

PERCEIVE Final Conference

An improved Cohesion Policy
for a stronger EU

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PROJECT

GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER 693529

Why do citizens' support Cohesion Policy?

Identity, corruption and governance

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Overview

- Large picture – how much EU fiscal integration do EU citizens want & why? E.g. how much *'solidarity among strangers'* (Habermas 2006) is there among EU citizens?
- With economic & political crises EU facing more skepticism, public support for policys (and EU in general) is critical
- *"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed"* (Abraham Lincoln)
- Will discuss 3 UGOT studies & contribution to literature



Motivation

- Big picture, we know a lot about:
 - a. **public support for European integration** (Ingelhart 1977; Gabel 1995; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Hobolt and de Vries 2016)
 - b. *inter alia* history, **evolution, casues of, rational behind, policy-making for and against of EU Cohesion Policy & convergence** (Bachtler and Wren 2006; Piattoni and Polverari 2016)
- These two literatures do not really overlapp – e.g. we do not know what citizens think specifically of the 2nd largest budget item of the EU and "*most signifcant redistributive policy tool*" (Fratesi 2016).
- Also we need new data to do this– so we designed/launched a new survey in 2017



Theoretical backdrop: Why do citizens support EU integration in general?

3 main theoretical models:

1. Utilitarian – (Gabel 1998) –self interest/ rational. Status, labour market, wealth of country/area, etc. Builds on models of preferences for domestic redistribution (Alesina and Ferrera 2005)

2. cue taking/benchmarking' (Andersson 1998; Hobolt and de Vries 2016)

-citizens use 'cues' (hurestics) based on perceptions domestic institutions (Sanchez-Cuenta 2000; Munoz et al 2011). 2 main hypotheses debated:

“**congruence hypothesis**”: + perceptions in nat. institutions = + EU perceptions

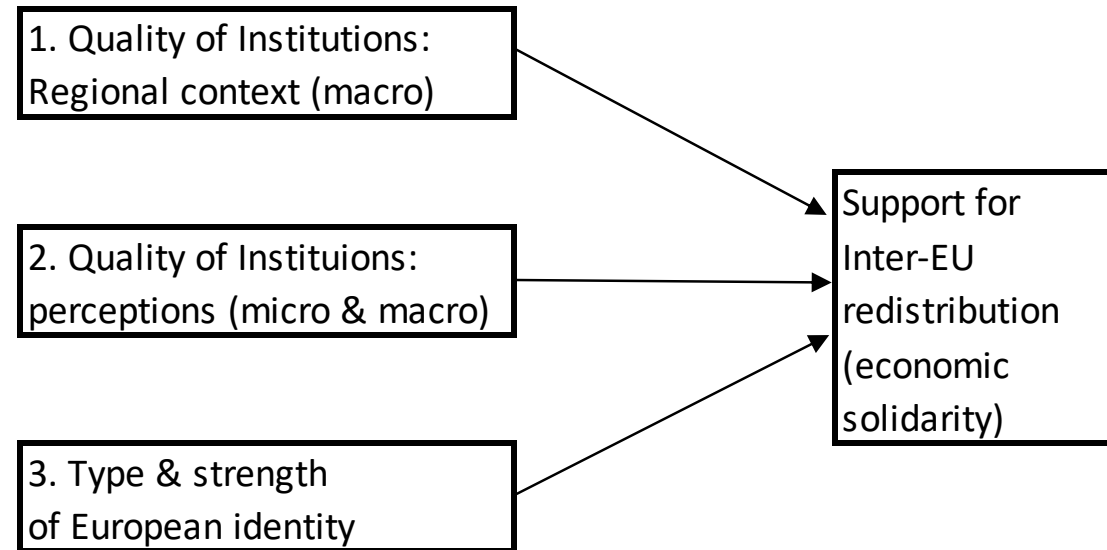
“**Compensation hypothesis**”: national perceptions inverse relationship with EU support

3. Identity/values – (Hooghe and Marks 2005) – citizens who feel 'exclusively national' identity are most likely Euroskeptics. Opposite for cosmopolitan values



Our contribution

- 3 empirical studies: theoretical lens are institutional quality & identity
- 1 done with data on support for post-crisis bailouts. Data from EES data
- 2 & 3 done with data on attitudes toward Cohesion Policy, with original PERCEIVE survey data
- Design and launch an original citizen survey for us and project on whole



Study 1: Why Support International redistribution? Corruption and Public Support for Aid in the Eurozone (in *European Union Politics*, 2018)

- Big picture: how much economic solidarity is there among EU citizens?
- **Study's backdrop:** Financial crisis led to Eurozone shock – bailouts in several countries, funded by the collective zone. Ireland & Portugal ca. 46b Euros, Greece 7.2b
- Huge geographic redistribution of resources – not without controversy, public support for policies (and EU in general) is critical
- RQ: What factors explain public support for bailouts within the EU?



Our theoretical idea

- Foreign aid support literature: donor country inst. quality → (+) aid support (Chang & Goldstein 2008; Svalfors 2013; Bauhr et al 2013)
- Few support studies have looked at 'quality of government' (QoG) as a predictor for EU integration support

Using the “*compensation/congruence hypotheses*” frame, we argue

QoG affects preferences for redistributive EU redistribution via:

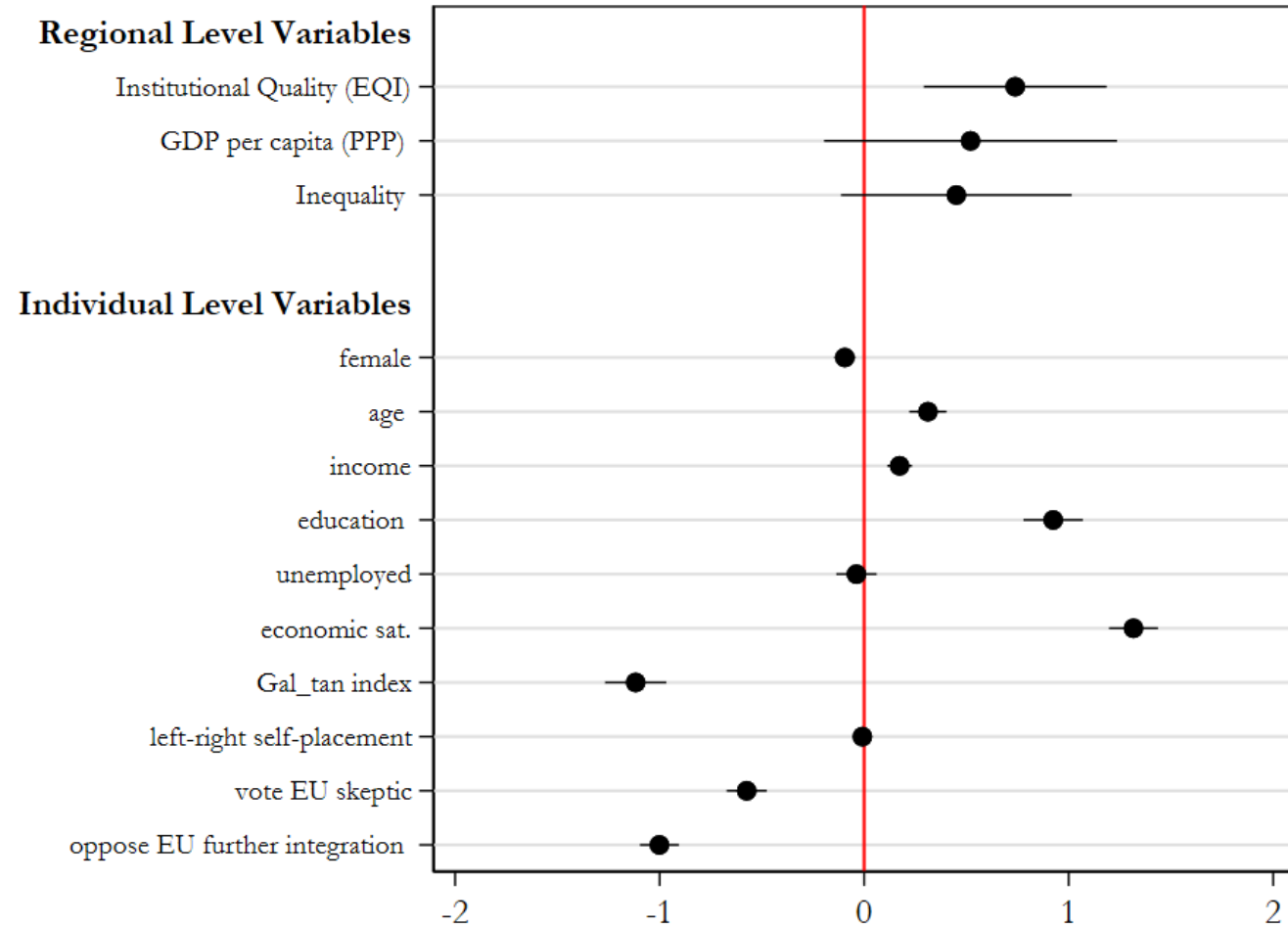
- distribution of public goods (universalism) in higher QoG areas
- corruption impedes collective action – more free riding
- Domestic institutions a heuristic, public trust – efficient spending

- *H: Polities with better quality of government and lower levels of corruption will have higher public support for redistribution within the EU on average.*



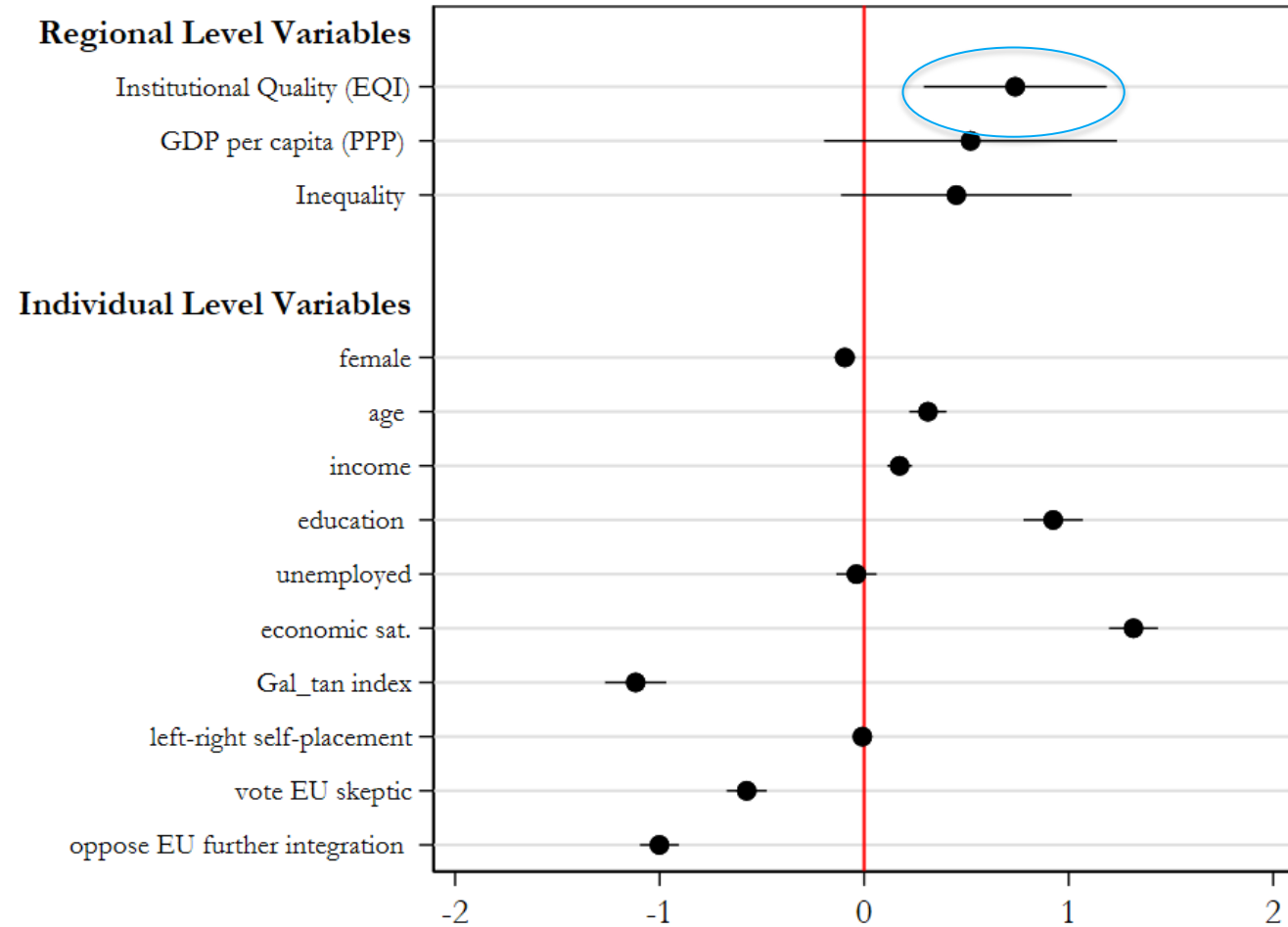
Summary of findings

- Tests effect of quality of institutions (macro) via the **European Quality of Government Index** (EQI – Charron, Dijkstra & Lapuente, 2015)
- DV: do you support YOUR COUNTRY contributing?
- Find institutional quality a positive & significant factor (congruence)
- Other regional level factors negligible



Summary of findings

- Tests effect of quality of institutions (macro) via the **European Quality of Government Index** (EQI – Charron, Dijkstra & Lapuente, 2015)
- Accounts for utilitarian and value based individual factors.
- Find institutional quality a positive & significant factor (congruence)
- Other regional level factors negligible



Study 2: The EU as a Savior and a Saint? Corruption and Public Support for Redistribution (in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2019)

- RQ: What factors explain public support for redistribution within the European Union?
- Our proxy for this is **support for Cohesion Policy**

Theoretical frame & testable hypotheses:

- We still know little about when/under what conditions citizens use domestic institutions as cues, & how this conditions preferences for transferring redistributive power to EU
- Argument: **institutional quality (macro)** and **perceptions of corruption (micro)** are key
- Among people who perceive national governments as corrupt, the EU will be seen as a 'saint' (or 'least worst'). The alternative argument = 'compensation' likely

H1 Perceptions of domestic corruption increases support for cohesion policy

- Context matters - this effect is most likely where institutional quality is lowest

H2. Perceptions of domestic corruption has a stronger (weaker) influence on support for EU led financial redistribution in countries with low (high) quality of government



Our survey: main questions

17,147 Randomly selected, telephone interviews in 15 EU MS, 36 questions on awareness & support for CP & EU, political attitudes, perceptions of institutions, identity & demographic.

****awareness is low, so for validity, some Priming information provided:***

'As you might have heard, EU cohesion policy aims to reduce regional differences within the EU in things like economic development, and employment. While all members contribute and receive some funds, the wealthier EU countries generally contribute more and poorer EU regions receive more funding on average.'

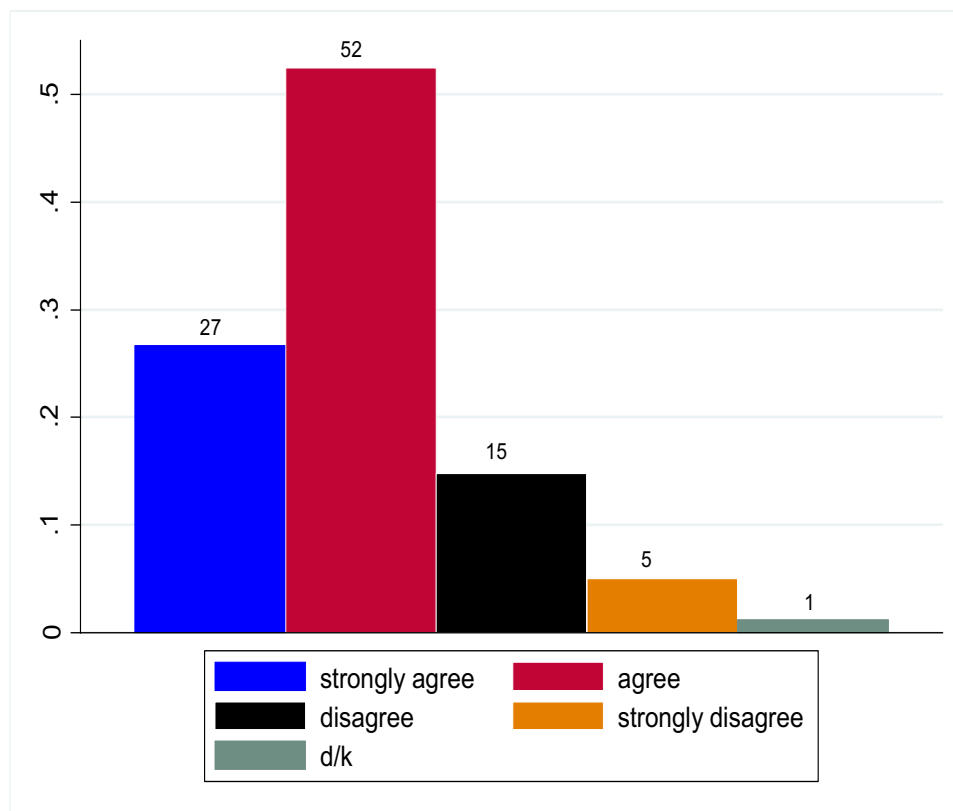
'Support': "In your opinion, the EU should continue this policy, where wealthier countries contribute more, and poorer EU regions receive more funding." (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, d/k)



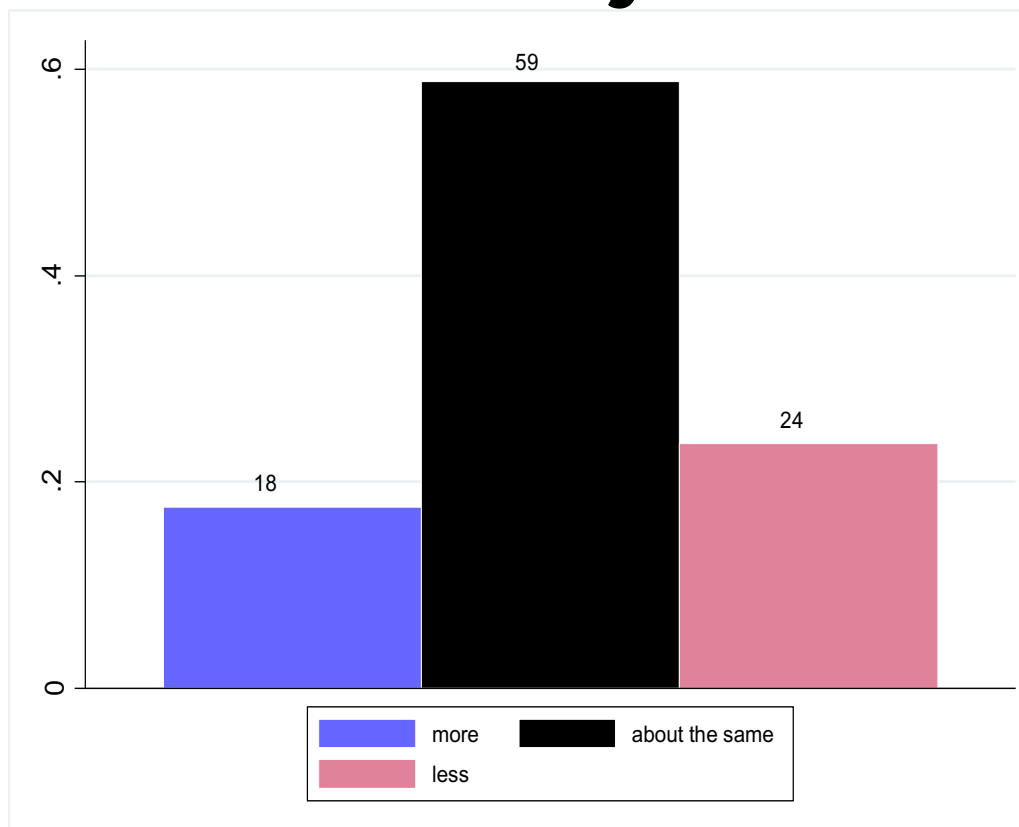
2nd question: 'intensity' of support

In your opinion, compared with what it spends today, should (COUNTRY) contribute, more, about the same, or less to this EU policy? 1. More, 2. About the same, 3. Less

Support



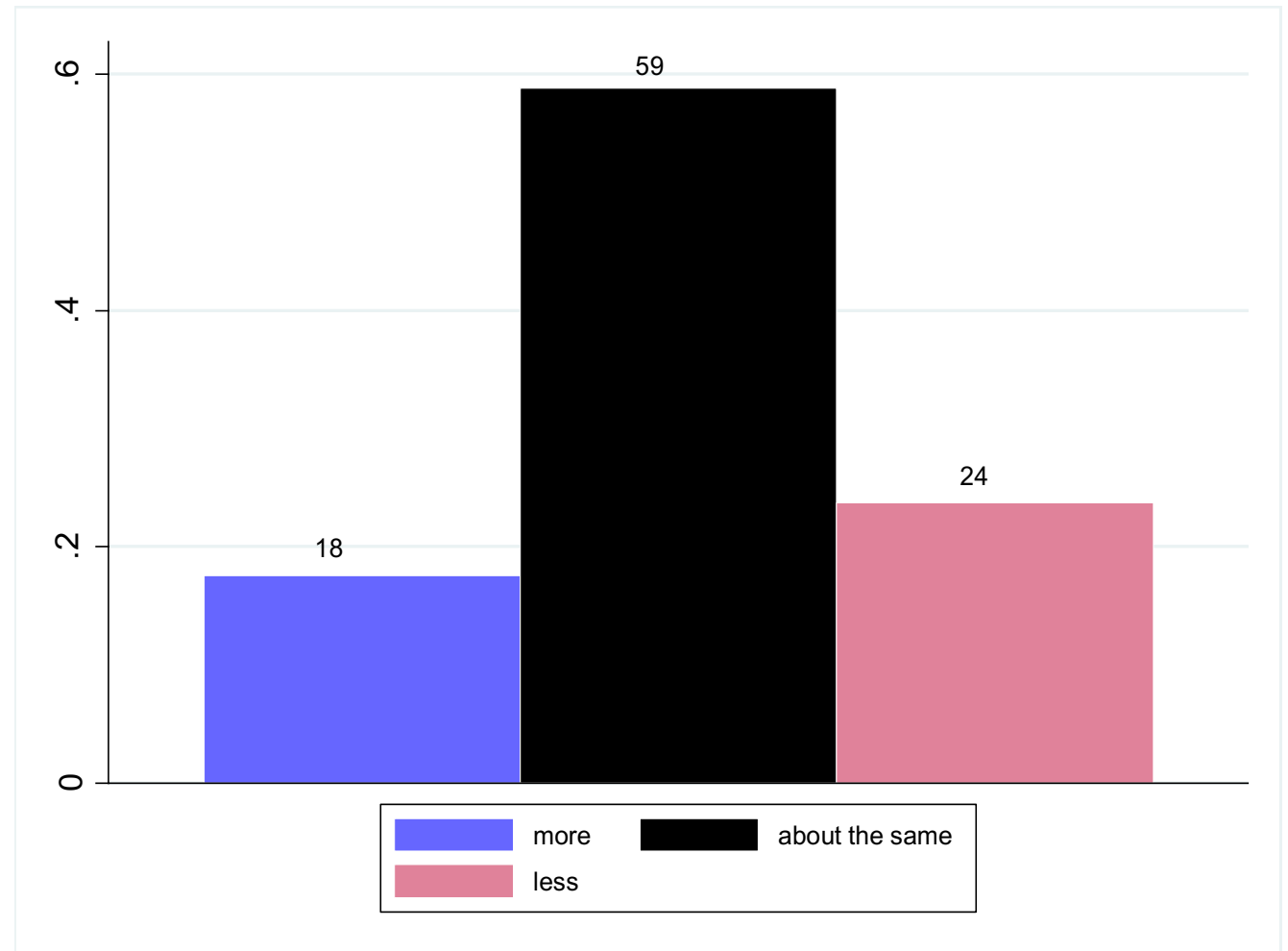
Intensity



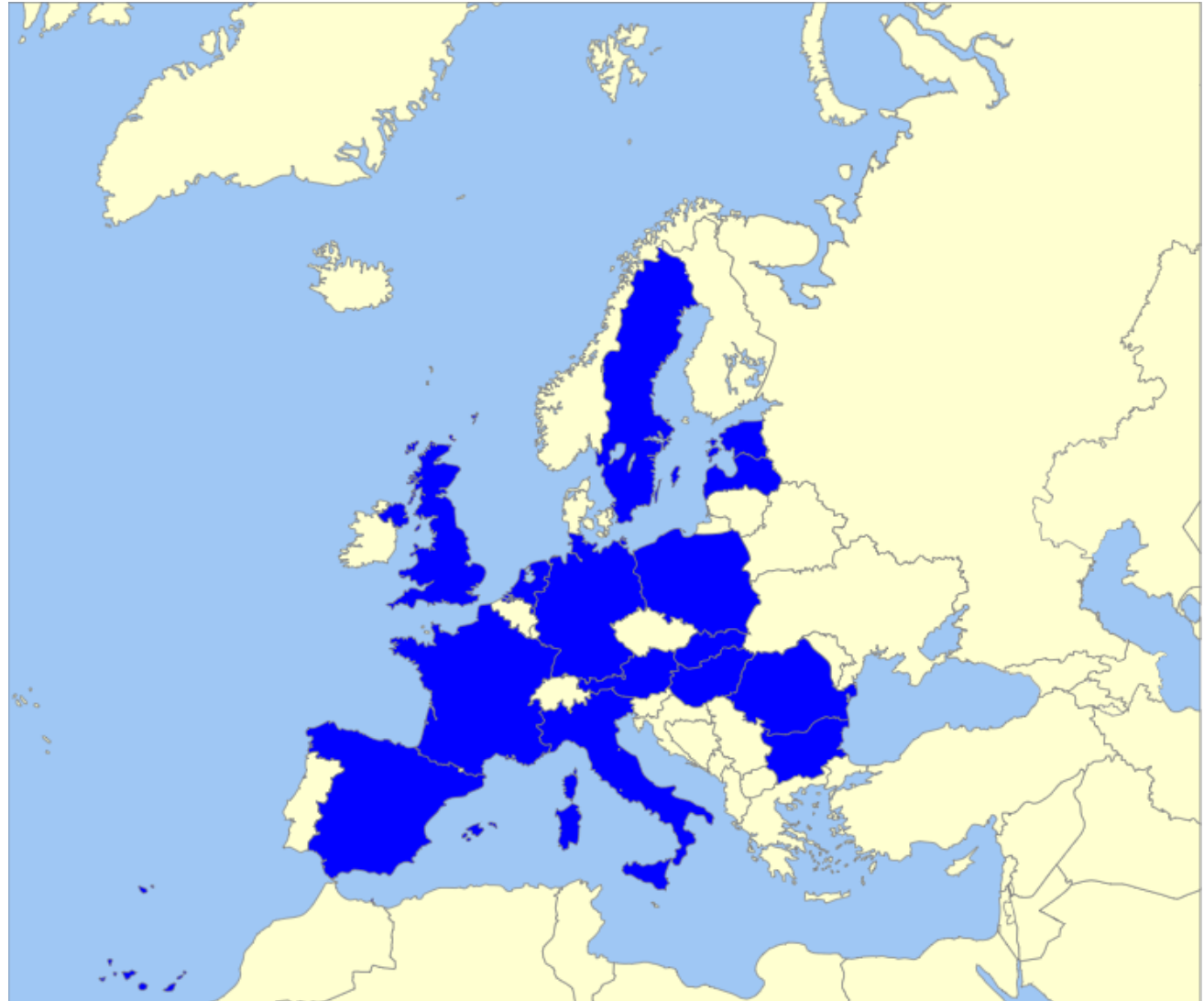
'intensity' of support

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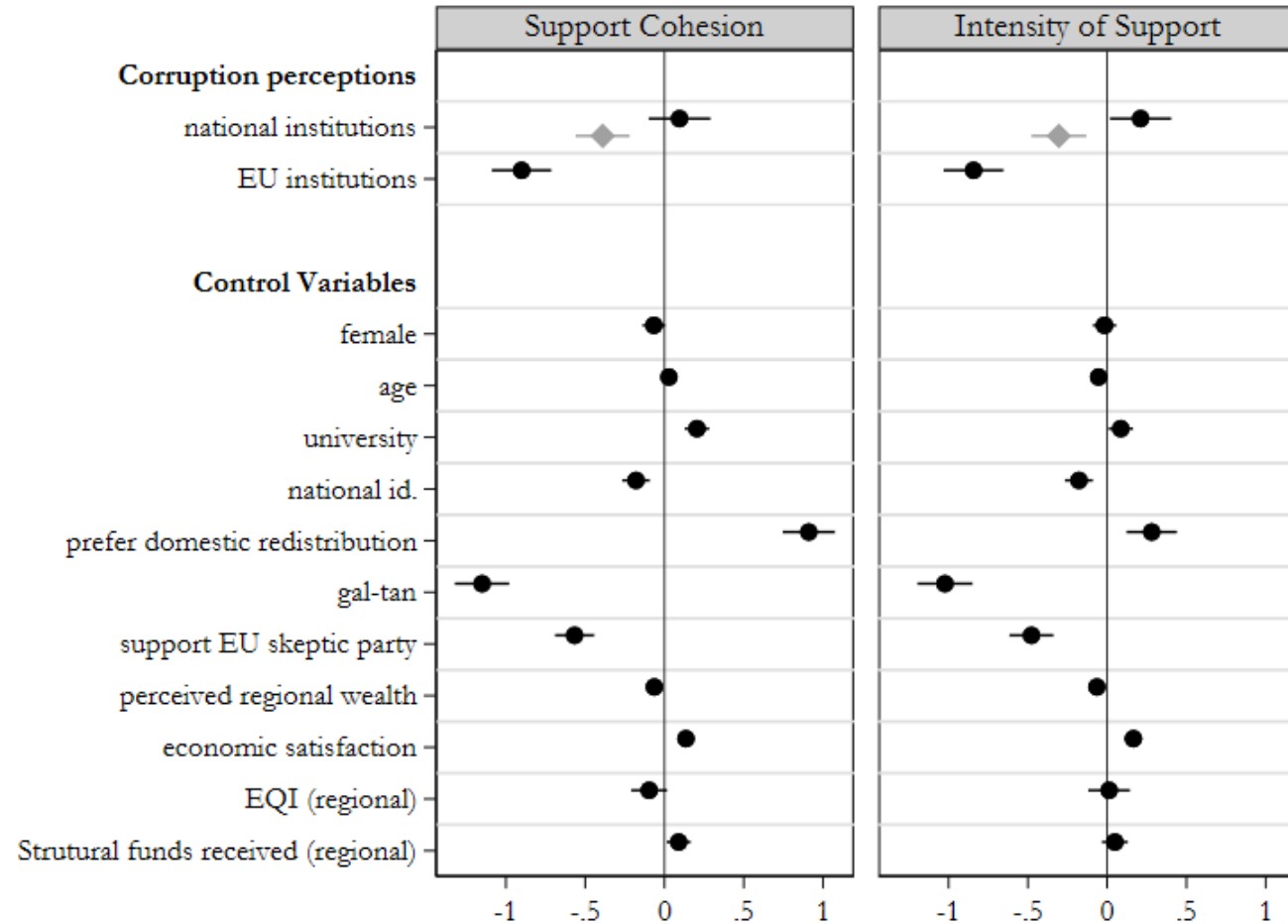


**15 countries in
the sample
(represent 85%
of EU
population)**



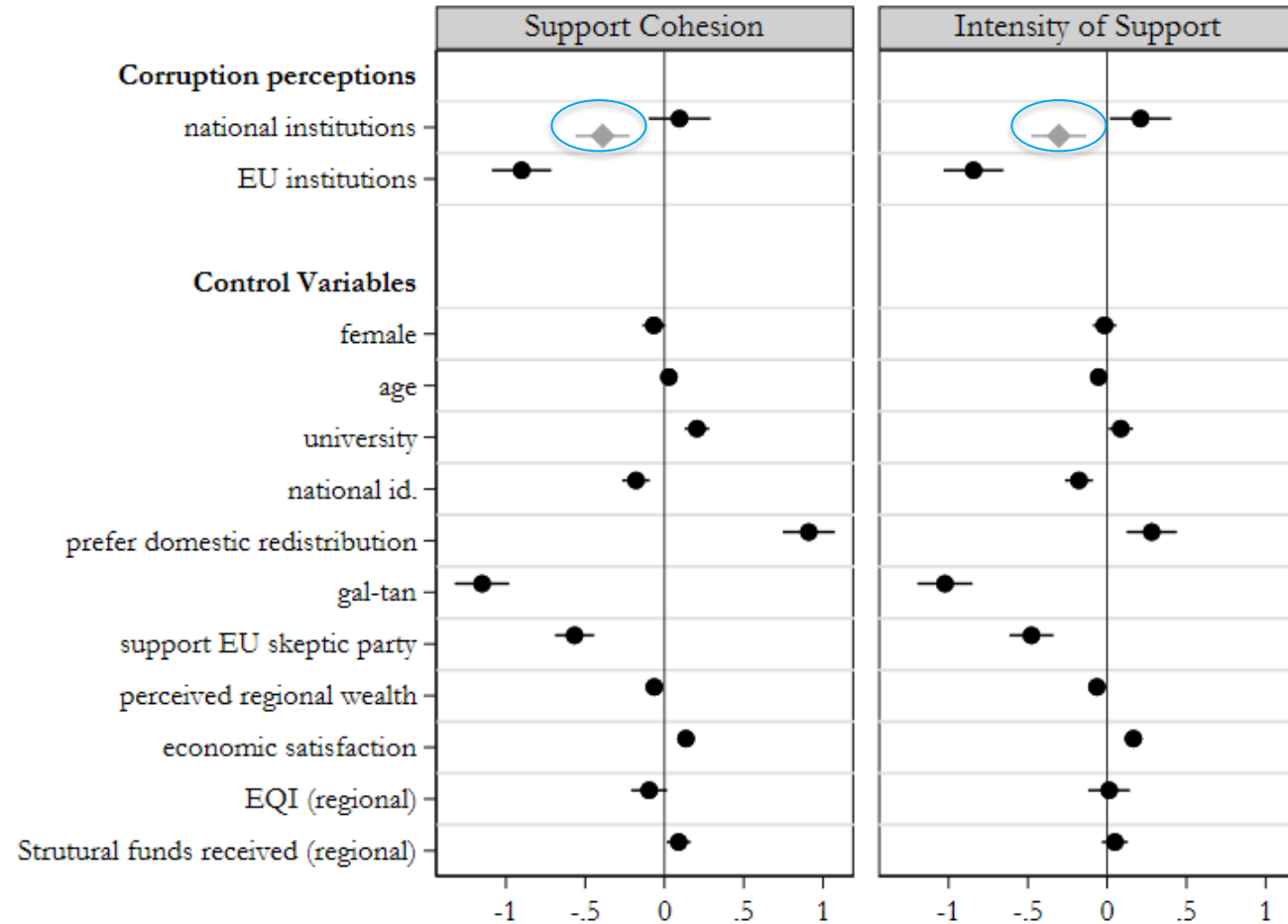
Findings: H1 – micro level perceptions of corruption

- Baseline shows higher perceptions of national corruption = lower support for CP



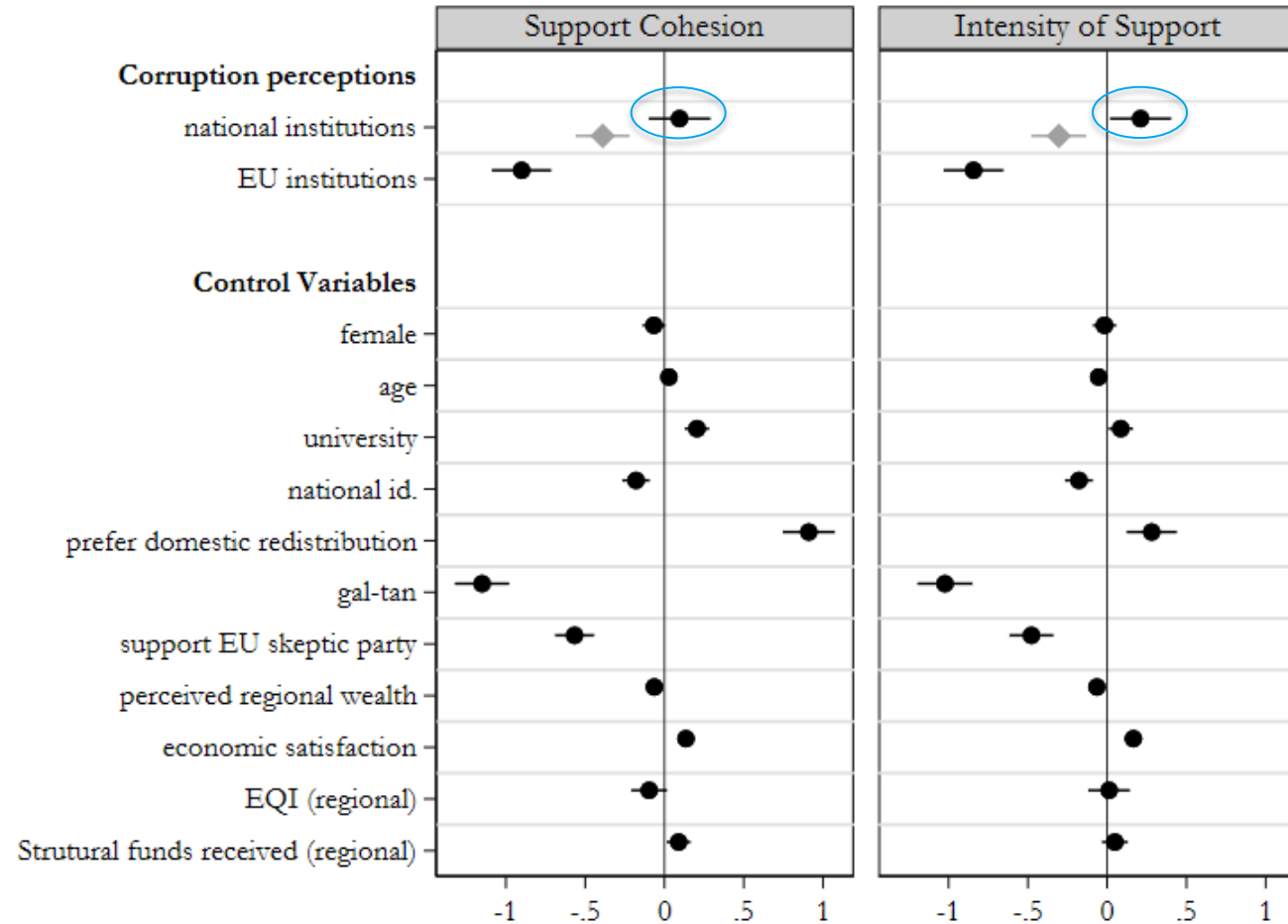
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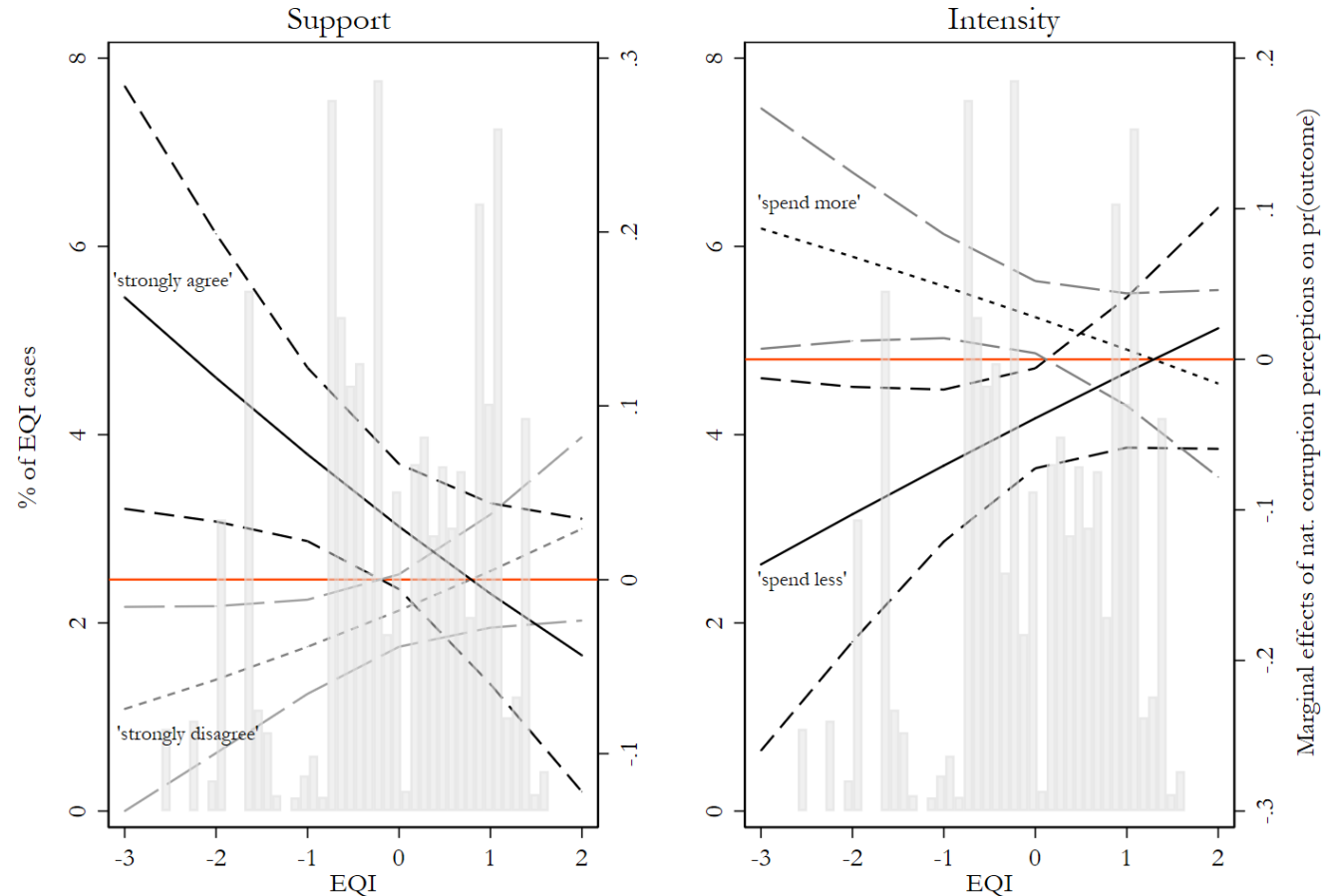
Findings: H1 – micro level perceptions of corruption

- Yet, effect of national perceptions positive when controlling for perceptions of the EU
- Some evidence for 'compensation' at micro level



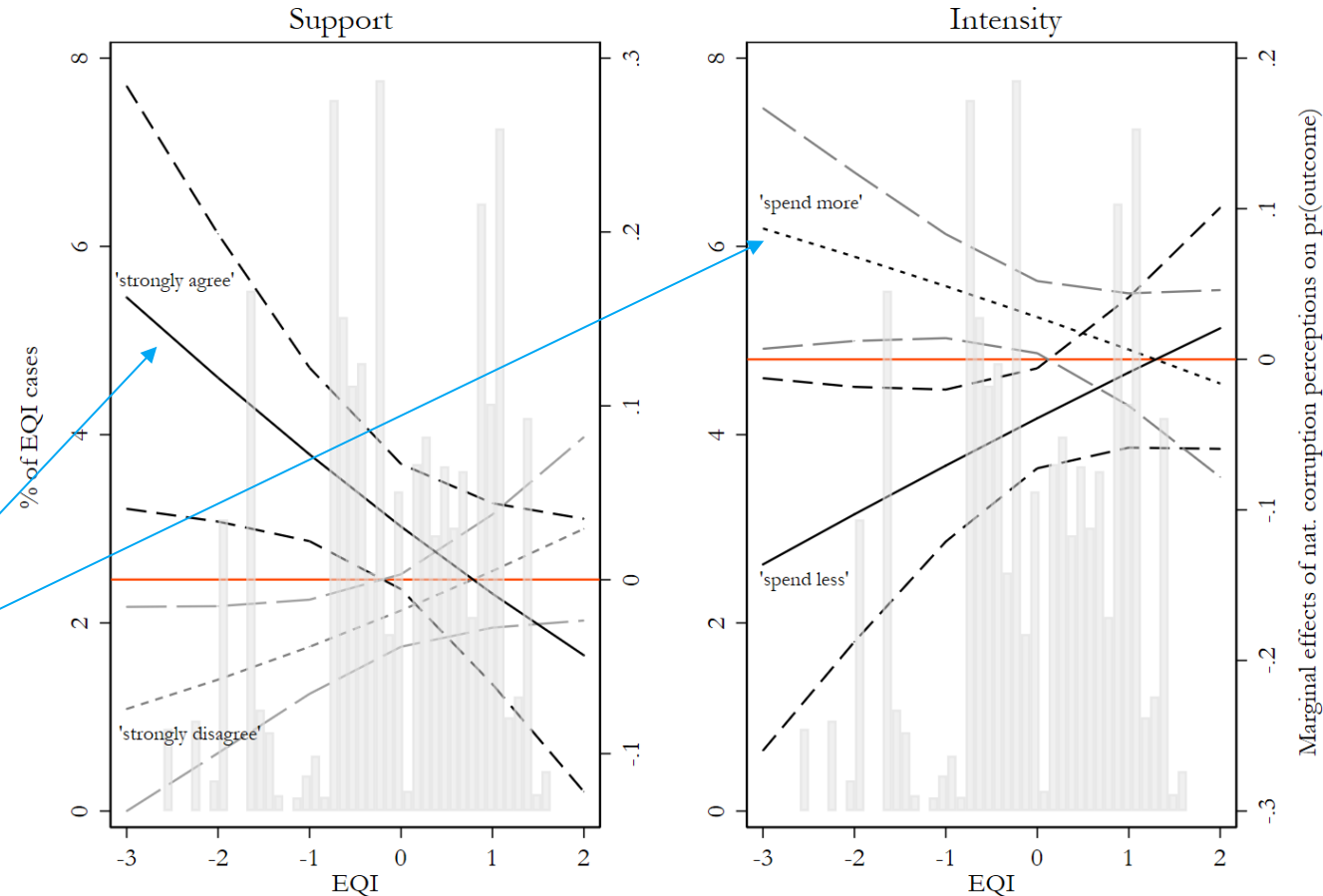
Findings: H2 – interaction with regional institutions

- Does this effect hold over all levels of regional QoG?
- Answer: no – we see 'compensation' occurring only where the QoG of a region is low



Findings: H2 – interaction with regional institutions

- Does this effect hold over all levels of regional QoG?
- Answer: no – we see 'compensation' occurring only where the QoG of a region is low
- Lines show effect of higher national corruption perceptions on support for CP w/95% c.i.



Study 3: In God we trust? Identity, institutions and international solidarity (in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, forthcoming)

- Main Idea: **identity with Europe** is key to explaining variation in preferences for inter- EU redistribution
- Empirical literature generally uses a blunt conception/measure of 'identity' – 'exclusive national identity' (Hooghe and Marks 2004; 2005; McLaren 2007)
- Weakness: captures **only one dimension**, 'strength' vis-a-vis national identity. We argue for a **multi-dimensional concept/measure** (Bruter 2003; Risse 2015).
- We add civic-religious axis (type), with civic identity (Habermas 1992), are the "two distinct substantive concepts of what 'Europe' actually means" (Risse 2015:6)

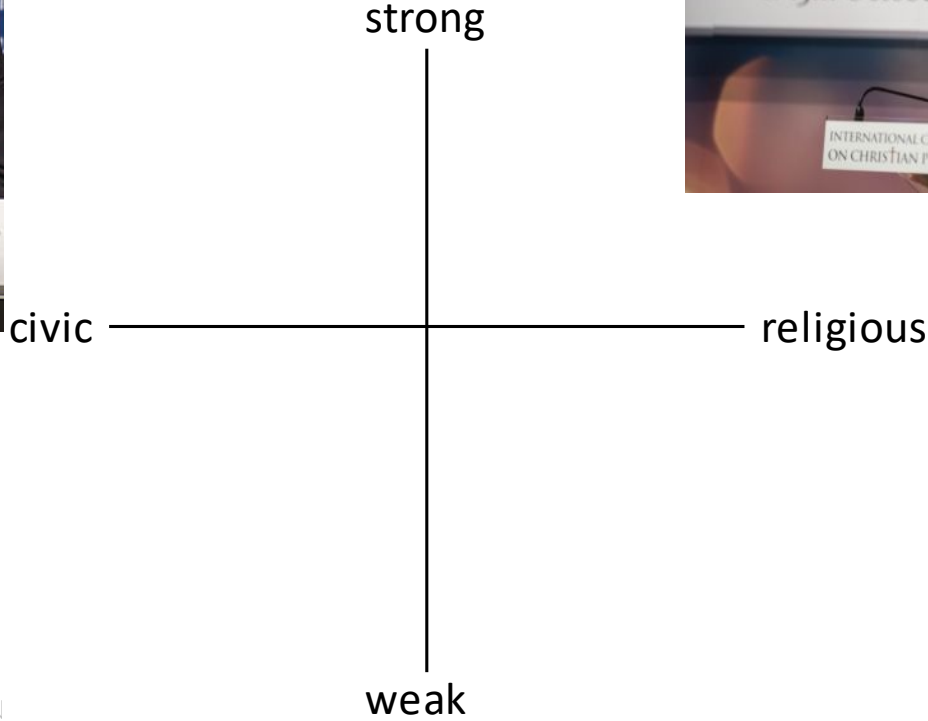


Example

Guy Verhofstadt



Viktor Orban



Theoretical story

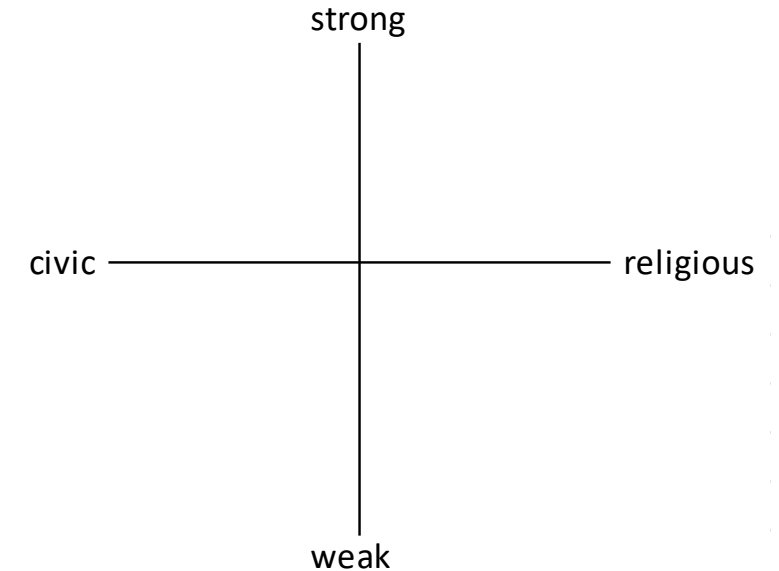
- Strength of European id shown to matter, but type?
- We argue religious id with Europe = less support for CP

Some reasons why religious European id (-):

- a. Inclusive vs. Exclusive identities
- b. Belief that state is not responsible for redistribution (Norris & Inglehart 2014)
- c. Religious identifiers perceive EU as secular (Invernizzi-Accetti 2018)

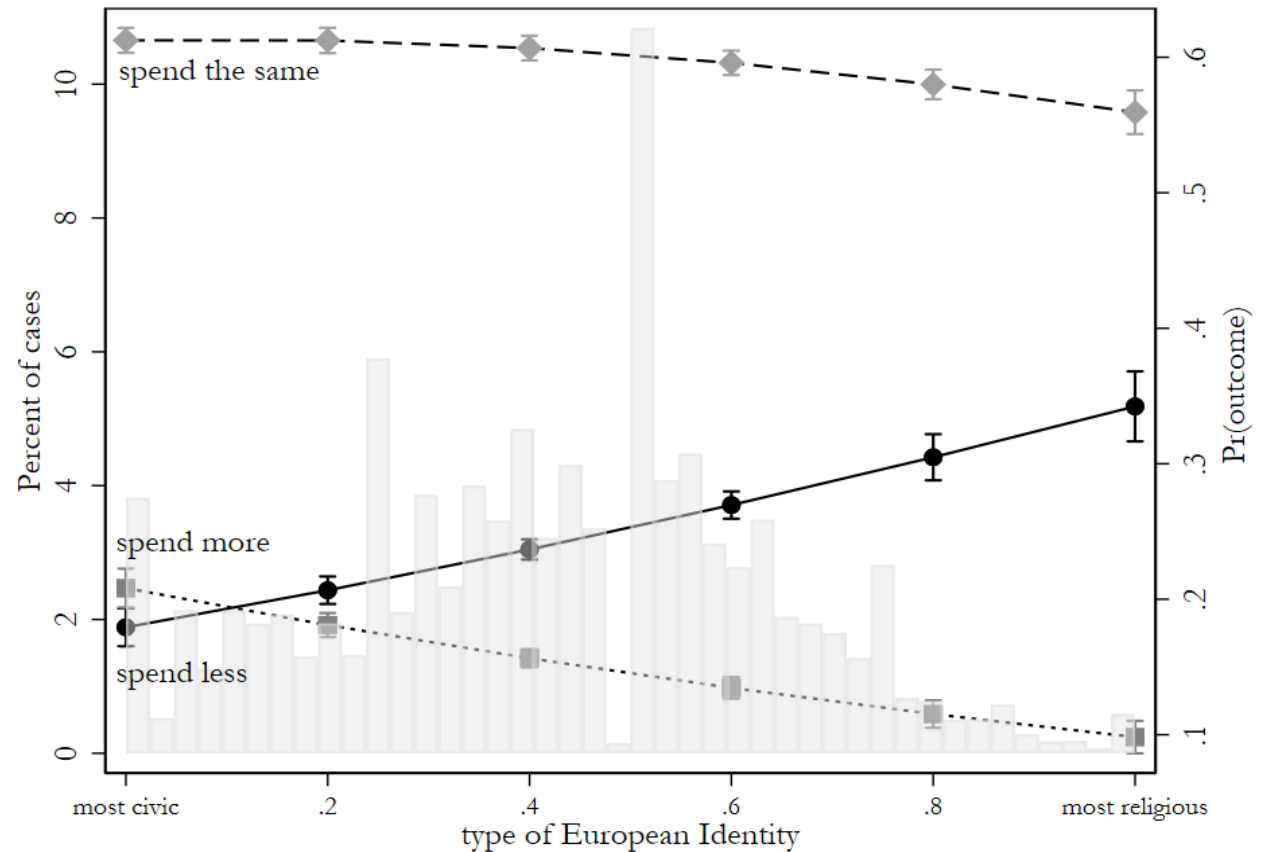
H1. Civic identification increases support for redistribution within the EU, while religious identification decreases it.

H2. European identification is more strongly (weakly) associated with support for redistribution among those that have a civic (religious) identification with Europe



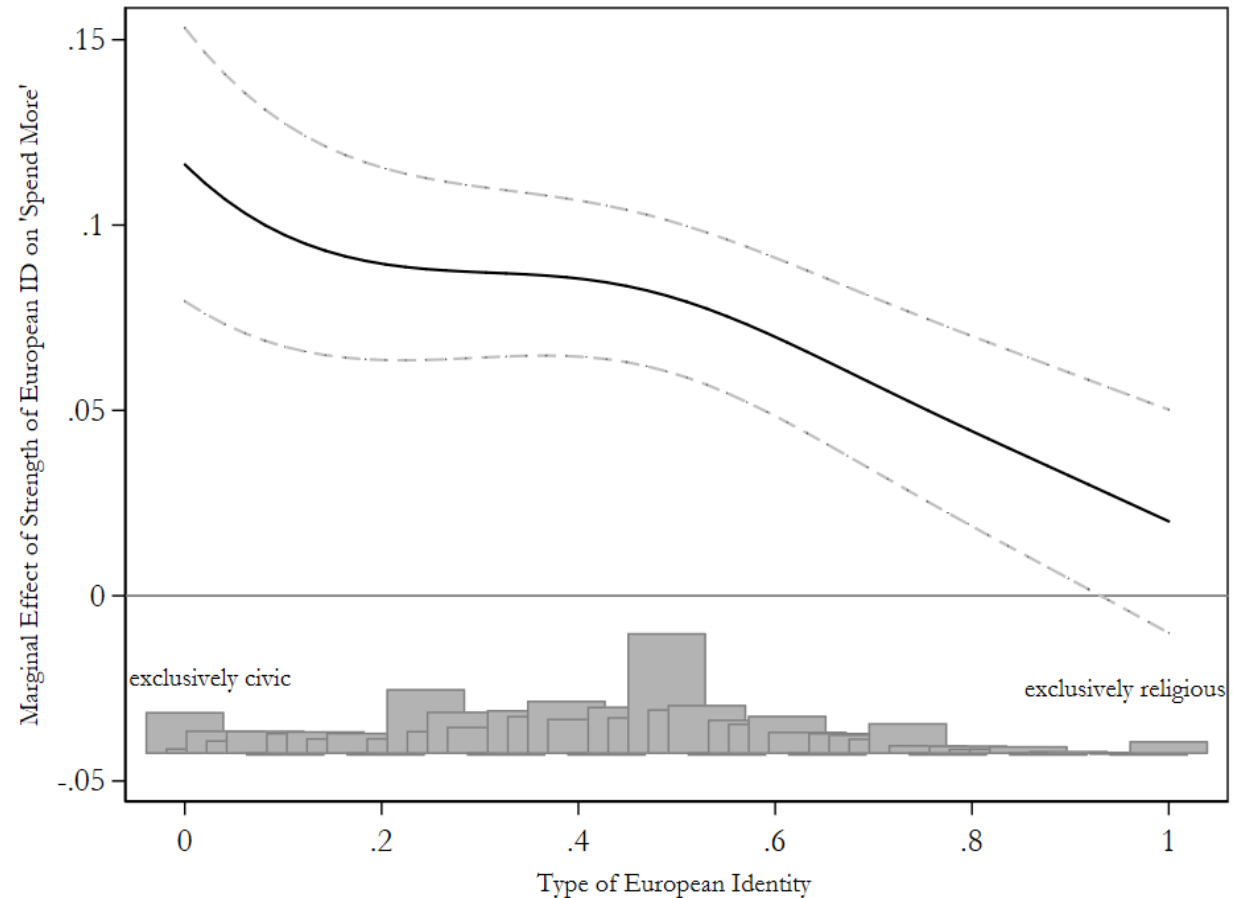
Findings: H1

- DV: 'intensity' of support for CP
- Create a measure of extreme civic to extreme religious European identity for each individual
- civic identifiers more than 2x as likely to say 'spend more' than extreme religious ones
- Extreme religious identifiers nearly 2x as likely to say 'spend less' than extreme civic.



Findings: H2 - interaction between **strength** and **type** of European identity

- Support for H2: the effect of strength of European identity on one's likelihood to say 'spend more' is 6x greater among extreme civics compared with extreme religious
- The effect of strength of European identity is negligible among strong religious identifiers



In Conclusion

Use existing and newly collected survey data within PERCEIVE

First to measure citizen support for Cohesion Policy

Overall, we find that our theoretical lenses – identity & institutional quality – have strong empirical power in explaining support for inter-EU economic solidarity

Findings in sum

Institutional context matters, lower corruption and more impartial areas show more solidarity on whole.

At individual level, perceptions of national corruption increase support for EU economic integration, yet only in EU areas with higher than average corruption

Type of European Identity matters! Civic (inclusive) European identity strong predictor of support for CP, while religious the opposite

Strength of European identity mitigated by religious identity



Thank you.

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Eurobarometer Question

European regional policy supports economic development projects in all regions. In your opinion, should the EU continue to invest in all regions or concentrate exclusively on the poorer ones?

1. The EU should invest in all its regions;
2. The EU should only invest in the poorer regions;
3. Don't know/Not applicable

- EB Question has clear weaknesses for researchers:
 - Lack of 'no support' category
 - Underplays CPs redistributionary aspect (Fratesi 2016).
 - No sense of perceived level of one's regional economic development – subject to biased perceptions



The PERCEIVE Original Survey: identity questions

- **Strength (vertical)** –
 - *People may feel different degrees of identity with their region, their country, or with Europe on whole. On a 0-10 scale, with '0' being 'I don't identify at all, and '10' being 'I identify very strongly', how strongly you identify yourself with the following?: b. Europe*
- **Type (horizontal)** –
 - On a scale from 0-10, where '0' means "not at all important" and '10' means "very important", how important are the following for you in terms of 'being European'?
 - ***The right for all EU citizens to live and work in any other EU country (civic)***
 - ***Having the Euro currency (civic)***
 - ***Having a common European flag and passport (civic) *****
 - ***The Christian religion (religious)***



EU Cohesion Policy in Brief

- Economic and social cohesion = *'reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions'*. (Single European Act 1986)

Structural funds: ERDF, ESF & Cohesion Funds

- **Redistributive and pregressive** in nature – "the only real, significant redistributive mechanism in the EU ... and probably the most scrutinized regional development programme in the world" (Fratesi 2016: 457).
- **Multilevel governance:** EU, MS & regions - represents ca. 1/3rd of total EU Budget
- Its **salience** is clear: Angela Merkel (2011): 'If Cohesion policy fails, then Europe fails.'
- **Controversial** in its purpose and effect -Surprisingly little work on support for this policy – Brexit, major implication for EU legitimacy, future integration

