

# Have your cake and eat it, too? Public opinion, exit precedents, and the perceived costs of non-cooperation

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Although European integration involves gains and losses for countries who sign up to it, a key Eurosceptic argument is that a country can leave the European Union and selectively retain only those aspects from which it benefits. Therefore, limiting the extent to which a leaving member state can enjoy the benefits of integration is an important signal that the EU can send to other countries that may want to follow a similar path. Yet, do voters in such countries understand these signals and adjust their assessment of the EU's resolve not to accommodate differentiation demands? This paper studies the effects of the Brexit negotiations on Swiss public opinion. We exploit that voters in Switzerland have been faced with two EU-related policy proposals, one of which would considerably reduce the high levels of differentiation the country currently enjoys, whereas the other would further increase it. Drawing on a panel survey fielded between November 2019 and February 2021, we show that the UK's Brexit experience had a limited but not negligible impact on Swiss voters' expectations about the EU's resolve, as well as on vote intentions on both proposals. Our findings show that the power of exit precedents in preventing further differentiation finds an obstacle in the current polarization of opinions, thus raising questions about the effectiveness of non-accommodation as a strategy to contain differentiation demands.

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## Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the European Union has come under increasing pressure. Geopolitical shifts, deepening integration and various crises have led to a growing politicization and contestation of EU actors and institutions (Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Hutter et al. 2016; De Vries 2018). Calls for substantial EU reform, non-cooperative politics, opt-outs and even EU exit have become more frequent, and for the first time, a member state has left the Union. What is more, such challenges do not go unnoticed abroad. Rather, they can encourage and discourage support for similar challenges in other member states (Glencross 2019; Malet 2022; Schraff 2020; De Vries 2017; Walter 2021a). These developments raise questions about the dynamics of this process. Do they reinforce opposition to the EU or do they rally support for the EU? Do they increase demand for a “multiple speed” or “differentiated” Europe, or do they buttress attempts to streamline EU institutions? And how are developments in individual countries connected to these broader trends?

In response to the recent crises and challenges it faces, the EU overall has become less willing to tolerate differentiated integration, that is to support the existence of varying institutional rules across states that participate in some EU arrangements (Matthijs et al. 2019). Core state powers of EU member states have become further integrated during the last decade (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018). At the same time, the EU increasingly closes and controls external boundaries, and strives for more boundary congruence. This process of “internal debordering with external rebordering” (Schimmelfennig 2021) has reduced the scope for further differentiation (Matthijs et al. 2019). This process presents a challenge for countries who seek to increase or maintain a “differentiated integration” by selectively opting in policy areas they like to see pooled at the EU level and opting out from those that they prefer to deal with at the national level (Leuffen et al. 2013). Rather than accommodate requests for differentiation, the EU now increasingly insists that the benefits of cooperation can only be enjoyed when the costs are also borne.

This paper explores the credibility of this stance among voters in differentiation-seeking countries. Do voters buy the argument that their country has to choose between either fully signing up to the EU’s rules or not cooperating and hence losing out the benefits that EU integration conveys? After all, this fundamentally contradicts a core tenet of Eurosceptic arguments: the premise that their respective country would be better off if it opted out of the EU as a “package deal”, and selectively retained only those aspects of the EU from which it benefits. At the same time, not accommodating differentiation requests carries costs for the EU as well (Jurado et al. 2021; Walter 2020, 2021b), which creates incentives for the EU to compromise, after all. Voters in countries seeking a more differentiated relationship with the EU thus have reasons to question the EU’s resolve.

Given this uncertainty about the EU’s resolve, this paper pays particular attention to how voters use other countries’ differentiation attempts as a possibility to update their beliefs about EU resolve. We argue that other country’s experiences with differentiation bids, and the subsequent EU response, can provide a useful source of information to voters abroad. The more the EU accommodates other countries’ differentiation bids, the more strongly should voters expect the EU to accommodate their own country’s differentiation bid as well, making them less willing to agree to any institutional proposals that decrease differentiation. This suggests that the relevance of individual countries’ differentiation bids go far beyond the individual case, because it feeds into broader dynamics and creates possible domino effects across Europe.

Empirically, we focus on the case of Switzerland, especially on how Swiss voters responded to Brexit, the biggest differentiation challenges to the EU to date. Although Switzerland is a unique case both with respect to its direct democratic institutions and its special relationships, two characteristics of this case make it a particularly useful case to study the question at hand. First, it is a case where both a reduction and an increase in differentiation were on the table at the same time as the UK was leaving the EU. For one, the “limitation initiative” put a proposal to Swiss voters to renegotiate

or terminate the Swiss-EU treaty on free movement of people, at the risk of significantly lower levels of Swiss-EU cooperation. Second, Switzerland and the EU were negotiating an “institutional framework agreement,” aimed at institutionalizing Swiss-EU relations and dynamically linking Switzerland’s bilateral agreements to EU law, while at the same time offering deeper levels of cooperation. Moreover, Switzerland is a particularly hard case for finding changes in EU-related attitudes. Swiss voters have repeatedly voted on EU-related issues in the past and the issue is highly politicized, so that Swiss voters tend to have rather crystallized attitudes on Swiss-EU relations (Bornschiefer 2015; Christin and Trechsel 2002). Finding any effect of the UK’s Brexit experience on Swiss EU attitudes thus suggests that similar cross-national dynamics are likely to occur in other contexts as well.

We use the particular Swiss setting and an original panel survey conducted in Switzerland between fall 2019 and spring 2021 to examine how the UK’s Brexit experience shaped Swiss voters’ expectations about the EU’s resolve not to accommodate Switzerland’s differentiation requests as well as vote intentions on these two proposals. We find that voters’ evaluations of the British Brexit strategy and their assessments of the impact of Brexit for the UK had a small but not negligible impact on their expectations about the consequences of differentiation-seeking referendums, and on their voting intentions in such referendums. Crucially, the strength of voters’ previous attitudes on Swiss-EU cooperation moderates the effect of the Brexit negotiations on Swiss public opinion.

## **No to differentiation – really? Gauging the EU’s resolve by looking at precedents**

Perhaps the most prominent argument of Eurosceptics seeking more differentiation from the EU is that their country can enjoy the benefits of European integration without full membership or full adherence to EU rules. This argument has been put forth most famously by then British foreign minister Boris Johnson, who in 2016

described his government’s Brexit policy as “having our cake and eating it.”<sup>1</sup> But similar arguments have been advanced by political actors critical of the EU in Greece (Walter et al. 2018a), Denmark (Beach 2021), or Switzerland (Armingeon and Lutz 2019) as well.

For the EU, these arguments create a difficult trade-off (Walter 2021a, b). On the one hand, not accommodating serious differentiation requests (such as the Brexit referendum, the Greek bailout referendum, or the Danish opt-out referendum) carries substantial risks for the EU that the differentiation-seeking countries will no longer, or not more deeply, cooperate with the EU. The reintroduction of trade barriers, for example, is costly for the EU member states, and failure to generate new cooperation gains through new agreements has opportunity costs. At the same time, however, it also faces the risk that accepting a tailor-made, differentiated arrangements and opt-outs to individual countries may encourage similar demands elsewhere (Glencross 2019; Jensen and Slapin 2012; de Vries 2017; Walter 2021a). Such arrangements can thus be perceived as a threat to the cohesion of the EU and the understanding that the EU is a package deal in which all members make compromises to generate cooperation gains (Adler-Nissen 2014).

In a context in which the EU’s boundaries are increasingly contested and in which external rebordering pressures are likely to exceed internal rebordering pressures for structural reasons (Schimmelfennig 2021), the cooperation gains that differentiation enables with more Eurosceptic states have begun to lose in weight relative to concerns that this differentiation may reduce EU stability. As a result, the EU has taken an increasingly inflexibly stance regarding states’ differentiation requests, especially with regard to countries that are not (or no longer) members of the EU, but nonetheless want to enjoy close relations with the EU. For these countries, the EU’s recalibration

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1889723/boris-johnson-joins-forces-with-liam-fox-and-declares-support-for-hard-brex-it-which-will-liberate-britain-to-champion-free-trade/>

of the scope for continued differentiated integration and the costs of non-cooperation is most consequential.

The trade-offs associated with this stance make it difficult, however, for voters (and elites) in differentiation-seeking countries to gauge the EU's true resolve on this question (Walter et al. 2018). Eurosceptics openly question this resolve, usually by emphasizing the cooperation benefits that an uncompromising stance would put at stake for the EU. This raises the question how credible such a stance among voters in differentiation-seeking countries is and how voters in countries faced with an EU refusal to differentiate can gauge the EU's resolve.

We argue that in a context in which the EU refuses to allow for differentiation, an important way for voters in these countries to learn about the EU's resolve and thus about the consequences of refusing to cooperate on the EU's terms is to observe precedents and other countries' experiences with differentiation bids. There are several reasons to think that voters learn from foreign experiences and update their preferences for an uncompromising negotiation strategy that pushes for differentiation, despite the EU's resistance.

First, much research has demonstrated that voters' and policymakers' expectations about the consequences of more or less cooperative behavior affect their preferences for international cooperation (Fearon 1995; Hobolt 2009; Walter et al. 2018). These preferences are intrinsically dynamic as they evaluate an object, the status quo of cooperation, which is continuously evolving. Preferences for a change in the terms of cooperation are thus rooted in a comparison between the status quo and alternative scenarios of more or less cooperation (De Vries 2018). This alternative scenario is hard to predict, however: will it be a form of differentiated integration? Or will the EU make good on its threat not to accommodate requests for differentiation? Especially because the EU has an incentive to hide its true propensity to accommodate demands (Walter et al. 2018), observing its reaction to other country's bids provides important pieces of information.

Second, several studies have shown that voters observe political developments in other countries to form an opinion about policy issues (Linos 2011; Malet 2022; Pacheco 2012). There is now considerable evidence, for example, that Brexit had an impact on EU attitudes in the remaining EU-27 (Hobolt et al. 2021; Malet and Walter 2021; de Vries 2018; Walter 2021a). Likewise, political parties respond to foreign precedents and use them to justify their own policy positions regarding (non-)cooperation with the EU (van Kessel et al. 2020; Martini and Walter 2020).

For both of these reasons, *we expect that observing how the EU responds to other countries' differentiation bids allows voters abroad to glean important information about its resolve, and hence the difficulties and opportunities of pursuing a similar course of action. Based on this information, voters then update their attitudes about potential differentiation bids of their own country.*

Not all voters will be susceptible to this updating mechanism, of course (Walter 2021a). Some voters may not be willing to update their expectations and attitudes, even when the evidence seems to point in an opposite direction (Bisgaard, 2015; Kraft, Lodge, & Taber, 2015). When people hold strong prior beliefs, it is difficult to change their (mis-)perceptions with corrective information (Grynberg et al. 2019; Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017; Taber and Lodge 2006). Instead, people tend to engage in motivated reasoning and to use confirming information to reinforce these beliefs while at the same time discarding contradicting information. In our context, this suggests that *the effects of observing the EU's response to another country's differentiation bid is likely to be weaker both among staunch opponents and staunch supporters of a closer relationship with the EU.* In contrast, individuals with less strongly held beliefs about their country's relation with the EU can be expected to be more susceptible to the new information provided by an actual disintegration process.

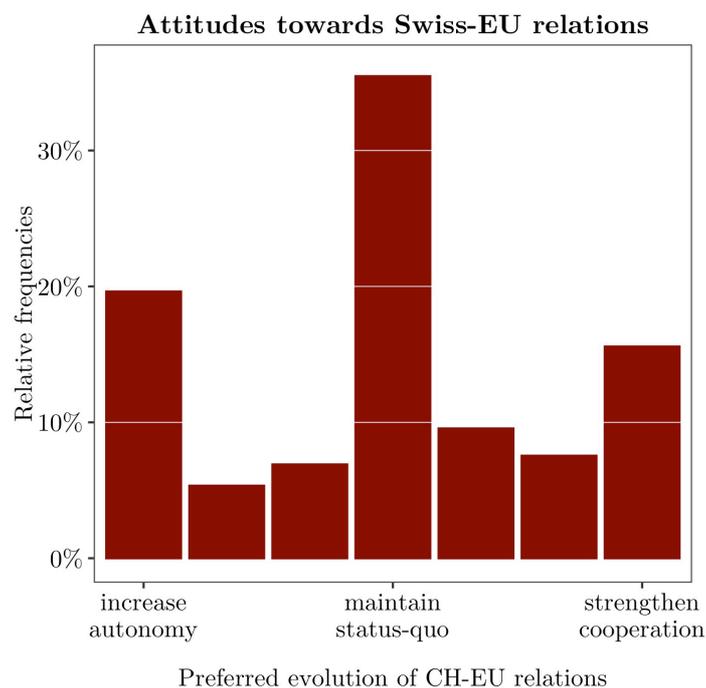
## Case study: Switzerland between differentiated integration and rebordering

We empirically examine this argument for the case of Switzerland, which has had for decades a close but differentiated relationship with the EU. In 1992, Swiss voters rejected European Economic Area membership. Subsequently, Switzerland and the EU created a tight web of over 120 bilateral treaties that allow for close cooperation on issues as diverse as market access, research cooperation and free movement, and even membership in the Schengen/Dublin regime (Oesch 2020). The bilateral treaties have allowed Switzerland to cooperate closely with the EU without joining the EU. By creating its own *Europe à la carte*, or a ‘customized quasi-membership’ (Kriesi and Trechsel 2008), Switzerland became a posterchild of differentiated integration.

Today Swiss voters realize the benefit of such differentiated relationship. In our original survey, we inquired respondents about their preferred evolution of Swiss-EU relations by asking them to place themselves on a scale that goes from 1 (increase autonomy from the EU) to 7 (increase cooperation with the EU), where 4 indicated support for maintaining the status-quo. Figure 1 shows that more than a third of respondents exhibit a strong preference for the status-quo. However, the two peaks at the extreme ends of the distribution also indicate a strong polarization of attitudes. This reveals that the high politicization of the European integration issue in the Swiss political debate over the last thirty years has left a mark on voters’ attitudes (Bornschier 2015; Kriesi 2007).

Against this background, two dynamics have emerged in Switzerland in recent years, which make the country a fascinating case to study the question at hand. The first dynamic is a push for more Swiss differentiation. The second one reflects the EU’s attempt to reduce it.

Figure 1 – Public opinion on Swiss-EU relations



*Increasing differentiation: the “Limitation initiative”*

Following a similar failed attempt, Swiss Euroskeptics launched an initiative, the “Limitation initiative” which, if approved, would have obliged the Swiss government to renegotiate the free movement treaty with the EU, and to unilaterally withdraw from the treaty should these renegotiations be unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> This initiative was put to a vote in 2020 (and rejected at the polls). Before the vote, the EU had warned that in case of approval it would have invoked the “guillotine clause”, a legal clause that stipulated that if one of the main seven bilateral treaties was to be terminated, all of them would cease to apply. The Limitation initiative thus effectively confronted

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<sup>2</sup> Swiss-EU relations hit their first major crisis in over 20 years when in 2014 Swiss voters accepted the so-called “Against Mass Immigration”-initiative. The initiative called for the introduction of quotas on EU immigration – a provision clearly at odds with the bilateral treaty on free movement – and as such was never implemented (Armingeon and Lutz 2019). The “Limitation initiative” is a second, more binding attempt.

Table 1 – Changes in vote on limitation initiative and changes in expected EU accommodation (October/November 2019 – September 2020)

Change in expected EU accommodation	Change in vote intention for limitation initiative (waves 1–2)			
	Cooperative shift	Unchanged	Non-cooperative shift	Total
	From Yes to No		From No to Yes	
Less accommodative	36.1 % (35)	20.2 % (268)	9.1 % (5)	20.8 % (308)
Unchanged	53.6 % (52)	64.5 % (857)	54.5 % (30)	63.4 % (939)
More accommodative	10.3 % (10)	15.3 % (204)	36.4 % (20)	15.8 % (234)
Total	100 % (97)	100 % (1329)	100 % (55)	100 % (1481)

Switzerland with a choice between continued adherence to EU immigration rules, and the possibility of losing access to the EU’s Single market overnight.

Voters opinion on the initiative were strongly crystallized already before the campaign. Our own data show that almost 90% of the people – 1329 out of 1481 respondents in our survey – maintained their position in the ten months before the vote (see the raw at the bottom of Table 1). This is a sign of the high stability of voters’ opinion on such a politicized issue in Swiss politics. At the same time, the column on the right end of Table 1 shows the evolution of people’s expectations about the consequences of the vote. While 63.4 percent did not change their mind about the EU’s reaction, the share of people whose expectation became less optimistic (i.e., expecting the EU to be less accommodative) is slightly bigger than those whose expectations became rosier (21% vs. 16%). This suggests that the EU’s resolve not to accommodate Swiss demands for more differentiation was not equally received by all Swiss voters. This is not surprising given that many voices in the Swiss debate questioned the EU’s resolve to not accommodate Switzerland. For example, the supporters of the limitation initiative argued that Switzerland would be able to negotiate a more differentiated relationship

as an equal partner and assert its interests because “the EU [was] just as dependent on us as we are on it.”<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 also shows the strong correlation between changes in vote intentions on the Limitation initiative and changes in the expected EU accommodation (in terms of Swiss access to the internal market). As we can see, of the 97 people (6.6%) who decided to vote against the initiative (cooperative shift), more than one third expected the EU to be less accommodative in September 2020 compared to ten months before. Conversely, around one third of the people who moved from opposition to support (non-cooperative shift) expected the EU to be more accommodative in September 2020 compared to October/November 2019. Altogether, these numbers show a very high stability of both expectations and vote choice which makes it unlikely to find significant effects. However, they also suggest that among the few of changed their vote intentions a good share also updated their expectations about the EU’s resolve.

### *Reducing differentiation: the “institutional framework agreement”*

The second dynamic that has marked Swiss-EU relations in recent years reflects the EU’s attempts to reduce differentiation and to instead encourage more congruence, especially among participants in the Single Market. In 2014, Switzerland and the EU began to negotiate about a new agreement that would put the Swiss-EU relationship on a more institutionalized footing. The idea was to institutionally bundle the 120 existing and future bilateral agreements and dynamically link them to future legal developments in the EU by means of an “institutional framework agreement” (InstA). With its goal to consolidate and further develop the bilateral path taken by Swiss-EU relations, the framework agreement can be seen as a rebordering attempt by the EU, because it would have increased the congruence of Swiss law with EU law.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.begrenzungsinitiative.ch/faktencheck/>

The framework agreement was contested in Swiss politics since the start of negotiations and ultimately failed when the Swiss government pulled out of the negotiations in spring 2021. The EU has announced that it is unwilling to update any existing agreements or conclude new ones until a framework agreement is in place. For Switzerland this is problematic because the status quo can only be maintained if both parties pursue this path. If the EU follows through on its threat of refusing to update existing agreements, then the status quo of bilateral relations will slowly erode. In the short to medium term this means new certification hurdles for the medtech and machinery industries, reduced electricity security and a relegation of Swiss researchers to third-country status in Horizon Europe – and some of these hurdles have already been erected. In the long run, Swiss-EU cooperation could fall far below current levels. As a result, Switzerland is confronted with a choice between signing up to a less differentiated new model of Swiss-EU relations or letting cooperation with the EU erode.

Swiss voters' preferences on the framework agreement and their expectations of an erosion of the bilateral treaties reflect this dynamic. Table 2 shows the correlation between changes in vote intentions on the framework agreement and changes in expected consequences of a rejection of such agreement (in terms of evaluation of an erosion of the bilateral treaties) based on the first and third wave of our panel survey. The bottom row of Table 2 shows the share of respondents in our panel survey who changed their mind on the framework between October/November 2019 and February 2021. Again, we find a high degree of stability of voting intentions on a hypothetical referendum on the framework agreement. Between fall 2019 and winter 2021, 1080 out of 1285 respondents (84%) did not change their mind. At the same time, the share of non-cooperative switches is larger than the share of cooperative ones (10% vs. 6). An important difference we observe when we analyze change between the first and the third wave of our panel is the higher share of people who update their expectations of non-cooperative differentiation bids, with 20% of our respondents becoming more pessimistic and 24% more optimistic. This clearly shows that in the fifteen months

Table 2 – Changes in vote on the framework agreement and changes in expected consequences of an erosion of bilateral treaties (Oct./Nov. 2019 – February 2021)

Change in vote on framework agreement (waves 1-3)				
Change in evaluations of erosion of bilateral treaties	Cooperative shift	Unchanged	Non-cooperative shift	Total
	From No to Yes		From Yes to No	
More negative	28.6 % (22)	19.7 % (213)	16.4 % (21)	19.9 % (256)
Unchanged	53.2 % (41)	56.9 % (614)	53.9 % (69)	56.3 % (724)
More positive	18.2 % (14)	23.4 % (253)	29.7 % (38)	23.7 % (305)
Total	100 % (77)	100 % (1080)	100 % (128)	100 % (1285)

covered by our survey the EU was not able to fully convince Swiss voters that a failure to sign up to the framework agreement would have derailed Swiss-EU relations. As the Swiss president Guy Parmelin put it when the government decided to terminate the negotiations on the framework agreement, “the EU would damage itself by torpedoing trade relations with one of its most important trading partners.”<sup>4</sup>

Disaggregating these figures, we observe that 30% of the voters who decided to change their vote against the framework agreement thought that the consequences of an erosion of the bilateral treaties would be more positive in February 2021 than in the autumn of 2019. Conversely, among those who changed their vote in favor of the framework agreement, 29% believed the consequences of an erosion of the bilateral treaties to be more negative in the third wave of our survey compared to the first one.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Guy Parmelin, NZZ, May 29, 2021. <https://nzzas.nzz.ch/schweiz/rahmenabkommen-parmelin-verteidigt-abbruch-der-verhandlungen-ld.1627715>

Again, this confirms the strong link between people’s support for differentiation and their expectations about the consequences of such policy proposals.

## **Research design: Swiss-EU relations and Brexit negotiations**

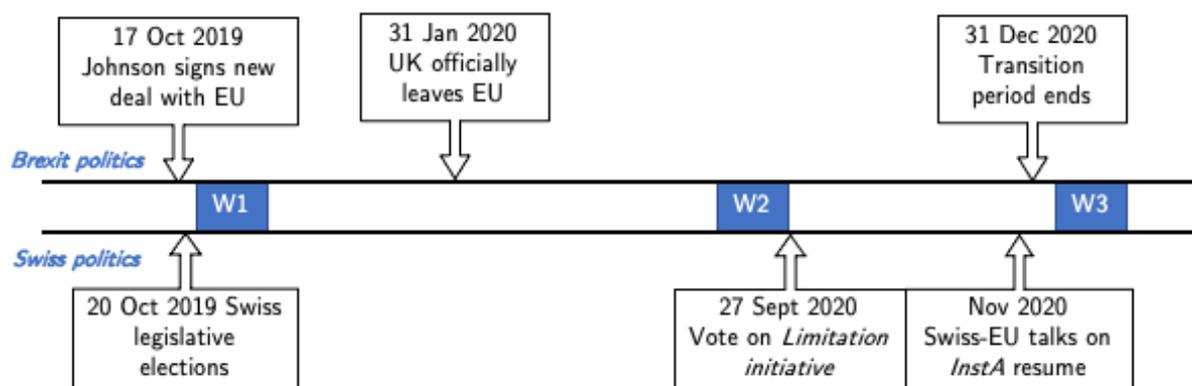
Switzerland allows us to test our argument in a setting in which concrete policy proposals to both deepen Swiss-EU relations (the framework agreement) or to differentiate further (the limitation initiative) have been high up on the political agenda. Public opinion is particularly meaningful in the case of Switzerland, as Swiss voters regularly vote on proposals concerning Swiss-EU relations. As a direct democracy, no major international treaty can be ratified in Switzerland without an affirmative referendum vote. This context makes it possible to elicit vote intentions on actual, concrete, upcoming direct democratic votes, rather than voters’ preferences on broad policy issues.

An additional aspect makes this case particularly interesting for our purposes. Both policy proposals were debated and discussed against the backdrop of the Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU. The Brexit negotiations thus provided Swiss voters with a unique opportunity to observe the EU’s willingness to accommodate the UK’s differentiation requests. At some points in the negotiations the EU’s resolve appeared stronger than at others, but ultimately, it proved very strong: The UK was left with the choice to either sign up to EU rules or to seriously reduce its integration into the Single Market – and ultimately chose the latter.

The concurrence of the Brexit negotiations and the Swiss debate over the future of the country’s relationship with the EU allows us to analyze whether changes in people’s perceptions of the Brexit process are related to changes in people’s expectations the consequences of Swiss differentiation bids and in their voting intentions. Therefore, we fielded an online panel survey among the voting-age Swiss population. The survey was implemented as a web survey (CAWI) by the polling company gfs.bern and relies on

its internet panel to recruit respondents using quotas for age, gender, and language region. The data is weighted based on language region, age, gender, education, and party affinity in order to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Our study analyzes three survey waves fielded between October 2019 and February 2021 (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup> The first wave was carried out between 25 October and 11 November 2019, right after the legislative elections, and it included 2633 respondents. The second wave was fielded among 1613 respondents from 9-28 September 2020, right before the referendum vote on the Limitation initiative. The third and final wave was carried out between 8 and 28 February 2021 with 1395 respondents, shortly after the Brexit transition period ended. The timing of the survey waves allows us to cover both the vote on the Limitation initiative and the final phase of deliberations about the institutional framework agreement, or InstA, and thus both Swiss efforts to differentiate further, and the EU’s effort to reduce differentiation.

Figure 2 – Timeline of survey waves



<sup>5</sup> A fourth wave was added to the original design for panel maintenance following the postponement of the vote on the Limitation initiative, and is not used for the present analyses as it does not include all the relevant questions.

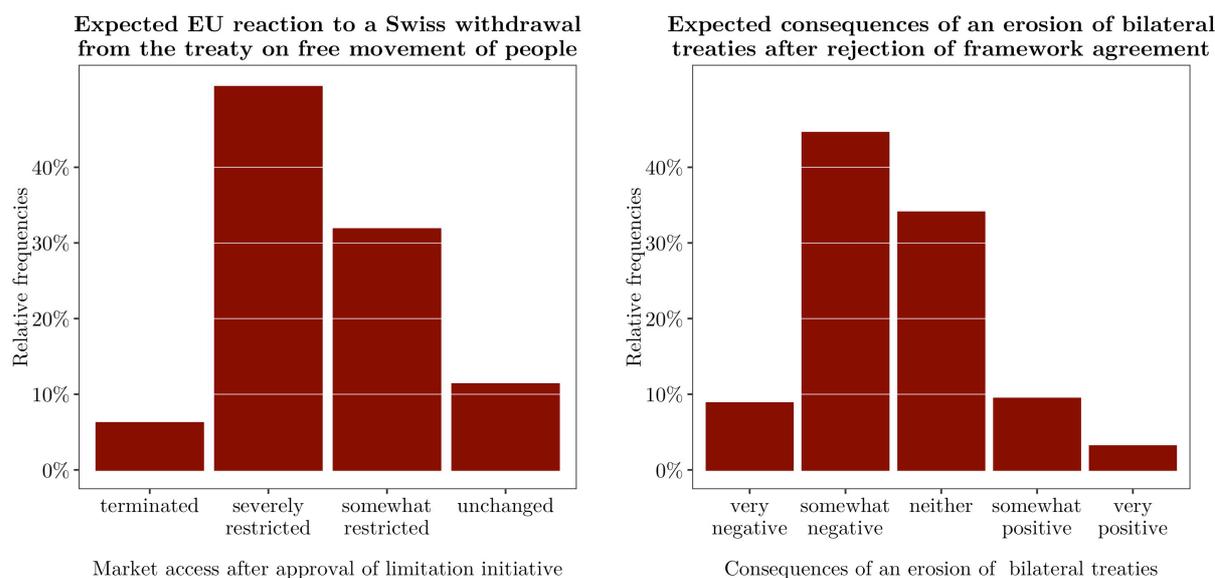
Our hypotheses suggest two sets of dependent variables: 1) voters' expectations about the EU's resolve not to accommodate Swiss differentiation requests, and thus about the consequences of pursuing non-cooperative differentiation bids; 2) voters' support for such differentiation bids. We operationalize each of these concepts as follows:

*Expectations about the consequences of differentiation bids*

Our survey contained two questions to measure the expected consequences of a Swiss refusal to maintain (limitation initiative) or reduce (framework agreement) differentiation. The first one focuses on how the EU would respond to Swiss attempts to increase differentiation with the limitation initiative and the extent to which the EU is resolved not to accommodate such attempt. We examine whether respondents expect the EU to ultimately agree to limitations on free movement of people using the following question: *“If Switzerland terminates the Treaty on the Free Movement of Persons, the EU has the right to terminate several bilateral agreements with Switzerland and thus severely restrict Switzerland's access to the EU market. How do you think the EU is most likely to react? If Switzerland withdraws from the Treaty on the Free Movement of Persons, the EU will (1) terminate / (2) strongly restrict / (3) somewhat restrict / (4) leave unchanged Switzerland's extensive access to the EU market.»*

Using data from the Fall 2019 wave (wave 1), Figure 3 shows that expectations about the EU's resolve vary considerably. A majority of people is clearly pessimistic about the possibility to increase differentiation at little cost. However, one third of respondents believe that the EU would impose little restrictions to Switzerland's access to the Single Market if the country withdraws from the Treaty of Freedom of Movement, and 11% of respondents expect the EU not to react at all. In subsequent analyses, answers to the question are dichotomized for ease of interpretation, and rescaled so that 1 indicates unchanged or only slightly reduced market access and 0 a severe restriction or termination. Models with full scaled dependent variables are presented in the appendix.

Figure 3 – Expected consequences of non-cooperation



Second, respondents were asked to assess the consequences of an erosion of the bilateral treaties between Switzerland and the EU. The question informed respondents that the EU had announced that it would not update existing agreements and would not conclude any new agreements with Switzerland until a framework agreement has been signed and asked them to rate how this would affect Switzerland. Answers were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very negative impact) to 5 (very positive impact). Figure 3 presents the distribution of such variable. While 54% of respondents expect an erosion of the bilateral treaties to be somewhat or very negative for Switzerland, about one third of respondents think that an erosion of the bilateral relation will have neither positive nor negative consequences for Switzerland overall, and 13% even believe that it will have a positive impact. Answers to the question were dichotomized for ease of interpretation, and rescaled so that 1 indicates (very) positive or neutral consequences and 0 (very) negative consequences.

#### *Support for differentiation bids*

To examine the hypothesis that more negative assessments of the UK's Brexit experience are associated with more support for the limitation initiative and less support for the framework agreement, we focus on Swiss vote intentions in two

upcoming direct democratic votes. To measure vote intentions on the Limitation initiative, held on 21 September 2020, respondents were asked *“The popular initiative ‘For a Moderate Immigration (Limitation Initiative)’ calls for the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons with the EU to be suspended or terminated. If the popular vote on the Limitation Initiative were held today, how would you vote?”*. Vote intentions in a referendum on the Framework Agreement were elicited with the following question: *“Switzerland is currently discussing the conclusion of an institutional framework agreement with the EU. Thanks to this agreement, Switzerland would continue to benefit from a large degree of access to the European internal market, but in return would be obliged to adapt to EU law to a greater extent than at present. How would you vote if the referendum on the framework agreement were held today?”*<sup>6</sup>. Answer categories ranged from 1 (definitely against) to 4 (definitely in favor). These answers were dichotomized for ease of interpretation, and rescaled so that 1 indicates support for increasing/maintaining differentiation and 0 opposition to such bid. Models with full scaled dependent variables are presented in the appendix. Vote intentions were measured in wave 1 and 2, and for the Framework Agreement additionally in wave 3.

Actual policy support for differentiation is split in our sample: In October 2019 (wave 1), 39% of respondents planned to certainly or probably vote for the limitation initiative (with 58% against). The initiative was ultimately rejected at the polls in September 2020 with 61.7% votes against the initiative. Likewise, 42% planned to reject the Framework agreement, whereas 53% of respondents planned to vote for it.

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<sup>6</sup> The InstA can only be ratified through a referendum. At the time of the survey there was broad consensus that such a referendum would be held in the foreseeable future. However, after the Swiss government decided to cancel the InstA negotiations in a surprise move in May 2021, the referendum ultimately did not take place.

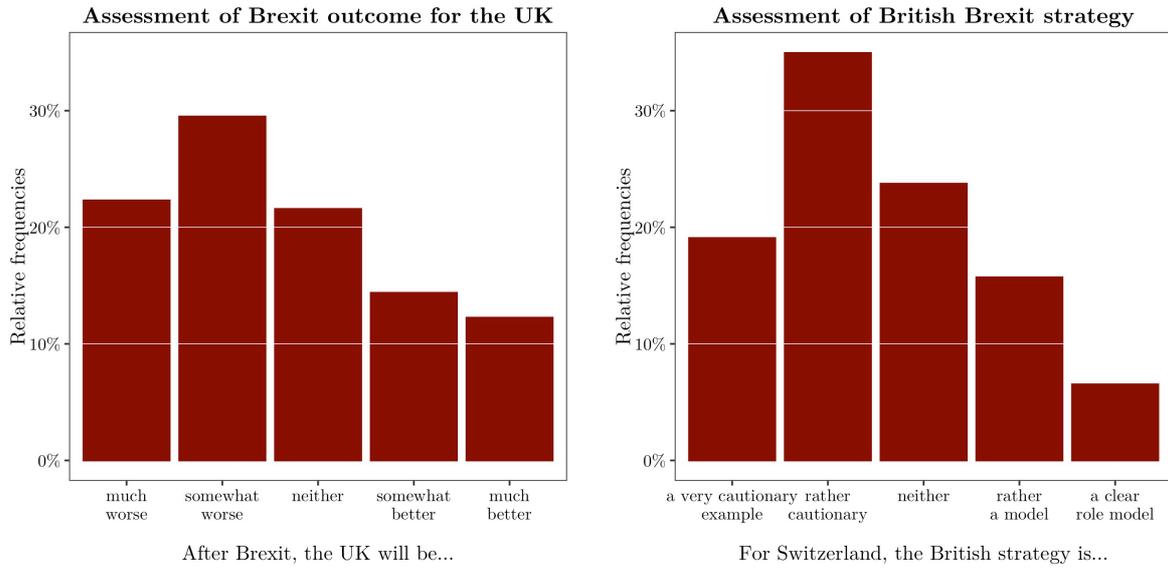
*Independent variable: Outcome of other countries' differentiation attempts*

Our argument centers on how non-cooperative challenges to the EU elsewhere and the EU's response to these challenges is related to voters' assessments of their own countries' bids to maintain or increase differentiation. To examine this argument empirically, our analysis predominantly focuses on the UK's experience with Brexit and the EU's response to this challenge and tracks people's perception of Brexit during the whole period covered by our panel. We use two questions that tap respondents' assessments of the overall outcome of the negotiations for the UK, and the relevance of the British strategy for Switzerland:

- *What do you think will be the overall impact of Brexit over the next 5 years? As a result of Brexit, the UK will be... [much better/somewhat better/neither better nor worse/somewhat worse/much worse].*
- *For Switzerland, the UK's negotiation strategy is... [a clear role model/rather a role model/neither/rather a cautionary example/a very cautionary example].*

The histogram on the left of Figure 4 shows that people's assessment of the Brexit outcome (measured in wave 1) were quite negative, with more than a half of respondent predicting the UK to be worse off or much worse off after Brexit. The histogram on the right of Figure 4 shows that our respondent tended to see the UK's strategy rather as a cautionary example (around 55%) than as role model for Switzerland (around 22%). Overall this suggests that the EU's non-accommodation stance towards the UK did have an impact on Swiss people's perceptions of Brexit. Indeed, the histogram on the right of Figure 4 shows that our respondents tended to see the UK's strategy rather as a cautionary example (around 55%) than as role model for Switzerland (around 22%).

Figure 4 – Assessment of Brexit and its relevance for Switzerland



### Models

Our analyses leverage the panel structure of our survey, which means that the same respondents answered the same questions at several points in time. This means that we can analyze whether changes in people’s assessment of the Brexit experience affect changes in expectations about the consequences of differentiation bids and changes in policy support for such bids. In the analyses below, we will thus present results from two-way fixed-effects models. While such models account for time-invariant unobserved confounders, we additionally control for observed time-variant confounders by including a set of control variables measured at each wave. We control for exposure to Brexit-related news, interest in Swiss-EU relations, dissatisfaction with democracy, economic dissatisfaction, government approval, vote intention for the radical-right SVP, ideology (left-right) and its squared term, support for immigration (a three-item index), populism (a five-item index). Following the expectations stated above, we analyze heterogenous effect by previous attitudes towards Swiss-EU cooperation measured at wave 1 and as such not included as constitutive term in the fixed-effect model.

In the appendix (Figure A1), we present histograms of the within-respondents ranges of the two main independent variables to get a sense of the relevant shifts that occur in the data. If we consider only the first two waves, we observe that a majority of respondents did not change their assessments at all. This limits our ability to detect a substantive effect and sets a bound to a general interpretation of one-unit change in Brexit evaluations in the analysis of the Limitation initiative. We observe larger shifts when we analyze three waves, as we do when we study the framework agreement and its consequences. Here a one-unit change is the median change in Brexit assessments among our respondents.

## **The effect of Brexit evaluations on expectations**

Based on our original survey data, we can test whether the EU's response to another country's differentiation bid (in our case Brexit) has affected Swiss preferences regarding Swiss-EU relations and the concrete reform proposals concerning these relations. We have argued that voters' perceptions of the EU's reaction to another country's differentiation bid influence how much differentiation they expect the EU to ultimately accept for their own country. To what extent did Swiss voters gauge the EU's resolve by looking at the negotiations between the UK and the EU that followed the Brexit referendum?

In our models, we estimate how changes in assessments of Brexit are related to changes in expected EU resolve. Models 1 in Table 3 show that, on average, when people update their perceptions of the British strategy, they do not change their expectations about the EU's response to a unilateral termination of the Freedom of Movement Treaty. Instead, based on Model 3, we estimate that a voter whose evaluations of the Brexit impact become more positive by one-point becomes 4 percent more likely to expect an accommodative reaction from the EU in case of popular approval of the Limitation initiative (i.e., market access unchanged or only slightly reduced). However, only a bit

more than a third of respondents experienced at least such a one-point shift. The others did not change their assessments of Brexit at all (see Fig. 1 in the SI).

We have shown above that looking at the outcome of the Brexit negotiation helped Swiss voters gauge the EU's resolve. Did their perceptions of this previous differentiation attempt by another country also affect their expectations about the consequences of non-cooperative referendum outcomes? We informed respondents that the EU had announced that the current bilateral treaties would not be updated in case of a rejection of Framework Agreement. We then asked them to evaluate how they would rate such a scenario. Do people's evaluations of Brexit affect whether voters see the consequences of an erosion of the current arrangement as positive or negative for Switzerland? Models 5 and 7 in Table 3 show that, on average, assessments of the Brexit impact on the UK and of the British negotiation strategy do not affect people's expected consequences of an erosion of the bilateral treaties.

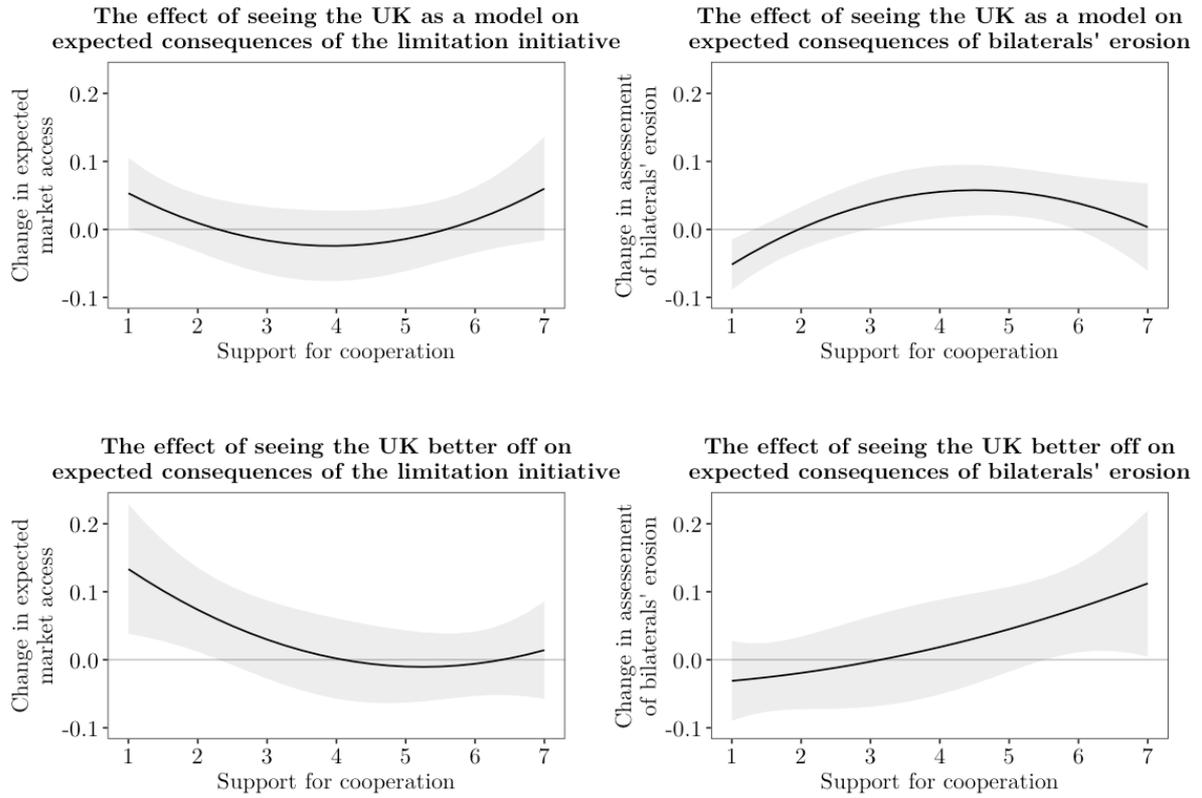
While we have so far only discussed average effect of Brexit evaluations, we argued that voters with less extreme preexisting attitudes are more likely to update their expectations as they may have less entrenched convictions about the EU's reaction. Our results, however, only partially confirm our expectations. The interaction plot on the top right of Figure 6 (based on model 6) confirm that only people with middle positions, or only slightly favorable to Swiss-EU cooperation, change their evaluations of an erosion of the bilateral treaties based on how they perceive the British Brexit strategy. The more they come to see the UK as a cautionary example, the more they are likely to see the consequences of an erosion of the current treaties as negative for Switzerland. When we analyze the impact of assessments of the Brexit outcome on people's evaluations of an erosion of the bilateral treaties (see the plot on the bottom right of Figure 6), the most Europhile voters seem to update their expectations. However, the coefficients of the interaction effect in model 9 do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

Table 3 – The impact of changes in Brexit evaluations on changes in expected consequences of differentiation

	Dependent variable:							
	Expected market access				Positive view of erosion of bilateral treaties			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
British strategy as role model	0.013 (0.017)	0.115** (0.047)			0.013 (0.013)	-0.123*** (0.034)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation		-0.071** (0.032)				0.080*** (0.024)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>		0.009** (0.004)				-0.009*** (0.003)		
Positive Brexit impact on UK			0.039* (0.021)	0.209** (0.082)			0.021 (0.022)	-0.038 (0.057)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation				-0.084* (0.044)				0.004 (0.042)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>				0.008 (0.005)				0.002 (0.006)
Interest in Swiss-EU relations	-0.024 (0.025)	-0.021 (0.025)	-0.007 (0.026)	-0.009 (0.025)	-0.015 (0.024)	-0.020 (0.023)	-0.011 (0.023)	-0.012 (0.022)
Heard of Brexit	0.008 (0.015)	0.007 (0.014)	0.003 (0.015)	0.002 (0.015)	-0.007 (0.015)	-0.003 (0.015)	-0.008 (0.015)	-0.004 (0.015)
Support for immigration (index)	0.017 (0.033)	0.014 (0.032)	0.012 (0.034)	0.012 (0.033)	0.025 (0.026)	0.029 (0.026)	0.017 (0.026)	0.014 (0.026)
Populist attitude (index)	-0.024 (0.025)	-0.023 (0.025)	-0.007 (0.025)	-0.007 (0.025)	0.005 (0.025)	0.008 (0.025)	0.006 (0.024)	0.009 (0.024)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	0.002 (0.025)	0.006 (0.025)	0.012 (0.025)	0.017 (0.024)	0.034 (0.032)	0.035 (0.033)	0.043 (0.032)	0.038 (0.032)
Economic dissatisfaction	0.053* (0.030)	0.054* (0.030)	0.040 (0.031)	0.030 (0.030)	-0.008 (0.023)	-0.004 (0.023)	-0.006 (0.023)	-0.001 (0.023)
Government dissatisfaction	-0.046* (0.027)	-0.044 (0.027)	-0.050* (0.028)	-0.051* (0.028)	0.022 (0.026)	0.020 (0.025)	0.015 (0.025)	0.016 (0.025)
SVP vote	-0.067 (0.080)	-0.059 (0.078)	-0.043 (0.081)	-0.018 (0.075)	0.022 (0.080)	0.005 (0.080)	0.052 (0.080)	0.041 (0.080)
Left-Right	-0.095* (0.053)	-0.099* (0.052)	-0.076 (0.053)	-0.078 (0.052)	0.058 (0.046)	0.064 (0.047)	0.047 (0.046)	0.053 (0.047)
Left-Right <sup>2</sup>	0.007* (0.004)	0.007* (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)	-0.008** (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)	-0.007* (0.004)
Num.Obs.	2661	2656	2671	2663	3491	3477	3503	3489
R2 Adj.	0.607	0.608	0.606	0.607	0.471	0.476	0.477	0.481
R2 Within	0.021	0.028	0.018	0.028	0.014	0.022	0.015	0.021

Note: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. TWFE models with standard errors clustered at the individual level.

Figure 6 – Interaction plots



The interaction plots on the left of Figure 6 display the heterogeneous effects of Brexit evaluations on people’s expected market access in case of approval of the Limitation initiative. Based on models 2 and 4 in Table 3, these plots tell a different story compared to our hypothesis. They show that Eurosceptic voters are the only ones who change their expectations about the market access that Switzerland would be granted by the EU in case of unilateral termination of the free movement of people. As Eurosceptic voters came to perceive the British strategy less as a model, and the impact of Brexit on the UK as less positive, they also became more likely to believe that the EU would not accommodate Swiss demands for further differentiation. These results suggest that the non-accommodation strategy of the EU towards the UK had a limited but clear deterrence effect in Switzerland as it sent a signal to those voters who were more willing to follow a similar path.

## The effect of Brexit evaluations on vote intentions

We have shown that some Swiss voters learned from the Brexit negotiations and updated their expectations about the EU's resolve and the consequences of pursuing a similar differentiation bid. In this section, we analyze whether voters' assessments of Brexit directly affected their referendum vote intentions, in the context of the Limitation initiative that was voted on in September 2020, and in the context of a hypothetical referendum on the framework agreement that was later set aside when the Swiss government dropped out of the negotiations with the EU.

When Swiss citizens cast their vote on the Limitation initiative to revise the agreement with the EU on the free movement of persons, their expectations about the EU's reaction affected their vote choices (see Tables 1 and 2 above). We have documented that their perceptions of the outcome of the Brexit negotiations and of the British strategy helped them form their expectations. Did voters' assessments of Brexit also directly affect their referendum vote intentions? Results from models 9 and 11 in Table 4 suggest a negative answer in the case of the Limitation initiative. The estimated effect of people's changes in Brexit evaluations on their vote changes on the limitation initiative is on average zero. Moreover, we do not find any significant heterogeneous effect of Brexit evaluations across different levels of support for Swiss-EU cooperation (models 10 and 12). Given the high stability of vote intentions on the Limitation initiative, these results suggest that the power of the EU to signal its resolve is limited when faced with entrenched attitudes.

We find more evidence of a 'Brexit effect' when we analyze vote intentions in a hypothetical referendum on the framework agreement, which are less crystallized and span three waves of our survey. On average, voters who came to see the British strategy as a role model were more likely to oppose the EU's push to reduce the current levels of differentiated integration that Switzerland currently enjoys (see model 13 in table 4). Instead, voters' assessments of the Brexit impact on the UK do not have an impact

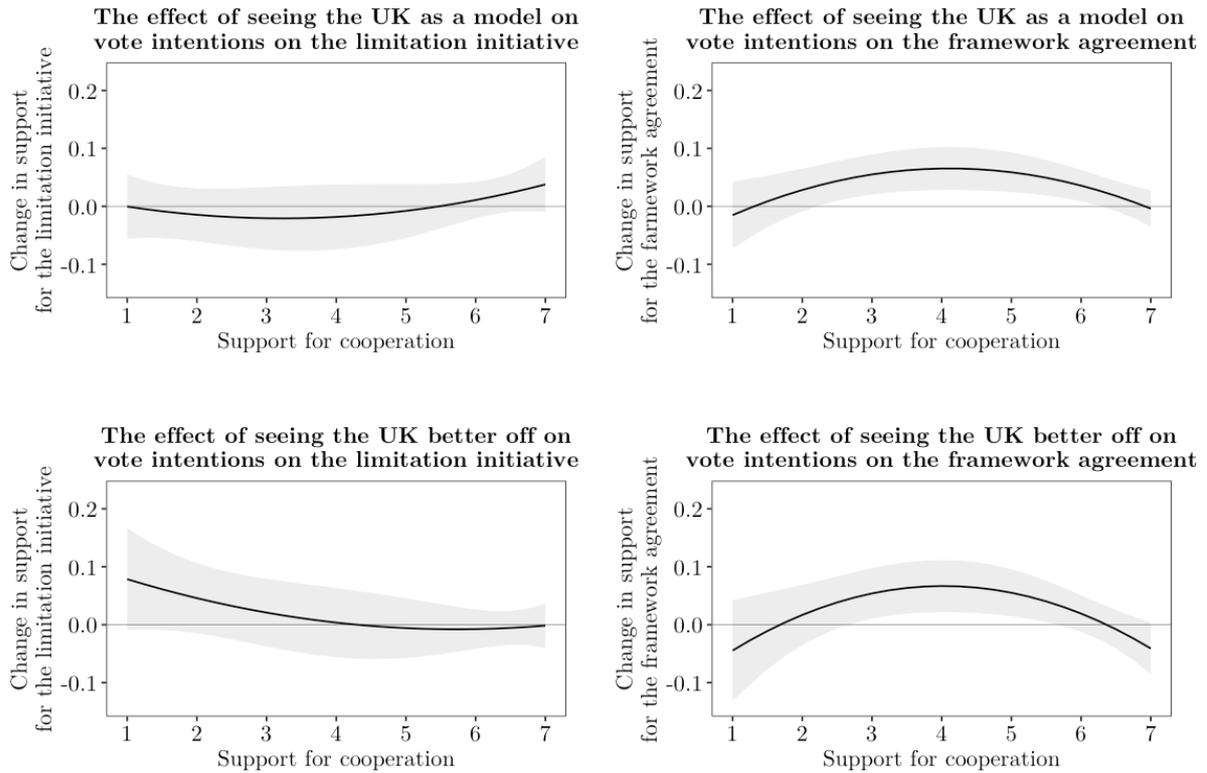
on average on Swiss vote intentions. However, we do find significant interaction that confirm our expectations.

Table 4 – The impact of changes in Brexit evaluations on changes in vote intentions

	Dependent variable:							
	Support for limitation initiative				Opposition to framework agreement			
	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16
British strategy as role model	-0.007 (0.017)	0.022 (0.050)			0.028* (0.015)	-0.075 (0.050)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation		-0.027 (0.034)				0.068*** (0.026)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>		0.004 (0.004)				-0.008*** (0.003)		
Positive Brexit impact on UK			0.006 (0.024)	0.119 (0.074)			0.014 (0.019)	-0.130* (0.075)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation				-0.044 (0.040)				0.098*** (0.038)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>				0.004 (0.005)				-0.012*** (0.004)
Interest in Swiss-EU relations	0.011 (0.014)	0.012 (0.014)	0.004 (0.014)	0.004 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.016)	-0.016 (0.015)	-0.005 (0.016)	-0.013 (0.015)
Heard of Brexit	-0.006 (0.014)	0.000 (0.013)	0.002 (0.014)	0.009 (0.012)	-0.017 (0.014)	-0.014 (0.013)	-0.017 (0.014)	-0.016 (0.013)
Support for immigration (index)	-0.066** (0.027)	-0.072*** (0.027)	-0.058** (0.026)	-0.062** (0.026)	-0.038 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.023)	-0.034 (0.025)	-0.028 (0.024)
Populist attitude (index)	0.040* (0.022)	0.035* (0.021)	0.039* (0.021)	0.032 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.017)	-0.014 (0.018)	-0.007 (0.017)	-0.004 (0.016)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	0.048* (0.025)	0.029 (0.019)	0.060** (0.024)	0.047** (0.020)	0.011 (0.018)	0.014 (0.018)	0.009 (0.018)	0.007 (0.019)
Economic dissatisfaction	-0.036 (0.030)	-0.024 (0.027)	-0.041 (0.028)	-0.035 (0.026)	-0.028 (0.019)	-0.026 (0.018)	-0.027 (0.019)	-0.025 (0.019)
Government dissatisfaction	-0.006 (0.029)	0.002 (0.028)	-0.005 (0.027)	-0.001 (0.026)	0.017 (0.019)	0.014 (0.019)	0.017 (0.019)	0.016 (0.018)
SVP vote	0.068 (0.070)	0.072 (0.070)	0.063 (0.067)	0.082 (0.067)	0.127 (0.079)	0.118 (0.079)	0.142* (0.077)	0.137* (0.076)
Left-Right	-0.043 (0.057)	-0.048 (0.055)	0.012 (0.029)	0.010 (0.028)	-0.015 (0.028)	-0.011 (0.028)	-0.018 (0.027)	-0.017 (0.027)
Left-Right <sup>2</sup>	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.003)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)
Num.Obs.	2678	2672	2683	2675	3525	3512	3535	3521
R2 Adj.	0.759	0.769	0.772	0.783	0.722	0.723	0.721	0.722
R2 Within	0.043	0.040	0.045	0.049	0.027	0.037	0.023	0.034

Note: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. TWFE models with standard errors clustered at the individual level.

Figure 7 – Interaction plots



The interaction plots on the right side of figure 7 show that only voters with non-extreme attitudes towards Swiss-EU cooperation changed their preferences towards the framework agreement based on their updated evaluations of Brexit. Among people in favor of the status-quo of Swiss-EU relations, a one-point change in assessments of the Brexit outcome or of the British strategy (the average within-respondent changes over the three waves) changed people’s preference for the framework agreement by around 7 percentage points: those whose views of Brexit became more favorable were more likely to oppose the rebordering efforts of the EU, while those who came to see the Brexit experience as more negative over time were more likely to be in favor of reducing current levels of differentiation with a new framework agreement. These results confirm our expectations that people with middle positions tend to be more malleable and thus more likely to learn from foreign experiences when making up their mind on their own country’s differentiation bid. The capacity of the EU to signal its resolve and to deter

further differentiation attempts finds a strong limit in the polarization of public opinion, yet it may succeed in reducing support for such attempts among the most persuadable voters.

## **Robustness tests**

While two-way fixed effects improve our confidence in the estimated coefficients by accounting for time-invariant confounders, they are still prone to issues of reverse causation. For example, voters may change their evaluations of Brexit so as to align them to changes in voting intentions to avoid cognitive dissonance. To probe a causal interpretation of our findings, in the appendix we present results from cross-lagged models (See Table A3 and Figure A2). These models amount to a sort of Granger causality test in a diff-in-diff setting. As these models require at least three repeated measures, we focus on voting intentions on the Framework Agreement. Results show that people changed their referendum vote intentions based on their (previous) evaluations of British strategy, but did not change their evaluations of the British strategy based on their (previous) vote intentions. We do not find any significant average effect in the case of evaluations of the Brexit impact (as in model 13 above).

## **Conclusions**

In response to the recent crises and challenges it faces, the EU overall has become less willing to tolerate differentiated integration, because it has the potential to threaten the EU's stability. The EU has therefore a strong incentive to signal its resolve not to accommodate further differentiation demands. In such context, an important way for voters in differentiation-seeking countries to learn about the EU's resolve and thus about the consequences of refusing to cooperate on the EU's terms, is to observe precedents and other countries' experiences with differentiation bids. In this study, we have asked whether and to which extent voters actually learn from previous differentiation bids, and the EU's response to them. We have hypothesized that the

more voters perceive the EU to accommodate another country's differentiation bid, the more differentiation do they expect the EU to accept for their own country, and the more positive are voters' expectations about the consequences of their own country's differentiation bids. Ultimately, this may lead voters to support a similar course of action for their own country.

To test these expectations, this paper has analyzed in detail how Swiss voters responded to Brexit, one of the biggest popular challenges to the EU to date. We hypothesized that the more the EU was perceived as accommodating the UK in the Brexit negotiations, the more Swiss voters would expect the EU to accept Swiss attempts to increase or maintain differentiation, and thus the more optimistic they would be about the consequences of such differentiation bids. As a consequence, we thus expected that the more positive Swiss voters were about the UK's Brexit experience, the more likely they were to vote for the limitation initiative and against the framework agreement, and vice versa.

Our results show that the Brexit negotiations had a limited but not negligible effect on Swiss voters' expectations and vote intentions. We found that some Eurosceptic voters learned from the Brexit negotiations about the EU's resolve not to accommodate Swiss demands to increase differentiation via the Limitation initiative. This would suggest that the EU's signal was clearly perceived among the people who were the most important target as they were willing to follow a similar path. However, voters did not update their vote intentions in such referendum, thus confirming how hard it can be to change opinions on issue that have been highly politicized. In the context of the framework agreement, voters' changing evaluations of the Brexit experience had an impact on voters with middle positions on Swiss-EU cooperation. These voters, who tend to like to status quo of Swiss-EU relations, updated their expectations about the consequences of an erosion of the bilateral treaties, and changed their vote intentions in a hypothetical vote on the framework agreement as a result of changes in their assessments of Brexit.

These findings have important implications for our understanding of European integration in times of internal contestation and external rebordering. First of all, they suggest that the power of the EU to signal its resolve to other differentiation-seeking countries finds an obstacle in the high polarization of attitudes that nowadays marks public opinion on international cooperation in many European countries. Yet, the deterrence effect of the EU's non-accommodation stance does resonate among voter with less extreme opinion and may thus prove effective in reducing support for further differentiation attempts.

These results confirm a strong link between political dynamics at the center and at the border of the EU (Bartolini 2005; Rokkan 1999). While scholars have so far investigated the effect of external debordering on the de-consolidation of the EU's central power (Schimmelfennig 2021; Vollaard 2018), our findings highlight that the contestation of the center also generates political dynamics at the borders. As the EU becomes more contested, differentiation becomes less feasible, especially for third countries. In this regard, this study reaffirms the influence of power imbalance to understand the dynamics of international cooperation. For a long time, the special role of Switzerland had challenged the idea that small states are necessarily dominated by the geopolitical powerhouses (Katzenstein 1980). Yet, the EU's resolve to reduce the scope for differentiated integration has challenged Swiss preferences for the status quo and constrained the available policy options.

Finally, our findings shed new light on the political dynamics that popular changes to the EU create for differentiation-seeking countries. As the EU becomes more contested and differentiation becomes less feasible, voters in countries that have so far benefited of such selective integration reassess the bargaining space and recalibrate the costs of non-cooperation. Given the difficulty to gauge the EU's resolve (Walter et al. 2018), previous differentiation attempts, and the subsequent negotiations, become an invaluable source of information. In this regard, our findings also confirm a growing number of studies who show that voters learn from foreign experiences to form political preferences.

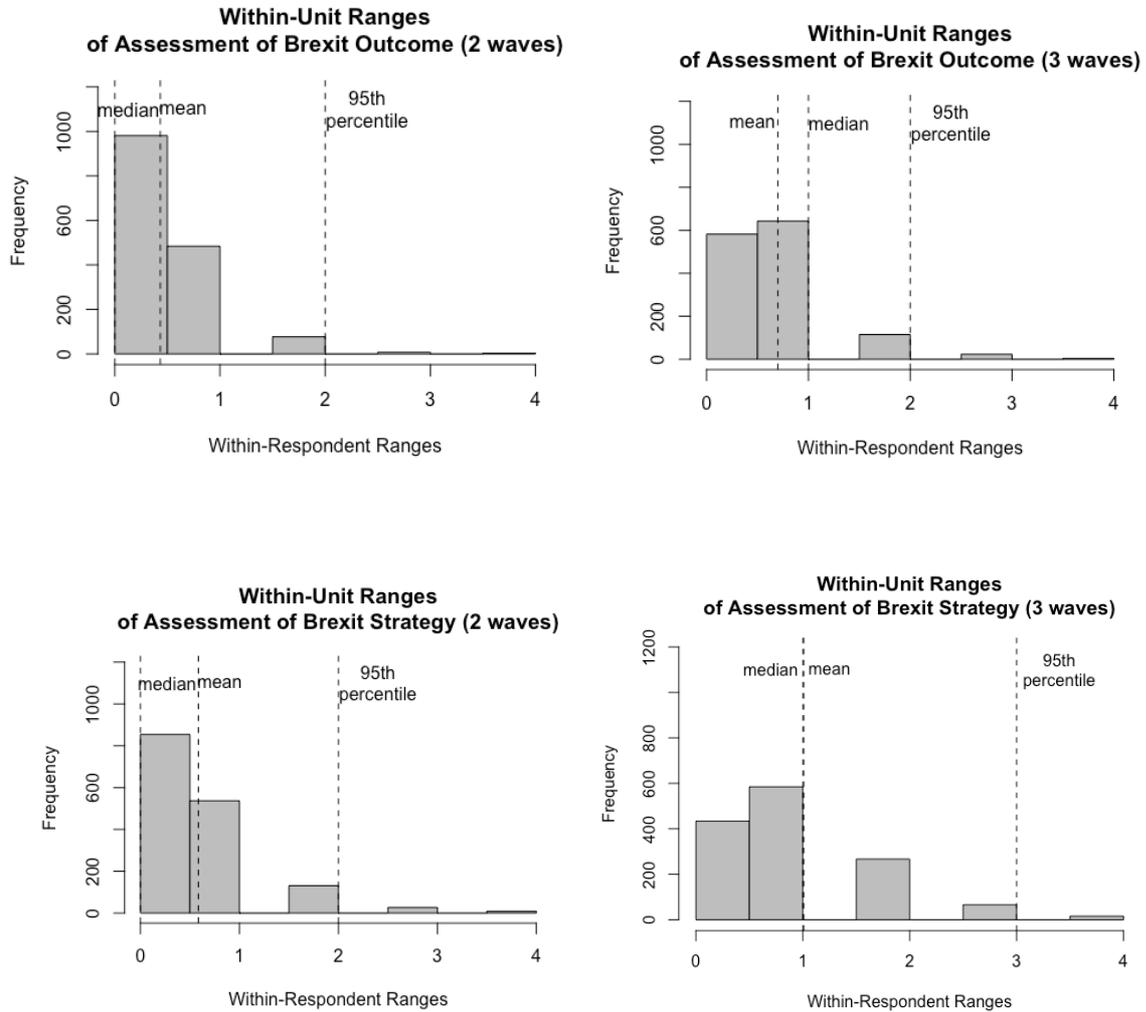
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# Appendix

Figure A1 – Within-Unit Absolute Ranges of the Independent Variable



For a substantive interpretation of effect sizes we show the mean and median within-respondent absolute change in the two main independent variables across the first two waves (covered in the analysis of the limitation initiative) and across all the three waves (covered in the analysis of the framework agreement).

Table A1 – Replication of Table 3 with full scaled DVs

	Dependent variable:							
	Expected market access				Positive view of erosion of bilateral treaties			
	Model A1	Model A2	Model A3	Model A4	Model A5	Model A6	Model A7	Model A8
British strategy as role model	-0.008 (0.025)	0.106 (0.077)			-0.034 (0.027)	-0.338*** (0.097)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation		-0.096** (0.046)				0.176*** (0.053)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>		0.014** (0.006)				-0.019*** (0.007)		
Positive Brexit impact on UK			0.043 (0.033)	0.117 (0.144)			0.036 (0.038)	-0.135 (0.143)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation				-0.005 (0.072)				0.055 (0.076)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>				-0.003 (0.008)				-0.002 (0.010)
Interest in Swiss-EU relations	-0.038 (0.035)	-0.033 (0.035)	-0.020 (0.037)	-0.021 (0.036)	-0.010 (0.038)	-0.021 (0.038)	-0.005 (0.038)	-0.010 (0.038)
Heard of Brexit	0.000 (0.023)	-0.002 (0.023)	-0.002 (0.023)	-0.002 (0.024)	0.018 (0.028)	0.026 (0.028)	0.019 (0.028)	0.026 (0.028)
Support for immigration (index)	-0.019 (0.050)	-0.025 (0.050)	-0.026 (0.051)	-0.023 (0.051)	0.046 (0.057)	0.054 (0.058)	0.038 (0.058)	0.038 (0.057)
Populist attitude (index)	-0.015 (0.040)	-0.013 (0.040)	-0.000 (0.041)	-0.001 (0.041)	0.053 (0.038)	0.058 (0.039)	0.049 (0.039)	0.055 (0.039)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	-0.019 (0.042)	-0.017 (0.041)	-0.001 (0.044)	0.006 (0.044)	-0.003 (0.058)	0.000 (0.059)	0.012 (0.058)	0.003 (0.059)
Economic dissatisfaction	0.063 (0.039)	0.064 (0.039)	0.047 (0.039)	0.037 (0.039)	0.012 (0.043)	0.018 (0.042)	0.019 (0.044)	0.027 (0.043)
Government dissatisfaction	-0.051 (0.041)	-0.047 (0.041)	-0.058 (0.042)	-0.059 (0.041)	0.052 (0.055)	0.048 (0.052)	0.038 (0.055)	0.040 (0.055)
SVP vote	-0.019 (0.123)	-0.012 (0.122)	0.001 (0.120)	0.021 (0.117)	0.016 (0.093)	-0.019 (0.093)	0.061 (0.095)	0.040 (0.094)
Left-Right	-0.133* (0.075)	-0.138* (0.074)	-0.098 (0.073)	-0.096 (0.074)	0.064 (0.076)	0.076 (0.076)	0.039 (0.074)	0.048 (0.075)
Left-Right <sup>2</sup>	0.009 (0.006)	0.009 (0.006)	0.007 (0.006)	0.006 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)
Num.Obs.	2661	2656	2671	2663	3491	3477	3503	3489
R2 Adj.	0.651	0.649	0.649	0.647	0.479	0.486	0.476	0.480
R2 Within	0.013	0.020	0.012	0.016	0.013	0.027	0.012	0.018

Note: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. TWFE models with standard errors clustered at the individual level.

Table A2 – Replication of Table 4 with full scaled DVs

	Dependent variable:							
	Support for limitation initiative				Opposition to framework agreement			
	Model A9	Model A10	Model A11	Model A12	Model A13	Model A14	Model A15	Model A16
British strategy as role model	0.039 (0.042)	-0.007 (0.127)			0.052*** (0.020)	-0.112* (0.063)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation		0.032 (0.083)				0.097*** (0.035)		
British strategy : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>		-0.004 (0.010)				-0.011** (0.004)		
Positive Brexit impact on UK			-0.003 (0.062)	0.047 (0.169)			0.073** (0.031)	-0.172 (0.108)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation				0.029 (0.093)				0.149** (0.059)
Brexit impact : Support for cooperation <sup>2</sup>				-0.006 (0.011)				-0.017** (0.007)
Interest in Swiss-EU relations	0.055 (0.039)	0.052 (0.038)	0.040 (0.039)	0.046 (0.037)	-0.043 (0.029)	-0.049* (0.029)	-0.032 (0.029)	-0.044 (0.029)
Heard of Brexit	-0.012 (0.039)	0.011 (0.032)	0.007 (0.037)	0.030 (0.030)	-0.019 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.020)	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.013 (0.019)
Support for immigration (index)	-0.146** (0.072)	-0.159** (0.070)	-0.130* (0.070)	-0.139** (0.068)	-0.062* (0.034)	-0.055* (0.034)	-0.046 (0.034)	-0.038 (0.033)
Populist attitude (index)	0.055 (0.056)	0.037 (0.053)	0.072 (0.052)	0.053 (0.048)	0.025 (0.029)	0.026 (0.029)	0.037 (0.027)	0.042 (0.027)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	0.190*** (0.070)	0.133*** (0.047)	0.211*** (0.064)	0.168*** (0.047)	0.011 (0.033)	0.013 (0.033)	0.013 (0.032)	0.007 (0.033)
Economic dissatisfaction	-0.079 (0.075)	-0.040 (0.066)	-0.090 (0.071)	-0.059 (0.063)	-0.059* (0.031)	-0.057* (0.031)	-0.053* (0.031)	-0.047 (0.031)
Government dissatisfaction	0.013 (0.068)	0.030 (0.065)	0.027 (0.062)	0.038 (0.062)	0.052* (0.029)	0.049* (0.028)	0.050* (0.029)	0.050* (0.028)
SVP vote	0.216 (0.151)	0.222 (0.153)	0.199 (0.146)	0.221 (0.145)	0.268* (0.147)	0.250* (0.148)	0.268* (0.144)	0.255* (0.141)
Left-Right	-0.127 (0.156)	-0.136 (0.155)	0.027 (0.072)	0.027 (0.071)	-0.094 (0.061)	-0.089 (0.060)	-0.091 (0.059)	-0.087 (0.059)
Left-Right <sup>2</sup>	0.005 (0.011)	0.006 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	0.005 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)
Num.Obs.	2678	2672	2683	2675	3525	3512	3535	3521
R2 Adj.	0.791	0.805	0.803	0.817	0.800	0.801	0.800	0.802
R2 Within	0.055	0.052	0.056	0.053	0.038	0.046	0.039	0.049

Note: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. TWFE models with standard errors clustered at the individual level.

Table A3 – Cross-lagged models

	DV:			
	Support InstA Model A17	British strategy Model A18	Support InstA Model A19	Brexit impact Model 20
Support for framework agreement $t_{-1}$	0.651*** (0.022)	0.777*** (0.055)	0.545*** (0.024)	0.491*** (0.051)
British strategy as role model $t_{-1}$	0.037*** (0.010)	0.526*** (0.024)		
Brexit impact on UK $t_{-1}$			0.097*** (0.010)	0.710*** (0.020)
Wave 3	-0.165*** (0.034)	0.208** (0.083)	-0.065** (0.031)	0.045 (0.067)
Support for framework agreement $t_{-1}$ : Wave 3	-0.099*** (0.032)	-0.284*** (0.080)	-0.019 (0.034)	-0.126* (0.072)
British strategy as role model $t_{-1}$ : Wave 3	0.062*** (0.014)	0.022 (0.034)		
Brexit impact on UK $t_{-1}$ : Wave 3			0.006 (0.013)	-0.046* (0.028)
Constant	0.109*** (0.024)	1.041*** (0.059)	0.009 (0.022)	0.658*** (0.047)
Num.Obs.	2661	2656	2671	2663
R2 Adj.	0.651	0.649	0.649	0.647
R2 Within	0.013	0.020	0.012	0.016

Figure A2 – Cross-lagged models

