

SHIFTING PARADIGMS

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMIC POLICY IN SHAPING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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EUROPEAN POLICY
INSTITUTE



Authors:

Jan Eichhorn

Andrea Gimeno Solaz

Phoebe White

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INSTITUTE**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If European policymakers and citizens are going to effectively address the climate crisis, they must examine the economy and climate policies in a unified and coherent way. Yet people in nine countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland, the

Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, and the United States) often evaluate climate policy options and the economy differently. This report highlights the wide variation in how people in Europe view the climate crisis and structural changes to the economy.

The main findings of this report are:

1. Desire for action to address the climate crisis does not necessarily translate into support for the most transformative economic policies

The countries with the greatest proportion of people who express a desire for action to stop the climate crisis are not those with the most transformative views on climate policy. Spain and Italy, for example, have the highest proportion of people who want everything to be done to stop climate change, yet they are fourth and fifth when it comes to their populations favouring the most transformative climate policy options. Other countries see more people select policy options that would result in greater change from the status quo to less carbon-intensive economies.

2. Preferences for transformative climate policies do not necessarily lead to support for wholesale changes to the economy

There are many people who favour transformative policy action to address the climate crisis, but they prefer less state intervention generally (and vice versa). The degree to which views on these two issues align varies between countries. Out of the nine countries, people in Germany are most likely to be coherent in their views and evaluate climate policies and economic structures in the same way. The link in evaluations between the two domains is weakest in Italy.

3. People who see stronger links between climate policy actions and economic systems do not share the same demographics across countries

The groups that hold more coherent views about the relationship between the economic system and climate-specific policies vary across countries. For example, people over the age of 55 in France, Italy, the United States, and the United Kingdom are less likely to hold coherent views than younger people in these countries. The same is, however, not true in the other countries. In terms of gender, women in some states tend to be more coherent in their views, but there are no significant gender differences in Germany, Italy, or the Czech Republic.

4. Factual knowledge, not formal education, is linked more strongly to people supporting more transformative action to address the climate crisis

Knowledge about the climate crisis is strongly linked to the desire for more transformative climate policies and, to an even greater extent, increased state intervention in the economy. People who know more about the climate crisis tend to be more supportive of intervention, but the same is not true for formal education. In some countries, people with more formal education even hold less transformative views on climate policy. In most of the nine countries surveyed, the people with more formal education hold more libertarian views about the role of government in the economy.

5. There are more opportunities for productive discussions about climate policies because they are less ideologically polarising than discussions about economic systems

In nearly all countries surveyed, people who identify as rather left-wing are more likely to favour both strong transformative climate policies and increased state involvement in the economy. However, the gap among those who identify as right-wing is much bigger for views on the economic system than it is for climate-specific policy. Focusing debates about transformations on climate policy, rather than the relationship between the state and market, presents an opportunity to break down ideological barriers in discussions about systemic changes.

Policymakers and the public can use the findings of this report to translate general climate awareness into knowledge about policy choices that correspond to people's desire for action. People of all levels of education need to learn more about the origins and global scale of the climate crisis. Our research indicates that people with formal education do not necessarily support transformative policies and, in fact, may even oppose them on ideological grounds.

Advocates for more transformative changes should frame debates about economic change through the lens of climate policy discussions. This approach offers a significant opportunity to reduce ideological polarisation. Talking about the fundamentals of the economic system directly can

lead to more division. Instead, discussing climate policies that find wider support among different publics may increase support for a transformative agenda. It will be crucial for us to identify which segments of the population tend to evaluate the climate crisis and the economy in a connected way. Doing this will require a country-specific approach that considers the distinct debates on these topics in each state.

If advocates and policymakers can focus debates on specific, transformative climate policies that are designed well, they may be able to work with—not against—large segments of the population in developing a greater alignment between their specific preferences and overall outlook on the system.

RATIONALE

People across most countries appear to be aware of climate change and want to see action taken against it—albeit to a different extent.¹ This is a welcome finding and has been used to justify policy action. Nevertheless, the picture is not as positive as it might seem. Many people say that they are aware of climate change, but that does not mean they understand it.² In reality, a large proportion of people in various countries do not know the extent to which global heating is caused by human activity or the extent to which the climate crisis will likely impact their lives.³

This means they do not appreciate the systemic changes required to address this challenge, and several civil society organisations and researchers have identified this lack of knowledge as a key problem. A focus on personal behaviour alone is insufficient to make a meaningful dent in global emissions. Some scientists have therefore been asking how the climate crisis connects with the way we organise our economies and societies.

What has received less attention is the extent to which publics actually connect thinking about climate policy and the economy. Do people link their thinking about climate policy to their preferences for the organisation of the economy in general? Finding an answer to this question is essential for civil society and political actors who are trying to shape the scope of climate policy responses. Do some groups evaluate both areas in the same way? Are there others who might lack this consistency? And if so, what characterises these groups?

Coherence is understood here as ‘the degree to which attitudes on one issue are related to attitudes on other issues’.⁴ Thus, a coherent belief system is one where all attitudes and ideas present a good degree of interconnectedness. Traditionally, coherence in policy views was not something publics were seen to possess. Scholars characterised ordinary people as presenting ‘non-attitudes’ (disorganised sets of beliefs), while coherent and persistent belief systems

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- 1 Flynn, C. et al. 2021. Peoples’ Climate Vote. UNDP & University of Oxford. Available at <https://www.undp.org/publications/peoples-climate-vote>.
 - 2 Ipsos MORI. 2021. Ipsos Perils of Perception: climate change (17 April). Available at <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/ipsos-perils-perception-climate-change>.
 - 3 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & dpart, pp. 10. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.
 - 4 Bishop, G., Hamilton, D. & McConahay J. 1980. Attitudes and Nonattitudes in the Belief Systems of Mass Public. *The Journal of Social Psychology* 110 (1): 53-64.

were seen as the privilege of the political and social elites.⁵ However, a growing body of literature has challenged this notion, arguing that everyone has a concrete belief system and what differentiates political elites and the lay public is the ability to articulate them. But the topical focus of existing work has hitherto been rather narrow. While most of the existing literature has revolved around coherence within economic policy⁶ or between economic and social policy⁷, this report assesses coherence between public views on the economic system on the one hand and environmental policy on the other.

To do this, we take a new approach to measuring coherence, assessing people's responses to a number of questions about both the economic system and climate policy. We examine whether there are differences between publics in nine countries and pay special attention to the question of how views on both domains and the coherence between them vary across different groups of people. As well as demographic factors, we place a strong emphasis on education, climate-specific knowledge, and ideological positions. Our findings highlight significant variation between countries, opportunities for activists to engage publics meaningfully, and areas that must be addressed cautiously to avoid polarisation.

5 Converse, P. 2006. The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964). *Critical review* 18 (1-3): 1-74.

6 Williamson, M. & Wearing, A. 1996. Lay people's cognitive models of the economy. *Journal of Economic Psychology* 17: 3-38.

7 Luttbeg, N. 1968. The Structure of Beliefs Among Leaders and the Public. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 32: 398-409; Brown, S. R. (1970). Consistency and the Persistence of Ideology: Some Experimental Results. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34 (1): 60-68.

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

We use data from a representative survey carried out in August 2020 in nine countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States) with over 10,000 respondents in total (at least 1000 per country). The data is representative for the population aged 18-74 in each country.⁸ To measure people's views on both climate change policy preferences and views on the economic system more broadly, we construct two indicators.

These two indicators combine the information from a wide array of questions on policy preferences contained in the survey.⁹ The first scale measures whether people prefer climate policy choices that reflect the status quo (at one end) or that are genuinely transformative (at the other).¹⁰ The

second scale shows whether people think that the economy should be organised in a libertarian way (at one extreme) or entirely by the state (at the other).¹¹ Finally, to assess the coherence between the two scores, the gap between both evaluations is measured.¹² A value of 0 indicates that the views on both domains are fully coherent.¹³ The greater the value, the greater the gap between the two scores is on average, and therefore the less coherent we evaluate them to be. As well as comparing the values in their own right, we investigate whether the profiles of people who hold particular views differ between countries.

After examining whether gender and age play a role in determining people's views on either domain and the coherence between them, we focus on the roles

8 For a detailed account of country-level sample sizes and sampling approach, please see the project methods note: <https://dpart.org/methods-note-there-is-space-for-everyone-climate-crisis-messages-across-the-political-spectrum/>.

9 The answer options for each question are coded in relation to the scale from 0 to 10 underlying the respective indicator. Answer options for each question are allocated equally distanced spots on the respective scale and the responses from the range of questions are then added up and standardised within the scales. Please see the appendix for a detailed breakdown of all the items making up the two scores.

10 A value of 0 for the climate policy score indicates the most status quo answer, i.e. not wanting to take action on the respective issue; a value of 10 indicates that the respondents would choose the most transformative action.

11 For the economic system evaluation, a score of 0 on any question indicates the most libertarian view, i.e. the least possible amount of state involvement in structuring the economy, while a score of 10 indicates the greatest possible amount of state direction.

12 Both indicators are centred around their respective country means to make them comparable to each other, and the size of the gap between both scores is measured. The absolute value of that gap indicates how far apart the responses on the two scores are for a respondent.

13 This means the respondent's response on both scales was equally close or far away from the country means for both scores in the same direction (thus indicating coherence between climate policy preferences on the one hand and economic system views on the other).

of knowledge about climate change¹⁴ and education. As demonstrated previously in this project¹⁵, people's factual knowledge about the causes and consequences of climate change varies greatly in all countries. Indeed, people often feel less confident in their climate-specific knowledge than their general scientific understanding.¹⁶ However, their climate change knowledge is strongly associated with their views about whether the crisis should be tackled extensively—in fact even more so than formal education.¹⁷ Moreover, the relationship between formal education and climate views has been shown to be inconsistent, especially in countries with a great deal of political polarisation¹⁸, where an individual's political and religious beliefs can be more indicative of their views on climate. Formal

education differences may actually be associated with a polarisation in climate change views.¹⁹

Because of this, we investigate whether polarisation on climate-specific policy views, preferences for economic system structures and the coherence between the two exist for the publics in the nine countries studied. We then examine whether people who identify as more left- or right-wing ideologically have different attitudinal profiles. The respective mean scores for different groups (e.g. split by gender, educational attainment or ideological self-identification) are presented with 95 percent confidence intervals²⁰ for each country to allow for an easy comparison.

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- 14 Climate-specific knowledge in this survey is measured through six factual questions. We record how many of those they answered correctly (0 to 6). Details about the questions asked can be found in the appendix.
 - 15 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & dpart. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.
 - 16 Fischer, H., Dorothee A., & Said, N. The Accuracy of GERMAN Citizens' Confidence in Their Climate Change Knowledge. *Nature Climate Change* 9 (10): 776–780.
 - 17 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & dpart, pp. 21. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.
 - 18 Funk, C. & Kennedy, B. 2016. The Politics of Climate Change. Pew Research Center, pp. 68. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2016/10/04/public-knowledge-about-science-has-a-limited-tie-to-peoples-beliefs-about-climate-change-and-climate-scientists/>.
 - 19 Drummond, C. & Fischhoff, B. (2017). Individuals with Greater Science Literacy and Education Have More Polarized Beliefs on Controversial Science Topics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114 (36): 9587–9592.
 - 20 Confidence intervals provide an estimate of a likely range within which the respective result may fall in the full population studied. Because survey sampling is prone to some random variation, there is a degree of uncertainty about how close the precise estimate of any statistic in the sample is to the actual value in the population. A 95 percent confidence interval provides us with the range within which we would expect the estimate of our sample to fall in 95 out of 100 randomly drawn samples from the population.

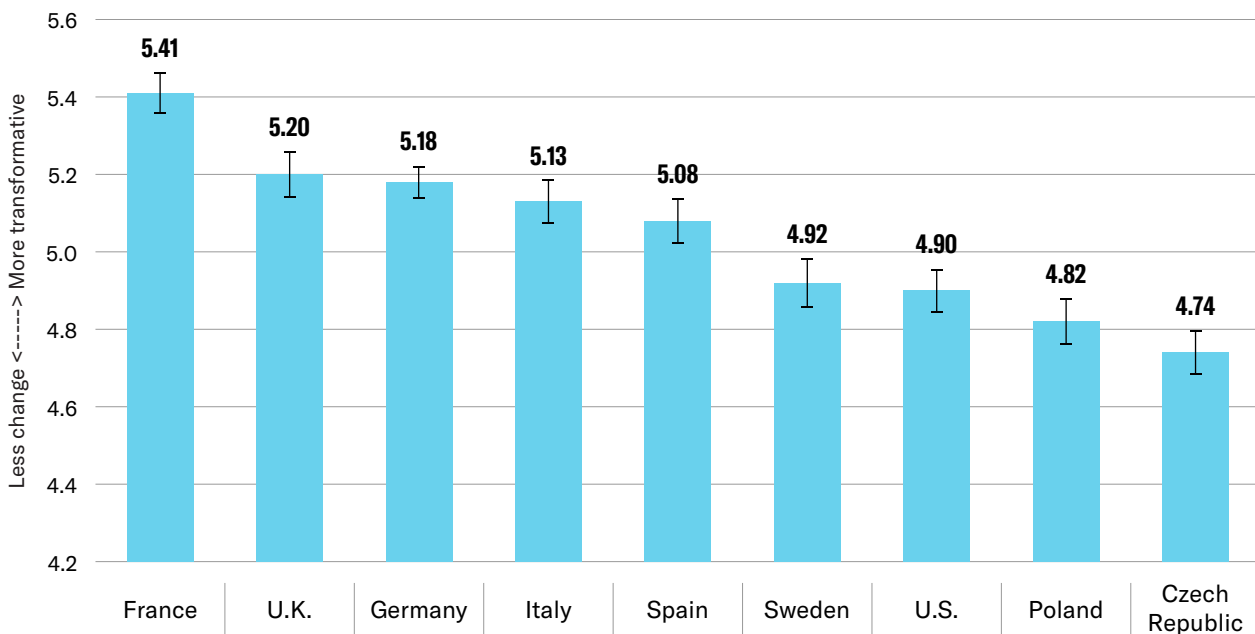
CLIMATE POLICY AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM VIEWS

Countries vary significantly in their populations' desire for transformative policy action on climate change (Figure 1). France is the most enthusiastic, ahead of the U.K., Germany, Italy, and Spain and then at a lower level the other countries (Sweden, U.S., Poland, and Czech Republic). The order suggests that policy preferences do not perfectly

match general attitudes towards greater action on climate change. In our previous report²¹, we showed, for example, that Spanish and Italian respondents were more likely than French ones to state that action against climate change should be transformative. Examining policy preferences in more detail, therefore, is imperative.

FIGURE 1

Climate policy views by country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



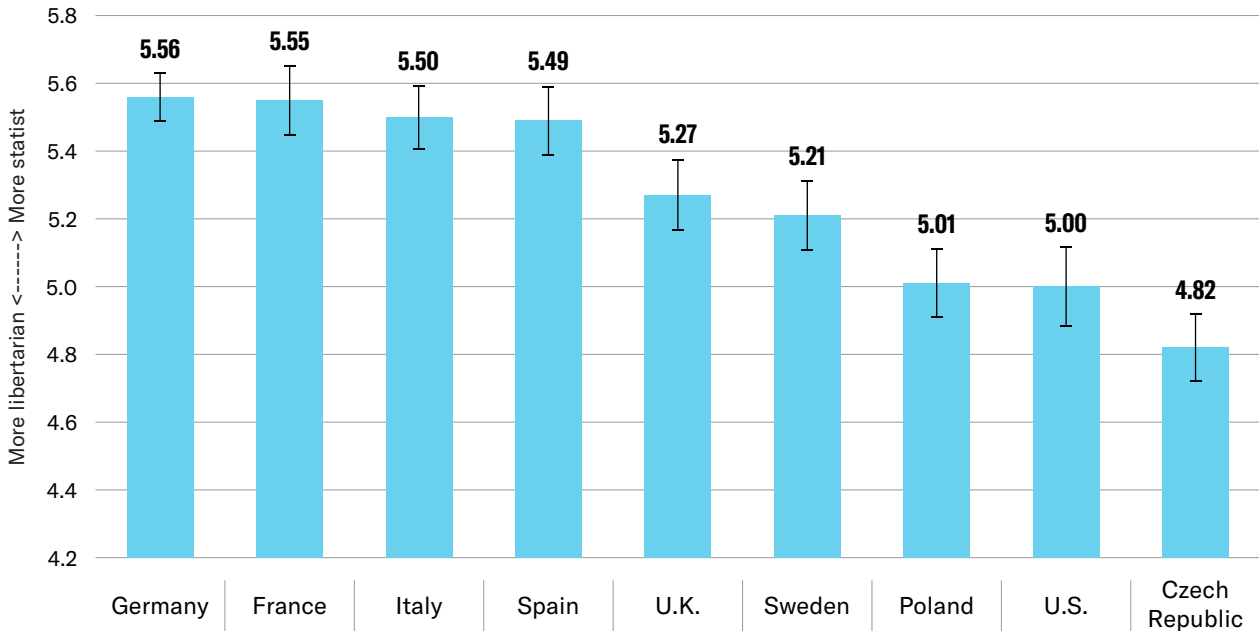
21 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & d|part. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.

Overall, many of the countries which tend to support transformative policy actions on climate change also show, on average, a stronger desire for more state action in the economy (Figure 2). However, there

are exceptions, in particular the U.K., which falls in the middle group with Sweden on the economic question.

FIGURE 2

Economic system views by country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

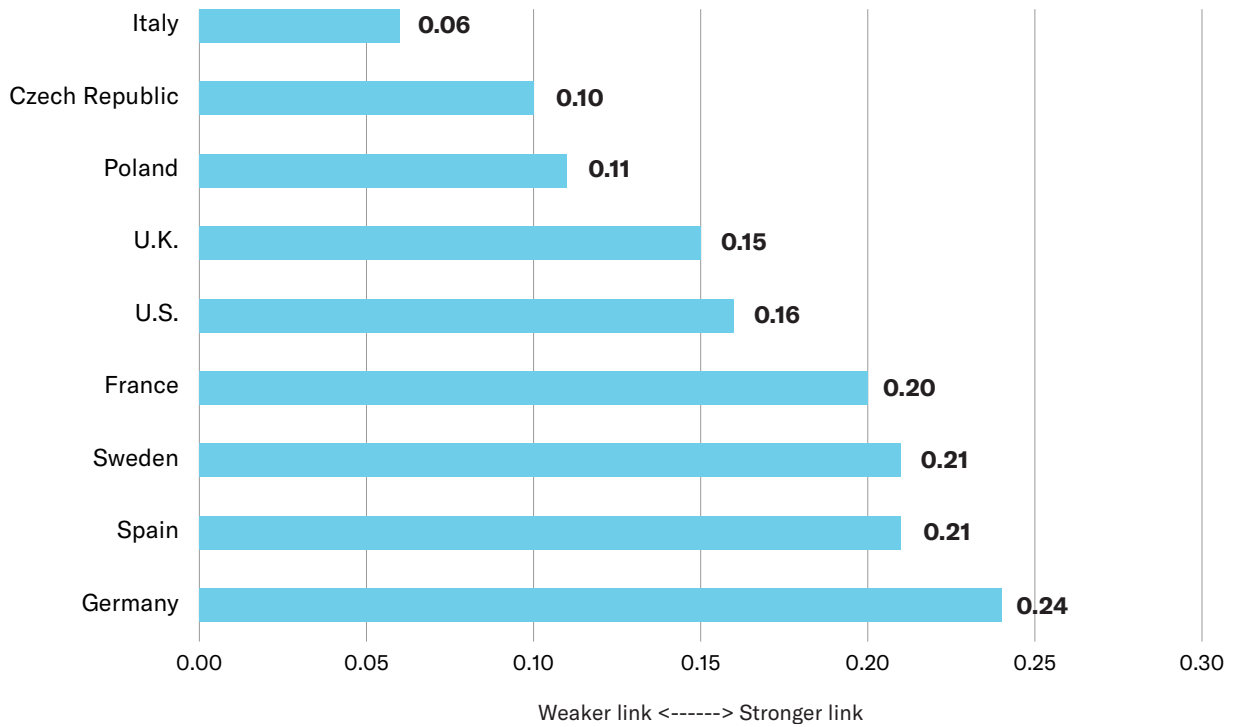


Crucially, these comparisons of averages do not tell us whether people within each country who hold particular views on climate policies are likely to hold similar views on the economic system. Indeed, there are big differences between countries in terms of the strength of the association between the two

sets of views (Figure 3). For all three countries, the correlations are moderate, but they are more pronounced in Germany, Spain, Sweden and France and rather weak in Poland, the Czech Republic and, in particular, Italy (the only country where the relationship was not statistically significant at all).

FIGURE 3

Coherence between views on climate policy and economic systems (Correlations: Pearson's r)²²



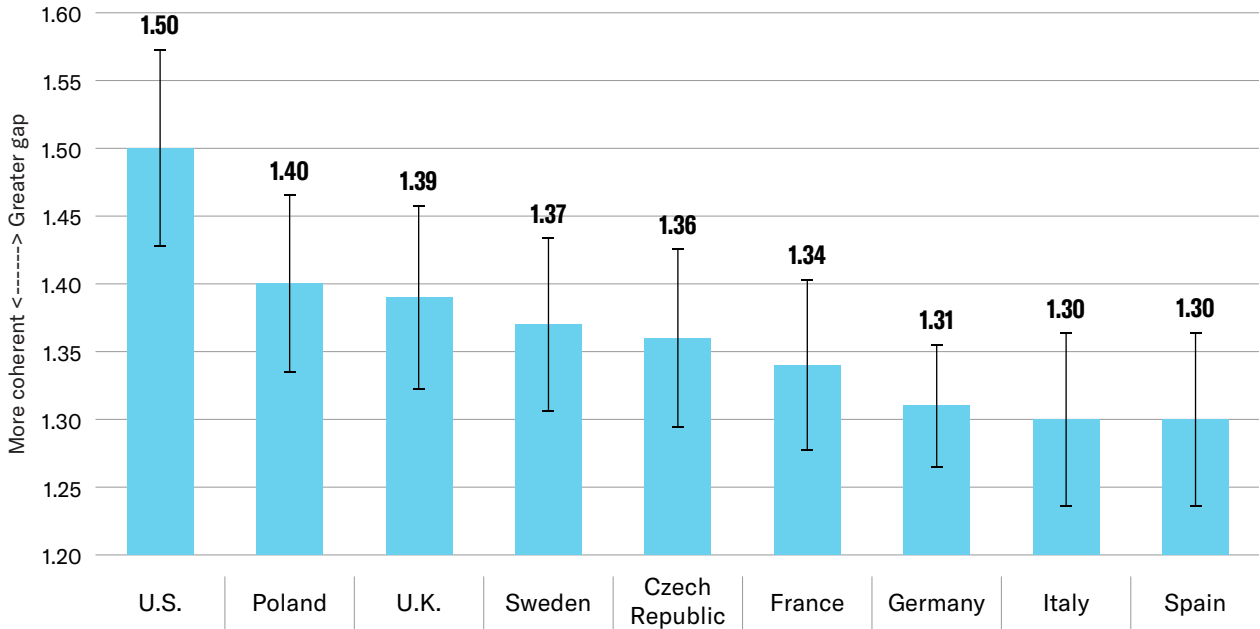
This tells us that we need to investigate further and look at the gap between the two scales to find out to what extent the views on these two questions cohere. This analysis reveals a marked distinction between the U.S. and European countries. Although the U.S., on average, favoured both less transformative climate policy and a less state-focused economy, for

individuals within the country, the gap between those evaluations tends to be bigger than in any other country studied (Figure 4). In contrast, the lowest gaps could be seen in Spain, Italy and Germany, but the difference to the other European countries was not as pronounced as that in the U.S.

²² A correlation coefficient measures to what extent the value on one scale corresponds to the value on another scale. In other words, do people who support strong transformative views on climate policy also more likely to support a stronger role for state action in the economy? If the association between the two variables was perfect, the correlation coefficient would have a value of 1. A value of 0 implies no relationship at all.

FIGURE 4

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



In summary, stronger general expressions of the urgency of climate crisis action do not necessarily translate into the fullest support for transformative policies. There are some links between people’s views on climate policy options and their preferences for the economic system, but the links are only moderate

and coherence between the two is stronger in some countries than others. We need to better understand which groups of people are more or less likely to evaluate the two issues in a similar way. In the next section, we therefore compare people’s demographic profiles.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Demographic profiles are not uniform across countries. While women are more likely to favour transformative climate policies in six of the nine countries studied, the relationship is reversed for Italy and no significant difference between men and women is found in the Czech Republic or Spain

(Figure 5a). On economic structures, the overall pattern appears similar: women in most countries are more likely to favour stronger state action, but in Spain and Italy there are no significant differences (Figure 5b).

FIGURE 5A

Climate policy views by gender and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

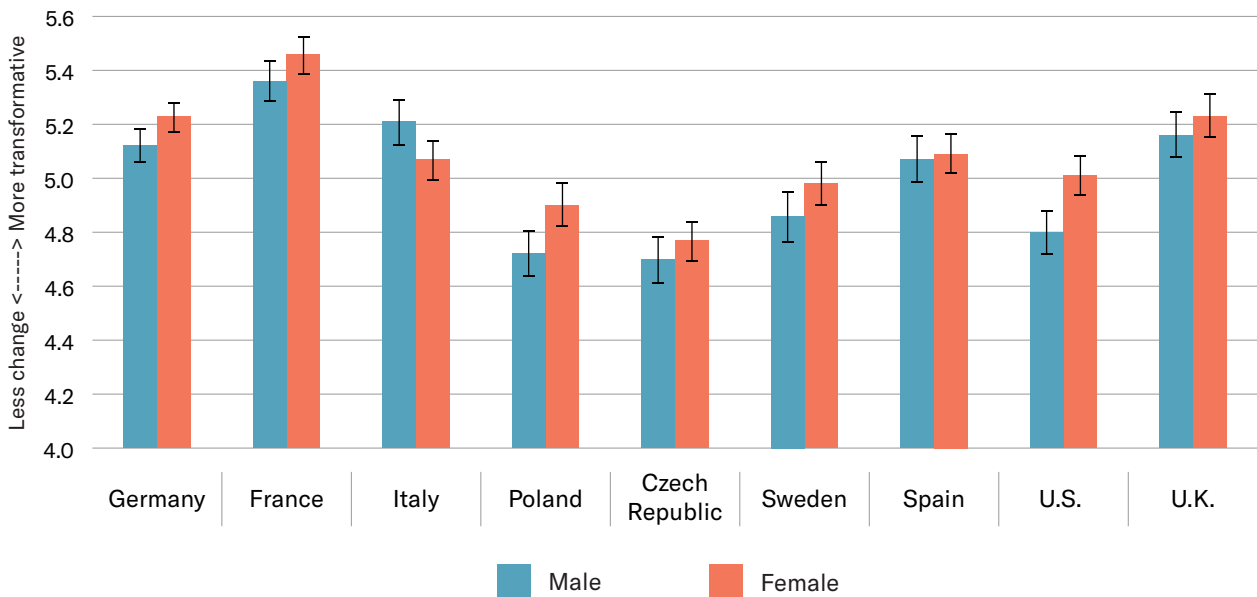
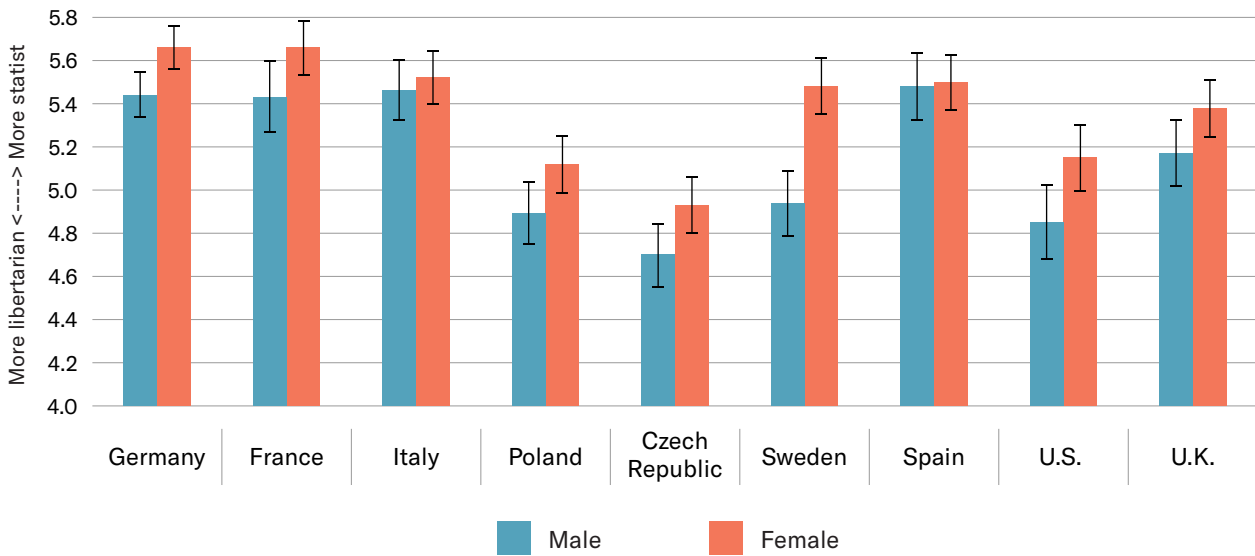


FIGURE 5B

Economic system views by gender and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

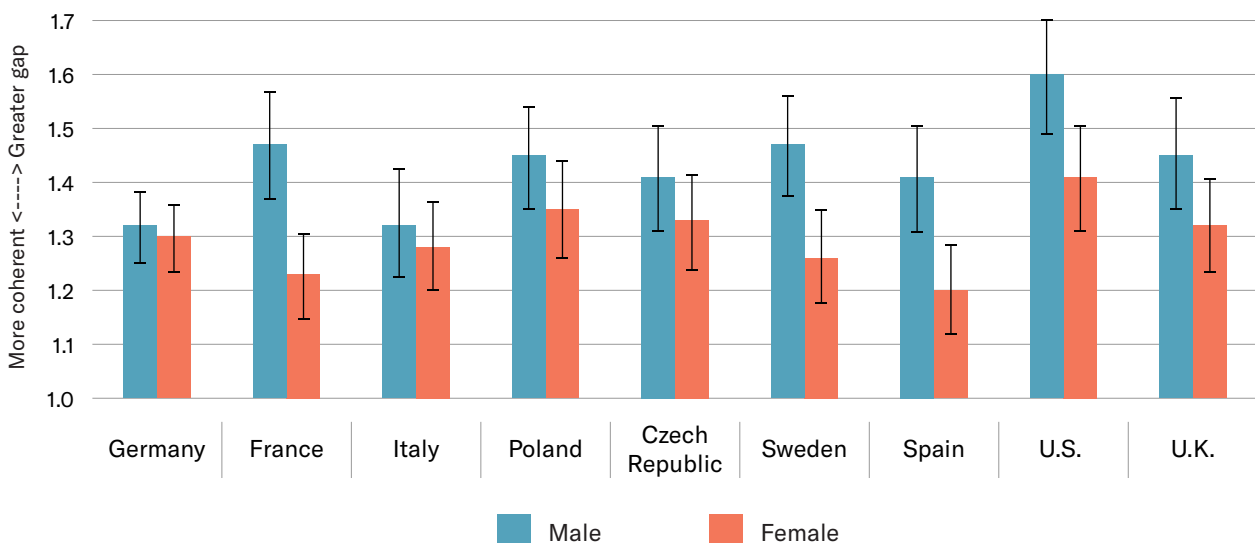


However, those aggregate figures do not show whether men or women in those countries tend to have more or less coherent views on climate policy and economic structures. The gap between the two scores is much more pronounced for men than

women in France, Sweden, Spain, the U.S. and the U.K. and, more marginally, in Poland and the Czech Republic (Figure 5c). There are no significant gender differences in coherence for Germany or Italy.

FIGURE 5C

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by gender and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

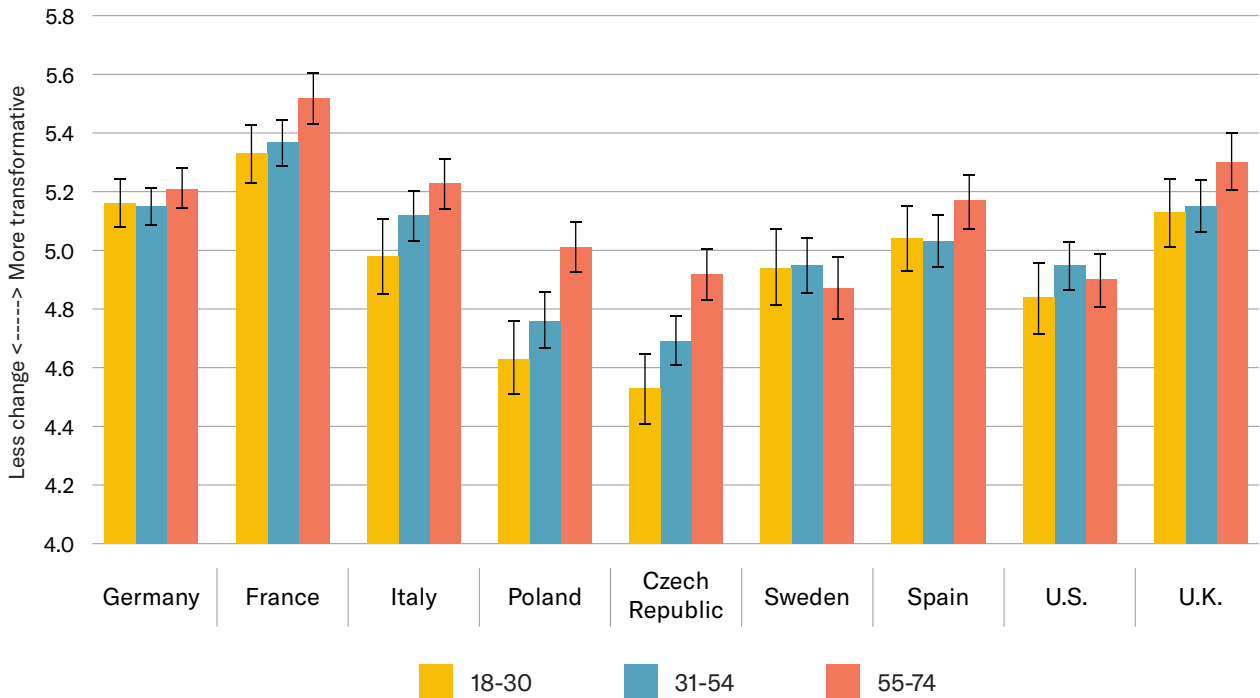


Age profiles are not uniform across countries either. Older people are notably more likely to favour transformative climate policy action in Poland and the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent in France,

Italy, Spain, and the U.K. (Figure 6a). But there are no major age differences in Germany, Sweden, or the U.S., at least when comparing large age groupings (18-30, 31-54 and 55-74).

FIGURE 6A

Climate policy views by age and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

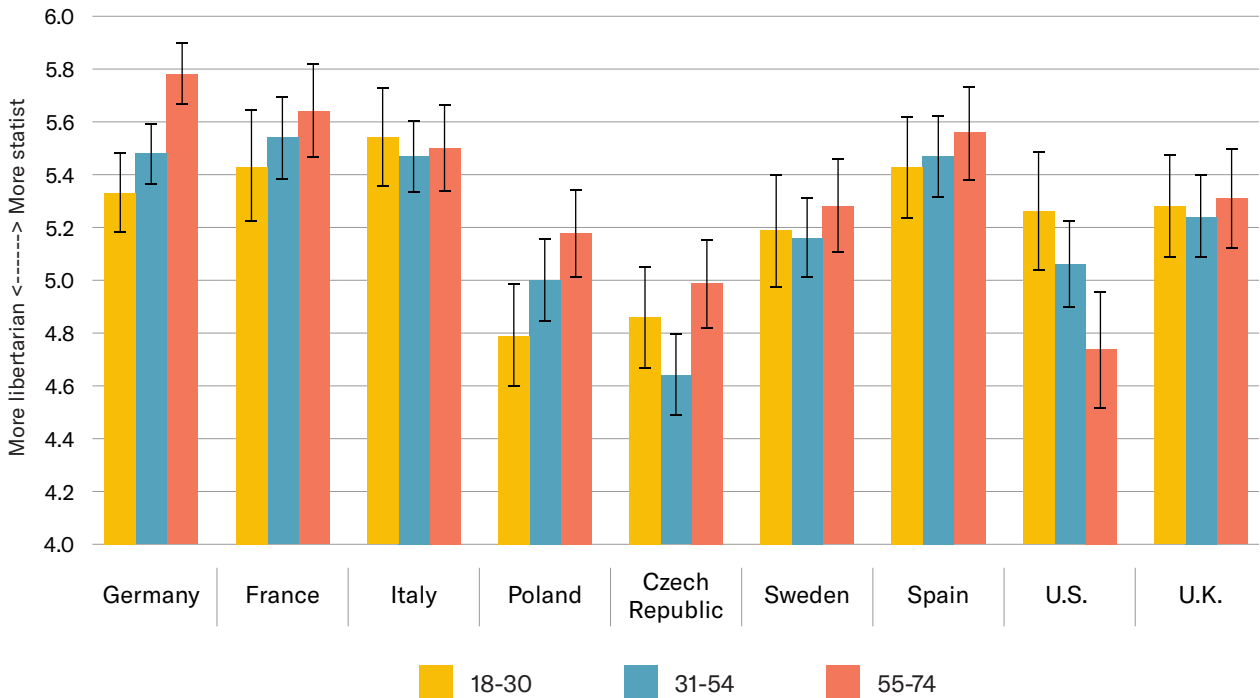


When asked about the economic system, however, older people in Germany emphasise state action more (Figure 6b). The same holds for Poland, while the opposite is true in the U.S., where young people

are much more likely to attribute a strong role to the state in shaping the economy. No major effects could be seen for the other countries.

FIGURE 6B

Economic system views by age and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

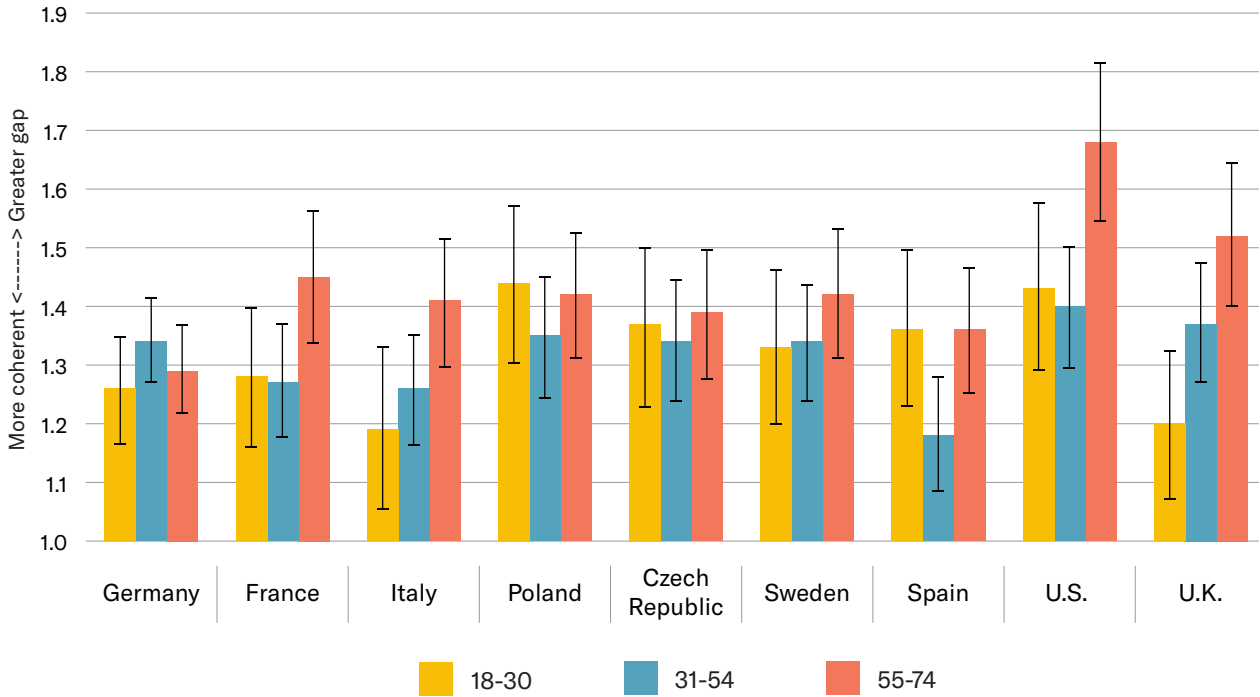


But are views on climate policy and economic structures more likely to align in some age groups? Big age differences on coherence can be seen for the U.S., U.K., Italy and France. In all of them we find that the young (18-30 years) and middle aged (31-54 years) groups are significantly more coherent in their views than those in the oldest groups (55-74 years), where the gap between climate policy and economic

system evaluations tends to be much bigger (Figure 6c). In the U.K. there is an additional difference between the youngest group and the middle-aged, with the former showing even greater levels of coherence. While differences in the other countries are only marginal, Spain deviates from the patterns found elsewhere. There, the middle-aged actually show the most coherence.

FIGURE 6C

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by age and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



There is no uniform demographic profile on climate policy preference, economic system views or coherence between the two. Age and gender patterns differ greatly between countries and coherence is

not simply a reflection of the average scores on each of the two domains measured. We therefore need a better understanding of these more coherent groups that goes beyond demographic factors.

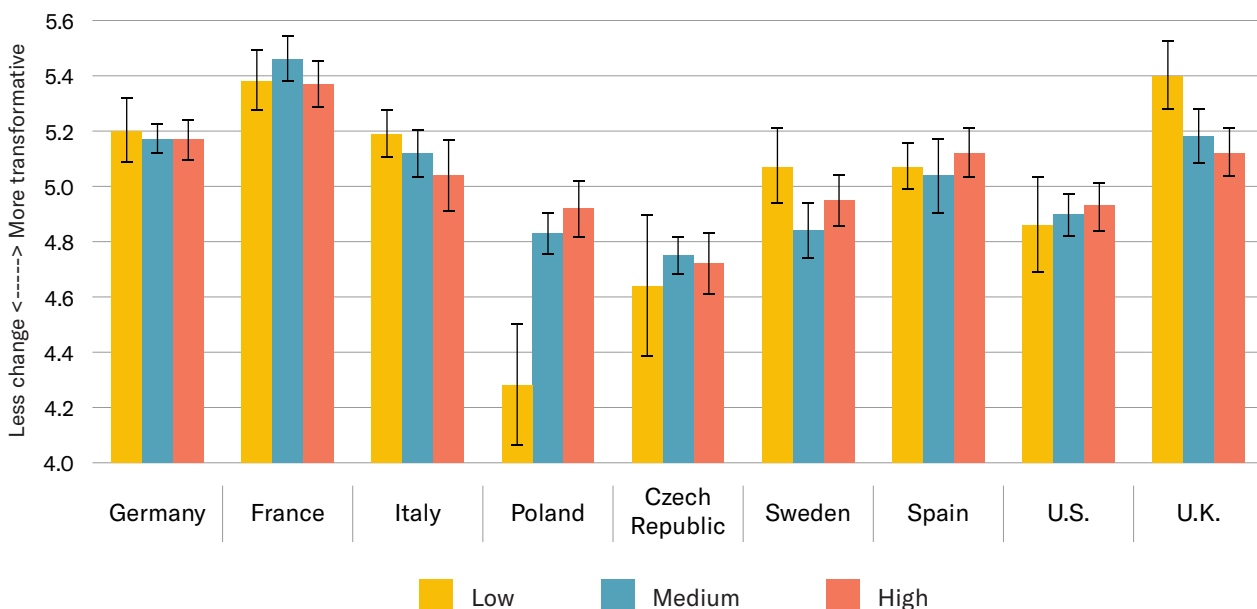
FORMAL EDUCATION AND CLIMATE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Factual knowledge about climate change (and to a lesser extent formal education in general) is strongly linked to its perceived impact on people’s lives and the willingness and urgency to undertake action in general, as we have shown in our first report in this project.²³ But does this translate into views on climate policy specifically and the coherence between such views and preferences for the economic system more widely? The picture is mixed.

There is no strong link between educational attainment and the desire for more transformative climate policies (Figure 7a). Only in Poland are people with greater formal education notably more likely to favour more transformative actions (at least compared to those with low levels of education). In the U.K., Sweden and Italy, higher education is actually associated with a slightly stronger tendency towards the *status quo*.

FIGURE 7A

Climate policy views by formal education and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



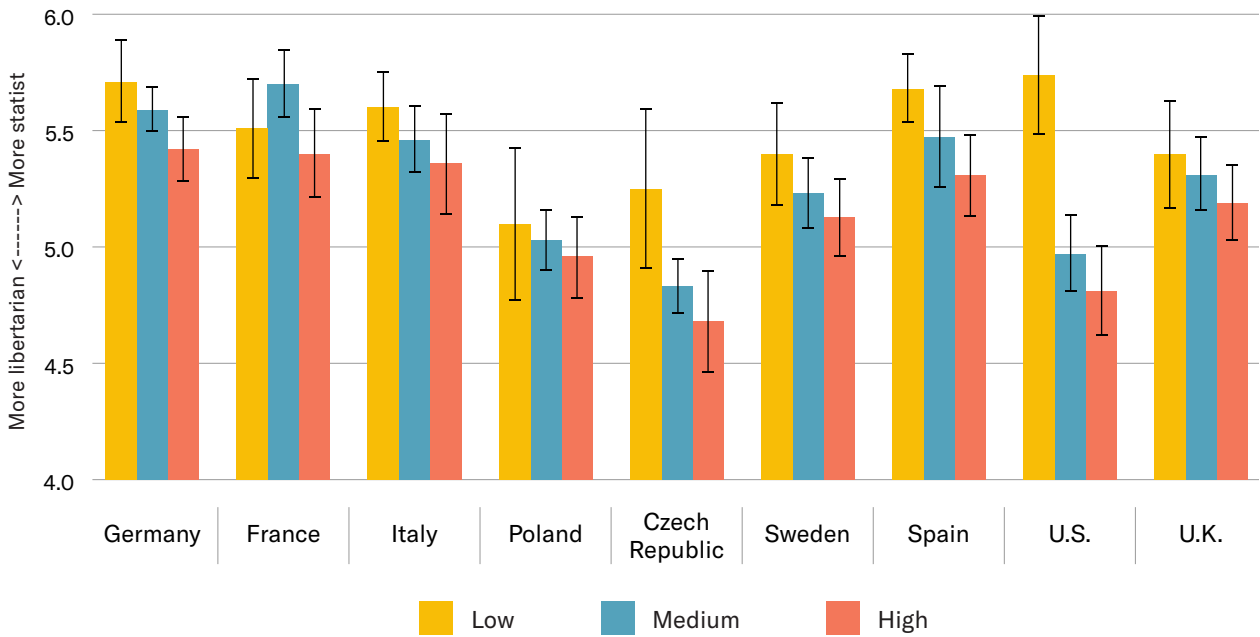
23 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & d|part. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.

We see more pronounced differences when we focus on the economic system more widely. In most of the countries, higher formal education is associated with a more libertarian and less state-focused view on how the economy should be organised (figure 7b).

People with less education tend to be more likely to favour state intervention in shaping the economy, with the exceptions of France and Poland. The differences are most pronounced in the U.S.

FIGURE 7B

Economic system views by formal education and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

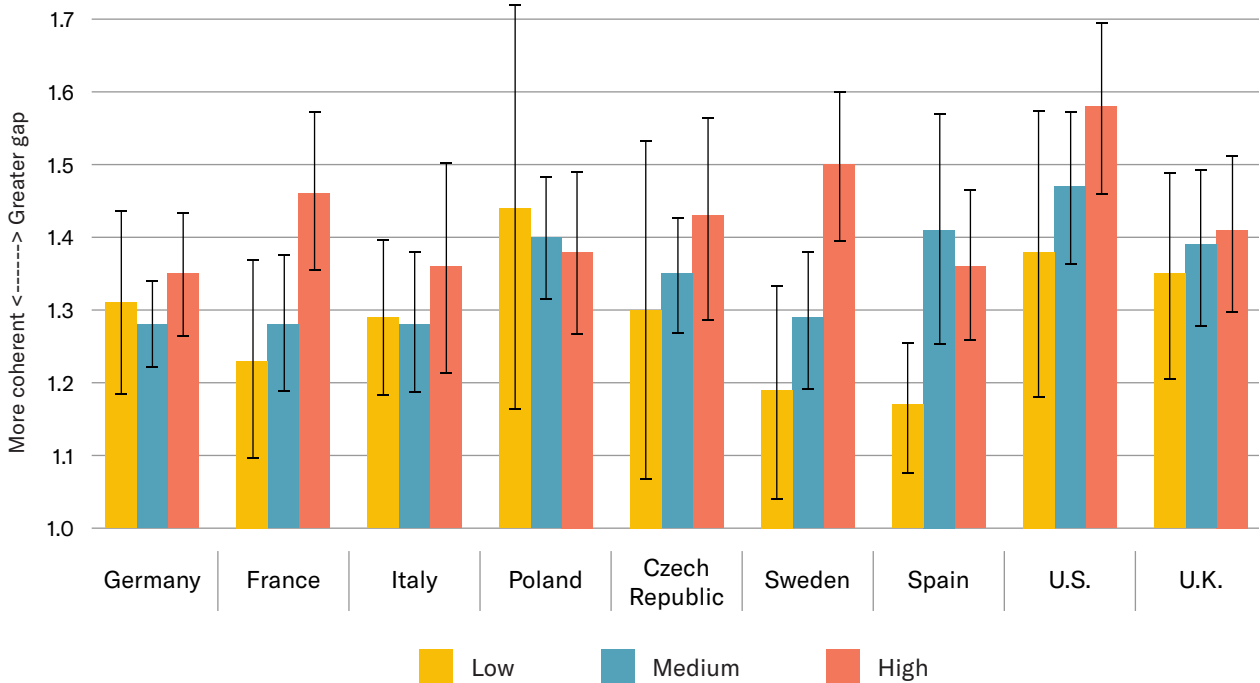


Regarding coherence, the profiles are much more varied (Figure 7c). In Sweden, France, the U.S. and to some extent Spain, people with greater educational attainment are significantly more likely to have a gap between their climate policy and economic system

views than those with lower levels of education. For the other countries, however, no significant gaps exist. Formal education is an important correlate for coherence and economic system views—but not everywhere.

FIGURE 7C

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by formal education and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

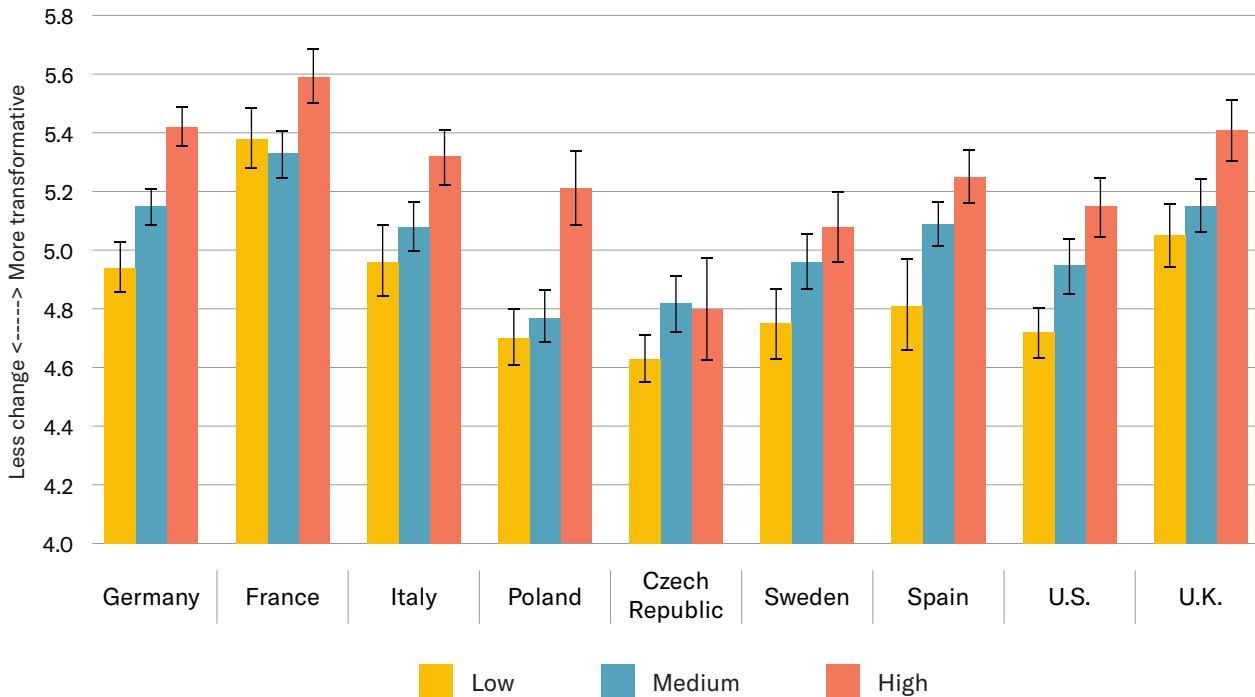


But as we know from our previous report, climate-specific knowledge has a bigger impact on general climate attitudes than formal education in general. Overall, the same holds true for perceptions of climate policies (Figure 8a). In all countries, those who answer fewer questions about climate change facts correctly are also less likely to favour transformative policy actions. The relationship is

stronger in some countries than others. For example, it is only weakly pronounced in France and the Czech Republic and rather moderate in Italy or Sweden. But overall, knowledge of the origins of climate change, the scale of its impact and the scientific consensus are consistently associated with a greater desire for transformative policies.

FIGURE 8A

Climate policy views by climate-specific knowledge and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



In most countries, the effects are even more pronounced for views on the economic system—but crucially, they run contrary to those found for formal education (figure 8b). People who know more about climate change are also much more likely to support more state intervention in the economy generally (not just in relation to climate policy). While formal education in some countries was associated with more libertarian views, there is a clear link between climate-specific knowledge and a preference for stronger state involvement in the economy. The only

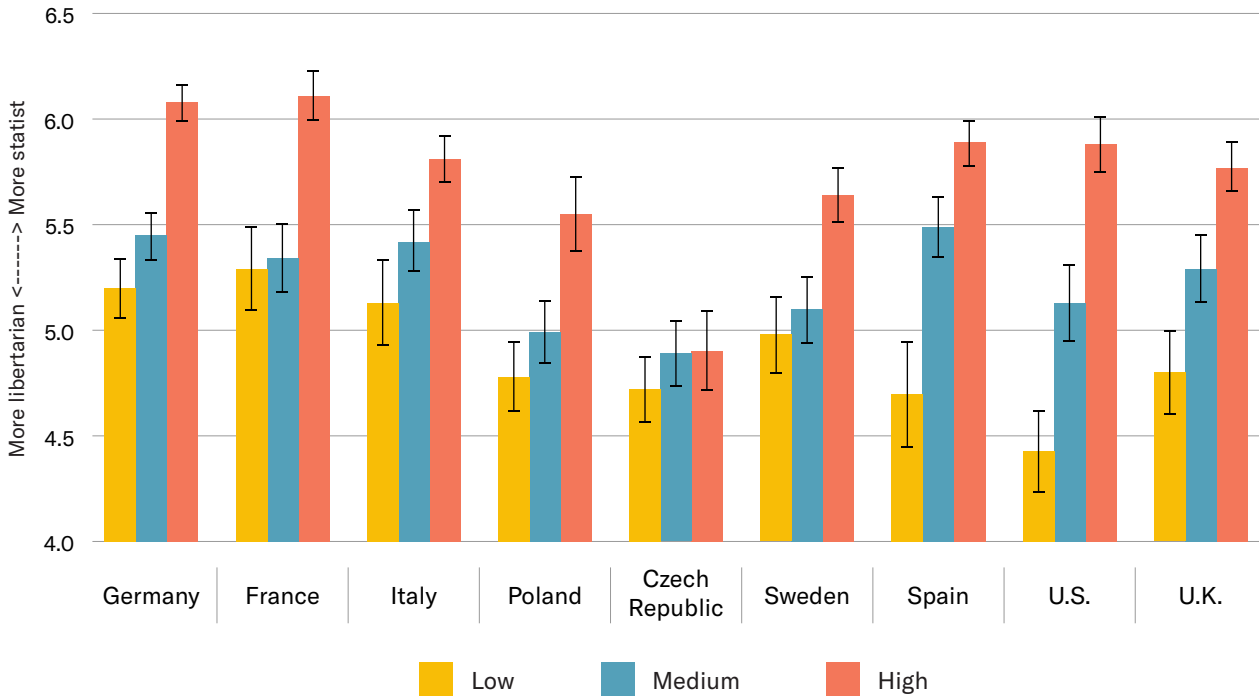
country where this relationship is weak is the Czech Republic.

It is noteworthy that the relationship between climate specific knowledge and general economic system preferences is stronger than that with views on climate policy. More knowledge seems to translate into a general desire for more directed change with the state taking on responsibility,²⁴ but people are not necessarily aware of which policies may have the most transformative effect.

24 This matches insights from the previous report: Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & dpart, p. 24. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.

FIGURE 8B

Economic system views by climate-specific knowledge and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

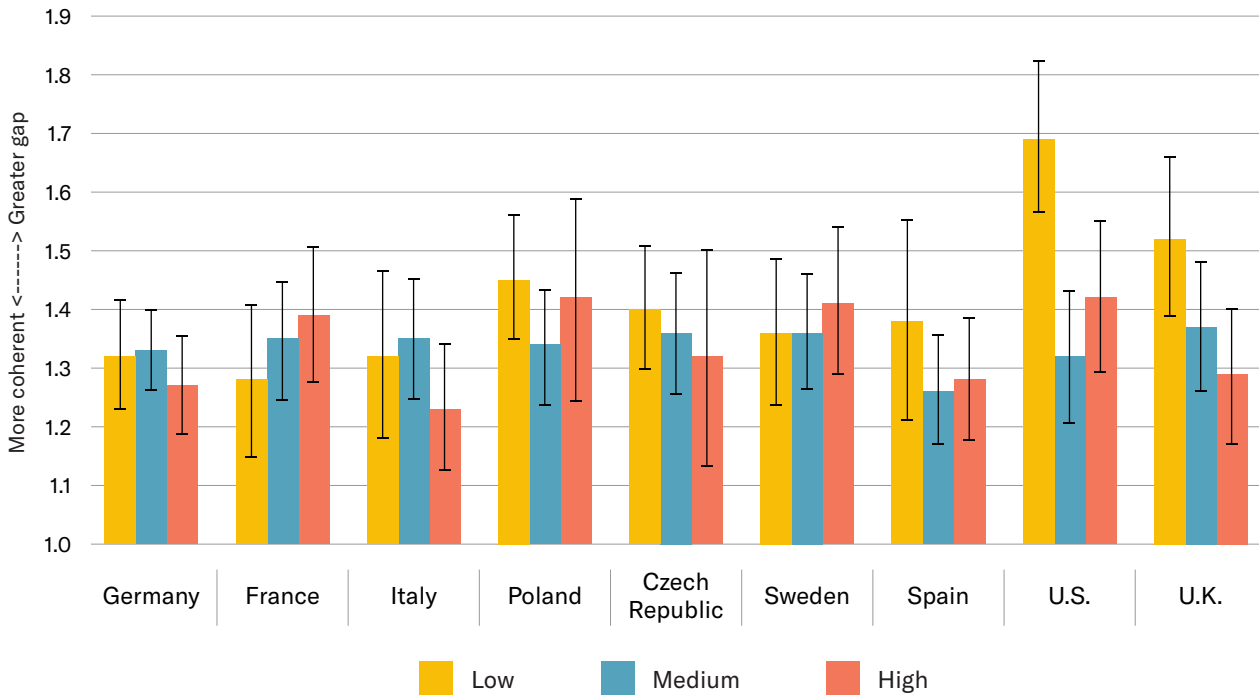


That inconsistency might also partially explain why climate-specific knowledge is not strongly linked to coherence between climate policy and economic system preferences (Figure 8c). Except for the U.K. and the U.S., there are no significant differences in coherence based on climate-specific knowledge.

In those two countries, people with lower climate specific knowledge show greater gaps between the two evaluations. But this finding does not match what we see elsewhere.

FIGURE 8C

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by climate-specific knowledge and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



Overall, climate-specific knowledge is linked to policy attitudes, both those that address the climate emergency and those about structuring the economic system generally. Specific knowledge is more important than formal education, and even has opposite effects when evaluating what economic structures should look like. In most countries, existing formal education structures do not seem to have given people the perspectives and tools to seek transformative change, but have rather

encouraged them to prefer the *status quo*. However, greater specific knowledge about the causes and consequences of climate change is linked more strongly to views about the economic system as a whole than climate specific policy, so educating people about the climate emergency has the potential to not only increase their support for better climate policy, but also their willingness to let state institutions enact necessary changes.

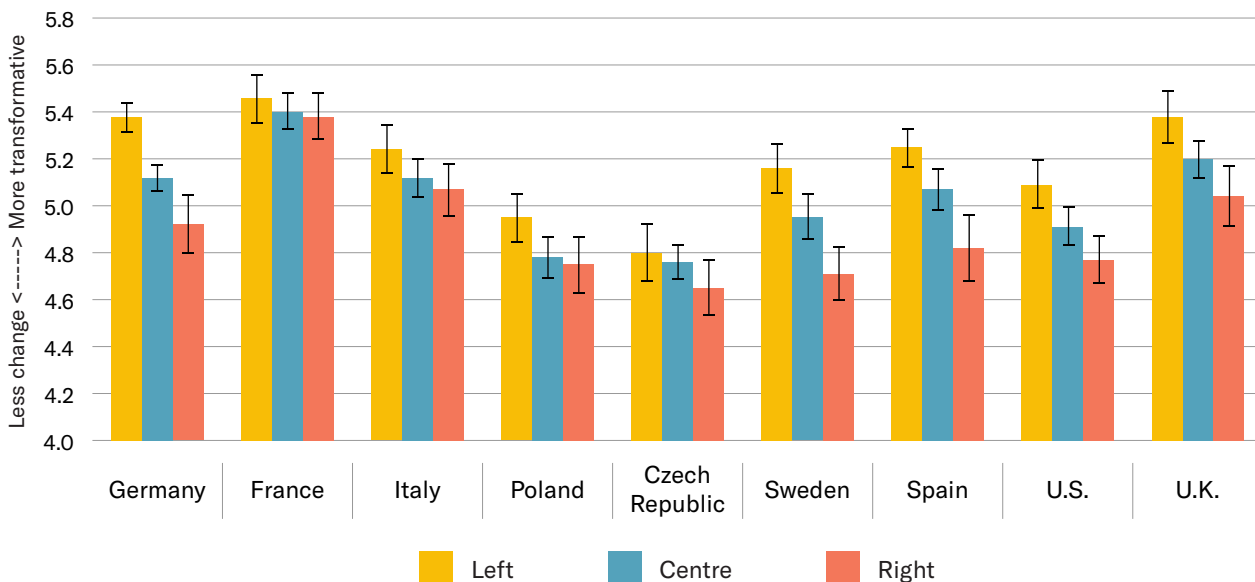
IDEOLOGICAL POLARISATION

Knowledge is clearly a very important, albeit complex factor in people’s policy preferences. However, it does not capture people’s perceptions of their overall political outlook. We have seen in previous work that in most countries there was significant polarisation in attitudes to climate change based on where people placed themselves on the left-right scale.²⁵ Indeed, in many countries, we see significant differences in policy attitudes as well. Overall, with the exception of France, people who place themselves on the left of the spectrum are more

likely to support transformative climate policies than those on the right (Figure 9a). The degree of polarisation varies. It is rather weak in Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic and most pronounced in Germany, Spain and Sweden. Interestingly, polarisation was stronger in other countries, especially the U.S., when people were asked about their general attitudes to climate change rather than policy specific questions.²⁶ Once again, we see that general attitudes do not necessarily translate into a preference for transformative policy.

FIGURE 9A

Climate policy views by ideological self-positioning and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



25 Eichhorn, J., Molthof, L. & Nicke, S. 2020. From Climate Change Awareness to Climate Crisis Action. Public Perceptions in Europe and the United States. Brussels & Berlin: Open Society European Policy Institute & dpart, pp. 16. Available at <https://dpart.org/publications/comparative-report/>.

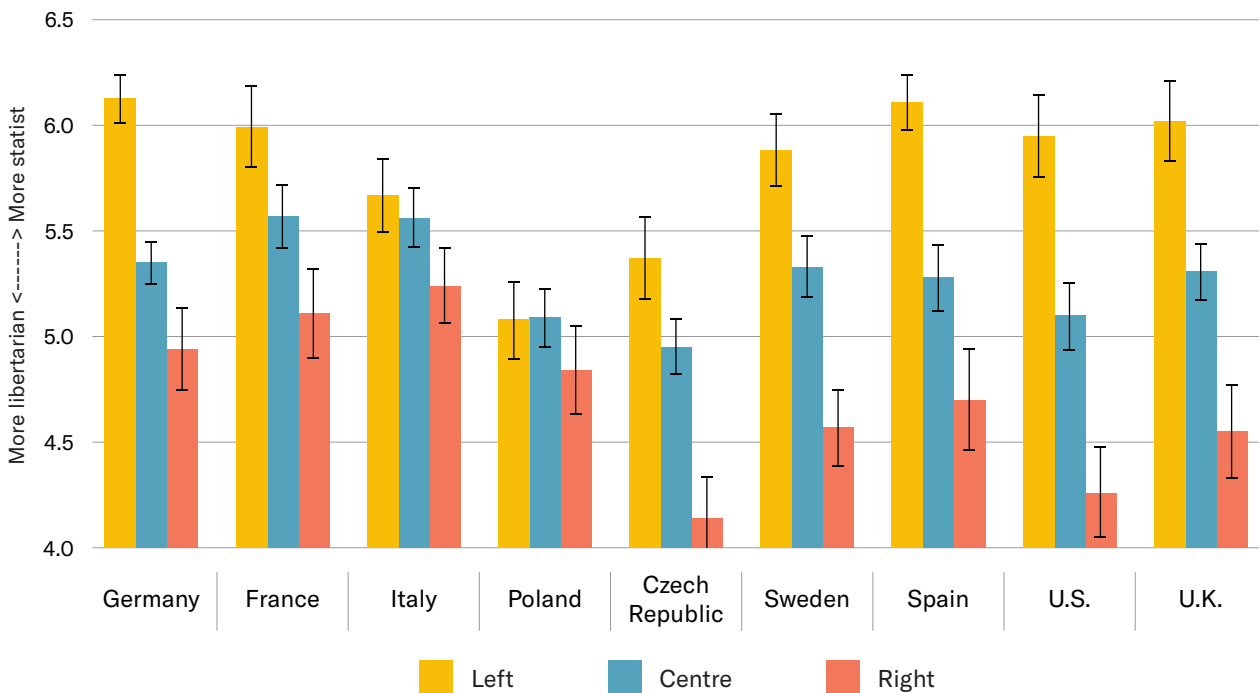
26 Ibid.

Similarly, the effect of ideological self-positioning is more pronounced for general economic system views. People who identify as more right-wing are more likely to favour libertarian views while those on the left emphasise the role of the state more often (Figure 9b). The relationship is weak in Poland and

only moderately pronounced in Italy, but we find strong polarisation in most countries, especially the U.S. This suggests that views on general structures of economic policy are more polarised than policies specifically focused on climate change.

FIGURE 9B

Economic system views by ideological self-positioning and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)

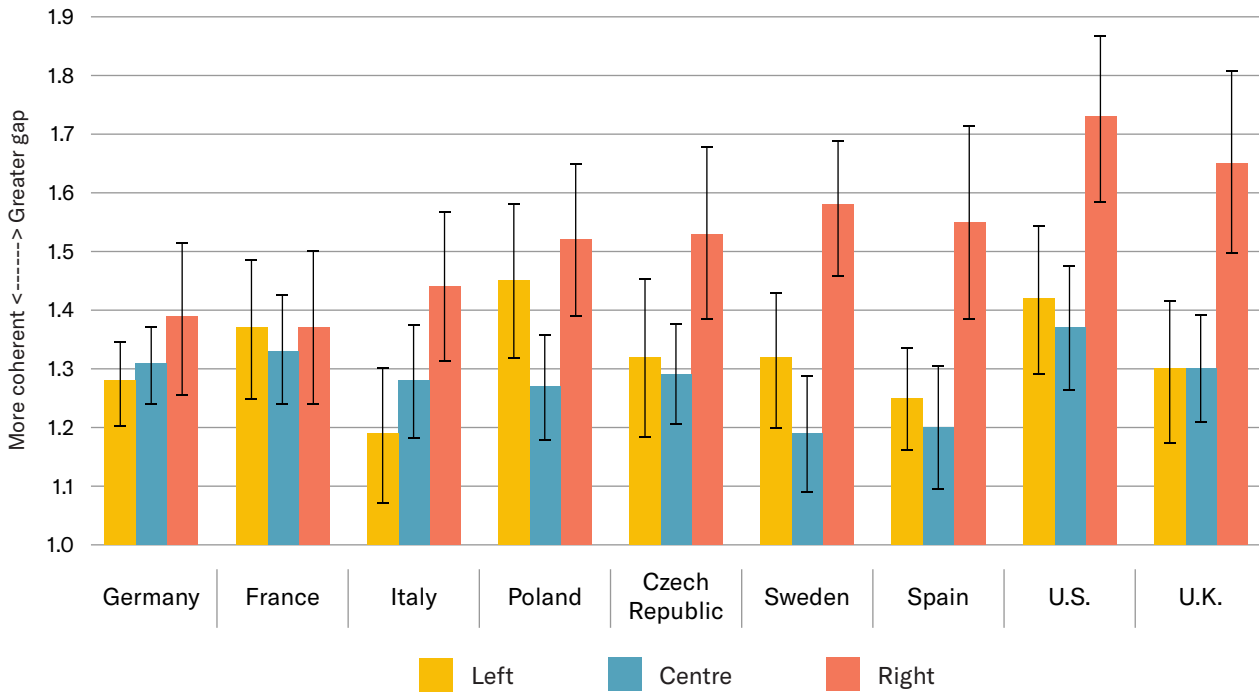


Overall, those who identify as right-wing are also more likely to hold less coherent views between their preference for climate policies and the economic system (Figure 9c). The gap is pronounced in the U.K., U.S., Spain, Sweden, Italy, and the Czech Republic, but not in Germany, France or Poland. The differences are typically between those who identify

themselves as on the right and everyone else. Except for Sweden and Poland, there are no significant differences between those who identify as left-wing and those who position themselves in the centre (though for these two countries the greatest level of coherence is amongst people in the centre).

FIGURE 9C

Gap between climate policy and economic system views by ideological self-positioning and country (mean score and 95 percent confidence interval)



So self-positioned ideology matters, but not consistently across all countries in the same way. Views about the economic system are most polarised and climate policy preferences much less so. There is greater incoherence between the two among those on the right in some (but not all) countries. It is crucial,

therefore, to understand the country-specific context of ideological divides and structures of polarisation when crafting engagement narratives, as it is unlikely that a one-size-fits-all solution can be found across all these different contexts.

CONCLUSION

While most people are aware that the climate has been changing and many generally say that action should be taken to counter it, this does not necessarily translate directly into policy positions. Indeed, when asked which policies would address climate change, many people do not choose the most transformative options. However, the extent to which people want change varies significantly from country to country. Differences also exist between their preferences about state involvement in the economy, but the two domains are only moderately linked to each other in most countries and not at all in some (such as Italy). For many people, therefore, there is a gap between their views on the economy and their evaluation of the scope of climate change policy.

Importantly, when it comes to these evaluations, not all population groups share the same degree of coherence. While demographic differences are not consistent across countries, we find that climate-specific knowledge does play an important role—and to a much greater extent than formal education in general. People who know more about the causes and consequences of climate change are more likely to favour transformative climate policy as well as state intervention in the economy. Crucially, the association is stronger for the latter. This may indicate that while more

knowledge about the climate crisis results in a greater desire for governments to take action, people might not necessarily be able to identify the most transformative policies that governments could pursue. There is an opportunity to develop greater awareness of these policy options among those who have a sound basic knowledge of the issue.

Working on the link in a constructive way requires careful consideration of how ideological views are linked to policy views. Self-positioning on the left-right scale is associated with economic system and climate policy preferences in most countries, but that association is much more pronounced for the former. This means that climate-specific policy views are less polarised than views about the interplay between the state and private sector in general. This is an important insight for actors who want to emphasise the imperative for economic system changes in addressing the climate crisis. If designed poorly, this linkage could increase polarisation in debates about climate policy, especially if climate policy debates are seen predominantly through general economic system perspectives. But constructed well, there might be an opportunity to reduce polarisation in debates about the economy, if seen through the lens of climate policy.

The study shows how important it is to examine the interplay of views on climate policy specifically and wider economic policy. There is no automatic link between the two and the precise interplay varies greatly between countries. Strategies for engaging publics in wider economic debates linked to climate policy need to be designed with a clear understanding of the respective national contexts. To answer the question of how that should be done, further research is necessary. This report has only shown how groups differ in their views. It does not demonstrate what factors may be causally responsible for certain views. Some group differences may be explained by other factors. For example, people with particular ideological positions may be more likely to have a certain demographic and education profile. Any further analyses need to take account of the interplay between the factors studied through multivariate approaches.

Furthermore, the measures used here need to be expanded. Both climate policy and economic structures can be characterised in more complex ways than one-dimensional scales allow. For the former, it would be useful to distinguish between different types of transformation, for example. For the latter, it would be useful to not just distinguish between more and less state intervention, but also between types of state engagement. Beyond this, qualitative work would help to examine how people make sense of the debates on both domains, how salient links between the two actually are, and whether they respond to particular arguments or stimuli. Such research would allow us to develop detailed strategies to engage publics in the wider systemic change needed to comprehensively address the climate crisis.

APPENDIX: SCORE CALCULATIONS

A. CODING OF ITEMS USED TO CALCULATE THE CLIMATE POLICY SCORE

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
Which of the following comes closest to your view on what the government should do to get individuals to act in a climate-responsible way, if anything at all?	There should be no government actions to get individuals to act in a climate-responsible way	0
	Individuals should get rewards for behaving in a climate-responsible way	2.5
	There should be a mix of rewards, disincentives, and bans for individuals	5
	Individuals should be taxed on behaviour that is damaging to the climate	7.5
	Individuals should be prohibited from behaving in ways that are damaging to the climate	10
And which of the following comes closest to your view on what the government should do to get businesses to act in a climate-responsible way, if anything at all?	There should be no government actions to get businesses to act in a climate-responsible way	0
	Businesses should get rewards for behaving in a climate-responsible way	2.5
	There should be a mix of rewards, disincentives and bans for businesses	5
	Businesses should be taxed on behaviour that is damaging to the climate	7.5
	Businesses should be prohibited from behaving in ways that are damaging to the climate	10
There are different views about the potential role of technology in addressing climate change compared to change people have to make in their lives. Which of the following comes closest to your own view?	New technologies can solve climate change without individuals having to change their lives too much	0
	New technologies can help address climate change, but individuals will also have to make changes to their lives	3.33
	New technologies can only have a small effect in addressing climate change, it is more important that individuals change their lives	6.67
	New technologies cannot really help address climate change and may actually stop individuals from changing their lives	10

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
<p>In your opinion, which of the following policies should the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government pursue to best address your concerns about climate change, if any at all?</p> <p>AND</p> <p>And what would be the second best policy, in your opinion?</p> <p><i>(We obtain ONE item for both questions combined, where the scaled value for each respondent is $x = (\text{value response First choice} * 0.6) + (\text{value response Second choice} * 0.4)$)</i></p>	The government should not pursue any of these policies	0
	Allow communities of households to generate their own energy with shared renewable sources, such as local solar or wind turbine parks	1.43
	Increase the number of nuclear energy power plants	2.86
	Only give out government funding to businesses that engage in environmentally sustainable activities	4.29
	Make public transport very cheap or free of charge	5.71
	Apply a higher tax on all flights people take	7.14
	Increase the price of meat by adding a special meat tax	8.57
	Apply a tax on all carbon emissions	10
<p>Raising animals for meat consumption has a strong impact on emissions that contribute to climate change. Which of the following do you consider the best response the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government could choose? Please select what you believe is the best response and what your believe is the second best response.</p>	Do not change anything	0
	Run public awareness and education campaigns	2
	Cut subsidies (financial help) currently given to animal farmers	4
	Raise a tax on meat	6
	Ban large-scale farming of animals	8
	Ban all non-organic meat production	10
<p>Flights have a strong impact on emissions that contribute to climate change. Which of the following do you consider the best response the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government could choose? Please select what you believe is the best response and what you believe is the second best response.</p>	Do not change anything	0
	Improve train and bus networks, making them cheaper and faster with more routes	2
	Increase taxes on flights, but only for people who fly more than 3 times a year	4
	Increase taxes on all flights	6
	Ban flights within [COUNTRY]	8
	Ban all flights	10

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
Car traffic has a strong impact on emissions that contribute to climate change. Which of the following do you consider the best response the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government could choose? Please select...	Do not change anything	0
	Reduce the speed at which cars can travel on all motorways	1.43
	Introduce or increase tolls to use all highways	2.86
	Improve the infrastructure for bicycles (e.g., better cycle paths)	4.29
	Improve the infrastructure for electric cars (e.g., more charging stations)	5.71
	Make public transport free of charge	7.14
	Provide financial support for people to buy cars that don't use petrol (e.g., electric cars)	8.57
	Ban cars from city centres	10
How we construct homes has a strong impact on emissions that contribute to climate change. Which of the following do you consider the best response the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government could choose? Please select...	Do not change anything	0
	Provide support for people building new homes to make them more energy efficient	2
	Make it mandatory that all new homes have to have solar panels installed	4
	Pay for improvements to insulation in people's homes	6
	Build many new, state-owned energy efficient homes to rent to people	8
	Ban the construction of new homes that are not highly energy efficient	10

B. CODING OF ITEMS USED TO CALCULATE THE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS SCORE

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
<p>In your view, economic decisions by the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government should be guided first and foremost by the goal to</p> <p>AND</p> <p>And what would you say should be the second highest priority for economic decisions by the [COUNTRY ADJECTIVE] government?</p>	Reduce [COUNTRY]'s national debt	0
	Increase economic growth	2
	Provide jobs for all people in the country	4
	Increase people's overall wellbeing	6
	Reduce inequality in society	8
<p>Many people are concerned that the distribution of material wealth in [COUNTRY] has become very unequal. Which of the following comes closest to your own view about what should ideally be done about that?</p>	Nothing	0
	We should make it easier for individuals to invest their money (e.g., in shares)	2
	We should provide more services free of charge (such as public transport)	4
	We should increase the taxes for those who earn most	6
	We should fundamentally change the economic system to redistribute wealth	8
<p>There is a lot of debate about how the state and businesses should work together. Which of the following comes closest to your own view?</p>	We should provide every person in [COUNTRY] with a Universal Basic Income every month	10
	The state should provide basic legal frameworks for businesses, but otherwise not engage in economic activities	0
	The state should provide basic legal frameworks for businesses and provide a safety net for people who do not have a job, but should not directly engage in economic activities	2.5
	Private businesses should be allowed to operate within the legal framework the state provides, but the state should intervene in areas where markets do not work well for people	5
	Private businesses should be allowed to operate within the legal framework the state provides, but the state should prohibit activities that only benefit very few people and are harmful to many others	7.5
The state should plan and organise all economic activities	10	

For both indicators a maximum of 2 ‘don’t know’ responses (which were substituted by the mean of nearby points) were allowed before a case was excluded. The final dataset includes 10286 valid cases.

C. CODING OF QUESTIONS USED TO COMPUTE THE CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE SCORE

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
You may have heard the idea that the world’s climate is changing due to increases in temperature over the past 100 years. What is your personal opinion on this? Do you think the world’s climate is changing?	Definitely changing	1
	Probably changing	0
	Probably not changing	0
	Definitely not changing	0
	Don’t know	0
If no action is taken to address climate change, to what extent do you think your life will be changed by 2035?	My life will get better, because of climate change	0
	My life will not be changed substantially due to climate change	0
	My life will change somewhat and I will have to adapt to the changed climate	0
	My life will be strongly disrupted by climate change in a way that will change it fundamentally	1
	My life will become very hard and a deep struggle to secure even basic needs, because of climate change	1
	Don’t know	0
In 2015, governments from around the world agreed at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris to limit temperature rises to below 2°C and aim for 1.5°C.	True	1
	False	0
The richest half of the global population is responsible for about 90 per cent of the world’s emissions of carbon into the atmosphere.	True	1
	False	0

QUESTION	RESPONSE	VALUE
Scientists are roughly equally divided in their views on whether climate change is man-made or not.	True	0
	False	1
Do you think that climate change is caused by natural processes, human activity, or both?	Entirely by natural processes	0
	Mainly by natural processes	0
	About equally by natural processes and human activity	0
	Mainly by human activity	1
	Entirely by human activity	1
	I don't think climate change is happening	0

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