

The Accommodation Dilemma.

How voter-endorsed disintegration bids challenge international institutions

Stefanie Walter
University of Zurich
walter@ipz.uzh.ch

*Paper prepared for presentation in the the IC3JM Seminar at Carlos III – Juan March
Institute Madrid, 16 April 2021*

Abstract

Popular challenges to international institutions present a growing problem for international cooperation. This paper presents a framework for analyzing the systemic consequences of such challenges. It focuses on the problems that unilateral, voter-endorsed disintegration bids, that is attempts to withdraw from or renegotiate the terms of existing international institutions, create for these institutions and their other member states and their responses to these challenges. Such disintegration bids pose an “accommodation dilemma” to the other member states: accommodating the challenging state’s demands creates political contagion risks and implies a redistribution of cooperation gains in the challenging country’s favor, but not accommodating these demands can be very costly. Comparative case studies of nine referendum-endorsed challenges to international institutions demonstrate that this framework can explain the negotiation dynamics and systemic outcomes of different voter-endorsed disintegration bids. A more detailed case study of Brexit delves into the mechanism and demonstrates the existence of contagion risks with survey data from approximately 60.000 EU-27 Europeans and the effect of the accommodation dilemma on EU-27 Brexit negotiation positions.

I would like to thank Tanja Börzel, Loriana Crasnic, Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Jeff Frieden, Markus Gastinger, Fabrizio Gilardi, Julia Gray, Sara Hobolt, Erik Jones, Katharina Meissner, Sean Müller, Valentin Lang, Tabea Palmtag, Nils Redeker, Tobias Rommel, Michael Strebler, Jonas Tallberg, Denise Traber, Christopher Wratil, as well as participants in workshops at Harvard, the Hertie School of Governance, the IPZ publication seminar, the LAGAPE seminar, Oxford University, the Scuola Normale, the UCL European Politics series, and EPSA 2018, IPES 2018 and PEIO 2019. Stefanie Matter, Tabea Palmtag, Lukas Stiefel and Théoda Woeffray provided excellent research assistance. This project has received funding from the Stiftung für wissenschaftliche Forschung an der Universität Zürich (grant number STWF-18-024) and the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme grant agreement No 817582 (ERC Consolidator Grant DISINTEGRATION).

1. Introduction

International institutions are increasingly confronted with a popular backlash against international cooperation. Demands to not only slow down, but to reverse international cooperation have proliferated and have been endorsed by voters in referendums and elections in a growing number of cases. The most prominent example of such a voter-endorsed challenge to an international institution is the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom (UK), in which British voters decided to leave the European Union (EU). This direct democratic vote set in motion the biggest withdrawal negotiations ever seen. Although highly disruptive, Brexit is, however, not unique. Voters in Greece, Iceland, and Switzerland have used popular referendums to repudiate the terms of existing international agreements in recent years. US President Trump fulfilled key campaign promises when he withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal and renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). And political parties and politicians in countries as diverse as Sweden, France, or Brazil have made campaign promises to withdraw their countries from international institutions such as the European Union (EU), the European Monetary Union, or the Paris Climate Accord.

Although skepticism about international cooperation is nothing new (e.g. Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Walter 2021b), the vehemence with which it has manifested itself more recently and the impact it has had on international relations are novel developments (Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019; Voeten 2019; De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter 2021). This makes it important to understand what a unilateral and voter-endorsed bid to renegotiate or withdraw from an international institution means for the institution as such and its other member states, and how they respond to such bids. After all, one country's unilateral bid to renegotiate its membership terms in its favor, or to withdraw from an international institution altogether, typically threatens to leave the other member states worse off. If such "*disintegration bids*" are successful, cooperation gains are redistributed in favor of the challenging state or even dissipate after the withdrawal of one party from this agreement. A small but growing literature has begun to examine how such challenges play out on the international level (Huikuri 2020; Jurado, Léon, and Walter 2021; Kruck and Zangl 2020; Lipsky 2017), but our understanding of the systemic consequences of the backlash against international cooperation is still underdeveloped.

This is particularly true for voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions. Growing popular support for non-cooperation and withdrawals from existing international institutions are widely seen as a serious threat to international cooperation (Pevehouse 2020), both with regard to specific international institutions such as the EU (Hobolt 2016; Laffan

2019), and the contemporary liberal world order more generally (e.g., Ikenberry 2018; Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). Unilateral challenges to international institutions have a large potential to reverberate among the elites and the mass publics in other countries (De Vries 2017; Walter 2021a), especially when they come in the form of a referendum vote or a core campaign promise, that provide them with a high degree of democratic legitimacy and garner a lot of attention both at home and abroad (Rose 2018). This not only politicizes the renegotiation/withdrawal process, but can also encourage foreign political elites and voters skeptical of international institutions to mobilize in favor of pursuing similar strategies. Voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions thus pose considerable risks of political contagion both by weakening the benefits of international cooperation and by emboldening cooperation-sceptics elsewhere.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative to better understand which challenges voter-endorsed attempts to renegotiate or withdraw from an international institution pose for international institutions and its other member states, which dynamics they produce in the international arena and how those states interested in maintaining high levels of international cooperation can respond to this challenge. So far, however, our theoretical tools to develop such an understanding are underdeveloped. There is vast research on the creation and functioning of international institutions, but analysis of how such institutions decay or dissolve has remained rudimentary (although there is a growing literature, see e.g. von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2020; Gray 2018; Helfer 2005; Huikuri 2020; Leeds and Savun 2007).¹

This paper contributes to this literature by examining how the other parties to an international agreement or institution respond to a specific type of challenge to international cooperation: attempts by one member state to change the terms of or withdraw from an existing international agreement on the basis of a strong popular mandate. It examines the trade-offs that such voter-endorsed challenges create for the institution's other member states and argues that the politics of international disintegration are fundamentally shaped by an "accommodation dilemma:" the dilemma that accommodating the challenging state carries political contagion risks and a redistribution of cooperation gains in the challenging country's favor, but that not accommodating its demands can be very costly. This dilemma shapes how the remaining member states respond to disintegration bids, especially when their popular backing accentuate

¹ I define international institutions as relatively stable sets of norms and rules that pertain to the international system, the actors in the system and their activities (Duffield 2007), ranging from international treaties to supranational organizations.

contagion risks, but also in other context where accommodation is likely to spark further challenges abroad.

Empirically, the paper focuses on referendum-based challenges against existing international institutions as those cases in which a disintegration challenge is most clearly endorsed by voters. To illustrate the merits of this framework, the paper first conducts a comparative case study of all instances of these challenges to date. I then zoom in on the most consequential of these cases to date, the UK's referendum-based decision to leave the European Union. Using survey data from approximately 60,000 EU-27 Europeans surveyed over the course of the Brexit withdrawal negotiations, I show that contagion dynamics exist and that they are influenced by ups and downs of the withdrawal negotiations and countries' relative bargaining power. Moreover, I show that the Brexit negotiation positions of the EU-27 governments are shaped by the extent to which they experience the accommodation dilemma. The conclusion discusses what my framework suggests for the long-term challenges generated by the popular backlash against international institutions for international cooperation.

2. What are voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions?

I define voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions as *a process in which one member state of an international institution attempts to unilaterally change the terms of or withdraw from an existing international agreement on the basis of a strong popular mandate*. Such challenges can be described as bids to dis-integrate from an international institution, because they seek to partly or fully withdraw the country from the jurisdiction of an international agreement or an international or supranational organization. While in the past, such challenges have typically been an elite affair, more recently they have increasingly received strong domestic popular support (De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter 2021). The most direct form of voter-endorsement is a referendum vote on a proposal that is directed against an international agreement or an international organization. But such endorsement also occurs when a candidate or party that makes a promise to challenge an international institution a centerpiece of the election campaign is voted into office, albeit this endorsement then occurs in a less binding and direct fashion.

What makes voter-endorsed disintegration bids different from more elite-based challenges is that they not only provide the disintegration decision with a high degree of democratic legitimacy, but also politicizes the question of whether an international treaty can be changed ex post or terminated (Hutter, Grande, and Kriesi 2016; Rose 2018; De Vries,

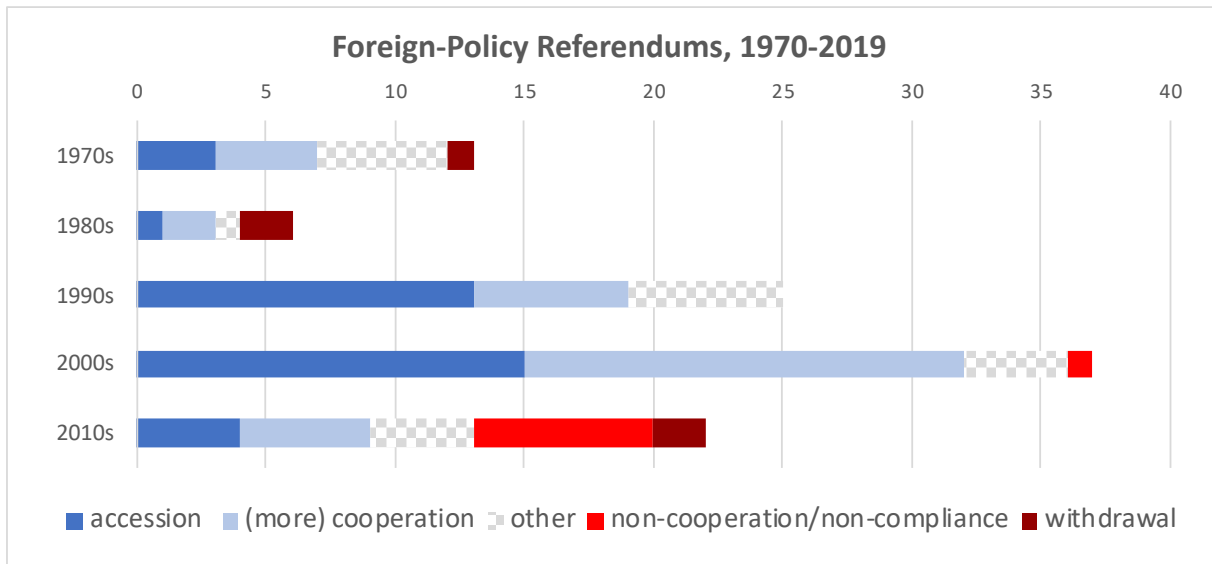
Hobolt, and Walter 2021; Zürn 2014). Voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions therefore tend to be much more politicized and salient in the political debate than renegotiation bids or withdrawal decisions taken by a small foreign policy elite. They also provide the disintegration bid with a high degree of democratic legitimacy, which often reduces governments' room to compromise on the international level. This effect is particularly strong for referendum votes, even though renegeing on key campaign promises can also be politically costly for policymakers.

Focusing on referendums as the clearest form of voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions, Figure 1 shows that such challenges have proliferated in the 2010s.² It distinguishes between referendum proposals that establish or deepen cooperation between states and referendum proposals that, if successful, roll back *existing* forms of international cooperation either by mandating changes to, a renegotiation of with existing international agreements, or by directly putting continued membership in the international institution up for a vote.³ The figure shows that while referendums that challenge existing international institutions are still relatively rare, they have become much more frequent and much more dominant in recent years. Ten of the thirteen referendums challenging existing international cooperation were held in the 2010s. Table 1 provides an overview of all referendums that challenge existing international institutions. It shows that most of these referendums are related to European integration. This is not a coincidence, but rather reflects that the EU has achieved a level of integration and authority that makes the trade-offs between national sovereignty and international cooperation gains particularly pronounced (Hooghe and Marks 2009; Zürn, Binder, and Ecker-Ehrhardt 2012). Not surprisingly, many Euroskeptic parties in Europe push for referendums on EU-related issues. Yet we also see voter-endorsed challenges to international agreements in other countries as well, such as a (non-binding) referendum against an IMF program in Brazil in 2000.

² See table A1 in the online appendix (OA) for a list and classification of referendums. For a similar classification see Mendez and Germann (2016).

³ For example, the 2016 Dutch rejection of the Ukraine association agreement with the EU thus counts as a referendum on establishing cooperation (in this case between the EU and Ukraine), even though it was launched by populist Euroskeptics and rejected at the polls.

Figure 1: Types of foreign-policy referendums, 1970-2019



Source: C2D Datenbank, Zentrum für Demokratie Aarau, classified for recent years and updated by myself.

Not all of these referendums actually result in a vote in favor of a disintegration bid. Although cooperation-enhancing referendums have a higher “success rate” (74%) than cooperation-challenging referendums, such challenges have been endorsed by voters in about every second instance (58%).⁴ But even when they are endorsed, the outcome of these disintegration bids is not clear a priori (see also Schimmelfennig 2019). Some of them result in a change of the international arrangement in favor of the challenging state, some in the withdrawal of the challenging state from the international institution, and some are retracted when the challenging state aborts its plans to renegotiate or withdraw from the institution. This wide variety of outcomes. underscores the need for a better understanding of the dynamics and reactions these efforts produce.

⁴ See Table A2 (OA) for more details.

Table 1: List of referendums challenging existing international institutions

	<i>Referendum name & topic</i>	<i>Referendum vote (outcome)</i>
Referendums on the renegotiation of or non-compliance with existing international agreements		
2000 Brazil	National Plebiscite on the External Debt Unofficial, non-binding referendum on exiting from IMF program and non-repayment of foreign and domestic public debt	Non-cooperative
2010 Iceland	First loan guarantees referendum (Icesave referendum I) Referendum on repayment of loan guarantees to the British and Dutch government meant to cover British and Dutch savers' deposits in a bankrupted Icelandic bank (Icesave bill 2).	Non-cooperative
2011 Iceland	Second loan guarantees referendum (Icesave referendum II) Referendum on the renegotiated agreement between Iceland, the UK and the Netherlands on debt repayment (Icesave bill 3)	Non-cooperative
2014 Switzerland	"Against Mass Immigration" initiative Referendum mandating renegotiation of the "Treaty on Free Movement of People" with the EU.	Non-cooperative
2015 Greece	Greek Bailout referendum Referendum on accepting the bailout conditions proposed by EU Commission, IMF and ECB; no bailout would put Greece's EMU membership at risk.	Non-cooperative
2016 Switzerland	Implementation Initiative Referendum on a law proposal openly in breach of the European Human Rights Declaration	Cooperative
2016 Hungary	Migrant quota referendum Referendum against the EU's Emergency Response Mechanism, adopted in 2015.	Invalid (non-cooperative)
2019 Switzerland	Swiss weapon law reform referendum Approval was required by the Schengen and Dublin treaties (non-approval leads to exit)	Cooperative
Referendums on continued membership in an existing international treaty/organization		
1975 UK	Referendum on continued European Communities (EC) membership	Remain
1982 Greenland	Referendum on leaving the EC after Greenland had achieved self-rule	Leave
1986 Spain	Referendum on continued NATO membership	Remain
2014 Switzerland	ECOPOP initiative Proposal included termination of the free movement of people treaty with EU	Remain
2016 UK	Brexit Referendum on leaving the EU	Leave

3. Voter-endorsed disintegration bids as a challenge for the other member states

Unilateral, voter-endorsed challenges to existing international institutions have significant spillover effects for the other parties to the respective international agreement or international organization. When one member state withdraws from or renegotiates its terms of membership in an existing international institution in its favor, this affects the other member states of the institution in two ways: the loss of existing cooperation gains and the risk that similar demands will spread to other member states. These spillover effects shape the other member states' incentives on to respond to such disintegration bids in a more or less accommodating manner.

Spillover effects I: Lost cooperation gains

International cooperation is typically established because both sides benefit from such cooperation, even if the gains of cooperation are not always shared equally (Abbott and Snidal 1998; Gruber 2000; Keohane 1984). In the same vein, reintroducing barriers to cooperation is costly. A withdrawal or one-sided renegotiation outcome therefore reduces the share of the cooperation gains the other member states enjoy. Although withdrawal or one-sided renegotiation outcome can also create some upsides for some member states, for example when they succeed in luring business or activities from the leaving state as a result or when the new setting better suits their political preferences, in most cases, the loss of cooperation gains will outweigh the benefits.

For example, if trade barriers are re-introduced, exporters will be hurt and international supply chains will be disrupted, and when the leaving state uses this opportunity to deregulate, its businesses may enjoy a competitive advantage over its competitors in the other member states. Withdrawal can also make other forms of cooperation and policy coordination – from police cooperation to environmental protection – between the other countries and the leaving country more difficult. This creates transaction costs, economic distortions, and also financial risks that arise as economic agents adjust to the new environment. Moreover, especially when the withdrawing member state is an important and powerful member state, safeguarding the functioning of the institution can become difficult, even when the remaining member states in principle want to do it – the US' withdrawal from Iran Nuclear Deal, which fulfilled one of Donald Trump's major campaign promises, is a case in point. Countries vary in their exposure to a potential loss of cooperation gains: a "hard Brexit," for example, has been estimated to put

less than 0.5% of Bulgaria's GDP at risk, but more than 10% of Irish GDP (Chen et al. 2018). Exposure tends to be highest for member states who depend strongly on cooperation with the cooperation-challenging state.

Spillover effects II: Political contagion risks

A second type of spillover effect of unilateral, voter-endorsed disintegration bids are political contagion risks that arise because successful withdrawal or renegotiation can embolden integration-sceptics. Within the challenging state, a successful disintegration bid such as a renegotiation in the country's favor may encourage further challenges against international institutions in the future. But in addition to this temporal contagion effect, contagion can also spread cross-nationally. For one, successful disintegration bids lower the overall economic and political attractiveness of the international institution for the remaining member states, which creates the risks that other member states will find it no longer worth to pay the price of membership. Moreover, they demonstrate that they offer a way for countries to unilaterally improve their position, that integration and cooperation can be reversed, and that nation states can be better off on their own. As such, they are therefore likely to spur similar demands and support for similar actions in other member states as well (Hobolt 2016; Hobolt, Popa, van der Brug, and Schmitt 2021; De Vries 2017; Walter 2021a). If this turns into a domino effect, this can pose a threat to the long-run viability of the international institution as a whole.⁵ However, when a disintegration bid fails (for example because the government aborts its challenge for fear of negative consequences), or makes the challenging country worse off, this should induce more pessimism about the viability of such challenges and should deter similar demands abroad.

While these effects also hold for any successful one-sided challenge to an international institution, the contagion effect is likely to be particularly strong when the disintegration bid has been endorsed by voters. Such challenges tend to be highly salient and politicized far beyond the country in which the vote takes place (De Vries, Hobolt, and Walter 2021). By observing developments abroad, voters obtain information that allows them to update their own policy preferences (Kayser and Peress 2012; Malet 2019; De Vries 2018). This is particularly important regarding challenges to international institutions, because such challenges have been so rare in the past. It is therefore difficult for voters to correctly predict how their own country

⁵ This process is similar to the cross-national diffusion of domestic regime contention (e.g., Weyland 2010)

would fare if it left an existing international institution or tried to renegotiate its membership terms, how other countries would respond, and what the economic, social, and political consequences would be (Walter, Dinas, Jurado, and Konstantinidis 2018). Another country's disintegration experience provides voters with such information, allowing them to update their beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of a disintegration bid by their own country. As such, the extent and direction of political contagion effects – encouragement or deterrence – are themselves influenced by the negotiation process and outcome.

Responding to a voter-endorsed disintegration bid

These spillover effects create considerable problems for policymakers faced with a voter-endorsed challenge to an international institution by another member state. Yet, although a country can unilaterally decide to withdraw from an international institution, the other parties to an agreement have several options of how to respond. Sometimes, these options are limited because the terms of withdrawal are pre-determined in an international agreement (Rosendorff and Milner 2001), or because withdrawal simply means a return to the status quo (Thompson, Broude, and Haftel 2019). But often, disintegration bids result in negotiations about the terms of withdrawal, of a renegotiated treaty, or the countries' future relations. For example, such (re-)negotiations regularly occur with regard to transboundary freshwater agreements (De Bruyne, Fischhendler, and Haftel 2020), trade agreements (Castle 2019) or bilateral investment treaties (Haftel and Thompson 2018; Huikuri 2020). Other, better-known examples include the US bid to terminate NAFTA and renegotiate the USMCA successor agreement (Lester and Manak 2018) or the Brexit negotiations about the terms of withdrawal and the future EU-UK relationship (Hix 2018).

In these negotiations, the other member states can decide whether or not to accommodate the challenging state's demands (Jurado, Léon, and Walter 2021).⁶ This gives the other member states leverage as they can influence how the disintegration process evolves, whether the country pursues or aborts its disintegration bid, and whether the challenging country is ultimately worse or better off after challenging the international institution. On the one hand, the other member states can accommodate the challenging country's democratically endorsed disintegration-bid, for example by granting the exceptions demanded or maintaining wide-ranging cooperation after withdrawal. Such an *accommodation strategy* changes the

⁶ Although the negotiations can be conducted by representatives of the international institution, the negotiating outcome needs to be ratified by the remaining member states.

distribution of cooperation gains in the challenging country's favor, but also preserves many of these gains for the other member states. However, accommodation comes with two downsides for the other member states: not only does it usually leave the other member states worse off than under the status quo, but it also makes it likely that the challenging country's experience is positive, which in turn provides an attractive precedent that is likely to encourage exit-tendencies and support for other challenges in other member states. Accommodation thus carries considerable political contagion risks.

On the other extreme, the remaining member states can take a *hard, non-accommodating stance* by refusing to make concessions or to grant exceptions. By tying the benefits of cooperation to the existing agreement, this strategy tries to make withdrawal or non-compliance as costly as possible for the challenging country. A non-accommodation strategy has two advantages: For one, it raises the likelihood that the challenging member state will withdraw its disintegration bid. This implies a continuation of the status quo, and this is the best outcome for the other member states. Second, even if the challenge is not aborted, a non-accommodating strategy is likely to lower contagion risks because it makes the outcome less attractive and highlights the benefits of the existing arrangement to potential further challengers. However, this strategy has a significant downside: If the challenging state does not back down, it has the potential to be very costly for the other member states as they lose out on many of the benefits of cooperation that they had so far mutually enjoyed.

The Accommodation Dilemma

These spillover effects create significant downside risks, which shape policymakers' incentives of to respond to unilateral disintegration bids in a more or less accommodating fashion.⁷ In situations when the potential loss of cooperation gains clearly dominates contagion risks, accommodation is the most likely response. In contrast, when contagion risks dominate the loss of cooperation gains, there are strong incentives to pursue a non-accommodation strategy.⁸ Importantly, the systemic repercussions of contagion dynamics mean that policymakers need to consider not only the political contagion risks in their own country, but

⁷ Note that the accommodation dilemma also creates incentives for policymakers abroad to intervene in other countries' referendum campaigns in support of a cooperative voting outcome (Walter, Dinas, Jurado, and Konstantinidis 2018).

⁸ The extent to which governments are concerned about potential encouragement effects also depends on their own ideological leaning. More cooperation-skeptic governments will be less concerned about contagion risks and are therefore more likely to accommodate a disintegrating state, not least because they may be interested in setting a positive precedent for leaving (Jurado, Léon, and Walter 2021).

also the contagion risks in other member states and in the withdrawing. Even if a government represents a country in which the mass public strongly supports continued membership in the international institution, it has incentives to support a non-accommodating strategy if it fears that accommodation will encourage cooperation-sceptics in another member state. High contagion risks at home or in another member state thus increase support for a hawkish negotiation strategy, and this effect will be particularly pronounced when the disintegration process is highly politicized.

The choice is much more difficult when the disintegration bid puts both many cooperation gains at risk and creates significant contagion risks. In these situation policymakers in the other member states face an “*accommodation dilemma*,” based on the trade-off between minimizing cooperation losses and minimizing contagion risks: Whereas accommodation minimizes the disruption caused by disintegration, it makes the challenging country better off by allowing it to enjoy the benefits of cooperation without sharing the costs (Jurado, Léon, and Walter 2021; Walter 2020). This not only leads to a redistribution of cooperation gains, but is also likely to encourage further challenges, which may threaten the long-term stability of the international institution. This speaks in favor of non-accommodation, but this is a strategy that – unless the challenging state aborts its disintegration bid – creates high costs not just for the challenging state, but also for the remaining member states.

The need to balance these concerns creates a considerable dilemma for the other member states. They have incentives to pursue a non-accommodation strategy in order to persuade the challenging country to withdraw its disintegration bid, but they also have incentives to compromise if this strategy fails. As a result, these instances are likely to be politically charged and difficult to resolve, because the willingness of the other member states to accommodate the challenger on key issues will be limited as a result of the high contagion risks, even though there will be some room for compromise where the loss of cooperation gains looms particularly large.

Bargaining Power

In addition to the accommodation dilemma, the distribution of bargaining power between the challenging state and the other member state will be a key determinant with respect to how good a deal a withdrawing country can expect from the remaining member states (Bailer 2010; Huikuri 2020; Lipsy 2017). The level of bargaining power depends on a number of factors (e.g., Bailer 2010; Thomson, Stokman, Achen, and König 2006). For example, the

leverage of the remaining members when interdependence with the challenging state is high and asymmetrically skewed in their favor (Keohane and Nye 1977), or when their preferences are homogenous with regard to the negotiation strategy. Relative bargaining power also depends on the institutional setup of the withdrawal process, frequently specified in the form of exit clauses that can disadvantage the withdrawing state (Huysmans 2019; Pelc 2009; Rosendorff and Milner 2001). Bargaining power matters because the remaining member states have stronger incentives to pursue a non-accommodative strategy vis-à-vis the disintegrating state when their bargaining power is high and there are nontrivial chances that such a strategy will result in a retraction of the disintegration bid. In contrast, accommodation and compromise are more likely when bargaining power is more symmetrically distributed, or when the remaining member states' leverage is low.⁹

Bargaining power also matters in a more indirect way, however, because it also affects the level of contagion risk. A country's bargaining power relative to the challenging state influences the extent to which the latter's disintegration experience serves as a good counterfactual for citizens in another country. Table 2 shows that the contagion risks associated with accommodation are particularly high when the cooperation-challenging state is relatively weak. If a state with low bargaining power manages to secure significant concessions from the other member states, this signals to most remaining states that it will be easy to get similar concessions, resulting in a strong encouragement effect. This implies that in negotiations with states with low bargaining power a non-accommodation strategy is not only most the feasible strategy, but also one where incentives not to accommodate are particularly large. In contrast, the deterrence effect will be weak in cases when such a state does not get concessions because it is unclear whether the unsuccessful disintegration experience can be attributed to a high level of resolve on the part of the remaining member states or simply to the lack of bargaining power of the disintegrating state. Likewise, accommodating a state with high bargaining power will not reverberate strongly. If, however, such a strong state fails to win significant concessions, the deterrence effect will be large.

⁹ For example, Mexico and Canada have pushed back against Trump's efforts to renegotiate NAFTA in the US's favor much harder than against his decision to leave the Paris accord. This is likely not only because they are more directly affected, but also because their economies' tight integration with the US economy gives them leverage vis-à-vis the US.

Table 2: Negotiation strategy, relative bargaining power, and contagion risks

	Non-accommodation	Accommodation
Challenging country has less bargaining power	<i>Unsuccessful challenge</i> <i>Weak deterrence effect</i>	<i>Successful challenge</i> <i>Strong encouragement effect</i>
Challenging country has more bargaining power	<i>Unsuccessful challenge</i> <i>Strong deterrence effect</i>	<i>Successful challenge</i> <i>Weak encouragement effect</i>

In sum, the response of the other member states to a voter-endorsed challenge to an international institution will be fundamentally shaped by the accommodation dilemma. The other member states will be particularly hawkish in cases in which their net domestic costs of non-accommodation are small, but more dovish when non-accommodation is very costly for their domestic economy and society. Responding to a voter-endorsed disintegration bid becomes more difficult and harder to predict the more pronounced the accommodation dilemma is. Because the response of the other member states depends both on how high the net costs of non-accommodation are for them and on how real the risks of political contagion are, as well as on the distribution of bargaining power, we can thus expect considerable variation in how the other member states of an international institution react to a unilateral, voter-endorsed renegotiation or withdrawal bid by one member state across cases, countries, and issue areas.

4. A comparative case study of voter-endorsed disintegration bids

How useful is this framework for explaining the trajectories and responses of the remaining member states to referendums in which voters endorsed a challenge to an existing international treaty or organization? To answer this question, I first conduct a comparative case study of seven voter-endorsed disintegration bids. In once more focus on referendums as the most extreme form of voter endorsement and study all seven referendums to date in which voters supported a renegotiation of the membership terms in or a withdrawal from an international institution through a non-cooperative vote at the polls (see Table 3). These referendums cover a large variety of different issues, most notably membership in the EC/EU (Greenland 1982, UK 2016), debt repayment and austerity (Brazil 2000, Iceland 2010 and 2011, Greece 2015), and migration (Switzerland 2015). My analysis shows that the accommodation dilemma framework provides a useful framework for comparing this disparate set of cases. The

next section then delves deeper into the mechanisms of the argument by zooming in on Brexit, the most consequential voter-endorsed withdrawal from an international institution to date.

Assessing cooperation gains at risk and contagion risks

For each referendum, table 3 lists the level of cooperation gains at risk for the other member states, the level of contagion risk, and the relative bargaining power of the challenging state, as well as the response that the accommodation dilemma argument predicts for this specific combination. The two columns on the right then detail the actual response of the other member states and the affected international institution, as well as the ultimate outcome of the respective disintegration bid.

To determine the level of cooperation gains at risk for the other member states in each of these referendums, I focus on the size and breadth of the cooperation gains, and whether they occur once or on a rolling basis. The seven cases vary considerably not just with regard to the type of costs, but also along these indicators.¹⁰ Table 3 shows that the cooperation gains at risk were smallest in the two Icesave referendums. Here, the cooperation gains at risk were up to 4.5 billion euros, which Britain and the Netherlands claimed from Iceland after the default and nationalization of one of its major banks, Landbanki. Although large in nominal terms, this sum pales in comparison to the cooperation gains at risk in the other cases, especially as these were one-off payments and concerned a narrow financial issue. Costs were somewhat larger in the case of Brazil, where all of the country's external debt and an IMF loan were at stake.

The cooperation gains at risk were larger in all other cases, especially as they concerned overall relations with the challenging state and thus extended to a much broader range of issues, and because these costs were not one-off but would accrue in the long term. Here, the cooperation costs at risk ranged from medium in the case of Greenland, whose integration with the EC countries was limited by its geographical remoteness and strong reliance on the fishing industry, to very high in the case of Brexit, which put cooperation with a closely integrated major EU member state at risk in a vast range of areas, making it potentially hugely costly for both the UK and the remaining EU-27 member states (Hix 2018). Cooperation gains at risk were also high in the case of Switzerland, because the bilateral 'Treaty on the Free Movement of People' is tied by law to a set of additional bilateral treaties covering a broad range of issues ranging from research to traffic which form the basis of Switzerland's close relations with the

¹⁰ For details, see table A3 (OA).

EU. Non-accommodation thus risked seriously disrupting relations with the EU's third largest trading partner. Finally, stakes in the Greek referendum were also very high, because non-accommodation implied Greece's exit from European Economic and Monetary Union ("Grexit"), an outcome that European policymakers had been trying to avoid for years.

There is also considerable variation in the level of contagion risk. This level depends on the attractiveness of the accommodative solution to others and the uniqueness of the case.¹¹ Once more, contagion risks were smallest in Greenland, because it had a unique geographical, historical, and cultural situation that created a very special setting that reduced contagion risks, (Harhoff 1983). As a former colony and part of Denmark, Greenland had joined the then EC in 1973 even though a large majority of Greenlanders had voted against accession in Denmark's 1972 EC accession referendum, and the referendum to leave the EC was held as soon as Greenland had gained the right to home rule within the Kingdom of Denmark just a few years late. This uniqueness of Greenland's situation limited the usefulness of this precedent to others, even though some EC member states nonetheless voiced concerns that Greenland's withdrawal might encourage other regions to follow a similar path. Contagion risks can be classified as

¹¹ For details, see table A4 (OA).

Table 3: Voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions and member state response

	<i>Cooperation gains at risk</i>	<i>Contagion risk</i>	<i>Predicted response</i>	<i>Bargining power challenger</i>	<i>Response to non-cooperative vote by the other member states and the affected international institution</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Greenland 1982: EC Membership	medium	low	accommodation	low	Accommodation , successful withdrawal negotiations and ratification of Greenland Treaty	EC Withdrawal in 1985
Brazil 2000: IMF & external debt referendum	medium-low	high	non-accommodation	low	Non-Response after the Brazilian government immediately announced not to pursue the unofficial, non-binding referendum vote before the vote.	Non-implementation
Iceland 2010: Icesave I referendum	low	medium	non-accommodation	medium	Limited accommodation : Renegotiation of agreement with better terms for Iceland	Renegotiated agreement with better terms for Iceland
Iceland 2011: Icesave II referendum	low	medium	non-accommodation	medium	Failed non-accommodation : UK and NL take the issue before the EFTA Court via the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA); the EFTA Court dismissed the case in 2013.	Iceland released from financial commitments
Switzerland 2014: Mass Immigration Initiative	high	very high	non-accommodation	low	Non-Accommodation : EU and EU member states refuse to enter into negotiations	Non-implementation
Greece 2015: Bailout Referendum	very high	very high	non-accommodation	low	Non-Accommodation : EMU member states and European institutions insist in negotiations that Greece can have a bailout agreement with roughly the same terms or will have to leave the Eurozone.	Non-implementation
UK 2016: EU Membership	very high	very high	Non-accommodation on key issues	high	Very limited accommodation : Withdrawal agreement contains several concessions on the EU side, but no accommodation on core EU principles (e.g. four freedoms)	EU withdrawal in 2020, much more limited cooperation in the future.

medium in the two Icesave referendums. On the one hand, non-repayment of external debt can be seen as an attractive precedent by other countries saddled with external debt, yet the fact that it came in the wake of an existential economic crisis limited both its applicability to other cases and its attractiveness. To a lesser extent this also applies to the case of Brazil.

In contrast, contagion risks were very high in the cases of the Greek, Swiss and Brexit referendums. Accommodation in the case of Greece would have meant to grant exceptions to Eurozone rules and conditionality more generally, and thus would have put into question the Union's established approach of dealing with the Eurozone crisis (Walter, Dinas, Jurado, and Konstantinidis 2018). Such a precedent was likely to encourage similar demands in other Eurozone crisis countries facing harsh austerity, such as Spain or Portugal. In the Swiss and British cases, accommodation would mostly have taken the form of exceptions to the four freedoms, especially free movement of people, and more generally the ability of the challenging state to enjoy the benefits of the EU while limiting its cost. This presented a very attractive precedent for others, especially in a context of growing euroskepticism across the EU. Such a response thus risked putting the entire European project at risk in the long run by creating incentives for other countries to challenge EU rules or even withdraw from the EU as well.

The accommodation dilemma and responses by the other member state

This discussion shows that voter-endorsed disintegration bids vary widely both with respect to the cooperation gains they put at risk and the contagion risks they create. The accommodation-dilemma framework suggests that the willingness of other countries to accommodate or not accommodate these bids should be influenced by this variation. The fourth column in Table 3 summarizes the predictions the framework makes for each of the seven cases. When the cooperation gains at risk dominate contagion risks, as in the case of Greenland, it predicts an accommodative stance, whereas non-accommodation is the predicted response if these risks are reversed, such as in Brazil, the two Icesave referendums, and the Swiss case. Finally, the dilemma is most acute when the disintegration bid creates large risks both with regard to cooperation gains and contagion, such as in the Greek and the Brexit cases. In those cases, governments have a strong incentive to avoid the dilemma by convincing the challenging state to back down, but if this does not work, we can expect a compromising line.

Table 3 shows that these predictions are largely borne out. At the same time, they also underscore that the challenging country's bargaining power is an important context factor in shaping the outcome of voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions. As predicted by

the framework, Greenland's 1982 referendum vote to end European Communities (EC) membership was accommodated by the EC countries. By offering Greenland "Overseas Country and Territories (OCT)" status, an existing status category for former colonies of EC countries, concluding a special arrangement in the contentious area of fisheries that preserved both sides' interests, as well as explicitly declaring Greenland a "special case" in the Greenland Treaty, they were able to limit the loss of cooperation gains, without risking major contagion abroad. This paved the way to Greenland's accommodated withdrawal from the EC and continued close relations.

With regard to the four referendums for which the framework predicts non-accommodation, we see more variation in outcomes. In Brazil, a foreign response to the unofficial referendum organized by the Catholic Church and leftist groups, in which a continuation of the ongoing IMF program and debt repayment was roundly rejected by voters, became obsolete. The Brazilian government was aware of its international creditors' incentives not to accommodate such a challenge and therefore from the start openly declared that it would not change its policies irrespective of the voting outcome so as not to damage the country's relations with the IMF and external creditors. This allowed the IMF and the other countries to treat the referendum as an internal Brazilian affair rather than actively respond to it. In the case of the two Icesave referendums, we see a mix of accommodation and non-accommodation. After the first referendum vote, the Dutch and British governments made some concessions in a renegotiation of the debt repayment agreement they had negotiated with the Icelandic government. When this limited accommodation was once more rejected by voters in the Icesave II referendum, however, the two countries resorted to a legal dispute resolution and brought the issue before the EFTA Court. They thus did not accommodate Iceland, yet ultimately had to yield when the Court ruled in favor of Iceland and freed it from the obligation to repay the deposit guarantees. Finally, the Swiss 2014 referendum is a textbook case of non-accommodation. The binding referendum mandated the introduction of immigration quotas and a renegotiation of any international treaty that did not allow such measures, primarily the Swiss-EU treaty on the free movement on people. Although the Swiss government tried time and again to renegotiate the treaty, the EU simply refused to enter such negotiations. Moreover, when Switzerland declined to extend freedom of movement to nationals of a new EU member state (Croatia) in violation of its treaty commitments shortly after the vote, the EU reacted harshly by barring Switzerland's access to the new Horizon 2020 research program. This non-accommodating stance left Switzerland eventually convinced Swiss policymakers not to

implement the referendum with respect to EU citizens and to maintain the bilateral treaties instead (Armingeon and Lutz 2019).

The accommodation dilemma was most pronounced in the 2015 Greek bailout referendum and the 2016 British Brexit referendum. Not only did these disintegration bids put huge cooperation gains at risk, but they also carried enormous contagion risks. The two cases differ, however, with regard to the challenging country's bargaining power, which as one of the EU's biggest member states and its financial center was much larger for the United Kingdom than for Greece, a country mired in crisis and dependent on foreign financing. Despite the pronounced accommodation dilemma in both cases, this thus suggests a non-accommodation strategy for Greece, but more of a compromise (although no full-fledged accommodation) in the case of Brexit.

These predictions are largely borne out by the two cases. The Greek government's decision to call the 2015 referendum in order to force the country's creditors to give it better terms on the country's third bailout agreement in a row, confronted the other member states with a full-fledged accommodation dilemma. They thus had strong incentives to pressure Greece to withdraw its disintegration bid. As a result, the other Eurozone countries were outspoken about their determination not to accommodate a non-cooperative referendum vote from the start. They insisted that the only options for Greece were to accept conditionality – and hence not to implement the referendum vote – or to leave the Eurozone (“Grexit”). Aware of their much larger bargaining power, they thus pursued a hard, non-accommodating negotiation strategy. Confronted with strong domestic opposition to leaving the Euro, the Greek government then decided to accept a (slightly modified) bailout agreement and thus effectively to not implement the referendum decision (Crespy and Ladi 2019). In contrast, the 2016 Brexit referendum confronted the EU-27 member states not just with a pronounced accommodation dilemma, but also with a more powerful withdrawing state. Nonetheless, throughout the Brexit negotiations, the EU side made it clear that it was not going to accommodate the “have your cake and eat it”-approach that Brexiteers had championed. The negotiations took much longer and turned out to be much more difficult than observers had originally expected. One major concern, mentioned repeatedly by the EU-27 side were possible contagion risks that would put the workings of the Single Markets at risk in the long run. As a result, both the talks about the terms of withdrawal and about the future relationship were close to failure several times.¹² But even in these moments, when the risks of a “No Deal Brexit” became substantial, the EU-27

¹² Failure to reach an agreement loomed particularly strongly around the original Brexit date in March 2019, in the fall 2019, and in the fall 2020.

did not make major concessions to the UK. Ultimately, Boris Johnson successfully “renegotiated” and passed the Withdrawal Agreement by returning to an earlier EU proposal. Britain officially left the European Union on January 31, 2020. In line with my argument, the area where the EU-27 were most willing to compromise was regarding the status of Northern Ireland, where the loss of cooperation gains in the form of a potential resurgence of the Northern Irish conflict loomed particularly large. Both parties also concluded an agreement about the future relationship in December 2020, which significantly limited the extent of cooperation between the EU and the UK.

Overall, this discussion shows that although the seven referendum-endorsed disintegration bids we have seen so far seem like a rather disparate set of cases, the accommodation framework allows us to analyze them in a comparative manner.

5. Zooming in: The accommodation dilemma and the Brexit negotiations

The case studies show qualitatively, that the accommodation dilemma shapes how the governments of the remaining member states respond to voter-endorsed disintegration bids. In addition to these dynamics on the intergovernmental level, however, my framework makes a number of assumptions and arguments about mechanisms about contagion effects among voters and government responses. The second part of the empirical analysis therefore turns to an in-depth analysis of these mechanisms in the context of Brexit. Brexit is not only the most consequential disintegration bid to date, it is also a case in which the withdrawal negotiations have been characterized by significant ups and downs, and one in which the remaining member states differ in their exposure to the potential fallout of a non-accommodative outcome, No Deal Brexit.

The analysis proceeds in two steps. I first use original survey data from over 60.000 EU-27 Europeans to examine whether contagion effects exist and whether they are indeed influenced by the Brexit negotiations themselves and countries’ relative bargaining power, as the framework predicts. In a second step, I examine to what extent the accommodation dilemma shaped the Brexit negotiation preferences of the remaining EU-27 governments.

Contagion effects of Brexit in the EU-27

My argument rests on the assumption that voter-endorsed disintegration bids such as Brexit should have considerable political contagion effects in other EU member states, which themselves should be shaped by how well Brexit is going for the UK. In contrast to the jubilant reaction of euroskeptics across Europe to the 2016 referendum outcome, which underscores the potential for an encouragement effect, my framework suggests that the non-accommodating strategy pursued by the EU-27 in the withdrawal negotiations should overall have a deterring effect on voters in the remaining member states. This effect should be particularly strong among those countries with less bargaining power than the UK. I examine these hypotheses by analyzing whether Brexit has affected EU-27 respondents' support for an exit of their own country from the EU.

The analysis uses original survey data collected in six survey waves of approximately 10,000 working-age respondents each conducted during the Brexit withdrawal negotiations (July 2017 to December 2019) in all EU-27 member states. Questions were placed on Dalia Research's Europulse omnibus, which draws respondents across the EU-27 countries in sample sizes roughly proportional to their population size. This means that small countries such as Malta or Luxembourg only have between 12-13 respondents per survey wave, whereas big countries such as Germany, France, or Italy have over 1000 respondents per wave. For the analyses, the data were weighted by age, gender, level of education, and degree of urbanization, based upon the most recent Eurostat statistics.

I begin with a cross-sectional analysis that compares how voters' evaluations of the UK's Brexit experience influences their support for EU-exit. Support for EU-exit was measured by asking respondents how they would vote if their country were to hold a referendum on leaving the EU today on a four-point scale of (1) "definitely remain" (2) "probably remain" (3) "probably leave" and (4) "definitely leave."¹³ The contagion effect hinges on whether respondents abroad view Brexit as an attractive or unattractive model for their own country. I measure respondents' assessment of the British Brexit experience by asking them on a five-point scale whether they thought that five years from the date of the survey, Brexit would make the UK (1) much better off to (5) much worse off. The answers to this question show that EU-27 Europeans differ considerably in their Brexit assessments: About 28% expect that Brexit will be positive for the UK, whereas 42% expect a negative effect. These evaluations are

¹³ Those replying "don't know", about 10% of the sample, were coded as missing. Descriptions and descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in the online appendix, tables A5 and A6.

strongly related to respondents' opinion of the EU, so that I control for individual EU attitudes using a general question and one on respondents' preferred future course for the EU, as well as pre-Brexit euroskepticism at the country-level (share of people viewing the EU (very) negatively as recorded in the Spring 2016 Eurobarometer wave).¹⁴ Because my framework suggests that the relationship between Brexit evaluations and support for EU-exit should be conditioned by countries' bargaining power, I also include a dummy variable that identifies the only two countries with similar or larger bargaining power than the UK: Germany and France, the two central pillars of the EU. In addition, I control for age, gender, education, level of urbanization, and citizenship and include wave dummies.

If Brexit has political contagion effects abroad, positive assessments of the UK's Brexit experience should encourage EU-27 Europeans to support an EU-exit of their own country, whereas negative assessments should deter them. Moreover, the encouragement effect should be stronger and the deterrence effect weaker in France and Germany, the two countries with higher bargaining power than the UK. Figure 2a shows the results from hierarchical random-effects model and demonstrates that Brexit indeed has both encouragement and deterrence effects.¹⁵ Respondents who think that Brexit will turn out (very) well for the UK are significantly more likely to support an exit of their own country from the EU, and this effect is stronger in France and Germany than in the other EU-27 countries. Figure 2a also shows that those who believe that Brexit will make the UK (much) worse off in the medium term, are significantly less likely to support EU-exit. Contrary to expectations, however, the deterrence effect does not seem to be more pronounced in countries with weaker bargaining power.

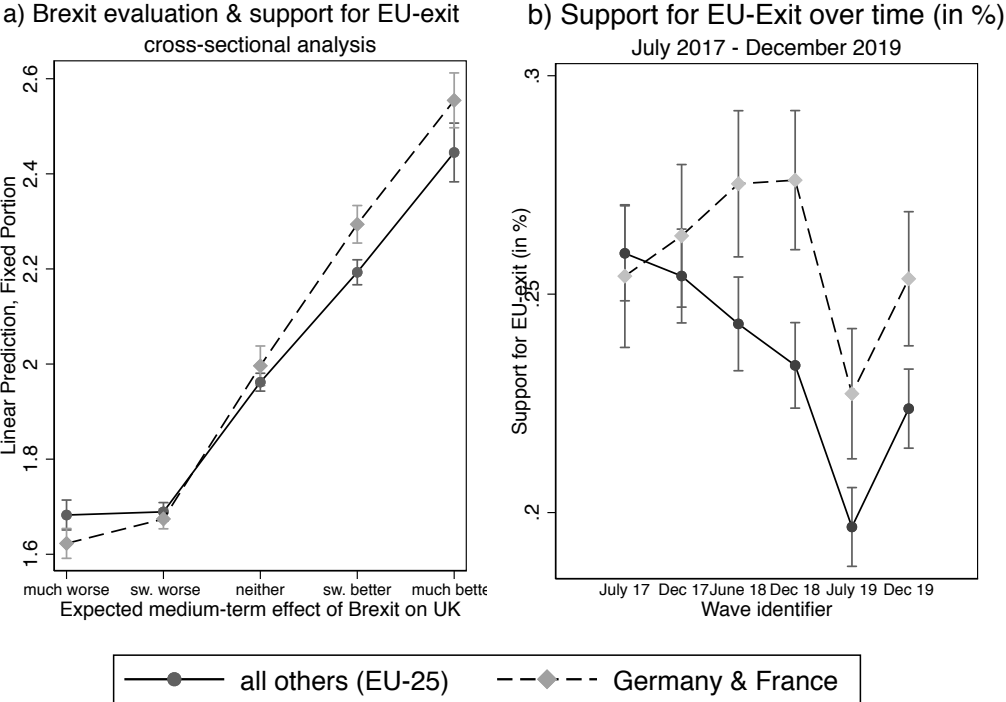
I next turn to the question of how the Brexit withdrawal negotiations with its considerable ups and downs have affected support for EU-exit in the remaining member states over time. The EU's non-accommodating stance became particularly visible in the latter part of the Brexit negotiations, which suggests that we should increasingly observe a deterrence effect over the course of the negotiations, an effect that should be particularly pronounced among member states with less bargaining power. Figures 2b shows how respondents' average support for an EU-exit of their own country evolved over the course of the Brexit withdrawal negotiations in Germany and France (solid line), and in the other 25 remaining member states (dashed line). It shows that in the first year of the Brexit negotiations, there was little change in EU-exit support. The second year was marked by a considerable divergence between the two

¹⁴ Note that EU opinion may be affected by Brexit as well. Table A7 (OA) shows that results are robust, but effect sizes are considerably stronger without EU-level controls.

¹⁵ For full results see table A7 (OA)

most powerful EU member states and all others: In line with the expectation that encouragement effects are stronger in countries with high bargaining power, support for EU-exit increased in France and Germany. In contrast, exit-support in the rest of the EU-27 decreased over time, especially when the negotiations became more difficult. Finally, we can observe a marked deterrence effect in all countries after the UK’s first failed attempt to leave the EU in March 2019, in which the EU signaled clearly that it was prepared to accept a No-Deal Brexit rather than accommodating the UK on key issues. This supports the argument that disintegration negotiations themselves can have significant effects on the support for the challenged international institution in the institution’s other member states.

Figure 2: Cross-sectional and dynamic Brexit contagion effects



In line with previous studies that find similar contagion effects both on the individual level (Glencross 2019; Hobolt, Popa, van der Brug, and Schmitt 2021; Walter 2021a) and with regard to elite discourse (Chopin and Lequesne 2020; Martini and Walter 2020), this analysis thus supports my argument’s premise that voter-endorsed disintegration bids can have considerable contagion effects abroad.

The accommodation dilemma and withdrawal negotiation preferences

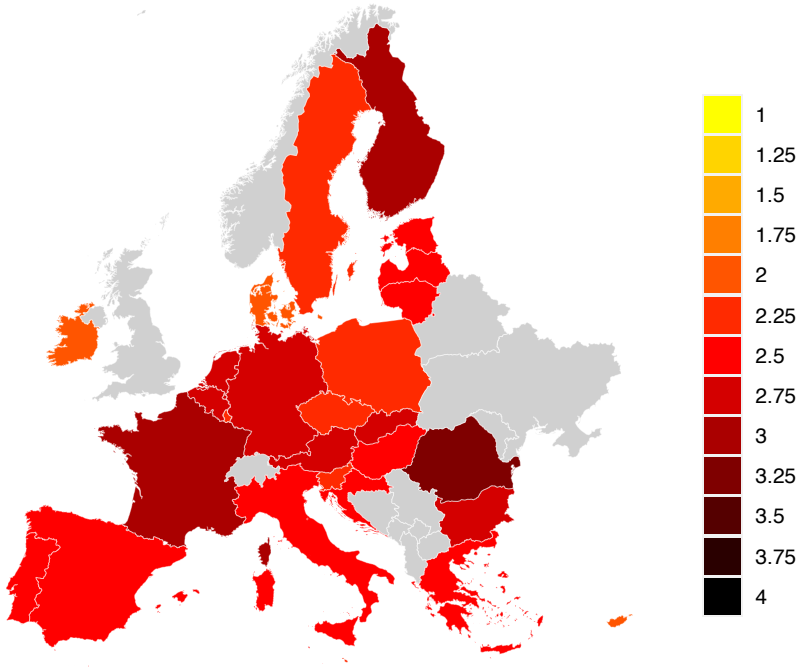
In a final analysis, I examine to what extent concerns about the loss of cooperation gains and political contagion risks shape state governments' willingness to accommodate a challenger state in withdrawal negotiations. Focusing once more on Brexit, I examine how the accommodation dilemma shaped the national Brexit negotiation positions of the remaining EU-27 member states. I focus on their initial negotiation preferences at the beginning of the withdrawal negotiations based on information collected and assessments made by the Economist Intelligence Unit EIU (The Economist 2017), because over time member states' publicly stated negotiation positions became increasingly unified and internal differences were rarely discussed publicly. For each of the EU-27 governments, the Economist Intelligence Unit rated their support or opposition on four issues: Britain paying a low exit bill,¹⁶ "cherry-picking" the four EU freedoms (free movement of goods, workers, services and capital within the EU), maintaining trade ties/low tariff barriers, and sustaining defence ties. These issues cover both narrow and broad issues related to the UK's withdrawal from the EU and future EU-UK relations. I calculate countries' negotiation positions for both a broad range of issues (mean of all four issues) and for a more narrow range of issues that are most directly related to the Brexit negotiations (mean position on exit bill, cherry-picking, and trade ties). Higher values on the four-point scales of both indices denote opposition to accommodating the UK.

Figure 3 shows the national Brexit negotiation positions for all 27 remaining EU member states, calculated as average of the four issue-specific negotiation positions recorded by the EIU. It demonstrates that there is considerable variation in the extent to which each EU-27 member state is willing to accommodate the UK. The member states take particularly non-accommodating positions with regard to the exit bill and the UK's desire to "cherry pick" from the four EU freedoms, and but take more accommodating positions with regard to continues trade ties and especially with regard to close defence ties.¹⁷ To the extent that contagion risks are likely to be particularly high with regard to the exit bill and exceptions from the four EU freedoms, whereas the cooperation gains at risk are high with regard to trade and are likely to dominate with regard to security cooperation, this variation among issues reflects the trade-offs inherent in disintegration processes.

¹⁶ The exit bill refers to UK payments to the EU to cover ongoing expenses such as pension payments for British bureaucrats who used to work for the EU.

¹⁷ For details, see tabel A7 in the online appendix.

Figure 3: National Brexit negotiation positions of the EU-27 member states (broad definition)



Source: own calculations, based on data from the Economist Intelligence Unit (The Economist 2017)

To explore more systematically how the accommodation dilemma shapes member states’ Brexit negotiation preferences, I examine how their exposure to the loss of cooperation gains and their concern about contagion risks are related to how accommodating their average Brexit negotiation position is. To measure national exposure to Brexit-related losses of cooperation gains is measured by how much countries’ real GDP would decrease as a consequence of a hard Brexit on WTO-terms es estimated by Felbermayr et al. (2017).¹⁸ These losses vary significantly across the remaining member states: Ireland, for example, is much more exposed to the economic consequences of Brexit than Austria. It should be noted that this measure only covers one aspect of cooperation, which is not ideal because different issues may matter more for some countries than others. For example, for some countries, the gains from trade with the UK are the most important cooperation gain, whereas for others, their citizens’ ability to work in the UK may be more important. However, the GDP measure used here constitutes a comparable metric on an issue (Brexit-related losses to national GDP) that is likely

¹⁸ Because this variable is highly skewed, I use logged values.

to matter to all countries. The higher these risks to national GDP associated with Brexit, the more accommodating I expect countries' negotiation positions to be (denoted by a negative coefficient), and vice versa.

To operationalize concern about political contagion on the national level, I rely on the newly developed EU Exit Index (Gastinger 2021), which is a composite index that measures the exit propensity of every EU member state by relying on indicators reflecting the social (public opinion), economic, and political dimensions of a country's potential support for EU exit. I use the index's 2015 values, that is the year before the Brexit vote. To gauge countries' concern about contagion risk, I subtract their 2015 EU exit propensity value from the average value in all EU-27 member states, so that higher values represent a higher level of contagion concern. This reflects that countries who themselves are unlikely to leave the EU should be more concerned about possible contagion risks than countries who have a high propensity to leave. With a value of -17.13, Austria is the country with the lowest level of contagion concern, whereas Lithuania scores highest with a value of 17.08. Higher levels of contagion concern should be associated with a harder, less accommodating negotiation position.

Table 4 shows the results of several OLS regression analyses that examine the correlates of countries' Brexit negotiation positions with exposure and contagion concerns for both the narrow and the broad definition of EU-27 Brexit negotiation positions. As expected, a higher economic exposure to the consequences of Brexit significantly softens countries' negotiation stance. Model (1), for example, predicts a negotiation stance of 2.3 for Ireland, the country with the highest exposure, but one of 3.15 for Croatia, one of the two countries with the lowest exposure. Likewise, higher levels of contagion concern are associated with a harder, non-accommodating negotiation position, even though this effect is not statistically significant.

To explore whether the accommodation dilemma is reflected in the data, models (2) and (4) include interaction terms between exposure and contagion concerns. The analysis shows that the interaction term is positive, suggesting that exposure softens countries' negotiation positions less when they are strongly concerned about the possible contagion effects of Brexit. In model (2), for example, the pro-accommodation effect of exposure to the loss of cooperation gains is about four times bigger for the country least concerned about contagion risks than for the most concerned country.¹⁹ Despite the indirect measurement of exposure and contagion

¹⁹ The effect is 2.3 times bigger in model 4.

concerns, this analysis thus is in line with the predictions of the accommodation dilemma framework.

Table 4: Correlates of support for a non-accommodating negotiation stance

	Narrow definition (1)	Narrow definition (2)	Broad definition (3)	Broad definition (4)
Exposure: Brexit-related GDP loss (logged)	-0.248** (0.098)	-0.302** (0.121)	-0.168** (0.077)	-0.191* (0.096)
Contagion concern	0.002 (0.009)	0.017 (0.021)	0.003 (0.007)	0.010 (0.017)
Exposure * contagion concern		0.010 (0.013)		0.004 (0.010)
Constant	2.616*** (0.148)	2.530*** (0.186)	2.287*** (0.117)	2.250*** (0.149)
N	27	27	27	27
R ²	0.216	0.235	0.166	0.172
Adj. R ²	0.15	0.136	0.096	0.064
F	3.299	2.36	2.381	1.59

In sum, the closer analysis of the Brexit case has revealed evidence in support of the mechanisms suggested by the accommodation dilemma framework. Support for leaving the EU in the remaining member states has evolved in the shadow of the Brexit negotiations, there are differences in contagion effects between countries with different levels of bargaining power, and negotiation preferences are related to exposure to lost cooperation gains and concern about contagion risks and the accommodation dilemma this produces.

6. Conclusion

This paper has introduced a framework for analyzing a relatively recent phenomenon with far-reaching systemic consequences: voter-endorsed challenges to international institutions. It focuses on how such challenges reverberate among the other member states of these institutions and on how they respond to these challenges. I have argued that the other member states confront an *accommodation dilemma*: On the one hand, they risk significant losses of existing cooperation gains when they refuse to accommodate one state's attempt to withdraw from or renegotiate its membership terms in its favor. On the other hand,

accommodation may encourage similar challenges abroad, which can create long-term risks to the stability of the institution. This effect is likely to be particularly pronounced when the challenge has been endorsed by voters. Using comparative case studies of unilateral, referendum-based challenges to international agreements, original survey data collected in the EU-27 during the Brexit withdrawal negotiations, and an analysis of national Brexit negotiation positions, this paper has illustrated the frameworks' usefulness for understanding the negotiation dynamics and outcomes of these processes.

Empirically, this paper has focused on challenges to international institutions endorsed by voters in referendums. Although these are the clearest instances of voter-endorsed disintegration bids, the framework developed in this paper can also be extended to examine disintegration bids that arise from major campaign promises, such as Donald Trump's 2016 promises to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement or to renegotiate NAFTA in the US's favor. Moreover, the accommodation dilemma is likely to characterize other international negotiations about the evolution of international cooperation as well. Examples include disintegration processes initiated by political elites, non-cooperative integration referendum votes more generally, or unilateral non-compliance. Future research should explore to what extent the dynamics and mechanisms discussed in this paper extend to these instances and how the trade-offs implied by the accommodation dilemma differ in these cases.

The recent successes of populist parties, candidates, and initiatives have often been based on a common narrative: that by being more assertive in international relations and putting the nation's interest first rather than accepting compromise, the country's prosperity, national sovereignty, and democratic quality could be improved. Upon closer inspection, however, these promises have usually proven to be built on quicksand. Successes at the domestic polls have been met with resistance abroad. Renegotiating international agreements has proven difficult, if not impossible, and has sometimes forced populist governments to concede that the status quo is better than what they could achieve if they left such an agreement. Although these setbacks have decreased the appeal of such messages to some extent (Glencross 2019), they still garner considerable support. This paper has demonstrated that so far, voter-endorsed attempts to unilaterally change or withdraw from the rules of international cooperation have often failed, not because of poor negotiation skills on part of the governments of the withdrawing states, but because they invoke a central trilemma in international relations: Rarely do the trade-offs between international cooperation, democracy, and national sovereignty (Rodrik 2011) move into the spotlight more prominently than when one country votes on an issue in which other countries equally have a large stake.

Bibliography

- Abbott, Kenneth W, and Duncan Snidal. 1998. "Why states act through formal international organizations." *Journal of conflict resolution* 42(1): 3–32.
- Armington, Klaus, and Philipp Lutz. 2019. "Muddling between responsiveness and responsibility: the Swiss case of a non-implementation of a constitutional rule." *Comparative European Politics*: 1–25.
- Bailer, Stefanie. 2010. "What factors determine bargaining power and success in EU negotiations?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 17(5): 743–757.
- von Borzyskowski, Inken, and Felicity Vabulas. 2019. "Hello, goodbye: When do states withdraw from international organizations?" *The Review of International Organizations* 14: 335–366.
- De Bruyne, Charlotte, Itay Fischhendler, and Yoram Z Haftel. 2020. "Design and change in transboundary freshwater agreements." *Climatic Change* 162(2): 321–341.
- Castle, Matthew Adrian. 2019. *Why Revise? Presenting a New Dataset on Renegotiations in the International Trade Regime*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3425591>.
- Chen, Wen et al. 2018. "The continental divide? Economic exposure to Brexit in regions and countries on both sides of The Channel." *Papers in Regional Science* 97(1): 25–54.
- Chopin, Thierry, and Christian Lequesne. 2020. "Disintegration reversed: Brexit and the cohesiveness of the EU27." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*: 1–13.
- Copelovitch, Mark, and Jon C W Pevehouse. 2019. "International organizations in a new era of populist nationalism." *The Review of International Organizations* 14: 169–86.
- Crespy, Amandine, and Stella Ladi. 2019. "In the name of 'the people'? Popular Sovereignty and the 2015 Greek referendum." *Journal of European Integration* 41(7): 871–885.
- Duffield, John. 2007. "What are international institutions?" *International Studies Review* 9(1): 1–22.
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette. 2020. "Death of international organizations. The organizational ecology of intergovernmental organizations, 1815–2015." *The Review of International Organizations* 15: 1815–2015.
- Felbermayr, Gabriel, Clemens Fuest, Jasmin Katrin Gröschl, and Daniel Stöhlker. 2017. *Economic effects of Brexit on the European economy*. EconPol Policy Report.
- Gastinger, Markus. 2021. "Introducing the EU exit index measuring each member state's propensity to leave the European Union." *European Union Politics*: 14651165211000138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14651165211000138>.
- Glencross, Andrew. 2019. "The impact of the Article 50 talks on the EU: Risk aversion and the prospects for further EU disintegration." *European View* 18(2): 186–193.
- Gray, Julia. 2018. "Life, Death, or Zombie? The Vitality of International Organizations." *International Studies Quarterly* 62(1): 1–13.
- Gruber, Lloyd. 2000. *Ruling the world: Power politics and the rise of supranational institutions*. Princeton University Press.
- Haftel, Yoram Z, and Alexander Thompson. 2018. "When do states renegotiate investment agreements? The impact of arbitration." *The Review of International Organizations* 13(1): 25–48.
- Harhoff, Frederik. 1983. "Greenland's withdrawal from the European Communities." *Common Market Law Review* 20(1): 13–33.
- Helfer, Laurence R. 2005. "Exiting treaties." *Virginia Law Review*: 1579–1648.
- Hix, Simon. 2018. "Brexit: where is the EU–UK relationship heading?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(4): 11–27.
- Hobolt, Sara, Sebastian Popa, Wouter van der Brug, and Hermann Schmitt. 2021. "The Brexit Deterrent? How Member State Exit Shapes Public Support for the European Union." *European Union Politics* 2.
- Hobolt, Sara. 2016. "The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent." *Journal of*

- European Public Policy* 23(9): 1259–77.
- Hobolt, Sara, and Catherine de Vries. 2016. “Public support for European integration.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 413–432.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. 2009. “A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus.” *British Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 1–23.
- Huikuri, Tuuli-Anna. 2020. *Terminating to Renegotiate: Bargaining in the Investment Treaty Regime*.
- Hutter, Swen, Edgar Grande, and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2016. *Politicising Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huysmans, Martijn. 2019. “Enlargement and exit: The origins of Article 50.” *European Union Politics* 20(2): 155–75.
- Ikenberry, G John. 2018. “The end of liberal international order?” *International Affairs* 94(1): 7–23.
- Jurado, Ignacio, Sandra León, and Stefanie Walter. 2021. “Shaping post-withdrawal relations with a leaving state: Brexit dilemmas and public opinion.” *International Organization*.
- Karstens, Felix. 2019. “How public discourse affects attitudes towards Freedom of Movement and Schengen.” *European Union Politics* 21(1): 43–63.
- Kayser, Mark Andreas, and Michael Peress. 2012. “Benchmarking across Borders: Electoral Accountability and the Necessity of Comparison.” *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 661–684.
- Keohane, Robert. 1984. *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Keohane, Robert, and Joseph Nye. 1977. *Power and interdependence: World politics in transition*. <http://repository.tufts.ac.jp/handle/10108/17258> (Accessed November 3, 2016).
- Kruck, Andreas, and Bernhard Zangl. 2020. “The Adjustment of International Institutions to Global Power Shifts: A Framework for Analysis.” *Global Policy* 11(S3): 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12865>.
- Laffan, Brigid. 2019. “How the EU27 Came to Be.” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 57(S1): 13–27.
- Lake, David, Lisa Martin, and Thomas Risse. 2021. “Challenges to the Liberal International Order.” *International Organization*.
- Leeds, Brett Ashley, and Burcu Savun. 2007. “Terminating alliances: Why do states abrogate agreements?” *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1118–1132.
- Lester, Simon, and Inu Manak. 2018. “The rise of populist nationalism and the renegotiation of NAFTA.” *Journal of International Economic Law* 21(1): 151–169.
- Lipsky, Phillip Y. 2017. *Renegotiating the world order: Institutional change in international relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Malet, Giorgio. 2019. *Do Voters Follow Foreign Preferences? A Natural Experiment on Cross-national Social Influence*. Florence.
- Martini, Marco, and Stefanie Walter. 2020. “Learning from Precedent: How the British Brexit Experience Counteracts Populism outside the UK.” In *Paper presented at the 2020 APSA Annual Meeting*,.
- Mendez, Fernando, and Micha Germann. 2016. “Contested Sovereignty: Mapping Referendums on Sovereignty over Time and Space.” *British Journal of Political Science*: 1–25.
- Pelc, Krzysztof J. 2009. “Seeking escape: The use of escape clauses in international trade agreements.” *International Studies Quarterly* 53(2): 349–368.
- Pevehouse, Jon C W. 2020. “The COVID-19 Pandemic, International Cooperation, and Populism.” *International Organization*: 1–22.
- Rodrik, Dani. 2011. *The globalization paradox: democracy and the future of the world*

- economy*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Rose, Richard. 2018. "Referendum challenges to the EU's policy legitimacy – and how the EU responds." *Journal of European Public Policy*: 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2018.1426034>.
- Rosendorff, B Peter, and Helen V Milner. 2001. "The optimal design of international trade institutions: Uncertainty and escape." *International Organization* 55(04): 829–857.
- Schimmelfennig, Frank. 2019. "Getting around no: how governments react to negative EU referendums." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26(7): 1056–1074.
- The Economist. 2017. "The Brexit negotiations: hard or soft Europe?"
- Thompson, Alexander, Tomer Broude, and Yoram Z Haftel. 2019. "Once Bitten, Twice Shy? Investment Disputes, State Sovereignty, and Change in Treaty Design." *International Organization* 73(4): 859–880. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/article/once-bitten-twice-shy-investment-disputes-state-sovereignty-and-change-in-treaty-design/B318D016F7C9F520C5BBF2CADF7E5A63>.
- Thomson, Robert, Frans N Stokman, Christopher H Achen, and Thomas König. 2006. "The European union decides."
- Voeten, Erik. 2019. "Populism and Backlashes Against International Courts." *Perspectives on Politics*. Available at SSRN 3255764.
- de Vries, Catherine. 2019. "Don't Mention the War! Second World War Remembrance and Support for European Cooperation." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- De Vries, Catherine. 2017. "Benchmarking Brexit: How the British decision to leave shapes EU public opinion." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55: 38–53.
- De Vries, Catherine. 2018. *Euro-scepticism and the Future of European Integration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Vries, Catherine, Sara Hobolt, and Stefanie Walter. 2021. "Politicizing International Cooperation: The Mass Public, Political Entrepreneurs and Political Opportunity Structures." *International Organization*.
- Walter, Stefanie. 2021a. "Brexit domino? The political contagion effects of voter-endorsed withdrawals from international institutions." *Comparative Political Studies*. doi:10.1177/0010414021997169.
- Walter, Stefanie, Elias Dinas, Ignacio Jurado, and Nikitas Konstantinidis. 2018. "Noncooperation by Popular Vote: Expectations, Foreign Intervention, and the Vote in the 2015 Greek Bailout Referendum." *International Organization* 72(4): 969–994.
- Walter, Stefanie. 2021b. "The Backlash against Globalization." *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Walter, Stefanie. 2020. *The Mass Politics of International Disintegration*. Zürich.
- Weyland, Kurt. 2010. "The diffusion of regime contention in European democratization, 1830–1940." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(8–9): 1148–1176.
- Zürn, Michael. 2014. "The politicization of world politics and its effects: Eight propositions." *European Political Science Review* 6(1): 47–71.
- Zürn, Michael, Martin Binder, and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt. 2012. "International authority and its politicization." *International Theory* 4(1): 69–106.

The Accommodation Dilemma.

Responding to popular challenges to international institutions

Online Appendix

November 2020

Table of Contents

Table A1: Classification of foreign policy referendums.....	2
European Union opt-out referendum	4
European Union membership referendum	4
Migrant quota referendum	4
Table A2: Voting Outcomes in different types of referendums	5
Table A3: Classification of cooperation gains at risk	6
Table A4: Classification of contagion risk	6
Information about the EU-27 survey	7
Table A5: Descriptive Statistics, EU-27 analysis	7
Figure A1: Distribution of core variables	9
Table A6: Support for EU-exit of own country: hierarchical random-effects models	10
Figure A2: Robustness Figure 2a.....	11
Table A7: EU-27 Brexit negotiation positions	12

Table A1: Classification of foreign policy referendums

Country	Date	Referendum type	Title of Referendum (topic)
France	23.04.72	(more) cooperation	Enlargement of the European Community
Ireland	10.05.72	Accession	Accession to the European Community
Norway	26.09.72	Accession	Accession to the European Community (EC)
Denmark	02.10.72	Accession	Accession to the European Community (EC)
Switzerland	03.12.72	(more) cooperation	Federal decree on agreement between Switzerland and the EEC and member states of the EC on coal and steel
United Kingdom	05.06.75	withdrawal	UK European Communities membership referendum
Switzerland	13.06.76	(more) cooperation	Agreement between Switzerland and the International Development Agency on a loan of 200 million francs
Panama	23.10.77	(more) cooperation	Panama Canal-Treaty with the USA (Torrijos-Carter-Treaties)
Denmark	27.02.86	(more) cooperation	Single European Act
Spain	12.03.86	withdrawal	Remaining a NATO member
Switzerland	16.03.86	Accession	Federal decree on accession of Switzerland to the UN
Ireland	26.05.87	(more) cooperation	Single European Act
Switzerland	17.05.92	Accession	Swiss involvement with the Bretton Woods institutions
Switzerland	17.05.92	Accession	Swiss accession to the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank)
Denmark	02.06.92	(more) cooperation	European Union - Treaty of Maastricht
Ireland	18.06.92	Accession	Accession to the European Union
France	20.09.92	(more) cooperation	European Union Treaty (Maastricht)
Switzerland	06.12.92	Accession	Federal decree on European Economic Area
Liechtenstein	13.12.92	Accession	Accession to the European Economic Association (EEA)
Denmark	18.05.93	(more) cooperation	Revised Treaty of Maastricht
Austria	12.06.94	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Sweden	13.10.94	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Finland	16.10.94	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Åland Islands	20.11.94	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Norway	28.11.94	Accession	Accession to the European Union (EU)
Liechtenstein	09.04.95	Accession	Accession to the European Economic Association (EEA)
Belarus	14.05.95	(more) cooperation	Economic collaboration with the Russian Federation
Slovakia	24.05.97	Accession	NATO membership
Hungary	16.11.97	Accession	Accession to the NATO
Ireland	22.05.98	(more) cooperation	EU Treaty of Amsterdam
Denmark	28.05.98	(more) cooperation	EU Treaty of Amsterdam (Enlargement of the EU)
Switzerland	21.05.00	(more) cooperation	Approval of sectoral agreements between Switzerland and the EC and/or its member states or Euratom
Brazil	07.09.00	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Continuation of the agreement with the IMF
Denmark	28.09.00	(more) cooperation	Introduction of the common Currency (Euro)
Switzerland	04.03.01	(more) cooperation	Citizen's initiative "Yes to Europe"

Country	Date	Referendum type	Title of Referendum (topic)
Ireland	07.06.01	(more) cooperation	Ratification of the Treaty of Nice
Switzerland	03.03.02	Accession	Citizen's initiative "For Switzerland's membership to the UN"
Ireland	19.10.02	(more) cooperation	Ratification of the Treaty of Nice
Malta	08.03.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Slovenia	23.03.03	Accession	Accession to the NATO
Slovenia	23.03.03	Accession	Accession to the EU
Hungary	12.04.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Lithuania	11.05.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Slovakia	17.05.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Poland	08.06.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Czech Republic	14.06.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Estonia	14.09.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Latvia	21.09.03	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Bolivia	18.07.04	(more) cooperation	Energy policy - Exchanging gas for access to the Pacific Ocean
Spain	20.02.05	(more) cooperation	Referendum on the EU Constitution
France	29.05.05	(more) cooperation	Referendum on the Adoption of the European Constitution
Netherlands	01.06.05	(more) cooperation	Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe
Switzerland	05.06.05	(more) cooperation	Approval and implementation of the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU on the Schengen and Dublin accords
Luxembourg	10.07.05	(more) cooperation	Referendum on the European Constitution
Switzerland	25.09.05	(more) cooperation	Approval and implementation of the extension of the agreement on the free movement of persons to the new EU member states between Switzerland and the EU and its members states & approval revision of the accompanying measures on the free movement of persons
Switzerland	26.11.06	(more) cooperation	Federal Law of 24 March 2006 on cooperation with the countries of Eastern Europe
Costa Rica	07.10.07	Accession	Free-trade Treaty between Central America and the USA
Georgia	05.01.08	Accession	Accession to NATO
Taiwan	22.03.08	Accession	Accession to international organisations under any name
Taiwan	22.03.08	Accession	Accession to the United Nations under the name 'Taiwan'
Ireland	12.06.08	(more) cooperation	Ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon
Switzerland	08.02.09	(more) cooperation	Renewal of the agreement between Switzerland and the EC and its Member States on free movement of persons and the approval and implementation of the Protocol to extend the agreement on free movement to Bulgaria and Romania
Ireland	02.10.09	(more) cooperation	Ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon
Switzerland	29.11.09	other	Citizen's initiative of 21.9.2007 "For the prohibition of the export of munitions"
Iceland	06.03.10	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Amendment of the Icesave compensation agreement with Great Britain and the Netherlands
Slovenia	06.06.10	other	Border Arbitration Agreement with Croatia
Iceland	09.04.11	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	State guarantee for the Icesave- compensation fund

Country	Date	Referendum type	Title of Referendum (topic)
Croatia	22.01.12	Accession	Accession to the European Union
Ireland	31.05.12	(more) cooperation	Treaty on Stability Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union
Switzerland	17.06.12	other	Citizens' initiative of 11 August 2009 «For strengthening the popular rights on foreign policy (submittal of state treaties to the people!)»
Switzerland	09.02.14	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Citizens' initiative «Against mass immigration»
Denmark	25.05.14	Accession	Accession to European Unified Patent Court (UPC)
Switzerland	30.11.14	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Citizens' initiative of 02.11.2012 «Halt overpopulation - Preserve the natural environment» (Ecopop)
Greece	05.07.15	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Referendum on proposed bailout agreement
Denmark	03.12.15	(more) cooperation	European Union opt-out referendum
Switzerland	28.02.16	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Citizens' initiative of 29 December 2012 "For the enforcement of the deportation of criminal foreigners"
Netherlands	06.04.16	(more) cooperation	Dutch Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement referendum
UK	23.06.16	withdrawal	European Union membership referendum
Hungary	02.10.16	non-cooperation/ noncompliance	Migrant quota referendum
Guatemala	15.04.18	(more) cooperation	Submission of the territorial disputes with Belize to the International Court of Justice
North Macedonia	30.09.18	other	Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece on change of name to “Republic of Northern Macedonia”
Antigua and Barbuda	06.11.18	Accession	Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) as the final court of appeal
Grenada	06.11.18	Accession	Joining the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) and judicial reform
Belize	06.11.18	(more) cooperation	Submission of the territorial disputes with Guatemala to the International Court of Justice
Switzerland	25.11.18	other	Citizens' initiative “Swiss law instead of foreign judges” (initiative for self-determination)
Switzerland	19.05.19	withdrawal	Implementation of an amendment to the EU Weapons Directive (further development of Schengen)

Table A2: Voting Outcomes in different types of referendums

	vote in favor of cooperation	vote against cooperation	invalid	Total
Accession	27 (77%)	8 (23%)	1	36 (100%)
(more) cooperation	24 (71%)	10 (29%)	0	34 (100%)
Non-cooperation/ non-compliance	2 (25%)	5 (71%)	1	7 (100%)
Withdrawal	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	5 (100%)

Note: Percentage calculated as percent of valid referendum votes per referendum category

Table A3: Classification of cooperation gains at risk

	Type of cooperation gains at risk	Size of cooperation gains at risk	Breadth of cooperation gains at risk	One-off vs. repeated/ long-term costs	OVERALL assessment of cooperation gains at risk
Greenland 1982: EC Membership	close ties with Greenland	small, with exception of DK	broad, but concentrated in fisheries	long term	medium
Brazil 2000: IMF & external debt referendum	repayment of IMF loan and external debt	medium; external debt end-1999: US\$242 billion	narrow (debt repayment, IMF loan)	one-off	low-medium
Iceland 2010: Icesave I referendum	repayment of outstanding external debt	small; repayment of \$5.3 billion to UK and NL, owed to hundred thousands of savers	narrow (debt repayment)	one-off	low
Iceland 2011: Icesave II referendum	repayment of outstanding external debt	See Icesave I	narrow (debt repayment)	one-off	low
Switzerland 2014: Immigration Referendum on	close ties with Switzerland	large (important trading partner, tight migration relations)	broad (bilateral treaties I)	long term	high
Greece 2015: Bailout Referendum	EMU stability	huge; Greek EMU membership	broad (Greece's EMU membership)	long term	very high
UK 2016: Membership in EU	close integration with UK	huge	very broad (almost all aspects of the relationship)	long term	very high

Table A4: Classification of contagion risk

	Kind of contagion risk?	Attractiveness of an accommodative solution	Uniqueness of situation	Bargaining power of challenging state & resulting encouragement risk	Overall contagion risk
Greenland 1982: EC Membership	Further (regional) EC withdrawal	medium	high	low > high encouragement risk	low
Brazil 2000: IMF & external debt referendum	Non-repayment of external debt	high	low to medium	medium > medium	high
Iceland 2010: Icesave I referendum	Non-repayment of external debt	medium	low to medium	low > high	medium
Iceland 2011: Icesave II referendum	Non-repayment of external debt	medium	low to medium	low > high	medium
Switzerland 2014: Immigration Referendum	Exceptions to the four freedoms, especially free movement of people	very high	low to medium	medium > medium	very high
Greece 2015: Bailout Referendum	Exceptions to Eurozone rules and conditionality	high	low	low > high	very high
UK 2016: Membership in EU	Further EU withdrawal, exceptions to the four freedoms	very high	low to medium	high > low	very high

Information about the EU-27 survey

The analysis of EU-27 public opinion is based on data collected through a cross-sectional tracking survey on respondents across the EU that asked a set of eight identical questions plus two variable questions over the entire project period every six months between July 2018 and December 2020. The questions were placed on Dalia Research's Europulse omnibus survey (<https://daliaresearch.com/europulse/>). This is a regularly conducted online survey of a census representative sample of approximately 10,000 working-age Europeans from all EU member states. All participants are volunteers for social science research and over the age of 18, i.e. in full capacity to give informed consent. Dalia follows an open recruitment approach that lets respondents opt-in voluntarily and leverages the reach of third-party apps and mobile websites. The surveys do not require respondents to become members of a research panel, thereby allowing both first-time and regular survey-takers to participate. For all recruited participants, participation is strictly voluntary, they can exit the survey at any point and they can refuse to answer questions at any time.

Respondents are drawn across all 28 EU Member States, with sample sizes roughly proportional to their population size (see table A1 below; UK respondents were excluded for the analysis). In order to obtain census representative results, the data are weighted based upon the most recent Eurostat statistics. The target weighting variables are age, gender, level of education (as defined by ISCED (2011) levels 0-2, 3-4, and 5-8), and degree of urbanization (rural and urban).

This omnibus has been used in a number of other studies (see e.g., Karstens 2019; De Vries 2017, 2018, 2019). De Vries (2018: 66, footnote 6) notes that the demographical background of EuroPulse survey respondents shows very little difference from nationally representative surveys. Additional analysis (see online appendix) show that average country-level EU support in the November 2018 Eurobarometer and the December 2018 EuroPulse survey are correlated, especially for countries with a sample size larger than 300. While the EuroPulse also contains data for the UK, these are omitted in my analyses.

The tracking questions asked respondents about their expectations regarding the effects of Brexit, their preferred EU negotiation strategy, and various questions about their support for the EU, including how they would vote in an EU membership referendum in their own country.

Table A5: Descriptive Statistics, EU-27 analysis

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EU exit support	52,136	1.91	1.03	1	4
Leaver Dummy	55,765	0.24	0.43	0	1
Negotiation preference	55,765	3.38	1.24	0	5
Expected effect of Brexit on UK	50,708	2.80	1.16	1	5
Expected effect of Brexit on own country	50,049	2.10	0.83	0	4
France+Germany Dummy	55,765	0.29	0.45	0	1
Regional GDP at risk (logged)	55,264	0.45	0.87	-0.89	2.33
Opinion of EU	55,764	2.36	1.13	0	4
Future course for EU	55,765	1.88	1.12	0	3
Country-level spring 2016 euroskepticism	55,765	25.58	7.04	9	51
Attention paid to Brexit	55,765	2.86	0.83	1	4
Age in years	55,765	40.60	13.21	18	69
Education level	55,765	3.17	0.77	1	4
Female (Dummy)	55,765	0.49	0.50	0	1
Rural (Dummy)	55,765	0.27	0.44	0	1

Citizen (Dummy)	55,765	0.98	0.15	0	1
July 17 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.15	0.36	0	1
Dec 17 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.15	0.36	0	1
June 18 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.15	0.36	0	1
Dec 18 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.17	0.38	0	1
July 19 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.18	0.38	0	1
Dec 19 wave (Dummy)	55,765	0.19	0.40	0	1

Figure A1: Distribution of core variables

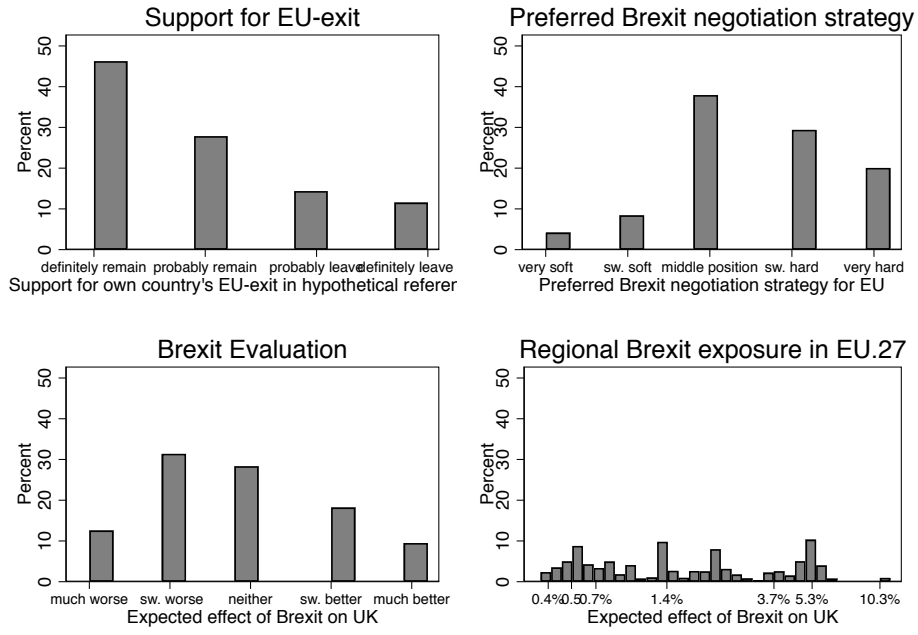
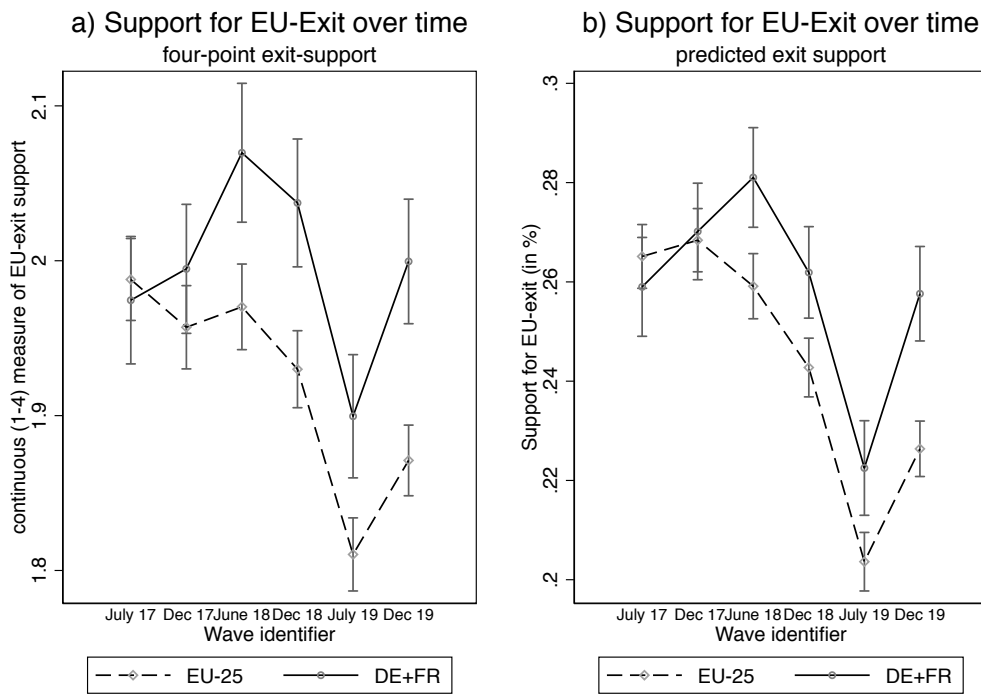


Table A6: Support for EU-exit of own country: hierarchical random-effects models

	Model 1 (Figure 2a)	Model 2 no controls EU opinion	Model 3 Leave- Dummy	Model 4 No Brexit evaluation
Brexit = UK much worse off	-0.279*** (0.02)	-0.449*** (0.03)	-0.031*** (0.00)	
Brexit = UK somewhat worse off	-0.273*** (0.01)	-0.429*** (0.01)	-0.060*** (0.00)	
Brexit = UK somewhat better off	0.231*** (0.02)	0.461*** (0.04)	0.115*** (0.01)	
Brexit = UK much better off	0.483*** (0.04)	1.030*** (0.03)	0.234*** (0.02)	
DE+FR (Dummy)	0.034 (0.02)	0.193*** (0.05)	0.011 (0.01)	-0.006 (0.00)
UK much worse off * DE+FR	-0.094*** (0.03)	-0.200*** (0.05)	-0.051*** (0.01)	
UK somewhat worse off * DE+FR	-0.049* (0.03)	-0.126*** (0.04)	-0.027** (0.01)	
UK somewhat better off * DE+FR	0.066* (0.04)	0.082 (0.05)	0.034** (0.01)	
UK much better off * DE+FR	0.075*** (0.01)	0.162*** (0.02)	0.017 (0.02)	
Opinion of EU	-0.513*** (0.02)		-0.191*** (0.01)	-0.212*** (0.00)
Preferred future for EU: more competencies for EU	-0.054*** (0.01)		0.043*** (0.01)	0.064*** (0.01)
Preferred future for EU: keep current power distribution	-0.058*** (0.01)		0.016*** (0.00)	0.042*** (0.00)
Preferred future for EU: return powers to member states	0.076*** (0.02)		0.074*** (0.01)	0.135*** (0.01)
Attention paid to Brexit	-0.026*** (0.01)	-0.107*** (0.01)	0.009** (0.00)	0.022*** (0.00)
Age in years	0.001*** (0.00)	0.006*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.000 (0.00)
Education	-0.039*** (0.00)	-0.067*** (0.00)	-0.014*** (0.00)	-0.021*** (0.00)
Female (Dummy)	-0.015** (0.01)	-0.011* (0.01)	-0.014*** (0.00)	-0.018*** (0.00)
Rural (dummy)	0.030*** (0.01)	0.055*** (0.02)	0.013*** (0.00)	0.011*** (0.00)
Citizenship (dummy)	0.058* (0.03)	0.163*** (0.03)	0.022 (0.02)	0.055*** (0.02)
Pre-Brexit country level euroskepticism	0.002** (0.00)		0.001** (0.00)	
December 17 wave	-0.013*** (0.00)	0.004*** (0.00)	0.003*** (0.00)	0.014*** (0.00)
June 18 wave	0.022*** (0.00)	0.014*** (0.00)	0.007*** (0.00)	0.008*** (0.00)
December 18 wave	-0.038*** (0.00)	-0.020*** (0.00)	-0.012*** (0.00)	-0.019*** (0.00)
June 19 wave	-0.094*** (0.00)	-0.095*** (0.00)	-0.033*** (0.00)	-0.040*** (0.00)
December 19 wave	-0.045*** (0.00)	-0.040*** (0.00)	-0.014*** (0.00)	-0.023*** (0.00)
_cons	3.244*** (0.08)	2.001*** (0.04)	0.598*** (0.03)	0.634*** (0.03)
N (individuals/countries)	48112	48113	51208	57658
Log likelihood	-48600	-60100	-14800	-19400
AIC	97229	120000	29581	38813
Wave-level variance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Country-level variance	0.008	0.035	0.001	0.035
Individual-level variance	0.462	0.751	0.105	0.339

Notes: Multi-level models (individuals nested in waves and countries). Standard errors in parentheses. Data are weighted. Reference categories: “Brexit makes UK neither worse nor better off”, “EU reform – don’t know”

Figure A2: Robustness Figure 2a



Note: Figure A2b is based on model 4 from table A6 (predicted support for EU exit)

Table A7: EU-27 Brexit negotiation positions

Country	Britain paying a low exit bill	«Cherry-picking» four EU freedoms	Maintaining trade ties/low tariff barriers	Sustaining defence ties	Average Brexit negotiation position (narrow)	Average Brexit negotiation position (broad)
Austria	3	4	3	1	3.3	2.75
Belgium	4	4	2	1	3.3	2.75
Bulgaria	4	3	3	1	3.3	2.75
Cyprus	2	4	1	1	2.3	2
Czech Republic	4	3	1	1	2.7	2.25
Germany	4	4	2	1	3.3	2.75
Denmark	4	2	1	1	2.3	2
Estonia	3	3	2	2	2.7	2.5
Spain	4	4	1	1	3.0	2.5
Finland	4	4	2	2	3.3	3
France	4	4	3	1	3.7	3
Greece	4	4	1	1	3.0	2.5
Croatia	3	3	3	1	3.0	2.5
Hungary	4	3	2	1	3.0	2.5
Ireland	2	4	1	1	2.3	2
Italy	3	4	2	1	3.0	2.5
Latvia	3	3	2	2	2.7	2.5
Lithuania	3	3	2	2	2.7	2.5
Luxembourg	2	4	2	1	2.7	2.25
Malta	2	4	2	1	2.7	2.25
Netherlands	4	4	1	2	3.0	2.75
Poland	3	3	1	2	2.3	2.25
Portugal	3	4	2	1	3.0	2.5
Romania	4	4	3	2	3.7	3.25
Sweden	4	3	1	1	2.7	2.25
Slovenia	3	3	2	1	2.7	2.25
Slovakia	4	4	2	1	3.3	2.75
Average	3.37	3.56	1.85	1.26	3.0	2.51

1= in favor of the respective proposal
4 = opposed to the respective proposal

Source: The Economist 2017