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Losers of globalization, losers in representation? The impact of education on unequal policy representation in Europe

Emmanouil Tsatsanis, Ana Maria Belchior

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*Emmanouil Tsatsanis**, *Ana Maria Belchior***

LOSERS OF GLOBALIZATION, LOSERS
IN REPRESENTATION? THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION
ON UNEQUAL POLICY REPRESENTATION IN EUROPE

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the impact of education on policy representation. It examines degrees of congruence between political elites and citizens on policy preferences across different policy issues, trying to discern whether there is a representation gap between the so-called “winners” and “losers” of globalization in Europe as captured via the proxy measure of educational attainment. Additionally, we examine whether this representation gap, as well as overall levels of congruence, are affected by contextual factors related to the economy and the ideological orientation of governments. Using data from the 2014 European Election Studies and the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey, our findings largely confirm the existence of a representation gap along educational lines. Contextual factors related to the economy present weak or no direct and moderating effects whereas ideologically left-leaning governments accentuate, for the most part, the representation gap between individuals of low and high educational attainment.

Keywords: *representation; inequality; education; Europe; globalization*

* Researcher, Institute of Political Research, National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), email: etsatsanis@ekke.gr

** Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Policy, ISCTE-IUL (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa)

*Μάνος Τσατσάνης**, *Ana Maria Belchior***

ΗΤΤΗΜΕΝΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΓΚΟΣΜΙΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ, ΗΤΤΗΜΕΝΟΙ
ΚΑΙ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΤΙΠΡΟΣΩΠΕΥΣΗ;
Ο ΑΝΤΙΚΤΥΠΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΠΕΔΟΥ
ΣΕ ΑΝΙΣΟΤΗΤΕΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΑΝΤΙΠΡΟΣΩΠΕΥΣΗ

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το άρθρο εστιάζεται στην επίδραση της μόρφωσης στην πολιτική αντιπροσώπευση. Εξετάζει βαθμούς σύγκλισης και αντιστοίχισης μεταξύ πολιτικών ελίτ (κυβερνητικών κομμάτων) και πολιτών σε ό,τι αφορά προτιμήσεις σε μία σειρά τομέων πολιτικής. Το ερευνητικό ερώτημα της μελέτης είναι το κατά πόσο παρατηρείται χάσμα αντιπροσώπευσης μεταξύ διαφορετικών κοινωνικών ομάδων που μπορούν να διαχωριστούν μεταξύ των λεγόμενων «νικητών» και «ηττημένων» της παγκοσμιοποίησης με γνώμονα το μορφωτικό επίπεδο. Συγκεκριμένα, εξετάζουμε α) το αν οι προτιμήσεις σε διάφορους τομείς πολιτικής των ατόμων που διαθέτουν χαμηλό επίπεδο μόρφωσης εκπροσωπούνται το ίδιο καλά συνολικά στις χώρες της Ευρώπης, β) το αν αυτό το χάσμα αντιπροσώπευσης επηρεάζεται από ευρύτερους οικονομικούς και πολιτικούς παράγοντες, όπως το βάθος της ύφεσης κατά την περίοδο της κρίσης και η ιδεολογία της εκάστοτε εθνικής κυβέρνησης. Για τη διερεύνηση των ερωτημάτων χρησιμοποιούνται δεδομένα από το European Election Study του 2014 και την Chapel Hill Expert Survey επίσης του 2014.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: πολιτική αντιπροσώπευση, ανισότητα, παγκοσμιοποίηση, μορφωτικό επίπεδο, Ευρώπη

*Ερευνητής, Ινστιτούτο Πολιτικών Ερευνών, Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικών Ερευνών (ΕΚΚΕ).

** Αναπληρώτρια Καθηγήτρια, Τμήμα Πολιτικής Επιστήμης και Δημοσίων Πολιτικών, ISCTE-IUL Πανεπιστημακό Ινστιτούτο Λισαβόνας.

INTRODUCTION

Even though questions about the compatibility between inequality and democracy have been asked since classical times, in recent years there has been renewed interest and scholarly production on this topic. Beyond the relationship between forms of (in)equality and democracy, on an empirical level socioeconomic inequalities seem to go hand in hand with political inequalities, and reinforce each other. The least privileged tend to have a smaller political voice, which consequently reinforces their underprivileged condition, decreasing their chances to have a say in political decisions even further (Verba et al., 1978; Bartels, 2008). Since one of the defining characteristics of democracy as a political system is that citizens are political equals (Dahl, 1989, p. 1), it stands to reason that the existence of such inequalities undermines the quality of contemporary democracies.

There is widespread evidence that levels of inequality in most post-industrial societies have resumed an upward trajectory during the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century (Piketty, 2014) and plenty of recent studies trace the economic, social and political effects of inequality. Among them, there have been several studies that investigate the impact of social and economic inequality on electoral turnout (e.g. Erikson, 2015; Avery, 2015), citizens' political participation in general (Page et al., 2013), and political representation (e.g. Althaus, 2003; Gilens, 2005; Rosset, 2013; Gilens and Page, 2014; Bartels 2008; 2015; Peters and Ensink, 2015), especially in the United States. These studies have been reiterating the disadvantage of the less privileged, who tend to participate less, not vote as much, and whose preferences are less well represented in the political sphere.

Education is often included in studies as a component of socioeconomic stratification, and there is wide acknowledgement that it is a key explanatory factor (along with political information) of citizens' political participation (Althaus, 2003; Verba et al., 1978). Furthermore, research has largely supported the claim that education is a core factor in shaping individuals' views of the political world (Coenders and Sheepers, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2017; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2006, 2007), and, more broadly, that educational attainment is an important element in the new cleavage of the political space emerging in Western European societies (Kriesi et al., 2008). Regarding political attitudes and behaviour, the least educated tend to politically participate less (eg. Althaus, 2003, regarding opinion surveys), to trust less in democratic institutions, and to be politically less sophisticated (for example, to be more erratic in their polit-

ical opinions [Zaller, 1992] and less consistent in disentangling left-right positions [Freire and Belchior, 2011]). However, education has seldom been analysed as an isolated explaining factor of the quality of representation (exceptions are Althaus, 2003; Aaldering, 2017). Extant research has shown that the preferences of the less educated citizens are worse represented than the preferences of the more educated ones but the fact that this research has hitherto focused on singular cases (specifically, the United States and the Netherlands) limits the generalizability of these findings.

With the underlying aim of providing comparative evidence, our study focuses on the effect of education on policy representation in the 28 European Union member states, at a time when the economic crisis and the austerity-oriented policy response to it have been associated with the prolonged recession, anaemic growth prospects, deepening inequality and growing unpopularity of mainstream political parties and policies. We go beyond previous studies on representation by examining degrees of congruence between political elites (specifically, parties-in-government) and citizens in Europe on policy preferences corresponding to different policy dimensions (economic and sociocultural) and trying to discern whether low education groups in society are less well represented than higher education groups, thus indirectly assessing the representation gap between the so-called “winners” and “losers” of globalization. Therefore, this study is original in two respects: a) it examines the effects of education on political representation in a European comparative context and b) it assesses the importance of levels of education in the degree of correspondence between the government and citizens’ positions across different policy issues, a topic which, to our knowledge, has been underexplored. In particular, we attempt to investigate a) whether there is a “representation gap” at the expense of the less educated groups in society; b) whether this representation gap is influenced by contextual factors (i.e. by the crisis in national economies, by the levels of economic inequality in the society, or by the ideology of the incumbent government), and c) whether these contextual factors have a direct effect on the overall levels of congruence between citizens and governments.

In the next section, we offer a brief literature review of conceptualizations of political representation relevant to this study and of the main contributions to the relationship between individual resources and policy representation. We then proceed to the discussion of our hypotheses, data sources and method of analysis followed by the presentation and interpretation of the findings.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Conceptualizing democratic political representation as congruence between citizens and political elites

Miller and Stokes (1963) established a tradition of empirical research into political representation in which the underlying assumption is that the congruence between the political preferences of the elected representatives and those they represent is a key component of the quality of political representation in a democracy. That is to say, the higher the degree of congruence between the preferences of the electorate and the representatives, the higher the probability the electorate will feel themselves to be well represented. In addition, this type of congruence increases the probability that both the legislative and executive branches will act following the people's preferences, which is a basic axiom of representative democracy (Freire et al., 2016, p. 243; Manin et al., 1999).

The present study adopts similar assumptions about the nature and quality of democratic representation. As with the "responsible party model", the congruence model can be associated with a mandatory vision of democracy, particularly because of the bottom-up perspective it adopts in respect to the political representation process. According to this model, it is up to the voters to make a conscientious, rational electoral choice based on information about the parties and it is up to elected officials to accomplish the mandate that they have been given by the voters (see eg. Miller et al., 1999; Powell, 2004). In this vision of democracy, citizens' preferences (i.e., "the will of the people") are the fundamental input in the political-electoral process, and the elected officials have as their main duty to take those preferences into account and, to a certain extent, act as "delegates" in enacting them in the legislative and governing process.

1.2. The effects of unequal distribution of individual resources on political representation

A burgeoning literature on representation has been reaching a dominant conclusion concerning representation: policymakers generally take into account the preferences of citizens (eg. Kang and Powell, 2010; Enns and Wlezien, 2011; Wlezien and Soroka, 2012), especially among less complex, ideological or highly salient issues (Spoon and Klüver, 2015). However, most of this research examines average preferences (or priorities) of the citizenry as a whole, assessing how much governments respond to

them but also neglecting how quality of representation can vary for different segments in society. The present study gives priority to this perspective, aiming to assess if there is an asymmetry in representation between the more and less skilled, dynamic and ultimately successful individuals, using educational attainment as a proxy. Education is often employed to distinguish empirically between “winners” and “losers” in contemporary globalized economies (Kriesi et al., 2008; Bornshcier, 2010) but, of course, it should not be conceived as the only possible source or marker of socio-economic inequality (see, most notably, Piketty, 2014).

In past research, the socioeconomic characteristics of citizens that have been singled out as the most significant drivers of unequal representation include income, information and education. The most straightforward way to assess the influence of economics in representation has been to use income as the independent variable. Studies that followed this approach concluded, mostly regarding the United States, that governments’ policy agendas tend to be more congruent with the preferences of the most well off segments of society than with least well off (Gilens, 2005; Kelly and Enns, 2010; Soroka and Wlezien, 2008; Schlozman et al., 2012; Rigby and Wright, 2013; Gilens and Page, 2014; Erikson, 2015), even though there have been studies that refute this conclusion (e.g. Brunner et al., 2013; Ura and Ellis, 2008). Larry Bartels has especially stressed the problem of unequal representation in the United States (2008). He demonstrates that American representatives are largely unresponsive to lower-income groups, leaving their interests and preferences less well represented, producing a situation where economic inequality has been generating political inequality, which in turn reinforces economic inequality in a kind of feedback loop.

Besides being expectedly less participatory and less well represented, the citizens that belong to lower socioeconomic strata are also expected to have different policy preferences when compared to the better-off. There is ample research demonstrating that individuals from lower-income groups are more likely to support more state intervention and redistribution policies (Ura and Ellis, 2008; Gilens, 2009; Soroka and Wlezien, 2008; Rehm, 2009; Giger et al., 2012; Rosset et al., 2013; Page et al., 2013; Bartels, 2008, 2015; Donnelly and Lefkofridi, 2014).

However, other studies have found that this relationship is not direct and that notwithstanding the role of income (Gilens, 2005; Bartels, 2008), other factors merit consideration in terms of uncovering patterns of unequal political representation. For example, Erikson (2015, pp. 22-23)

found that the relationship between income and policy preferences is intermediated by political information: the more informed voters tend to support policy positions more consistent with their economic standing. The disadvantaged position of the underprivileged is reinforced because high levels of information are typically concentrated among high-income voters (Erikson, 2015, p. 21). Althaus (2003) also emphasized that an unequal social distribution of political knowledge and education can lead to imbalances and inequalities in patterns of political representation.

Most of this research focused on the United States case. The quality of representation across different groups in society has been rarely explored in other cases. Nevertheless, the limited comparative research showed a general trend of underrepresentation of the policy preferences of the poor across western democracies through lack of congruence between voters and parties or governments (Giger et al., 2012; Rosset et al., 2013; Peters and Ensink, 2015), or through lack of participation (Beramendi and Anderson, 2008). To the extent that the comparative literature has focused on policy representation, however, it has tended to focus on the left-right dimension (e.g. Giger et al., 2012; Rosset et al., 2013), an abstract ideological continuum which may potentially be interpreted differently by citizens and elites (Powell, 2000: 94). It can be useful as a heuristic but perhaps not an ideal empirical measure of ‘substantive’ political representation (see Pitkin, 1967). Alternatively, comparative research has mostly focused hitherto on single policy issues, namely government social policy measured as welfare spending (Bartels, 2015; Peters and Ensink, 2015) and only occasionally has focused on a range of policy issues (Donnelly and Lefkofridi, 2014). However, public spending is not the most adequate indicator to measure the government’s policy correspondence to voters, since spending can result from causes other than deliberate policy preferences. For example, population ageing implies that spending on pensions increases, but that does not necessarily translate to governmental policy decisions (Mortensen et al., 2011, p. 978). Additionally, none of this research has isolated the effects of education on representation; research that did this focused on particular cases (Althaus, 2003; Aaldering, 2017). Our research aims at improving our understanding of the quality of representation by originally developing a European comparative analysis of government voters policy congruence across a set of policy issues, comparing higher with lower educated groups, leading to more generalizable findings.

1.3 Political representation in the age of globalization: a representation gap between “winners” and “losers” of globalization?

Recent years have seen an explosion of scholarly and journalistic discourse on the political consequences of recent economic downturns, social dislocations and cultural change, all presumably tied to some extent to a broader process of accelerating globalization. The examples are far too many to cite here. In 2016 virtually every major daily or weekly publication in Europe and North America published at least one special issue or report on the political backlash of globalization, which has become the typical frame to interpret recent political developments across the Western world. The theme reiterated after every surprising electoral result that has brought to the fore “populist” parties or candidates is that within Western societies the parts of the population that are “left behind” and/or feel threatened by global integration processes decide to punish the political establishment, associated for the most part with pro-integration political forces. The implicit argument is that the political elite consensus that pushed towards increasing liberalization and integration of economies and societies since at least the early 1990s has left without adequate political representation certain societal groups whose preferences are not aligned with the prevailing integrationist consensus. Post-electoral studies and exit polls have shown that the level of education has been proven one of the best predictors of voting behaviour – surpassing the explanatory power of income categories - in recent elections and referendums (for an overview see Runciman, 2016).

In the political science literature, the theme of the growing politicization of the new structural conflict between so-called “winners” and “losers” of globalization has been couched in terms of revisiting the classic Rokkianian cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967) of political competition (eg. Kriesi et al., 2008; Hooghe and Marks, 2017). According to this approach, the losers of globalization are those people whose life chances were relatively protected before the advent of globalization by the existence of national institutional frameworks, such as welfare states and neo-corporatist structures of interest intermediation, that were designed to mediate the worst aspects of market competition and pursue targets of near full employment.

The distinction between winners and losers of globalization in the relevant literature has been associated with the degree to which individuals possess *exit options* in an age where mobility becomes a crucial determi-

nant of social stratification. Individuals who can control convertible resources allowing them to exit will most likely benefit the most from the opening up of borders whereas those who remain “locked-in” due to lack of such resources will tend to be identified as losers of the process of globalization (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 5, Baumann, 1998). In this regard, higher education has become an indispensable resource that determines one’s exit options and, more broadly, life chances, in the age of globalization. In a period of rapid deindustrialization and technological change in Western societies, higher education provides the necessary specialized skills that are marketable inside and across national boundaries (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 7) and therefore are associated not just with present income and current position in the social structure but with broader life chances.

Higher education does not only affect the prospects of economic security and the ability to compete in a world with increasing international and transnational flows of goods, capital and labor. It also shapes broader worldviews and can have an impact on tolerance of ethnic minorities and support for cultural diversity (Coenders and Sheepers, 2003). Education has been shown to have an effect on attitudes on a range of topic related to globalization such as trade and immigration, but also towards the concept of globalization itself (Hooghe and Marks, 2017; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2006; 2007). For this reason, in this study we choose to examine the hypothesized emerging divide between “winners” and “losers” of globalization by focusing on its educational dimension since it is possibly the only empirical referent that remains constant across different societies and types of economy.

2. THE REPRESENTATION GAP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS IN EUROPE: THE MAIN HYPOTHESES

Given the increasingly reduced capacity of national governments to produce policy responses to the sweeping effects of globalization, several scholars have noted that the policy “straightjacket” that every government slips into, willingly or not, is one of the most important contributing factors to the increasing dissatisfaction and disaffection with mainstream governmental parties and politics in general (e.g. Mair, 2013; Rodrik, 2011). Peter Mair had noted the increasing tension between the *responsible* and *responsive* government in the age of globalization, which has been amplified in the context of the European Union (and especially within the Eurozone), as the supranational institutional framework has removed even more deci-

sion-making capacity and authority from national governments. Responsiveness refers to the tendency that parties and governments to respond to the short-term demands of voters and public opinion, whereas responsibility refers to the necessity to take into account the longer-term needs of their people and countries, and also to honour commitments and respond to claims of “principals” outside the national polity, such as international markets and organisations (Bohle, 2014, p. 290). However, Mair argued that in the wake of the European sovereign debt crisis, the constraints on responsive government generated by the EU have shifted the weight of accountability away from national electorates (i.e. democratic accountability) and more towards external principals. In addition, the so-called responsible government is no longer associated necessarily with the long-term interests of a country but the need for national governments to be more responsive to external demands (in the European context associated with austerity and “structural reforms”¹), can make “responsible” government be at odds with the interests of the citizens, both in the short as well as the long-run (Mair, 2013; Bohl, 2014, p. 290; Ezrow and Hellwig, 2014).

In this research we focus, not on responsiveness, but on representation in terms of government-voter degree of congruence of policy preferences. Our contention is that the decrease in government-citizen congruence does not have a uniform impact. We expect that so-called “losers of globalization” have more to lose in relation to more dynamic segments of society and therefore will tend to be less well represented by government policies and the policy platforms of current parties-in-government (as measured in terms of congruence). Lower educational attainment is highly correlated with lower income levels and working-class occupations, which in turn have long been associated with differences in policy preferences, namely a preference for bigger government, redistribution and the reduction of inequality (Knutsen, 2007; McCall and Manza 2011). Such policy preferences are considered increasingly at odds with government *responsibility* in a globally competitive economic environment. At the same time, also cultural issues –especially the issue of immigration– have become increasingly salient in European countries, both due to the free movement of people inside the European Union, as well as the increase in immigration from outside Europe. However, in this case too, there is an expectation of an asymmetry in the size of the representation deficit. Research has shown that cultural concerns related to immigration tend to be most salient among

1. Mostly meaning deregulation of capital and labor markets.

low-educated respondents and not necessarily connected to concerns about wages and taxes (Card et al., 2012). Therefore, our first hypothesis is:

***H1:** Individuals of low educational attainment will tend to be worse represented across all policy categories compared to individuals of high educational attainment*

We expect, however, that certain contextual factors will have an impact on the representational gap between the higher and the lower educated. As Ezrow and Hellwig demonstrated (2014), parties correspond to voters' (left-right) positions as long as the national economy is sufficiently sheltered from world markets. Globalization is thus expected to distract parties' representatives from their voters' preferences, even more so in the case of parties-in-government. A parallel can be drawn regarding the potential effects of the 2009 international economic crisis in Europe and consequent external intervention. The economic crisis is expected to have negatively affected the policy congruence between governments and voters. Countries that were more affected by the economic crisis, that suffered high levels of unemployment, as well as higher levels of economic inequality, are expected to amplify the representation gap along educational lines, especially during the period when the crisis was at its peak. This is not just because those countries' governments had less leeway to take independent decisions but also because economic inequalities potentiate the representation gap between the more and the less privileged segments of society (Bartels, 2008). Furthermore, in such societies political polarization is higher (Magalhães, 2014), which can translate to polarization on (particularly) economic policy preferences. A crisis is thus expected to amplify the representational gap between the more dynamic strata of society (higher educated) and the less competitive strata (lower educated) that tend to be in more precarious economic positions, more dependent on government programs, and therefore more likely to be affected by prolonged austerity programs.

Additionally, countries that have higher levels of socioeconomic inequality will also tend to display lower levels of congruence between government policy positions and the electorate (especially on economic policy issues, as they are promoters of socioeconomic inequality), as such inequalities generate political inequality (Bartels, 2008). Therefore our hypotheses are:

H2: *The representation gap by educational attainment will tend to be greater on economic policy issues in countries that have been more affected by the economic crisis and/or have higher levels of economic inequality*

H3: *Countries that have been more affected by the economic crisis and/or have higher levels of economic inequality are expected to display lower levels of congruence overall on the economic policy dimension*

Another contextual factor that is expected to condition the size of the representational gap between higher and lower education levels relates to the ideological orientation of the government of the day in each European country. It has already been demonstrated that parties' ideologies are related to different levels of government-citizen congruence regarding socio-economic and libertarian-authoritarian policy issues (Belchior and Freire, 2013; Freire et al., 2016). Even though globalization-induced pressures and the institutional context of the European Union have narrowed the effective policy space for governments, the alternation of different parties or coalition of parties in government still translates to differences in policy orientations, even if reduced in relation to the past. For this reason, we expect that in countries where the ideological orientation of the government on economic policy is more right-wing (economically liberal), the representation gap on economic policy issues will be more pronounced. Similarly, where governments are more libertarian on cultural policy issues, we expect that the representation gap will be wider given that higher education tends to be correlated with more culturally libertarian views. Our hypotheses are:

H4a: *The representation gap by educational attainment will tend to be greater on economic policy issues in countries where the government is located closer to the right end of the economic left-right dimension*

H4b: *The representation gap by educational attainment will tend to be greater on cultural policy issues in countries where the government is located closer to the libertarian end of the authoritarian-libertarian cultural dimension*

3. DATA AND METHODS

Our empirical part relies on data for voters from the 2014 European Election Study (EES) and from the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) for the parties-in-government component, a year when the Eurozone and immigration crises were still highly salient throughout Europe. We include in our analysis the 28 EU member countries² (including the UK, still a member country at that point) that held elections for the European Parliament in 2014.

To construct the measure of our dependent variables, i.e. government-citizen congruence on five policy issues, we rely on both EES and CHES data. Congruence is conceptualized as a many-to-one relationship (Golder and Stramski, 2010), and the measure of the position of the government on policy dimension k (Gov_k) is constructed for each of the 28 countries separately via the following calculation:

$$Gov_k = \sum_{j=1}^n p_j \bar{g}_{jk}$$

where n is the number of parties in government, p_j is the share of seats of party j in the governmental coalition, and \bar{g}_{jk} is the mean position of party j on policy issue k based on CHES expert judgements.

The variable of policy congruence of citizen i from the government's position on policy issue k ($Gprox_{ik}$) is calculated as follows:

$$Gprox_{ik} = -|c_{ik} - Gov_k|$$

where c_{ik} is the position of citizen i on policy issue k . The multiplication by -1 reverses the directionality of the variable, from measuring government-voter policy preference distance to government-voter policy preference proximity or congruence.

We construct five separate dependent variables, corresponding to five common items in the EES and CHES datasets (see Table 1). These items correspond to three economic policy issues and two cultural issues (one item on immigration, and one on the materialism-postmaterialism dimension, which specifically captures policy prioritization between environmental protection and economic growth).

2. The countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

TABLE 1
*Summary of common items in EES and CHES datasets
 used to construct dependent variables*

Policy dimension	Variable name	Common 11-point scales
Economic	<i>spendtax</i>	0-Fully in favour of raising taxes to increase public services 10-Fully in favour of cutting public services to cut taxes
	<i>redistribution</i>	0-Fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor 10-Fully opposed to the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor
	<i>interv_econ</i>	0-Fully in favour of state intervention in the economy 10-Fully opposed to state intervention in the economy
Sociocultural	<i>immigration</i>	0-Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration 10-Fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration
	<i>growth_v_envir</i>	0-Environmental protection should always take priority even at the cost of economic growth 10-Economic growth should always take priority even at the cost of environmental protection

TABLE 2
Summary of dependent variables

Policy dimension	Variable name	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Economic	<i>spendtax</i>	27998	-2.84	2.05	-7.6	0
	<i>redistribution</i>	28506	-2.88	1.99	-8.5	-0.2
	<i>interv_econ</i>	27574	-2.66	1.94	-8.4	0
Sociocultural	<i>immigration</i>	28223	-2.69	1.88	-8.5	-0.2
	<i>growth_v_envir</i>	28748	-2.83	2.04	-7.5	0

These five variables are not by any means exhaustive in terms of policy areas or value dimensions. Our choice is also guided by the availability of common items in the two datasets but also by thematic relevance to questions of economic policy and inequality, as well as new challenges related to globalization, such as immigration and threats to the environment.

Our main independent variable of interest (education) is operationalized in the form of a binary variable (0-1). Individuals who stopped their full-time education above the age of 20 (or are still studying) are assigned the value “1”; those who stopped their full-time education at a younger age are assigned the value “0”. This is the variable used in the 2014 European Election Study and can serve as a proxy measure of individuals that have received at least some tertiary-level education as opposed to those who have received only secondary-level education or less. The lack of tertiary-level education largely captures the societal segment in European societies that has become the most vulnerable to the effects of globalization and corresponds well to those that are often called “losers of globalization”, meaning those individuals that lack the necessary educational skills to successfully compete in an increasingly integrated global economy and feel threatened by social changes in European, and more broadly, Western societies.

To explore the congruence between government positions and respondents with no tertiary-level education we perform multilevel regressions on each of our five dependent variables due to the hierarchical nature of our data. Apart from education, we also include in the model some control variables, such as gender (male=0, female=1), age (continuous variable), interest in politics (4-point ordinal scale, rescaled from 0 to 1), and self-placement on the left-right ideological axis (11-point scale, rescaled from 0 to 1).

Furthermore, we include in the model four contextual variables that serve as control variables and investigate the direct effects of contextual factors: Gini coefficients to control for the level of inequality within each country (as used eg. by Avery, 2015), the percentage of GDP change between 2008 and 2014 and the percentage of unemployment in 2014 to control for the impact of the economic crisis (all of the above variables have been centred), as well as the position of the government parties (weighted according to the formula above) on the Economic Left-Right scale for the regressions on the economic dependent variables as well as their positions on the sociocultural GAL-TAN³ dimension using the Chapel Hill Expert Survey data for 2014.

To test our hypotheses concerning the moderating effect of contextual factors on the representation gap (H2, H4a, H4b), we create cross-level

3. Hooghe et al (2002) define GAL/TAN as green, alternative and libertarian positions versus traditional, authoritarian and nationalist positions.

interaction variables between education and the contextual factors, which we include in separate models.

4. FINDINGS

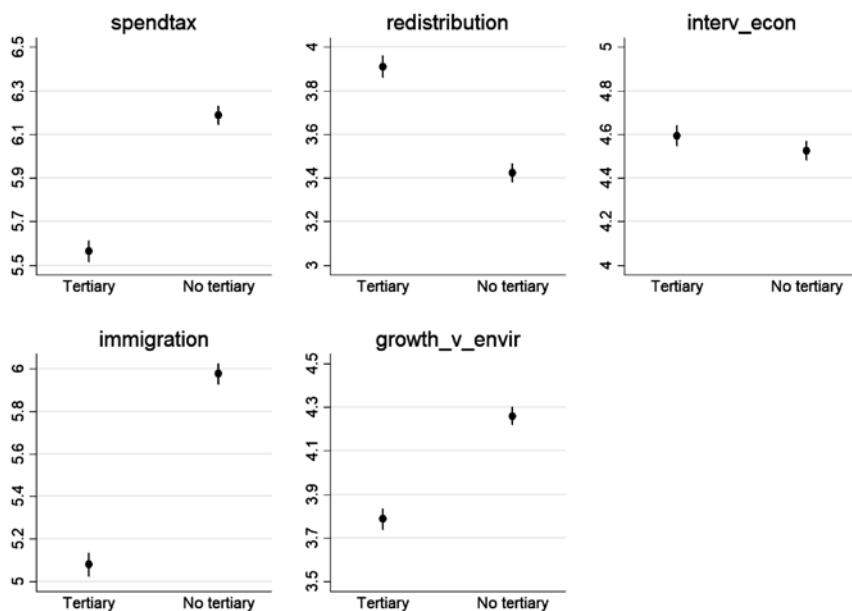
In Figure 1, we present the mean scores of the two educational groups across the five-issue dimensions to gauge the relative distance of preferences between the two groups before examining the degree of government-citizen congruence. There are some mixed patterns in the distribution of preferences across the three economic policy issues. Whereas, as expected, the less educated tend to be more in favour of redistribution (see *redistribution*⁴ issue), they also tend to be to the right of the more educated on the *spendtax* issue (cutting taxes vs. increasing public services), contrary to what we expected. For both issues, this pattern between the two groups is observed across most of the countries in the sample (see Tables A1 and A3 in the Appendix).⁵ On the *interv_econ* issue, the most educated are on average a bit to the right of the least educated, but the mean difference is not statistically significant. Conversely, the distribution of preferences on the two cultural policy issues is as one would expect. On *immigration* the least educated are in favour of more restrictive policies and on *growth_v_envir*, they tend to prioritize economic growth more than environmental protection.

A simple calculation of the means of our congruence measures by educational category (respondents with tertiary-level education and those without), once again across the (weighted) sample of all 28 countries, reveals some interesting contrasts between the tertiary-level education group and the no tertiary-level education group (see Figure 2). We see that in four out of the five policy issues (the three economic ones and *immigration*) the mean congruence score for respondents with tertiary-level education is higher compared to those with secondary-level education or lower. The point-biserial correlation coefficients between higher education and the first four policy congruence scores are relatively small but statistically significant (.081 for *redistribution*; .046 for *spendtax*; .041 for *interv_econ*; and .027 for *immigration*, all statistically significant at $p < .001$). On all four policy issues, there is a modest but clear representational gap along edu-

4. For the sake of brevity, from this point onward we refer to the dependent variables by using the abbreviated variable names in Tables 1 and 2 in italicized font.

5. The Appendix includes tables with the mean values of citizens' preferences on each issue dimensions in each country and tables with the corresponding government positions

FIGURE 1
*Policy preferences on five issue dimensions by education level– EU28
 (weighted sample)*



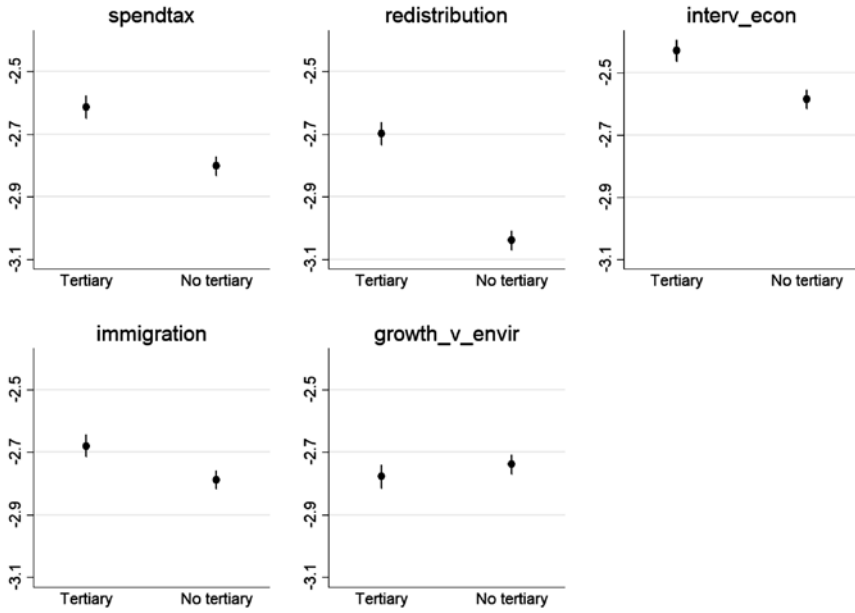
Note: Point estimates and error bars represent mean values and 95% confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Data: European Election Study 2014.

educational lines consistent with our first hypothesis (H1). Conversely, there seems to be no relationship between education level and the congruence score for the *growth_v_envir* issue.

Moving to the multilevel regressions (Table 3), we see that impact of education on congruence holds for the three economic issues even after the introduction of control variables. None of the other individual-level variables appears to affect congruence (except for the negative effect of interest in politics on congruence for the *interv_econ* issue) and, from the group of contextual variables, only the level of unemployment seems to have a direct negative effect on congruence, meaning that aggregate congruence is lower in countries with higher levels of unemployment and thus only partially confirming H3 (the directionality is the same but the effect is not statistically significant in the case of *interv_econ*).

FIGURE 2

Mean government-citizen congruence scores on five issue dimensions by education level– EU28 (weighted sample)



Note: Point estimates and error bars represent mean values and 95% confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the scales, see Table 2.

Data: European Election Study 2014 and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

TABLE 3
Government-voter congruence models across five issue dimensions

	<i>spendtax</i>		<i>redistribution</i>		<i>interv. econ</i>		<i>immigration</i>		<i>growth_v envir</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
	<i>Fixed effects</i>									
	-3.21*** (.683)	-2.95*** (.680)	-1.66*** (.600)	-1.72*** (.603)	-2.50*** (.385)	-2.09*** (.553)	-2.46*** (.249)	-2.07*** (.281)	-2.01*** (.280)	-1.54*** (.404)
Female	.061 (.056)	.062 (.056)	.048 (.043)	.048 (.043)	.158*** (.049)	.159*** (.049)	-.005 (.024)	-.005 (.024)	-.007 (.036)	-.008 (.036)
Age	-.109 (.092)	-.111 (.092)	.127* (.072)	.128* (.071)	.023 (.097)	.021 (.097)	.114 (.174)	.115 (.175)	.207*** (.098)	.209*** (.098)
Interest in politics	.003 (.214)	.004 (.214)	-.037 (.089)	-.037 (.089)	-.276*** (.090)	-.275*** (.090)	-.062 (.149)	-.064 (.149)	-.097 (.164)	-.099 (.162)
Left-right ideology	-.060 (.380)	-.061 (.380)	.272 (.400)	.273 (.400)	.011 (.198)	.011 (.197)	-.308 (.462)	-.308 (.461)	.563*** (.170)	.569*** (.169)
No tertiary education	-.138*** (.052)	-.900*** (.236)	-.234*** (.043)	-.154 (.194)	-.070* (.042)	-.325*** (.111)	-.069 (.050)	-.710*** (.167)	.118*** (.027)	-.346*** (.125)
GDP change (%) (centered)	-.018 (.020)	-.019 (.021)	-.014 (.020)	-.014 (.020)	-.015 (.012)	-.005 (.019)	.007 (.009)	.006 (.010)	-.009 (.011)	-.008 (.016)
Gini coef. (centered)	.534 (4.82)	.373 (4.58)	-2.41 (2.69)	-2.32 (2.72)	-1.86 (3.33)	-2.42 (3.32)	-1.75 (1.73)	-1.45 (1.88)	-2.17 (2.77)	-1.70 (2.90)
Unemployment (%) (centered)	-.063** (.030)	-.067** (.031)	-.093** (.032)	-.093*** (.033)	-.028 (.022)	-.014 (.036)	.008 (.016)	-.005 (.020)	-.049** (.020)	-.055** (.025)
Government Econ. L-R	.172 (.124)	.130 (.122)	-.142 (.088)	-.134 (.088)	.014 (.067)	-.076 (.088)				
Government GAL/TAN							-.023 (.050)	-.088** (.043)	-.175*** (.045)	-.275*** (.066)

<i>Cross-level interactions</i>									
GDPchange x No tertiary	.010 (.007)	.006 (.006)	-.005** (.002)	.000 (.004)	-.001 (.005)				
Gini coef. x No tertiary	-.223 (1.33)	.251 (1.50)	.480 (.641)	2.15 (1.75)	-.556 (1.21)				
Unemployment x No tertiary	.021 (.014)	.010 (.008)	-.007 (.005)	.020 (.015)	.002 (.007)				
Gov Econ. L-R x No tertiary	.115*** (.035)	-.026 (.033)	.053*** (.018)						
Gov GAL/TAN x No tertiary				.104*** (.029)	.089*** (.024)				
<i>Random-effect parameters: Country level</i>									
Variance (inter- cept)	.527 (.132)	.309 (.109)	.408 (.080)	.371 (.082)	.131 (.053)	.249 (.070)	.246 (.070)		
Variance (No tertiary)	.062 (.032)	.008 (.012)	.009 (.011)	.007 (.005)	.003 (.002)	.109 (.036)	.045 (.004)		
Covariance	-.009 (.058)	.017 (.034)	.014 (.033)	-.055 (.022)	-.031 (.016)	-.071 (.051)	-.033 (.015)		
AIC	84843.05	84839.05	85549.40	81464.64	81466.16	87316.47	87308.25	87299.45	87295.09
BIC	84955.55	84983.70	85662.07	81577.03	81610.66	87429.07	87453.02	87412.27	87440.14
Log pseudolike- lihood	-42407.53	-42401.53	-42760.70	-40718.32	-40715.08	-43644.24	-43636.13	-43635.72	-43629.54
N (individuals)	22825	22825	23113	22644	22644	22988	22988	23354	23354
N (countries)	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28

Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

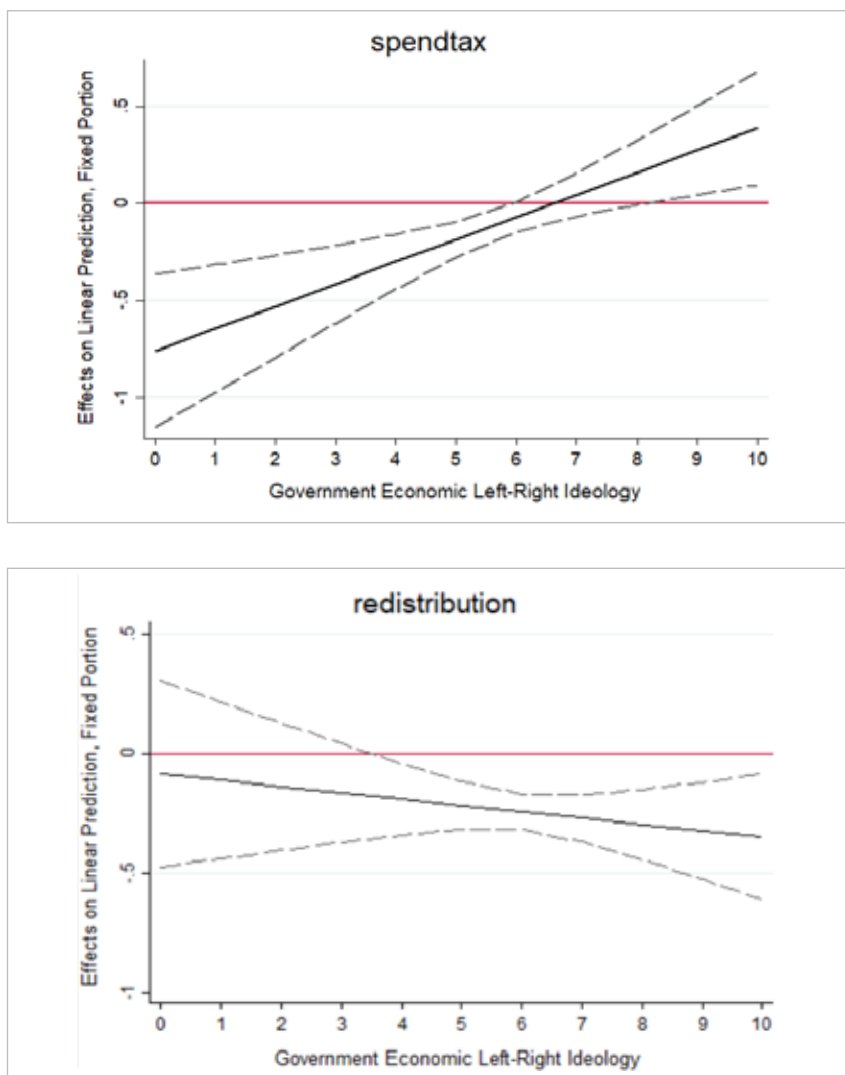
Data: European Election Study 2014 and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

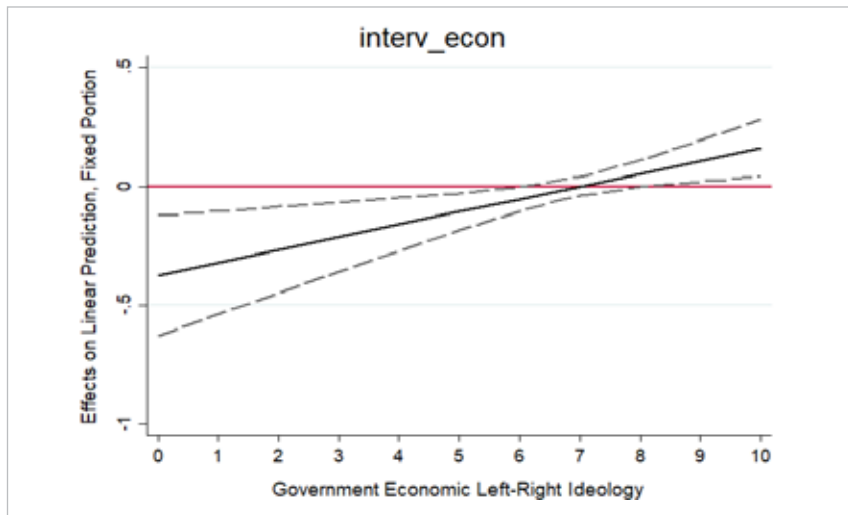
The inclusion in the models of cross-level interactions between education and the four contextual variables for testing H2 and H4a produces mixed findings. Except for the statistically significant interaction between education and GDP change on *interv_econ* congruence (contrary to H2, the negative impact of low education on congruence increases in the least affected countries), the interaction terms are non-significant thus failing to confirm H2. The interaction terms between education and government economic ideology also fail to produce consistent results. Contrary to H4a, on the *spendtax* and *interv_econ* issues, lower education levels tend to have a negative effect on government-citizen congruence when the economic ideology of the government is more left-wing (Figure 3), even though this is to be expected given that the *spendtax* issue individuals in almost every country tend to be to the right of their more educated compatriots. Conversely, on the *redistribution* issue, the negative effect of low education increases and becomes significant where the economic ideology of the government is more right-wing, in line with H4a, even though the interaction term itself is not statistically significant.

Our models for the two cultural policy issues reveal some interesting patterns. In our baseline model for *immigration* (Table 3) the effect of low education remains in the expected direction but it is not significant. Conversely, government-citizen congruence on the *growth_v_envir* policy issue reveals that the fixed effect of lack of tertiary-level education on congruence is positive when no cross-level interactions are included in the model. This finding is in line with the preliminary association between the two that was observed in Figure 1 without controls and is the only finding that runs counter to our expectations in H1, showing that the effect of tertiary-level education varies by policy area but on the other issues that are more directly associated with the dilemmas emerging from growing integration, the hypothesis concerning the representation gap largely holds. Furthermore, this is the only issue where an association between congruence and ideology emerges at the individual level, with rightward ideological tendencies having a positive association with congruence. In this case, citizens with right-wing views that tend to prioritize growth over environmental concerns (environmental concerns are typically associated with left-wing ideological orientations) tend to be more congruent with government policy stances within the EU countries. Finally, the depth of the economic crisis, as measured by the level of unemployment but not GDP change, appears to produce direct effects on levels of overall congruence (something that was not observed on the *immigration* issue). Even

FIGURE 3

Conditional marginal effects of no tertiary education on economic issue dimensions by government economic ideology





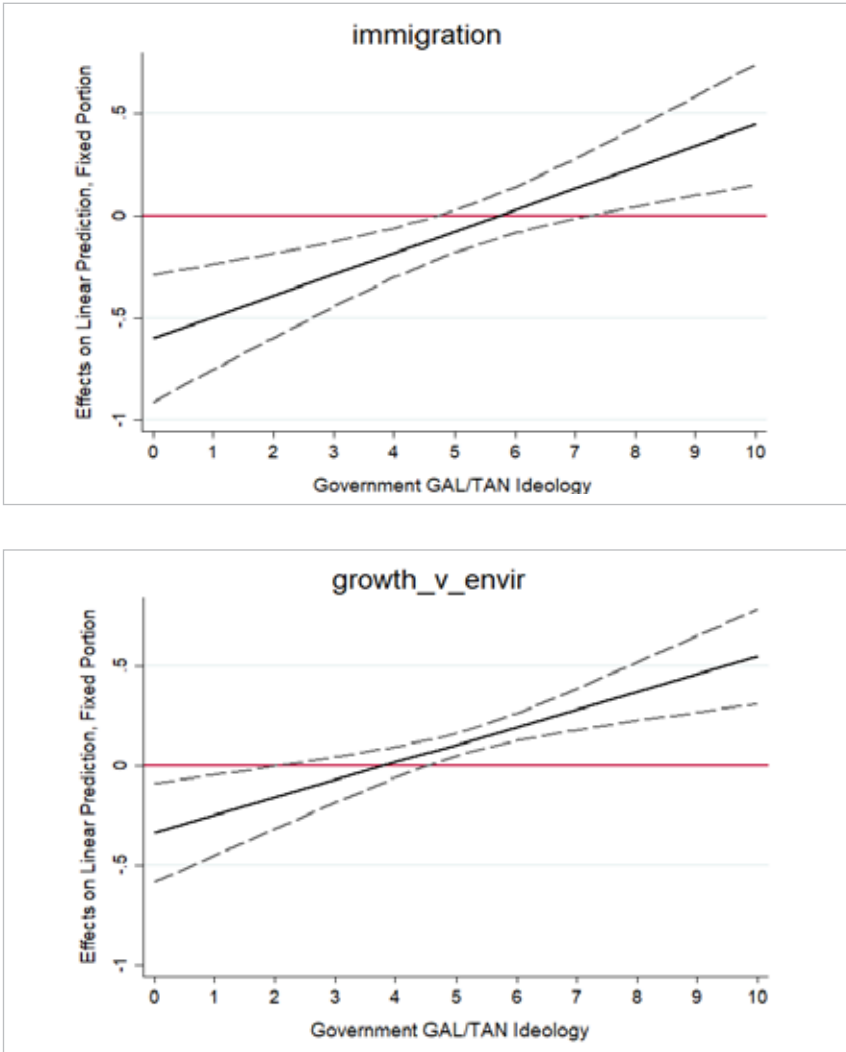
Note: Dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals. All other independent variables are held at their mean values.

Data: European Election Study 2014 and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

though this relationship was expected more for economic policy issues (H3), it seems that in the countries that have been suffering from high levels of unemployment, governments appear to be more out of step with the preferences of their citizens on the policy issue of prioritizing the economy over the environment.

To test H4b, we run the models again adding cross-level interactions as we did for the economic policy issues. This time the results fully confirm H4b as the effect of low education on congruence for both issues is negative when the ideology of the government on the cultural dimension is located toward the libertarian end of the spectrum and it becomes positive when the ideology of the government is closer at the traditionalist/authoritarian end (Figure 4). Perhaps one of the most interesting sets of findings of the present study concerns the moderating effect of government ideology. Except for the issue of *redistribution*, low education individuals appear to be less congruent than highly educated individuals with government policy positions and priorities on both economic and cultural issues when the government ideology is more left-leaning (economically or culturally), whereas the reverse is true when the government ideology is more right-leaning.

FIGURE 4
Conditional marginal effects of no tertiary education on cultural issue dimensions by government ideology



Note: Dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals. All other independent variables are held at their mean values.

Data: European Election Study 2014 and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

5. CONCLUSIONS

At a time when the socioeconomic conditions of living in many European countries deteriorated due to the emergence of a severe economic crisis (and in many of those has yet to return to pre-crisis levels), the matter of growing socioeconomic inequalities and developing disparities in overall life chances is more relevant than ever. This research focused on an innovative comparative analysis of policy congruence between European governments and voters, assessing how much the difference in levels of educational attainment are related to unequal policy representation measured in terms of government-citizen policy congruence. The findings supported for the most part the hypothesis that education is a significant factor in the creation of a representation gap in European societies between the low and the highly educated, and thus the more and less equipped individuals to deal with the changes and challenges of globalization.

The aim of this article was also to assess if the economic context and the ideology of the government had a relevant moderating effect on the relationship between education and congruence as well as direct effects on overall congruence levels. The results were mixed. In the latter case, only unemployment rates are associated with lower levels of overall congruence between government and voters whereas changes in the size of the economy and levels of economic equality seem to have no direct effect. The interpretation of this finding is not straightforward but can be related to the fact that unemployment often is the most tangible facet of economic hardship when a large part of the population is confronted with the problem inside their households or in their close social environment. The ideology of the government also had no direct effect on congruence levels, except for the issue of prioritizing economic growth over the environment, where culturally conservative governments increase overall levels of congruence.

In terms of the moderating effects of economic conditions and government ideology on the association between education levels and government-citizen policy congruence, our hypotheses are again only partially confirmed and in some cases wholly contradicted. The negative impact of low education on government-citizen congruence on the question of income redistribution and the issue of priorities regarding increases in taxation for providing public service is slightly higher (but the interaction term is not statistically significant) in countries that experienced (deep) recessions, whereas the trend is the opposite on the issue of state intervention in the economy. However, overall there seems to be no moderating effect

of economic contextual factors on the representation gap. Conversely, the moderating effect of government ideology appears to be much more important but not always in the expected direction. Except for the issue of redistribution, left-leaning governments appear to accentuate rather than decrease the representation gap between the low and highly educated.

In summary, we argue that there are strong indications that on economic policy dimensions - which are more directly associated with the constraints faced by the national government and affect more profoundly the life chances of citizens in European democracies - there is indeed a modest but clear representation gap between the “winners” and “losers” of globalization captured via the proxy variable of education. On cultural issues, lower educated groups appear to be better represented, but mostly when right-leaning governments are in power, explaining perhaps to some extent the successful challenge to mainstream liberal politics mounted by right-wing populist parties across Europe. However, further research will be required to determine additional contextual factors that mediate these effects, as well as determine the extent to which this representation is ephemeral and associated with the recently experienced economic and political conjuncture (Eurozone and migration crisis) or whether it points to the future of political representation in Europe and other Western democracies.

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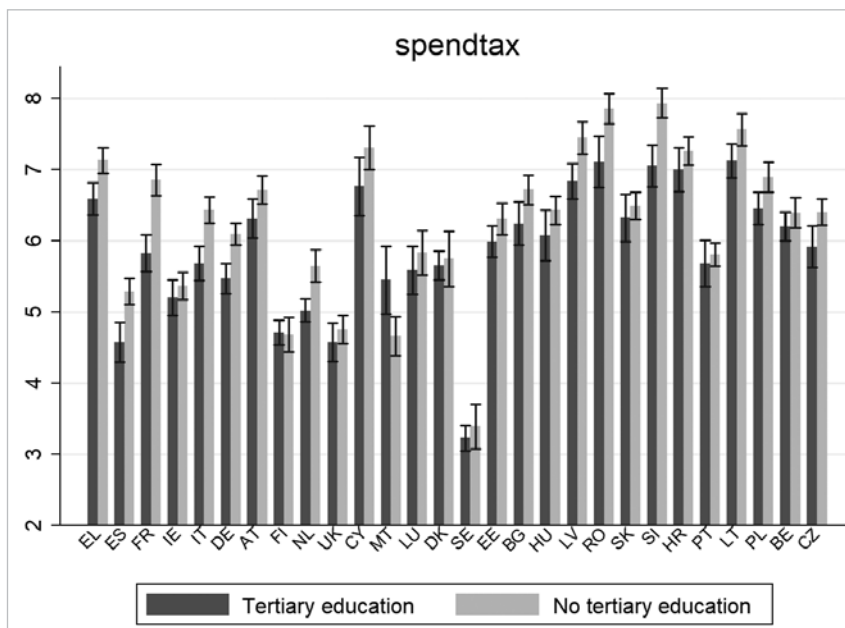
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APPENDIX

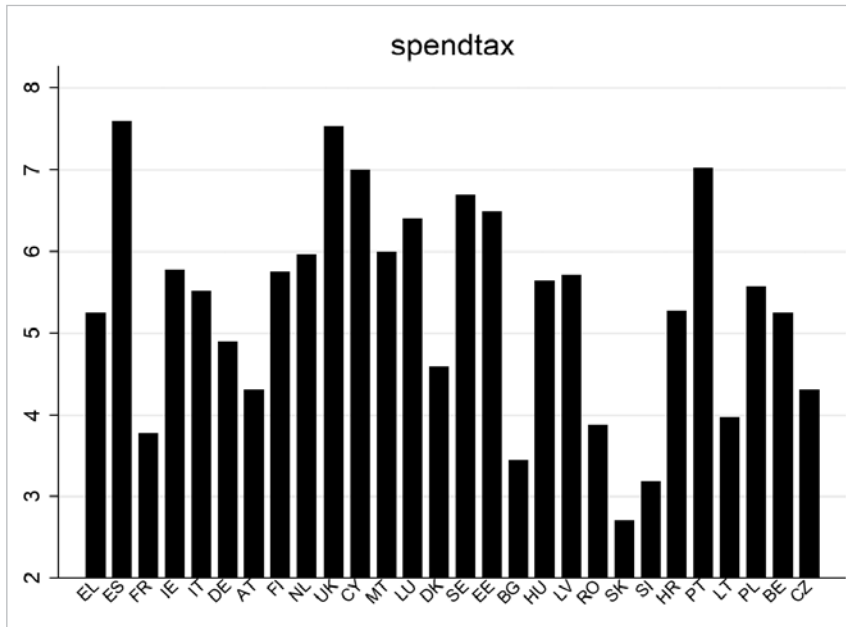
FIGURE A1
*Mean values of citizens' policy preferences
 on spendtax issue dimension by country*



Note: Error bars 95% represent confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: European Election Study 2014.

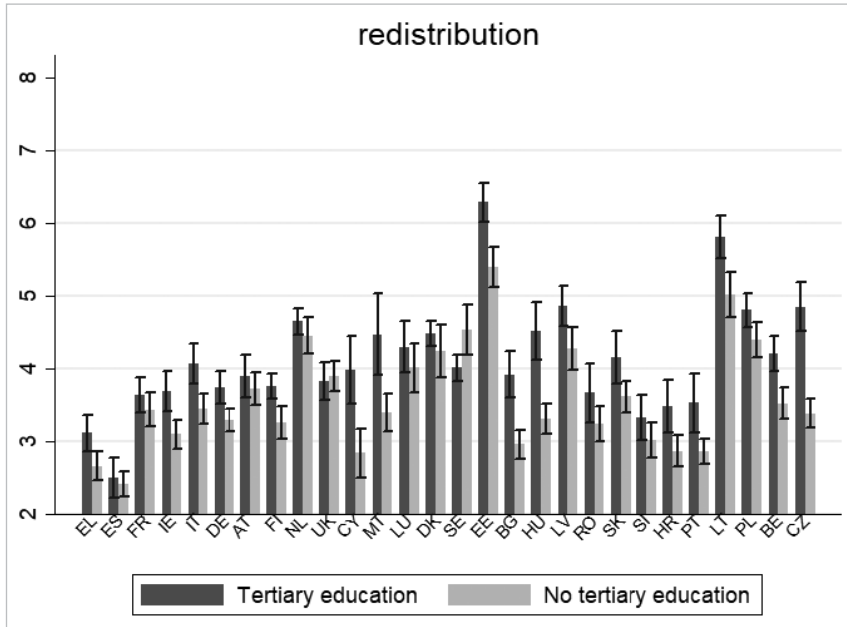
FIGURE A2
 Government positions on spendtax issue dimension



Note: For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

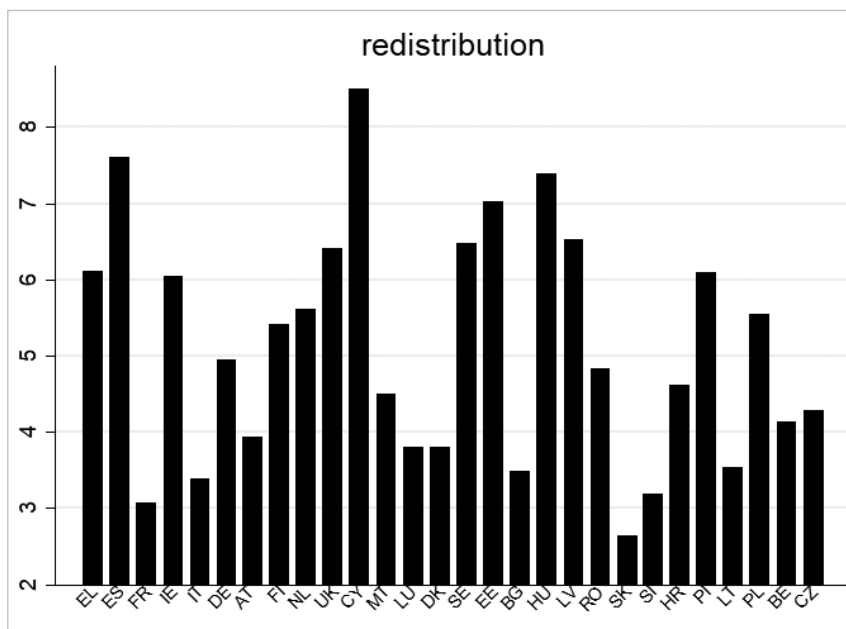
FIGURE A3
Mean values of citizens' policy preferences on redistribution issue dimension by country



Note: Error bars 95% represent confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: European Election Study 2014.

FIGURE A4
Government positions on redistribution issue dimension

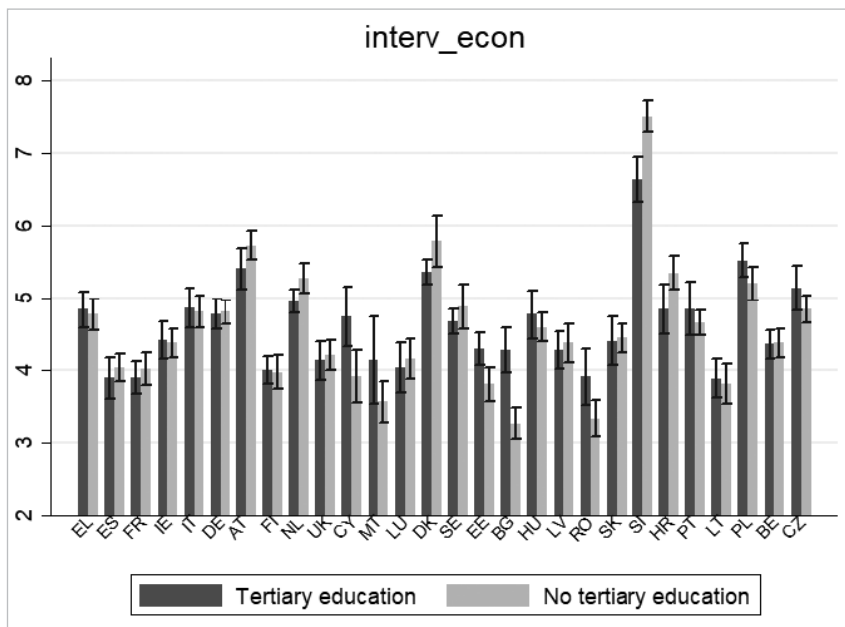


Note: For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

FIGURE A5

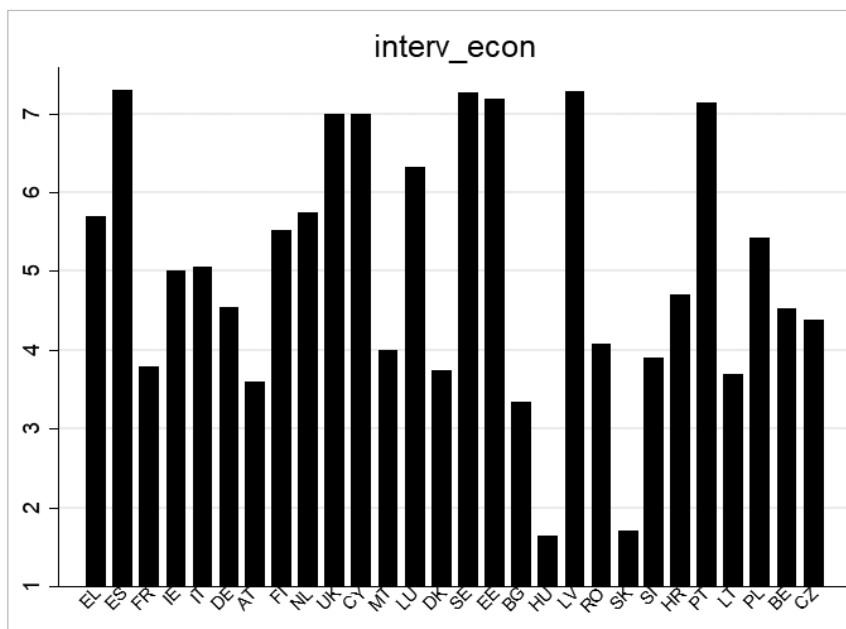
Mean values of citizens' policy preferences on interv_econ issue dimension by country



Note: Error bars 95% represent confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: European Election Study 2014.

FIGURE A6
Government positions on interv_econ issue dimension

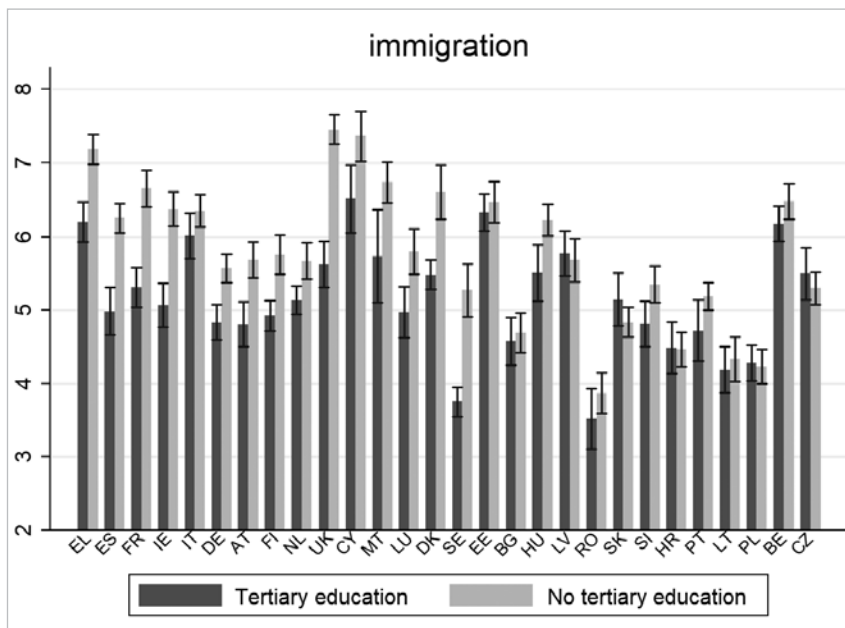


Note: For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

FIGURE A7

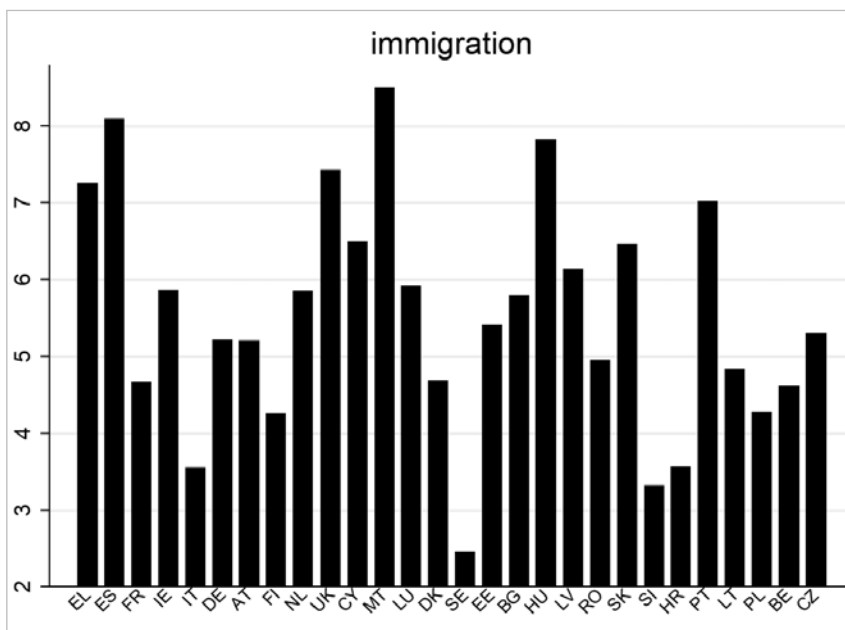
Mean values of citizens' policy preferences on immigration issue dimension by country



Note: Error bars 95% represent confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: European Election Study 2014.

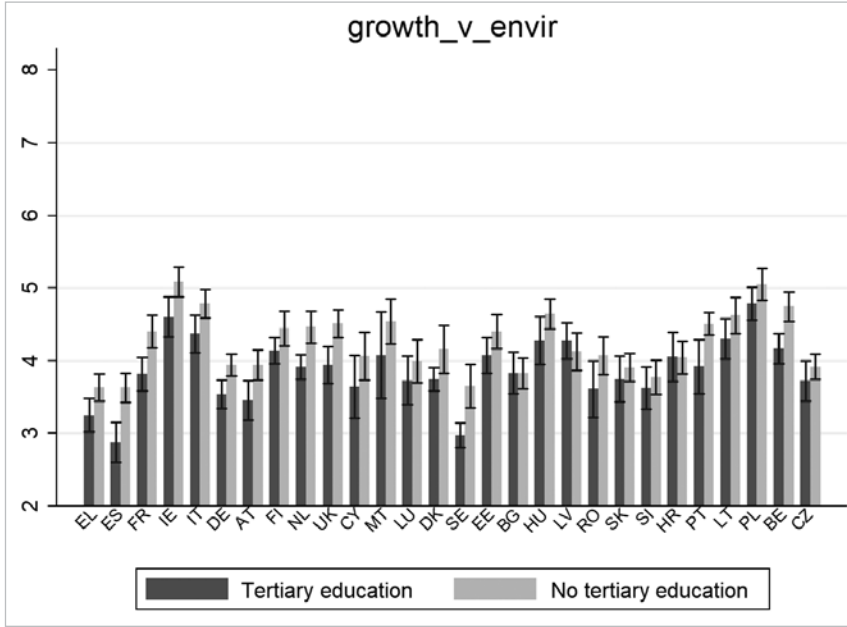
FIGURE A8
Government positions on immigration issue dimension



Note: For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.

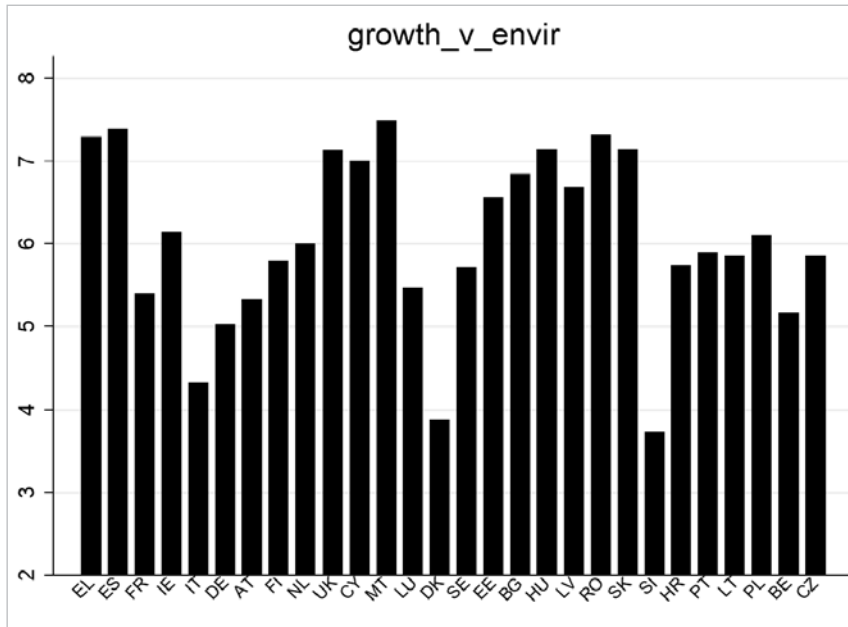
FIGURE A9
Mean values of citizens' policy preferences on growth_v_envir issue dimension by country



Note: Error bars 95% represent confidence intervals. For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: European Election Study 2014.

FIGURE A10
Government positions on growth_v_envir issue dimension



Note: For the interpretation of the 0-10 scales, see Table 1. Country abbreviations: EL-Greece, ES-Spain, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, DE-Germany, AT-Austria, FI-Finland, NL-Netherlands, UK-United Kingdom, CY-Cyprus, MT-Malta, LU-Luxembourg, DK-Denmark, SE-Sweden, EE-Estonia, BG-Bulgaria, HU-Hungary, LV-Latvia, RO-Romania, SK-Slovakia, SI-Slovenia, HR-Croatia, PT-Portugal, LT-Lithuania, PL-Poland, BE-Belgium, CZ-Czech Republic.

Data: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014.