

The Dance of European Integration: How Ideology and Policy Shape Support for the EU*

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Abstract

What explains support for European Integration? Why did people on the Left oppose, and Right support, European Integration in the 1980s, but this pattern reverse in the 2020s? In contrast to the common account of European Integration as a new ‘cleavage’ in European politics, on a par with class, religion, and geography, we argue that citizens evaluate European Integration by what it has on offer for them. If Europe offers them a policy-bundle in line with their own (left-right) preferences, they support it. If not, they are opposed. In turn, the EU adjusts its policy-bundle in response to what the EU expects the public demands. Although sometimes out of tune, support for European Integration is a dance between the public self-interested assessment of Europe’s policy supply and Europe’s responsiveness to the public’s policy demand. We test this theory using individual-level public opinion data from all EU member states since the mid 1970s and a novel method for measuring the left-right policy location of EU legislative outputs over time.

Away from the public eye, European integration started as an elite project to irrevocably integrate the European economies such that future European wars on a continental scale became unthinkable (Milward, 1992). However, as European cooperation came to cover most policy-areas by the mid 1990s, the public woke up to the effects of the integration-process (Franklin, Marsh and McLaren, 1994). By the early 2020s, the question of Europe has become an established feature of public debates and party politics across the continent (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014; De Vries and Hobolt, 2020). As a result, prominent scholars such as Hooghe and Marks (2018), characterize European integration as a new cleavage in European politics, on par with the structural features of religion, class, and geography of the classic cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

Yet, policy outputs from the EU system are not only about the speed and character of European integration. EU policies directly relate to ideological questions that define left-right politics in Europe, from resource allocation and distribution (through the EU budget and economic and monetary union), to environmental standards and social protections (such as workers' rights), to personal social rights and freedoms (such as internal free movement of people and external refugee control, gender equality rules, and LGBTQ rights). Also, the direction of EU legislative outputs on these issues is shaped by the ideological make-up of the EU institutions: which MEPs and groups dominate the European Parliament, the partisan make-up of national governments in the Council, and the ideological composition of the Commission (Crombez and Hix, 2011, 2015; Hagemann and Høyland, 2010; Junge, König and Luig, 2015). The checks-and-balances of the EU institutions mean that on average EU policies are relatively centrist. Yet, at different points in time the EU has delivered more “rightwing” policies, such as market deregulation, and at other times the EU has produced more “leftwing” policies, such as higher environmental and social standards.

We hence see the EU as a political system that produces a “policy-bundle” that at any one time is more in line with the (left-right) policy-preferences of some voters than others. If the EU produces a different policy-bundle, voters that do not change their policy preferences will assess the EU differently. Similarly, if voters change their preferences, while the EU keeps producing the same policy-bundle, voters' assessments of the EU will change. So, neither voters' policy preferences nor the EU policy-bundle is static. As a result, we see support for European integration as a “dance” between, on the one hand, voters' assessments of their ideological preferences relative to the EU's policy-production and, on the other hand, the EU's responsiveness to voters' assessments of the resulting policy-bundle.¹

What we do in this paper is to put this output-based account of support for the EU to the test. In line with recent work on public support for international courts (e.g. Madsen et al., 2022), we argue that the public base their support for the EU on the extent to which the EU provides a bundle of policies that is in line with their board

¹Here, our idea of a “dance” between these two factors is inspired by McCarthy, Poole and Rosenthal (2008)'s characterization of the two-way relationship between ideology and inequality in the U.S.

policy preferences. As our argument is counter to the “EU as a new cleavages” we require data on citizens’ over a long time period. Here, we rely on the Eurobarometer-survey, which has been ongoing with an identical-worded question on to what extent the respondent supports the EU since 1976 on both their attitudes towards the EU and their left-right self-placement. Attitude towards the EU is our dependent variable. Then, to capture the kind of policy-outputs the EU produces, we rely on EurLex, the Union’s official collection of all legislation that the European Union (and its predecessors) has produced. For each year, on the basis of Commission’s labelling, we classify each piece of legislation as belonging to a policy-field that the left or right care most about, or if this is unclear. We then count up the number of left, right and unclear legislation for each year. Subtracting the number of left policies from the number of right and dividing on the total number of policies gives us an indication of the extent of the left or right leaning of the EU policy bundle that year. Fixing the EU-bundle and left-right self-placement to be on a common meaningful scale, we calculate the respondents’ policy loss by taking the squared distance between the annualized EU policy-bundle and the left-right self-placement. This is our main explanatory variable. Having described how policy loss and support for the EU vary over time, across member states and within subgroups of the population, we test the relationship statistically. Here we use fixed country-year effects to control out all variation that is not due to differences between respondents in the same country, at the same time. The results show that respondents that experience a small policy loss are more supportive of the EU than those that experience larger losses. This finding is consistent across a range of statistical specifications and operationalizations of the dependent and the explanatory variables. As a result, we conclude that EU citizens assess the EU on the basis of what the EU has in store for them. If the EU change the balance in the policy-mix on offer, some EU citizens that preferred to old policy-mix to the new may become less supportive of the EU, while citizens for whom the opposite is the case, may grow more supportive.

In the next section, we review the literature on political ideology and support for the EU. Highlighting the role of the substantive support and the relationship between policy and polity preferences, we arrive at our hypotheses. Then, in the second section, we map support for the EU over time by left-right self-placement, showing how the the relationship between ideology and support for the EU has transformed over the past 45 years. In the third section, we describe the evolution of EU legislation, highlighting how the relative weight of left and right policies has changed. We also situate citizens’ assessment of the EU and the EU’s annual policy-bundles on a common scale, allowing us to create a measure of “policy loss”. Here, we also explain how we estimate a series of statistical models of the relationship between policy loss and support for the EU at the individual level. Then, in the fourth section, we present the results, and show that there is a stronger lag than lead in this relationship, consistent with our expectation that EU citizens are more reactive of what the EU is doing than the EU is reactive to citizens’ preferences. We also show that the relationship holds across a range of specifications. In the final section, we discuss some broader implications of our findings, highlight some limitations, and point out ways this line of research could

be expanded upon in future research.

Political Ideology and Support for the EU

There are two main perspectives in the existing research on the relationship between political ideology and support for the EU. The first of these, most prominently promoted by Hooghe and Marks (2018), sees European integration as a new “cleavage” on a par with other structural divisions, like religion, class, and geography in classic cleavage theory. This new cleavages pits social and economic groups who benefit from the process of European integration, such as higher income and higher educated groups, against those groups who do not directly benefit or who have their identities undermined by the process of European integration, such as lower income and lower educated groups or groups with strong national identities (Gabel, 1998; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Kriesi et al., 2006). As Hooghe and Marks (2018) state:

we describe the emergence of a transnational cleavage, which has as its core a political reaction against European integration and immigration. The perforation of national states by immigration, integration and trade may signify a critical juncture in the political development of Europe no less decisive for parties and party systems than the previous junctures that Lipset and Rokkan (1967) detect in their classic article.

To see European integration through the lenses of cleavage theory is not entirely new. For example, Hix (1999) characterised European integration as an Independence–Integration cleavage that cuts across the left-right dimension (see also Hix and Lord, 1997). Because this cleavage is orthogonal to the left-right, it undermines parties’ support coalitions - as some parties’ voters are likely to support European integration while others are likely to oppose it. On the left, for example, socio-cultural professionals benefit from more opportunities from European-wide services market and generally support liberal EU social and migration policies, while industrial workers in much of Western Europe face downward wage pressure from European-wide product market competition and capital and labour mobility. Similarly, on the right, higher income groups benefit from greater investment opportunities and returns on their social and economic investments while socially conservative voters oppose liberal EU social and migration policies. Hix (1999, 80) hence expected that established parties, whose voters are split on European integration, will try to minimize competition on European integration issues and focus their attention instead on traditional domestic left-right issues.

Second, an alternative approach, although not inconsistent with the cleavage approach, is to regard the relationship between political ideology and attitudes towards the European Union as an “inverted-U shape” (Taggart, 1998; Aspinwall, 2002; Hooghe, Marks and Wilson, 2002; Hix, Noury and Roland, 2006; De Vries and Edwards, 2009). In this approach, individuals and parties who have centrist positions on the left-right

dimension are more supportive of the EU, and the further an individual or a party is either to the left or to the right the less supportive they are of the EU.

One explanation for this inverted-U shape is that the institutional design of the EU constrains policy outcomes to be ideologically centrist (Nanou and Dorussen, 2013; Grossman and Sauger, 2019). On average, the EU delivers a social market economy, with liberal product and services markets but some common social and environmental protections, as well as rights for women, sexual and ethnic minorities, liberal free movement of people, and a monetarist design for economic and monetary union. Citizens and parties on the left who prefer more radical market intervention or socialist economic policies, or who oppose a monetarist design of economic and monetary union (and particularly the imposition of austerity plans by the EU after the 2008 sovereign debt crisis) inevitably have to oppose the constraints imposed by the EU if they want to change policy outcomes. Similarly, citizens on the right who prefer more radical libertarian free market deregulation or who oppose liberal social rights and favour more restrictive immigration policies will also oppose EU level policy constraints (Konstantinidis and Mutlu-Eren, 2019; Brack, 2020).

The problem with these two approaches, as we see it, is that they are too static. A cleavage may erode, as the class and religious cleavages have done, but a cleavage should be enduring, at least for a considerable period. So, for European integration to be a cleavage, the attitudes towards the EU of the groups on either side of the division should remain relatively stable over time. Similarly, the inverted-U shape model of EU politics has been the dominant framework in the literature since the later 1980s, and remains the lens through which many scholars of EU politics, as well as political commentators, view citizens' and parties' in EU politics, for example when trying to explain how EU attitudes shape political behaviour in national elections, European Parliament elections and EU-related referendums (Bakker et al., 2015; Marks and Steenbergen, 2004).

A cursory look across the history of European integration suggests that the relationship between political ideology and attitudes towards European integration has been far from static. In the 1950s, when European integration was primarily concerned with the integration of markets, socialist parties in many countries regarded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and European Economic Community (EEC) as a threat to national welfare states and national industries. In his classic *Uniting of Europe*, Haas (1958) documents how many left-wing parties voted against or abstained in the key votes in national parliaments ratifying the ECSC and EEC treaties, for example:

The opposition of the [German] Social Democratic Party was exactly as sweeping - and self-contradictory - as that of the [French] RPF in France. Every facet of the Treaty was subject to bitter criticism. Ruinous competition would destroy an already handicapped German industry, or cartels would find shelter under the protection of the dictatorial and capitalist-dominated High Authority.

As a matter of fact, most northern European social democratic parties remained

opposed to the European Communities (EC) until the “social dimension” of the single market programme in the mid 1980s and the Delors Commission’s activism in promoting social rights and worker protection (Haahr, 1993; Gaffney, 1996).

In the other side of the ideological divide, most centre-right parties and business interests were supportive of European integration between the 1950s and 1980s - to liberalise trade, promote integration of national product markets (to achieve greater economies of scale and higher profit margins), deregulate national markets, and encourage the privatisation of national industries. However, by the late 1980s, some free market forces on the right started to oppose European integration. As Margaret Thatcher infamously put it in her 1988 “Bruges Speech”:

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels.²

So, what explains the evolving relationship between political ideology and attitudes towards European integration? We posit that these changes can be explained by the changing political/policy meaning of what European integration represents. Between the 1950s and 1970s, European integration mainly meant market integration and market liberalisation. In this period, it was rational for voters on the right to support European integration, and voters on the left to oppose it. Then from the mid 1980s until the 2000s, following the single market programme and the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union represented a combination of market deregulation and monetarist economic policies (supported by the centre-right) and social and environment re-regulation, gender equality and other non-discrimination policies, and increased public spending on regional support and infrastructure (supported by the centre-left). In this period, it was rational for the moderate right and moderate left to support the EU policy framework, and the radical left and radical right to oppose the new constraints set by the EU - hence the inverted-U shape. Then, after the early 2000s, the picture becomes more complex. Enlargement of the EU to Central and Eastern Europe led to the influx of migrant workers to many countries in Western Europe, which many people on the right opposed. The liberal social policies of the EU, such as LGBTQ rights and common refugee policies, were opposed by many on the right in Central and Eastern Europe. But, the left in Southern and Western Europe opposed the austerity policies “imposed by Brussels” in the wake of the sovereign debt crisis in 2008.

In broader terms, though, the EU political system at its heart is a new supranational institutional architecture for constructing and regulating a market on a continental scale and to coordinate national actions to mitigate potential negative externalities of market integration on national macroeconomic, migration, foreign and other policies. This framework enables capital and goods markets to be regulated beyond the nation-state (including through process as well as product standards). It also enables the EU

²The text of Margaret Thatcher’s Bruges Speech is available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332>

to coordinate action to address climate change and to enforce common liberal social rights and freedoms (workers' rights, gender equality, and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and disability). On average, this architecture provides opportunities for voters on the left to secure the policy outcomes they prefer while making it more difficult for voters on the right to deregulate markets (more than the EU framework allows) or to preserve "traditional" social policies.

Over time, then, we expect the relationship between ideology and European integration to reverse: with the left opposed and right supportive of European integration in the period of market integration (the 1950s to the 1980s), then a period of the inverted-U shape (with the centrists in favour and the extremes opposed) as the EU builds the basic socio-economic architecture of the EU (1990s to 2000s), and then the left supportive and the right opposed as the EU moves into a period of 'normal governance' (from the 2010s).

This shift reminds us of the changing pattern of support for the federal government in the United States. As William H. Riker (1987), the great scholar of *inter alia* American federalism, explained:

“Since federalism restrains the national government by setting the scene for conflicts between the states and the nation, the appropriate stance for a New Dealer is to seek to eliminate federalism. On the other hand, the liberal goal of protecting rights from governmental attack justifies restraints like federalism and separation of powers that occasion intergovernmental and interbranch deadlocks” (Riker, 1987, xii-xiii).

Riker himself evolved from being a New Deal Democrat in his youth, who supported market intervention and public spending by the US federal government, to a free market liberal in his later life, who favoured “states’ rights” against the constraints imposed by Washington (Volden, 2004).

Rather than just sketch these broad aggregate patterns, we can develop and test these ideas at an individual-level: namely, how does the relationship between an individual citizen’s ideological position and the policy outputs of the EU affect how far she supports/opposes the European Union? Here, our starting point is a rational choice institutionalist perspective: where actors’ preferences over institutions are “endogenous” to their preferences over policy (Riker, 1980; Tsebelis, 2002; Shepsle, 2008). The policies the EU produces are the joint result of the preferences of the actors (national governments, MEPs, Commissioners), the legislative procedures, and the implementation and the enforcement of adopted legislation across the member states. Given actors’ preferences, the procedural rules governing who has the power to make which proposal to whom, dictate the scope and direction of policy outcomes. Put another way: policy outcomes are “structure-induced equilibria” (Shepsle and Weingast, 1981).

Because policy outcomes are structure-induced, actors’ preferences about these structures are endogenous to their policy preferences. If a citizen expects the institutions deliver policies she likes, she will support granting more policy powers to the

decision-making institutions, but if she expects the institutions deliver policy outcomes she dislikes, she will oppose granting more policy powers to the decision-making institutions. In the EU context, then, a citizen will support/oppose European integration based on the expected policy outputs of the EU, and how close or how far these expected policy outcomes are from the citizen’s ideal set of policies. So, if the EU produces more left-wing outputs (e.g. social and environmental regulations, liberal migration policies etc.), left-wing citizens will support integration, but if it produces more right-wing outputs (e.g. market deregulation, constraints on public spending etc.) left-wing citizens will oppose integration.

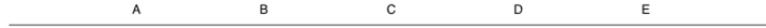


Figure 1: Illustration of the spatial model, where each actor is represented with her most preferred policy-bundle

Figure 1 illustrates this model in a one-dimensional policy-space, where each actor is represented by her most-preferred policy-bundle. For example, actor C’s most preferred policy-bundle is C. If she cannot obtain the policy-bundle C, actor C prefers policy-bundles that are closer to C than further away. C is indifferent in terms of the direction of the policy outcome relative to her ideal policy-bundle; she only cares about the distance. C thus prefers policy-bundle B to policy-bundle A, and D to E, but is indifferent between policy-bundles located at B and D. The nearer (further) the policy outputs of the EU are to her ideal policy-bundle, the more she will support (oppose) the EU.

Given the composition of the EU institutions and the oversized or double majority requirements needed to pass legislation, the EU policy-bundle is on average fairly centrist. The institutional rules hence mean that the EU is as unlikely to produce policy-bundles that are to the liking of those on the radical left as those on the radical right. However, at different points in time, the EU delivers policies that are closer to citizens on the centre-left than centre-right, and at other times the EU delivers the reverse. And, given the growing policy powers of the EU, and the accumulation of EU rules that are broadly supported by the left, we expect citizens on the centre-left to increasingly support the EU over time, and citizens on the centre-right to become less supportive.

From this discussion and our theoretical model we derive the following hypotheses:

- **H1. Ideology-support variation:** Attitudes towards European integration vary by ideological (policy) preferences, both across individuals and across time (versus the cleavage approach)
- **H2. Conditional “Inverted-U”:** Over-time changes in the relationship between ideology and EU support are explained by changing EU policy outputs (right in 1970s-1980s, centrist in 1990s-2000s, left in 2010s)
- **H3. Individual ideal-policy loss:** The further EU policy outcomes are from an individual’s ideal policy preferences (the greater the ‘policy loss’) the less an individual will support the EU
- **H4. Policy responsiveness:** citizens’ support will respond to changes in EU policy outcomes, and EU policy outcomes will respond to changes in citizens’ preferences

Hypothesis 1 implies a rejection of the suggestion that European integration has emerged as a new cleavage in European politics, since the cleavage approach implies that attitudes towards European integration are stable over time and across individuals. In contrast, our policy-preferences based approach implies that support for the EU fluctuates over time and across different segments of society, as the policy priorities of the EU vary over time. Those on the right are more supportive of the EU when the focus of the EU is on easing cross-border trade in goods and services, while those on the left are more supportive of the EU when the focus is on environment regulation, protection of workers’ rights, and so on. In the next section, we assess to what extent the pattern of EU support is more in line with the cleavage approach or our policy-preferences approach by mapping EU support over time and within different segments of the left-right spectrum.

Hypothesis 2 implies a rejection of the stability in the “inverted-U” support of European integration, where those located at the centre of the left-right scale are always the most supportive, and support falls the further an individual is located from the centre. The inverted-U model also suggests that the drop in support for the EU declines at the same rate in both directions from the centre, and is stable over time. In contrast, our policy-preferences approach predicts that the peak in support for European integration, as well as the curvature of the “inverted-U”, will vary over time because the type of policies the EU produces varies. We evaluate this hypothesis in the next section by estimating annualized models of support for European integration as a function of linear and squared individual left-right self-placement, controlling for known covariates such as age, education, and gender.

Hypothesis 3 is a direct test of the policy-preferences approach and requires a measure of EU policy-output that is comparable to left-right self-placement. To do this we calculate such a measure by collecting all EU legislation from the EurLex database, and we use the assigned policy-area of each piece of legislation to classify whether it is mostly of interest to the left, the right, or is unclear. For each year,

we subtract the number of “left” legislation from the number of “right” legislation and divide this by the total number of legislation that year. We refer to this as the annual “policy-bundle” of the EU. We use this, admittedly rough, measure to capture the general sense of what the EU is doing, at a level of granularity that we believe reasonably approximates what EU citizens are able to process. We believe EU citizens are able to get a sense of the main types of policies the EU is delivering, and can judge whether these policies are on issues they care about, but EU citizens stay largely uninformed about the detailed contents of EU directives and regulations. We then expect EU citizens to compare their own political preferences to the EU policy-bundle. The smaller the distance between their ideological self-placement and the ideological local of the EU policy-bundle, the more supportive of the EU we expect a respondent to be. In the main part of the analysis, following standard spatial models of voting, we use the squared distance between left-right self-placement and the left-right location of the EU policy-bundle, but as robustness checks we test alternative specifications.

Hypothesis 4 tests to what extent EU policy outputs are primarily a reaction to change in citizens’ preferences or whether citizens’ evaluations of the EU are primarily a reaction to EU policy outputs. As such, we evaluate who is leading and who is following in the dance of European integration. To assess this, we rerun our empirical model with different leads and lags when calculating the location of the EU policy-bundle. A lag of four years estimates the correlation between support for the EU today and the policy-bundle the EU produced four years ago. Correspondingly, a lead of four years estimates the correlation between support for the EU four years ago and the policy-bundle the EU produces today. If the lead coefficients are larger than the lags, this implies that EU policy outputs react to changing policy preferences by changing the composition of EU policies. If the lag coefficients are larger than the leads, this implies that EU citizens are mainly reacting to the policy outputs of the EU.

Citizen Support for the EU Over Time

To illustrate how citizens’ support for the EU has evolved over time, we collected and integrated every Eurobarometer survey between 1976 and 2022. To measure support for the EU we use the so-called “Membership question” in the surveys: *“Generally speaking, do you think that (your country’s) membership of the European Community/Union is . . . A Good Thing, Neither Good Nor Bad, A Bad Thing”*. We recoded the responses to numeric values, A Good thing (3), Neither Good Nor Bad (2), and A Bad Thing (1). This question has an advantage over other questions in the Eurobarometer survey - for example the questions about the expected benefits of EU membership or whether someone has a European identity - because it has been asked in every member state and in every survey over time and it is relatively simple to understand and to answer.

As we are interested in how support for the EU co-varies with an individual’s political ideology, we use the standard left-right self-placement question: *“In political*

matters people talk of ‘the left’ and ‘the right’. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 (Left) to 10 (Right)’. The substantive content of the left-right dimension has changed over the period we are studying (Kitschelt, 1994; Dalton, 2018; Rovny and Polk, 2018; Hutter and Kriesi, 2019). In the 1970s and 1980s, this dimension related more to economic issues, such as public spending and taxation, whereas in the 2000s and 2010s this dimension related more to socio-cultural issues, such as immigration and LGBTQ+ rights. However, across the whole period, and across country, the left-right dimension is a useful approximation of citizens’ political preferences across a wide range of policy issues, and so gives us a “vanilla” measure of both whether a citizen locates themselves more “on the left” as opposed to “on the right”, and also whether a citizen is more politically centrist or more politically extreme. Furthermore, to account for the varying conceptions of left and right across time and space, we include economic as well as socio-cultural issues in our measurement of the left-right location of EU policy outputs.

We also collected information about the level of education, the sex of the respondent, their age, as well as the country of the respondent and the year in which the survey was in the field.

To start with, as a descriptive exercise, in Figure 2 we regress support for the EU against ideological self-placement for every year between 1976 and 2022, grouped by different levels of left-right self placement: radical left (1-2), centre left (3-4), centre (5-6), centre right (7-8), radical right (9-10). To guard against compositional effects following the Central and Eastern enlargement in 2004, and subsequent rounds, we focus, in this figure, on the “old 15” member states only. We use the Centre as the reference group.

Starting in the top left corner, with the radical left, we see that, compared to the centrists, these citizens were strongly anti-EU from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, after which their opposition mellowed somewhat. More recently, these citizens have become just as, or even more, supportive of the EU than centrists. Moving on to the centre left, we see that over time these citizens have slowly but surely become more supportive of the EU than those in the centre. On the right, we see the reverse pattern. Those on the centre right have gone from being more supportive than the centre until the 1990s, to not being any more or less supportive than centrists. Finally, for the radical right, we see that perhaps from the mid-1990s, but in particular from the mid 2000s, these citizens have become more hostile to the EU than the centrists.

In Figure 3, we show the corresponding evolution within the “New 13” member states. Here we see that the radical right have become more positive over time, although not more positive than the centre, while citizens placing themselves on the centre left are as supportive of EU as those in the centre. In these countries, citizens placing themselves as centre right are the most positive of the EU, closely followed by those of the radical right.

In short, the pattern that emerges from these figures is not one of stability, but of

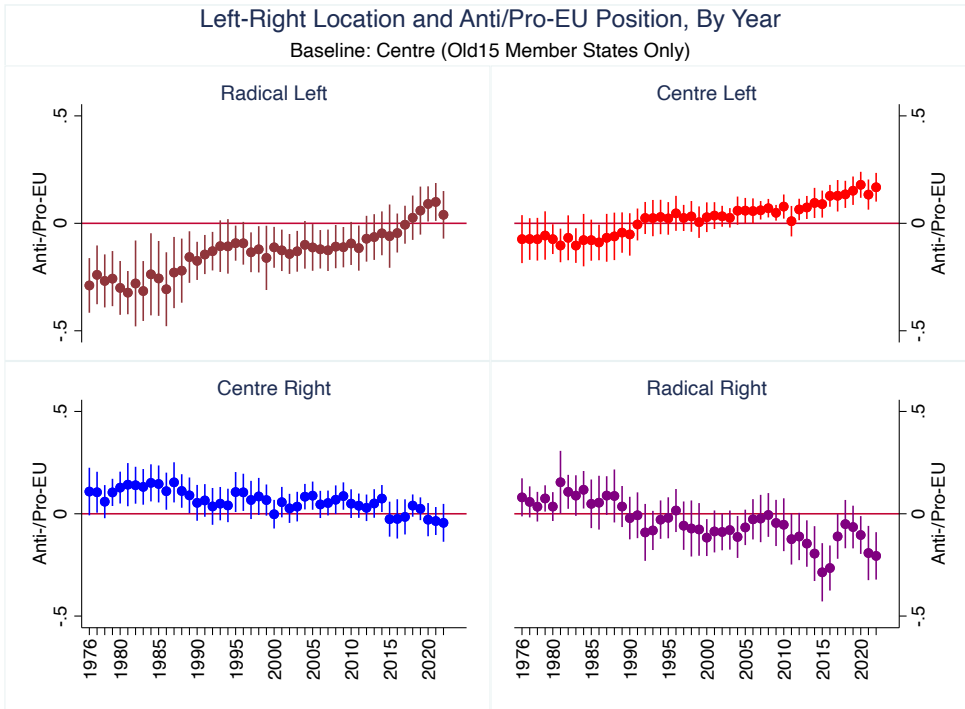


Figure 2: Support for EU over time by segments of left-right self-placement. Old-15 member states.

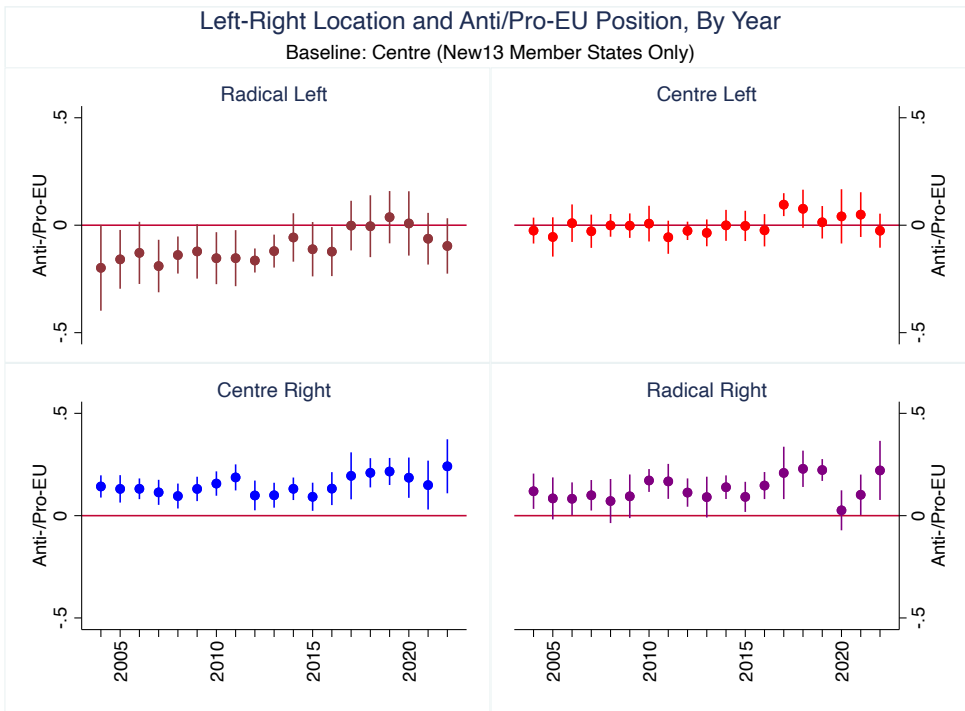


Figure 3: Support for EU over time by segments of left-right self-placement. New-13 member states.

gradual shift. In the Old 15, support for the EU went from being strongest amongst those on the centre right to being strongest amongst those on the centre left. Over time, citizens on the left as well as on the radical left changed their assessment of the EU, relative to the assessment made by those in the centre. Given this amount of change in the relationship between ideology and support for the EU over time, this raises questions about whether pro-/anti-EU attitudes are driven by new societal cleavage, which permanently divides some groups against others, as opposed to being determined by instrumental calculations by individuals about whether the EU will deliver the types of policies they prefer.

Next, we investigate the inverted-U relationship in more detail using the same approach, but adding controls for gender, age, age squared, and country fixed effects. Again, we do this as a descriptive exercise, showing how the survey responses vary over time. If the inverted-U shape is a structural feature of European politics, we should expect the coefficients for left-right (linear and squared terms) to be fairly constant over time, once relevant covariates are included.

As we see in the top left panel of Figure 4, until the 1990s left-right self-placement correlated in a *positive* way with support for the EU: meaning that, on average, the further right someone was placed, the more supportive they were of the EU. Then, from 1990 to 2015, EU support is best characterised by the famed inverted U-shape, where the linear relationship between left-right and support for the EU is not significant, but the quadratic relationship is significant and negative: meaning that centrists supported the EU, and extremists on the left and right opposed the EU. However, since 2016, the relationship starts to look like a mirror-image of the early period, where left-right self-placement is correlated in a *negative* way with support for the EU: meaning that the further left someone is placed, the more supportive they are of the EU. For sure, those furthest to the right are more sceptical of the EU than those on the centre right, but the difference between these two groups is getting smaller. One caveat, though, is that for citizens from Central and Eastern Europe, those on the right continue to be more supportive of the EU than those on the left.

So, in sum, neither the support of the EU within different segments of the left-right spectrum, nor the inverted U-shaped relationship are stable features of European politics. Instead, the relationship between underlying political (ideological) preferences and attitudes towards the EU has evolved over time. Furthermore, these cross-time patterns at the citizen level seem to be consistent with our discussion, above, of how political elites changed their views about European integration over time. So, rather than conceiving the EU as a fixed cleavage in European politics, perhaps we should consider the possibility that support for the EU is a function of what kind of policies the EU delivers. To test this proposition more directly, in the next section we introduce a dataset and a new measure of EU policy output.

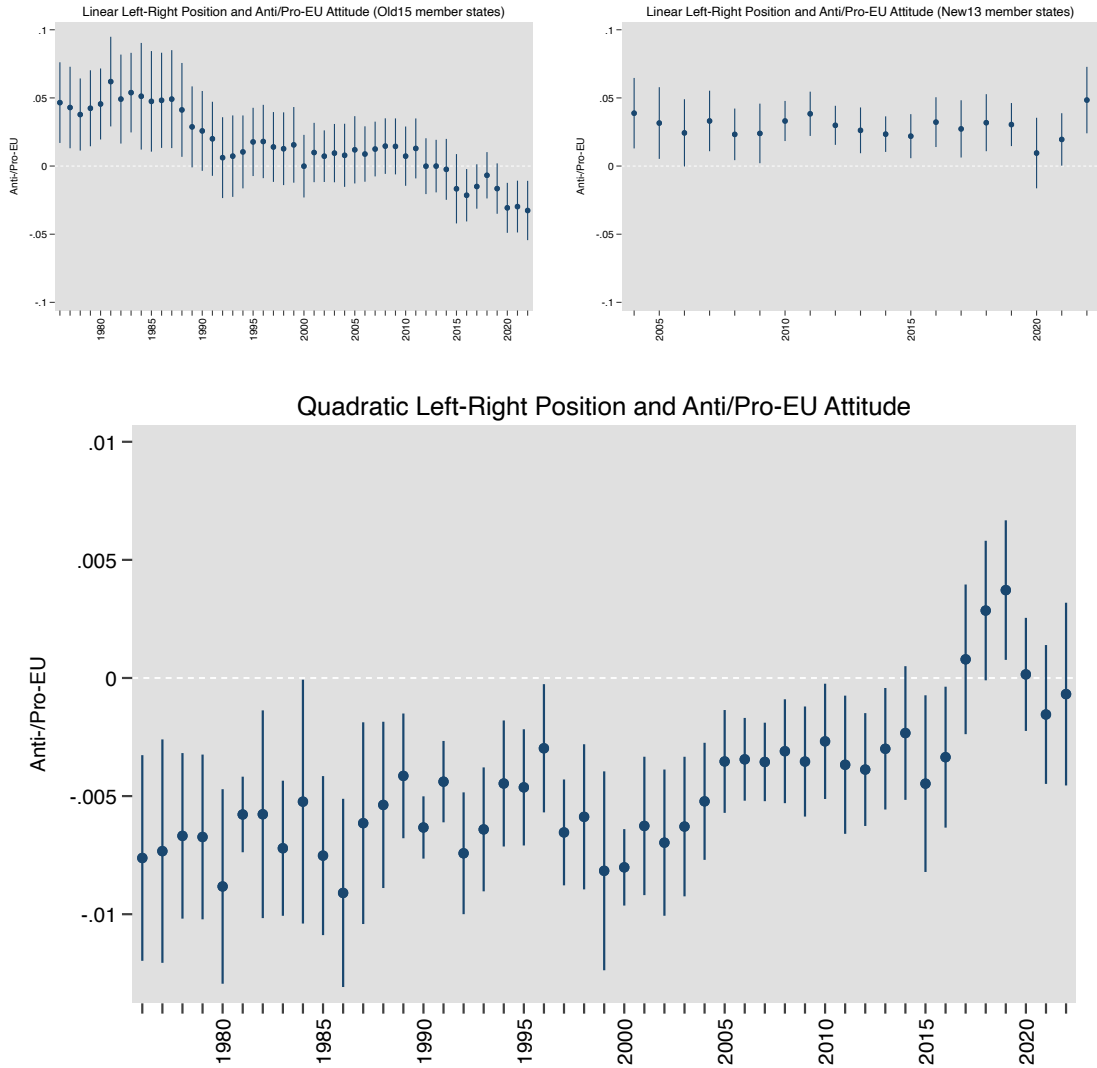


Figure 4: Regression of support for EU by left-right placement over time, with controls. Top-left: Old-15, Top-right: New 13., Bottom: Regression of support for EU by left-right placement (quadratic) over time, with controls (all member states)

Policy area	Left	Neutral	Right
General, financial and institutional matters		X	
Customs Union and free movement of goods			X
Agriculture			X
Fisheries		X	
Freedom of movement for workers and social policy	X		
Right of establishment and freedom to provide services			X
Transport policy		X	
Competition policy	X		
Taxation	X		
Economic and monetary policy and free movement of capital			X
External relations		X	
Energy		X	
Industrial policy and internal market			X
Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments	X		
Environment, consumers and health protection	X		
Science, information, education and culture	X		
Law relating to undertakings			X
Common Foreign and Security Policy		X	
Area of freedom, security and justice			X
People's Europe		X	

Table 1: Classification of EU policies into left-right interest.

Note: Policy-area identified by EuroLex, our classification as right, neutral, or left.

EU Policy Production Over Time

In this section, we map the evolution of EU policy outputs over the same period as our public opinion data. Relying on the EuroLex’s classification of legislation into 20 different policy areas, we group these areas as being mainly to the benefit of the left or the right. Several policy-areas are difficult to classify as either left or right, so we leave those out in the main part of the subsequent analysis.

EU legislation is in principle common to all member states, although some member states have opted out or not joined specific policy areas. EuroLex assigns policy-categories to all legislation. We use these categories to classify a piece of legislation as being primarily of interest to citizens on the right, primarily of interest to citizens on the left, or of no specific ideological direction. Our classification is presented in Table 1.

Within each of these categories, the volume of legislation varies over time with the evolution in EUs’ focus and competences. In Figure 5, we plot this development over time across all of these policy-categories. Note that the y-axes differ across the policies, as the number of legislations varies substantively across policy-areas as well as across time. As such, this figure highlight the variation within each policy-area over time. For example, for free movement of goods, the annual number of legislation, reflects the single market programme. There is virtually no legislation before the mid 1980s. Then,

five years later, the number of annual pieces of legislation extend beyond 300, peaking at almost 900 per year in the mid 1990s, before it gradually declines. In contrast, the number of environmental legislation grows more gradually during the 1990s and early 2000s. Then, from the late 2000s and the 2010s, the EU has produced a massive amount of environmental legislation, above 1250 pieces a year.

For each year, we count the number of legislative acts produced in the right and left categories. Then we subtract the number of left-classified laws from the number of right-classified laws and divide that by the total number of left and right laws from that year. The evolution of EU policy outputs by this measure is illustrated in Figure 6. The higher the value, the more to the right the policy-bundle is. Each dot is a yearly observation, and the blue line indicates the smoothed trend over time.

As the figure shows, we see that the EU produced an increasing share of right-interest policies relative to left-interest policies in the 1980s, mainly related to the liberalisation of markets as part of the single market programme. Then, in the early 1990s, as “flanking-policies” became more prominent - such as environmental regulation, social regulation, and regional development policies - the policy-bundle became more left-leaning. In the 2000s, the policy-bundle then became more left-leaning than right-leaning. Following the financial crisis, and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis, the right-interest share of the policy-bundle increased again.

Linking Policy-Preferences and Policy-Production

We now discuss how we link citizens’ left-right self-placement with the left-right location of the EU policy-bundle. Admittedly, this task contains some subjective elements. But, from existing literature, we know that the EU is a political system that produces relatively centrist policies, as a result of the checks-and-balances of the legislative process as well as the way different political preferences are represented across the Commission, the EU Council, and the European Parliament. As a result, EU legislation can only be adopted with broad political consensus, and with only some political parties and the left or some political parties on the right opposed at any one time. For example, in the European Parliament, most legislation passes with the support of a broad “grand coalition”, of the centre-right European People’s Party, the centre-left Socialists and Democrats, and the centrist Alliance of Liberals and Democrats/Renew group (Kreppel and Hix, 2003; Hix, Noury and Roland, 2007; Hagemann and Høyland, 2010; Hix and Høyland, 2013; Blumenau and Lauderdale, 2018).

With this observation, it seems reasonable to limit the range of the EU-policy bundle to be within the central (50-percent) tendency of the distribution of EU citizens’ left-right preferences. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to assume that the centre of citizens’ left-right policy preference and the mean of the policies delivered by the EU is broadly comparable. We thus mean-centre the left-right self placement scale, but do not change the scale. This, as shown in Figure 7, results in an EU bundle that is

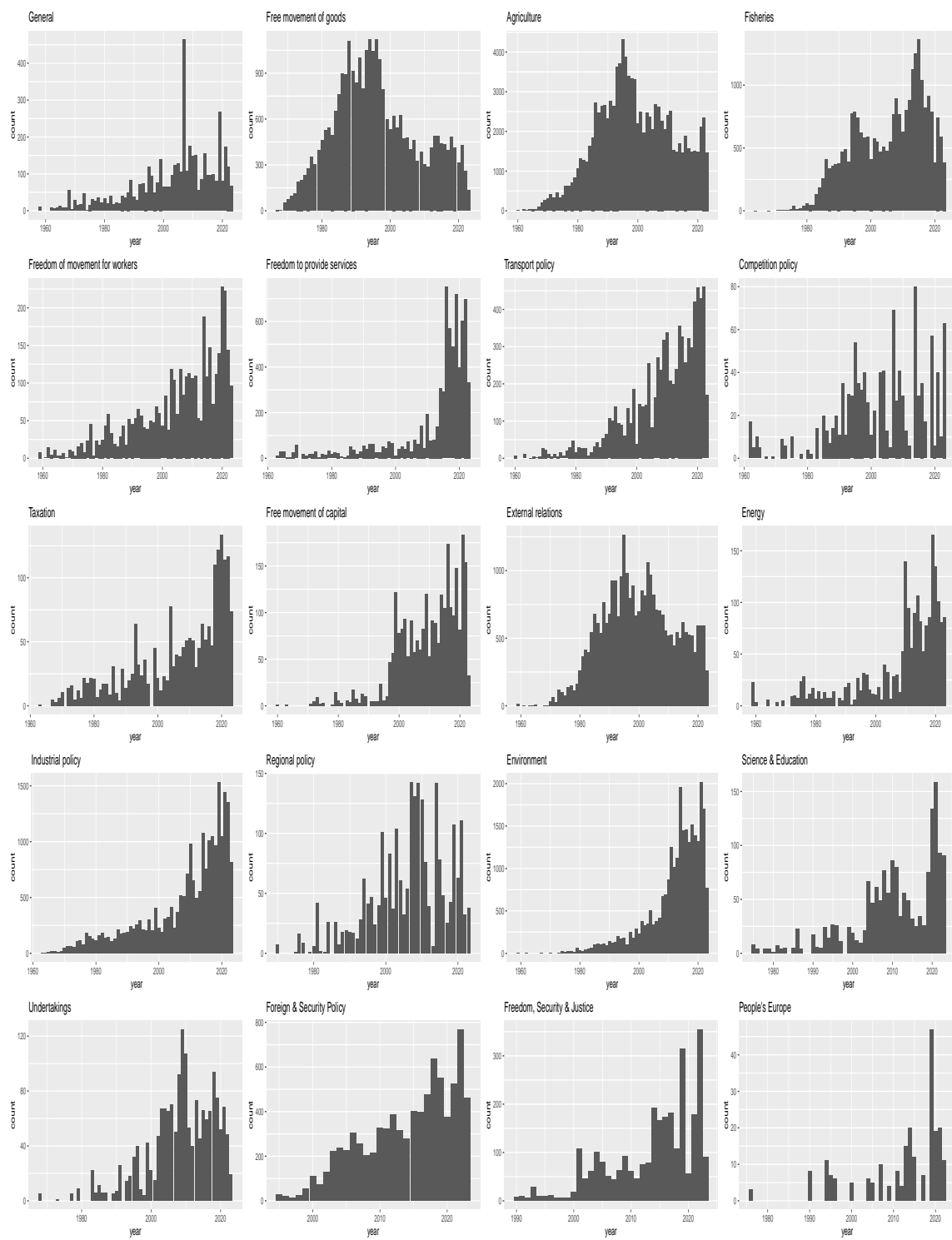


Figure 5: Development of EU policy-production over time, across policies.

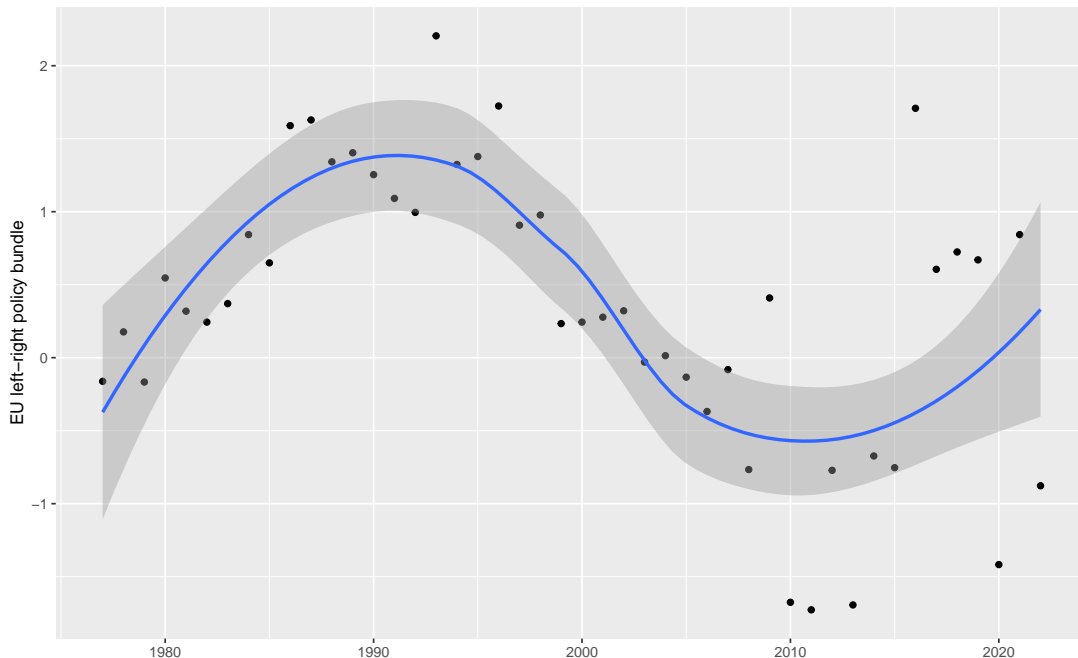


Figure 6: Left-right composition of EU policy-production over time.

slightly to the right of the average location of EU citizens, but is towards the centre of the EU citizens’ self-placement scale. Significant proportions of EU citizens are located both to the left of the most leftward EU policy-bundle and to the right of the most rightward EU policy-bundle, which again seems reasonable.

Then, following a standard spatial model of politics, we capture a citizen’s policy loss using a quadratic-loss function: as the squared distance between the EU policy-bundle and their (mean-centred) left-right self-placement (e.g. Enelow and Hinich, 1981; Adams, Merrill and Grofman, 2005). In other words, when comparing policy options, citizens prefer a bundle that is closer to their ideal point, and a quadratic-loss function imposes a harsher increasing loss as a policy-bundle becomes more distant from a citizen’s ideal point (whereas a linear-loss function would impose a fixed rate of increase in the loss). Formally, we use the following model:

$$\text{policy loss} = (\text{policy bundle} - \text{self placement})^2$$

Policy loss is thus (weakly) positive. The smallest policy loss is zero, which is realised if the EU produces a policy-bundle that is identical to the most-preferred policy bundle of a citizen. The larger the distance between the EU’s policy-bundle and a citizen’s most-preferred policy-bundle, the larger the policy loss. If a citizen evaluates the EU on the the basis of their policy loss, the effect of the policy distance should be

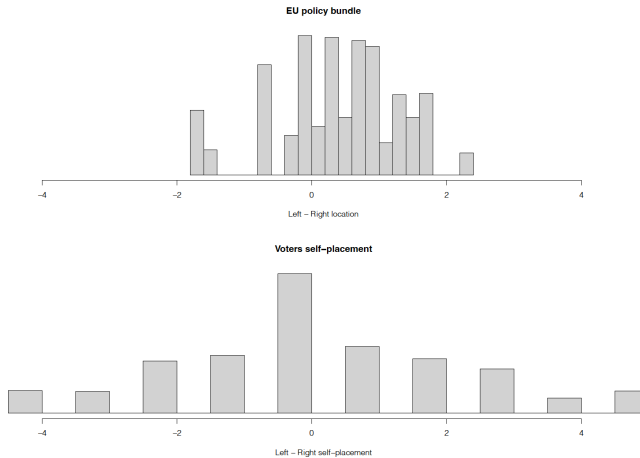


Figure 7: Left-right distribution of EU policy-bundle (top), Mean-centred left-right self-placement of EU citizens' (bottom).

negative. Put another way, citizens who experience a larger mismatch between their most-preferred policy and what the EU produces should have a less positive evaluation of the EU than those who experience a smaller mismatch. As robustness tests, we estimate several alternative ways of conceptualising and measuring policy loss, as we will discuss.

Before we discuss the estimation strategy, we present some descriptive statistics of the relationship between policy loss and EU support over time and across some groups. Recall that support for the EU is coded on a 1 to 3 scale, where a higher value indicates support for the EU. First, Figure 8 we see how the average policy loss varies over time. Here, EU policies became less in tune with EU citizens policy preferences throughout the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. Then, from the the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s, the EU produced policy-bundles that reduced the average policy loss of EU citizens. Finally, from the mid 2000s, EU policy outputs again become less in tune with the ideological preferences of EU citizens.

Next, Figure 9 shows the linear relationship between policy loss and support for the EU. In the bottom-left panel, we show this relationship separately for people on the left and right. Then on the bottom-right, we show this relationship by level of education. These plots show that for higher levels of policy loss, average support for the EU is lower. Moreover, this effect is stronger amongst people on the right than on the left. Those on the left also have higher average support for low level of policy loss. Finally, a similar, but larger, difference is found across level of education, in that people with higher education both respond stronger to policy loss and have a higher average level of support for the EU. Put another way, people on the right and people with a

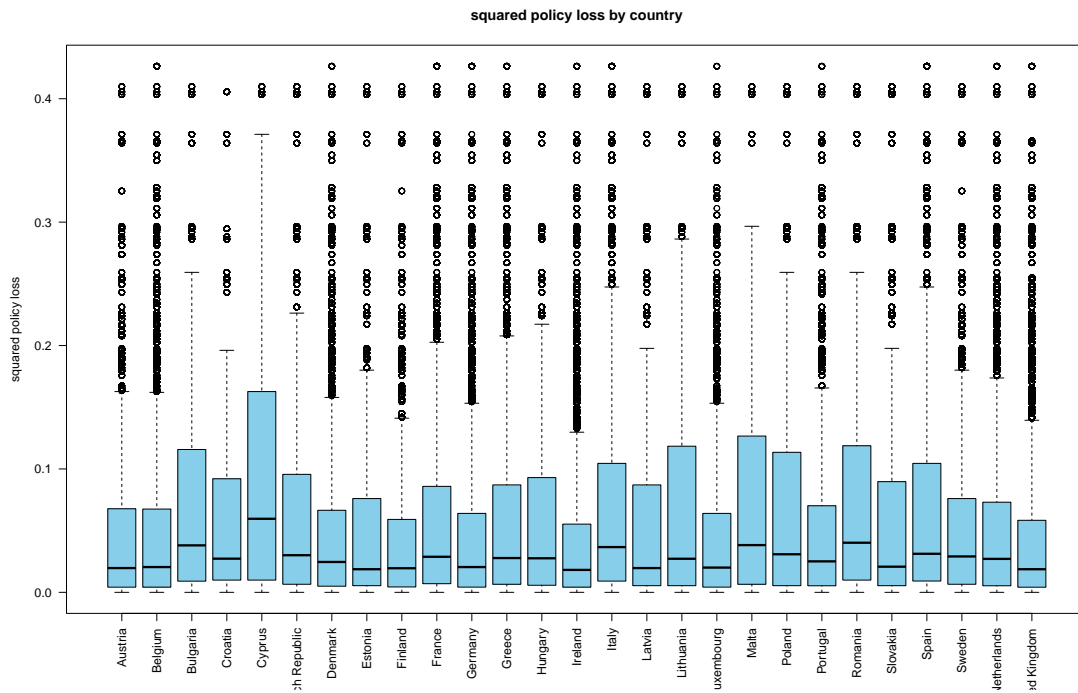
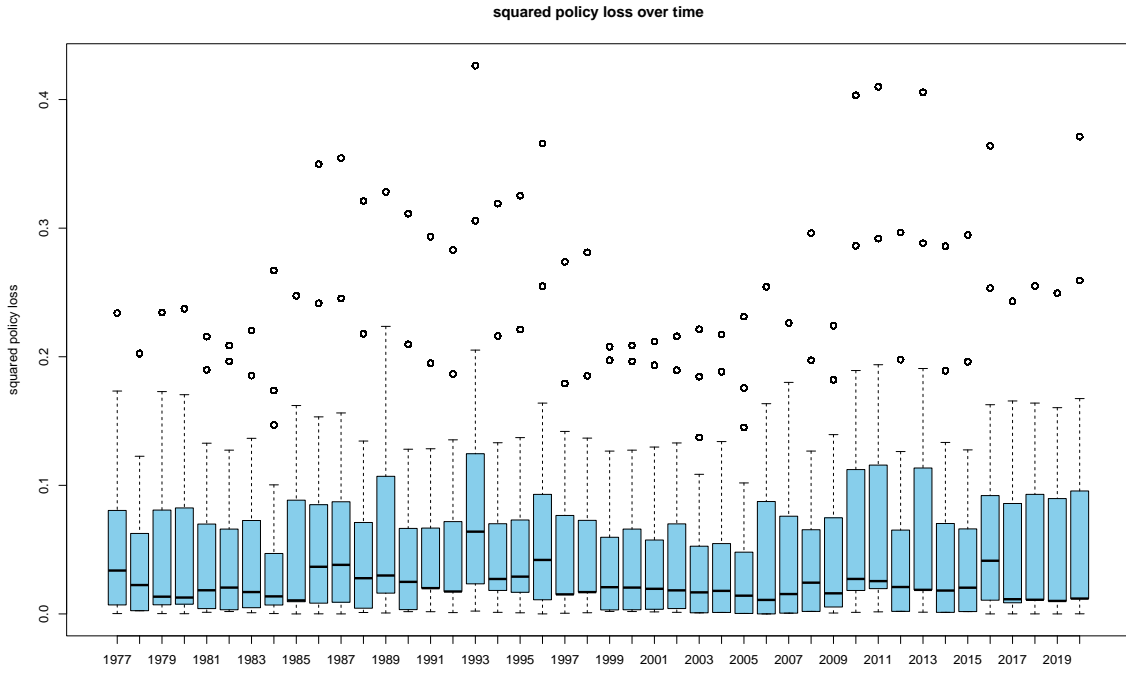


Figure 8: Citizens' policy-loss over time (upper) and by member states.

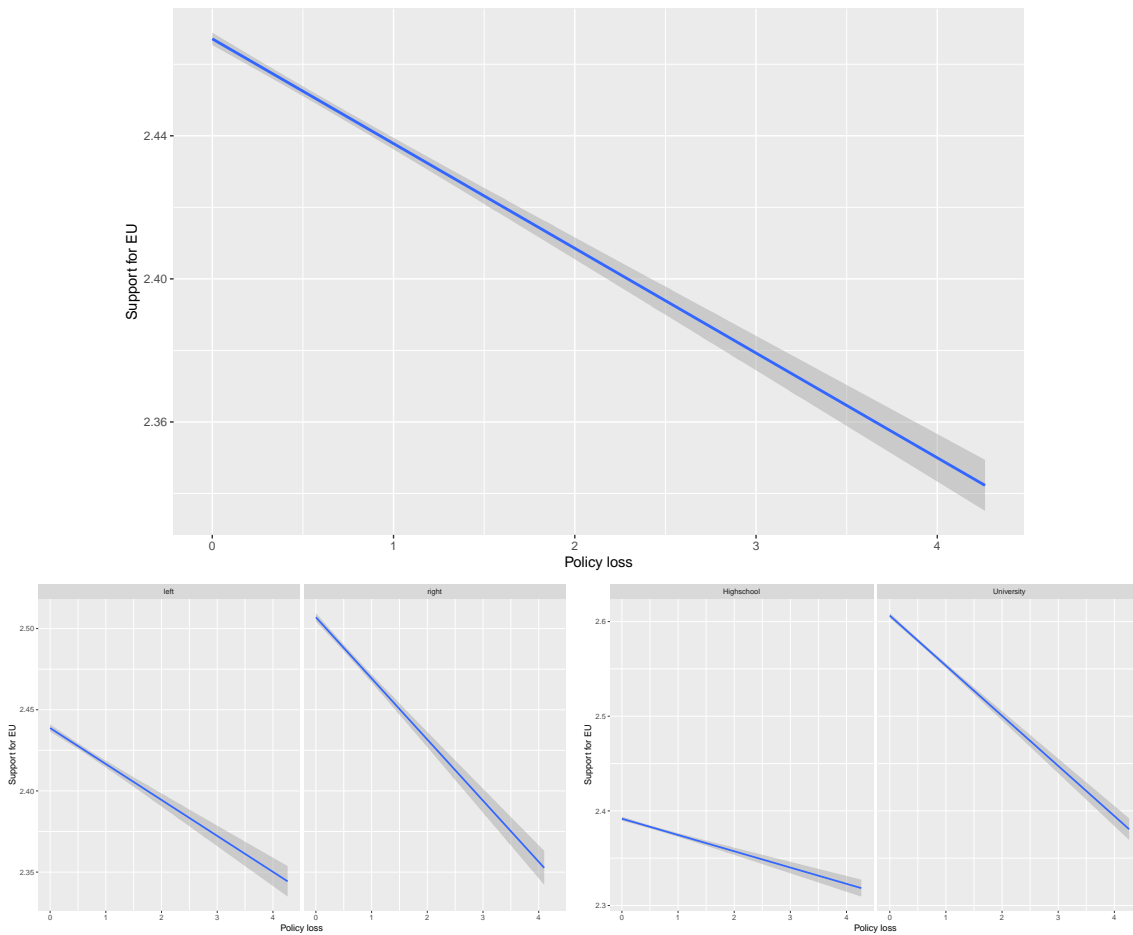


Figure 9: Policy loss and support for the EU (top). Policy loss and support for the EU, by left and right self-placement (bottom left). Policy loss and support for the EU by higher education (bottom right)

higher level of education are more responsive to EU policy outputs than are people on the left or people with a lower level of education.

We have now seen that both policy loss and support for the EU vary across time and across different subsets of the population. The pattern that emerges does not suggest a new stable cleavage, but rather an instrumental relationship between citizens' political preferences and how they evaluate what the EU delivers at any given time. To test this latter argument further, we turn to a more systematic statistical analysis.

Estimation

We integrated all the biannual Eurobarometer surveys that had both the left-right self-placement question and the EU membership question, between 1976 and 2020. This gives us 45 years worth of observations across 28 member states, and a total of over 1.1 million individual respondents. As the data contain sufficiently large samples within each member state each year, we use fixed country-year effects in our main specification. Fixed country-year effects implies that we only rely on variation within a specific country in a specific year for estimating the effects. We also adjust the standard-errors accordingly. Variation across countries or over time does not contribute to the estimates except for in the first model, where we only use country fixed effects. In the first and second models, policy loss is the only included covariate. In model three, we also include age, age squared, sex of the respondent, and level of education, in addition to country-year fixed effects. Note that Eurobarometer is not a panel-dataset. Each year, new respondents are sampled. This prevents us from estimating within person effects of changes in policy loss, which would be the ideal approach. Nevertheless, the sample-size is sufficiently large in each country each year to estimate within country-year effects.

We begin by estimating the overall results, before investigating whether the main pattern holds separately for those on the left and for those on the right. Next, we estimate time-specific and country-specific effects of policy loss on support for the EU. We then consider the question of the direction of the relationship between EU policy-production and EU public support, estimating the relationship with different lags and leads.

We also undertake a series of robustness tests. Instead of the annual policy loss measure, we first calculate a cumulative measure - in other words, this assumes that citizens respond to all previous EU policy outputs rather than the outputs in a given year. Second, instead of the quadratic-loss function, we use a linear-loss function, taking the absolute distance between an EU policy-bundle and a citizen's ideal policy. Third, we check if the relationship still holds if we instead use an indicator-variable for whether the EU produces policies that are broadly out of line with the preferences of the respondent or not; this measure takes the value 1 if a citizen is self-placed on the left (right) and the EU produces policies on the right (left) and takes the value 0 if the EU produces policies in line with the preferences of a citizen. Fourth, we add systematic bias to the EU policy-bundle before recalculating the quadratic policy loss function, checking how off we need to be in order for the results to no longer hold.

Results

Here we present summary results in a series of figures, and the full results are shown in tables in the Appendix. To start, Figure 10 shows the main results. We see that the coefficient is negative and clearly different from zero across all specifications. Also note

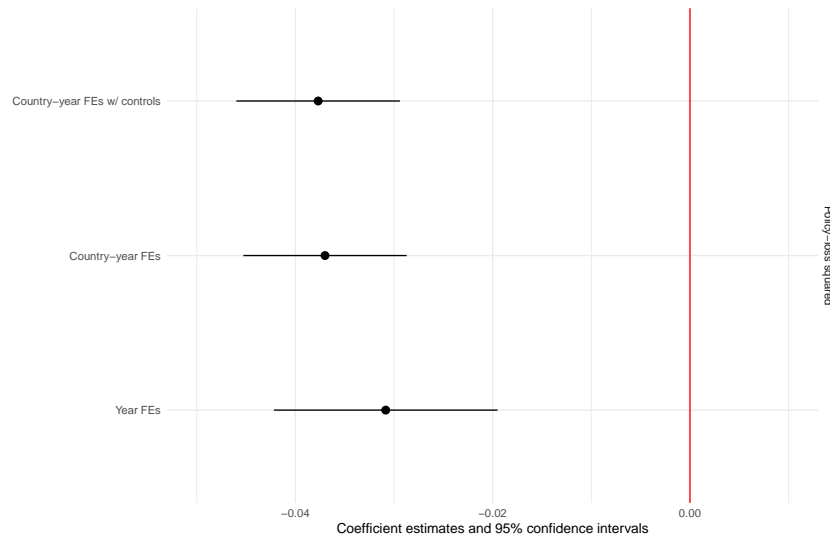


Figure 10: Regression results. Control variables are estimated but not shown.

that the size of the coefficient increases as fixed country-year effects and controls are included in the models. This can be taken as support for our hypothesis that citizens evaluate the EU in terms of the policy it has on offer for them. Citizens who lose less from EU policies are more supportive of the EU than citizens who lose more.

Next, Figure 11 shows the results from estimating the models separately for respondents on the left and on the right. There are two key results here. First, the relationship holds for both citizens on the right and on the left. Second, the results are stronger for citizens on the left. In other words, citizens on the left evaluate the EU based on its policy outputs to a larger extent than do citizens on the right.

Until now we have shown that the results holds on average, across all citizens and both for those on the left and the right. If the EU is emerging as a new cleavage, these results should be stable across time. To assess to what extent they are stable, we re-estimated the baseline model for each year, including fixed country effects. These results are shown in Figure 12.

We find that the size of the policy loss coefficient varies considerably over time. The effect was weak in the late 1970s, before becoming stronger during the early and mid 1980s. From the late 1980s to the mid 1990s the effect became weaker before gaining strength again from the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s. Then, from the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the relationship between policy loss and support for the EU seems to have evaporated. As this change in the relationship coincided with a major change in the composition of the EU, following the central and eastern enlargements in 2004 and subsequent rounds, Figure 13 shows how the annual coefficient for policy

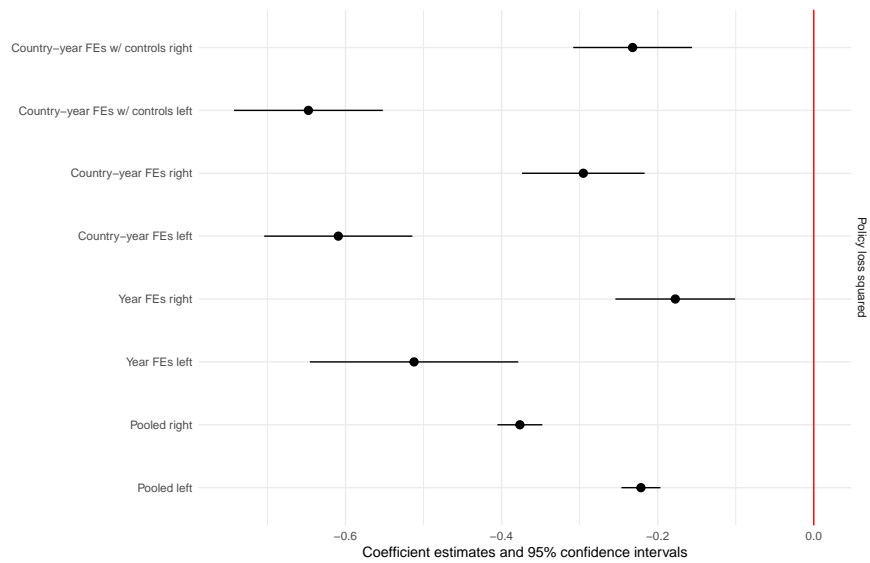


Figure 11: Regression results, for left and right separately. Control variables are estimated but not shown.

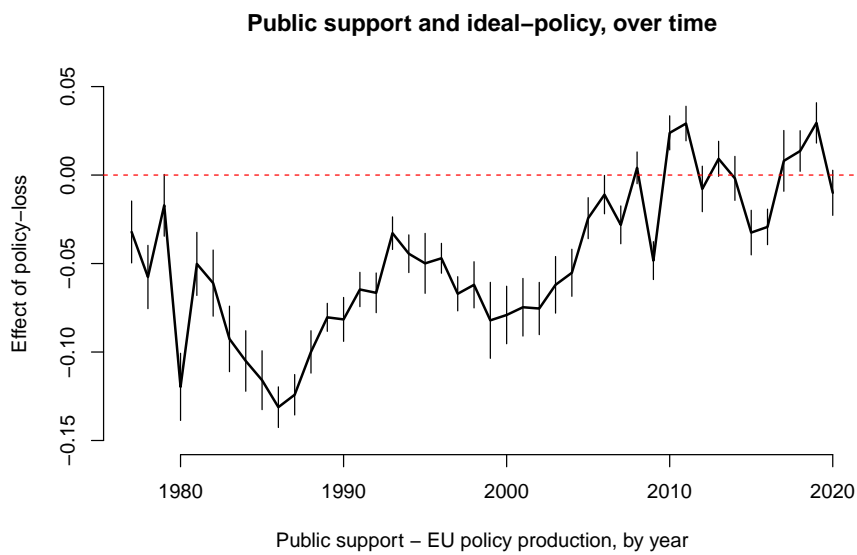


Figure 12: Regression results, policy-loss coefficient plotted across year-specific models with fixed country effects.

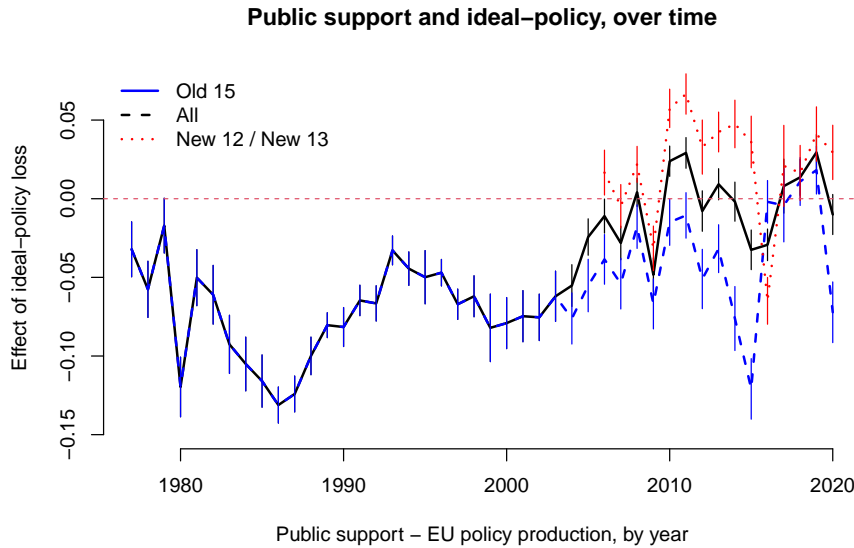


Figure 13: Separate annual regression models for old 15 and new 13 member states.

loss differs between the Old 15 and the New 13 member states.

We see from this figure that one reason why we failed to find a relationship after the end of the 2000s is compositional. For the Old 15 member states there is, with a couple of annual exceptions, a negative relationship between policy loss and support for the EU, as we would expect. However, in the New 13 member states, there is either no or even a positive relationship. In addition, we see that after 2015, with the migration-crisis, the Brexit-referendum, and Trump's term as US president, the relationship between EU-policy loss and support for the EU disappeared. This may be due to increased emphasis on identity politics and populism in European politics rather than output- or performance-based evaluations of citizens (Noury and Roland, 2020).

To see if there are some particular countries that are driving these results, and to get a better handle of the differences between countries before and after central and eastern European enlargement, Figure 14 plots country-specific coefficients before and after 2004.

From this Figure, it is clear that the pictures before and after 2004 differ. Prior to central and eastern European enlargement there was a clear negative relationship between policy loss and support for the EU. The relationship was strongest in Denmark, Greece, Sweden and Portugal. The only exceptions were Germany and Austria, where we detect no relationship. In the post 2004-era, in contrast, there was still a clear negative relationship in most of the old member states, although in Finland and Austria

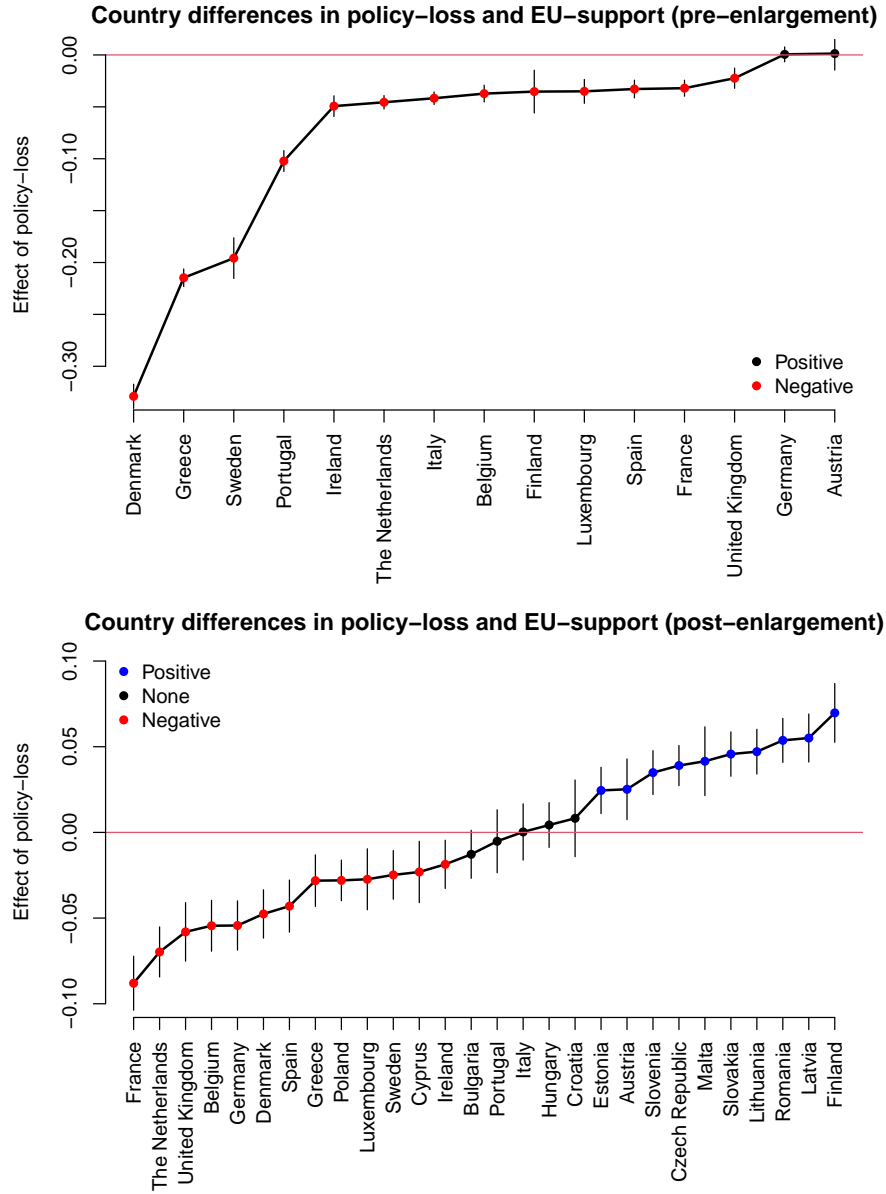


Figure 14: Country-specific coefficients pre (top) and post (bottom) 2004 enlargement.

we now find a positive relationship, similar to most of the new member states. However, also amongst the new member states there are member states where the public appear to assess the EU along similar lines to most of the old member states. In Poland and Cyprus, for example, there is a negative effect of policy loss on EU support. We also note that following central and eastern enlargement, Germans now assess the value of EU membership by policy loss, similar to most other old member states.

Finally, before probing into the robustness of the results, we want to dwell on the direction of the relationship between support for the EU and policy loss. Do citizens evaluate what the EU delivers and then make their assessment on that basis, or does the EU respond to citizens' assessments of the EU? Essentially, who is leading in the dance of European integration, the EU or its citizens? To do this, we estimate the effect of policy loss on support for the EU with various leads and lags. A lag of one year means that policy loss is calculated on last year's policy-bundle. A lead of one year means that policy loss is calculated on the basis of next year's bundle. If the lead effects are stronger than the lagged effects, it can be interpreted as the EU responding to the policy demands from its citizens to a larger extent than EU citizens evaluating the EU on the basis of the policy it delivers. In contrast, if the lagged effects are stronger than the lead effects, it means that EU citizens are evaluating the EU on the basis of policy-bundles in the past to a larger extent than the EU is responsive to the policy demands of its citizens.

From Figure 15 we see that, to the extent that European integration is a dance, the EU leads and the public follows. Almost regardless of the lag, the coefficient is larger in the top plot than for any lead. While the lead coefficients are also negative, they are much smaller in magnitude than the lagged coefficients. EU citizens are left to react to where the EU leads them next. On a more serious note, we also see that the coefficient for policy loss is largest for a lag of 10 years. This suggests that there is some delay in the public's evaluation of the EU policy-bundle. We will expand on the notion of a delay in citizens' evaluations of EU policy production in the robustness section, which follows next.

Robustness

In this section, we test some alternative specifications of the policy loss variable and alternative statistical models for estimating the relationship between policy loss and EU support. These tests do not provide any grounds for re-evaluating the findings above.

First, building on the finding of a lag in the evaluation of EU policy loss on EU support, we calculated a cumulative measure of the EU policy-bundle. Here, we simply add up all the EU policies on the left and on the right before a particular year and use the balance between the two as a measure of relative left vs rightwardness of EU policy up to that point. The upper panel of Figure 16 shows how this cumulative measure has evolved over time. Here we see that the cumulative EU policy-bundle was more

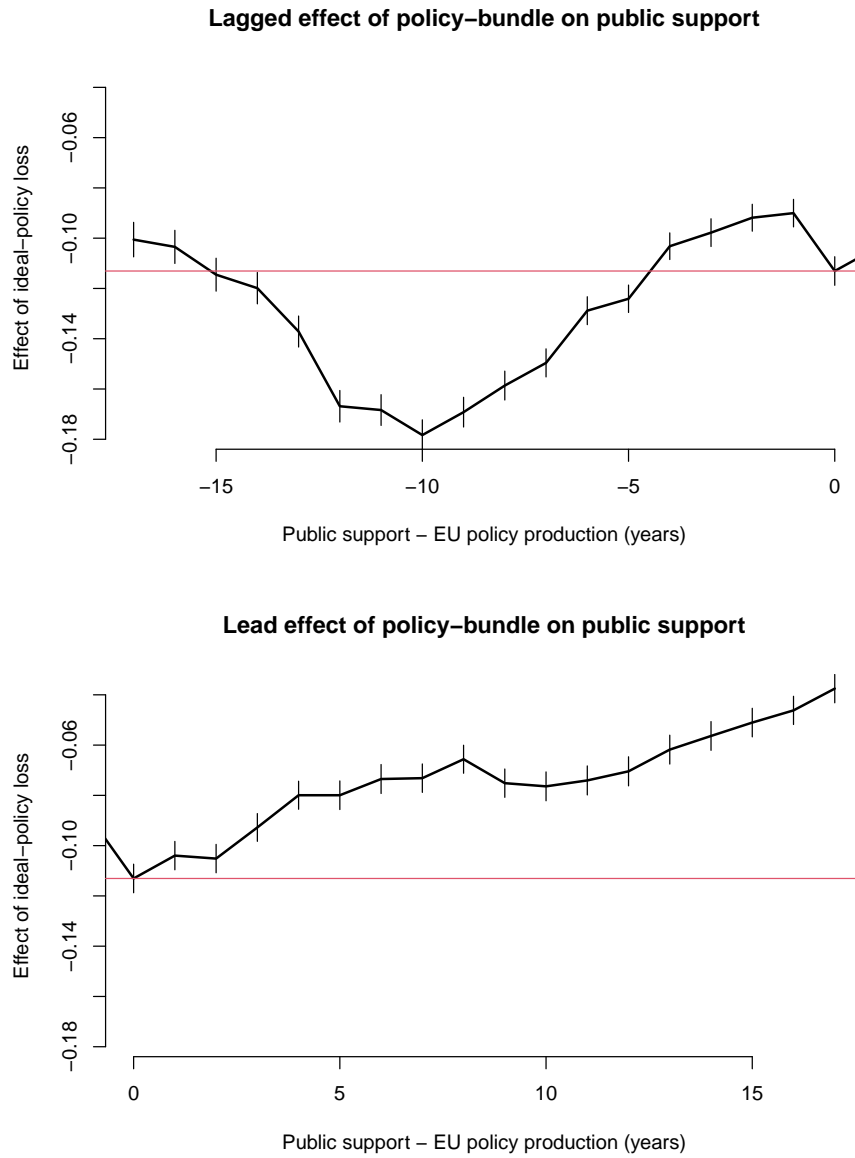


Figure 15: Effect of policy-loss on EU support, different lagged (upper) and lead (lower).

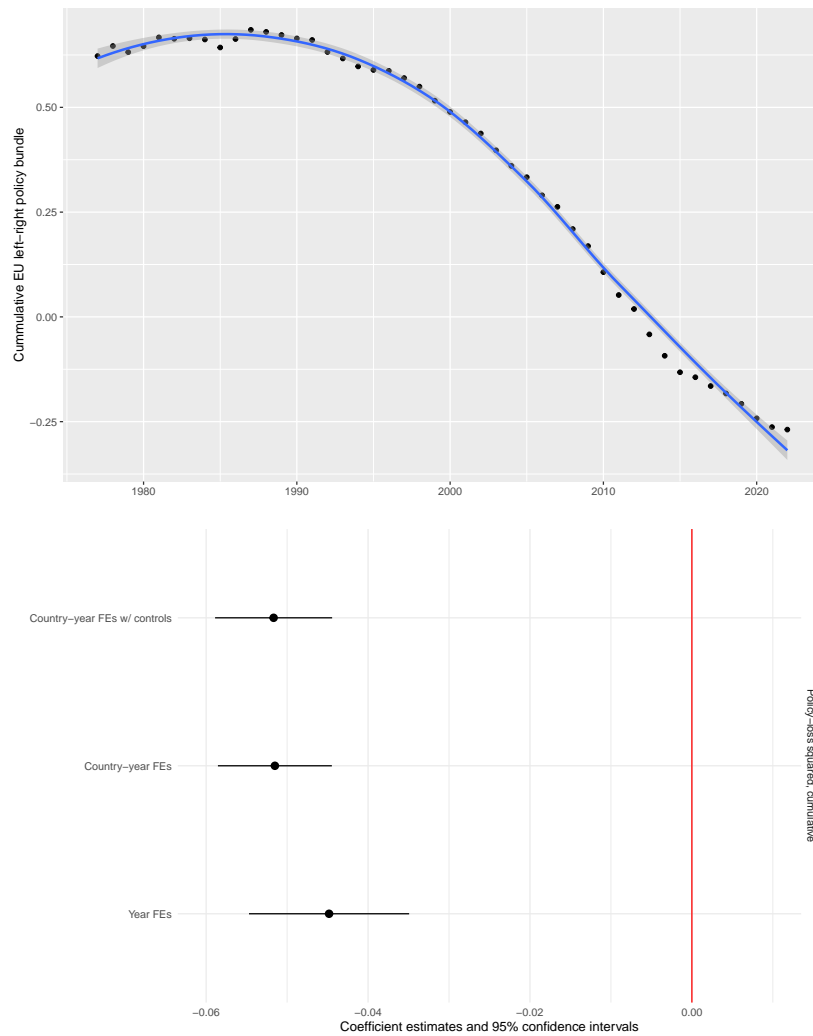


Figure 16: Cumulative measure of EU policy bundle

to the right in the early period of European integration but gradually moved towards the left after 1990. The lower panel in the figure shows the estimated coefficient of the cumulative policy loss across the three models. These results are robust to this alternative specification of policy loss.

Another concern one might have is that the choice of a quadratic loss function, while grounded in theory, may be an arbitrary choice, potentially driving the results. We hence develop two alternative measures of policy loss. First, we use the linear (absolute) policy distance instead of the quadratic distance. Second, we construct a binary measure of policy distance that takes the value 1 if the EU policy bundle is on the opposite side of the left-right midpoint to a respondent, and takes the value of 0 if it is on the same side of the mid-point as the respondent. Figure 17 presents

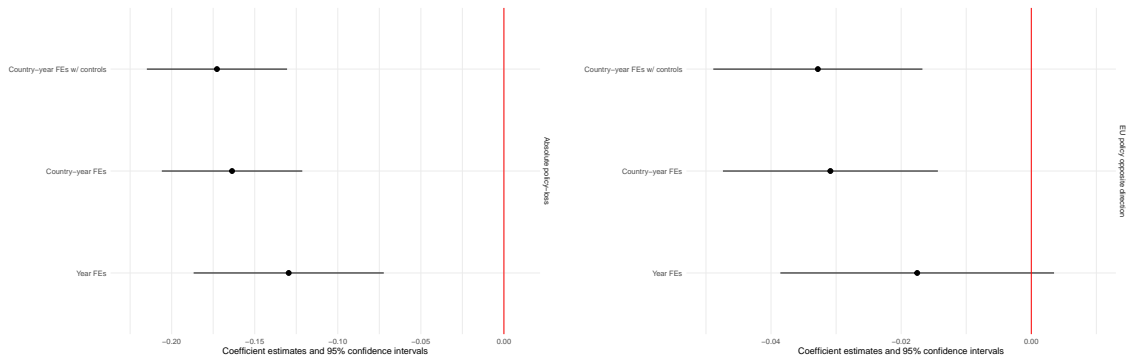


Figure 17: Alternative operationalizations of policy loss, absolute (left) and directional (right)

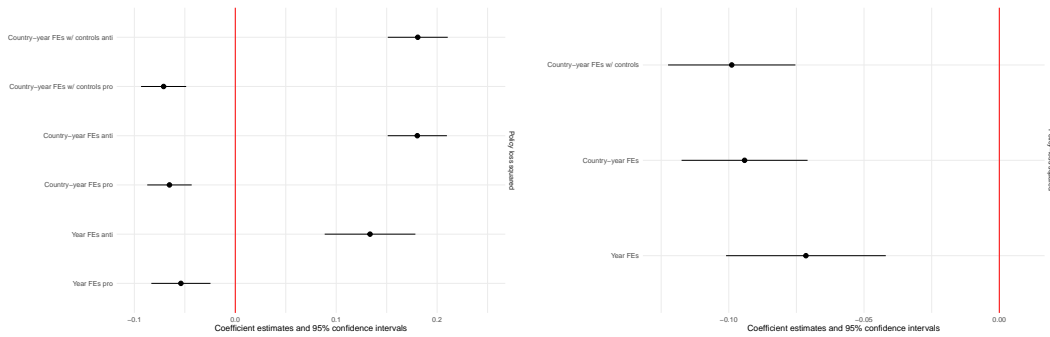


Figure 18: Coefficient plot logit models (left) and ordered logit models (right).

the coefficient plots from the models using these operationalizations. Neither of these operationalizations provide different substantive results, although in the model with no controls and only country fixed effects, the directional measure fails to reach a conventional level of significance.

An additional concern could be that our outcome variable (EU support) is measured on an ordinal qualitative scale, while the results so far have been derived using a linear regression model, best suited for a continuous dependent variable with potentially infinite different values. To address this concern, we first estimate two alternative sets of logit models, one with Support for the EU versus Neutral and Opposed, and the other pitting Opposed against Neutral and Supportive. In addition, we ran ordered logit models. The results from these models are presented in Figure 18. We see from these results that our findings Are not due to the choice of functional form.

Finally, one may worry about bias in our policy loss measure due to a failure to correctly locate EU policy-bundles and individual left-right self-placements on a

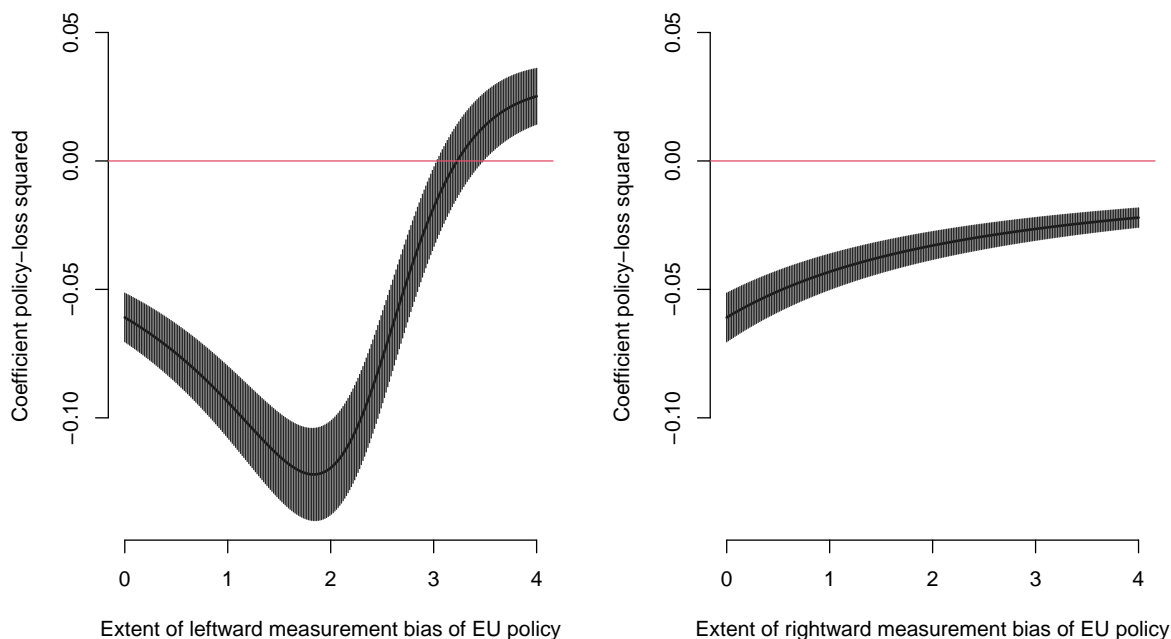


Figure 19: Effect of leftward (left) and rightward (right) bias in the location of the EU policy bundle.

comparable scale. This is a legitimate concern. As a way to assess how large such a bias would have to be in order to change our results, we re-ran the main model (policy loss squared, with fixed country-year effects and clustered standard errors) with an increasing bias in our location of the EU policy-bundle, first to the left, then to the right. The resulting coefficients are plotted in Figure 19. As we see from the Figure, unless the policy bias is extreme leftist, it is highly unlikely that our bias in the placement of the EU policy-bundle on the left-right scale will be able to distort the results reported above.

Conclusion

The process of European Integration is the greatest supranational polity-building exercise ever undertaken. Moreover, this process has far-reaching consequences beyond Europe, as the European Union is one of the world's major polities, as measured by economic might or trading power as well as in terms of the number of citizens affected by the policies it produces. As such, it is important to understand what drives public

support for the project, and also whether there is a relationship between what the EU does and whether EU citizens support the project.

Previous research on public support for the EU has tended to focus on the relationship between individual economic, social, and educational assets and support for the EU; finding that people with higher assets are generally more supportive than people with lower assets. These relationships seem relatively stable, although the absolute levels of support across social groups has varied considerably both across time and across country.

Instead, we focus on something different: the relationship between political preferences and EU support. We find that this relationship has changed dramatically over time. In the early years of European integration, people on the right were more supportive of European integration than people on left. In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, with the single market programme and the flanking social, environmental and regional spending policies - a “social market” economic model - centrists were more supportive of the project while people further to the left or right were less supportive. Then, since the early 2000s, the early pattern reversed: with the left more supportive and the right less supportive. We contend that this transformation is a consequence of the polity-building nature of the EU: where the EU has evolved into a state-like structure for regulating capital and markets and for spreading liberal social norms, and so the EU is now more supported by citizens on the left who favour these policies (akin to the fact that Democrats in the US tend to be more supportive of the US federal government than are Republicans).

So, from a micro-level perspective, we theorise that citizens’ attitudes towards the EU are endogenous to their political preferences and whether they think the EU will deliver policies closer to their preferences or further from them. We develop and test this theory across time and across country: looking at the relationship between the left-right location of EU policy outputs, an individual’s left-right ideological position, and whether the individual supports the EU. We find that, at any given time and in any given country, the closer EU policy outputs are to an individual’s political preferences, the more likely the citizen will support the EU. Hence, the right did indeed like European integration in the 1970s and 1980s because it delivered right-wing policies and the left like the EU today because it delivers left-wing policies.

These findings also have normative consequences. In general, our results suggest that “output legitimacy” matters for the EU, in the sense that if the EU delivers some policies on the left and some policies on the right, then citizens on both sides of the classic political divide can be satisfied. However, a concern is that we find that the relationship between policy outputs, political preferences and public support is weaker in central and eastern Europe than in western Europe and is weaker after 2015 in western Europe. Either other factors, such as security concerns or national identities, are now the major determinants of people’s attitudes towards the EU or the EU needs to return to a focus on delivering policies that their citizens understand and desire.

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Appendix

In this appendix we present the full regression results in a set of tables.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Policy-loss squared	-0.031 (0.006)	-0.037 (0.004)	-0.038 (0.004)
University			0.195 (0.004)
Female			-0.052 (0.003)
Age (mean-sentered)			-0.053 (0.007)
Age squared (scaled)			0.043 (0.007)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
R2	0.015	0.098	0.116
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A1: Regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, 1 (opposed) - 3 (supportive). Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1l	Model 1r	Model 2l	Model 2r	Model 3l	Model 3r	Model 4l	Model 4r
(Intercept)	2.439 (0.001)	2.507 (0.001)						
Policy loss squared	-0.022 (0.001)	-0.038 (0.001)	-0.051 (0.007)	-0.018 (0.004)	-0.061 (0.005)	-0.030 (0.004)	-0.065 (0.005)	-0.023 (0.004)
University							0.191 (0.005)	0.186 (0.004)
Female							-0.049 (0.003)	-0.054 (0.003)
Age (mean-sentered)							-0.070 (0.007)	-0.039 (0.008)
Age squared (scaled)							0.055 (0.007)	0.030 (0.008)
Num.Obs.	659 363	454 084	659 363	454 084	659 363	454 084	659 363	454 084
R2	0.000	0.001	0.015	0.017	0.125	0.104	0.142	0.120
Country-year FE					✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE			✓	✓				

Table A2: Regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, 1 (opposed) - 3 (supportive). Separate models for respondents on the left (l) and on the right (r). Pooled (Model 1), clustered standard errors, by year (Model 2) and by country-year (Models 3 and 4). Fixed effects by year (Model 2) and country-year (Models 3 and 4).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Policy-loss squared, cumulative	-0.004 (0.000)	-0.005 (0.000)	-0.005 (0.000)
University			0.195 (0.004)
Female			-0.052 (0.003)
Age (mean-sentered)			-0.053 (0.007)
Age squared (scaled)			0.044 (0.007)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
R2	0.015	0.099	0.116
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A3: Regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, 1 (opposed) - 3 (supportive). Cumulative policy loss Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Absolute policy-loss	-0.130 (0.028)	-0.164 (0.022)	-0.173 (0.022)
University			0.196 (0.004)
Female			-0.052 (0.003)
Age (mean-sentered)			-0.053 (0.007)
Age squared (scaled)			0.043 (0.007)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
R2	0.015	0.098	0.115
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A4: Regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, 1 (opposed) - 3 (supportive). Absolute policy loss. Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Policy bundle in opposite direction	-0.018 (0.010)	-0.031 (0.008)	-0.033 (0.008)
University			0.195 (0.004)
Female			-0.050 (0.003)
Age (mean-sentered)			-0.052 (0.007)
Age squared (scaled)			0.041 (0.007)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
R2	0.014	0.098	0.115
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A5: Regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, 1 (opposed) - 3 (supportive). Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Policy-loss squared	-0.054 (0.015)	-0.065 (0.011)	-0.071 (0.011)
University			0.657 (0.011)
Female			-0.228 (0.008)
Age (mean-sentered)			-0.104 (0.021)
Age squared (scaled)			0.093 (0.021)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
RMSE	0.49	0.47	0.46
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A6: Logistic regression results. Dependent variable: Support for the EU, Opposition or neutral (0) vs supportive (1). Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Policy-loss squared	0.134 (0.022)	0.180 (0.015)	0.181 (0.015)
University			-0.516 (0.013)
Female			0.038 (0.011)
Age (mean-sentered)			0.375 (0.026)
Age squared (scaled)			-0.305 (0.024)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
RMSE	0.36	0.35	0.34
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A7: Logistic regression results. Dependent variable: Opposition the EU, Supportive or neutral (0) vs opposed (1). Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Against—Neutral	−1.806 (0.061)	−2.725 (0.020)	−2.716 (0.021)
Neutral—Pro	−0.506 (0.014)	−1.335 (0.008)	−1.302 (0.010)
Policy-loss squared	−0.071 (0.015)	−0.094 (0.012)	−0.099 (0.012)
University			0.623 (0.011)
Female			−0.180 (0.008)
Age (mean-sentered)			−0.153 (0.020)
Age squared (scaled)			0.128 (0.020)
Num.Obs.	1 113 447	1 113 447	1 113 447
AIC	4 293 309.8	4 194 966.0	4 170 991.6
BIC	17 568 357.8	17 461 298.4	17 437 276.2
Country-year FE		✓	✓
Year FE	✓		

Table A8: Ordered logistic regression results. Dependent variable: Opposition - Neutral - Supportive. Clustered standard errors, by year (Model 1) and by country-year (Models 2 and 3). Fixed effects by year (Model 1) and country-year (Models 2 and 3).