

The Mass Politics of International Disintegration

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

Abstract

In the past few years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented popular backlash against international institutions. Popular demands to not only slow down, but to reverse international integration have proliferated, and have resulted in referendum and election outcomes that have reverberated across the world. Examples range from the Swiss 2014 mass immigration initiative over the British 2016 Brexit referendum to the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord. The implications of these voter-based disintegration efforts reach far beyond the countries in which they originate. Yet very little research exists beyond individual case studies on the general drivers, dynamics and challenges these instances of voter-based disintegration pose for international cooperation. This paper presents a unified framework for analyzing these voter-based bids to unilaterally change or terminate the terms of an existing international agreement. It argues that the disintegration process is shaped by how remaining member states respond to one member's, but that they face an "accommodation dilemma" between preserving as many cooperation gains as possible and making exit costly in order to discourage other member states from following suit. The accommodation dilemma creates incentives for the remaining member states to intervene in domestic campaigns in which disintegration figures as a viable outcome, and shapes the negotiation strategies of the remaining member states after a disintegration vote. I present evidence from original survey data and comparative case studies to show that the ability of foreign governments' to intervene in domestic disintegration referendum campaigns is limited, that contagion risks exists, and that the responses of the remaining member states to voter-based disintegration bids systematically vary.

*Paper prepared for presentation IO Dissolution workshop in Zurich
June 2019*

I would like to thank Loriana Crasnic, Markus Gastinger, Katharina Meissner, Valentin Lang, Tabea Palmtag, Nils Redeker, Tobias Rommel, Michael Strebel, Denise Traber, as well as participants in workshops at Harvard, the Hertie School of Governance, the IPZ publication seminar, Oxford University, the Scuola Normale, and EPSA 2018, IPES 2018 and PEIO 2019. This project has received funding from the University of Zurich 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

In recent years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented popular backlash against international institutions. Faced with increasing trade-offs between the gains from international cooperation, democracy, and national sovereignty (Rodrik 2011), popular demands to not only slow down, but to reverse international integration have proliferated. The most prominent example of such an instance of “voter-based disintegration” 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 has set in motion the biggest withdrawal negotiations ever seen in an international organization. Although highly disruptive and unusual, 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. And US President Trump has fulfilled key campaign promises by withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord and renegotiating the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) agreement. Skepticism about the merits of international cooperation is nothing new (see for examples the overviews in Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Kuo and Naoi 2015). But the vehemence with which it has manifested itself more recently is a new development.

Much research has focused on the causes of this popular turn against international cooperation (there is a growing literature on this issue, see e.g., Clarke et al. 2017; Colantone and Stanig 2018; Curtis et al. 2014; Goodwin and Heath 2016; Hobolt 2016; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Sciarini et al. 2015). Much attention has also been paid to the internal political struggles that follow upon popular votes to fully or partially withdraw from an international agreement. However, there is much less research about what a unilateral withdrawal from an international institution means for the institution’s other member states. This is surprising because the consequences of voter-based efforts of disintegration reach far beyond the countries in which they originate. Not only does one member’s unilateral bid to improving its membership terms threaten to leave the others worse off. Voter-based disintegration bids by one member state also reverberate among the elites and the mass publics in other countries. These reverberations will be particularly pronounced when the withdrawal occurs in a highly visible and politicized manner such as through a referendum vote, which politicizes the withdrawal process and provides it with a high degree of legitimacy and a lot of attention both at home and abroad. For example, after the Brexit referendum vote, euphoric Eurosceptics across Europe, from France’s Marine le Pen to the Slovak People's Party-Our Slovakia, called for similar referendums in their own countries. And across the Atlantic, then-candidate Donald Trump tweeted that British voters “took their country back, just like we will take America

back.”¹ Similarly, the leaders of Spain’s Podemos or Italy’s Five-Star-Movement celebrated Greece’s 2015 referendum-based bid for a more generous bailout package, raising fears that it would spark similar demands in other Eurozone crisis countries.

Voter-based disintegration thus poses considerable risks of political contagion by weakening the benefits of international cooperation and emboldening integration-sceptics elsewhere. Not surprisingly, this phenomenon is widely seen as a serious threat to international cooperation. The Economist has warned that the “politics of anger” might lead to an unravelling of globalization and the prosperity it has created (The Economist 2016). This concern is shared by academics, who have argued that growing popular support for disintegration poses a fundamental challenge for international institutions such as the EU (e.g., Blyth 2016; Hobolt 2016) and the contemporary liberal world order more generally (e.g., Ikenberry 2018; Pepinsky 2017; Rodrik 2017). However, political contagion does not always occur. For example, public support for the EU has increased since the Brexit referendum (Eurobarometer 2017), popular appetite to leave the Iran Deal has not spread to other countries, and no other country has followed the US’ lead in withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord (although Brazil’s president Bolsonaro has been toying with the idea). Against this backdrop, it is imperative to better understand how voter-based attempts to revert integration spread, how they can be contained, and which dynamics they produce in the international arena. In short, we need a better understanding of the *mass politics of international disintegration* and their implication for international relations.

So far, our theoretical tools to develop such an understanding are underdeveloped, however. There is vast research on the creation and functioning of international institutions (for overviews, see e.g. Gilligan and Johns 2012; Martin and Simmons 2013; Pevehouse and von Borzyskowski 2016), but analysis of how such institutions disintegrate has remained rudimentary (for notable exceptions, see von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2018; Gray 2018; Helfer 2005, 2017; Leeds and Savun 2007).² For example, in the Oxford Handbook of International Organizations (Cogan et al. 2016), none of the 55 chapters focuses on the dissolution of international organizations. Even in research on the European Union, where scholars have had to grapple with the challenges of popular Euroscepticism for some time (Hooghe and Marks 2009), a theory of European disintegration

¹ Tweet from June 24, 2016

² 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). They cover a spectrum that ranges from international treaties to supranational organizations.

remains elusive (Börzel 2018). Scholars agree that disintegration is not “integration in reverse”, but not on much else (Jones 2018; Rosamond 2016; Vollaard 2014; Webber 2013). A better understanding of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of international disintegration is thus urgently needed (Schneider 2017).

This paper works towards this goal by conceptualizing and systematically exploring the mass politics of international disintegration. It first defines *voter-based disintegration* as unilateral attempt by one member state to change or terminate the terms of an existing international agreement on the basis of a strong popular mandate. Voter-based disintegration is thus a specific type of international disintegration. It then examines the challenges that a voter-based disintegration bid by member state presents to the remaining member states: I argue that the mass politics of international disintegration are fundamentally shaped by an “accommodation dilemma,” that is the dilemma that accommodating the revisionist country’s disintegration bid carries large contagion risks, but that non-accommodation is costly to the remaining member states. The remainder of the paper examines how this dilemma shapes how the remaining member states respond to voter-based disintegration, both before the vote (section 4) and after the vote (section 5). The final section discusses the long-term challenges that the mass politics of disintegration pose for international cooperation. Throughout the paper, I draw on evidence from several recent voter-based disintegration processes in Europe, including original survey data from the UK and the EU27 countries as well as qualitative evidence

2. What is Voter-based Disintegration?

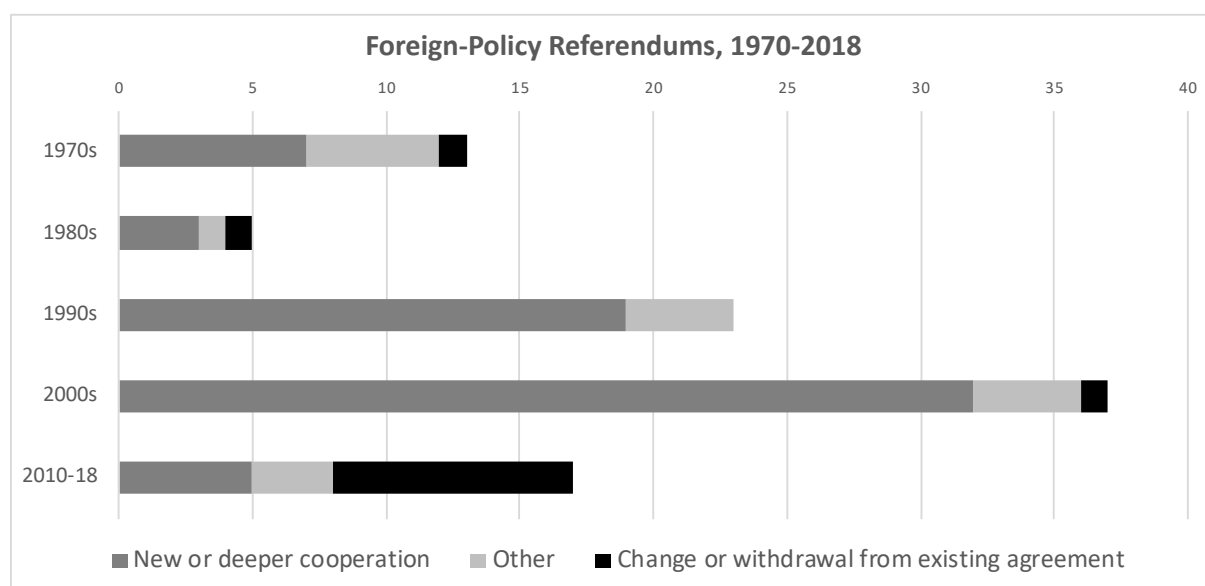
I define voter-based disintegration as a *process in which a member state of an international institution attempts to unilaterally change or terminate the terms of an existing international agreement on the basis of a strong popular mandate*. It aims at international disintegration because it seeks to partly or fully withdraw from the rules of an international institution, such as an international agreement or an international or supranational organization. It is voter-based because it is grounded in strong domestic popular support, expressed for example a referendum vote or as part of a successful candidate’s election campaign. This not only provides 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 among the other member states (Hutter et al. 2016; Zürn 2014). Voter-based instances of disintegration therefore tend to be much more politicized and salient in the political debate than

disintegration decisions taken by a small foreign policy elite.³ Voter-based disintegration should be seen as a process. Its starting point is domestic integration scepticism, but it acquires an international dimension as soon as the national government takes up this mounting domestic pressure to negotiate better membership terms with the other member states. If the other states do not accommodate such a request, the process can accelerate: the disintegrating state officially announces its intention to partially or fully withdraw from the international institution, negotiates the terms of withdrawal, and ultimately withdraws from specific rules or the entire international institution. Of course, the process can also end along this way, if the disintegrating state backs down. The most prominent example of such an instance of “voter-based disintegration” 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 has set in motion the biggest withdrawal negotiations ever seen in an international organization. Although highly disruptive and unusual, 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. And across the Atlantic, US President Trump has fulfilled key campaign promises by withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord or the Iran deal, and renegotiating the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) agreement.

Scepticism about the merits of international cooperation is nothing new (see for examples the overviews in Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Kuo and Naoi 2015). But the vehemence with which it has manifested itself more recently is a new development. Figure 1 shows that voter-based disintegration efforts have proliferated in the recent decade. It focuses on referendums, the clearest form of voter-based disintegration efforts and distinguishes between “integration referendums” that establish or deepen cooperation between states and “disintegration referendums” that, if successful, roll back *existing* forms of international cooperation, either partially by unilaterally mandating changes to an agreement, or fully, by mandating a withdrawal.

³ For a discussion of these latter instances, see von Borzyskowski and Vabulas (2019) or Leeds and Savun (2007).

Figure 1: Number of integration and disintegration referendums, 1970-2016



Source: C2D Datenbank, Zentrum für Demokratie Aarau, updated by myself for recent years. Author's classification of all national referendums on questions concerning international cooperation.

Figure 1 shows that while referendums aimed at international disintegration are still relatively rare, they have become much more frequent and much more dominant in recent years. Nine of the ten disintegration referendums held so far and almost all 'successful' ones (i.e. resulting in a disintegrative vote) have been held since 2010.⁴ Moreover, populist leaders across Europe have called for more disintegration referendums, so that the number may continue to grow. It is not a coincidence that these referendums are mostly directed against the EU, which has achieved a level of integration that makes the trade-offs between national sovereignty, democracy and international cooperation gains particularly pronounced (Rodrik 2011). Yet we also see strong voter-based disintegration attempts in other countries and directed against other international institutions as well, for example in the US or in Brazil, where presidential candidates have made changing or leaving international treaties key promises in their election campaigns.

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

⁴ The disintegration referendums are the 1975 UK referendum on continued EC membership, the 1984 Greenland referendum on leaving the EC, the 1986 Spanish referendum on continued NATO membership, the 2000 Brazil IMF referendum, the 2010 and 2011 Icesave referendums, the 2014 Swiss "Against Mass Immigration" initiative, the 2014 Swiss ECOPOP initiative, the 2015 Greek bailout referendum, the 2016 Swiss Implementation Initiative, the 2016 Hungarian refugee quota referendum, the 2016 British Brexit referendum, and the 2018 Swiss self-determination initiative.

Voter-based disintegration efforts by one member state have significant spillover effects for the other parties to the respective international agreement or international institution. First, such unilateral decisions undermine the overall economic and political attractiveness of the international institution. 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). This suggests that the withdrawal of one member state or a renegotiation in one state's favor reduces the share of the cooperation gains the other member states enjoy: Reintroducing barriers to cooperation that the international institution had hitherto removed, is costly both in economic and more general efficiency terms. For example, if disintegration leads to the re-introduction of trade barriers, exporters in both the remaining members and the leaving state will be hurt and international supply chains will be disrupted. This is likely to cause job losses and economic downturns in both the leaving state and the remaining members. Other forms of cooperation and policy coordination between the remaining countries and the leaving country – from police cooperation to environmental protection – are also likely to become more difficult. This creates transaction costs, economic distortions, and also financial risks that arise as economic agents adjust to the new disintegrated environment. As a result, the attractiveness of the international institution for the remaining member states declines, which creates the risks that other member states will find it no longer worth to pay the price of membership. Moreover, especially when the withdrawing member state is an important and powerful member, upholding the institution may be difficult, even when the remaining member states in principle want to do it – the Iran Nuclear Deal is a case in point.

Second, disintegration bids carry political contagion risks because they can embolden integration-sceptics elsewhere. By demonstrating that countries can unilaterally improve their position through voter-based disintegration bids, unilateral renegotiations of or withdrawals from international agreements are likely to spur similar demands in other member states as well. This effect is likely to be particularly strong when the disintegration move is strongly rooted in domestic mass politics, because such instances tend to be highly salient and politicized and therefore tend to reverberate far beyond their own country. As a result, such instances are particularly likely to affect public opinion and disintegration support in other member states (Hobolt 2016; de Vries 2017; S Walter 2019b). For voters, it is generally difficult to correctly predict how one's country would fare if it left an existing international institution. But observing another country's disintegration trajectory provides voters with information voters about the likely response of the other member states and of the likely economic, social, and political

consequences of disintegration. A disintegration experience that improves the situation of the withdrawing country demonstrates that integration can be reversed and that nation states can be better off on their own. A successful renegotiation or withdrawal by one member state is therefore likely to encourage disintegrative tendencies in other member states.⁵ This diffusion of disintegrative tendencies among the institution's remaining member states poses a threat to the long-run viability of the international institution as a whole. At the same time, however, observing that a country is worse-off post-disintegration (or aborts its disintegration bid for fear of negative consequences) is likely to make them more pessimistic about their own country's post-disintegration future. Such a "deterrence effect" should thus decrease voters' enthusiasm for an exit of their own country.⁶

These spillover effects create considerable challenges for policymakers in the other member states. At the same time, however, even though a country can unilaterally repudiate its membership in an international institution, the remaining member states have a significant say about the terms of any future relationship that is to replace the existing cooperative arrangement. How the disintegration process evolves, and whether the country pursues or aborts its disintegration request, therefore depends to a large degree on the other member states of the international institution. These other states can choose from a wide array of possible reactions: On the one extreme, the remaining states can accommodate the democratically expressed wish of the other people, e.g. by granting the exceptions demanded or by maintaining wide-ranging post-withdrawal cooperation with the withdrawing state. Such an accommodation strategy changes the terms of such an agreement to the disintegrating country's benefit *ex post*, but also preserves the benefits from cooperation to the extent possible. However, accommodation comes with two downsides for the other member states: not only does it tend to leave the remaining member states worse off than under the status quo, it also carries considerable political contagion risks by setting an attractive precedent for disintegration. On the other extreme, the remaining member states can take a hard, non-accommodating stance by refusing to make concessions or to grant exceptions and by making withdrawal or non-compliance costly for the disintegrating country. This, in turn, lowers contagion risks and raises the probability that the withdrawing state will retract its withdrawal bid (as the Swiss and the Greek ultimately did at

⁵ This effect has also been well documented in the context of secession on the national level (Walter 2006b; 2006a; Coggins 2011).

⁶ These effects are not limited to voters in other countries, but may extend to voters in the leaving state – who may update and potentially change their preferences as the true benefits or costs of disintegration are revealed. Beyond the effect on disintegration support, the encouragement and deterrence effect are also likely to influence how voters evaluate the international institution and the merits of international cooperation more generally (Clements et al. 2014; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2012).

the end of their negotiations with the EU member states about how to implement noncooperative referendum votes). If the withdrawing state does not back down, however, this strategy tends to be very costly for the remaining member states as they lose out on the benefits of cooperation that they had so far mutually enjoyed.

Given that both main strategies available to member states have significant downsides, the question of how to respond to a unilateral disintegration bid thus presents policymakers with a “accommodation dilemma” (Jurado et al. 2018; S Walter 2019a). On the one hand, non-accommodation will be costly not just for the disintegrating state, but also for the remaining member states. But, at the same time, making the disintegrating country better off outside the international institution by allowing it to enjoy the benefits of cooperation without sharing the costs threatens the long-term stability of the international institution. This dilemma creates a strategically difficult situation in which public opinion features both as a constraint on and an outcome of the disintegration negotiations.

Brexit illustrates the accommodation dilemma nicely. While granting the UK continued access to the EU’s single market would maintain existing economic ties and preserve many cooperation gains in the other member states, the remaining EU-27 member states are weary that such a response might put the entire European project at risk in the long run by creating incentives for other countries to defect as well. In contrast, the non-accommodation strategy might dampen others’ incentives to leave the EU, but would come at a high economic price for both the UK and the remaining member states (Hix 2018).

Given these negative externalities, policymakers in the other member states need to confront the question of how to respond to one member state’s unilateral, voter-based disintegration bid. The resulting politics of voter-based disintegration will fundamentally shaped by the accommodation dilemma, both before a disintegration vote and after such a vote.

Challenges for foreign policymakers before the vote

When faced with a disintegration referendum in another member state or an election in which integration-sceptic candidates have a good chance of winning (such as Donald Trump in the 2016 US elections or Marine Le Pen in the 2017 French presidential elections), domestic policymakers tend to have clear preferences for the voting outcome: Because a unilateral bid for renegotiation of or withdrawal from an international institution puts the remaining member states in a difficult and costly situation, the best case scenario for policymakers abroad is an

election or referendum outcome in which the voters abroad vote against the candidate or proposal favoring disintegration and in favor of continued integration. This creates incentives for them to get involved in what would normally be regarded another country's domestic affairs: a foreign election or referendum campaign (S Walter et al. 2018).

Such foreign interventions in domestic elections or referendum campaigns raise both normative and practical questions. In normative terms, foreign interventions in domestic referendum and election campaigns, especially in its more active forms, violate the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs and thus conflict with national sovereignty. Yet, as democratically elected leaders, foreign policymakers are also tasked to represent the interests of their citizens. From this viewpoint, interventions in a foreign campaign with the intention to protect the country's own voters from harm may be legitimate. These normative questions about the legitimacy of foreign campaign interventions are difficult to resolve.

Equally difficult are the practical difficulties of intervening in another country's election or referendum campaign. In principle, voters abroad should be interested in learning about the likely response of the other member states to a noncooperative voting outcome in advance – after all, how such a vote would ultimately play out for the disintegrating country significantly depends on whether the other member states will accommodate such a disintegration bid or not. Voters tend to understand this strategic complication (Christin et al. 2002; Dinas et al. 2017; Finke and Beach 2017; Hobolt 2009), but also often misperceive the strategic incentives of the other member states to take a non-accommodating stance and are therefore view their country's post-integration future too optimistically (Grynberg et al. 2019; Milic 2015; Sciarini et al. 2015), and such optimism makes voters more willing to risk breaking apart from an international organization.⁷ This gives foreign policymakers an incentive to communicate their likely reaction to a disintegrative vote, their preferred voting outcome, and their resolve to the voters abroad. Least intrusive, foreign policymakers can try to coax voters in the other country to vote in favor of continued cooperation, for example by emphasizing the value of continued membership, making normative appeals and promising future benefits. However, they can also take a more aggressive stance, warning, or even threatening, voters about the negative consequences of a disintegrative vote. Finally, they can actively intervene in the campaign, such

⁷ Similar over-optimism has been documented with regard to subnational secession, such as in independence referendums in Québec (Blais et al. 1995), Catalonia (Muñoz and Tormos 2015), and Scotland (Curtice 2014).

as European policymakers did in the run-up to the 2015 Greek bailout referendum when they cut off Greece from additional financing during the referendum campaign.⁸

Such intervention is no easy feat, however, because foreign policymakers face obstacles with regard to the credibility, the effectiveness, and the costs of such interventions (S Walter et al. 2018). Because foreign policymakers act in the interest of their own country, their interventions in domestic election campaigns may not be credible or effective. Positive foreign messages can easily go unheard in a heated domestic campaign. With regards to warnings, foreign governments face private information and time-inconsistency problems that make it particularly difficult for them to credibly communicate their resolve not to accommodate a non-cooperative vote (Fearon 1995). Because non-accommodation also imposes costs on those other countries themselves, their pledge to punish such a vote *ex post* may suffer from credibility issues and may therefore not be taken seriously by domestic voters. What is worse, they can also backfire if voters perceive them as an undue interference in domestic affairs (Shulman and Bloom 2012). As such, foreign interventions may not be very effective. To illustrate this problem, consider the 2016 Brexit campaign in the UK: Because of the large risks that Brexit posed for the European integration project, EU and EU-27 policymakers had a strong interest in a ‘remain’-outcome in the referendum. Yet, they were rather hesitant to get too strongly involved in the Brexit campaign because it was feared that given the widespread British distrust towards to EU, such interventions might strengthen, rather than weaken, the Leave-camp (Glencross 2016). In fact, the British prime minister David Cameron, a remainer, had asked the EU Commission not to get involved in the Brexit referendum campaign.

Faced with these difficulties of signaling their resolve, another way for foreign policymakers to increase the credibility of their interventions is to send costly signals about their determination not to accommodate a voting outcome that would harm their own citizens. To be effective, however, these signals have to carry considerable costs, without any guarantee that this investment will pay off. For example, the interventions by Eurozone policymakers in the referendum campaign leading up to the 2015 Greek bailout referendum were very costly, yet ultimately unsuccessful. The Greek government had called the referendum to force the country’s creditors to give it better terms on a bailout agreement for the crisis-ridden country. This would have fundamentally changed the existing mode of EMU crisis management, which

⁸ Increasingly, foreign involvement in domestic campaigns also occurs in more decentralized forms via social media (Sevin and Uzunoğlu 2017). Such direct foreign interventions in domestic elections have been rare among Western democracies, but were more common during the Cold War and still are relatively common in developing country elections (see for example Corstange and Marinov 2012; Levin 2016). I am not considering the outright illegal forms of foreign interventions seen in the recent US elections and Brexit campaign here.

is why the other Eurozone member states were adamantly opposed to a Greek exception. To underline their resolve, European policymakers resorted to a clear demonstration of their determination not to accommodate a referendum vote against the bailout agreement on offer. When the existing bailout agreement expired during the referendum campaign, they refused to extend it for a few days and the ECB declined Greece's request to increase emergency liquidity assistance to Greek banks. These decisions forced the Greek government to close the banks and to become the first developed country to ever default on an IMF loan early on in the referendum campaign. The costs of this European signal of resolve were immense, not just for Greece, but also for the other Eurozone governments. This intervention on net did sway about 10% of Greek voters away from voting no and towards voting yes (S Walter et al. 2018).⁹ Nonetheless, right before the vote, a majority of Greeks believed that a non-cooperative referendum outcome would result in continued negotiations, whereas only about one quarter thought that a No-vote would lead to Grexit. Thus, the foreign intervention in the Greek referendum campaign overall failed to convince most Greek voters that the other Eurozone countries were resolved not to accommodate a negative vote. Ultimately, the foreign intervention did not succeed in changing the referendum outcome in favor of a cooperative outcome – despite the huge costs.

Overall, intervening in other countries' election or referendum campaigns is thus a tricky path for policymakers, not just because of normative legitimacy concerns, but also for practical reasons. Credibility problems and the high costs of credible signals about the other member states' resolve thus are likely to reduce the effectiveness of foreign interventions in election or referendum campaigns that champion a pro-disintegration candidate or proposal.

Challenges for foreign policymakers after the vote

Once the voters in one member state have cast a popular vote in favor of disintegration, the other member states are squarely confronted with the accommodation dilemma. How the disintegration process evolves, and whether and to what extent the country succeeds or aborts its disintegration request, depends to a large degree on the other member states of the international institution. Yet policymakers in these countries confront the trade-off between minimizing the loss of cooperation gains that disintegration entails and minimizing the risk of political contagion.

⁹ The survey evidence suggests that about 12% of voters switched from No to yes, but about 4% also hardened their position and switched from yes to now (Walter et al. 2018).

The degree to which each of these spillover effects will manifest themselves depends on the contours of the future relationship between the disintegrating and the remaining member states. Cooperation losses will be smaller, the closer the relations between the two sides remain to the current level of cooperation. This is most easily achieved by accommodating the disintegrating country's requests. In contrast, the extent and direction of political contagion effects – encouragement or deterrence – will depend on how attractive the disintegrating country's experience is. A positive experience, the more likely is it to encourage exit-tendencies in other member states. In contrast, a non-accommodative stance, such as refusing to renegotiate an agreement or insisting that a withdrawal from an existing agreement means that the disintegrating country can no longer enjoy the benefits of cooperation, makes exit costly for the leaving country, highlights the benefits of the existing arrangement and is thus likely to reduce the risk of political contagion. Such a strategy is highly costly not just for the leaving state, however, but also for the remaining member states. Whether it is worthwhile to pursue this strategy thus depends both on how real the risks of political contagion are, and how high the net costs of non-accommodation are for the remaining member states.

The remaining member states thus face considerable challenges when confronted with a unilateral, voter-based disintegration bid by one member state, which they need to balance in the disintegration negotiations.¹⁰ These negotiations will be fundamentally shaped by the accommodation dilemma, the trade-off between the costs of a non-accommodative strategy and the contagion risks implied by an accommodative strategy. The contours of this dilemma and the extent to which it shapes international disintegration negotiations is likely to vary across disintegration cases, member states, and issue areas however, which is why we see considerable variation in how the other member states of an international institution react to a unilateral, voter-based renegotiation or withdrawal bid by one member state.

First, countries weigh the costs of non-accommodation more heavily when the potential costs of this strategy to the domestic economy and society are high. The net costs of disintegration are usually distributed unequally among member states and also differ across different issues. They are highest when a member state depends strongly on cooperation with the disintegrating state, and when its ability to potentially benefit from opportunities created by disintegration is low. This exposure to non-accommodation can vary considerably: a “hard

¹⁰ Note that the bargaining mandate can also be exercised by representatives of the international institution as such, as the EU did in the negotiations about the implementation of the Swiss mass immigration initiative. But because the bargaining outcome needs to be ratified by the remaining member states if it suggests substantive changes to the existing agreement, member state positions will be influential in these instances as well.

Brexit,” for example, is estimated to put less than 0.5% of Slovakia’s and Bulgaria’s GDP, but more than 10% of Irish GDP at risk (Chen et al. 2017). It also varies across issue areas. The costs of non-accommodation are small for some issues (such as continued financial payments by the leaving state), whereas on other issues the trade-offs implied by the accommodation dilemma bite much more (such as trade restrictions), making non-accommodation more costly (Jurado et al. 2018). States will be particularly hawkish in disintegration cases and regarding negotiation issues in which their net domestic costs of non-accommodation are small, but more dovish on issues where non-accommodation is very costly for their domestic economy and society.

Second, political contagion risks influence national negotiating positions. Because the bargaining outcome is likely to have significant spillover effects on the support for the international institution in all remaining member states, public opinion moves in the spotlight of the disintegration negotiations. Feedback effects between international negotiations and domestic public opinion are well known in international relations research (e.g. research on two-level games (Putnam 1988), audience costs (e.g. Fearon 1994; Tomz 2007) or the role of domestic politics for international politics more generally (e.g. Milner 1997; Moravcsik 1993, 1997)). In addition to these vertical linkages between voters and their governments, however, the contagion effects in disintegration negotiations mean that policymakers need to consider the contagion risks in other member states and in the withdrawing country (diagonal linkages) in parallel with the political contagion risks in their own country (vertical linkages). The higher the contagion risks in at least one member state, the more hawkish governments’ negotiation positions will usually be overall. This means that even if a government represents a country in which the mass public strongly supports continued membership, it will opt for a non-accommodating strategy if it fears that accommodation will encourage integration-sceptics in another remaining member state. High contagion risks at home or in another member state thus increase support for a non-accommodation strategy. This effect will be particularly pronounced when the disintegration process is highly politicized.

Third, the distribution of bargaining power between the disintegrating and the other member state shapes the negotiation dynamics. Relative bargaining power will be a key determinant with respect to how good a deal a withdrawing country can expect from the remaining member states. It also matters because non-accommodation can be very costly, but at the same time increases the likelihood that the withdrawing state might back down – generally the best outcome for the remaining states. This suggests that the remaining member states have stronger incentives to pursue a non-accommodative strategy vis-à-vis the

disintegrating state when there are nontrivial chances that such a strategy will result in a retraction of the disintegration bid. This is most likely when the bargaining power of the remaining states is high. The level of bargaining power itself depends on a number of factors (Bailer 2004, 2010; Bailer et al. 2015; Dür et al. 2010; Finke et al. 2012; Moravcsik 1997; Thomson et al. 2006). The leverage of the remaining members tends to be higher when the number of remaining member states is high, when the interdependence between the disintegrating and the remaining member states is asymmetric and in favor of the latter (Keohane and Nye 1977), and when non-accommodation means continuing the status quo (Schimmelfennig 2017). Relative bargaining power also depends on the institutional setup of the withdrawal process, frequently specified in the form of exit clauses (Huysmans 2019; Kucik and Reinhardt 2008; Pelc 2009; Rosendorff and Milner 2001) that disadvantage the withdrawing state and in the strength of the commitment to disintegration in the leaving state: not following a single-issue vote in a referendum is likely to be more costly than not implementing a campaign promise in an election campaign. Finally, the remaining member states also have more bargaining power when their preferences are homogenous with regard to a certain issue. For example, the ranks will be much more closed on issues such as continued financial contributions of the withdrawing state – which virtually all states are likely to favor – than on issues such as preferential market access, where positions are likely to be much more divided.

Moreover, relative bargaining power also influences the level contagion risk: the extent to which a country's disintegration experience serves as a good counterfactual for citizens in another country depends on how the latter compares to the disintegrating state in terms of bargaining power. The higher the disintegrating country's bargaining power, the more likely will it be to extract concessions from the remaining members. This has implications for the contagion risks associated with the disintegration process. Table 1 shows that the contagion risks associated with accommodation are particularly high when the disintegrating state is relatively weak. If a weak state manages to secure significant concessions from the remaining states, this signals to most remaining states that it will be easy to get similar concessions, resulting in a strong encouragement effect. In contrast, the deterrence effect will be weak in cases where the 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.

Table 1: Disintegration negotiation strategy, relative bargaining power, and contagion risks

Relative to the disintegrating country, own country has...	Accommodation (disintegration as success)	Non-accommodation (disintegration as failure)
more bargaining power	Strong encouragement effect	Weak deterrence effect
less bargaining power	Weak encouragement effect	Strong deterrence effect

Finally, because ideas also matter in international negotiations (e.g., McNamara 1998; Risse 2004), more integration-sceptic 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 et al. 2018).

Against this backdrop, one would expect the remaining member states to vary in their responses to a disintegration referendum.

4. Empirical Evidence

The main purpose of this paper is to present a conceptual framework of how to think about the mass politics of disintegration and voter-based disintegration processes specifically. The framework has a multitude of empirical implications, which are impossible to test in the context of a single paper. To demonstrate the usefulness of the framework, I therefore present evidence on three empirical implications that arise from this framework instead, drawing on original survey data and case study evidence. I focus on the ability of foreign governments' to intervene in domestic disintegration referendum campaigns, the existence of contagion risks, and variation in the responses of the remaining member states to voter-based disintegration bids.

Pre-vote interventions in foreign disintegration referendum campaigns

The first analysis focuses on the challenges for foreign policymakers before a disintegration vote in another member state of an international institution. Because voters' expectations about the likely consequences of a pro-disintegration vote have been shown to exert a significant influence on voters' vote choice in disintegration referendums (Grynberg et al. 2019; Muñoz and Tormos 2015; S Walter et al. 2018), it examines to what extent foreign

policymakers can influence voters' expectations about the other member states' likely response to a pro-disintegration vote in an ongoing disintegration referendum campaign.

I draw on an survey experiment that I conducted in the context of an original online poll of 1778 British respondents conducted by YouGov two weeks before the 2016 Brexit referendum. The experiment explores whether and how warnings about the EU reaction to a pro-Brexit referendum outcomes influences respondents' expectations about the UK's prospects in a post-Brexit world. All respondents were informed about the following: *"After a referendum vote to leave the EU, Britain and the EU [would] have to negotiate an agreement about their future relationship."* Respondents were then randomly given one of five different treatments. The first was a control group with no additional information. In the remaining four treatments respondents were informed that a domestic (The Remain Campaign) or a foreign (the Belgian Prime Minister, the President of the EU Commission, or the US president) had *"warned that the EU will only sign such an agreement if it makes Britain worse off compared to where it stands now."*

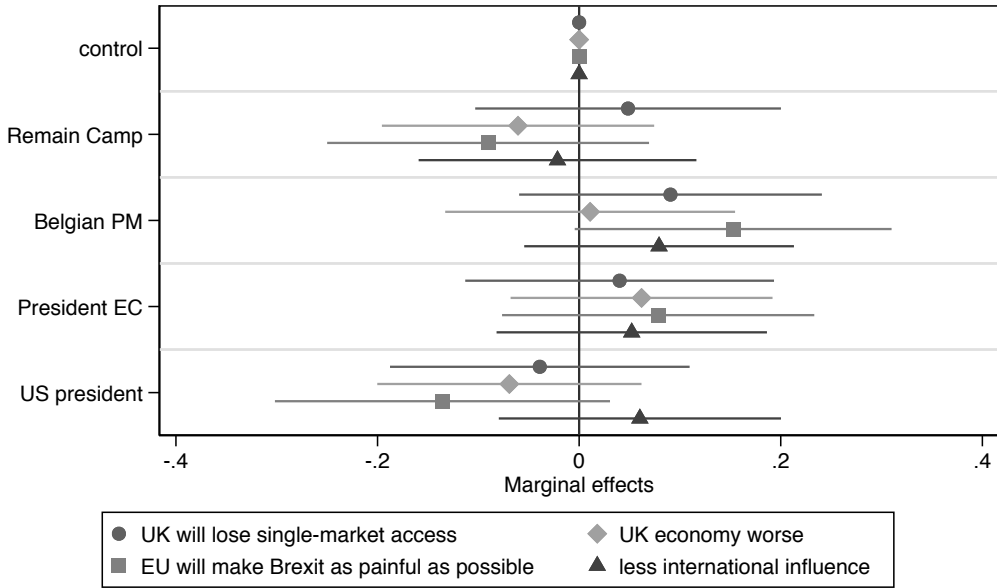
Respondents were then asked about their expectations about how a post-Brexit world would look like: *"In the run-up to the referendum, we have heard many different arguments about what would happen if the UK were to leave the EU. For each of the following scenarios, how likely do you think that this scenario will come true if Britain votes to leave the EU in the referendum? If Britain votes to leave the EU... a) Britain will lose full access to the EU's single market, b) Britain will negotiate an agreement with the EU that leaves it worse off economically than it is today, c) the EU will do everything it can to make exit as painful for Britain as possible, and d) Britain will have less influence in international negotiations than as a EU member."* For each expectations, respondents could rate each scenario on a four-point-scale ranging from very unlikely to very likely. With the exception of the question of whether the EU would try to make exit painful for the UK, which more than two thirds expected to happen, expectations were rather balanced between optimistic and pessimistic expectations. Leave-voters were significantly more optimistic than Remainers (see also Owen and Walter 2017).

To examine whether warnings by foreign policymakers representing another member state (the Belgian prime minister), the affected international institution (the President of the EU Commission) or another country (the US president) were able to influence these expectations,

I run OLS regressions that control for respondents’ referendum vote intention¹¹ as well as gender, age, political attention, social grade, and education.¹²

Figure 2: Survey Experiment: Effects of threats by different foreign actors on expectations

For each of the following scenarios, how likely do you think that this scenario will come true if Britain votes to leave the EU in the referendum?



Note: Controlling for gender, age, political attention, social grade, education, referendum vote intention

Figure 2 shows the marginal effects of each of the treatments on the likelihood that a respondent has more pessimistic expectations regarding the foreign response to a Leave-outcome in the June 2016 Brexit referendum, with 95% confidence intervals. Although warnings by foreign policymakers, especially European politicians, did make voters somewhat more pessimistic, these effects were not statistically significant.¹³ Warnings attributed the US president made voters even more optimistic at times, although again the effects are not statistically significant. Figure 2 thus shows how difficult it is for foreign policymakers to sway public opinion in disintegration referendum campaigns. Influencing expectations, beliefs, and vote intentions of voters in another country is no easy task in such a setting and presents a serious challenge to foreign policymakers ahead of a disintegration referendum in another member state.

¹¹ The vote intention had been recorded earlier in the survey.
¹² Full regression results can be found in table A1 in the appendix. Data are weighted.
¹³ These results are largely robust when the control group that did not receive any warning is discarded and the remain campaign is used as baseline instead, see Figure A1 in the appendix.

Contagion risks

In a second analysis, I leverage the Brexit experience again, but examine how it reverberates across the remaining member states. In particular, I examine whether individuals take the experience of a disintegrating country into account when forming an opinion about whether they themselves support disintegration of their own state. To this end I use data from an original EU-wide online poll across conducted on my behalf by Dalia Research in June 2018, about one year after the withdrawal negotiations between the UK and the EU had started. The sample consists of 9,423 working-age respondents (ages 18-65), drawn across the remaining 27 EU Member States,¹⁴ with sample sizes roughly proportional to their population size. In order to obtain census representative results, the data were weighted based upon the most recent Eurostat statistics.¹⁵

Respondents' support for disintegration of their own country from the EU was measured with the question "*If [YOUR COUNTRY] were to hold a referendum on leaving the EU today, how would you vote?*". I recoded the answers as 0 for those who said they would probably or definitely vote to remain in the EU and 1 for those would probably or definitely vote to leave. I then examine how assessments about the likely effect of Brexit on the UK are associated with the propensity of respondents to support an exit of their own country from the EU. I use the question "*Five years from now on, do you think Brexit will make the UK much better off/somewhat better off/neither better nor worse off/somewhat worse off/much worse off?*" Of course, this opinion will be strongly influenced by what respondents' attitudes about the EU. I therefore control for the respondent's general opinion of the EU, using the question "*What is your opinion of the EU? Very negative/Somewhat negative/Neither negative nor positive/Somewhat positive/Very positive*". Figure 3 shows that indeed, expectations about whether Brexit will be positive or negative for the UK vary significantly among euroskeptics and Europhiles.

28 EU Member States

Because research has shown that Euroskepticism is a multidimensional concept (Hobolt and de Vries 2016), I additionally control for respondents' views about the EU's competences: "*Which statement best describes your views about the future of the European Union? The EU*

¹⁴ I omit the UK for the analysis.

¹⁵ The target weighting variables were 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). Results are robust to using only the data from the biggest five countries, whose sample sizes exceed N=1000.

should return some power to national governments/The division of power between national governments and the EU should remain as it is today/National governments should transfer more power to the EU.” Moreover, I control for sociodemographic variables: age, gender, education, whether the respondent lives in a rural or urban setting, and the respondent’s country.

Figure 3: Histogram of expectations about the effect of Brexit on the UK, by EU opinion

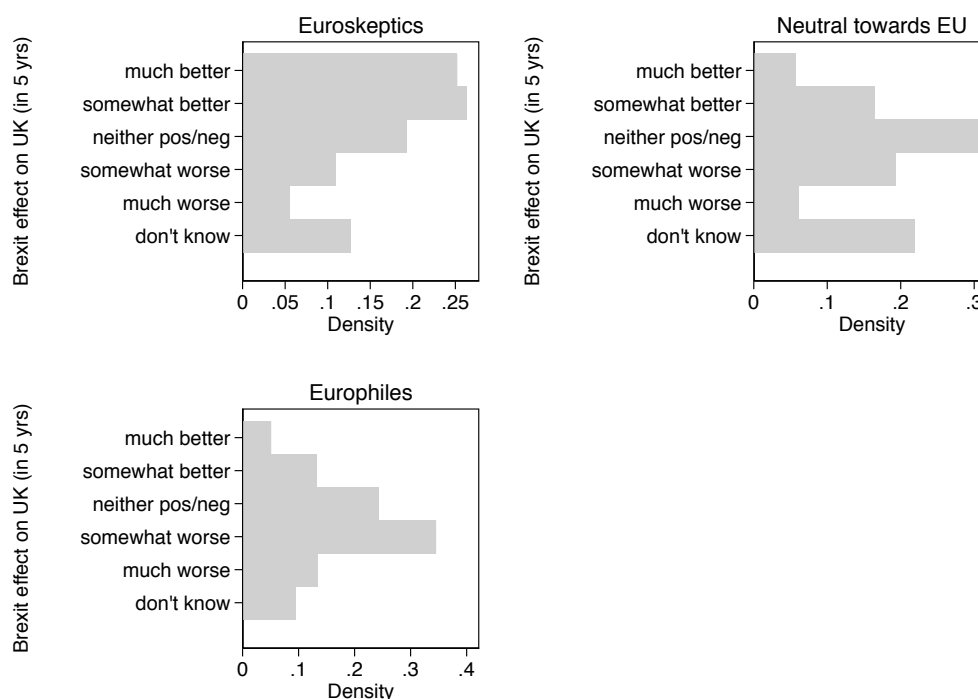


Figure 4 shows the marginal effects from a logit regression on the likely vote in a national exit referendum in the respondent’s own country. It demonstrates that both a deterrence and an encouragement effect are at play: Those who assess the UK’s prospects outside the EU more pessimistically are less likely to vote for an exit of their own country from the EU. Likewise, those who think that the UK will do well after it has left the European Union are also more likely to potentially vote leave if their own country held an exit referendum. This effect holds even after two different dimensions of EU-related opinions are controlled for. Not surprisingly, a possible disintegration vote is strongly influenced by these opinions. Nonetheless, the likely effect of Brexit on the UK exerts an additional effect on respondents’ vote intentions. Moreover, Figure 6 shows that deterrence and encouragement effects can also be observed when we split up the sample according to people’s opinion of the EU.

Figure 5: Deterrence and encouragement effects of Brexit

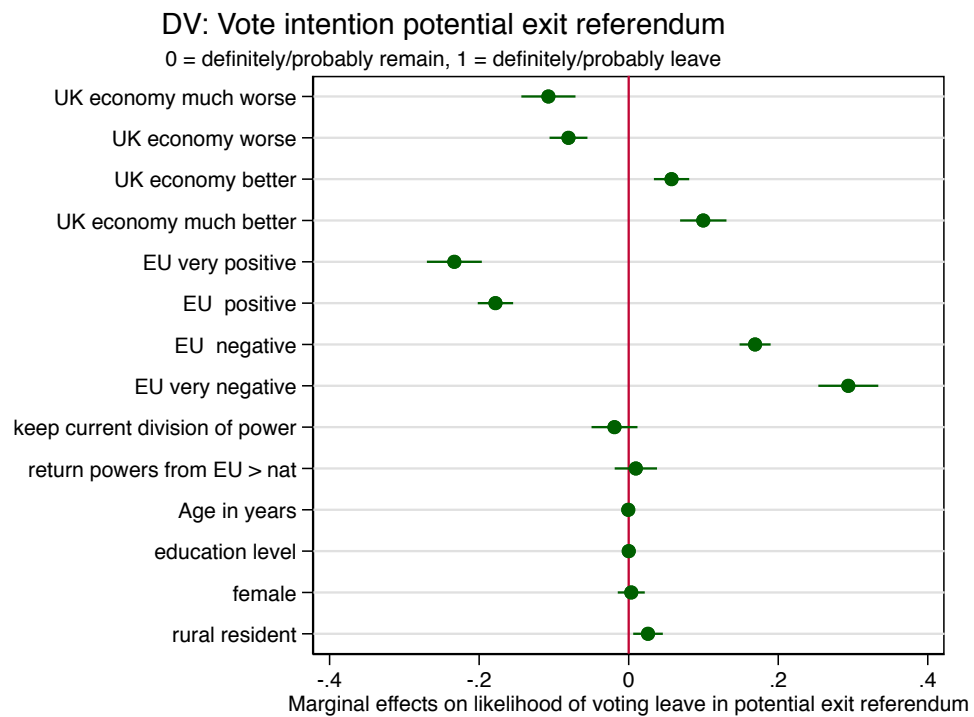
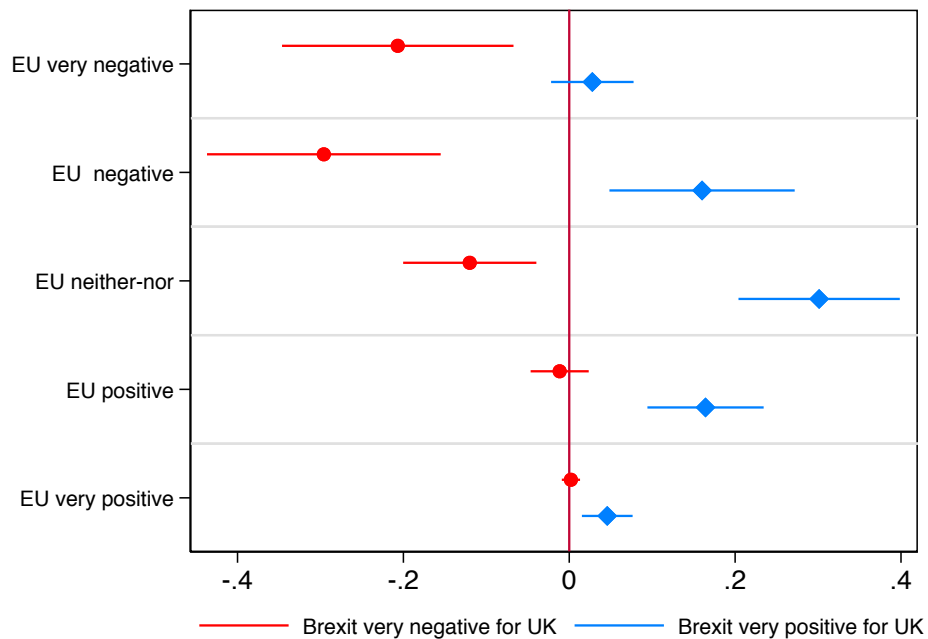


Figure 6: Deterrence and encouragement effects of Brexit, by EU opinion

Change in predicted probability of voting for own country's exit



Of course, a rigorous analysis of contagion effects would require a dynamic analysis of how individuals respond to disintegration negotiations and outcomes, and how this feeds back into their own support for an international institution and demands for disintegration. Nonetheless, this brief analysis suggests that the contagion risks that underlie the accommodation dilemma for policymakers in the remaining member states present a real concern.

Variation in the responses of the remaining member states to voter-based disintegration bids.

In a final analysis, I examine the variation in how other countries respond to unilateral, mass-based disintegration bids by one member state. Table 2 classifies all seven episodes of voter-based disintegration that have occurred so far by the disintegrating country's bargaining power and the other member states' responses.

Table 2 shows that in most cases, voter-based renegotiation or withdrawal bids have been met with considerable resistance from the other member states. Among states with low bargaining power, we find not a single case whose voter-based disintegration demands were accommodated by the other member states.¹⁶ This is not surprising, because accommodation in such an instance carries the biggest contagion risks of encouraging similar attempts elsewhere. Instead, in all three instances, the disintegration bids by low-bargaining-power states were not accommodated. An example is the EU's reaction to Switzerland's referendum vote in 2014 to restrict immigration and subsequent decision not to extend freedom of movement to nationals of a new EU member state (Croatia) in violation of its bilateral treaties with the EU. As a non-EU member with a high trade dependence on the EU, Switzerland has less bargaining power vis-à-vis the EU than most EU member states.¹⁷ Confronted with Swiss demands to renegotiate the bilateral treaty on the free movement of people, the EU retaliated by barring Switzerland's access to the new Horizon 2020 research program, which eventually succeeded in convincing the Swiss parliament not to implement the referendum and to honor its obligations enshrined in the bilateral treaties. Because the EU and its member states made disintegration very costly for Switzerland, the Swiss ultimately reconsidered their bid to renegotiate and implemented the

¹⁶ Iceland's efforts to renege on paying Icesave's debts to the UK and the Netherlands ultimately succeeded, but only because an international court ruled that it did not have to pay, after the UK and the Netherlands had sued the country after its voters had refused to ratify two repayment agreements in two successive referendums (Curtis et al. 2014).

¹⁷ The weak bargaining position was compounded by the institutional setting, in which the so-called "guillotine clause" in the bilateral treaties gives the EU the right to terminate all bilateral treaties if Switzerland withdraws from one of them (such as the treaty on the free movement of people).

2014 referendum vote on the “Mass Immigration Initiative” in a way that left the rights of EU citizens untouched. As suggested by my argument Switzerland’s failure to win any concessions from the EU in the aftermath of its 2014 referendum “against mass immigration” has not had any significant effect on support for similar demands of limiting free movement in the remaining member states. However, had the EU allowed Switzerland to introduce restrictions on the free movement of people, it is likely that this decision would have sparked a wave of similar demands for exceptions across the EU.

Table 2: Bargaining power and response by other member states to voter-based disintegration bids

	Accommodation	Non-accommodation
Disintegrating country has low bargaining power	<i>[strong encouragement risk]</i>	<i>[weak deterrence effect]</i> Switzerland: Freedom of Movement Renegotiation Greece: Bailout Renegotiation Iceland: Refusal to repay Icesave debt
Disintegrating country has high bargaining power	<i>[weak encouragement risk]</i> USA: NAFTA renegotiation USA: Paris Climate Accord	<i>[strong deterrence effect]</i> UK: Brexit* USA: Iran Deal Withdrawal* * some accommodation

In contrast, bids for renegotiation of the terms of an international agreement in one country’s favor can be relatively successful if the disintegrating state is powerful. This is illustrated by the willingness of Mexico and Canada to engage in a renegotiation of the NAFTA treaty shows. In these renegotiations, launched in order to keep a key campaign promise of US president Trump, the US secured concessions from Mexico and Canada in the renegotiated USMCA agreement that left the former worse off and the US better off than under NAFTA, although it is contested how large these concessions actually were. The success of the world’s hegemon in extracting concessions from Mexico and Canada is not likely to fuel similar demands elsewhere. The fact, however, that even the US has been forced to compromise, is likely to create a certain deterrence effect because it underlines how large the losses from a reduction of the existing cooperation gains would be.

Finally, we also see some cases of non-accommodation of powerful states, even though the responses tend to be more accommodating than with regard to less powerful states. After all, the EU is engaging with the UK's wish to leave the EU, for example, whereas it refused to even officially open negotiations about a potential treaty change with Switzerland. With a much larger economy and much deeper levels of economic, social, and political integration with the EU-27 countries than Switzerland, the UK has more bargaining power than the latter. Nonetheless, the EU's approach to the Brexit process has largely been non-accommodating. In the Brexit negotiations, the remaining EU-27 countries have also shown a high degree of unity in the Brexit negotiations so far. However, the negotiations about the withdrawal agreement have covered aspects of Brexit on which there is little debate among the EU-27 – for example, everybody is in favor of the UK paying more. Figure 6a shows the positions of the remaining member states on the issues discussed so far, based on assessments of national negotiation positions made by the Economist Intelligence Unit (The Economist 2017). However, figure 7b, which considers a larger range of issues in the Brexit negotiations, including, for example, security, shows considerable variation in the long-run Brexit-approach among the remaining EU member states.

Figure 7a:
Brexit positions, negotiation phase I

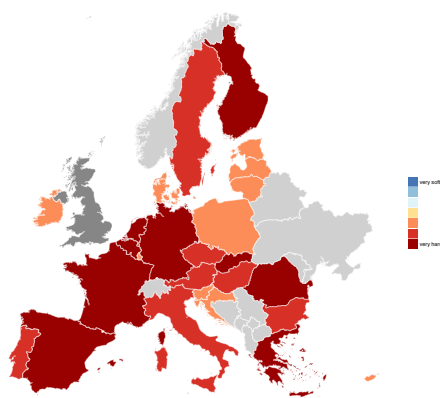
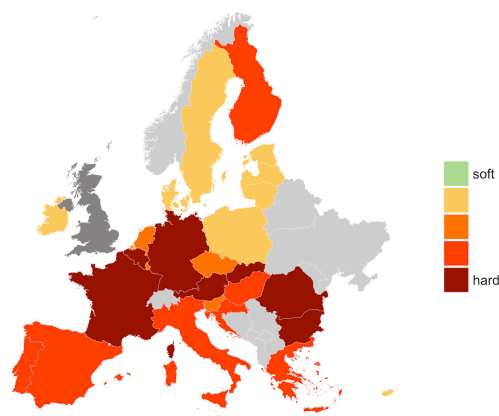


Figure 7b:
Overall Brexit negotiation positions



Overall, this discussion shows that there is not just variation in the willingness to accommodate voter-based disintegration bids across disintegration cases, but also across the remaining member states.

5. Conclusion: Voter-based disintegration, a democratic threat to international cooperation?

This paper has introduced a framework for analyzing a relatively recent phenomenon with far-reaching systemic consequences: voter-based disintegration bids. It has argued that these episodes can be analyzed in a coherent framework that puts the accommodation dilemma that these cases generate in the center of attention. Focusing on the challenges that voter-based disintegration poses to the remaining member states, it has argued that these challenges are considerable, both before and after pro-disintegration votes in another member state. Using original survey data and case study evidence, the paper has examined some implications of this broader framework in an effort to illustrate its usefulness.

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 (De Vries 2018; S Walter 2019b), they still garner considerable support.

This paper has demonstrated that so far, voter-based 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.

Yet the failure of populist promises to materialize bears its own risk. When governments tasked with implementing populist referendum outcomes have not been able to deliver the promised lands of milk and honey, they have been decried by populists as incompetent or unwilling to implement the will of the people. Resistance of foreign governments against one country's wishes for unilateral change has been condemned as a lack of respect of democracy. And because intergovernmental bargaining tends to take place between a relatively small

number of few government officials behind closed doors, its outcomes have often been characterized as elitist decisions by bureaucrats who have lost touch with normal people. There is thus a risk that the failure of voter-based disintegration initiatives breeds even more resentment and feeding ground for populists. Dealing with this democratic threat to the liberal world order is no easy task. It is important, but not easy, for policymakers to communicate clearly the trade-offs and constraints under which they operate. They also need to straddle the rope between accommodating too much and risking contagion on one hand, and accommodating too little and risking backlash on the other. Only one thing is certain: it is impossible to ignore this challenge to international cooperation from below.

Bibliography

- Abbott, Kenneth W, and Duncan Snidal. 1998. "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations." *Journal of conflict resolution* 42(1): 3–32.
- Bailer, Stefanie. 2004. "Bargaining Success in the European Union The Impact of Exogenous and Endogenous Power Resources." *European Union Politics* 5(1): 99–123.
- . 2010. "What Factors Determine Bargaining Power and Success in EU Negotiations?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 17(5): 743–57.
- Bailer, Stefanie, Mikko Mattila, and Gerald Schneider. 2015. "Money Makes the EU Go Round: The Objective Foundations of Conflict in the Council of Ministers." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 53(3): 437–56.
- Blais, André, Pierre Martin, and Richard Nadeau. 1995. "Attentes Économiques et Linguistiques et Appui à La Souveraineté Du Québec: Une Analyse Prospective et Comparative." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 28(04): 637–57.
- Blyth, Mark. 2016. "After the Brits Have Gone and the Trumpets Have Sounded: Turning a Drama into a Crisis That Will Not Go to Waste." *Intereconomics* 51(6): 324–31.
- Börzel, Tanja A. 2018. "Researching the EU (Studies) into Demise?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 25(3): 475–85.
- von Borzyskowski, Inken, and Felicity Vabulas. 2019. "Hello, Goodbye: When Do States Withdraw from International Organizations?" *The Review of International Organizations*: 1–32.
- Chen, Wen et al. 2017. "The Continental Divide? Economic Exposure to Brexit in Regions and Countries on Both Sides of The Channel." *Papers in Regional Science*.
- Christin, Thomas, Simon Hug, and Pascal Sciarini. 2002. "Interests and Information in Referendum Voting: An Analysis of Swiss Voters." *European Journal of Political Research* 41(6): 759–76.
- Clarke, Harold D, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley. 2017. *Brexit*. Cambridge University Press.
- Clements, Ben, Kyriaki Nanou, and Susannah Verney. 2014. "'We No Longer Love You, But We Don't Want To Leave You': The Eurozone Crisis and Popular Euroscepticism in Greece." *Journal of European Integration* (ahead-of-print): 1–19.
- Cogan, Jacob Katz, Ian Hurd, and Ian Johnstone. 2016. *The Oxford Handbook of International Organizations*. Oxford University Press.
- Coggins, Bridget. 2011. "Friends in High Places: International Politics and the Emergence of States from Secessionism." *International Organization* 65(03): 433–67.
- Colantone, Italo, and Piero Stanig. 2018. "Global Competition and Brexit." *American political science review* 112(2): 201–18.
- Corstange, Daniel, and Nikolay Marinov. 2012. "Taking Sides in Other People's Elections: The Polarizing Effect of Foreign Intervention." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 655–70.
- Curtice, John. 2014. "It All Depends on Your Perspective: Economic Perceptions and the Demography of Voting in the Scottish Independence Referendum." *Fraser of Allander Economic Commentary* 38(2): 147–52.
- Curtis, K Amber, Joseph Jupille, and David Leblang. 2014. "Iceland on the Rocks: The Mass Political Economy of Sovereign Debt Resettlement." *International Organization* 68(03): 721–40.
- Dinas, Elias, Ignacio Jurado, Nikitas Konstantinidis, and Stefanie Walter. 2017. "Keeping the Euro at Any Cost? Explaining Preferences for Euro Membership in Greece." In *European Political Science Association Meeting 2017*, Milano.
- Duffield, John. 2007. "What Are International Institutions?" *International Studies Review* 9(1): 1–22.

- Dür, Andreas, Gemma Mateo, and Daniel C Thomas. 2010. "Negotiation Theory and the EU: The State of the Art." *Journal of European Public Policy* 17(5): 613–18.
- Ecker-Ehrhardt, Matthias. 2012. "Cosmopolitan Politicization: How Perceptions of Interdependence Foster Citizens' Expectations in International Institutions." *European Journal of International Relations* 18(3): 481–508.
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette. 2018. "Death of International Organizations. The Organizational Ecology of Intergovernmental Organizations, 1815–2015." *The Review of International Organizations*: 1–32.
- Eurobarometer. 2017. *Public Opinion in the European Union*. Brussels.
- Fearon, James D. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88(03): 577–92.
- . 1995. "Rationalist Explanations of War." *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.
- Finke, Daniel, and Derek Beach. 2017. "'Who Wants It More - the Impact of Attitude Strength and Motivated Reasoning on Issue-Voting in EU Referendums.'"
- Finke, Daniel, Thomas König, Sven-Oliver Proksch, and George Tsebelis. 2012. *Reforming the European Union: Realizing the Impossible*. Princeton University Press.
- Gilligan, Michael J, and Leslie Johns. 2012. "Formal Models of International Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 221–43.
- Glencross, Andrew. 2016. "The EU Referendum Campaign." In *Why the UK Voted for Brexit*, Springer, 35–46.
- Goodwin, Matthew, and Oliver Heath. 2016. "The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result." *The Political Quarterly* 87(3): 323–32.
- 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.
- Grynberg, Charlotte, Stefanie Walter, and Fabio Wasserfallen. 2019. *Expectations, Vote Choice, and Opinion Stability Since the 2016 Brexit Referendum*.
- Helfer, Laurence R. 2005. "Exiting Treaties." *Virginia Law Review*: 1579–1648.
- . 2017. "Introduction to Symposium on Treaty Exit at the Interface of Domestic and International Law." *AJIL Unbound* 111: 425–27.
- Hix, Simon. 2018. "Brexit: Where Is the EU–UK Relationship Heading?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- Hobolt, Sara. 2009. *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2016. "The Brexit Vote: A Divided Nation, a Divided Continent." *Journal of European Public Policy*: 1–19.
- Hobolt, Sara, and Catherine de Vries. 2016. "Public Support for European Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 413–32.
- 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.
- 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*: 1465116519830202.
- Ikenberry, G John. 2018. "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94(1): 7–23.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2016. "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism:

- Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash.”
- Jones, Erik. 2018. “Towards a Theory of Disintegration.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 25(3): 440–51.
- Jurado, Ignacio, Sandra León, and Stefanie Walter. 2018. “European Preferences for Brexit: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment in Germany and Spain.” *unpublished manuscript*.
- 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*.
- Kucik, Jeffrey, and Eric Reinhardt. 2008. “Does Flexibility Promote Cooperation? An Application to the Global Trade Regime.” *International Organization* 62(03): 477–505.
- Kuo, Jason, and Megumi Naoi. 2015. “Individual Attitudes.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Political Economy of International Trade*, ed. Lisa Martin. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leeds, Brett Ashley, and Burcu Savun. 2007. “Terminating Alliances: Why Do States Abrogate Agreements?” *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1118–32.
- Levin, Dov H. 2016. “When the Great Power Gets a Vote: The Effects of Great Power Electoral Interventions on Election Results.” *International Studies Quarterly*.
- Martin, Lisa, and Beth Simmons. 2013. “International Organizations and Institutions.” In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons. London: SAGE, 326–51.
- McNamara, Kathleen. 1998. *The Currency of Ideas: Monetary Politics in the European Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Milic, Thomas. 2015. “‘For They Knew What They Did’—What Swiss Voters Did (Not) Know About The Mass Immigration Initiative.” *Swiss Political Science Review* 21(1): 48–62.
- Milner, Helen V. 1997. “Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations.”
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1993. “Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 31(4): 473–524.
- . 1997. “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics.” *International Organization* 51(04): 513–53.
- Muñoz, Jordi, and Raúl Tormos. 2015. “Economic Expectations and Support for Secession in Catalonia: Between Causality and Rationalization.” *European Political Science Review* 7(02): 315–41.
- Owen, Erica, and Stefanie Walter. 2017. “Open Economy Politics and Brexit: Insights, Puzzles, and Ways Forward.” *Review of International Political Economy* 24(2): 179–202.
- Pelc, Krzysztof J. 2009. “Seeking Escape: The Use of Escape Clauses in International Trade Agreements.” *International Studies Quarterly* 53(2): 349–68.
- Pepinsky, Thomas B. 2017. “Dis-Embedding Liberal Internationalism.” In *Workshop on the Challenges to the Contemporary World Order*, Filzbach.
- Pevehouse, Jon, and Inken von Borzyskowski. 2016. “International Organizations in World Politics.” In *The Oxford Handbook of International Organizations*.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1988. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42(3): 427–60.
- Risse, Thomas. 2004. “Social Constructivism and European Integration.” In *European Integration Theory*, eds. Antje Wiener and Thomas Dietz. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodrik, Dani. 2011. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World*

- Economy*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . 2017. *Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy*. Princeton University Press.
- Rosamond, Ben. 2016. “Brexit and the Problem of European Disintegration.” *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 12(4).
- Rosendorff, B Peter, and Helen V Milner. 2001. “The Optimal Design of International Trade Institutions: Uncertainty and Escape.” *International Organization* 55(04): 829–57.
- Schimmelfennig, Frank. 2017. “Brexit: Negotiating Differentiated Disintegration.” In *ECSA Suisse Annual Meeting*, Fribourg.
- Schneider, Christina. 2017. “Political Economy of Regional Integration.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20(1).
- Sciarini, Pascal, Simon Lanz, and Alessandro Nai. 2015. “Till Immigration Do Us Part? Public Opinion and the Dilemma between Immigration Control and Bilateral Agreements.” *Swiss Political Science Review* 21(2): 271–86.
- Sevin, Efe, and Sarphan Uzunoğlu. 2017. “Do Foreigners Count? Internationalization of Presidential Campaigns.” *American Behavioral Scientist*: 0002764217701215.
- Shulman, Stephen, and Stephen Bloom. 2012. “The Legitimacy of Foreign Intervention in Elections: The Ukrainian Response.” *Review of International Studies* 38(2): 445–71.
- The Economist. 2016. “The Politics of Anger.” *The Economist*.
- . 2017. “The Brexit Negotiations: Hard or Soft Europe?”
- Thomson, Robert, Frans N Stokman, Christopher H Achen, and Thomas König. 2006. “The European Union Decides.”
- Tomz, Michael. 2007. “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach.” *International Organization* 61(04): 821–40.
- Vollaard, Hans. 2014. “Explaining European Disintegration.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 52(5): 1142–59.
- de Vries, Catherine. 2017. “Support for the EU after Brexit: How the British Decision to Leave Shapes EU Public Opinion.” *Journal of Common Market Studies Annual Review*.
- De Vries, Catherine. 2018. *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*. Oxford University Press.
- Walter, Barbara. 2006a. “Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 313–30.
- . 2006b. “Information, Uncertainty, and the Decision to Secede.” *International Organization* 60(01): 105–35.
- Walter, Stefanie. 2019a. *EU-27 Public Opinion on Brexit*. Zurich.
- . 2019b. “Witnessing the Disembedding of Liberalism Elsewhere.” In *Paper Presented at the “The Anti-Globalization Backlash”-Workshop, May 2019*, Florence.
- 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.
- Webber, Douglas. 2013. “How Likely Is It That the European Union Will Disintegrate? A Critical Analysis of Competing Theoretical Perspectives.” *European Journal of International Relations* 20(2): 341–65.
- Zürn, Michael. 2014. “The Politicization of World Politics and Its Effects: Eight Propositions.” *European Political Science Review* 6(1): 47–71.

Appendix

Table A1: Effectiveness of Foreign and domestic warnings

	Single Market Access	Economy will be worse off	Eu will make exit painful	UK will have less influence internationally
Remain Camp	0.095 (0.09)	-0.074 (0.08)	-0.107 (0.10)	-0.040 (0.09)
Belgian PM	0.105 (0.09)	0.069 (0.09)	0.230** (0.10)	0.075 (0.09)
President EC	0.081 (0.09)	0.106 (0.08)	0.110 (0.09)	0.079 (0.09)
US president	-0.039 (0.09)	-0.081 (0.08)	-0.137 (0.10)	0.046 (0.09)
male	-0.147** (0.06)	-0.042 (0.05)	-0.112* (0.06)	-0.013 (0.06)
Age	0.002 (0.00)	-0.002 (0.00)	0.003 (0.00)	-0.001 (0.00)
Politica	0.029** (0.01)	0.037*** (0.01)	-0.007 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)
socialgrade	-0.022 (0.02)	0.000 (0.02)	0.012 (0.02)	-0.003 (0.02)
secondary	-0.014 (0.09)	-0.078 (0.07)	-0.195** (0.09)	-0.154* (0.09)
tertiary	0.029 (0.09)	0.074 (0.08)	-0.086 (0.10)	-0.040 (0.09)
Leave	-1.356*** (0.07)	-1.718*** (0.06)	-0.118 (0.07)	-1.982*** (0.06)
Will not vote	-0.434*** (0.14)	-0.520*** (0.12)	-0.536*** (0.14)	-0.910*** (0.14)
Don't know	-0.611*** (0.10)	-0.776*** (0.09)	-0.247** (0.10)	-1.106*** (0.10)
Constant	3.451*** (0.19)	3.718*** (0.16)	3.576*** (0.20)	4.312*** (0.19)
N	1716.000	1716.000	1716.000	1716.000
r2	0.250	0.414	0.029	0.437
r2_a				
F	36.041	83.683	3.706	88.970