UNEQUAL DEMOCRACIES

Working paper n°42

March, 2023

Forging support: how party cues shape fiscal preferences

Max Joosten (University of Geneva)
max.joosten@unige.ch

FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

ABSTRACT:

In the empirical literature, the question whether fiscal austerity is unpopular or not is much discussed. One line of research shows that consolidation has negative effects, ranging from declines in approval ratings to vote abstention. Another demonstrates that, in fact, re-election chances are not harmed by governments implementing austerity. Both sides are limited in at least two regards. First, they do not allow for the possibility that public opinion is heavily cued about the necessity to reduce government debts and budget deficits. Second, the literature is limited in its extent to which it considers heterogeneity across income groups. I argue that addressing these two limitations sheds new light on this empirical dispute. I find that high-income voters are more prone to respond to their party's austerity cues demanding a smaller government budget. I match cross-country over time individual level survey data on fiscal preferences with data on party manifesto's attention to austerity for 60 country-years. I conclude by suggesting that as high-incomes are more likely to turn out at elections, they are less prone to punish governments. But because low-income voters are less adjusted, they punish mainstream parties by turning to other parties or abstain from voting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This work was supported by the European Research Council under Grant agreement no. 741538. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the SPERI Doc/Post-Doc Colloquium at the University of Geneva on 24 November, the Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress on 4-5 February 2021 and the European Political Science Association Annual Conference on June 24-25, 2021. I thank participants of these seminars for their constructive feedbacks and in particular Brian Burgoon, Nathalie Giger, Jonas Pontusson, and Thomas Sattler.

1. Introduction

Following welfare state expansion and claiming credit for doing so in the post-war period, since the 1970s structural pressures on government finances have pushed governments to retrench. Retrenchment was argued to be unpopular because many citizens had become dependent on the welfare state. Following these developments, Pierson (1996) showed that in this era of 'permanent austerity' the new politics of the welfare state were all about avoiding blame. It has not been exclusively right-wing political parties enacting retrenchment: scholars have argued that (centre) left and right parties have converged on their economic policy agenda prioritizing short term belt-tightening (Lynch, 2019) and that there are hardly any differences between left and right parties implementing austerity packages (Hübscher, 2016). As of today, 'permanent austerity' has been the dominant policy paradigm (Hall, 1993) for about fifty years. If we accept this to be true, this we can expect this to have had implications for its popularity. Classic models of mass preference formation would indeed lead us to expect that such permanent one-sided cues shapes at least some of its popularity (Zaller, 1992).

A distinct line of (empirical) literature has emerged that centres around the question whether austerity is popular among citizens or not. On the one hand, there is work demonstrating that austerity causes vote abstention and increased votes for non-mainstream parties (Hübscher et al., 2021). Moreover, it is shown that directly after governments announce spending cuts, their approval rates decline (Jacques & Haffert, 2021). This explains, subsequently, why governments strategically plan their austerity packages not too close to elections to avoid backlash (Hübscher & Sattler, 2017; König & Wenzelburger, 2017). On the other hand, there is empirical evidence that shows that implementing austerity does not harm a government's probability to be voted out of office (Alesina et al., 2012; Alesina et al., 2020). Neither of the two lines of research discuss the possibility that preferences might be endogenous to the political environment, which has been dominated by permanent austerity. A recent exception is Bansak et al. (2021), who demonstrate that the support for (different aspects of) austerity packages strongly depends on whether your preferred political party supports it. This opens up a relevant, yet understudied, alternative explanation for austerity's popularity: that support for it can be manufactured.

By including the framing of policies by political parties, the current study attempts to contribute to the literature on austerity's popularity by exploring whether this has happened. I expect party's positions on fiscal austerity to shape citizens' fiscal preferences accordingly by

reducing support for government spending and increasing support for spending cuts and taxation. By emphasizing specific subsets of considerations, namely the risks of government debt and the urgency to reduce public borrowing, these become more salient for voters. This can materialize either through the position of the respondent's preferred party or through a cross-party consensus in which no alternatives are offered. I furthermore expect that this differs across left and right party families, with left parties emphasizing tax-based consolidation and right parties promoting a spending-based austerity agenda. Finally, because high-income voters more likely to receive the cues and low-income voters are more likely to resist it, I expect that high-income voters adapt their preferences more strongly than low- and middle-income voters.

Empirically, I test these hypotheses matching individual level data on spending and taxation preferences from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) with data on party positions towards austerity measured by the Manifesto Data Project (MPD). The results show that austerity cues from one's own party makes citizens demand a smaller government budget: they want less overall spending, less taxation and more spending cuts. With some (notable) exceptions, there is limited evidence that this varies by party family. The effect sizes are largest for high-income voters, suggesting they are more likely to shift their attitudes. Linking to the empirical debate on austerity's popularity, my results suggest that if high-income are more likely to turn out to vote and they adjust to the austerity paradigm of their own party, they might not punish parties at elections. On the other hand because lower-income voters adjust less, they abstain or turn to non-mainstream parties. This way both lines of research might be right. The remainder of the paper consists of a discussion of mass opinion formation, how this relates to the discussion on austerity and across party families, and a framework for understanding heterogeneity across income groups. This is followed by a discussion on the data and methods, an empirical section testing the hypotheses and finally a discussion of the results, how this contributes to current literature and its implications.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1 Preference formation

A classical interpretation of power is that 'A may exercise power over B by exercising power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants.' (Lukes, 1974, p. 27). This interpretation assumes a conflict of interests between A and B, but – as Lukes (1974) continues – 'the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from

arising in the first place' (p. 27). Such exercising of power entails shaping the wants and needs of citizens to the extent that they believe that their interests align with those of that in power. Indeed, Dahl (1961) wrote that leaders do not 'merely respond to the preferences of constituents; leaders also shape preferences' (p. 164). There are different ways in which to interpret the shaping of preferences and although it is difficult – if not impossible – to distinguish one from the other it is a useful framework to think about preference formation. On the one hand, it can be positively conceived of as part of the healthy working of democracy where elites 'educate' citizens. Education takes place when elites share interests with their recipients and they provide arguments on the merits of their position (Esaiasson & Wlezien, 2017). Communication and the quality thereof can then positively shape the quality of democracy. However when elites ''manipulate' citizens, this may harm the quality of democracy. This negative interpretation is that (some) voters might be impressionable or gullible and elites have the potential to manipulate preferences (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 519)[1]. The latter takes place when interests between representative and recipient diverge and involve the 'structuring of alternatives that constrains the choices of the actor subject to power' (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 519).

Both education and manipulation can be achieved by political parties by framing their positions in the political environment[2]. Framing may relate to variation in emphasis or salience in the discussion. There are alternative forms this can take. It might involve 'equivalence framing', which present the same information in different wording, and 'emphasis framing', which involves emphasizing different subsets of considerations, leading subjects to select some considerations over others when forming their opinions (Druckman, 2001, pp. 228 - 231). For example, a party can highlight how increased social spending increases taxation or how it can help the less well-off have a decent living. It is true that many actors attempt to frame the political environment, but it is argued that political parties 'should be given centre stage in understanding processes of public opinion formation' (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014, p. 132). Much of the early scholarship in the study of elite cues and preference formation argue indeed that party's positions shape voters' preferences (Campbell et al., 1980; Jacoby, 1988; Zaller, 1992). More recently, there is support for these arguments using more sophisticated research designs (Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018; Lenz, 2013; Ray, 2003; Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021). Among many mechanisms the direct relation between

[1] See also (Disch, 2011, p. 101).

[2] Defined as the 'totality of politically relevant information to which citizens are exposed' (Kuklinski et al., 2001, p. 411)

voter and party is highlighted, for example those arguing that citizens identify first and foremost with a party and then they adopt the preferences of that party when they learn about their positions (Campbell et al., 1980; Lenz, 2013) or those suggesting that political elites can actively shape the preferences of their voters (Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021).

2.2 Austerity

Austerity is a case in point because clearly power is at stake and it has both unequal distributive effects (Blyth, 2013) and is subject to various ideological frames (Bremer & McDaniel, 2020). Indeed, there are many ways of talking about public debts and deficits (Barnes & Hicks, 2018). Elites can emphasize how other countries have experienced major economic difficulties related to their debt or they can emphasize Keynesian policy responses. Moreover, austerity is often depoliticized and reduced to a technical issue on which there cannot be a discussion beyond whether one wants to cut the budget of one policy area over the other. Relatedly, even though the historical record of deficit reducing interventions suggests otherwise (Devries et al., 2011), reducing deficits does not essentially have to involve budget cuts, but can also be achieved through tax increases. In this sense, power is exercised through ‘confining the scope of decision-making to relatively “safe” issues (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, p. 948). From emphasizing the tightened limits of what is possible for the budget through an austerity frame, a reduction in spending and/or an increase in taxation would logically follow.

There is some evidence that suggests that austerity frames shape preferences. Barnes and Hicks (2018) demonstrate that media and elites have an important role in 'making austerity popular'. If citizens are primed by experts' and politicians' opinion on the consequences of reducing debt, they tend to shift their opinions accordingly. Because the information to form preferences on debts and deficits is never provided neutrally, they argue, citizens opinions are changeable and 'perhaps malleable' (Barnes & Hicks, 2021). Similarly, Ferrara et al. (2021) show that exposure to different interpretations of the macroeconomy can help forging support for a country's economic strategy. The political environment is thus essential to understanding fiscal preferences of citizens and, importantly, political parties have an essential role in shaping this discourse and mobilizing support for a country's growth model (Baccaro et al., 2022; Baccaro & Pontusson, 2016; Blyth & Matthijs, 2017).

Related to the previous discussion on preference formation and the centre stage parties should be given, Bansak et al. (2021) show that party cues exert significant influence

over the extent to which citizens support austerity packages. The closer you are to the party that endorses the package, the more likely you are to support this package. Therefore the first hypothesis expects that:

H1: All other things constant, voters adapt their fiscal preferences to the austerity positions of parties

Alternative to voters adapting to their own party, a second possibility would be that voters adapt to the overall tenor of the political discussion. Austerity has defined the post-Great Recession political economy and centre-left and centre-right parties in Europe have agreed that reducing government spending and increasing government taxation to cut the budget deficit should be the prime response to the economic crisis (Bremer & McDaniel, 2020). Convergence on the economic policy agenda, however, dates back further than this post-crisis consensus as globalization pressures have led parties to converge (Ezrow & Hellwig, 2014; Lynch, 2019). If 'virtually all communications take the same side of a given issue' and 'there are no cueing messages to alert people that the policy was inconsistent with their values' (Zaller, 1992, pp. 97 - 98) we would expect citizens to increase support for that mainstream policy. Periods of elite depolarization on topics such as social welfare policies or income redistribution have been argued to be linked to mass public depolarization (Adams, De Vries, et al., 2012; Adams, Green, et al., 2012). In a similar vein, O'Grady (2022) demonstrates that following bi-partisan, sustained and one-sided anti-welfare discourse in the UK, public opinion has changed accordingly. Bipartisan convergence, in two-party systems, makes mass opinion much more likely to change (Amsalem & Zoizner, 2022; Druckman et al., 2013). Austerity policies are relevant here too as left and right parties have been equally likely to implement austerity packages (Hübscher, 2016).

A counter-argument would be that opinion change is more likely in cases when there is partisan elite disagreement and debate (Dancey & Goren, 2010). Citizens embrace the claims made by the parties they support, but resist those of parties they disagree with already (Cavaillé & Neundorf, 2022; Zaller, 1992, pp. 100 - 113). The logic behind this line of argument is that polarized issues receive much media attention and those issues on which there is broad party consensus receive less media attention. This may apply to specific issues, but I argue is less applicable to the larger paradigm of austerity politics that is discussed in this paper. When partisan debates focus on exactly what policy area to cut spending in, by how much taxation should increase or by what deadline the government budget should be

balanced, we can expect many cues that signal the necessity for overall lower spending or higher taxation. Therefore in periods where austerity is consensual across the pollical system I expect that citizens on average are 'more austere' themselves. This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: All other things constant, voters adapt their fiscal preferences to the austerity positions of cross-party consensus

2.3 Left versus Right austerity

Emphasis framing should impact left and right party families differently in terms of how government debt came about, who is primarily responsible for it, and who should pay for its reduction. On the political right, parties prioritize decent government finances as a way to restore competitiveness and inspire business confidence (Blyth, 2013). On the political left, not dealing with government debt would potentially place a greater burden on future tax-payers and limit state capacity to act in the long-run, as a greater deal of the budget would be devoted to paying interests (Bremer & McDaniel, 2020). While both may be justifiable in their own terms, and even though the left and the right hardly differ in their implementation of austerity (Hübscher, 2016), these party families have different constituencies and ideologies that are likely to induce different answers to the question ‘who should pay for borrowing reduction’. In turn I expect this to manifest in the cues that parties send to motivate their consolidation efforts. In other words, parties might agree on the end (a specific fiscal target or net budgetary effect), but disagree on the means to get there (reducing public expenditure versus increasing taxation). Left parties disproportionally represent low-income and lower-skilled citizens that might be more dependent on government spending. I expect them to be more likely to protect these constituencies and call for higher (proportional) taxation to deal with budget deficits. Right wing parties, on the other hand, might frame the problem in terms of excessive government spending. This makes these parties more likely to advocate spending cuts, while keeping taxation constant (Boix, 1998; Castles & Mair, 1984).

I therefore expect to find empirical support for the following set of hypotheses:

H3: All other things constant, when left-wing (right-wing) parties adopt austerity positions, left-wing (right-wing) voters demand tax-based (spending-based) consolidation voters adapt their fiscal preferences to the austerity positions of cross-party consensus

2.4 Heterogeneity across income groups

It is well-established that mass preferences are sensitive to elite signals, but there is not much research studying heterogeneity in attitudinal adaptation across socio-economic groups of citizens. Indeed, prominent work finds that preferences of groups move in tandem over time (Adams, De Vries, et al., 2012; O'Grady, 2022; Page & Shapiro, 1992, pp. 289 - 320; Soroka & Wlezien, 2010, pp. 145 - 167). If this is true, there is little room for diverging patterns. However, this is surprising if we acknowledge the basic political economic expectation that variation in economic context shapes preferences differently across income groups (Meltzer & Richard, 1981). Following Zaller (1992)'s model of mass opinion change involving cue reception and cue acceptance is it possible to hypothesize heterogeneity in terms of income (Joosten, 2022).

In terms of receiving cues, we know that this is shaped by whether someone is attentive to the political environment, is aware of it and/or has higher levels of political knowledge (Druckman & Lupia, 2000). This is relevant insofar as income is positively correlated with political knowledge or attention, which is previously demonstrated (Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Downs, 1957; Elkjær, 2020; Elkjær & Iversen, 2020; Erikson, 2015; Iversen & Soskice, 2015; Schlozman et al., 2012). Second, citizens are rarely faced with neutral facts about the economy as elites have extended influence on shaping the complex reality (Bisgaard & Slothuus, 2018). Elites might shape the media reporting on the economy to be more in line with their own views. Because there is an underrepresentation of politicians from a working-class background (Carnes, 2012), it is perhaps unsurprising that media reporting of economic news disproportional attention to issues applying to affluent citizens at the expense of issues relevant to low-income citizens Jacobs et al. (2021). In this light, it is relevant to distinguish the' economy from 'my' economy comparing income groups (Killick, 2022). A discursive context centred around cutting unemployment benefits will surely have different attitudinal impact on someone that is materially dependent on this compared to someone that is not. The latter person, conversely, will be more susceptible to framing of this in terms of the sustainability of the government budget. Relatedly, elites might want to influence those voters that turn out to vote in the next election (cf 'anticipatory representation', Mansbridge, 2003). If these are the affluent (Flavin, 2012), they might be targeted by elite influence.

In terms of accepting cues, I expect to find similar patterns although argued from the perspective of low-income voters. Cavaillé and Neundorf (2022) study the intersection of material interests, measured as substantial changes in a respondent's labour income or

changes in employment status, and the political environment. The authors argue that some policy issues are more 'important' to some groups than others. For those experiencing economic hardship, spending cuts might be more important than for those less reliable on government spending. Following from variation in importance, resistance to elite cues is higher for important attitudes (Boninger et al., 1995). From this follows that those experiencing economic hardship do not update their preferences, while those not personally affected are more likely to change their opinions to elite discourse.

H4: All other things constant, high-income voters adapt their fiscal preferences more strongly to the austerity positions of parties compared to middle- and low-income voters

3. Data and Methods

To empirically test the expectations as outlined above, I rely on three survey waves from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), covering the period 1996 – 2016. The main analyses distinguish between spending and taxation preferences for three income groups, but these data allow me to further inspect effects for different policy areas and tax subjects in the supplementary analyses. These individual level data are combined with party positions towards austerity as gathered by the Manifesto Data Project (MPD). The main analyses cover roughly 35,000 individuals across 30 countries. The included countries are Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Switzerland, Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, Lithuania, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United States[3]. Some countries are included in all three waves, some in two or just one. This resulted in a maximum of 60 country-years with positions of 190 unique parties. The respective regression tables report on the exact number of respondents and country-years per analysis. Some country-years miss data on some of the variables and are therefore excluded from the analyses. See Appendix B1 for a list of countries and years used.

3.1 Independent variable

My independent variable is party attention towards different aspects related to austerity taken from the Manifesto Project Database (MPD) (Volkens et al., 2021). The MPD uses content

[3] I excluded Georgia, Russia, Turkey and South Africa from the analyses as I do not expect conventional left-right partisan differences in the political system. The results are robust to their inclusion.

analysis to code the percentage of quasi-sentences in party manifesto's devoted to specific issues. To measure party's position on austerity, I use the indicator that is closest to this concept: ‘economic orthodoxy’. This indicator focuses on the need for 'economically healthy government policy making' which includes calls for: reduction of budget deficits; retrenchment in crisis; thrift and savings in the face of economic hardship; support for traditional economic institutions such as stock market and banking system; and support for strong currency. This variable reflects fiscal prudence and dealing with the government’s budget through spending and taxation policies related to fiscal debt and deficits and therefore captures ‘relevant aspects of an austerity agenda’ (Kraft, 2017, p. 1438).

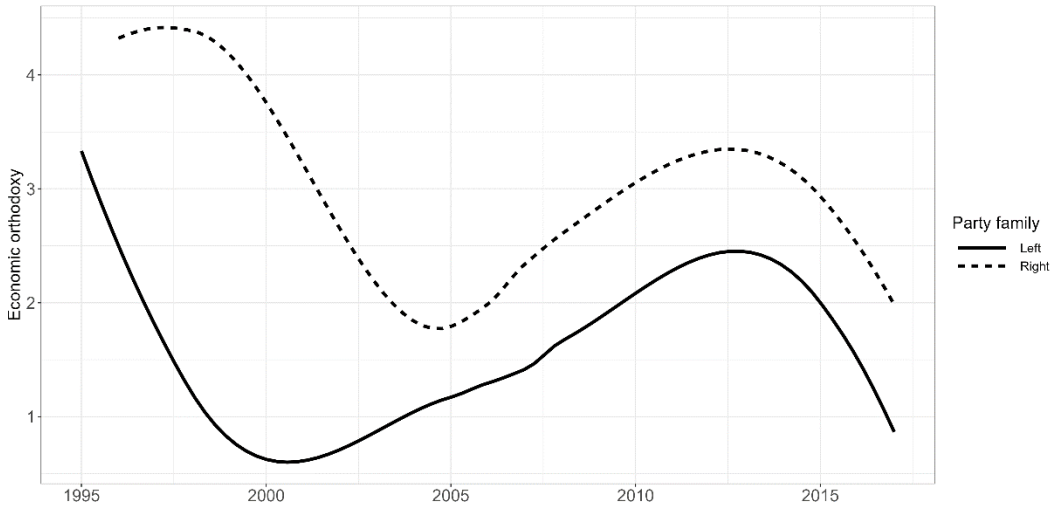
For the main analyses voters are linked to their own party through the party affiliation variable in the ISSP. As elections do not match perfectly with the ISSP's survey waves, I used linear interpolation in the missing years to estimate how relative attention changes between elections (following Schakel and Burgoon (2022)). This assumes that party positions gradually shift from election to election. Party positions are lagged one year before the measure of individual preferences. Similarly, for measuring consensus across parties in a given country-year, I estimate average positions of all parties combined, with party positions weighted by seat share in parliament before the elections[4]. Thus, a party with no seat in parliament before the election, has no weight in the average position of that country-year.

Finally, I use the party-family variable that is available in the MPD to group left and right political parties to study the effects of left-wing austerity on left-wing voters and right-wing austerity on right-wing voters. Left parties are those that are social-democratic, socialist and egologist parties, right-wing parties are liberal, conservative and nationalist parties. Left and right consensus is weighted in the same way as the overall consensus, but then only using parties that fall in either party family. Figure 1 shows the weighted average austerity positions by left and right parties for the countries that are used in the analyses. The figure shows that there is substantial variation across years and across left and right parties, while both seem to roughly move in tandem with more austere positions in the mid-1990s and following the financial crisis post-2010.

[4] In the literature polarization (as the opposite of consensus) is often measured not as the mean, but as the standard deviation. This makes sense when comparing, as most of these papers do, left-right polarization among parties and among citizens. It makes, however, less sense in my case. Low polarization might mean both consensus on high levels of austerity as well as consensus on very low levels of austerity. Measuring consensus across parties as the weighted average across parties in a specific country-year is also not without its limitations. In cases with high levels, there might be alternative economic policy solutions out there. Weighting the positions by seat share, however, should account for the quantity of cues coming from this party, with large parties receiving more attention.

In robustness tests the economic orthodoxy measure is complemented with other indicators that are close to the austerity paradigm. These are the MPD indicators 'welfare state limitation', 'education limitation', 'free market economy', 'incentives: positive' and 'protectionism: negative'. Results and conclusions from these analyses are the same.

Figure 1 Weighted average positions on austerity of left and right parties



3.2 Dependent variable

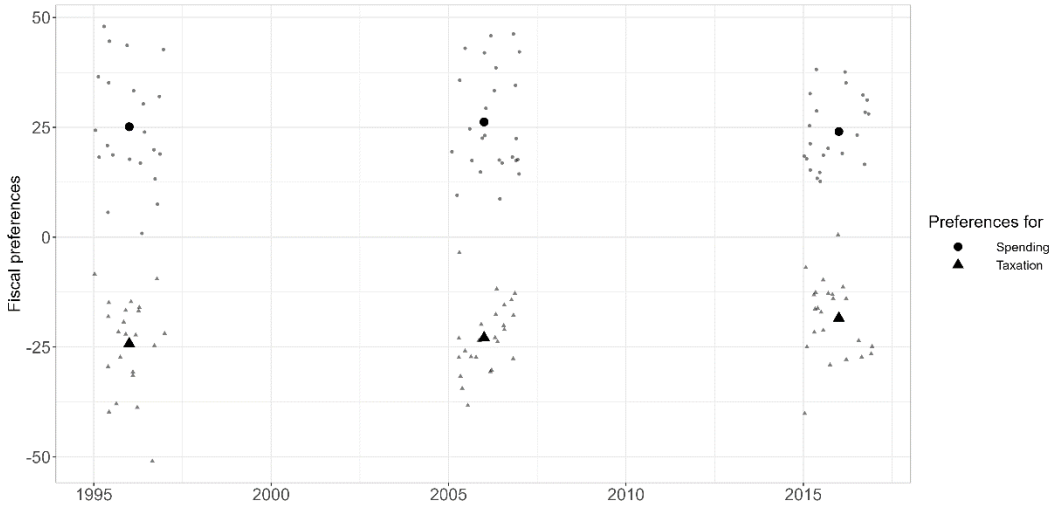
I use the preferences of voters and citizens as measured by the International Social Survey Program, specifically the Role of Government modules of 1996, 2006 and 2016. These waves all have the same set of questions about spending preferences towards eight different issues: environment, health, law and order, education, defence, pension, unemployment and culture. Additional to spending preferences, these surveys include an item that directly asks respondents about whether they are in favour of cuts in government spending. Then to measure citizens' tax preferences, these surveys ask respondents about their preferences to tax different income groups: low, middle and high. Preferences are recoded from the scale of 1 – 5 to go from -100 to + 100, with 50-point intervals[5]. The spending preferences are reversed so that negative values indicate less spending and positive values represent demands for more spending. The same goes for preferences for spending cuts, where higher values indicate ‘less in favour’ of cuts and therefore lower values are interpreted as ‘more spending’. For taxation negative values represent preferences for lower taxation and positive values represent preferences for higher taxation. To be sure, I operationalize demands for 'more taxation' and

[5] See also Schakel et al. (2020) and Wlezien and Soroka (2012).

for 'less spending' (or ‘more cuts’) as fiscally austere attitudes, while 'less taxation' and 'more spending' (or ‘less cuts’) represent a respondent's wish for more expansionary fiscal policy[6].

These survey questions are all so-called ‘unconstrained’ questions, and might therefore not reflect the trade-offs that policymakers face in real life. Moreover, this means that it is possible for respondents to have 'inconsistent preferences', wanting 'more for less' or a 'free lunch'. Then again, as is true for the literature using trade-off questions, the survey items do not exclusively cover all possible policy instruments to run a government budget. I acknowledge this limitation of the data, but argue that it is still relevant to study citizens' overall attitudes towards spending and taxation and see whether we can observe systematic variation. Figure 2 shows the spending and taxation preferences of citizens from all country-years used in the analyses. Across all years and for nearly all countries, on average citizens want more spending and less taxation. However, there is substantial variation within years between countries, while less so over time. If anything, on average (the larger and darker shaped point) there seems to be slightly more demand for taxation across decades.

Figure 2 Average spending and taxation preferences of all citizens per country-year



[6] The exact for the eight spending indicators read as follows: 'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it.'. Answer categories include: 'spend much more', 'spend more', 'spend the same as now', 'spend less', 'spend much less' and 'can't choose'. For taxation the questions are: 'Generally, how would you describe taxes in [Country] today? ((We mean all taxes together, including [wage deductions], [income tax], [taxes on goods and services] and all the rest.)) First, for those with high incomes / next. for those with middle income / lastly, for those with low incomes, are taxes ..'. with answer categories including: 'much too high', 'too high', 'about right', 'too low', 'or, are they much too low' and 'can't choose'.

Other relevant variables that I use in the analyses are income and party. For income, I rely on thirds of the income distribution as my group structure. The ISSP asks for net household income, which I use per country-year to construct three income groups of roughly equal size. Party affiliation is measured by asking respondents what party they would vote for if there would be a general election this week[7]. I use party affiliation to operationalize left and right voters (and parties). Appendix Figure B1 shows precisely the original year of the party positions as derived from the MPD. On average, elections – therefore MPD datapoints – are roughly one-and-a-half-year before ISSP waves. There are five country-years in which elections were four years before the ISSP, nine countries three years before, eleven cases two years before, fifteen cases one year before, and 22 country-years in the same year. As these data are interpolated between elections, it should be clear that when the difference is larger (four years) a party position relies more heavily on the election *after* the ISSP.

As control variables, I include variables that could both affect party positions as well as voters' preferences. These are, in line with the literature, logged GDP, annual GDP growth, and the unemployment rate, and are all downloaded automatically from the servers of the World Bank using the 'wbstats' package in R (Piburn, 2020). Furthermore, I include fixed effects for countries and years. As individual-level controls I include gender and age. Summary statistics for the independent, dependent and control variables can be found in Appendix Table B1.

4. Empirical strategy

To empirically address the different hypothesis, I consider adaptation to austerity position of parties in separate multivariate regressions. For all models, I run OLS regressions. All analyses differentiate between income groups and spending, taxation and spending cuts preferences. I regress spending and taxation preferences on parties' attention to austerity at t-1. The observations are weighted by the ISSP weights. Because all respondents are nested in countries and the data ranges over several decades, all models include two-way fixed effects for countries and years and I use robust standard errors.

[7] One limitation of focusing on survey respondents that indicate that they would vote is that this might not capture those that – because of austerity – abstain, change party or turn to other anti-system ways to voice their concerns (Bojar et al., 2022; Bremer et al., 2020; Hübscher et al., 2021).

5. Analysis

This section presents the results of the empirical analyses testing the hypotheses. Table 1 shows the results testing the first hypothesis – that voters adapt their fiscal preferences to their parties position on austerity. Respectively, these are the results for changes in spending preferences, changes in taxation preferences and changes in spending cuts preferences for low-, middle- and high-income groups. As expected, all three income groups adjust their spending preferences downwards. The estimates are significant at $p<0.01$ and the coefficient for high-income voters is largest, indicating there might be heterogeneity in adaptation for spending preferences. For taxation, the coefficients are in the opposite direction as hypothesized. Low income voters (at $p<0.1$), middle income voters (at $p<0.05$) and high-income voters (at $p<0.01$) all adjust their preferences towards demanding less taxation. Like for overall spending, the models for spending cuts show support in line with the hypothesis. The more one's party emphasizes austerity, the more in support of spending cuts one is. Also here the coefficient is largest for high-income voters. The macroeconomic controls suggest that both higher unemployment and higher GDP negatively affect the size of the government (*i.e.* less spending, less taxation and more cuts), while GDP growth lowers support for spending cuts.

The results largely demonstrate support for the first hypothesis: if parties promote an austerity agenda, voters want less overall spending and more spending cuts. However, voters also want less taxation. If austerity is not just interpreted as a temporary solution to rebalance government budget, but as a broader paradigm to shrink the size of the government (Blyth, 2013) this makes sense. One aspect that cannot be tested with the party-level data used in this empirical analysis is the extent to which parties emphasize austerity through spending-cuts or tax-hikes. However Devries et al. (2011) show that across OECD countries between 1978 – 2007 fiscal consolidation by governments has on average been composed of roughly 73% spending-based and 27% tax-based. If this translates to the mix of cues sent by political parties, the results are perhaps less surprising.

Appendix Tables A2 – A5 pay more attention to the composition of tax and spending items. The tax questions are based on increased demands for increased taxation on low, middle and high income groups demonstrate surprising results. Respondents from all three income groups demand more taxation for low-income citizens, while less for middle and high. The affluent are strongest in their response for less taxation for middle and high incomes. Appendices A3 – A5 dissect the spending categories. With defence (demand for

more spending) and law enforcement (null results) as outliers, the other six spending categories all show consistent support for the first hypothesis. Particularly culture, environment and unemployment are policy areas that voters want to see less spending while high-income voters adjust their preferences most strongly in most cases. Appendix Table A6 shows the results for the austerity composite measure including additional indicators that are close to an austerity paradigm. These results are identical.

Table 1 Linear regression models of citizens' fiscal preferences, own party

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-0.580***	-0.566***	-0.655***	-0.234*	-0.286**	-0.887***	0.791***	1.143***	1.367***
	(0.109)	(0.092)	(0.097)	(0.123)	(0.117)	(0.133)	(0.178)	(0.185)	(0.187)
GDP (logged) (t)	-23.567***	-28.428***	-29.273***	-28.049***	-39.619***	-38.071***	24.392*	64.753***	40.812***
	(7.410)	(6.764)	(6.723)	(8.032)	(8.559)	(8.552)	(12.572)	(12.439)	(11.931)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.625**	-0.836***	-1.392***	-0.744***	-0.460**	-0.293	1.304***	1.455***	0.678
	(0.206)	(0.184)	(0.191)	(0.237)	(0.221)	(0.257)	(0.410)	(0.381)	(0.427)
Growth (t)	-0.563***	0.245	0.727***	0.305	0.040	0.391	-1.702***	-0.604	-1.554***
	(0.283)	(0.260)	(0.267)	(0.336)	(0.346)	(0.372)	(0.498)	(0.486)	(0.485)
Age	0.075	0.078***	0.089***	0.054***	0.100***	0.029	0.138***	0.108***	0.244***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)
Female	2.566	2.619***	4.015***	-1.295**	-0.561	0.169	-0.399	0.738	-1.981**
	(0.453)	(0.414)	(0.441)	(0.547)	(0.521)	(0.582)	(0.837)	(0.824)	(0.864)
Constant	273.922**	321.159**	330.399**	281.717**	396.911**	380.127**	-220.538	-660.112**	-404.648**
	(79.099)	(72.265)	(71.799)	(85.996)	(91.414)	(91.586)	(134.408)	(133.055)	(127.344)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	11,889	12,315	10,417	12,328	12,461	10,666	13,076	13,161	11,116
Adjusted R^2	0.142	0.172	0.190	0.074	0.059	0.084	0.112	0.110	0.101

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table 2 shows the empirical results for the second hypothesis on whether voters follow the consensus across parties in a given country-year. The results are arguably weaker than those for voters adapting to their own party. Perhaps the most interesting is that middle- and high-income voters, and to a lesser extent also lower-income voters, demand more taxation as a response to consensus. Appendix Table A8 combines both the individual party measure and the consensus measure in the same model and shows more pronounced effects. The results

for own party are roughly 1.5 times larger, while many of the consensus effects are statistically distinguishable from zero at $p<0.01$ and opposite to the effects of one's own party. With the exception of low-income voters and their overall spending preferences, across the board voters want to see more spending, more taxation and less spending cuts. The difference between one's own party and consensus is striking and seems to suggest that when your own party promotes an austerity agenda you are likely to follow and ask for an overall reduction of the government (less spending, less taxation, more cuts), while if all parties want austerity, voters are more likely to revolt and demand the opposite.

Table 2 Linear regression models of citizens' fiscal preferences, party consensus

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy consensus (t-1)	-0.391**	0.001	-0.117	0.378*	0.527***	0.499**	-0.652*	-0.098	-0.128
	(0.175)	(0.154)	(0.158)	(0.199)	(0.203)	(0.241)	(0.334)	(0.335)	(0.315)
GDP (logged) (t)	-24.848***	-14.682*	-19.845**	-12.045	-18.782*	-6.967	-17.286	30.514**	-12.194
	(8.888)	(7.918)	(8.180)	(9.461)	(10.326)	(10.347)	(14.315)	(14.473)	(14.611)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.725**	-0.811***	-1.467***	-0.716***	-0.443*	-0.357	1.102**	1.296***	0.117
	(0.219)	(0.197)	(0.211)	(0.251)	(0.237)	(0.278)	(0.433)	(0.412)	(0.474)
Growth (t)	-0.569***	0.137	0.664**	0.240	-0.082	0.217	-1.449***	-0.308	-1.105**
	(0.286)	(0.262)	(0.268)	(0.339)	(0.352)	(0.378)	(0.502)	(0.492)	(0.488)
Age	0.071	0.075***	0.087***	0.054***	0.096***	0.021	0.138***	0.115***	0.250***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)
Female	2.605	2.613***	4.088***	-1.256**	-0.611	0.378	-0.410	0.682	-2.154**
	(0.455)	(0.416)	(0.445)	(0.549)	(0.523)	(0.586)	(0.840)	(0.830)	(0.870)
Constant	287.948**	172.383*	228.801**	108.150	171.588	44.396	231.541	-289.369*	170.491
	(95.406)	(84.943)	(87.812)	(101.725)	(110.723)	(111.224)	(153.560)	(155.336)	(156.748)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	11,809	12,229	10,297	12,252	12,378	10,541	12,989	13,064	10,981
Adjusted R^2	0.139	0.170	0.187	0.074	0.060	0.081	0.112	0.108	0.098
Note:									*p**p***p<0.01

The models in Table 3 show the results for the models including the interaction term of left parties. This means that these are the effects of left parties on left voters. As expected, the left dummy shows that left voters significantly demand more spending, more taxation and less spending cuts compared to non-left voters. The interaction terms shows few significant results, however one is notable. The interaction term shows that high-income voters respond to their party's austerity by demanding more taxation, which is significant at the $p<0.05$ level. This is interesting as most voters demand less taxation in response to their party's orthodox position. Perhaps high-income left-wing voters are among the few that are aware of their party's proposed austerity package. This does not provide clear evidence for the third hypothesis, although if we accept the fourth hypothesis there is at least some evidence that left voters demand tax-based consolidation.

Table 3: Linear regression interaction models of left-right voters

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-0.231***	-0.219***	-0.179***	-0.233***	-0.440***	-0.491***	0.435***	0.396***	0.618***
	(0.070)	(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.084)	(0.079)	(0.077)	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.104)
Left	3.994***	3.839***	5.774***	3.421***	2.999**	6.866***	-5.844***	-11.941***	-8.985***
	(1.050)	(0.960)	(0.975)	(1.272)	(1.189)	(1.282)	(1.966)	(1.948)	(1.915)
GDP (logged) (t)	-21.161***	-23.250***	-24.154***	-28.288***	-48.394***	-28.271***	15.336	43.850***	26.950**
	(8.134)	(7.208)	(7.148)	(8.624)	(9.352)	(9.231)	(13.712)	(13.523)	(12.998)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.693**	-0.876***	-1.490***	-0.868***	-0.462*	-0.575**	1.098**	1.200***	0.641
	(0.225)	(0.200)	(0.221)	(0.259)	(0.241)	(0.287)	(0.435)	(0.419)	(0.485)
Growth (t)	-0.609***	0.206	0.761**	-0.050	-0.343	-0.287	-1.900***	-0.598	-1.390**
	(0.331)	(0.294)	(0.310)	(0.395)	(0.393)	(0.421)	(0.579)	(0.563)	(0.560)
Age	0.076	0.082***	0.095***	0.056***	0.109***	0.040*	0.125***	0.089***	0.224***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.037)
Female	2.585***	2.193***	3.697***	-1.449**	-0.741	-0.153	-0.044	1.899**	-0.722
	(0.484)	(0.439)	(0.470)	(0.589)	(0.553)	(0.614)	(0.893)	(0.877)	(0.920)
Orthodoxy * Left	0.087	0.018	-0.015	-0.177	0.140	0.384**	0.186	0.371*	-0.097
	(0.131)	(0.109)	(0.121)	(0.149)	(0.135)	(0.167)	(0.227)	(0.216)	(0.253)
Constant	247.246***	265.401***	274.259***	288.654***	493.732***	278.573***	-122.406	-431.026***	-255.499*
	(86.912)	(77.080)	(76.495)	(92.474)	(99.987)	(98.865)	(146.883)	(144.724)	(138.912)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	10,452	10,883	9,160	10,824	11,006	9,380	11,466	11,611	9,746
Adjusted R^2	0.153	0.185	0.205	0.079	0.078	0.119	0.118	0.129	0.124
Note:									*p**p***p<0.01

5.1 Heterogeneity across income groups

As is already touched upon in discussing the results for hypotheses H1, H2 and H3, in this part I discuss in more detail the fourth hypothesis expecting heterogeneity in adaptation across income groups. The overall results in Table 1 consistently shows variation, with high-income voters to be most adaptative. The effect sizes for overall spending preferences are not very different, but high-income voters' negative response for tax preferences is more than three times larger than that of low- and middle-income voters. Also for spending cuts, the coefficient for high-income voters is substantively larger. These differences are not observable for the overall austere discursive context studied in Table 2. The much weaker

results do not suggest that high-income voters are more likely to change their attitudes. The results in Table A8, putting both measures in the same model, do show that high-income voters adapt their tax preferences twice the size as the other groups, while they are also strongest in terms of spending cuts. In Table 3 high-income voters are the only ones positively responding to parties in terms of their tax preferences. This is interesting if we assume that the mix of cues sent by left-wing parties contains more tax-based consolidation than spending-based consolidation and is in line with the finding that high-income voters adapt to their own party. The results for the individual spending areas broadly support these claims. All in all, there is support for the fourth hypothesis that high-income voters adapt their preferences most strongly to party's positions.

6. Discussion

This paper analyses the relationship between party's attention to austerity and voters' fiscal preferences. I theoretically and empirically distinguished between austerity as promoted by one's own party and in a consensual form across all parties, austerity as promoted by left-wing and right-wing parties, and fiscal adjustment by lower-, middle-, and higher-income voters. In conclusion, I find support for the hypotheses that stated that voters adjust to the austerity agenda of their own party and that high-income voters are most likely to adapt their preferences. On the other hand, I find only partial support for the expectation that left and right party families have heterogenous effects and find, contrary to my expectations, suggestive evidence that voters revolt to austerity consensus by demanding more spending, more taxation and less cuts.

In this section I reflect on the main findings and try to contextualize them. The main finding that all voters respond to their own party's economic orthodoxy by demanding less spending, taxation and cuts is interesting for at least two reasons. First, this could be explained by the fact that most austerity has been spending-based, so that the mix of cues sent from elites to the mass public contains more spending cuts than tax increases (73% spending-based and 27% tax-based (Devries et al., 2011)). Weaker results could also be explained by the nature of my tax measure, which is very rough. Bansak et al. (2021) showed that income tax were among the most unpopular austerity measures. Second, related to the independent variable, economic orthodoxy might relate not just to a 'neutral' rebalancing of the government budget, but in and of itself include calls for a smaller state. In this light, voter support for less taxation is not unexpected.

The second main finding is that high-income voters adjust their preferences most strongly to the positions of their own party. One implication is that one could reinterpret the debate in the empirical literature on whether fiscal consolidation is unpopular and thus costly for parties or not. One strand in the literature argues that re-election changes are not harmed after austerity and on the other that austerity has various negative and direct implications, such as vote abstention (Hübscher & Sattler, 2017; Hübscher et al., 2021; Jacques & Haffert, 2021; König & Wenzelburger, 2017). I propose that high-income voters are more likely to adjust their preferences to the political discussion *and* they subsequently turn out to vote more often. This difference is only suggestive because low-income voters adapt too, although to a smaller extent. One related limitation of the paper is that I only include voters and can therefore not say anything about those that abstain from voting. It could very well be that this group does not like the movement of their party to a more austere position and abstain, as suggested by (Hübscher et al., 2021). All in all, priming can, as written by Barnes and Hicks (2018), 'make austerity popular', but the extent varies with income. Although the results are only suggestive of such a distinction, the more general application would be to call for more research on heterogeneity across income groups in the literature on the political economy of austerity and in preference formation.

Finally, as also put forward by Cavaillé and Neundorf (2022), my results speak to the absence of increased electoral support for left parties following the Great Recession (Lindvall, 2012) and the 'missing left turn' in mass preferences (Bermeo & Bartels, 2014, pp. 1 - 19). As most mainstream, right as well as left, parties adopted an austerity paradigm (with a specific focus on spending cuts), my results suggest that voters have been shaped by this discursive context. The implication following therefrom is that if (left) parties would have adopted a non-austere paradigm, voters would have shifted leftwards in their preferences.

7. Literature

Adams, J., De Vries, C. E., & Leiter, D. (2012). Subconstituency reactions to elite depolarization in the Netherlands: an analysis of the Dutch public's policy beliefs and partisan loyalties, 1986–98. *British Journal of Political Science, 42*(1), 81-105.

Adams, J., Green, J., & Milazzo, C. (2012). Who moves? Elite and mass-level depolarization in Britain, 1987–2001. *Electoral Studies, 31*(4), 643-655.

Alesina, A., Carloni, D., & Lecce, G. (2012). The electoral consequences of large fiscal adjustments (*Fiscal policy after the financial crisis* (pp. 531-570). University of Chicago Press.

Alesina, A., Favero, C., & Giavazzi, F. (2020). *Austerity: When it Works and when it Doesn't*. Princeton University Press.

Amsalem, E., & Zoizner, A. (2022). Real, but limited: A meta-analytic assessment of framing effects in the political domain. *British Journal of Political Science*, *52*(1), 221-237.
Bachrach, P., & Baratz, M. S. (1962). Two Paces of Power (*Paradigms of Political POWER* (pp. 118-131). Routledge.
Bansak, K., Bechtel, M. M., & Margalit, Y. (2021). Why austerity? The mass politics of a contested policy. *American political science review*, *115*(2), 486-505.
Barnes, L., & Hicks, T. (2018). Making austerity popular: The media and mass attitudes toward fiscal policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, *62*(2), 340-354.
Bermeo, N., & Bartels, L. M. (2014). Mass politics in tough times. *Mass politics in tough times: Opinions, votes and protest in the Great Recession*, 1-39.
Bisgaard, M., & Slothuus, R. (2018). Partisan elites as culprits? How party cues shape partisan perceptual gaps. *American Journal of Political Science*, *62*(2), 456-469.
Blyth, M. (2013). *Austerity: The history of a dangerous idea*. Oxford University Press.
Boix, C. (1998). *Political parties, growth and equality: Conservative and social democratic economic strategies in the world economy*. Cambridge University Press.
Bojar, A., Bremer, B., Kriesi, H., & Wang, C. (2022). The effect of austerity packages on government popularity during the great recession. *British Journal of Political Science*, *52*(1), 181-199.
Boninger, D. S., Krosnick, J. A., & Berent, M. K. (1995). Origins of attitude importance: Self-interest, social identification, and value relevance. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *68*(1), 61.
Bremer, B., Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (2020). Dynamics of protest and electoral politics in the Great Recession. *European Journal of Political Research*, *59*(4), 842-866.
Bremer, B., & McDaniel, S. (2020). The ideational foundations of social democratic austerity in the context of the great recession. *Socio-Economic Review*, *18*(2), 439-463.
Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1980). *The american voter*. University of Chicago Press.
Carnes, N. (2012). Does the numerical underrepresentation of the working class in Congress matter? *Legislative studies quarterly*, *37*(1), 5-34.
Carpini, M. X. D., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. Yale University Press.
Castles, F. G., & Mair, P. (1984). Left–right political scales: Some 'expert'judgments. *European Journal of Political Research*, *12*(1), 73-88.
Cavaillé, C., & Neundorf, A. (2022). Elite Cues and Economic Policy Attitudes: The Mediating Role of Economic Hardship. *Political Behavior*, 1-22.
Dahl, R. A. (1961). *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. Yale University Press.
Dancey, L., & Goren, P. (2010). Party identification, issue attitudes, and the dynamics of political debate. *American Journal of Political Science*, *54*(3), 686-699.
Devries, P., Guajardo, J., Leigh, D., & Pescatori, A. (2011). *A New Action-Based Dataset of Fiscal Consolidation.*
Disch, L. (2011). Toward a mobilization conception of democratic representation. *American political science review*, *105*(1), 100-114.
Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of democracy.
Druckman, J. N. (2001). The implications of framing effects for citizen competence. *Political Behavior*, *23*, 225-256.
Druckman, J. N., & Lupia, A. (2000). Preference formation. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *3*(1), 1-24.
Druckman, J. N., Peterson, E., & Slothuus, R. (2013). How elite partisan polarization affects public opinion formation. *American political science review*, *107*(1), 57-79.

Elkjær, M. A. (2020). What drives unequal policy responsiveness? Assessing the role of informational asymmetries in economic policy-making. *Comparative political studies*, *53*(14), 2213-2245.
Elkjær, M. A., & Iversen, T. (2020). The political representation of economic interests: Subversion of democracy or middle-class supremacy? *World Politics*, *72*(2), 254-290.
Erikson, R. S. (2015). Income inequality and policy responsiveness. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *18*(1), 11-29.
Esaiasson, P., & Wlezien, C. (2017). Advances in the study of democratic responsiveness: An introduction. *Comparative political studies*, *50*(6), 699-710.
Flavin, P. (2012). Does higher voter turnout among the poor lead to more equal policy representation? *The Social Science Journal*, *49*(4), 405-412.
Hall, P. A. (1993). Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: the case of economic policymaking in Britain. *Comparative politics*, 275-296.
Hübscher, E. (2016). The politics of fiscal consolidation revisited. *Journal of Public Policy*(35 (4)), 29.
Hübscher, E., & Sattler, T. (2017). Fiscal consolidation under electoral risk. *European Journal of Political Research*, *56*(1), 151-168.
Hübscher, E., Sattler, T., & Wagner, M. (2021). Does austerity cause polarization? *Available at SSRN 3541546*.
Iversen, T., & Soskice, D. (2015). Information, inequality, and mass polarization: Ideology in advanced democracies. *Comparative political studies*, *48*(13), 1781-1813.
Jacobs, A. M., Matthews, J. S., Hicks, T., & Merkley, E. (2021). Whose news? Class-biased economic reporting in the United States. *American political science review*, *115*(3), 1016-1033.
Jacoby, W. G. (1988). The impact of party identification on issue attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 643-661.
Jacques, O., & Haffert, L. (2021). Are governments paying a price for austerity? Fiscal consolidations reduce government approval. *European Political Science Review*, *13*(2), 189-207.
Joosten, M. A. (2022). *Who Influences Whom? Inequality in the Mutual Responsiveness Between Voters and Elites*. University of Geneva
Killick, A. (2022). Not 'my economy': A political ethnographic study of interest in the economy. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *24*(1), 171-186.
König, P. D., & Wenzelburger, G. (2017). Honeymoon in the crisis: A comparative analysis of the strategic timing of austerity policies and their effect on government popularity in three countries. *Comparative European Politics*, *15*(6), 991-1015.
Kraft, J. (2017). Social democratic austerity: the conditional role of agenda dynamics and issue ownership. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *24*(10), 1430-1449.
Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., & Rich, R. F. (2001). The political environment and citizen competence. *American Journal of Political Science*, 410-424.
Leeper, T. J., & Slothuus, R. (2014). Political parties, motivated reasoning, and public opinion formation. *Political Psychology*, *35*, 129-156.
Lenz, G. S. (2013). *Follow the leader?: how voters respond to politicians' policies and performance*. University of Chicago Press.
Lindvall, J. (2012). The political consequences of the Great Depression and the great recession: Remarkably similar. *Swiss Political Science Review*, *18*(4), 514-517.
Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Lynch, J. (2019). Populism, partisan convergence, and mobilization in Western Europe. *Polity*, *51*(4), 668-677.

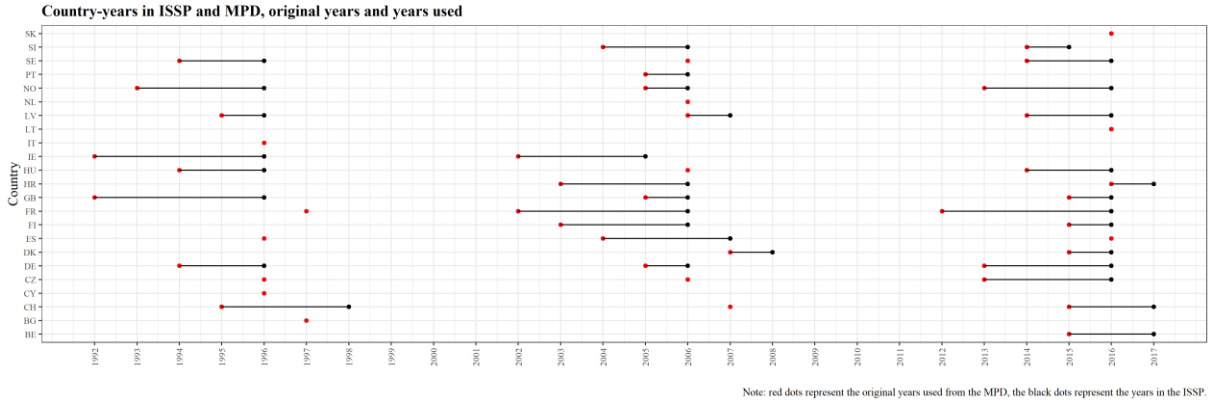
Mansbridge, J. (2003). Rethinking representation. *American political science review*, *97*(4), 515-528.
Meltzer, A. H., & Richard, S. F. (1981). A rational theory of the size of government. *Journal of political Economy*, *89*(5), 914-927.
O'Grady, T. (2022). *Transformation of British Welfare Policy: Politics, Discourse, and Public Opinion*. Oxford University Press.
Page, B. I., & Shapiro, R. Y. (1992). *The rational public: Fifty years of trends in Americans' policy preferences*. University of Chicago Press.
Piburn, J. (2020). *Programmatic Access to the World Bank API* (Version 1.0.4). https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/wbstats/wbstats.pdf
Pierson, P. (1996). The new politics of the welfare state. *World Politics*, *48*(2), 143-179.
Ray, L. (2003). When parties matter: The conditional influence of party positions on voter opinions about European integration. *The Journal of Politics*, *65*(4), 978-994.
Schakel, W., & Burgoon, B. (2022). The party road to representation: Unequal responsiveness in party platforms. *European Journal of Political Research*, *61*(2), 304-325.
Schakel, W., Burgoon, B., & Hakhverdian, A. (2020). Real but unequal representation in welfare state reform. *Politics & Society*, *48*(1), 131-163.
Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., & Brady, H. E. (2012). The unheavenly chorus (*The Unheavenly Chorus*. Princeton University Press.
Slothuus, R., & Bisgaard, M. (2021). How political parties shape public opinion in the real world. *American Journal of Political Science*, *65*(4), 896-911.
Soroka, S. N., & Wlezien, C. (2010). *Degrees of democracy: Politics, public opinion, and policy*. Cambridge University Press.
Volkens, A., Burst, T., Krause, W., Lehmann, P., Theres, M., Regel, S., Weßels, B., & Zehnter, L. (2021). *The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)* (Version 2021a). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25522/manifesto.mpds.2021a
Wlezien, C., & Soroka, S. N. (2012). Political institutions and the opinion–policy link. *West European Politics*, *35*(6), 1407-1432.
Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge university press.

Supplementary Appendix for " Forging support: how party cues shape fiscal preferences"

Table A1 : Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	N
Independent variables					
Party attention to Economic Orthoxoxy (t-1)	2.1	2.8	0	17.476	47978
Party attention to Austerity (Composite measure) (t-1)	8.3	6.243	0	35.827	47978
Dependent variables					
Total spending	24.7	25.692	-100	100	82833
Environment spending	30.6	43.322	-100	100	91781
Health spending	52.4	40.834	-100	100	94180
Law enforcement spending	30.7	43.864	-100	100	92643
Education spending	47.4	40.895	-100	100	93461
Defense spending	-7.7	54.497	-100	100	90444
Old age pension spending	41.3	42.085	-100	100	93266
Unemployment spending	6.8	50.248	-100	100	91878
Culture spending	-1.9	50.48	-100	100	91347
Total taxation	-21.8	30.285	-100	100	84365
Low income taxation preferences	-52.5	41.987	-100	100	89814
Middle income taxation preferences	-31.9	38.246	-100	100	89679
High income taxation preferences	18.2	56.029	-100	100	87115
Spending cuts	52.2	46.386	-100	100	91449
Control variables					
GDP per capita, logged	10.3	0.643	8.209	11.363	95444
GDP growth	2.3	2.424	-13.591	10.844	94440
Unemployment rate	7.6	4.275	2.74	22.14	96626
Age	47.8	17.299	15	99	94935
Female	0.5	0.499	0	1	96356

Figure A1: Country-years used in the analyses



Note: red dots represent the original years used from the MPD, the black dots represent the years in the ISSP.

Table A2: Linear regression models of voters' preferences for taxing low, middle and high

	Dependent variable:								
	Tax L pref.			Tax M pref.			Tax H pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	0.630***	0.356**	0.461***	-0.345**	-0.569***	-1.002***	-1.056***	-0.495**	-1.986***
	(0.164)	(0.158)	(0.168)	(0.163)	(0.146)	(0.158)	(0.227)	(0.219)	(0.246)
GDP (logged) (t)	-8.339***	-23.629*	-38.875***	-34.651***	-34.135***	-24.936**	-44.518***	-52.041***	-51.326***
	(12.433)	(12.645)	(12.208)	(11.524)	(11.134)	(11.179)	(15.304)	(15.837)	(15.669)
Unemployment rate (t)	-1.723***	-1.663***	-1.345***	-0.866***	-0.681**	-0.407	0.123	1.161***	0.892**
	(0.325)	(0.321)	(0.353)	(0.306)	(0.288)	(0.316)	(0.435)	(0.401)	(0.453)
Growth (t)	0.683***	1.140**	0.813*	-0.068	-0.332	-0.052	0.389	-0.888	0.105
	(0.460)	(0.458)	(0.485)	(0.431)	(0.424)	(0.436)	(0.613)	(0.609)	(0.647)
Age	-0.165	-0.095***	-0.153***	0.074***	0.133***	0.054**	0.249***	0.258***	0.184***
	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.040)
Female	-1.576	-1.225*	-1.659**	-2.710***	-1.942***	-1.604**	0.836	1.244	3.660***
	(0.737)	(0.729)	(0.786)	(0.679)	(0.649)	(0.705)	(0.990)	(0.941)	(1.057)
Constant	56.626	218.352	389.946**	349.427**	328.981**	233.153*	473.992**	544.449**	525.853**
	(132.899)	(135.388)	(130.848)	(123.374)	(118.851)	(119.707)	(163.775)	(169.436)	(167.650)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	13,163	12,967	10,889	12,965	13,128	11,096	12,679	12,812	10,953
Adjusted R^2	0.041	0.056	0.078	0.067	0.076	0.064	0.084	0.077	0.109

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table A3: Linear regression models of voters' preferences for spending on environment, healthcare and law

	Dependent variable:								
	Spend environment pref.			Spend healthcare pref.			Spend law pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-1.113***	-1.256***	-1.766***	-0.816***	-0.741***	-1.229***	-0.086	-0.169	0.104
	(0.180)	(0.174)	(0.185)	(0.170)	(0.153)	(0.178)	(0.183)	(0.165)	(0.173)
GDP (logged) (t)	-28.365***	-25.218**	5.931	5.747	-8.572	-17.738	2.407	-0.143	2.186
	(12.657)	(12.257)	(11.746)	(11.640)	(11.361)	(11.947)	(13.271)	(12.165)	(11.584)
Unemployment rate (t)	-1.230**	-1.316***	-1.128***	0.423	-0.509*	-1.484***	-1.696***	-1.652***	-2.283***
	(0.358)	(0.336)	(0.362)	(0.313)	(0.304)	(0.354)	(0.345)	(0.326)	(0.343)
Growth (t)	0.267***	-0.280	-0.109	0.615	0.894**	1.172**	-0.993**	-0.813*	-0.452
	(0.496)	(0.476)	(0.505)	(0.431)	(0.428)	(0.477)	(0.485)	(0.462)	(0.471)
Age	-0.333	-0.232***	-0.216***	0.030	0.017	-0.033	0.359***	0.177***	0.184***
	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.030)
Female	1.602	1.334*	3.011***	3.973***	5.924***	7.798***	1.650**	1.003	1.089
	(0.803)	(0.762)	(0.833)	(0.696)	(0.676)	(0.790)	(0.768)	(0.729)	(0.777)
Constant	359.617***	329.088**	9.283	-3.349	152.172	252.694**	9.074	37.038	9.888
	(135.077)	(130.938)	(125.040)	(124.134)	(121.507)	(127.753)	(141.933)	(130.164)	(124.024)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	13,152	13,248	11,148	13,585	13,441	11,227	13,368	13,297	11,156
Adjusted R^2	0.043	0.048	0.066	0.094	0.116	0.141	0.119	0.098	0.089

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table A4: Linear regression models of voters' preferences for spending on education, defence and old-age pensions

	Dependent variable:								
	Spend education pref.			Spend defence pref.			Spend pension pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-0.775***	-0.572***	-0.428**	1.156***	1.070***	1.320***	-0.676***	-0.461***	-0.663***
	(0.175)	(0.160)	(0.172)	(0.222)	(0.204)	(0.213)	(0.172)	(0.157)	(0.171)
GDP (logged) (t)	-74.180***	-89.294***	-83.637***	-75.258***	-65.245***	-85.473***	14.434	-15.909	-22.107*
	(12.066)	(11.839)	(11.916)	(14.159)	(14.889)	(14.565)	(11.941)	(12.227)	(12.426)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.092	-0.723**	-1.164***	-2.501***	-1.871***	-2.406***	-0.388	-1.099***	-1.669***
	(0.329)	(0.306)	(0.331)	(0.415)	(0.396)	(0.424)	(0.331)	(0.314)	(0.352)
Growth (t)	1.665***	2.825***	2.997***	-1.086*	0.237	0.592	-0.827*	-0.906**	0.291
	(0.463)	(0.445)	(0.478)	(0.583)	(0.571)	(0.593)	(0.449)	(0.444)	(0.467)
Age	-0.157	-0.126***	-0.153***	0.342***	0.239***	0.312***	0.363***	0.261***	0.240***
	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.038)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.030)
Female	2.606	2.577***	1.668**	0.169	-0.146	-0.109	3.000***	3.934***	6.753***
	(0.728)	(0.692)	(0.773)	(0.917)	(0.887)	(0.942)	(0.729)	(0.700)	(0.770)
Constant	833.895**	991.666**	937.777**	788.217**	669.302**	874.504**	-125.386	203.192	259.439*
	(128.929)	(126.738)	(127.511)	(151.338)	(159.048)	(155.918)	(127.557)	(130.691)	(132.985)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	13,447	13,401	11,217	13,039	13,091	10,940	13,499	13,326	11,140
Adjusted R^2	0.084	0.091	0.069	0.165	0.155	0.161	0.110	0.109	0.125

Note: *p **p ***p<0.01

Table A5: Linear regression models of voters' preferences for spending on unemployment and culture

	Dependent variable:					
	Spend unemployment pref.			Spend culture pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-1.078***	-0.990***	-1.543***	-1.246***	-1.665***	-1.618***
	(0.209)	(0.196)	(0.198)	(0.210)	(0.195)	(0.195)
GDP (logged) (t)	31.311***	44.193***	1.556	-55.867***	-69.183***	-35.506***
	(14.120)	(13.514)	(12.993)	(13.206)	(13.327)	(12.545)
Unemployment rate (t)	1.845***	1.425***	0.156	-1.394***	-0.975***	-0.747*
	(0.371)	(0.346)	(0.368)	(0.384)	(0.365)	(0.387)
Growth (t)	-1.388***	0.485	1.464***	-1.276**	-0.452	-0.249
	(0.539)	(0.512)	(0.524)	(0.530)	(0.544)	(0.544)
Age	0.064	0.159***	0.165***	-0.055**	0.134***	0.222***
	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.035)
Female	3.214	3.390***	6.324***	4.490***	3.402***	6.923***
	(0.843)	(0.825)	(0.857)	(0.888)	(0.849)	(0.891)
Constant	-349.614**	-505.568***	-52.981	586.008***	714.896***	360.952***
	(151.166)	(144.668)	(138.906)	(141.368)	(142.480)	(133.803)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	13,241	13,258	11,102	13,099	13,230	11,155
Adjusted R^2	0.115	0.156	0.133	0.114	0.139	0.133

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table A6: Alternative independent variable, austerity composite measure

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Austerity composite measure party position (t-1)	-0.485***	-0.448***	-0.515***	-0.391***	-0.609***	-0.889***	0.715***	1.005***	1.076***
	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.052)	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.074)
GDP (logged) (t)	-26.150***	-29.580***	-30.841***	-34.518***	-50.316***	-44.991***	29.989**	69.503***	44.944***
	(7.293)	(6.555)	(6.525)	(7.879)	(8.321)	(8.400)	(12.339)	(12.132)	(11.632)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.681**	-0.894***	-1.462***	-0.759***	-0.484**	-0.371	1.377***	1.562***	0.827*
	(0.205)	(0.184)	(0.191)	(0.236)	(0.220)	(0.254)	(0.408)	(0.379)	(0.423)
Growth (t)	-0.753***	0.069	0.516*	0.199	-0.140	0.096	-1.442***	-0.216	-1.124**
	(0.283)	(0.260)	(0.267)	(0.335)	(0.340)	(0.365)	(0.495)	(0.482)	(0.483)
Age	0.081	0.081***	0.093***	0.059***	0.106***	0.037*	0.128***	0.100***	0.236***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)
Female	2.532	2.483***	3.744***	-1.369**	-0.798	-0.378	-0.324	1.095	-1.406
	(0.451)	(0.412)	(0.439)	(0.546)	(0.518)	(0.576)	(0.834)	(0.820)	(0.860)
Constant	306.795***	338.415***	353.178***	355.570***	518.909***	464.585***	-288.040**	-721.894***	-461.161***
	(77.873)	(70.044)	(69.705)	(84.389)	(88.915)	(90.027)	(131.989)	(129.837)	(124.242)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	11,889	12,315	10,417	12,328	12,461	10,666	13,076	13,161	11,116
Adjusted R^2	0.150	0.180	0.200	0.078	0.072	0.108	0.117	0.121	0.114

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table A7: Economic orthodoxy own party and consensus in the same model

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (t-1)	-0.675***	-0.823***	-0.915***	-0.497***	-0.649***	-1.535***	1.397***	1.686***	1.938***
	(0.133)	(0.109)	(0.126)	(0.149)	(0.139)	(0.157)	(0.222)	(0.239)	(0.231)
Economic orthodoxy consensus (t-1)	0.237	0.787***	0.775***	0.845***	1.142***	2.008***	-1.964***	-1.711***	-2.019***
	(0.213)	(0.180)	(0.202)	(0.237)	(0.238)	(0.277)	(0.405)	(0.424)	(0.385)
GDP (logged) (t)	-24.199***	-14.731*	-19.819**	-11.660	-18.940*	-6.893	-18.942	30.242**	-11.863
	(8.907)	(7.936)	(8.207)	(9.469)	(10.325)	(10.394)	(14.319)	(14.477)	(14.628)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.756***	-0.854***	-1.532***	-0.747***	-0.478**	-0.470*	1.182***	1.388***	0.255
	(0.219)	(0.196)	(0.210)	(0.251)	(0.236)	(0.277)	(0.434)	(0.412)	(0.473)
Growth (t)	-0.500***	0.196	0.756***	0.291	-0.032	0.382	-1.591***	-0.440	-1.281***
	(0.287)	(0.262)	(0.269)	(0.339)	(0.351)	(0.377)	(0.501)	(0.492)	(0.488)
Age	0.074	0.078***	0.091***	0.057***	0.099***	0.026	0.132***	0.108***	0.242***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)
Female	2.557	2.604***	3.951***	-1.295**	-0.629	0.135	-0.326	0.719	-1.853**
	(0.455)	(0.415)	(0.444)	(0.549)	(0.523)	(0.583)	(0.839)	(0.828)	(0.869)
Constant	281.203**	173.077**	228.769**	104.239	173.433	43.984	248.769	-286.856*	166.409
	(95.602)	(85.128)	(88.092)	(101.811)	(110.716)	(111.733)	(153.600)	(155.365)	(156.922)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	11,809	12,229	10,297	12,252	12,378	10,541	12,989	13,064	10,981
Adjusted R2	0.142	0.174	0.192	0.075	0.061	0.090	0.115	0.112	0.104

Note: *p**p***p<0.01

Table A8: Change in Economic Orthodoxy compared to last election

	Dependent variable:								
	Spending pref.			Tax pref.			Spending cut pref.		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Economic orthodoxy party position (change to last election)	0.280**	0.266***	0.307***	0.184	0.335***	0.657***	-0.336**	-0.808***	-0.977***

	(0.115)	(0.100)	(0.097)	(0.126)	(0.118)	(0.127)	(0.154)	(0.167)	(0.177)
GDP (logged) (t)	-14.326***	-18.518***	-17.649***	-24.394***	-35.077***	-21.390**	11.692	45.341***	15.779
	(7.174)	(6.513)	(6.497)	(7.738)	(8.299)	(8.321)	(12.242)	(12.028)	(11.516)
Unemployment rate (t)	-0.688**	-0.885***	-1.478***	-0.762***	-0.473**	-0.389	1.384***	1.530***	0.832*
	(0.206)	(0.184)	(0.192)	(0.237)	(0.222)	(0.257)	(0.409)	(0.380)	(0.425)
Growth (t)	-0.580***	0.217	0.721***	0.314	0.053	0.427	-1.686***	-0.568	-1.607***
	(0.284)	(0.260)	(0.267)	(0.337)	(0.346)	(0.372)	(0.498)	(0.485)	(0.483)
Age	0.074	0.075***	0.085***	0.053***	0.098***	0.024	0.140***	0.113***	0.252***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.027)	(0.034)
Female	2.581	2.616***	4.067***	-1.294**	-0.565	0.213	-0.424	0.744	-2.058**
	(0.453)	(0.414)	(0.442)	(0.547)	(0.521)	(0.583)	(0.837)	(0.825)	(0.864)
Constant	173.479**	213.688**	204.970**	241.779**	347.270**	199.928*	-82.413	-448.968**	-134.173
	(76.510)	(69.508)	(69.353)	(82.766)	(88.559)	(89.127)	(130.795)	(128.597)	(122.841)
Income group	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Country-years	59	60	60	59	60	60	59	60	60
Fixed effects	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y	C&Y
Observations	11,889	12,315	10,417	12,328	12,461	10,666	13,076	13,161	11,116
Adjusted R^2	0.140	0.170	0.187	0.074	0.060	0.082	0.111	0.109	0.099

Note: *p**p***p<0.01