

THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE EUROCRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The EURO area has failed to integrate fiscally in response to the 2008 financial crisis. At the same time, however, significant horizontal transfers towards financial stabilization have taken place. What explains this co-existence of persistent reluctance by domestic leaders in core EU countries to pursue fiscal integration and large scale financial transfers between nations within the union? We analyze responses to the crisis as a result of the geography of income and production. Heterogeneity of constituencies' redistribution preferences associated with a diverse economic geography accounts for the political constraints on national governments keeping them from furthering fiscal integration. In turn, cross-unit externalities in the form of potential financial risks shift the preferences of citizens potentially exposed to negative side-effects and open up the possibility of efforts towards international redistribution. The paper presents first an analytical framework to study these two mechanisms. Subsequently, we perform empirical analyses of the determinants of preferences for social redistribution, fiscal integration, and international redistribution in the aftermath of the Eurocrisis.

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I. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO THE EUROCRISIS

The debt crisis that began in 2008 and has shaped European politics over the last decade ranks amongst the most critical period in the history of the European Union. At times, the very survival of the Euro as a common currency has been at stake. Over time, popular support for European integration has become more contentious and member states have witnessed major transformations in their domestic party systems (Hobolt and Tilley 2015; Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Kriesi and Hernández 2016).¹ More recently, as various forms of populism are on the rise within the union, talks about a possible common fiscal policy (EU budget), even mentioning a common unemployment insurance, are an occasional presence in the public sphere. These proposals provide an implicit acknowledgement that the response to the financial crisis of 2008 has proved insufficient to contain the spread of challengers at both sides of the political spectrum.

This paper analyzes the political foundations of the EU's response to the crisis, a response that, in essence, combines two features:

1. On the one hand, the Great Recession has failed to generate political momentum for the creation of a common fiscal policy that would provide automatic stabilizers across the Eurozone (Hall 2012; Krugman 2012).²
2. On the other hand, however, Euro-zone members have taken incremental steps to enhance the “economic governance” in the Euro-zone, devising a number of mechanisms, such as the

¹For detailed overviews of the electoral consequences of the Eurocrisis, especially in the periphery, see the symposium in *Electoral Studies* edited by Bellucci, Lobo, and Lewis-Beck (2012), and the special issue of *South European Society and Politics* edited by Bosco and Verney (2012).

²To be sure, several proposals for advancing fiscal federalism have been made. These proposals vary in ambition, design, and redistributive impact, but they tend to share similar political fate (Pisani-Ferry, Vihriälä, and Wolff 2013; De Grauwe 2014). In one extreme, a common European budget would imply a standard system of automatic stabilizers and massive redistributive transfers across the territories of the union, and it has never been considered seriously as a political prospect. More realistically, from a nuanced understanding of the specific constraints at work in the EU crisis, the Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa group proposed an automatic cyclical adjustment insurance fund to make palatable internal devaluations through inter-temporal, counter-cyclical management (Enderlein et al. 2012): the idea is to accumulate buffers in good times and use them automatically (i.e. off political controversies) in bad times. In addition, a European Debt Agency will manage according to clear criteria and strict procedures the trade-off between access to bailouts and the preservation of budgetary sovereignty. Again, the adoption of such a system would imply a major step towards fiscal federalism and redistribution between EU member states.

European Stabilization Mechanism (ESM),³ the Securities Market Program,⁴ or the Outright Monetary Transaction (OMT) from the European Central Bank⁵, that, jointly, constitute a significant step forward in the creation of fiscal and financial regulations to stabilize the Euro-area. The initial goal of all these interventions was financial stabilization and not redistribution per se. However, there is no gainsaying that the specifics about their design imply a major distributive struggle about the allocation of the adjustment and stabilization efforts between donors and debtors (Schimmelfennig 2015; Jones, Kelemen, and Meunier 2016).⁶

We provide a systematic analysis of the connection between domestic economic conditions, cross-national interdependencies, and political preferences as a way to illuminate this dual strategy of resistance to advance fiscal integration while at the same time adopting major steps towards financial stabilization with significant inter-country distributional implications. In undertaking this task, we put forward two arguments. First, the infeasibility of fiscal integration reflects the constraints that (under electoral democracy) a very uneven politico-economic geography imposes on rational leaders' intent on staying in office. Europe's *perpetual stasis* is the result of a political conflict over the determination of fiscal capacity within a confederation in which constituent members have veto power on any institutional development threatening their material and political status quo. Second, the combination of the crisis and pre-existing pattern of economic externalities across EU members

³A successor to the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the ESM provides financial assistance to euro area member states experiencing or threatened by financing difficulties.

⁴Defined by the European Central Bank as interventions in public and private debt securities markets in the euro area to ensure depth and liquidity in those market segments that are dysfunctional.

⁵OMTs refers to the potentially unlimited purchase of euro area sovereign bonds on the secondary market by the European Central Bank. Introduced in September 2012 with the purpose of "maintaining the integrity of the euro area", they benefit countries previously under the ESM experiencing particularly acute financial stress.

⁶For every specific institutional tool under discussion, conflict centered around three issues: the amount to be committed by net contributors to bailout efforts. For instance, Greece is to receive 197.5 billion Euro during the period 2010-2016 from the ESM. And Spain received a credit of up to 100 billion Euro of which it ended up using about 60 to bail out banks. By contrast, Germany contributes 27% of the reserves of the ESM whereas Spain makes up for 11% and Greece 2.8% (Sources: esm.europa.eu/about/publications/index.htm, ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/index_en.htm), the extent to which countries in need of bailout commit to repay the amounts received as part of the stabilization efforts (i.e. the scope of the mutualization of debt across all members of the Eurozone), and the sacrifice of fiscal autonomy to be incurred by recipient nations. Every step of the way, donor countries worked to limit the scope of the contribution, demanded more stringent fiscal reforms from recipient countries (thus limiting their autonomy), and secured a commitment for the bailouts to be annotated as debt to be repaid by national tax payers. By contrast, recipient countries would seek as much automatic mutualization through mechanisms, such as the Eurobonds, that would imply significant transfer of resources between members of the union.

creates incentives for voters and leaders in core EU countries to support specific forms of international risk pooling (and associated redistribution).

By focusing on how potentially negative externalities shape the preferences of voters across European nations, our paper illuminates the paradoxical combination of opposition towards fiscal integration on the one hand and support of bailout transfers on the other. We provide an analytical model of preference formation that distinguishes pure economic interests from the role of interdependencies (externalities) that lead actors to compromise on institutional innovations that imply transfers between countries. We provide a detailed account of the nature of these interdependencies and how they interact with the asymmetric economic position of member states in the aftermath of the crisis. Subsequently, we establish a direct empirical link between macro-economic circumstances and individual political preferences across the member states that contribute, in order to distinguish the conditions under which the engagement of mass publics in integration issues leads to more dissent and undermines integration from the conditions under which citizens' preferences are actually supportive of integration efforts despite their potential redistributive implications. Put shortly, our approach develops a framework that allows us to adjudicate the role of domestic preferences and cross-national externalities in shaping citizen's views about integration. The crisis, the specific responses that followed, and the apparent political inability to manage markets reflect less a lack of leadership or being oblivious to history (Stiglitz 2011; Blyth 2013) and more the tension among countries with very heterogeneous resources and preferences over the balance between state and markets.

By approaching Europe's response as one more instance of the challenge to craft fiscal integration in the presence of spatially divergent economic interests and risk profiles, and by carefully analyzing how these patterns shape the views of individual citizens, we contribute a new analysis of the tension between the economic logic of currency unions and democratic logic of partial political unions. There is no gainsaying that the EU's institutional architecture falls short of securing a proper functioning of its currency area. The Eurozone is a currency union operating without a fully developed political and fiscal union (Sargent 2012; McNamara 2015). The preservation of a fragmented fiscal authority amidst a common currency area generates macro-economic imbalances and policy consequences that ultimately worsen economic and social outcomes (Krugman 1991; Eichengreen, Frieden, and Von Hagen 1995; De Grauwe 2013; Bordo, Jonung, and Markiewicz 2013).

We integrate insights from the study of endogenous fiscal integration into the analysis of political responses to the crisis (Scharpf 2011; Iversen and Soskice 2013; De Grauwe 2012, 2013; Hall 2014; Frieden and Walter 2017), illuminating the connection between the geography of economic inequality and political grievances over integration (Beramendi 2012; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013). In doing so we also explain why, in contrast to other experiences, the crisis has not brought about an endogenous reform of the EU institutional integration in the direction of fiscal integration.

Major crises have historically created political opportunities to pursue reforms towards further fiscal and regulatory integration,⁷ developing an institutional context better able to facilitate adjustments when needed within the union. In an apparent run against history, the European Union, before and after the crisis, has failed to realize the efficiency and insurance gains associated with fiscal integration. Our approach and empirical findings shed light on the constraints, in terms of citizens' preferences, on reforms that would complete the EU's design as a successful monetary union.⁸

Finally, we contribute to the emerging field of preferences for international redistribution (Bechtel, Hainmueller, and Margalit 2014): we add a theoretical framework where the study of preferences is part of a broader analytical approach to conflicts in which politically independent nations share a common economic space. Finally, by analyzing how the politico-economic geography conditions the political implications of the crisis, our paper contributes to an informed discussion of current proposals on a common European budget.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework. Section 3 develops an analysis of the European crises from the perspective of a common currency area with a very diverse economic geography, and how those pre-crisis features shape the nature of the post-2008 contentions within the Union. This section helps frame the specifics of the Euro-zone case in the context of the model and derives empirical implications in terms of preferences for fiscal integration and preferences for international transfers/redistribution. The next two sections examine these

⁷Insofar as all members are hit by a common shock, there are economies of scale to be gained from coordinating the institutional response to the crisis, easing the political path towards integration (Riker 1964; Alesina and Perotti 1998; Cremer and Palfrey 1999; Persson and Tabellini 1996). That was indeed the core lesson from the experiences in the late 1930s and early 1940s: the Great Depression triggered an unprecedented increase in the fiscal role of the federal government in both Canada and the United States.

⁸The idea that "all successful monetary unions have eventually been associated with a political and fiscal union" (Nouriel Roubini, *Financial Times*, 13 June 2011) "The Eurozone heads for breakup") has a long pedigree in political economy (Popitz 1927; Dixit 1998; Perotti 2001; Drazen 2000; Casella 2005)

implications empirically. Section 4 focuses on the determinants of support for fiscal integration by linking patterns of cross-national differences in economic geography to the variation in support for the delegation of fiscal authority to Brussels during the period 1995 – 2011. In turn, section 5 discusses the relationship between economic externalities and the observable transfers between member states after the crisis. We conclude with a discussion of the central implications of our analysis for ongoing debates on the ways forward after the European debt crisis.

II. ARGUMENT: RISK SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN POLITICAL UNIONS

Like any other outcome of a political process, policy responses to crises reflect a combination of preferences and institutions. The analysis of preferences helps establish how much support there is for alternative courses of action. Our argument is that the distribution of preferences depends on the scope of risks sharing between members within the EU. By that we mean the extent to which the citizens face a common destiny in their social and economic circumstances as a result of the crisis. Beramendi (2012: p.37) argues that in the presence of an economic crisis, “the key issue is whether the negative socio-economic effects associated with the common shock spanned across regions (i.e., members) or remained geographically concentrated. If the latter, the redistributive and institutional contentions among citizens in different regions will exacerbate. The polarizing effects of the geography of risks will be enhanced by the shock.” By contrast, if the social consequences of the crisis cut across regional boundaries, the political dynamics changes dramatically and common pool solutions become more feasible. This is consistent with Rehm’s (2016) recent account of crisis and their implications for risk distributions: when the crisis is of such a scope that the risks distributions change their shape affecting a majority of the population across the income spectrum, major institutional innovations become possible.

The analysis of institutions, that is the nature of decision-making procedures within the political union, helps understand how these preferences translate into outcomes. Political unions vary in the extent to which they privilege the voice of citizens versus territories. In some instances, like Spain, the polity evolves from a previously centralized regime and territories have very little impact of their

own in the formation of the common will. In actual federations, by contrast, subnational units enjoy constitutionally protected powers to shape the federal policy.

Following this simple analytical framework, the rest of this section proceeds in three steps: first, we introduce the main characteristics of the institutional set-up of the European Union and the ways in which it conditions the transition from preferences into outcomes. This helps motivate the premises about the process of preference aggregation governing the subsequent analysis of preferences. Second, we analyze how the differences in income, labor markets, and externalities shape the scope of risk-sharing among units, and therefore their willingness to support initiatives to pool resources to meet the consequences of the crisis. Finally, we summarize the empirical implications of our argument and outline our empirical strategy.

A. The Institutional Organization of Political Accountability

The EU is an odd form of political union that responds to international economic integration by seeking a balance between market coordination and policy decentralization (Gancia, Ponzetto, and Ventura 2016). Its very institutional evolution reflects the cumulative impact of two forces: on the one hand, the constraining effect of domestic democratic pressures on each of the member-states governments (Moravcsik 1998; Hooghe and Marks 2001, 2009); on the other, the role of supranational actors, such as the Commission and the Court, as drivers of integration (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997, 1998; Kelemen and Pavone 2018).

With the currency union, the tension between the implicit push for coordination and the democratic logic by which national incumbents must be (at least partially) responsive to the preferences of their domestic constituencies only grew stronger (McNamara 2015). The interaction between supranational actors pushing for partial institutional adjustments and national governments protecting their domestic interests from very different positions of relative power is a well understood feature of the crisis (Schimmelfennig 2014, 2015; Jones, Kelemen, and Meunier 2016).

For the purposes of our analysis, the most important feature of the institutional the union is the fact that, despite the increasing role of the EU Parliament and the Commission, it remains the case that European nation states retain the ability to both set their own policy (except monetary policy for

Eurozone members) and veto any common proposal perceived to be against its core interests (Hix and Høyland 2011). This places the democratic nexus between citizens and incumbents within EU states at the center of the analysis as it gives each member a veto over all coordination proposals. To capture the role of this institutional feature in the political process of preference aggregation within the union, we assume henceforth that the incumbent of each member state must respond to the preferences of the median voter. Put differently, no incumbent can remain in office if she deviates from the preferences of the median voter. Accordingly, the fortune of any policy proposal within the union becomes dependent of the distance in terms of preferences between the median voters of the different constituent units.

B. Risk Sharing and Institutional Preferences

Given the institutional structure outlined in the preceding section, actors' preferences and their incentives to coordinate over reform take center stage. To understand the EU experience in a broader, comparative context, we turn to analyze the preferences of national median voters', defined in the earlier section as the key veto players. To the extent that democracies are representative and there is some congruence between voters and governments, it holds that the preferences of the national representative in the EU council overlap with the preferences of the national median voter.

To unpack the national median voter's preferences, and how they matter, we consider just two regions, A and B , where individuals care about their final consumption and vary in their pretax income. A is poorer than B , i.e., has a lower aggregate income per capita ($W^A < W < W^B$). As a result, income varies along two dimensions: among individual median voters (denoted by w_m) and among regions (w_r). Furthermore, we denote the overall union average income of the union by subscript u .

At any given time, individuals are employed with probability α (the first term in eq. 1 below) or unemployed with probability $1 - \alpha$ (the second term in eq. 1). The former have a final income defined by their post-tax work earnings. The latter obtain income equal to the benefits received while being unemployed. In addition, citizens are affected by an interregional transfer (T) that, when in place, is a function of the regional average income vis-à-vis the union.

Finally, to explore the impact of cross-units differences in economic structure and production, we assume a direct link between the level of regional economic specialization and the perceived implications of losing one's job. By specialization we refer to the extent to which employment in a particular region is concentrated in very few industries.⁹ As a result, during economic downturns, individuals will find it harder to overcome unemployment spells in highly specialized areas than in more economically diverse and dynamic regions. Through this channel, the territorial distribution of risk and risk aversion become a primary mechanism for the geography of economic production to condition the choice of fiscal institutions. We approximate these differences through the parameter δ_r in equation (1). For the purposes of our analysis, we assume that the levels of economic specialization and risk aversion are higher in region *A* than in *B*.

Accordingly, each individual median voter has a utility function over final consumption, $u(c_m)$, which we parametrize as exhibiting (Arrow-Pratt) constant relative risk aversion, $c_i^{1-\delta}/1-\delta$. Accordingly, individual utility is defined as:

$$V_{mr} = \alpha \frac{(w_{mr}(1-t) - T(w_r - w_u))^{1-\delta_r}}{1-\delta_r} + (1-\alpha) \frac{\left(\frac{\alpha}{1-\alpha}tw_u - T(w_r - w_u)\right)^{1-\delta_r}}{1-\delta_r}. \quad (1)$$

In this setting, citizens face a decision about two policy instruments, namely, the level of interpersonal redistribution (t), and the level of interregional transfers of resources among members of the union, i.e., the level of interregional redistribution (T).¹⁰

To analyze the conditions under which political integration or international redistribution become feasible we proceed in three steps. First, we consider a situation in which preferences are driven exclusively by income ($\delta_r=0$). Second, we introduce variation across regions in δ_r and analyze the implications of a diverse geography of production for preferences over inter-personal (t) and international redistribution (T). Finally, we consider the implications of potential cross-regional economic externalities on the preferences over international redistribution. Figure 1 displays graphically the

⁹The literature in political economy repeatedly identifies risk, i.e., the possibility of a future income loss, as a key factor in driving people's redistributive preferences (Atkinson 1995; Moene and Wallerstein 2001; Iversen and Soskice 2001)

¹⁰We use the term redistribution loosely. Both t and T are essentially insurance programs covering either individual or national level risks and generate redistribution through the fact that a share of members of whatever group of reference enjoy better coverage/transfers than could otherwise afford. On the link between redistributive taxation and social insurance, see the classical piece by Varian (1980).

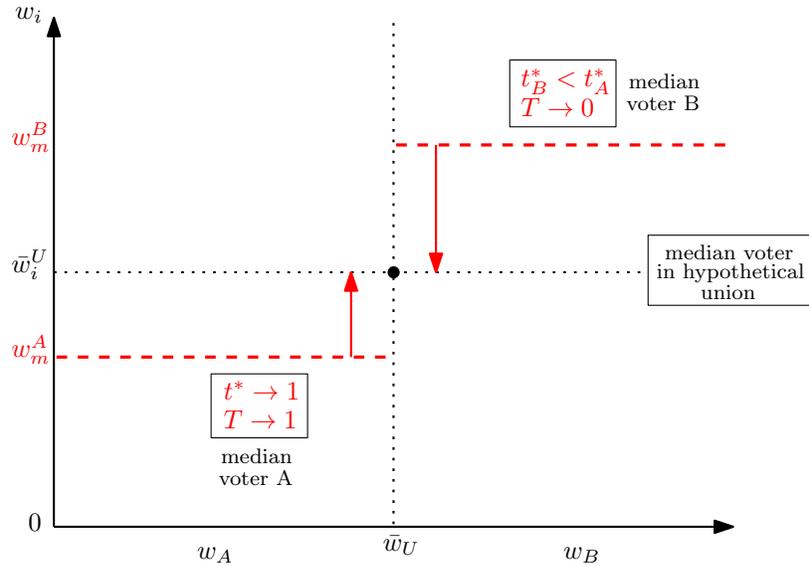


Figure 1: Argument

core implications of the analysis. The formal analysis underpinning the core results discussed in the next section are included in Appendix A.

C. Geography of Income

The first step involves analyzing preferences exclusively in income terms. To this effect we solve the decision problem of the median voter in each region assuming no differences in production across regions and no externalities between them. Figure 1 displays four distinctive groups of citizens. At the bottom left, poor citizens in poor region A support both types of redistribution. They want both transfers from the rich in their region and a larger tax base to draw from. At the top right rich citizens in rich region B , in the absence of mobility and insurance motives, oppose all forms of redistribution. In turn, the off-diagonal features voters whose preferences are not consistent across policy tools: in the top left, the rich in a poor region oppose redistribution within the region, but support receiving a share of the resources of other members of the union (perhaps to grease their own political machines); by contrast, in the bottom right, poor citizens in a rich region support their welfare states while refusing to share their tax base with their class-comrades in other regions.

Politically, the relevant positions are those of the respective median voters in both A and B . In the poorer region (A), the median voter falls below the union mean, whereas the median voter of the relatively wealthier regions falls above the union median. As a result, the former supports a relatively higher level of interpersonal redistribution via t than the latter. In addition, the former supports direct transfers from the rich to the poor region ($T \rightarrow 1$) whereas the latter opposes it ($T \rightarrow 0$). These results tap two channels through which differences across regions in terms of average income and spread of inequality lead to divergent preferences over interpersonal and interregional redistribution. Accordingly, as inequality between and within regions grows, the feasibility of political integration and interregional redistribution decreases.

D. Geography of Production

Interestingly, this map of preferences changes when we allow regions to vary in their degree of economic specialization. Most countries have three or four areas of economic development that attract large masses of workers, thereby altering their social and economic geography. Economic production tends to be concentrated in specific areas or regions due to increasing returns and the reduction of transportation costs (Hoover 1948; Krugman 1991; Venables 2001; Cai and Treisman 2005).¹¹ Economic concentration makes capitalist economies geographically unbalanced, and they will be more so the larger the scale of the political unit of reference. By virtue of concentration, different areas pursue different strategies: some regions, for instance, may opt for a growth strategy based on R&D investments and high labor productivity, whereas others rely on activities based on current consumption as the main driver of aggregate demand (e.g., areas specialized in tourism). The former tend to be more heterogeneous in terms of employment structure and opportunities than the latter, as high productivity, high skill industries require support from lower productivity industries and services. By contrast low productivity, consumption oriented industries do not require nearby pools of high skill workers.

¹¹Examples of concentrations of economic activity include fishing, farming, mining, manufacturing of particular goods (e.g., cars), or IT specialized industries such as hardware and software development.

In very specialized areas, the labor pool will find it more difficult to find alternative employment opportunities in the event of an economic downturn.¹² By implication, a higher degree of specialization in region *A* implies that workers and employers are more risk-averse (i.e., they fear more the potential realization of unemployment risks). All workers, including high-income ones, support some form of insurance (t), whereas the optimal level of insurance for the rich in a region with no economic specialization is necessarily lower (at the extreme, $t = 0$). Accordingly, preferences over t within *A* become less polarized and the median voter is willing to accept a marginally higher level of redistribution for any given level of her income ($t_{mA}/(\delta = 0) < t_{mA}/(\delta > 0)$; see Appendix A for the proof).¹³

The median voter in highly specialized areas becomes particularly sensitive to what Alesina and Perotti (1998) defined as “political risks”, namely the possibility that delegating authority to the center would increase the likelihood of a common, dysfunctional policy, distorting the workings of the local labor market (see also Perotti 2001). Thus, the median voter in the highly specialized will be wary of any process endogenously delegating fiscal capacity upwards. Empowering the center imposes too large a risk on the efficient working of their local economy, rendering fiscal integration an undesirable prospect.

Critically, the connection between the geography of production and labor markets on the one hand and political coalitions on the other feeds back directly into a distributive conflict over fiscal resources (T) between *A* and *B*. To the extent that differences in productive systems and risk profiles constrain the feasibility of endogenously creating a centralized tax and insurance policy (t), political conflict will center around the size of interregional transfers (T). As derived from the model and shown in Figure 1, the median voter in *B* continues to have no incentive to share their tax base with the rest of the union. In this, she agrees with both the wealthy and the poor within her own region: the former because they are bound to become tax payers for a much larger pool of dependents; the latter because they have no incentive to share their (larger) tax base with their fellow class travelers

¹²Krugman (1991) argues that localization provides locational insurance when increasing returns are at work. It is precisely this same mechanism that explains why previously advantageous areas for employment relocation become traps in bad economic times. As the expectations of downfall spread, the speed of the crisis and the decline in employment prospects for specialized workers reinforce each other.

¹³One direct implication of this result is that risk differentials associated with the geography of production facilitate the formation of intra-regional cross-class coalitions in defense of the dominant economic sectors and, conversely, undermine the likelihood of interregional class coalitions.

from other nations. As a result, differences emerging from an uneven geography of production and risk reinforce the polarizing effects on interregional redistribution of an uneven geography of income.

E. Shocks and Externalities

That the case, the third and final step in the analysis involves exploring how a common external shock, such as a financial crisis, interacts with the underlying economic geography of the union. The key distinction here is whether the crisis brings members of the union closer in terms of resources and risk profiles or, by contrast, generates asymmetric effects that exacerbate pre-existing differences within the union. The issue is whether the negative socioeconomic effects associated with the common shock of the financial crisis spanned across regions or remained geographically concentrated. If the latter, the crisis will polarize regions in terms of redistributive preferences and institutional tensions. In contrast, if the social consequences of the crisis cut across regional boundaries, the crisis may act as an engine for political and fiscal integration. Which of these two scenarios is actually realized depends in large part on the scope of socio-economic externalities across regions.

Economic externalities depend primarily on the extent to which factors, labor and capital, travel across borders and their implications for countries' risk profiles. Labor flows work as a transmission mechanism of labor markets and social insurance risks between territories.¹⁴ Capital cross-border linkages within a common economic and monetary area facilitate the exposure to financial risk, resulting from the pattern of internal lending and borrowing (Hale and Obstfeld 2014). The geography of debt flows works as a transmission mechanism of financial risks between territories.

Our analysis so far has assumed no externalities of either type. To the extent that this remains the case, in the presence of an uneven geography of production, economic shocks have differential effects on regional economies and polarize institutional preferences across member states. By contrast, to the extent that cross-regional externalities exist, such as cross-country exposure to financial risks, preferences will change to favor some level of interregional redistribution.

¹⁴By labor flows we refer to mobility of workers and potential dependents across borders. For analyses where increasing labor mobility facilitates the adoption of common social policies, see Bolton and Roland 1996; Perotti 2001; and Morelli, Yang, and Ye 2012.

Consider first the case of large levels of mobility among the unemployed. In such a case, the region expelling unemployed poor people increases its employment rate and average output, whereas the recipient region sees both magnitudes drop. As a result, both regions also come closer in terms of the nature of the distributive conflict among their citizens. More importantly, as the poor travel across regional boundaries, net welfare recipients in wealthier regions lose their ability to protect their tax base by keeping a decentralized insurance system and reducing interregional redistribution.¹⁵ Regarding capital and debt flows, a similar process unfolds. If the geography of debt is such that wealthier areas are exposed to a negative shock via the risk of poorer areas actually defaulting on their payments, then the risks associated with economic collapse are no longer concentrated territorially.

By acting as a multiplier of social shocks across territories, labor and capital/debt flows thus become a new source of risk against which wealthier members of the union have incentives to create some form of insurance. This is the scenario captured by the two arrows in Figure 1, which show a partial convergence of preferences across regions as a result of externalities. In anticipation of negative economic externalities, rich *and* poor citizens of the wealthier region *B* will coalesce with rich citizens of the poorer region *A* on an exchange in which interregional transfers (T) are used to ensure the status quo in terms of fiscal integration and inter-personal redistribution (t), even if at the expense of the poorest members of society.¹⁶ The goal is to contain the scope of negative economic consequences associated with migration and capital/debt flows, which would undermine the viability of regionalized labor markets and welfare states.

Support for a combination of decentralized interpersonal redistribution and significant interregional transfers is likely to grow stronger only when (the expectation of) negative economic externalities and regional economic specialization co-exist. The resulting fiscal structure would be a combination of decentralized fiscal institutions with partial interregional transfers (T).¹⁷ The actual form of T will reflect the nature of the externality to be dealt with. If the concern is primarily about labor flows, it will take the form of funding for infra-structural programs meant to enhance aggregate

¹⁵Interregional mobility of dependents from economically depressed to economically prosperous areas implies by definition an interregional transfer of resources between the regions of the union.

¹⁶This will be the optimal strategy insofar as an additional marginal increase in interregional redistribution (T) equates to the net loss due to changes in interpersonal redistribution (t) motivated by larger levels of cross-regional mobility of dependents.

¹⁷This logic of prospective self-insurance is also at work in the international arena: the privileged prefer to pay to keep the poor away rather than risk allowing undesired dependents into their economies.

demand and the functioning of local labor markets in recipient areas (e.g., the various forms of EU Structural Funds). If the concern is primarily about financial risks and capital losses, it will take the form of targeted bailouts meant to facilitate the rebalancing of financial institutions (both private and public).¹⁸

III. FROM THE THEORY TO THE CASE: MONETARY UNION, ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY, AND THE EUROPEAN DEBT CRISIS

In this section, we present relevant background information on the EU and derive the empirical expectations from the model as applied to the European debt crisis. To analyze the role of economic geography in the crisis it is necessary to take a step back. The common currency area was purposefully created through the monetary integration of countries very diverse in terms of both economic strategies (production) and resources (income). These differences were only exacerbated by several enlargement rounds, themselves entailing distributive compromises between the beneficiaries of larger markets and those facing steeper competition while giving up significant policy autonomy (Schneider 2009). These differences in income and production are important to understand the nature of the Eurozone crisis and its political implications. Growth strategies shape labor markets and distributive conflicts within countries. Income levels, and with them state resources, matter for distributive conflicts both within and between countries.¹⁹

¹⁸Optimally, and to ensure political feasibility, these packages will feature large levels of conditionality, targeting, and inter-temporal burden sharing with recipient countries. For empirical evidence on citizens' support for different forms of bailouts see Bechtel, Hainmueller, and Margalit (2014).

¹⁹In terms of the formal model developed above, growth strategies speak directly to cross-national differences in the type of economic specialization δ_r ; in turn, fiscal capacity speaks to cross-national differences in terms of the pool of resources necessary to undertake different types of redistribution (w , t , T in the model).

A. The Geography of Income and Production in the EU: Investment- versus Consumption-oriented Strategies

Concerning the geography of income and production in the EU, the key distinction is one between *investment* and *consumption* strategies.²⁰ An innovation-based strategy builds on skills upgrading in the medium run, aspires to increase productivity levels, and to sustain growth through “leading edge innovations” in Aghion and Howitt (2006) terms. In contrast, for countries behind the technology frontier growth occurs primarily via capital investments, the import of technologies developed elsewhere, and consumption-oriented policies aimed at sustaining high levels of aggregate demand (Acemoglu, Aghion, and Zilibotti 2006). Investment-oriented economies are export-oriented, whereas consumption-oriented ones are not (see Figure 3 below).²¹ Governments’ choices reflect how much they privilege consumptive expenditure at the expense of future returns via investments in education, research and development, and childcare. The balance between these two sets of policy instruments is critical to understanding the political economy of growth and inequality in the postindustrial world (Beramendi et al. 2015).

Consider the origins of wealth differences among EU members at the onset of the crisis. The EMU brought together under a common currency countries with very different levels of fiscal resources, as measured by the amount of revenue they are capable of collecting relative to the size of their economies. Some of these economies are more prone to compete in external markets and have developed well institutionalized solidarity systems; others, in turn, are more domestically oriented and have much more limited labor market coordination and systems of social protection (Thelen 2012; Iversen and Soskice 2019). Besley and Persson (2011) show convincingly how legal, political, and fiscal institutions feedback on each other over the long run, shaping economic development (affecting w_r in Figure 1) in the long run. Fiscal capacity and revenue collection reflect the shadow of long-term processes, including the type of industrialization pursued, the age of democracy, and

²⁰These strategies are defined at the country level for national governments remain the key decision makers in the EU and control the design of domestic economic policy.

²¹In line with this logic, we define *investment* widely as public expenditures that increase the overall productivity of the economy, and that of labor and capital in particular. The term investment refers to the future-orientation of these expenditures in the fields of education, research and development, childcare, and labor market activation (Esping-Andersen 2002). On the other hand, we consider as *consumption* expenditures social transfers to beneficiaries that (have to) use them in order to cover current needs and demands.

the pattern of state-society relations regarding strategies of political mobilization. Countries with early development of rule of law and democracy industrialized first and consolidated a set of political and economic institutions more conducive to investment. They are more capable of forging political coalitions to expand public goods and raise the necessary revenues (Pincus and Robinson 2014), and they are less tolerant of capture by special organized interest (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2006; Grossman and Helpman 1994). By contrast, late industrializers only achieved modernization via different forms of import substitution, which nurtured a core of well-organized interests (Altamirano, Rueda, and Wibbels 2015) that captured the political control of state institutions and used them to secure political hegemony via patronage and clientelism rather than programmatic politics (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). As a result, states are weaker, their shadow economies grow larger (Schneider, Buehn, and Montenegro 2010), and both voters and parties privilege consumption over investment.

Following (Beramendi et al. 2015: 10), Figure 2 captures the relative importance countries attribute to investment-oriented policies in the pre-crisis period. Using expenditure data from the OECD from 2003 to 2007, we define consumption-oriented policy as the sum of per GDP expenditures on (i) old age pensions, (ii) survivors' pensions, (iii) unemployment benefits and incapacity pensions; investment-oriented policy as per GDP expenditures on (i) public and private research and development, (ii) tertiary education, (iii) childcare services, and (iv) active labor market policies. With those two measures in hand, we calculate the ratio of investment-oriented expenditure to total expenditure (investment + consumptive expenditure).

Four distinctive groups emerge in the right panel of Figure 2. Nations like Denmark and Sweden both make large budgetary efforts in investment and consumption, and privilege the former. A second group of nations, like Austria, Germany or France, and to a lesser extent Italy, traditionally engage in large-scale spending but privilege consumption over investment. Symmetrically, at the other end of the spending capacity spectrum, we find nations, like Ireland, that have privileged investment over consumption, whereas others, like Spain, Portugal, and Greece, spend relatively little and devote most of their budget to short-term, consumption-oriented transfers. With declining tax revenues, investment-oriented strategies become less viable and the economy concentrates in low productivity, low technology sectors, such as construction or tourism. These differences, quite persistent over time, shape both the way different national economies react to the Great Recession and the potential

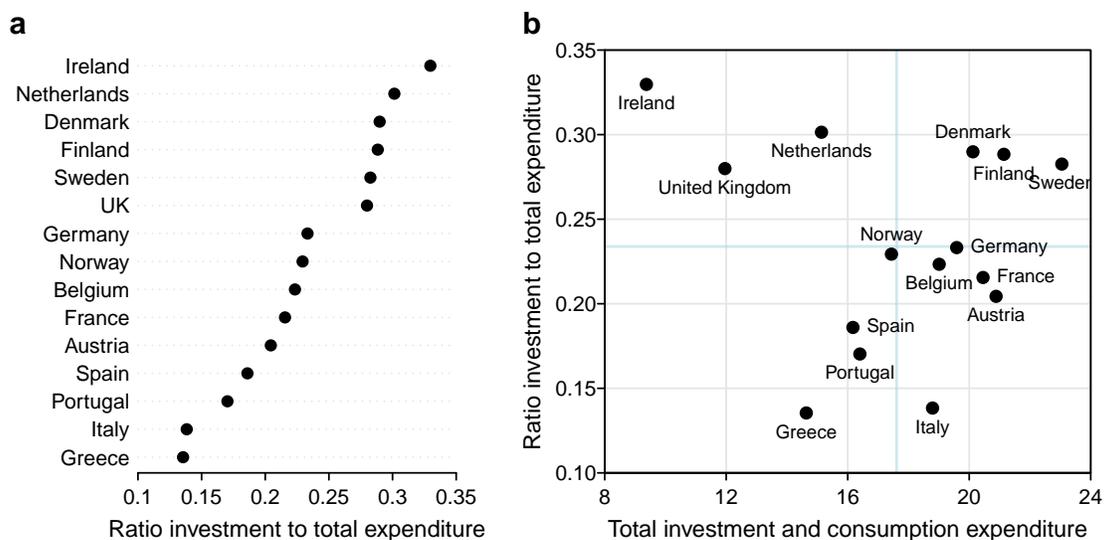


Figure 2: Configuration of economic strategies in Europe. Panel (a) shows the relative weight of spending on investment compared to total expenditure. Panel (b) plots countries' total expenditure on the abscissa, the relative weight of spending on investment in total expenditure on the ordinate. Light blue lines indicate average values.

patterns of economic externalities across territories. We analyze each of these in turn, thereby linking the EU experience to the key parameters in the model above.

B. Economic strategies and post-crisis outcomes

We start by analyzing how different national economies respond to the financial crisis. In the case of investment-oriented political economies, we expect a relatively lower elasticity of labor markets to economic downturns for three reasons. First, consumption and investment are not perfect substitutes: economies may choose to prioritize one over the other, but the required minimum of consumption effort is higher than the required minimum of investment effort. This reflects the constraint that democracies and markets must meet current needs before thinking about future returns. Accordingly, once an economy decides to prioritize investment, its economic structure becomes more diversified, with employment shares allocated across a wider range of industries at any given level of overall effort. Given a minimum level of skills, this broadens the options for labor market transitions. Second, the presence of well-developed systems of active labor market policies within less rigid labor markets speeds up the adjustment, and mutes the response of the unemployment rate to economic slowdowns.

Finally, those countries with an innovation-based strategy and high levels of fiscal capacity (such as Sweden, Denmark, and to a lesser extent Germany) are capable of better absorbing the negative consequences of the shock not only because the demands for budgetary intervention will be smaller, but also because their automatic stabilizers work more effectively. Accordingly, aggregate demand holds its ground, fiscal sustainability is not in question and international investors perceive these markets as safe targets for investment (Scharpf 2011).

As the investment/consumption balance shifts, the situation progressively reverses. At the other end of the spectrum, consumption-oriented countries show a much higher elasticity of unemployment relative to GDP. This is the case for two reasons, one economic, one political. Economically, by virtue of the low investment rates themselves, in consumption-oriented economies economic activity and employment are much more concentrated in low productivity sectors. Politically, labor forces also reflect the capture of regulatory policy by organized interests during the process of industrialization and are, as a result, highly dualized. In those circumstances, left parties and unions cater to the interests of insiders (Saint-Paul 1996; Rueda 2007), while less protected outsider workers provide a buffer during economic downturns. The presence of the latter group enhances the elasticity of the unemployment rate with respect to GDP. The situation becomes particularly untenable in consumption countries with low fiscal capacity, as they confront large and rapid increases in their budgetary demands with very limited margin to cope with them. With the fiscal and financial feasibility of public institutions in question, investors perceive higher risks, and these countries become attractive targets for bond market speculators.

In conclusion, past economic strategies mediate the impact of the crisis and set EU countries in rather divergent politico-economic trajectories in terms of risks, fiscal weaknesses, and distributive outcomes in ways that speak directly to the parameters of the model above. To illustrate this point empirically, Figure 3 shows the link between country differences in economic strategies prior to the crisis (on the x-axis) and politico-economic outcomes after the collapse of Lehman-Brothers. Panel (a) plots a country's gross-domestic product per capita on the y-axis, while panel (b) plots the national unemployment rate. Panel (c) shows the post-crisis balance in trade. Panel (d) shows levels of public debt as percentage of GDP. The last two panels show the distributional effects of pre-crisis economic

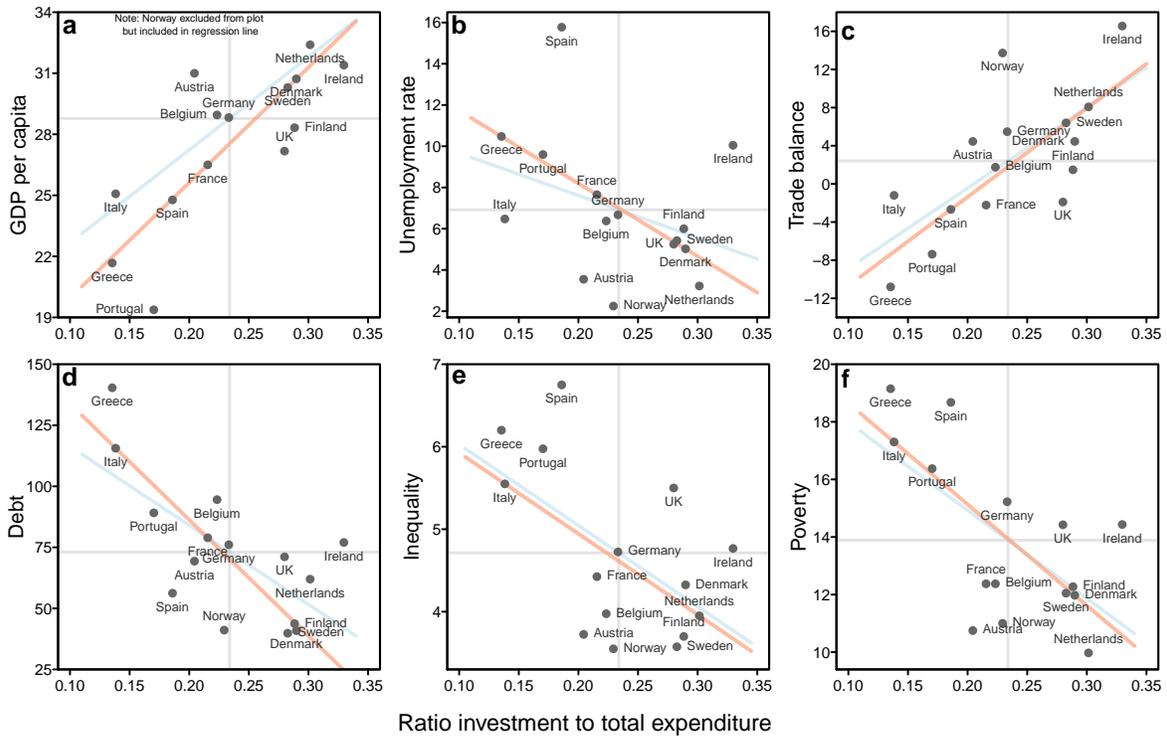


Figure 3: Effect of economic strategies on politico-economic outcomes. Panel (a) shows GDP per capita [in 1000s], panel (b) unemployment rates [in percent], panel (c) trade balance (exports minus imports). Panel (d) shows debt [in percent of GDP], panel (e) inequality [P90/P10 ratio], panel (f) percentage of individuals below the poverty line. The linear relationship between each variable and economic strategies is indicated by an OLS fit (light blue line) and an outlier-robust median regression (light red line). Light gray lines show averages of variables.

strategies. Panel (e) plots levels of inequality (the P90/P10 income ratio), while panel (f) shows the percentage of individuals below the poverty line.

The evidence conveyed in Figure 3 clearly supports the notion of divergent responses to the crisis by investment- and consumption-oriented economies. European economies have grown apart in terms of the both the incidence of risks and the financial capacity to cope with them. Panel (a) shows a fairly strong linear relationship between economic strategies and outcomes. Countries that privilege investment and trade over consumption have a markedly higher GDP (about 5000 per capita). In contrast, panel (b) of Figure 3 confirms that the countries pursuing consumption-oriented economic growth are the ones suffering the highest incidence of unemployment during 2008-2011. Consistent with the model above, in those economies with higher shares of employment specialized

and concentrated in low skill, low productivity sectors oriented to short-term consumption, the incidence of labor market risks more than doubles that of investment-oriented economies.

When risks are realized, the fiscal burden associated with abrupt increases in budgetary demands of consumption-oriented states translates into rapidly increasing levels of public debt, as shown in Panel (d) of Figure 3. By contrast, investment-oriented economies face the crisis from a stronger fiscal base and experience less increases in debt.

The social consequences of this process are quite stark. Panel (e) shows that countries pursuing consumption-oriented economic growth face much higher levels of inequality, where the income of the richest 10 percent of households is five to seven times greater than that of the bottom 10 percent. In virtually every country that follows a more investment-oriented economic strategy, this ratio is considerably lower. Similarly, consumption-oriented societies are experiencing high levels of poverty, with more than 15 percent living below the poverty line.

To summarize, by combining a common financial shock with a very heterogeneous geography of production, the Euro crisis has increased polarization of risks and income across EU members. Perceptions and aversion to unemployment risks (δ_r in our model) have grown apart as have the tax bases (w), and the incidence of inequality within nations (the ratio of w_i to w).

C. Externalities

The co-existence of investment- and consumption-oriented economies under the same currency also shapes the type and incidence of economic externalities within the union. Because of the split between consumption- and investment-oriented economies, European job markets were fairly isolated in terms of labor flows prior to the crisis, except for a very small share of the high-skilled labor force. To the extent that economic strategies among EU members continue to diverge, unskilled workers from the periphery have little future in Northern investment-oriented economies. As a result, labor flows remain limited to the upper ranks of the skill distribution and do not constitute a major source of economic externalities.²²

²²The case of refugees fleeing out of Syria is a very different one though, one that falls out of the scope of this paper.

In contrast, the geography of debt flows ties the fortunes of the investment-oriented economies of the core and the consumption-oriented economies in the periphery quite tightly (Hale and Obstfeld 2014).²³ Prior to the crisis, investment-oriented economies borrowed at low rates from ECB and invested in high yielding sovereign bond markets in the periphery, feeding short-term growth strategies and facilitating a sharp increase in net foreign liabilities by the periphery with respect to the core. As a result, those countries whose financial institutions have invested more aggressively in buying bonds and injecting liquidity in the peripheral economies are more exposed to the risk of a potential default by the latter. To the extent that core investors are tied in bond markets in the periphery, their economic fortunes are no longer isolated: default in the periphery entails major financial risks for key financial institutions at the core, thereby feeding back into the political process.

Figure 4 presents the evolution of this externality between the first quarter of 2006 and the third quarter of 2011.²⁴ Throughout this period, several core economies share a substantial degree of financial exposure to the potential collapse of South European economies. Accordingly, a potential default by one or, especially, several of these economies constitutes a major financial risks for the economies at the core. As the externalities are a source of shared risk, the transfers (T , in this case large-scale bailouts financed unevenly) work essentially as a form of insurance against the future realization of severe risks. Through the scope of potential externalities, financial linkages tie together the fortunes of the periphery and some members of the core in ways that creates political support for transfers between countries (T) oriented to protect the financial system of core economies.

D. Summary and Empirical Strategy

The Euro crisis has generated two distinctive patterns: (i) a polarization in the geography of income and risk within the union, and (ii) significant economic externalities in the form of financial risks to the core from the periphery. Analyzing these patterns through the lens of the theoretical model above

²³The story is well known (Fernandez-Villaverde, Garicano, and Santos 2013): Banks in core countries get money at low rates from the ECB and invest in high-yield sovereign bond markets in the periphery, feeding their consumption-oriented strategies further along the way.

²⁴Using data from the Bank of International Settlements we capture the size of foreign claims (on an ultimate risk basis) of core European countries in domestic banks in Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Italy and Greece. Figure 4 plots core banks' risk exposure in billions of constant US\$ relative to population expressed in millions.

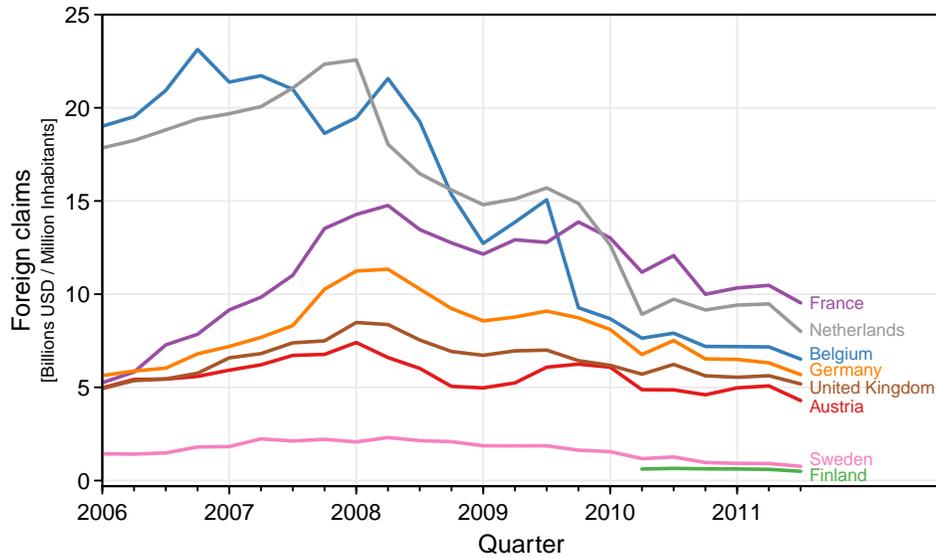


Figure 4: Post-crisis economic externalities across the European Union. Consolidated country risk exposure: Foreign claims (on ultimate risk basis) held by domestic banks [in billion US dollars per million inhabitants].

yields the following empirical implications, which we will study below in a comparative analysis of Western European countries:

1. Since consumption- and investment-oriented countries diverge systematically in their post-crisis outcomes, the economic geography of the European Union becomes more polarized, and so do the preferences of its citizens: *The more countries rely on economic strategies that prioritize investment over consumption, the lower will be their citizens' support for fiscal integration (H1).*
2. *As the scope of economic externalities from the periphery to the core increases, the support for inter-national transfers (international redistribution) increases (H2).*

Below we evaluate the empirical validity of these two claims. Our empirical strategy proceeds in three steps. First, we provide evidence of a key premise in our theoretical model. We show that areas in which economic activities are less heterogeneous and more focused on consumption-oriented economic strategies are characterized by less polarized preferences over redistribution. Subsequently, we evaluate (H1) by analyzing the relation between economic strategies and citizens' preferences for fiscal centralization. Finally, we evaluate (H2) by studying how citizens' support for financial aid across countries (international redistribution) varies with their country's exposure to financial risks.

IV. EMPIRICS

Before doing so we note some general points about the empirical analyses to follow. Our analyses are observational relying on cross-sectional survey items collected after the onset of the financial crisis. We look for empirical patterns in the data that are (in-)consistent with the predictions made by our theoretical model. Thus, we complement the usual statistical hypothesis tests with a visual, descriptive exploration of relationships. Cleveland (1993) provides an excellent discussion of how visualization can add to (or even replace) statistical inference. Especially in (often ‘data-limited’) comparative analyses, Bowers and Drake (2005) urge scholars to present “compelling description of the patterns within a given dataset” by using “graphical presentations [...] rather than formal hypothesis testing” (Bowers and Drake 2005: 303).

Since our population of interest is the set of (West-) European countries, our sample size is naturally limited. While our analyses, developed below, include a large number of individuals, they are “nested” in around 14 countries.²⁵ This raises two related issues: (i) we will be analyzing all available country cases, instead of working with a sample from a larger population; (ii) the limited information contained in small data sets makes it difficult to estimate effects of variables precisely. Both issues imply that the application of classical statistical inference “based on the long-run behavior of some repeatable data mechanism” (Jackman and Western 1994: 412) is questionable. Thus, all our statistical analyses are conducted in a fully Bayesian framework (e.g., Gill 2014). This has the advantage that inference is conditional on the observed data only, instead of trying to generalize to some (hypothetical) super-population (cf. Gill 2001; Jackman 2009: ch.1), so that our estimates and measures of uncertainty are more credible in small samples.

²⁵Note that our population is Western-European countries, irrespective whether they are members of the Euro area. Thus, our sample includes countries, such as Sweden or the United Kingdom. The reason for their inclusion is less one of statistical power, but driven by two substantive considerations. First, these countries make (and are affected by) decisions in the council that are relevant for the problem we are studying. Second, even non-Eurozone countries are *de facto* part of the same currency union, as shown by Plümper and Troeger (2008). Both considerations suggest that their citizens’ preferences over redistributive arrangements are a relevant object of study. Nonetheless, we also show in appendix F that our results remain substantively unchanged when excluding non-Eurozone countries (cf. panel A of Table F.1).

A. The micro logic of redistribution preferences

In the first step of our analysis we start with a descriptive exploration of our theoretical models' key premise. The micro-logic of our argument implies that the income polarization of redistribution preferences is larger in countries that rely more on investment-oriented economic strategies.

In order to measure the polarization in redistribution preferences between rich and poor, we require a dataset of substantial size. We use the European Social Survey (ESS). It covers all of the countries in our analysis, and, in its pooled version, provides a large sample of over 100,000 individuals.²⁶ Another advantage of using ESS data is that it contains a measure of preferences for redistribution widely used in previous research (e.g., Rehm 2009). It elicits a respondent's support for the statement "the government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels" measured on a 5 point agree-disagree scale. We create an indicator variable equal to one if a respondent clearly supports redistribution (i.e., "agrees" or "strongly agrees" with the statement above).

The key right-hand-side variable of this section's analysis is income. To obtain a comparable, continuous measure of income, we follow the exiting literature (e.g., Rueda and Stegmueller 2016) and transform ESS income categories into midpoints.²⁷ Since the last income category is open ended, we impute its mid-point assuming that the upper tail of the income distribution follows a Pareto distribution. We then deflate incomes to 2005 prices and re-express all currencies in purchasing power parity adjusted international dollars.

The dependent variable for our descriptive analysis is constructed in three steps. First, we estimate for each country in our sample a probit model of support for redistribution accounting for individuals' gender, age, years of education, and labor market status (via indicator variables for unemployment and retirement).²⁸ Second, for each country, we calculate the probability of supporting redistribution among the poor and the rich, defined as individuals at the 20th and 80th percentile of the income

²⁶We use waves 1 to 6. After limiting the sample to the countries of our analysis we are left with 139,938 cases. After deleting cases with missing data, our final sample size is 109,538 individuals.

²⁷Mid-point value assignments differ among survey waves. For 2004-2006 we use mid-points based on common value categories, while for 2008 and beyond, we use mid-points derived from country-specific income deciles. See Appendix B for details on income questions and our transformations.

²⁸This amounts to what Gelman and Hill (2007) call a "completely unpooled" strategy, which is feasible here due to the large sample size available for each country.

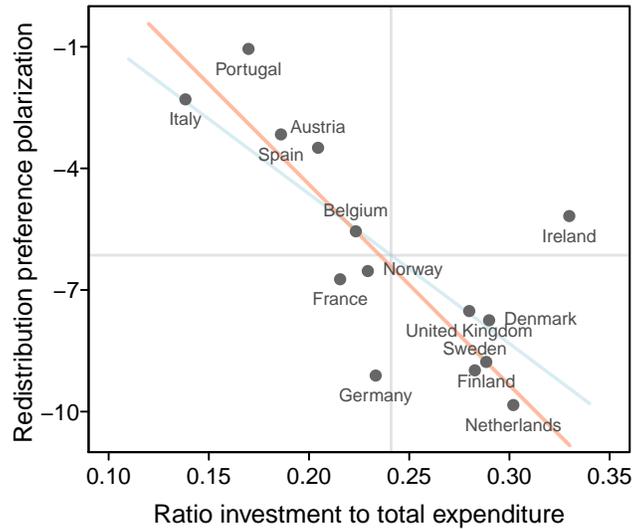


Figure 5: Polarization of redistribution preferences and its relationship to economic strategies. The y-axis plots first differences in predicted probabilities of redistribution support between poor and rich. More negative values indicate larger polarization in preferences by income. The x-axis plots investment-oriented economic strategies. The linear relationship between both is indicated by an OLS fit (light blue line) and an outlier-robust median regression (light red line). Gray lines show averages of both variables.

distribution, respectively. The first difference in these two probabilities is our measure of income polarization over redistribution in each country.²⁹

In Figure 5 we plot this measure of polarization over redistribution between rich and poor against economic strategies in Western Europe. Larger negative values indicate more polarization between rich and poor. The position of countries in this plot reveals a strong relationship between economic strategies and polarization (their correlation is -0.74 ± 0.19). In countries that put low priority on investment over consumption policies, such as Italy or Spain, polarization over redistribution is low to almost nonexistent (as in Portugal). By contrast, in high-investment countries, such as the Netherlands, Finland, and Denmark, polarization is high, reaching up to a 10 percent point difference in redistribution support between rich and poor.

²⁹Note that the choice of percentile is of minor impact. We also obtain a qualitatively similar pattern by plotting income slopes from a linear probability model against economic strategies.

B. Support for a European tax system

We now turn to an examination of *(H1)*, which relates citizens' average preferences for a common European fiscal policy (i.e., the centralization of t) to countries' economic strategies. We expect that in countries that privilege investment-oriented policies citizens are less likely to support the "Europeanization" of fiscal politics. We study this expectation using data from the European Union's Eurobarometer survey, wave 74.2, fielded in autumn 2010.³⁰ Our sample is limited to countries for which we have data on investment- and consumption-oriented policy choices. This includes Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. This sample consists of 14,079 respondents. After discarding 679 cases due to missing values on covariates our final sample size is 13,400.

Our dependent variable is an item probing respondents if they think that tax policy should be set exclusively by national governments, or jointly within the EU.³¹ We create an indicator variable equal to one if respondents prefer European Union involvement in tax policy. The share of citizens in favor of fiscal centralization ranges from around 10 percent in Denmark or Finland to about 40 to 50 percent in Spain, Italy, or Portugal.

In order to account for compositional differences between countries, we include as covariates individuals' gender, age, and years of education, as well as their subjective perception of income, and indicator variables for current labor force status (unemployment, retirement).

We start with a model describing country differences in average levels of support for centralized European fiscal policy after accounting for compositional differences in citizens' characteristics listed above. This is done by estimating a hierarchical probit model (e.g., Gelman and Hill 2007), where we regress tax preferences on individual-level covariates and country-specific constants or intercepts. More precisely, for tax preferences y_{ij}^* of individual i ($i = 1, \dots, n_j$) in country j ($j = 1, \dots, J$) we specify $y_{ij}^* = \alpha_j + \mathbf{x}_i\beta + \epsilon_{ij}$, where \mathbf{x}_i are individual-level covariates, and α_j are country-specific

³⁰For more details see Appendix B.

³¹The exact question wording is: "For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the (*nationality*) Government, or made jointly within the European Union? 1 (*National*) Government, 2 Jointly within the EU". "Don't know" was an explicitly available option. We impute non-responses (don't know responses as well as item non-response) as part of the MCMC algorithm when estimating our models.

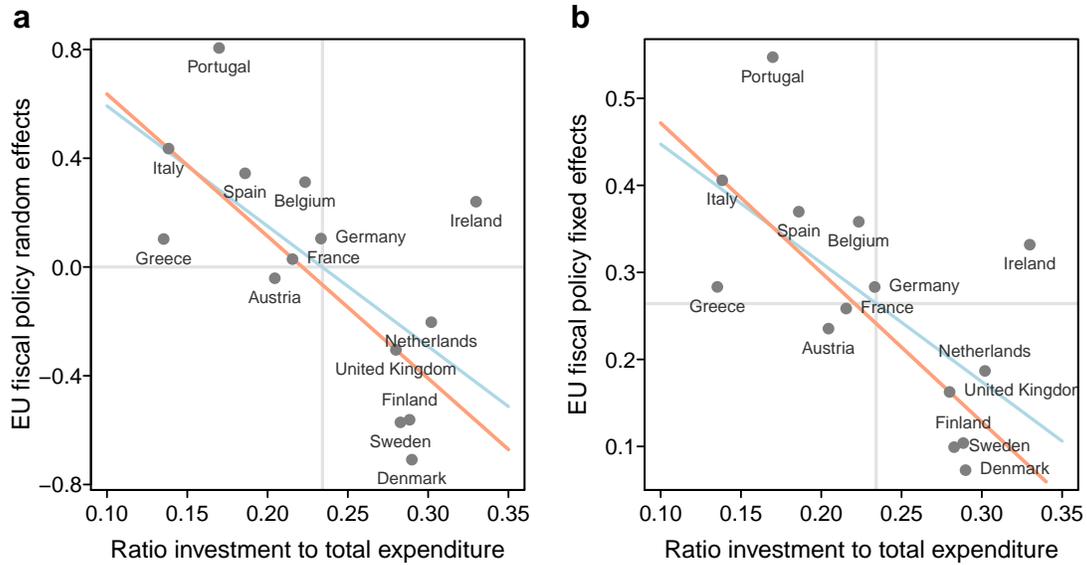


Figure 6: Europeans’ support for centralized fiscal policy and its relation to country’s economic strategies. Probit models of support for centralized fiscal policy with country-specific constants. Panel (a) shows country-specific random effects, panel (b) shows country-specific fixed effects. Larger values indicate more support for fiscal centralization. The linear relationship between centralization preferences and economic strategies is indicated by an OLS fit (light blue line) and an outlier-robust median regression (light red line). Gray lines show averages of variables.

effects. Residuals ϵ_{ij} are white noise with unit variance to identify the probit model.³² We treat country effects in two different ways. In the first variant, we specify a ‘random-effects’ structure, where α_j s are drawn from a common distribution (e.g., Hsiao 2003: 255), $\alpha_j \sim N(0, \sigma_\alpha^2)$. This induces the well-known shrinkage property of random effect models (Poirier 1995: ch.6, Jackman 2009: 309). Our second variant specifies country-specific effects akin to ‘fixed’ coefficients. In the Bayesian framework this amounts to specifying that $\forall j : \alpha_j \sim N(0, \nu_j)$ where the hyperparameter value for ν_j is set to a large value (Rendon 2012). This produces independent draws of α_j without inducing any shrinkage. Furthermore, it allows country-specific effects α_j to be correlated with individual-level variables.³³

As a first visual examination of our hypothesis, we plot estimated country-specific intercepts, α_j , against countries’ economic strategies (as suggested by Bowers and Drake 2005 and Gelman and Hill

³²We use a latent variable version of the probit model, where observed outcomes are generated by a threshold mechanism on the continuous latent variable y^* : $y = 1$ iff $y^* > 0$, else $y = 0$.

³³Our Bayesian model specification is completed by assigning vague priors to all free model parameters. We obtain the posterior distribution of all model parameters via MCMC sampling. For more details on estimation, prior choices, and robustness checks, see Appendix G.

2007). Figure 6 does this for both our ‘random’ and ‘fixed’ country-effects specifications. Our results paint a clear picture. Citizens in countries that focus on investment-oriented economic strategies show systematically lower support for fiscal centralization. In fact, out of the six countries with an investment-to-total-effort ratio above the overall mean, five are inhabited by citizens preferring lower than average levels of tax centralization. Out of the seven countries with an investment-to-total-effort ratio below the overall mean, six are inhabited by citizens preferring higher than average levels of tax centralization. The relationship between economic strategies and support for fiscal centralization holds in both types of model specifications (as shown by the similarity of patterns under fixed and random effects models).

We now turn to a more direct statistical test of this relationship by extending our hierarchical model to include country-level variables: $\alpha_j \sim N(\mathbf{z}'_j\gamma, \sigma_a^2)$. Here, \mathbf{z}_j contains country-level variables, most notably our measure of economic strategies. The parameter vector γ captures how they shape citizens’ support for fiscal integration (after adjusting for other individual and country-level characteristics). While not producing qualitatively different insights from the ones gained by studying Figure 6, this modeling strategy accounts for the fact that country-effects are estimated with error and provides a quantitative assessment of the uncertainty in the relationship between economic strategies and citizens’ preferences for fiscal centralization. Table 1 shows results from four specifications. We start with an ‘empty’ model *M0*, which accounts for compositional differences between countries, but does not include any country-level information. It serves as a useful starting point to compare other models against. Its estimated country random effects variance of 0.16 shows substantial differences between average preferences for fiscal centralization: about 14% of the total variance in preferences is due to systematic (and unexplained) country differences. In *M1* we add two summary measures of countries’ economic and budgetary performance.³⁴ Interestingly, while estimates for both variables are in the expected direction, they add little to our understanding of differences in citizens’ preferences: the

³⁴These two variables are a low-dimensional summary of the following country-level characteristics: GDP per capita, unemployment rate, inequality, poverty, debt-to-GDP ratio, deficit. Including all these variables in our model is not sensible because of our limited number of countries, but also because of the fact that they are themselves the result of countries’ economic strategies (so that their inclusion results in post-treatment bias). Instead, we use a singular value decomposition to create two principal components, representing economic and budgetary performance, on which we position each country. Those two dimensions represent 88 percent of the total variation in all variables. The values on these two variables are constructed such that they represent the effect of economic and budgetary issues *net* of the influence of countries’ economic strategies. See appendix C for technical details.

Table 1: Macro-micro models of preferences for centralization of European Union tax policy. Bayesian hierarchical probit models. Estimates, with 90% credible intervals in brackets, and Bayesian directional hypothesis tests.

	<i>M0</i>	<i>M1</i>	<i>M2</i>	<i>M3</i>
Economic performance ^a	—	0.206 [−0.080 0.495] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.116$	0.210 [−0.013 0.438] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.059$	0.217 [−0.032 0.481] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.072$
Budgetary performance	—	0.172 [−0.208 0.578] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.227$	0.174 [−0.134 0.480] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.166$	0.226 [−0.113 0.567] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.129$
Investment oriented economic strategies	—	—	−0.446 [−0.699 −0.202] $Pr(\theta > 0) : 0.004$	−0.549 [−0.827 −0.251] $Pr(\theta > 0) : 0.001$
Individual controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
Country random effects	yes	yes	yes	yes, robust ^b
Var(ξ)	0.162	0.168	0.097	0.057

Note: MCMC estimates based on 30,000 samples. Estimates are posterior means. Bayesian directional hypothesis tests $P(\theta > 0)$ if $\text{sgn}(\theta) = -1$ and $P(\theta < 0)$ if $\text{sgn}(\theta) = 1$. All models include gender, age, years of education, income, and indicator variables for being unemployment or in retirement.

^a Scores from a SVD of covariate matrix including GDP per capita, unemployment rate, inequality, poverty, debt, deficit into two principal components. See appendix C for technical details.

^b Robust random effects, $\xi \sim t(\mu_\xi, \sigma_\xi^2, \nu)$ with $\nu = 4$.

posterior credible interval for both is rather wide and spans zero. Furthermore, adding both summary measures (for no less than 7 country characteristics) does not appreciably reduce the systematic country variation in preferences (which remains estimated as 0.16).

We add our measure of investment-oriented economic strategies in *M2*. It shows again, quite unequivocally, the negative relationship between preferences for fiscal centralization and investment-oriented economic strategies. Our estimate for economic strategies is negative with a narrow credible interval, which does not include zero. To view the strength of the quantitative evidence for our argument from a different angle, we calculate the posterior probability that the relationship between fiscal preferences and economic strategies is of the opposite sign. Our results show that this probability is decisively low, being estimated at 0.4%.

This finding is replicated in *M3* where we use a random effects distribution that is more robust against outliers (cf. Lange, Little, and Taylor 1989). It again shows clear evidence for a negative relationship between economic strategies and fiscal centralization preferences. Under this model specification, the probability that the effect is of opposite sign evaluates to only 0.1%.

In Appendix D we provide additional evidence that our results are not likely to be driven by existing country differences in second-dimension politics. We use religious and ethno-linguistic fractionalization as relatively stable, structural characteristics that affect the importance of a second dimension of political competition. Accounting for differences in fractionalization does not eliminate the importance of countries' economic strategies in shaping fiscal integration preferences.

In Appendix E we replicate our results with an alternative proxy for economic strategies. As we argued above, countries following investment-oriented strategies are operating at the technology frontier. Consequently, they are expected to produce relatively more high-tech innovations than consumption-oriented countries. We calculate the number of applications for high-tech patents to the European Patent Office and the US Patent and Trademark Office for each country (normalized by population size) and re-estimate all models given in Table 1 with this alternative measure. Our results (in Table E.1. in the appendix) reaffirm the basic pattern on display in this section: societies that produce more high-tech patent applications are significantly less likely to support the centralization of fiscal responsibility.

C. Support for international transfers

In the third step of our argument we examine (*H2*), which argues that citizens' support for international transfers (i.e., *T*) is shaped by their country's exposure to financial risks. The key relationship studied in this section is between the level of exposure of the banking systems in the European core (measured as the log of the magnitudes reported in Figure 4) and the average level of citizens' support for international transfers towards countries in crisis. We test this argument using data from Eurobarometer 76.1, fielded in September 2011, which contains an item directly assessing Europeans' support for inter-regional transfers. We only include countries for which we have measures of exposure, namely Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.³⁵ This sample is comprised of 8,461 cases. After discarding 412 cases due to missing values on covariates our final sample consists of 8,049 individuals.

³⁵Note that this sample includes non-Eurozone countries. In appendix F we show that we find the same basic pattern of relationship when excluding them (cf. panel B of Table F1).

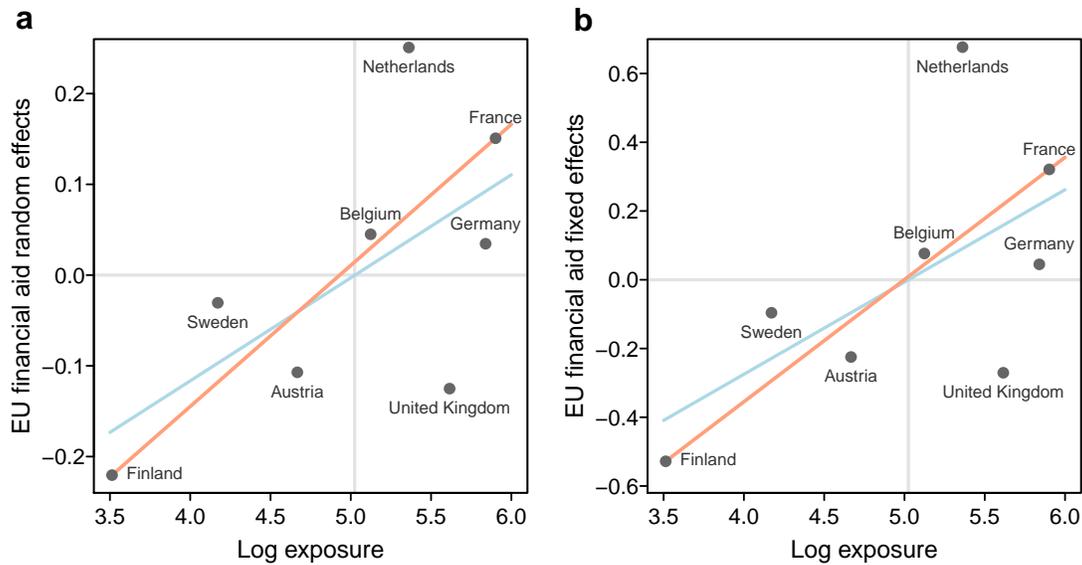


Figure 7: Europeans’ support for interregional transfers and its relation to countries’ exposure to risk. Probit models of preferences for international transfers with country-specific constants. The y-axis of panel (a) shows country-specific random effects, panel (b) shows country-specific fixed effects. Larger values indicate more support for transfers. The x-axis shows claims (on an ultimate risk basis) against “crisis countries” of a country’s financial sector . The linear relationship between transfer preferences and risk exposure is indicated by an OLS fit (light blue line) and an outlier-robust median regression (light red line). Gray lines show averages of variables.

Our dependent variable is an item asking respondents about their degree of support for their country providing financial help to other EU member states in economic and financial difficulties. Answers are recorded on a four-point “agree-disagree” scale, from which we create an indicator variable equal to one if a respondent clearly agrees to such inter-regional transfers.³⁶ The share of citizens agreeing with inter-regional transfers ranges from about 9 percent in Finland or the United Kingdom to about 22 percent in the Netherlands.

We proceed in the same fashion as in the previous subsection: we estimate a hierarchical model of citizens’ support for interregional transfers adjusting for compositional differences in age, gender, income, and labor market status, and visually inspect the correlation between country-specific intercepts and countries’ exposure to risk of debtors’ defaults. Figure 7 shows the resulting relationship.

³⁶The exact question wording is: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In times of crisis, it is desirable for [country] to give financial help to another EU Member State facing severe economic and financial difficulties.”. Answer options are “1 Totally agree, 2 Tend to agree, 3 Tend to disagree, 4 Totally disagree”. An explicit ‘Don’t know’ option is present. We impute missing responses on the dependent variable as part of our MCMC sampler.

Table 2: Macro-micro models of average preferences: support for interregional transfers. Bayesian hierarchical probit models. Estimates, with 90% credible intervals in brackets, and Bayesian directional hypothesis tests.

	M1	M2
Exposure [logged]	0.116 [0.011, 0.227] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.042$	0.115 [0.009, 0.221] $Pr(\theta < 0) : 0.042$
Individual controls	yes	yes
Country random effects	yes	yes, robust ^a
Var(ξ)	0.014	0.008

Note: MCMC estimates based on 30,000 samples. Estimates are posterior means. Bayesian directional hypothesis tests $P(\theta > 0)$ if $\text{sgn}(\theta) = -1$ and $P(\theta < 0)$ if $\text{sgn}(\theta) = 1$.

^a Robust random effects, $\xi \sim t(\mu_\xi, \sigma_\xi^2, \nu)$ with $\nu = 4$.

Despite only being composed of eight pieces of evidence (i.e., eight estimated country intercepts), Figure 7 provides a rather clear picture. As societies are more exposed to risks of default of their debtors, average support for international transfers increases. For example, Sweden and Austria both face a lower than average exposure to risk, while the converse is true for Germany and France. In line with our argument, citizens in Sweden and Austria are on average less supportive of international transfers than those in Germany and, especially, France. This association holds for all cases, save for the United Kingdom, whose citizens show a clear opposition to transfers.³⁷ This pattern obtains with both ‘random’ and ‘fixed’ effects specifications of country effects (shown in panel (a) and (b), respectively).

A stricter quantitative test of the relationship between support for transfers and financial risk exposure is provided in Table 2. Here we extend our hierarchical model to directly estimate the influence of exposure on citizens’ preferences. While we, again, hasten to caution that this is a small-N results, it nonetheless provides some statistical evidence for a link between exposure and support for transfers. The estimate in *M1* is positive with a credible interval that excludes zero. In addition, we calculate the probability that the relationship is of opposite sign (i.e., exposure reduces support for transfers) and find that, given the data, this probability is only 4%. We obtain almost identical results in *M2*, where we employ a robust specification of the country random effects distribution.

³⁷Cf. Rickard (2012), who shows that opposition in the UK to bailouts was much lower for Ireland than for other European economies.

Our findings of a systematic country-level effect suggest a certain degree of homogeneity of support within countries. Arguably, the politics behind this process reflect a top-down process where elites, aware of the potential risks, undertake the task of convincing voters of the need and desirability of supporting the union as a collective good. For example, in the German case it was incumbent upon employers' organizations, trade unions, banking associations, and party elites to build the case for costly bailouts towards those economies where German financial institutions were especially exposed (according to the data from the BIS reported in Figure 4 those economies would be in particular Spain, Ireland, and Italy). Quoted in March 2011, the head of the German employers' association (Dieter Hundt) criticized opposition to bailout efforts in the following way: "It's easy to demand that the rescue fund should not become bigger. But this avoids the crunch question: whether the volume is enough to clear a realistic path into the future for illiquid states."³⁸ A similar discourse was adopted by the main parties, which in September of that year supported the creation of the European Financial Stability Facility, a major fund to bailout European economies in need, with a majority of 523 out of 620 members of the Bundestag. By early October, the heads of the major trade unions (among others Michael Sommer, Berthold Huber (IG Metall) and Frank Bsirske (Verdi)) had endorsed the approach. Elites' discourses would trickle down to voters, who would in turn show a stronger support for international transfers towards those countries that could potentially constitute a larger risk.

Our results are also in line with a recent paper by Bechtel et al. (2014), who, on the basis of a conjoint experimental design, find that German voters do actually discriminate their support for bailouts depending upon who the recipient country is. Holding the degree of conditionality and cost-sharing across EU members constant, "bailouts face the strongest opposition when the recipient country is Greece and are most popular when the recipient country is Ireland, with Italy and Spain falling in the middle."³⁹ These findings are clearly consistent with the patterns reported in Figure 7.⁴⁰

³⁸*Handelsblatt*, 8 March 2011.

³⁹Bechtel, Hainmueller, and Margalit 2014, p.17. Similarly, Rickard (2012) argues that parties, interest groups and citizens in the UK were much more tolerant towards the Irish bailout than to those favoring other European economies.

⁴⁰Ultimately, though, modeling the specific mechanisms of the political process leading to a higher support for interregional transfers in more exposed countries is outside the scope of this paper.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has studied the linkage between domestic economic conditions, cross-national interdependencies, and political preferences in the aftermath of the European debt crisis. We have distinguished two dimensions in the politics of fiscal integration in the EU: the willingness to adopt a more integrated (centralized) system of taxes and transfers and the willingness to support large scale transfers between countries, implicitly associated with stabilization efforts. Regarding the former, we find that the growing spatial disparities in terms of economic fortunes that resulted from the crisis reduce the support for more integrated fiscal policy designs, thus nurturing what Hooghe and Marks (2009) define as *constraining dissensus* among the different European *demoi*. The member countries of the European Union, despite being bound together by a common monetary system, are resilient against adopting a common fiscal system. At the same time, we have also established that regarding inter-country stabilization transfers, donors' initial resistance is muted when significant cross-national interdependencies are at work, in a manner consistent with *intergovernmentalist* predictions (Moravcsik 1998; Schimmelfennig 2015). It is the exposure to financial risks by the core that underpins support for large financial stabilization packages with large distributive implications. The co-existence of these two political responses is interesting from the perspective of integration theory and political economy. Our analysis suggests that the key to unlocking this puzzle lies in the combination of a heterogeneous economic geography, exacerbated by the financial crisis, and the nature of cross-regional economic externalities it generates. Critically, the role of externalities identified in this paper helps discriminate analytically the implications of the higher levels of political engagement with integration issues by individual voters across EU nations. In the absence of externalities, domestic economic interests do indeed lead to higher levels of polarization and resistance against common pool solutions.

By contrast, even where distributional conflict is exacerbated, the presence of significant cross-regional externalities moderates this relationship and points to a more nuanced picture of the relationship between mass politics and further European integration: where externalities matter elites and citizens see a political rationale further steps towards fiscal and regulatory integration. Those likely to be affected by the negative externalities of a potential default by financial institutions in

debtor countries are relatively more likely to lend support to transfers for the purpose of financial stabilization.

Our analysis also yields some political implications for the future. Given the economic geography of the union, the status quo hardly constitutes a stable equilibrium. Wealthy, investment-oriented economies have little incentive to pursue the agenda of fiscal integration. Moreover, to the extent that bailouts work to protect financial institutions in core countries, political opposition to further transfers will rise. At the other end, the constraints on the political autonomy of net recipients appear hardly sustainable in the medium run. While Southern European incumbents face huge uncertainties and costs outside of the Euro, the possibility of a break-up is subject to the enduring patience of core voters in low capacity, high inefficiency economies (Fernández-Albertos and Kuo 2016), and to the strategic responses by their leaders. The recent rise of populist political forces (Hobolt and Tilley 2015) may suggest that voters' patience is running thin and that a different political response is required. However, given the political and economic fundamentals of the union analyzed in this paper, if the periphery of Europe were to pursue a coordinated effort (possibly with France) to renegotiate the terms of the union, net contributing, investment-oriented members would have incentives to opt out altogether. Ultimately, political integration is only feasible and sustainable under sufficiently low levels of heterogeneity in the political and economic geography of the union.

Our empirical efforts have only explored a fraction of the implications emerging from the analytical model. In particular, we have not considered exhaustively the role played by other potential sources of externalities in the process of preference formation at the micro level, or the politics of institutional design at the macro level. At the micro level, changes in patterns of labor mobility deserve further consideration. While we have argued that aggregate patterns of labor mobility have not increased significantly, this does not necessarily rule out an effect on individuals' preference formation. To assess the scope and importance of such an effect, a micro-level approach focused on areas where significant short term changes have taken place (because of migrants and refugees displacements, for instance) seems a more fruitful strategy. Similarly, at the macro level, the Syrian refugees crisis poses a major economic, social, and security challenge that cuts across EU member's borders and begs the question of what the appropriate design to cope with this challenge is. The framework in

this paper can be extended to analyze the broader class of situations in which a common challenge alters incentives to preserve political autonomy.

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