

Multidimensional Congruence and European Parliament Vote Switching

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Abstract

Does ideological incongruence hurt parties in elections? Research on the representational relationship between parties and voters suggests that ideological congruence can boost a party's electoral prospects. However, while the mechanism is at the individual-level, most of the literature focuses on the party-level. In this paper, we shift the focus to individuals, develop a set of hypotheses based on a multidimensional conception of party-voter congruence, and examine the electoral consequences of these varying congruence levels in the 2014 EP elections. Consistent with our expectations, we find that ideological incongruence is a significant factor in voting behavior in the European Parliament elections.

Analyses of the representational relationship between parties and voters usually focus on overall congruence levels as measured by the ideological left-right scale (Blais and Bodet 2006; Powell 2009; Golder and Stramski 2010; Budge et al. 2012). Without discounting the enduring relevance of the left-right dimension, a substantial body of research points to the importance of a second dimension of competition to European politics (Kitschelt 1994; Marks et al. 2006; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009; Bornschier 2010; Kriesi 2010). Party-voter congruence on specific issues other than the left-right dimension has been referred to as “the blind corner” of political representation scholarship (Thomassen 2012, 13), and there are increasing calls for a multidimensional approach to assessing representation (Dalton 2015; Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016). This paper advances this cause by examining issue-specific congruence between voters and parties in the 2014 rounds of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey on party positioning (CHES) and the European Elections Studies (EES). These surveys coordinated to ask several identical or similar items that measure voter preferences and party positions on various issues related to economic left-right, social left-right, and European integration. This allows us to construct more fine-grained measures of party-voter congruence on more political issues than has previously been available.

We then examine whether or not variation in congruence levels between parties and voters on these different issues have electoral consequences. We expect that higher levels of incongruence will lead to more vote switching. While it may at first appear uncontroversial to expect citizens to cast votes based on ideological proximity, prominent research from the U.S. case calls into question the importance of ideology and policy positions for vote choice, and instead highlights the role of group identities and projection effects (Lenz 2013; Achens and Bartels 2016). We attempt to adjudicate between these competing perspectives on voting behavior by modelling the decisions of individual voters to switch votes between the most recent national election and the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections, and asking to what extent variation in party-voter congruence levels motivate the decision to switch.¹

¹As will be discussed in more detail later, vote switching is defined as an individual selecting a different

European elections are particularly well-suited to this task because they are often seen as second-order national elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Hix and Marsh 2007; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). The second-order nature of these elections allows citizens to vote based on sincere preferences or dissatisfaction with the domestic government without the pressure of affecting domestic government construction. If there are electoral consequences to low party-voter ideological agreement, these should be most apparent in a relatively low-cost electoral space such as the EP elections.

At the same time, European elections are also interesting for our purposes because of the potential for heightened salience of political topics that do not map neatly onto left-right competition. Several researchers provide evidence for the importance of European issues and information for EP vote choice (Carrubba and Timpone 2005; Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009; de Vries et al. 2011; Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hong 2015; Hobolt and de Vries 2016*a*), and others point to a strong role for cultural politics in understanding preferences and party positions towards European integration (Marks et al. 2006; Kriesi 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009). This research suggests that if party-voter congruence on cultural or European politics has an effect on vote choice for certain individuals or supporters of particular parties, we are again more likely to see evidence of this in European Parliament elections.

In the next section, we review the literature on congruence and party-voter representation. In section two, we develop hypotheses regarding incongruence and voting behavior at the European Parliament elections. We then present the data on multi-issue incongruence at the voter level. Finally, we analyze EP vote switching as a way to test the hypotheses about multi-issue incongruence and electoral consequences.

party in the EP election than that individual voted for in the previous national election, or abstaining from the EP election altogether.

1 Multidimensional congruence and representation

The Treaty on the European Union and the Lisbon Treaty state in Article 10A that the “functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy” and that “political parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of citizens of the Union” (Mair and Thomassen 2010, 22). But while advocates of increased European Parliament power may have the goal of enhancing representative democracy at the EU level (Hix and Høyland 2013; Rittberger 2012, 33), research on the extent of party-voter EU integration congruence has generated mixed findings (Arnold and Sapir 2013; Arnold, Sapir, and de Vries 2012). While there is some evidence that parties are relatively responsive to voter preferences on European integration (Williams and Spoon 2015), others find much less responsiveness from mainstream parties on European integration (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*b*), especially after the Euro crisis (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*a*). Most research suggests that party-voter congruence is lower on issues other than general left-right (Dalton 2015), especially on the EU dimension (Thomassen and Schmitt 1997; Mattila and Raunio 2006, 2012), indicating a substantial gap between political elites and the electorate on the EU (Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema 2012).² What is more, incongruence between parties and voters on European integration is associated with lower levels of satisfaction with democracy (Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016).

In a recent review of the Euroskepticism literature, though, Hobolt and de Vries (2016*b*) point out that public Euroskepticism has been understudied as an explanatory variable, especially regarding vote choice. That said, recent scholarship provides support for the idea that party-voter incongruence on European integration (Hong 2015),³ in addition to immigration and

²Alternatively, Dolný and Baboš (2015) uses a survey of representatives to measure elite positions and find voter-representative congruence to be higher on EU integration than left-right.

³Hong (2015, 523) measures incongruence using voters’ perceptions of each party’s positions rather than something like CHES or CMP ideological measures. As discussed above, we think this is a reasonable strategy; however, it is limited in a crucial way. Understandably, the EES only asks voters to place parties on a very few issues (general left-right and EU), which means we cannot use voter placements to assess the effects of incongruence on immigration or other particular issues.

EU integration attitudes (Hobolt and Tilley 2015), influenced the decision of mainstream party supporters to switch to niche and/or challenger parties in recent elections. We pick up on this work here and attempt to expand on it in several ways.

Previous research on the electoral consequences of party-voter incongruence focus on voters that chose mainstream parties in the prior national election and switched to niche (Hong) or challenger (Hobolt and Tilley) parties in the subsequent election.⁴ Admittedly, this is a particularly relevant and probably the largest group of switchers, but it is not the only type of switching that takes place. Importantly, Hong (2015) did not include voters that abstained in the EP election, a large group of vote switchers that we examine. In contrast, Hobolt and Tilley (2015) do evaluate abstentions and consider a range of policy preferences for European voters, but their study does not include party-voter congruence on these policies. Hong considers congruence on general left-right ideology and EU integration – as do Hobolt and Spoon (2012) – but not other salient topics like immigration or redistribution (Hong 2015, 520–521), which have also been shown to matter for European citizens political behavior (Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016). We aim to build on this research and address these concerns by modelling party-voter congruence on four items that represent a broad cross-section of policy areas and dimensions of relevance to contemporary European democracies.

Significantly, Hong (2015, 520) also directly considers protest voting in addition to ideologically motivated (sincere) vote switching, by including distrust in the system as an independent variable. This protest voting hypothesis is theoretically related to the sanctioning model used by Hobolt and Tilley (2015), where they use pocketbook economic variables (e.g., whether respondent feels they are worse off after the crisis) to proxy for voter desire to sanction parties in power. Finally, in their analysis, Hobolt and Tilley (2015, 20) find that political (dis)interest best explains abstention, rather than ideological positions. Though

⁴Hobolt and Tilley (2015) uses government experience as the distinguishing characteristic, while Hong (2015) relies on a niche party categorization largely based on the work of Meguid (2005, 2008). In this definition, niche parties, like Greens and Radical Rights, emphasize issues other than standard left-right.

our primary focus is on the effects of ideological incongruence, we will also incorporate these alternatives.

2 Expectations

Starting from a simple spatial theory of vote choice, we expect that party-voter congruence should affect the voter decision to switch parties between national and EP elections. We anticipate that voters prefer the candidate or party that minimizes the ideological distance between the representative (the party) and the represented (the voter). Again, we reiterate that this is a contestable proposition. In their recent book, Achens and Bartels (2016) group this understanding within a “folk theory” of voting behavior that they sharply attack for being insufficiently attentive to group attachments and social identities. Also drawing from the U.S. example, Lenz (2013) argues that citizens select a preferred candidate or party early in the process without much consideration of policy positions and subsequently adjust their own positions to those of the candidate. These alternative voting models represent serious challenges to the spatial model of vote choice, which contends that, other things being equal, the closer the ideological position of a party to that of a voter, the more likely that voter will be to select the party.

Of course, in practice, other considerations enter voter calculations, including—in national parliamentary elections—strategic considerations about the viability of the preferred party. For example, although the general left-right position of an extreme left party may be closer to a hypothetical voter than a social democratic party in the same system, the voter may still choose the social democrats because she is concerned about the ability of the extreme left party to clear the electoral threshold or to take part in a governing coalition. EP elections reduce such strategic concerns because they do not produce a government and this offers voters the chance to vote ‘sincerely’ based on their general ideological preferences. Thus, we

should expect sincere EP vote switching due to ideological incongruence.

Hypothesis 1: The larger the party-voter incongruence on the general left-right dimension, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.

Proximity voting in European democracies is increasingly complicated by issue competition and the salience of a second, more culturally-based dimension of politics (Kitschelt 1994; Marks et al. 2006; de Vries and Edwards 2009; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009; Bornschieer 2010; Kriesi 2010). In particular, the topic of immigration has become extremely important to European politics, particularly in the last several years. Immigration is the most important political question for most radical right parties in Europe, a party family with a history of strong showings in EP elections. Party-voter congruence on immigration policy thus forms a key component in the contemporary representational relationship and gives rise to our next expectation.

Hypothesis 2: The larger the party-voter incongruence on immigration position, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.

Similar to Hong (2015, 521), we expect that the importance of incongruence on issues beyond left-right will vary based on salience. When voters prioritize issues like the EU and immigration, party-voter incongruence will play a more powerful role in vote switching.

Hypothesis 2a: The effect of immigration incongruence will be stronger for voters that prioritize immigration over other issues.

In addition to general ideology and preferences on immigration policy, attitudes towards European integration should affect vote choice in EP elections (Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hobolt and de Vries 2016a). In general, mainstream elites are more likely to support European integration than the public (van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2009), and mainstream European parties have been relatively unresponsive to public opinion on the EU

since the onset of the financial crisis (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2016*b*). Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2016*a*) argue that “[t]he growth of public Euroscepticism since the financial (and other) crisis in 2007, however, has raised a new representational challenge for European parties and it is one that mainstream parties, particularly in western Europe, are largely failing to address.” Thus, government supporters that are more euroskeptic than their party are more likely to defect in EP elections (Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009) and challenger parties on the right gain voters who disagree with the mainstream positions on the EU (Hobolt and Tilley 2015). However, mainstream party voters that were closer to their parties on European integration position were less likely to switch to niche parties in EP elections (Hong 2015). However, Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2016*a*) point out, eastern European mainstream parties have accommodated the public Euroskeptic shift better than their western counterparts. So, we expect differences across countries. This motivates our third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: The larger the party-voter incongruence on European integration position, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.

Hypothesis 3a: The effect of European integration incongruence will be stronger for voters that prioritize European integration over other issues.

Our first hypothesis relates to the most general, overarching dimension of political competition within Europe, whereas the latter two pertain to more particular policy areas. In order to protect against concerns that we are assessing incomparable types of congruence against one another, we will also look at a more specific policy area related to left-right competition, redistribution. Further, prior research indicates that left-leaning challenger parties pick up voters who disagree with mainstream parties on fiscal policy (Hobolt and Tilley 2015).

Hypothesis 4: The larger the party-voter incongruence on redistribution, the more likely that voter will be to switch in the European Parliament election.

Hypothesis 4a: The effect of redistribution incongruence will be stronger for voters that

prioritize redistribution over other issues.

Notice that each hypothesis has a secondary hypothesis regarding salience. The EES is still compiling the “Most Important Policy” answers from the 2014 round and will release those data soon. When they do, we will test the salience components of these hypotheses.⁵

3 Incongruence in multi-issue space

Previous studies, such as Hobolt and Spoon (2012, 20) and Hong (2015), explore the effects of ideological incongruence on European Parliament vote switching. But both studies were limited by the lack of individual-level issue positions on multiple issues. In 2014, the European Election Studies team coordinated with the Chapel Hill Expert Survey team to ask the same questions across multiple issue areas. In addition to left-right and EU, researchers now have access to individual-level and party-level positions on immigration, redistribution, a trade-off between taxing and spending, role of government in economic interventions, civil liberties vs. law and order, and the environment. In this paper, we focus on four of these: general left-right, European integration, immigration, and redistribution.⁶

In substantial amounts of the work on congruence (Powell 2000, 2009; Stecker and Tausenpfund 2016), the interest is in system-level agreement, particularly whether the government’s ideology is close to the preferences of the median voter, or as Golder and Stramski (2010, 95) phrase it, “how accurately the collective body of representatives reflects the ideological preferences of the citizens.” If so, Powell (2000, 163) argues, then “elections are performing

⁵Also, while the analysis below focuses on left-right, redistribution, immigration, and the EU, future analysis will incorporate incongruence on the other issues available between EES and CHES: a trade-off between taxing and spending, role of government in economic interventions, civil liberties vs. law and order, and the environment.

⁶The question wordings for these four items are included in Appendix A. We treat the redistribution question as a proxy for economic left-right and the immigration question (partly) as a proxy for social left-right. But with the wide array of other questions, we will be able to untangle the party-voter linkages better using all the questions in future work.

well as instruments of democracy. . . . The further away from the citizens, the less successful the performance of elections in creating *representational congruence* between voters and policymakers.”

Measuring congruence itself is fairly straight-forward, even if the mechanics are often disputed. Powell (2000, 169) explains: “Representative congruence is the distance between the position of the policy-making party and the position of the median citizen on the left-right scale. The larger the distance, the less the congruence; the smaller the distance, the greater the congruence.” But this focus on the government and the median voter leaves open the question of whether the public has a variety of options to represent their ideological positions. Following Önnudóttir (2014) and others (e.g., Belchior 2013; Giger and Lefkofridi 2014), we focus instead on the links between parties and their partisans.

Scholars use different datasets to extract party positions. Many use public placements of the parties (cf. Blais and Bodet 2006; Powell 2009; Golder and Stramski 2010). However, as Önnudóttir (2014) argues, public placements of parties are not without complications. In particular, projection or contrast effects may be significant issues, where the public either moves the parties’ position closer or further from its own, depending on their party preferences. Or as Powell (2009, 1480) admits, “many citizens may in fact be ignorant about many parties’ real right-left positions, certainly more ignorant than the experts, and offering perceptions that are less authentic than manifestos. . . . We have to assume that their errors cancel out.” More recently, Önnudóttir (2014, 8) uses the Comparative Candidate Survey to extract party positions from its candidates. Here, we follow Powell (2000, 169) and others (Lefkofridi and Casado-Asensio 2013) who use expert survey data to place the parties, with the assumption that the ideological scales used by the experts and the publics are comparable. Powell (2009) finds very similar measures of congruence using manifestos, experts, or public placements of parties, which is a reassuring finding.⁷

⁷Recent comparisons of left-right placements by experts and mass survey respondents lend further support to the comparability of these sources (Adams, Ezrow, and Somer-Topcu 2014; Dalton and McAllister 2014).

To measure individual-level incongruence, we simply capture the absolute value of the distance between a voter’s position (EES) and the voter’s party’s position (CHES). As an example, see Figure 1 where we display the average of the party family’s voter’s position on immigration to the average party’s position. As the figure shows, most left-wing parties are to the left of their voters on immigration, while the Radical Right has a position far more extreme than their voters. This suggests that it is possible that the parties of the Radical Right engage in archetypical niche party strategy by attempting to capitalize on a distinctive and extreme position on immigration policy relative to other parties.

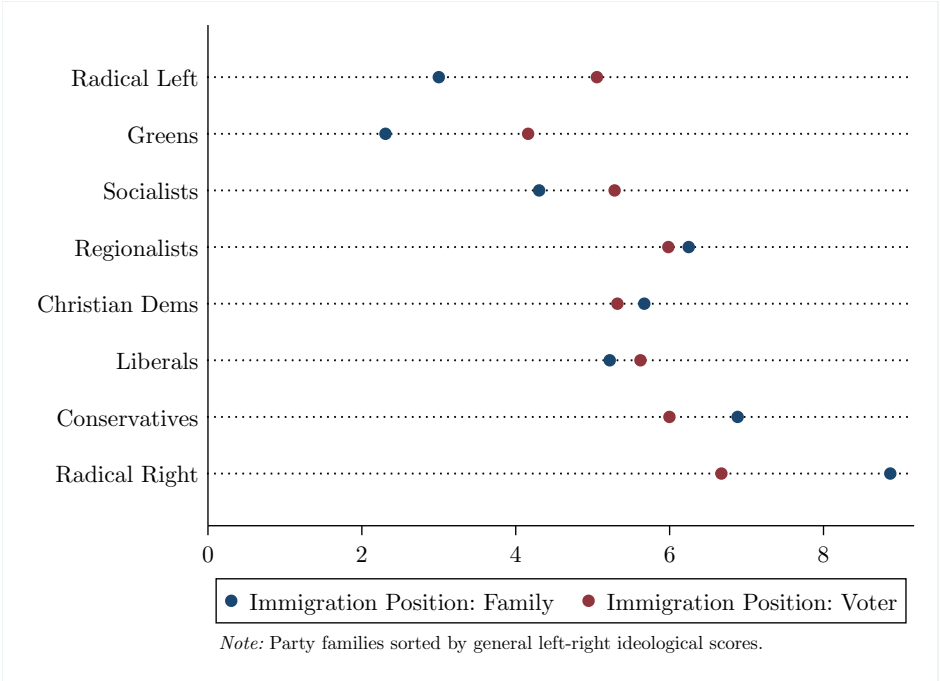


Figure 1: Party-Voter Incongruence on Immigration, by Party Family

To demonstrate variation in incongruence, we aggregated the individual-level incongruence by country (Figure 2) and by family (Figure 3). First, in Figure 2, we see tremendous variation across issues and across countries.

Among issues, the EU issue has the most incongruence in nearly all countries (except Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary), and in most countries, it is not close. This is consistent

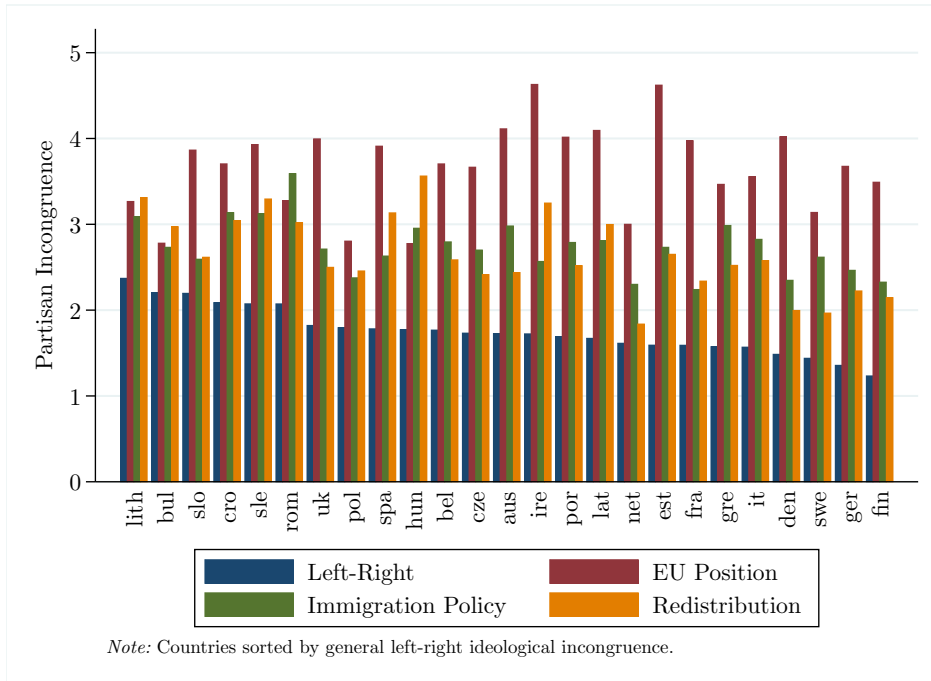


Figure 2: Party-Voter Incongruence on Multiple Issues, by Country

with our knowledge that most mainstream parties have more favorable attitudes on European integration than the public (van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2009). In contrast, but not surprisingly, parties tend to be more congruent on general left-right. In all countries, incongruence is lower for left-right than the remaining three issues.

Among countries, parties and voters are furthest apart on general left-right in Lithuania and closest in Finland, Germany, and Sweden. In some countries, like Hungary and Lithuania, the parties are surprisingly far from their voters on economic issues, whereas immigration is the most incongruent issue in Romania. As suggested by Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2016*b*, *a*), EU incongruence is a bigger problem in western Europe (e.g., UK, Ireland, France, Denmark) than it is for most eastern European countries; however, several eastern European countries, like Slovenia, Croatia, and Slovakia, also have high EU incongruence scores.

Next, in Figure 3, we see significant variation across party families on all four issues. All major party families are more congruent on general left-right than they are on the other,

more specific issues. The mainstream center-left and center-right, party families are most incongruent on the EU issue, while extreme parties on the left and right are most incongruent on immigration. As Figure 1 shows, the radical left is incongruent because they are far left from their voters on immigration, while the radical right takes a more extreme right-wing position on immigration than their voters.

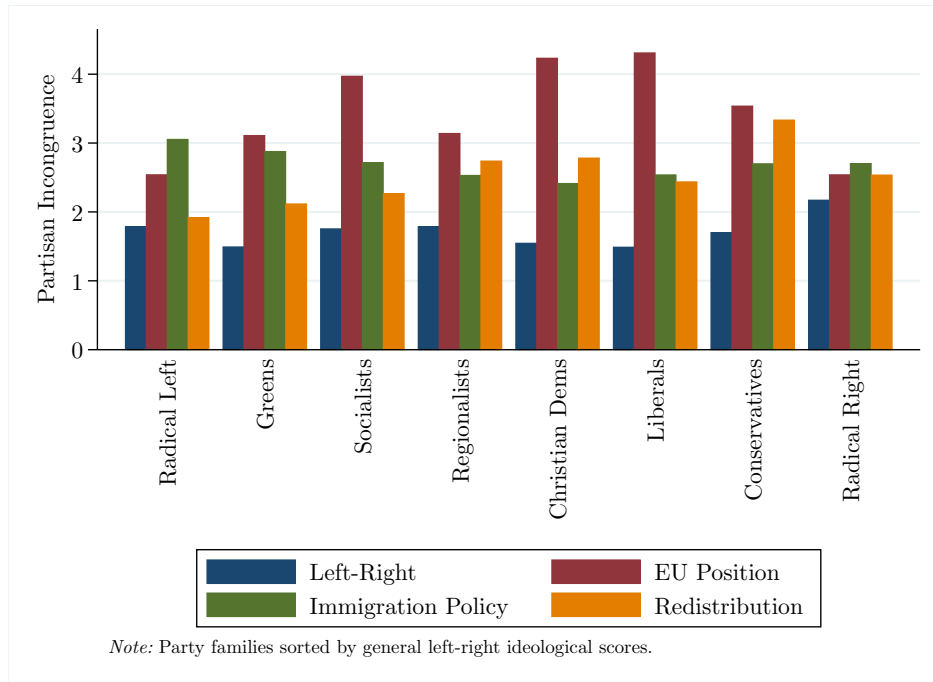


Figure 3: Party-Voter Incongruence on Multiple Issues, by Family

Certainly, the variation in incongruence across parties, families, and countries is interesting in and of itself as a dependent variable. But in the next section, we shift our attention to incongruence as an independent variable. Does ideological incongruence hurt parties at the ballot box?

4 Research Design and Data

The data for our analysis come from two sources, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the European Election Studies (EES). We use the 2014 wave of the CHES data to measure the positions of political parties and the 2014 EES voter survey to measure the preferences of voters. These surveys contain a number of items that were specifically designed to facilitate comparison between voters and parties. We construct an absolute measure of congruence that does not consider the direction of incongruence, only the magnitude. Voters are defined as an individual that reported voting for a particular party in the previous national election. EES respondents that did not vote in the national election do not enter the analysis.

Our dependent variable is a series of categorical variables, starting with *consistent vs. change*, where *consistent* means vote for the same party at the EP election as in the most recent national election and *change* means either switch parties or abstain. The next dependent variable categories are more specific: *consistent vs. switch*, *consistent vs. abstain*, and *abstain vs. switch*. These separate variables will allow us to unpack different aspects of the decision matrix of individuals.

For reference, nearly half of the respondents were consistent voters (8,499), choosing the same party at the EP election as in the most recent national election. Nearly 23% switched parties (3,942), while another 27% abstained (4,631). In simple bivariate analysis, all of the measures of incongruence have significant positive relationships with switching.

Since our theoretical interest is in the effect of incongruence on voter behavior, we rely on the literature for our main control variables. Beyond demographic controls (age, gender) and partisanship, we follow the Hobolt and Spoon (2012) and Hong (2015) strategy and use two variables to account for protest voting: EU satisfaction and government approval. In addition to these variables, Hobolt and Tilley (2015) find that political interest is the key explanatory variable for abstention. Since we also model abstention alongside switching, we

include political interest as well.

Both Hong (2015) and Hobolt and Spoon (2012) use hierarchical models to control for the multilevel nature of the data, and we utilize random effects logistic regression with country as the group variable to account for the higher-order effects.⁸

In Table 1, we present four logit models explaining voter behavior at the 2014 European Parliament elections.

⁸In addition to the logit models shown, we also conducted multinomial logistic regression and various hierarchical models for robustness. The main effects are robust to alternative model specifications.

Table 1: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections

	(1) Consistent vs Change	(2) Consistent vs Switch	(3) Consistent vs Abstain	(4) Abstain vs Switch
<i>Main</i>				
Left-Right Incongruence	0.04* (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.06* (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Redistribution Incongruence	0.04** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.24*** (0.05)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.19** (0.06)	0.08 (0.08)
EU Disapproval	0.27*** (0.05)	0.14* (0.06)	0.40*** (0.07)	-0.27*** (0.08)
Partisanship	-0.17*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.05 (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.23*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)	-0.40*** (0.04)
Male	0.05 (0.04)	0.01 (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.06 (0.06)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	-0.76*** (0.18)	-1.04*** (0.21)	-2.27*** (0.27)	0.97** (0.30)
<i>lnsig2u</i>				
Constant	-1.13*** (0.30)	-0.78* (0.31)	0.02 (0.31)	0.16 (0.31)
rho	0.09	0.12	0.24	0.26
sigma_u	0.57	0.68	1.01	1.08
AIC	13152.60	8900.28	8508.77	6002.78
BIC	13239.52	8983.72	8592.50	6081.02
N	10338	7738	7922	5016

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

In Table 1 Model 1, we see control results consistent with earlier work. Figure 4 displays the coefficients of the main explanatory variables from Model 1. Older people are less likely to switch, as are self-identified partisans. Voters who are dissatisfied with the government and with the EU are more likely to switch as well, though we will return to the protest variables in a later discussion of the government/non-government party split sample.

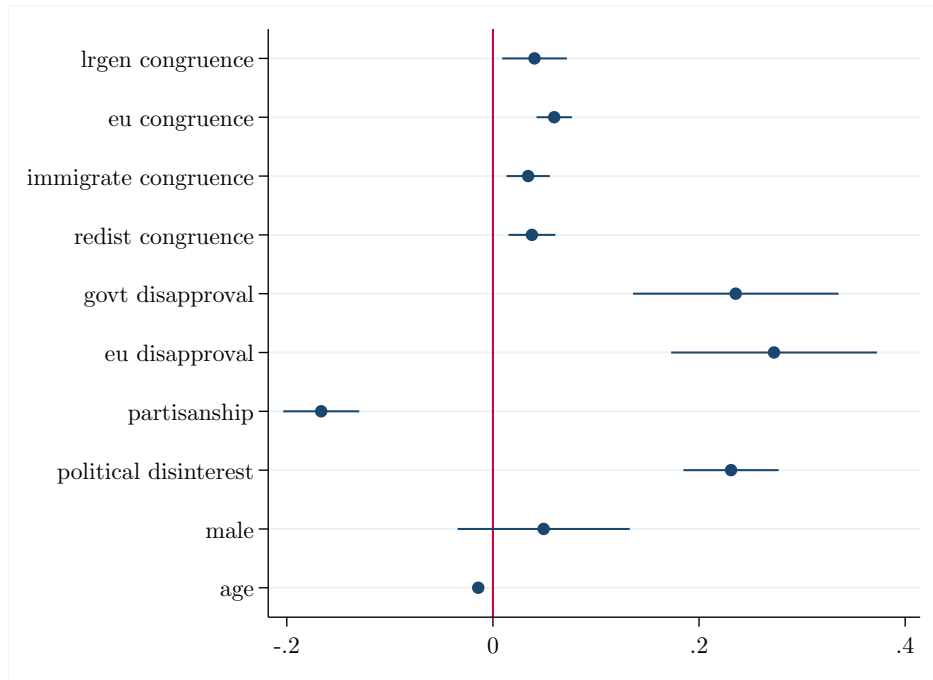


Figure 4: Analysis of Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections
Coefficients from Table 1, Model 1

Most significantly for our theoretical interests, incongruence across multiple issues matters for vote switching. Higher levels of individual-level incongruence with the national election party is associated with higher probability of vote switching and abstaining. With a few exceptions, these results are consistent with the separate *switch* and *abstain* variables.

For those voters who do change (Table 1, Model 4), though, incongruence plays less of a role in the choice between abstaining and switching. Instead, the driving factors are political interest and euroskepticism. Those respondents who express less interest in politics are more likely to abstain than switch. Abstaining is also driven by disapproval of the EU, an

interesting finding for those normatively bothered by the low turnout in European Parliament elections.

In the next set of models in Table 2, we split the sample by party family (i.e., respondents who voted for the Radical Right party in the national election are included in the Radical Right model and so on). The coefficients are compared in the dotplot in Figure 5.⁹

⁹In the appendix, we show the results for the Greens and Regionalists in Table 4.

Table 2: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections
Consistent vs. Change by Party Family

	(1) Radical Right	(2) Conservatives	(3) Liberals	(4) Christian Democrats	(5) Socialists	(6) Radical Left
<i>Main</i>						
Left-Right Incongruence	0.12* (0.05)	0.13** (0.04)	0.14** (0.05)	0.09 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.30*** (0.07)
EU Incongruence	-0.10* (0.04)	0.05* (0.02)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.05** (0.02)	0.07 (0.05)
Immigration Incongruence	0.14*** (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.08 (0.05)	0.02 (0.02)	0.07 (0.04)
Redistribution Incongruence	0.00 (0.05)	0.07** (0.02)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.05)
Govt Disapproval	0.18 (0.25)	0.31* (0.13)	0.25 (0.15)	0.44* (0.17)	0.49*** (0.10)	-0.45 (0.26)
EU Disapproval	0.02 (0.26)	0.24* (0.12)	0.41** (0.14)	0.63*** (0.17)	0.25* (0.10)	0.15 (0.26)
Partisanship	0.04 (0.08)	-0.21*** (0.04)	-0.25*** (0.05)	-0.17** (0.06)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.04 (0.09)
Political Disinterest	0.28*** (0.08)	0.38*** (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.33*** (0.08)	0.22*** (0.05)	0.12 (0.09)
Male	-0.62*** (0.17)	0.00 (0.10)	0.22 (0.12)	0.25 (0.14)	0.02 (0.08)	0.25 (0.18)
Age	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.01)
Constant	-0.91 (0.66)	-0.96* (0.40)	-0.38 (0.49)	-0.97 (0.73)	-0.49 (0.32)	-0.10 (0.69)
<i>lnsig2u</i>						
Constant	-1.24* (0.60)	-0.29 (0.43)	0.27 (0.50)	1.26* (0.61)	-0.19 (0.33)	-0.82 (0.59)
rho	0.08	0.18	0.29	0.52	0.20	0.12
sigma_u	0.54	0.86	1.15	1.88	0.91	0.66
AIC	886.21	2454.74	1691.08	1265.75	3742.70	809.44
BIC	940.67	2522.06	1753.84	1325.93	3815.22	863.28
N	691	2018	1381	1113	3112	656

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

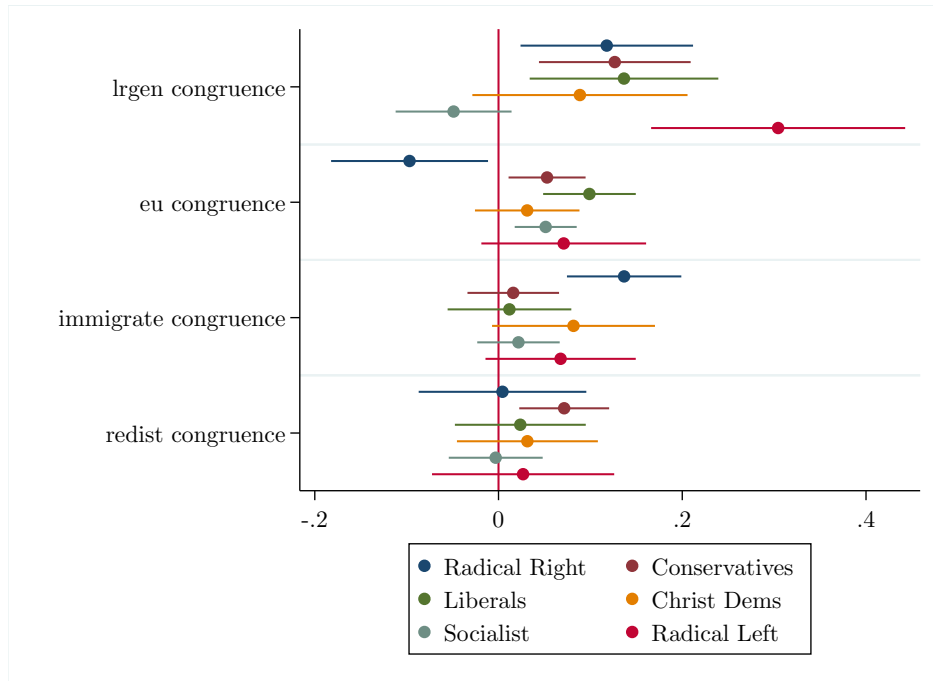


Figure 5: Analysis of Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections
Coefficients from Table 2

In these models, two things stand out. First, the effects of incongruence are not consistent across families. Liberals and Conservatives suffer when they are incongruent on EU and general left-right. Incongruence has no discernable effect on Christian Democratic voters, who are more likely driven by government and EU disapproval. Finally, Socialist voters are more likely to switch when their EU incongruence is higher.

Radical Right parties suffer when they are incongruent on general left-right and immigration, but actually do better when they are incongruent on the EU. Given that Radical Right parties are more extreme in their Euroskepticism than their voters – in the 2014 data only the Radical Right and Radical Left parties are more Euroskeptical than their voters – this finding may be a result of directional voting. Also, immigration incongruence is only significant for Radical Right voters. Surprisingly, only Radical Right voters are punishing their party at EP elections for being incongruent on immigration. This effect is shown in Figure 6.

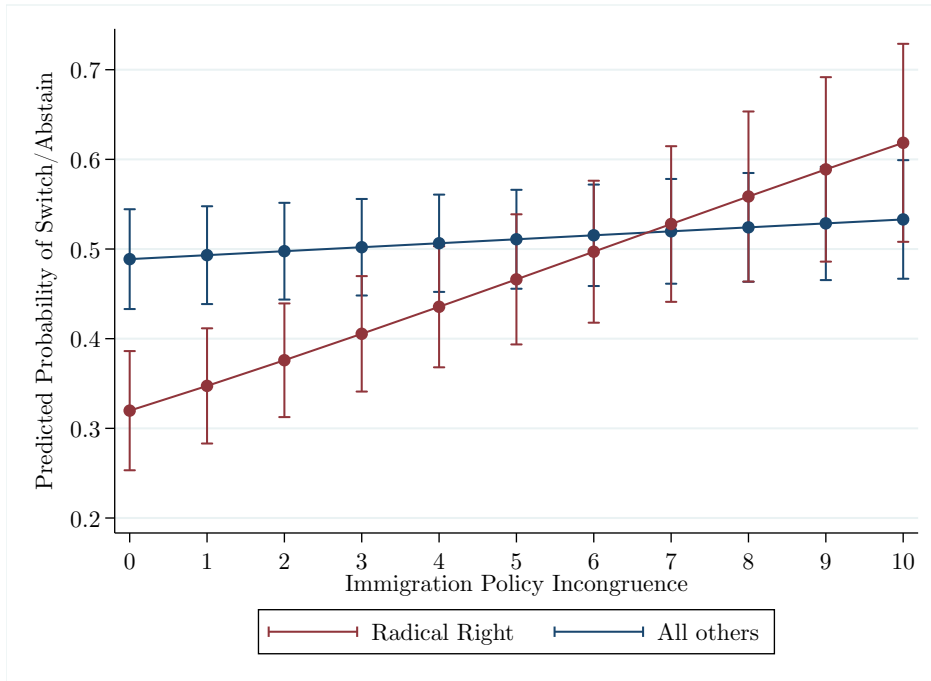


Figure 6: Effects of Immigration Incongruence on the Predicted Probability of Switching or Abstaining

Figure 6 illustrates that immigration policy congruent Radical Right party voters have only a 30% chance of switching or abstaining whereas highly incongruent voters have a greater than 60% chance.

The second main finding of Table 2 concerns protest voting. These models show that Government and EU disapproval only affects the mainstream parties, not the Radical Right and Radical Left parties. This pattern led to a final set of models, splitting the party supporters into government and non-government parties in Table 3.

Table 3: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections
Consistent vs. Change by Party Family

	(1) Government Party	(2) Non-government Party
<i>Main</i>		
Left-Right Incongruence	0.05 (0.03)	0.07** (0.02)
EU Incongruence	0.06*** (0.01)	0.04** (0.02)
Immigration Incongruence	0.03 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
Redistribution Incongruence	0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Govt Disapproval	0.70*** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.09)
EU Disapproval	0.28*** (0.08)	0.11 (0.09)
Partisanship	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.03)
Political Disinterest	0.30*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.04)
Male	0.14* (0.07)	-0.00 (0.07)
Age	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)
Constant	-1.55*** (0.26)	0.16 (0.29)
<i>lnsig2u</i>		
Constant	-0.72* (0.33)	-0.48 (0.33)
rho	0.13	0.16
sigma_u	0.70	0.79
AIC	5622.16	4968.97
BIC	5699.43	5044.21
N	4624	3906

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.

For supporters of government parties, incongruence on the EU is associated with switching or abstaining, but other forms of incongruence matter less. But protest voting is key. Government and EU disapproval are strong factors in explaining vote switching. In contrast, non-government party supporters are not more likely to switch if they disapprove of the government or EU. Rather, their voting behavior depends on incongruence on general left-right, EU, and immigration.

5 Discussion

In this preliminary analysis, we investigate the effects of ideological and issue-specific incongruence on voting behavior. We find strong evidence that voters actually punish their national parties at the European Parliament elections when they are highly incongruent. EP voting is not just second-order protest voting, but is ideologically driven; a finding consistent with work based on the 2009 (Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Hong 2015) and first analysis of the 2014 EES (Hobolt and de Vries 2016*a*).

With that in mind, we have much work left to do. First, we plan to investigate other issue-specific incongruence measures available in the CHES/EES. Second, and more theoretically interesting, we will incorporate issue salience into the analysis. There is no reason to believe that voters punish voters for incongruence on issues they do not care about. Rather, voters should care most about incongruence on their self-identified most important policy. When the EES data on salience are released, we will address this hypothesis.

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Appendix A. Survey questions

Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014

- **General left-right:** Please tick the box that best describes each party’s overall ideology on a scale ranging from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right).
- **Redistribution:** Position on redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. (11 point scale: 0 = Strongly favors redistribution, 10 = Strongly opposes redistribution).
- **Immigration:** Position on immigration policy. (11 point scale: 0 = Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration, 10 = Fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration).
- **European integration:** How would you describe the general position on European integration that the party leadership took over the course of 2014? (7 point scale: strongly opposed to strongly in favor).¹⁰

European Elections Study 2014

- **General left-right:** QPP12 - In political matters people talk of “the left” and “the right”. What is your position? Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “left” and 10 means “right”. Which number best describes your position?
- **Redistribution:** QPP17.2 - Redistribution of wealth. (11 point scale: 0 - You are fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in COUNTRY. 10 - You are fully opposed to the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in COUNTRY).
- **Immigration:** QPP17.6 - Immigration. (11 point scale: 0 = You are fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration, 10 = You are fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration).¹¹
- **European integration:** Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification ‘has already gone too far’ and 10 means it ‘should be pushed further’. What number on this scale best describes your position?

¹⁰We rescaled this question (0-10) to facilitate comparison.

¹¹We reversed the scale of this question to facilitate comparison.

Appendix B. Greens and Regionalists

Table 4: Effect of Ideological Incongruence on Vote Switching in 2014 EP Elections
Consistent vs. Change by Party Family

	(1) Greens	(2) Regionalists
<i>Main</i>		
Left-Right Incongruence	0.10 (0.08)	0.08 (0.11)
EU Incongruence	0.13* (0.05)	0.01 (0.08)
Immigration Incongruence	0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.08)
Redistribution Incongruence	0.07 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.09)
Govt Disapproval	0.34 (0.25)	0.21 (0.42)
EU Disapproval	-0.09 (0.25)	-0.30 (0.39)
Partisanship	-0.27** (0.09)	-0.11 (0.15)
Political Disinterest	0.10 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.17)
Male	0.32 (0.20)	-0.26 (0.34)
Age	-0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	-0.16 (0.57)	0.48 (1.27)
<i>lnsig2u</i>		
Constant	-1.17 (0.63)	1.19 (0.63)
rho	0.09	0.50
sigma_u	0.56	1.82
AIC	660.07	296.31
BIC	710.69	340.01
N	502	282

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Random effects logistic regression (group variable: country) with standard errors in parentheses.