

Elite Cues and Economic Policy Attitudes: The Mediating Role of Economic Hardship

Appendix: Supplementary Information

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1 Political Competition over the Economy in Europe

1.1 Measurement of Economic and Social Policy Positions

The Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2013) codes manifesto sentences based on the topic area and the policy orientation of the manifesto claims. We used the following variables to measure the share of sentences that mention **right-wing** economic and social policy positions:

- per401 (Free Market Economy)
- per402 (Incentives)
- per414 (Economic Orthodoxy)
- per702 (Labour Groups: Negative)
- per407 (Protectionism: Negative)

For **left-wing positions** we relied on the following items:

- per403 (Market Regulation)
- per404 (Economic Planning)
- per406 (Protectionism: Positive)
- per409 (Keynesian Demand Management)
- per412 (Controlled Economy)
- per413 (Nationalisation)
- per415 (Marxist Analysis: Positive)
- per701 (Labour Groups: Positive)
- per503 (Social Justice)

Table A.1: Categories not used to compute left-wing and right-wing economic policy indices

Issue category	Reason for exclusion
Welfare State Expansion (per504)	Valence issue, does not discriminate between Left and Right
Welfare State Limitation (per505)	Valence issue, does not discriminate between Left and Right
Corporatism (per405)	Not included, meaning specific to continental Europe
Economic goals (per408)	Residual category, meaning ambiguous
Technology and Infrastructure (per411)	Valence issue, does not discriminate between Left and Right
Marxist Analysis (per415)	Never mentioned
Anti-Growth Economy : positive (per416)	Never mentioned
Education Expansion (per506)	Valence issue, does not discriminate between Left and Right
Education Limitation (per507)	Never mentioned

Table A.1 further lists the categories that were not used and the reason why.

The party positions ($\theta^{(L)}$) were calculated using the log-odds ratio of normalized sentences, an approach proposed by Lowe et al. (2011):

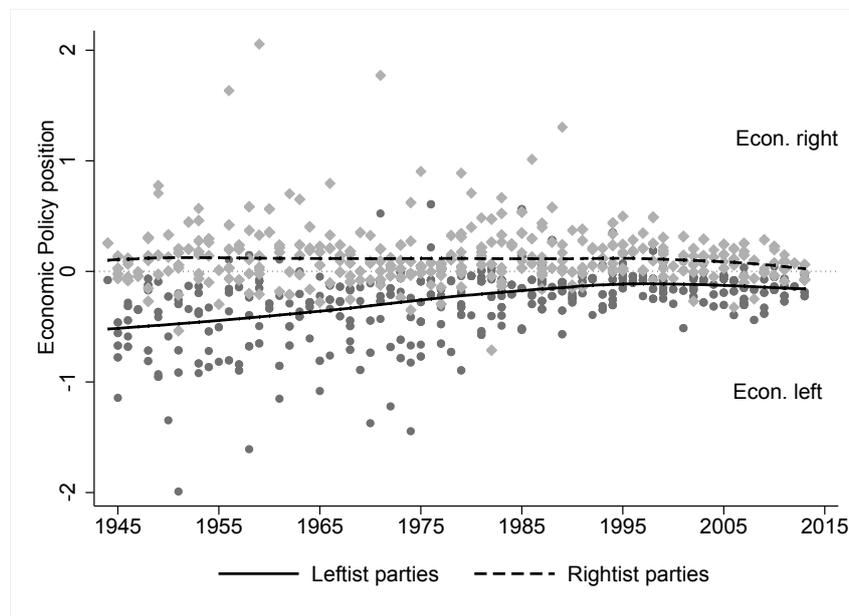
$$\theta^{(L)} = \log\left(\sum_1^3 R + 0.5\right) - \log\left(\sum_1^8 L + 0.5\right)$$

Positive values indicate a pro-market anti-redistribution position, while negative values indicated a left-wing economic position. Lowe et al. (2011) are critical of the more common additive index and have proposed the above index to replace it. The rationale is summarized by the authors as follows: “By this reasoning, the marginal effect of one more sentence is decreasing in the amount that has already been said on the topic (...) changes must be perceivable against the background of existing policy emphasis” (p130). In the paper, we are interested in how voters react to changes in the discursive context. Because a change is perceived relative to the previous status quo, this modified index better fits our purpose.

1.2 Economic Positions Across Time and Space

Figure A.1 examines country-year polarization scores for all Western European countries, starting after WWII. Over time, the general trend is one of convergence from the left: left-wing European parties have moved to the center on issues relating to traditional questions of redistribution and state-intervention in the economy. While left-wing parties have clearly changed their position on economic policy, by becoming more moderate, there is not much movement among right-wing parties. Overall, the discursive context is not favorable to an aggregate increase in support for redistribution, even among low-income individuals. However, within this general trend, some countries show stronger depolarization than others (e.g. the UK, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, Estonia, just to name a few), while other countries experience some amount of re-polarization (e.g. Germany, or Poland)

Figure A.1: Weighted Mean Economic Policy Positions of Left-Wing and Right-wing Parties over Time



Source: CMP. Only Western European countries. Using Loewe et al. 2011 formula. Each dot represents the mean positions of all leftist (circles) and all rightist (diamonds) political parties in each election. The lines represent lowest functions. Parties were classified as left and right based on the typology provided by Volkens et al. (2013).

2 Great Britain: Party Competition on Economic Issues

In this section we extensively document using both qualitative and quantitative evidence, the change in elite-behavior in Great Britain and its effect on the discursive context.

2.1 Measuring Changes in the British Discursive Context using Newspaper Data

The data collection project by Kriesi et al. (2012) allows us to use newspaper data to better capture the change in the discursive context (see chapter 2 in Kriesi et al. (2012)). This project is explicitly aimed at approximating how political competition among candidates affects the types of political claims and statements voters get exposed to. It does so by using a textual analysis of mainstream newspapers in the **two months preceding major elections**. Researchers coded headlines and the lead of the article. Researcher have used 12 “meta-categories” to capture the thematic conflicts articulated in the political arena during elections. Each category denotes a particular direction, either in “support of” or “opposition to.” The categories used are reproduced in Table A.2.

Table A.2: Issue Areas Used in the Newspaper Dataset by Kriesi, Grande, Donezald, Helbling, Hoeglinger, Hutter and Wueest (2012)

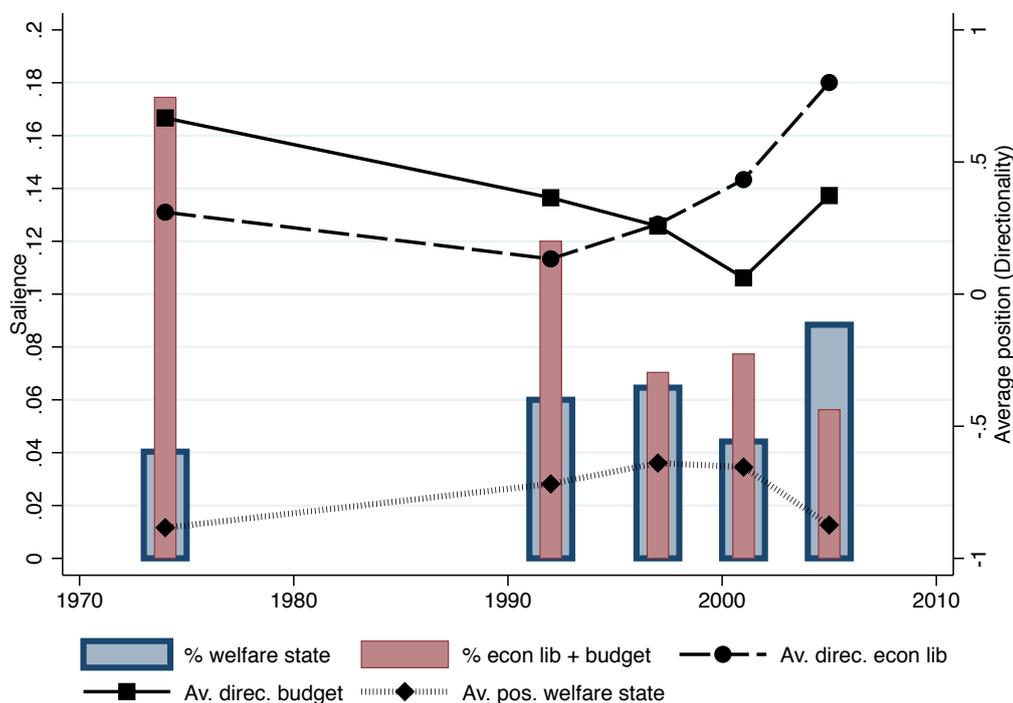
Welfare	Support for expansion of the welfare state; objection to welfare state retrenchment , support for tax reform with a redistributive character, calls for employment and more generous health-care programs
Economic liberalism	Opposition to market regulation, opposition to economic protectionism, support for deregulation, more competition and privatization
Budget	Support for rigid budgetary policy, reduction of the state deficit, cuts in expenditures, reduction of taxes without direct effect on redistribution
Other major issues covered	Anti-immigration, Europe, Cultural liberalism, Culture, Army , Security, Environment, Institutional reform, Infrastructure

We now turn to the newspaper data. Figure A.2 presents changes in salience and average position on issues related to economic and social policies, covering all years available in the dataset. To measure salience, we have plotted the economic liberalism and budget categories jointly as they both capture left-right differences over economic policy-making more generally. The welfare category is examined separately as it does not exhibit the same trend as the other two issue areas.

Using the left y-axis, one can track changes in salience. An obvious trend is the secular decline in the share of core sentences that allude to economic policies as captured by the economic liberalism and budget categories (the thinner red bars): while 18 percent of core sentences mentioned these issues in 1974, this share declines to 12 percent in 1991 and to less than 7 percent in 1997.

The welfare issue (the thicker blue bars) does not match any of the observed trends for the economic liberalism and budget issue areas. If anything, its salience is increasing over time

Figure A.2: Salience of Economic Issues (left y-axis) - Average Position for Each Issue (right y-axis) - Great Britain -



Source: Kriesi et al (2012b). On the y-axis, values superior to zero indicate that conservative statements outweigh liberal statement.

and the average claims available in newspapers are mainly favorable to welfare state expansion. This increase in salience can be traced back to Tony Blair's two main policy moves in the area of social policies: a) the reform of the National Health Service (NHS) to improve services and tackle its structural deficit, b) the continuous reform over the period of transfer programs to the non-working poor (i.e. the young, the disabled and the long-term unemployed). The NHS is a valence issue in Great Britain that does not really differentiate the parties and both parties campaign on increased spending. However, the reform of targeted transfers is an instance of a shift to the right on redistributive issues: the New Labour joined the Conservative Party in choosing to focus on welfare abuse and on increasing conditionality in access to benefits. A closer look at coding procedures indicates that this conservative shift is most likely not captured by the Kriesi et al. (2012) newspaper data.

The year 2005 also stands out as a year with many left-wing statement about welfare and redistribution. Among the New Labour's campaign promises that year was an increase in spending for education and health, the bulk of it through the extension of private/public partnership and financial support for the British equivalent of charter schools. The coding for this dataset is unfortunately too coarse to capture this distinction between an increase in public investment and a retreat from traditional left-wing forms of government involvement. We thus interpret the welfare index with caution.

2.2 Perceptions of the Dynamics of Electoral Competition by Voters

Table A.3 reports the mean positions that British Election Survey respondents assigned to the Labour and Conservative parties along four policy scales relating to preferences for providing social services versus cutting taxes; support for income redistribution; preferences for fighting inflation versus lowering unemployment; and support for nationalization of industry. Unfortunately, the items are only comparable across these 1987, 91, 97 and 2001 elections (see Milazzo, Adams and Green (2012)). The scale runs from 1 to 11 with higher values indicating more right-wing positions on these policy issues. For all items, except for the one on privatization, the biggest changes in perceived differences are around the time of the 1997 and 2001 elections.

Table A.3: British Election Study Respondents’ Mean Placements of the Labour and Conservative Parties, 1987–2001

policy		1987	1991	1997	2001
Social Services	Labour	3.03	2.83	3.59	4.17
	Conservative	7.16	7.06	6.94	6.21
	Difference	4.13	4.23	3.35	2.04
Nationalization	Labour	2.92	3.59	4.66	5.45
	Conservative	9.14	8.38	8.00	7.50
	Difference	6.22	4.79	3.34	2.05
Inflation/unemployment	Labour	2.33	2.98	3.14	3.73
	Conservative	6.38	6.44	6.16	5.88
	Difference	4.05	3.46	3.02	2.15
Redistribution	Labour	2.95	3.08	3.49	4.65
	Conservative	8.43	7.90	8.21	7.47
	Difference	5.48	4.82	4.72	2.82
Average Lab-Con gap		4.97	4.33	3.61	2.27

“Difference” report the difference between the mean placements of the Conservative Party and the mean placement of the Labour Party. All four scales are from 1 to 11, with higher numbers denoting more right-wing responses. Source: British Election Survey, reproduced from Milazzo, Adams and Green (2012).

In this section of the Appendix, we have documented changes in British citizens’ discursive context with the following time line: in contrast to Germany, policy changes implemented in 1997 have *not* resulted in a left-wing shift in the discursive context. We document a general decrease in the share of left-wing considerations. We interpret the post-1997 decade in Great Britain has an instance of asymmetrical de-polarization, coming mainly from the omission of redistributive issues on the left of the political spectrum. In Great Britain, the contextual conditions make it harder for individuals experiencing hardship to connect their material conditions to the “correct” policy position on economic and social policy issues.

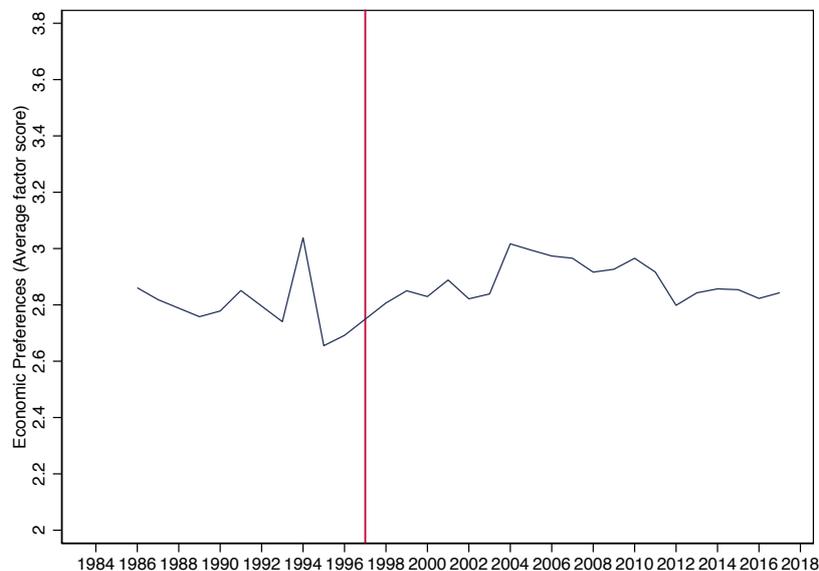
2.3 The British Social Attitude Survey

The British Social Attitude Survey (BSAS) provides 6 items that are comparable to the ones used in the BHPS. Respondents were asked to answer the following questions: “How much do you agree or disagree that... :”

- Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are least well-off?
- Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance
- There is one law for rich and one for poor?
- Working people not get fair share of nation’s wealth
- The gap between high and low incomes is too large
- Do you think it should or should not be the government’s responsibility to provide a job for everyone who wants one.

These items all load on the same dimension. For each available year, the Cronbach alpha is always very high (between 0.74 and 0.8). Figure A.3 plots the factor scores, using the same factor loadings across all years. While average responses fluctuate over time, there is no evidence of a conservative shift in the decade preceding the 1997 elections.

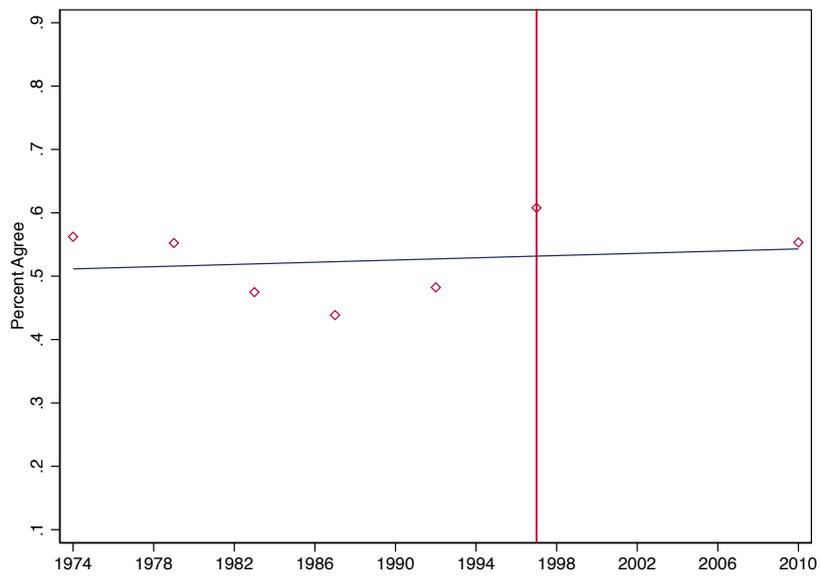
Figure A.3: Trends in the BSAS Economic Preferences (1986-2017)



Source : BSAS longitudinal dataset. The y-axis is scaled to be centered around the mean, plus or minus one standard deviation (obtained from the full distribution of scores when pooling all years). Higher values indicate more conservative patterns of answer. While support for redistribution decrease from 1974 to 1986, it

To examine the period before 1986, we can only rely on single survey items. Figure A.4 uses a survey item on redistribution available in the British Election Study starting in 1974 up until 1997, and asked again in the 2010 BSAS. This item asks respondents whether they agree or disagree that income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary working people. While agreement fluctuates over time, there is no evidence of a secular decline in support as measured by this survey item.

Figure A.4: Support for Redistribution (1974-2010)



Source : British Election Study 1974-1997. BSAS 2010. Agree / Disagree: “ Income and Wealth should be Redistributed towards ordinary working people.” For 1974 and 1979, respondents were asked to choose between “very important” and “fairly important” that income and wealth should be redistributed.

3 Latent Class Analysis: Additional Results

3.1 Latent Class Model: Model Fit Comparison

We estimated the optimum number of latent classes that provides the best fit to our data. Table A.4 provides a comparison of fit between models with 1 up to 5 classes. Model fit greatly improves if we hypothesize the existence of 3 different classes. The rate at which the BIC changes clearly decreases above three classes. Increasing the number of latent classes beyond three only results in the break down of the non-ideologue residual category, while the proportion of the sample composed of left and right-wingers stays the same. We therefore decided based on methodological as well as theoretical reasons to limit the latent classes to three.

Table A.4: Model Fit comparison: Measurement Model

# Latent Classes	LogLik	BIC	AIC	Npar
1	-327,148	654,511	654,344	24
2	-309,464	619,447	619,045	58
3	-303,215	607,360	606,639	104
4	-299,631	600,710	599,586	162
5	-297,338	596,748	595,140	232

3.2 Estimates from the Latent Class Measurement Model

The estimates from the Latent Class measurement model are shown in Table A.5 below. The entries are the estimated response probabilities for each categorical answer of the survey items for people in that class.

Individuals in class 1 and 3 have mirroring response patterns. For instance, individuals in class 1 have a probability of 0.67 of agreeing or agreeing strongly with the claim that public services should be state owned. Individuals in class 3, have a probability of disagreeing or disagreeing strongly of 0.62. This is the same patterns for all questions except for questions A and B, which show a strong bias in favor of a left-wing answer. These two questions were the only one where disagreeing was associated not with an economically conservative but an economically leftist position, potentially explaining this bias. However, overall, individuals in class 3, are still much less likely to take on a ‘left-wing’ position on these two questions (0.38 vs 0.95 for individuals in class 1 for item A). We consequently identify individuals in class 1 as holding left-wing economic preferences and individuals in class 3 as holding right-wing economic preferences. Of interest is the very low probability of the left-wingers to ever take a ‘neither-nor’ position (response 3).

Latent class 2 stands out for its low probability of taking ‘extreme’ positions (answer 1 or 5) on any of the six items. These individuals have a higher propensity of rejecting both extreme liberal and conservative positions. There is a left bias in this category, confirming here the claim that, on average, the British population is in favor of government intervention and is aware of social inequality. We call this class non-ideologue centrists.

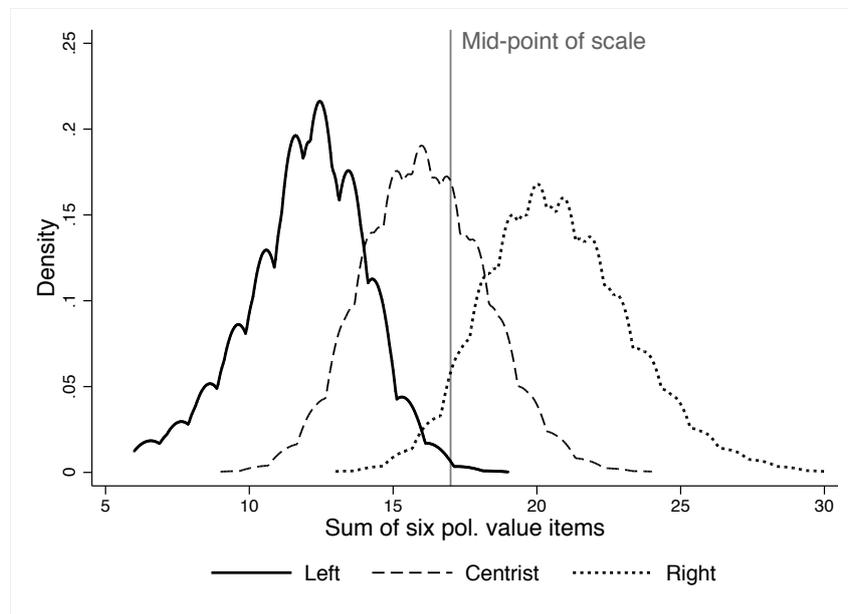
Table A.5: Estimates from the Latent Class measurement model

	Ideology: Classification			
	Leftist	Centrist	Rightist	Overall
<i>Proportion</i>	0.20	0.58	0.22	
Item A				
1	0.40	0.06	0.03	0.12
2	0.55	0.54	0.40	0.51
3	0.04	0.26	0.31	0.23
4	0.00	0.13	0.25	0.13
5	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Mean	1.65	2.48	2.81	2.38
Item B				
1	0.12	0.03	0.00	0.04
2	0.51	0.30	0.06	0.29
3	0.32	0.47	0.34	0.41
4	0.05	0.19	0.50	0.23
5	0.00	0.01	0.10	0.03
Mean	2.30	2.87	3.64	2.93
Item C				
1	0.46	0.09	0.04	0.15
2	0.51	0.55	0.39	0.51
3	0.03	0.21	0.25	0.18
4	0.00	0.14	0.28	0.15
5	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.02
Mean	1.58	2.44	2.90	2.37
Item D				
1	0.16	0.05	0.01	0.06
2	0.51	0.33	0.11	0.32
3	0.25	0.35	0.28	0.31
4	0.08	0.25	0.50	0.27
5	0.00	0.02	0.10	0.04
Mean	2.26	2.87	3.59	2.91
Item E				
1	0.13	0.06	0.00	0.06
2	0.53	0.40	0.08	0.36
3	0.17	0.21	0.13	0.19
4	0.16	0.30	0.62	0.35
5	0.01	0.02	0.16	0.05
Mean	2.39	2.83	3.85	2.97
Item F				
1	0.23	0.08	0.01	0.09
2	0.60	0.48	0.14	0.43
3	0.13	0.26	0.24	0.23
4	0.03	0.17	0.48	0.21
5	0.00	0.02	0.14	0.04
Mean	1.97	2.56	3.61	2.68

3.3 Are the Three Latent Classes Meaningful?

Figure A.5 plots the distribution of our three latent classes - left-wing, centrist and right-wing - on the additive index of the six single items that were utilized here. The additive index is a commonly adopted approach when using these Likert scale items. As Figure A.5 shows, the latent class model distinguishes very well between three types of respondents. The overlap between the left and right-wing distributions is very small. As expected the centrist class also expresses mid-range scores. Hardly anybody in this classification is below 12 or above 20 on the 6-30 scale. Based on this result, we feel confident that the classifications estimated using latent class modeling make a meaningful distinction between different economic policy preferences.

Figure A.5: Distribution of Three classes of Economic Policy Preferences on Additive Index of Observed Survey Items



Source : BHPS, 1991-2007

3.4 Over Time Proportion of Latent Classes

Table A.6 reports the proportion of left-wing, right-wing and centrist respondents as classified by the latent class model for each survey year. As the results clearly show, except the big right-wing dealignment between 1991 and 1993, there is no evidence of an increase in the share of individuals in the panel classified as right-wing ideologues.

Table A.6: Over Time Proportion of Latent Classes

	Liberal	Other	Conservative
Overall	0.20	0.57	0.23
By Year:			
1991	0.23	0.48	0.29
1993	0.24	0.54	0.22
1995	0.25	0.53	0.22
1997	0.18	0.59	0.22
2000	0.17	0.61	0.21
2004	0.16	0.63	0.22
2007	0.14	0.65	0.21

4 Covariates on Initial State

Table A.7 reports the coefficients of the factors affecting the initial economic preferences, when respondents entered the panel. 77.5% of people were interviewed for the first time in 1991. Including these factors into the model accounts for observed heterogeneity in economic policy preferences.

Table A.7: Covariates on initial state

	LIBERAL		CENTRIST		CONSERVATIVE	
	<i>coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>coef.</i>	<i>s.e.</i>
Intercept	-0.61*	0.25	2.85***	0.21	-2.24***	0.29
Age	0.01***	0.00	-0.03***	0.00	0.02***	0.00
Female	0.08**	0.03	0.13***	0.02	-0.21***	0.03
Education: Primary educ	0.26***	0.06	0.24***	0.05	-0.49***	0.07
Low sec-voc	-0.10*	0.05	0.14***	0.04	-0.04	0.05
High sec, mid voc	-0.16*	0.07	-0.13*	0.06	0.28***	0.06
Higher voc	-0.05	0.06	-0.07	0.05	0.11*	0.05
Degree	0.05	0.07	-0.19**	0.06	0.14*	0.06
Class: Service	-0.22***	0.06	-0.11*	0.05	0.33***	0.06
Intermediate	-0.10	0.06	-0.04	0.06	0.13*	0.06
Self-employed	-0.47***	0.09	-0.14	0.07	0.61***	0.08
Lower sales services	-0.04	0.07	0.08	0.06	-0.04	0.09
Technicians	0.42***	0.09	0.14	0.08	-0.56***	0.11
Manual workers	0.40***	0.07	0.08	0.07	-0.48***	0.10
Housing: Own	-0.41***	0.07	0.11	0.06	0.30***	0.07
Mortgage	-0.28***	0.04	-0.05	0.04	0.33***	0.05
Social	0.54***	0.07	0.14*	0.07	-0.68***	0.11
Rented	0.14*	0.06	-0.20**	0.06	0.05	0.08
Logged income	0.03	0.03	-0.13***	0.02	0.10**	0.03

Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. *Data:* BHPS (1901-2007).

Note: Effect coding! All variables are measured at the time when respondents entered the panel. N obs.: 7,582.

5 Measuring Material Hardship

1. *Income change*

- Based on annual income variable.
- Drop of income by at least 25% (10.6%): $\text{Inc}(t) / \text{Inc}(t-1) < 0.751$
- Increase of income by at least 25% (36.7%): $\text{Inc}(t) / \text{Inc}(t-1) > 1.250$

2. *Employment*

- Based on labour force status.
- Employed in t-1 and t (92.9%)
- Unemployed in t-1 and t (1.3%)
- Became unemployed in t (2.7%)
- Found job in t (3.0%)

3. *Subjective financial situation*

- Using question about self-identified change in their personal financial situation.
- Situation the same (71.2%)
- Situation got better (15.9%)
- Situation got worse (12.9%)

4. *Subjective job security*

- Using question about subjective job security, which was dichotomized to those responding that job is not secure (response cat 1 to 3)
- Job security got worse (7.5%): $\text{Jobinsec}(t-1) = 0 \rightarrow \text{Jobinsec}(t) = 1$
- Job security got better (8.5%): $\text{Jobinsec}(t-1) = 1 \rightarrow \text{Jobinsec}(t) = 0$

6 Additional results: Material conditions and changes in economic preferences

Figure A.6 plots the proportion of respondents that were classified as centrist in $t-1$ and became left-wing in t . This left-wing realignment is divided into those that experienced hardship (solid lines) and for those who had no change in their objective or subjective circumstances (dashed lines). As the plots show, those that experienced hardship are significantly more likely to move to the left.

Figure A.6: Left-wing Realignment (Centrist in $t - 1$; Left-wing in t) (95% C.I.)

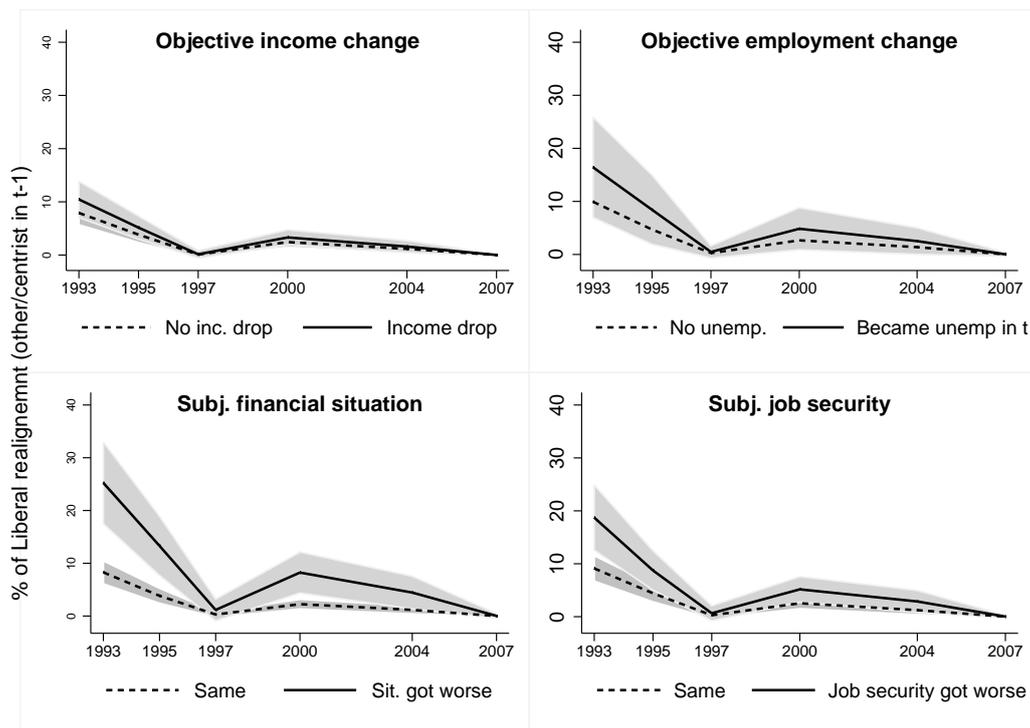
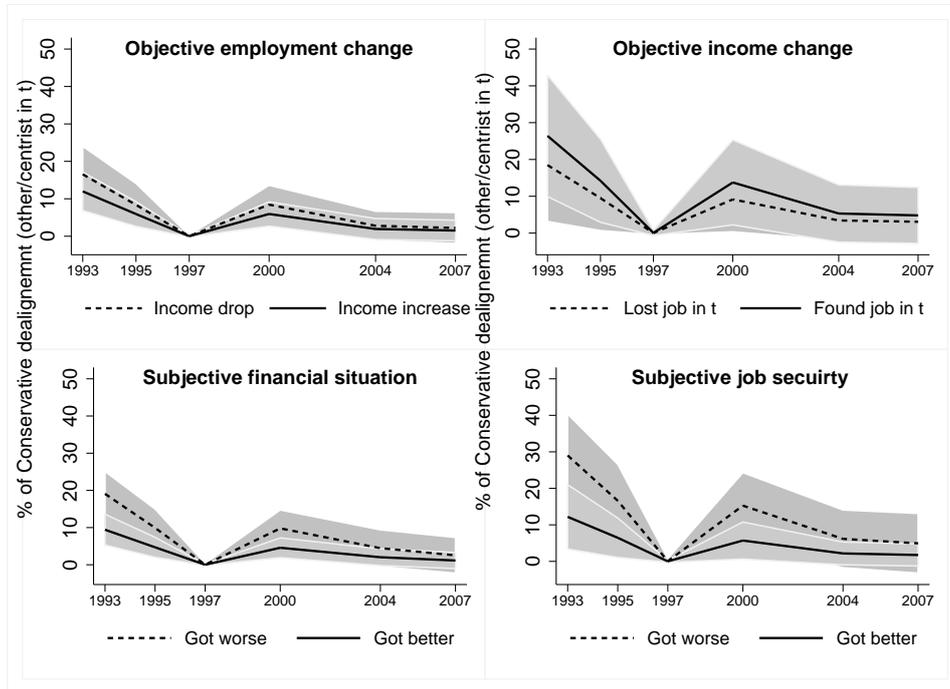
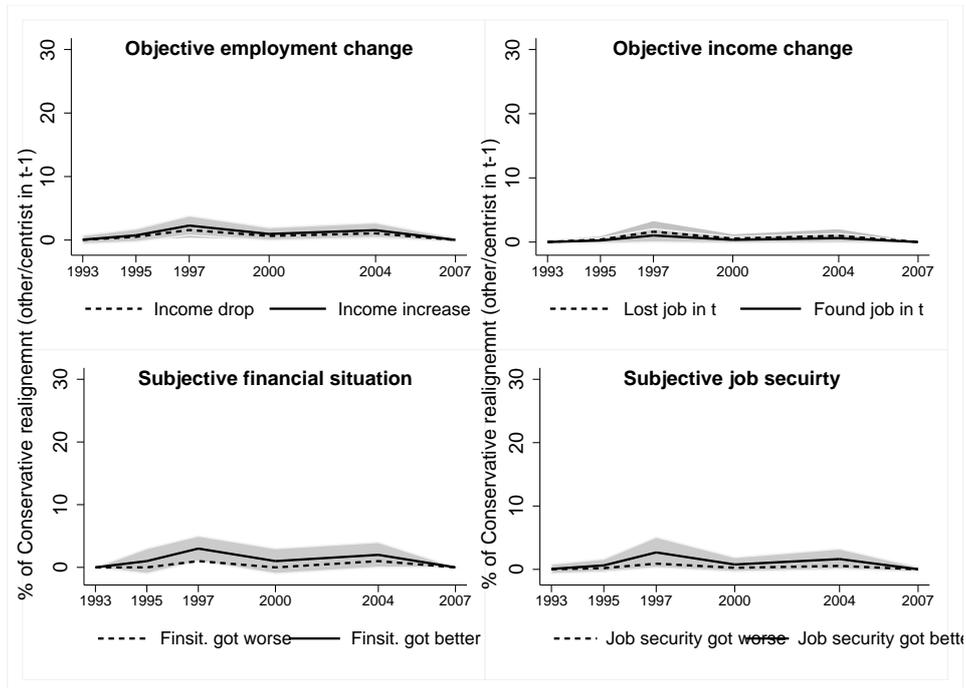


Figure A.7: Changes in Right-wing Economic Preferences



(a) Right-wing Dealignment (Right-wing in t-1; Centrist in t)



(b) Right-wing Realignment (Centrist in t; Right-wing in t)

Figure A.8: Predicted Probabilities of Movement out of and into Conservative Ideology Over Time Based on Changes in Material Interest (incl. 95% C.I.)

7 Additional Robustness Checks

7.1 Alternative Method: Fixed Effects Model

Table A.8: Dynamic fixed effects model

	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>P > t</i>	<i>[95% C.I.]</i>	
Econ. Ideology Scale (lag)	-0.037	0.000	-0.058	-0.016
Income (log)	0.109	0.024	0.014	0.204
Unemployment	0.025	0.842	-0.217	0.266
Financial situation (1=comfortably; 5=finding it difficult)	-0.092	0.000	-0.142	-0.043
Job security (1=insecure; 7=secure)	0.066	0.000	0.033	0.100
Control Variables:				
Age	0.043	0.000	0.031	0.054
Soc. Class (ref: service)				
Intermediate	-0.125	0.045	-0.248	-0.003
Lower sales service	-0.119	0.154	-0.283	0.045
Lower tech.	-0.283	0.014	-0.511	-0.056
Routine worker	-0.266	0.001	-0.417	-0.115
Housing (ref: owned)				
Mortgage	0.106	0.235	-0.069	0.280
Social	-0.070	0.628	-0.352	0.212
Rented	0.076	0.533	-0.162	0.314
Intercept	13.848	0.000	12.908	14.788

Note: The dependent variable is a sum index of 6 items tapping at economic preferences. The model was estimated using bootstrapped standard errors. N obs.: 4,864. Average observation per respondent: 3.3. Only working age population. *Source:* BHPS (1991-2007).

7.2 Placebo Test: Over Time Changes in Gender Attitudes

In order to test whether 1997 was an exceptional year, as people generally moved away from left-wing values, we rerun our analysis using a different dependent variable – gender values. Respondents of the BHPS were asked in nine waves whether they 1=strongly disagree or 5=strongly agree with the following items:

- Pre-school child suffers if mother works
- Family suffers if mother works full-time
- Woman and family happier if she works
- Husband and wife should both contribute
- Full time job makes woman independent
- Husband should earn, wife stay at home
- Children need father as much as mother
- Employers should help with childcare
- Single parents are as good as couples

These nine items load very strongly on one underlying factor. Parallel to our main analysis, we estimated a three-class latent class Markov Chain model.

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