values relative to the European mean voter regarding dimension d. $Lobbyism_{i,m}$ is the value of one of the measures m described above of candidate i 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 ($c \in \{Conditional, Unconditional\}$). Due to availability of the lobbyism measures I only use data on elected MEPs and MEP candidates.

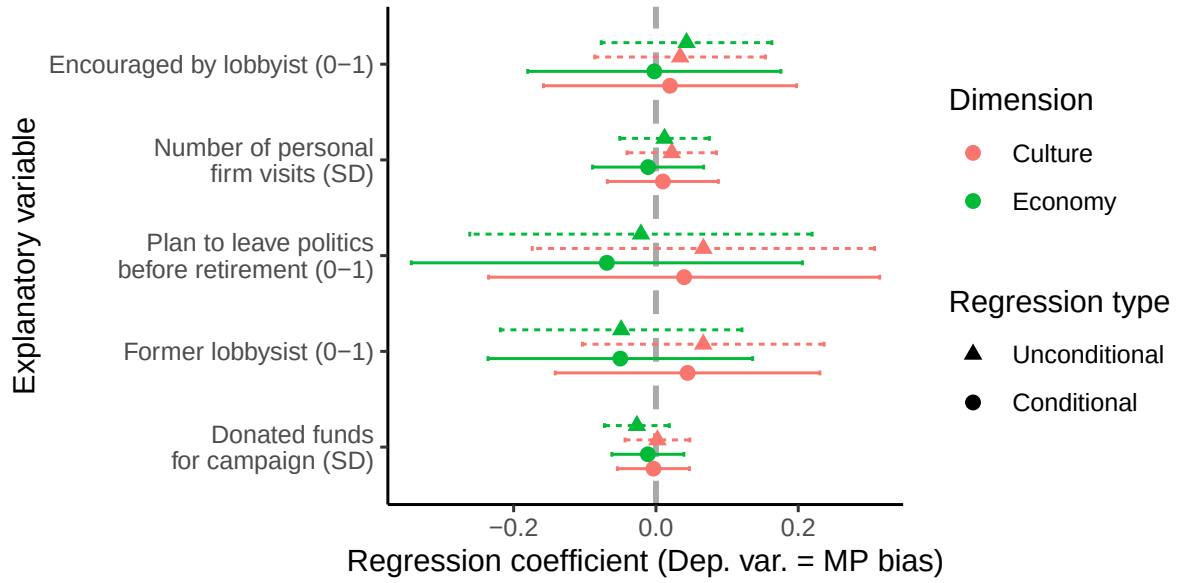

Figure E.2. Association between Representation Gaps of MPs and Lobbyism-related Variables
Note: This plot shows coefficients ($\beta_{d,m,c}$) from Equation E.1. The vertical axis shows the explanatory variable corresponding to the coefficient. In only use data on MEPs and pool elected parliamentarians and candidates. The dependent variable is standardized based on EU-wide citizen attitudes. Conditional estimates include the standard battery of demographic characteristics.

Figure E.2 shows the resulting $\beta_{d,m,c}$ coefficients. Each coefficient measures descriptively whether candidates who score higher on one of the explanatory variables are more biased in absolute values. None of the 20 coefficients is significant at the 5% level and all coefficients are small in magnitude relative to representation gaps. This observation holds on either dimension and does not depend on whether the regression is unconditional or conditional on

the standard set of demographic control variables. I interpret this as evidence that lobbyism is not a main driver of representation gaps.

Appendix F Additional Figures

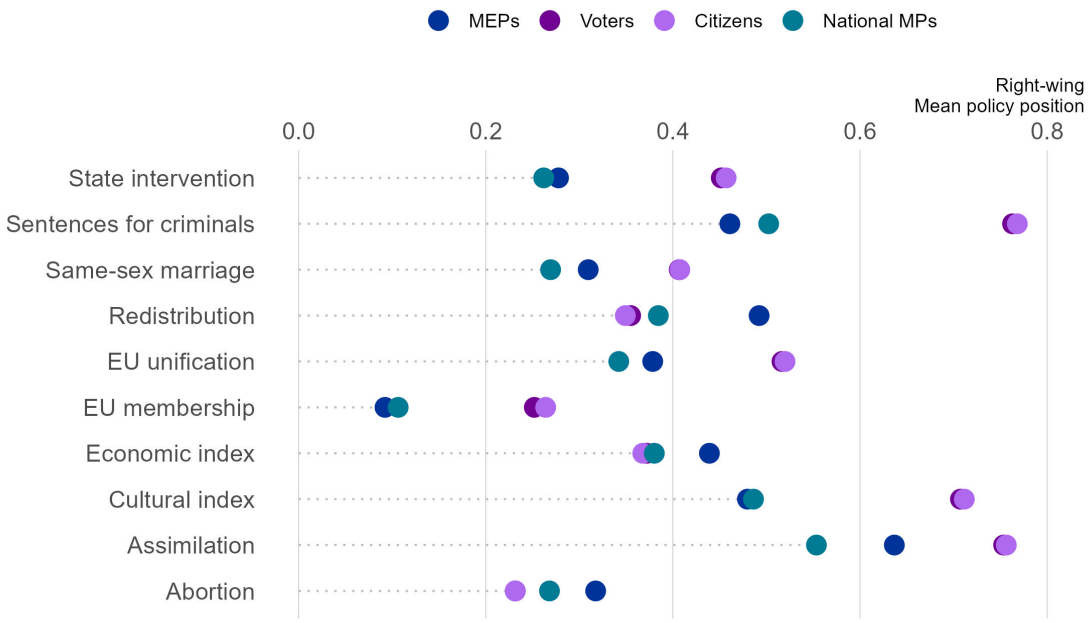

Figure F.1. Attitudes of MEPs, MPs, Voters and Citizens by Policy Issue

Note: This dumbbell plot shows mean policy attitudes. Higher values correspond to attitudes that are more right-wing. I pool data for the following countries: Germany, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Portugal, and Greece because data on all groups is available only for these countries. Means are weighted to adjust for population size differences. I only show results for issues where data is available for all groups. Voters are those who voted either at the 2009 European Parliament election or the last national election. The indexes refer to the "MP" indexes used in the main text.

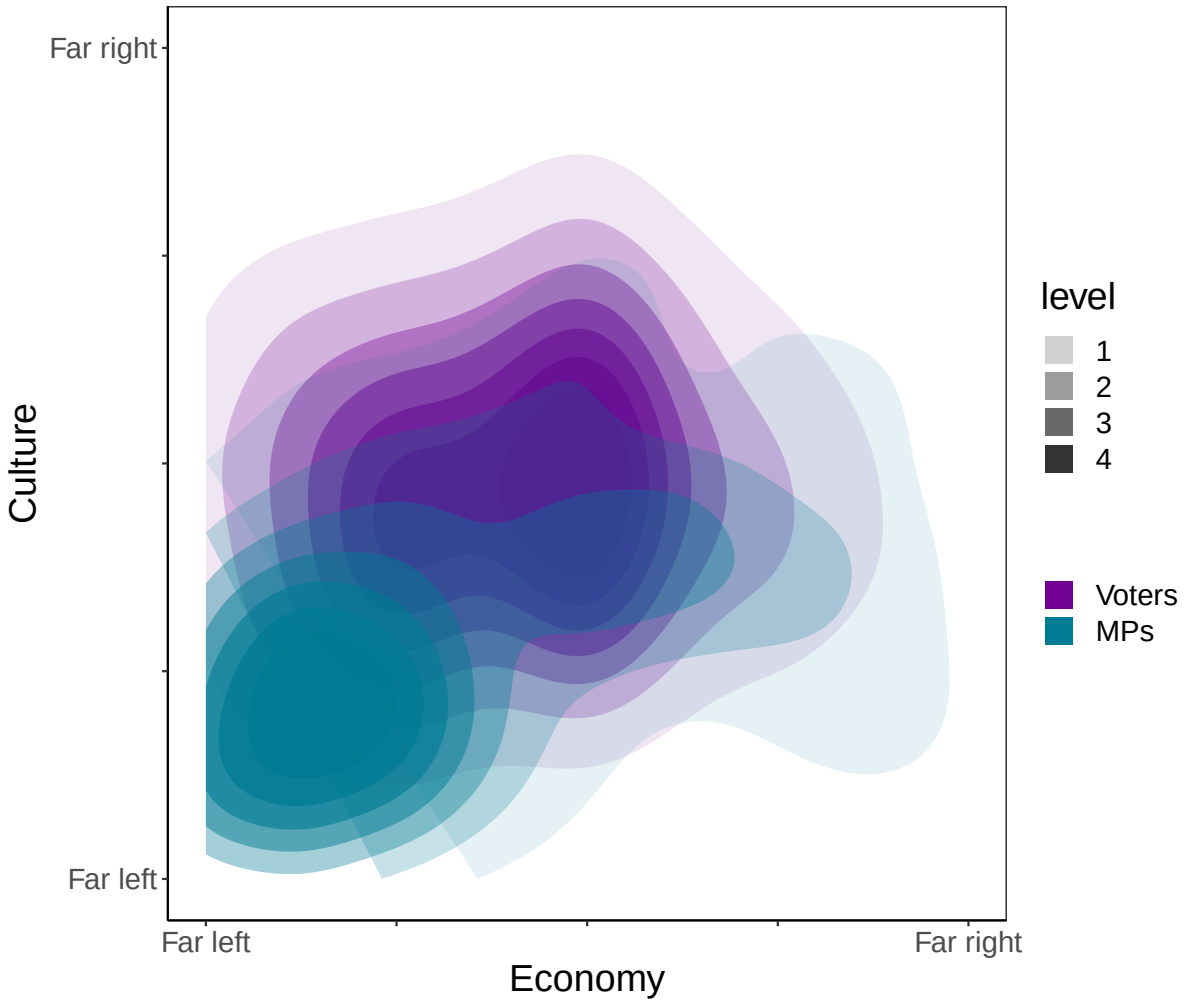

Figure F.2. Two-Dimensional Attitude Distributions of Voters and Parliamentarians Using Equal Weights for Issues

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.

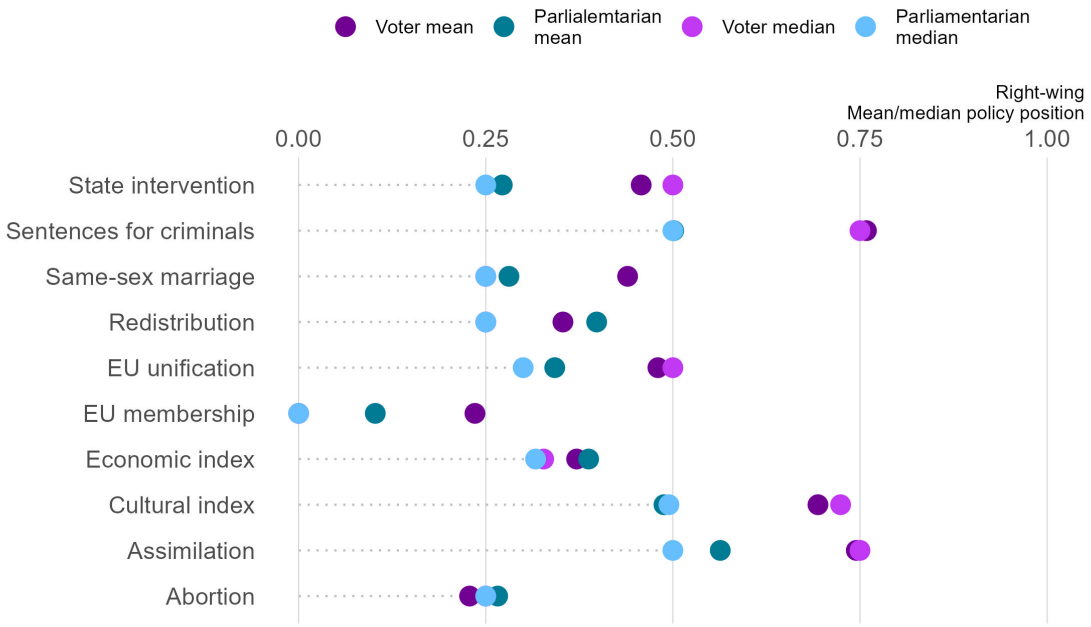

Figure F.3. Attitude Differences Regarding Means and Medians

Note: This dumbbell plot shows mean and median policy attitudes. Higher values correspond to attitudes that are more right-wing. I pool data for the following countries: Germany, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Portugal, and Greece because data on all groups is available only for these countries. Means and medians are weighted to adjust for population size differences. I only show results for issues where data is available for all groups. Voters are those who voted either at the 2009 European Parliament election or the last national election. The indexes refer to the "MP" indexes used in the main text.

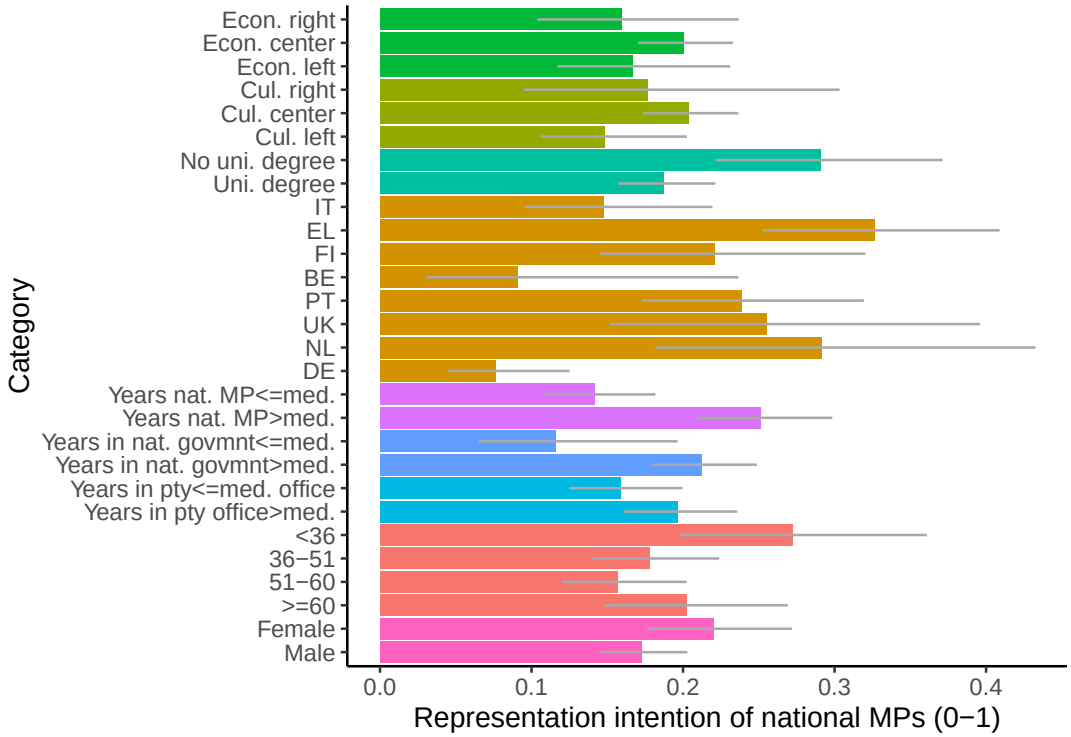

Figure F.4. Representation Intention of National MPs by Demographic Group

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.

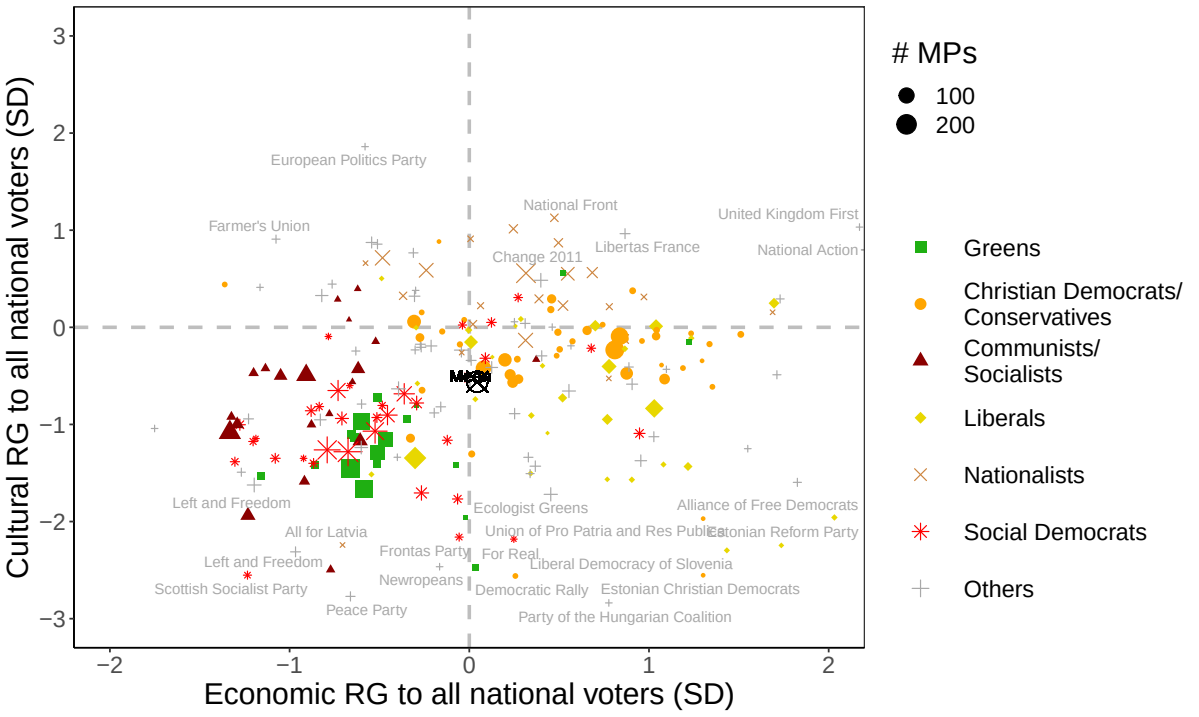

Figure F.5. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Party

Note: This plot compares the position of European parties relative to the position of the national mean voter in the 2D culture-economy space. I estimate party positions based on all candidates. Different symbols refer to different party families. The size of the symbol measures the number of MPs used to calculate the policy position. For clarity, I omit a few parties whose cultural index is smaller than -3. All of them rely on few observations and are therefore measured imprecisely.

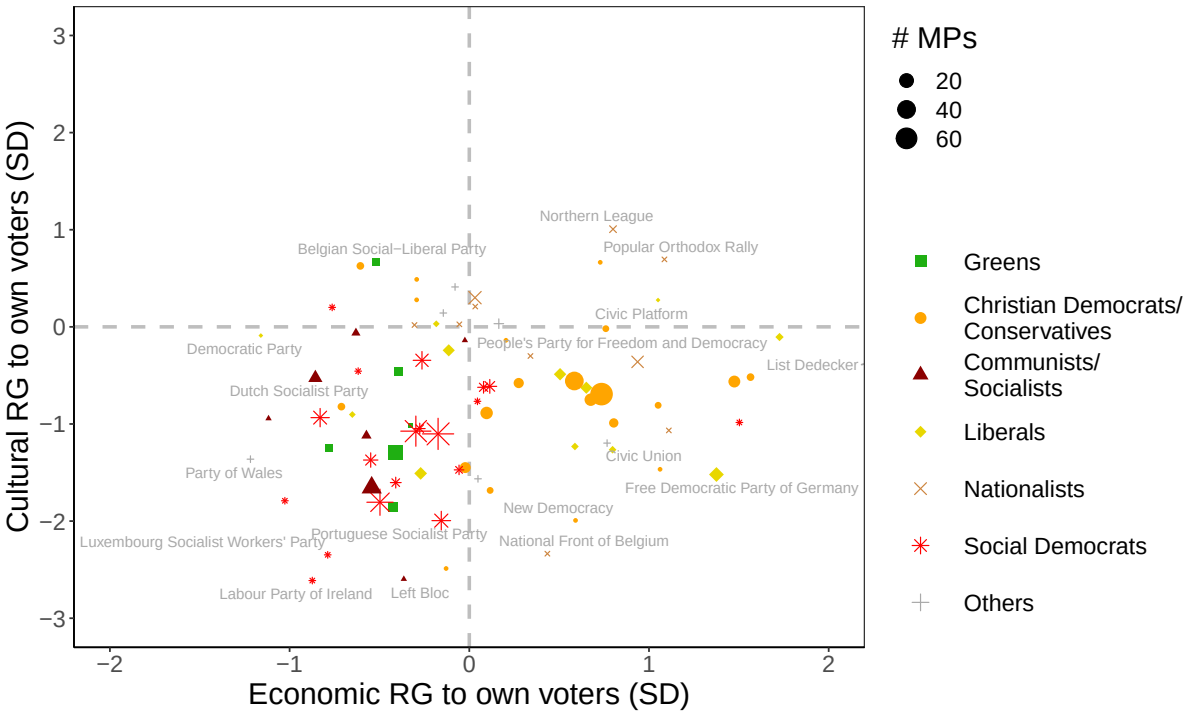

Figure F.6. Representation Gaps Relative to Own Mean Voter by Party

Note: This plot compares the position of European parties relative to the position of their own 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. For clarity, I omit a few parties whose cultural index is smaller than -3. All of them rely on few observations and are therefore measured imprecisely.

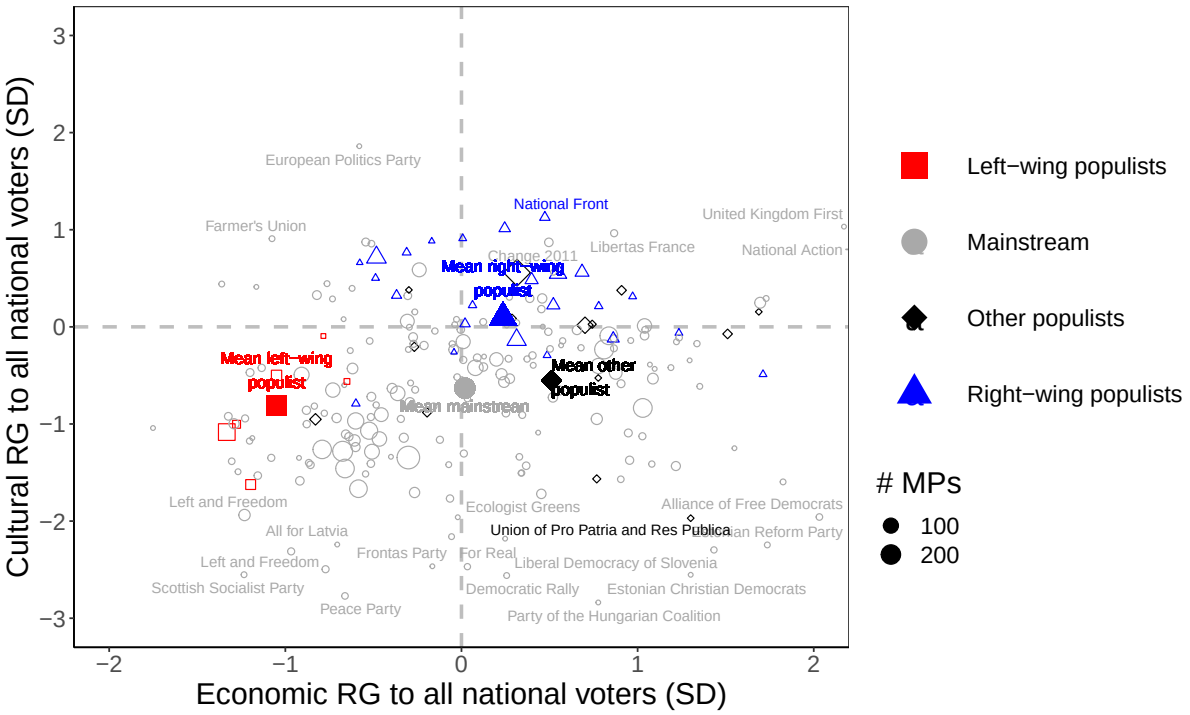

Figure F.7. Representation Gaps Relative to National Voters by Populist and Non-populist Parties

Note: This figure compares the policy positions of European parties relative to the position of the national mean voter in the 2D culture-economy space. Estimates of policy positions are based on the mean index of all candidates for national parliaments or the European Parliament. A few parties are positioned outside the boundaries of this figure, but all of them rely on a few observations and are, therefore, measured imprecisely. I omit them for clearness.

Appendix G Additional Tables

Table G.1. Information on Policy Attitude Variables

Variable name	Question wording	Question type	Included in
Private enterprise	Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY]'s economic problems.	5 point Likert	EES
State ownership	Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership.	5 point Likert	EES
State intervention	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy.	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Redistribution	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Assimilation	Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY].	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Same-sex marriage	Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Abortion	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Sentences	People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days.	5 point Likert	EES/CCS
Teaching authority in schools	Schools must teach children to obey authority.	5 point Likert	EES
Gender relations	A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family.	5 point Likert	EES
Immigration	Immigration to [COUNTRY] should be decreased significantly.	5 point Likert	EES
EU referendums	EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum.	5 point Likert	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"	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"	EES/CCS

Note: The question 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. 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." CCS refers to Wave 1 of the Comparative Candidate Study and EES refers to the European Election Study (Voter and Candidate survey).

Table G.2. Overview of Survey Data

		Number of respondents in the data					
Country	Year	MEPs	MEP candidates	MPs	MP candidates	Citizens	Voters
AT	2009	2	39	0	0	1000	972
BE	2007	0	0	61	509	0	0
BE	2009	5	57	0	0	1002	983
BE	2010	0	0	79	558	0	0
BG	2009	4	6	0	0	1000	871
CY	2009	3	8	0	0	1000	957
CZ	2009	5	21	0	0	1020	834
DE	2009	25	143	198	789	1004	964
DK	2009	3	24	0	0	1000	989
EE	2009	2	23	0	0	1007	874
EL	2009	2	19	0	0	1000	946
EL	2012	0	0	50	337	0	0
ES	2009	5	57	0	0	1000	931
FI	2009	4	41	0	0	1000	933
FI	2011	0	0	49	911	0	0
FR	2009	16	117	0	0	1000	931
HU	2009	2	26	0	0	1005	876
IE	2009	3	8	0	0	1001	967
IT	2009	7	58	0	0	1000	967
IT	2013	0	0	141	672	0	0
LT	2009	1	30	0	0	1000	778
LU	2009	4	16	0	0	1001	938
LV	2009	2	39	0	0	1001	896
MT	2009	1	11	0	0	1000	984
NL	2006	0	0	38	170	0	0
NL	2009	3	73	0	0	1005	962
PL	2009	2	36	0	0	1002	801
PT	2009	3	17	0	0	1000	929
PT	2011	0	0	101	257	0	0
RO	2009	5	24	0	0	1003	842
SE	2009	7	162	0	0	1002	985
SI	2009	0	18	0	0	1000	939
SK	2009	3	29	0	0	1016	873
UK	2009	17	244	0	0	1000	905
UK	2010	0	0	141	1472	0	0
Sum		136	1346	858	5675	27069	24827