

Online Appendix

Signals of Responsiveness in the European Union

June 20, 2017

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A. Detailed Description of the Data and Conjoint Experiment

My evaluation of how different signals of political competence influence voter support for alternative politicians is based on an original choice-based conjoint survey experiment in the fall of 2016 in Germany. The survey was conducted by *Respondi* over the internet on samples of the adult vote-eligible Germans. The survey received IRB exemption status at the [author's home institution]. All participants were informed that they participated in an experiment, and could not fill out the survey without giving their informed consent. The sample size was 2,540.

The survey results are based on an online survey in which respondents were recruited by *Respondi*, an international survey firm. Similar to most other online surveys, my sample was somewhat skewed towards the more educated voters (though not necessarily younger). Although I am mostly concerned with testing the internal validity of my theoretical argument, it is possible to use entropy balancing to re-weight the data from the online survey so that it matches the demographic margins from the voter population. In particular, I weighted on age groups, gender, and level of education. The sample is well balanced geographically.

Table A-1 shows the demographic margins of the voter population, the raw online sample, and the weighted online sample.

The core of the analysis draws from respondent choices between two alternative politicians presented within a conjoint framework. I devised a fully-randomized conjoint in which each respondent is shown two alternative politicians in comparison and asked to choose between them. This forced-choice design allows me to analyze whether different types of political competence signals affect individuals' vote choice. The fully-randomized design does not force me to make assumptions about the functional form that maps competence signals into support, but allows me to identify the causal effects of the competence signals in a non-parametrical way.

I used two different conjoint experiments. Half of the respondents only received the first treatment; the other half of the respondents only received the second treatment. In the paper, I present the results of the first conjoint experiment. Both conjoint experiments were repeated for two policy fields.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Voter Population</i>	<i>Online Sample (Raw)</i>	<i>Online Sample (Weighted)</i>
Age 18-29	15.8	15.5	15.8
Age 30-39	13.5	11.8	13.5
Age 40-49	16.2	17.4	16.2
Age 50-59	19.6	18.9	19.6
Age 60+	34.8	36.5	34.9
Male	49	51	49
Low Level of Education	40.4	23.8	40.2
Medium Level of Education	29.4	39.5	29.6
High Level of Education	29.5	24.9	30.1

Table A-1.: Demographics of the Survey Sample (in %). The table presents data on the demographic margins of the voter population, the raw online sample, and the weighted online sample. Data on the voter population are from the German statistical office (<http://www.destatis.de>) for the year 2015 (the most recent data available). Data on age groups are calculated for December 2015 based on the German census of 2011.

The first field is the policy on another financial rescue package for Greece.¹ The second field is the policy on allowing for more immigration of refugees and asylum seekers into the European Union.²

I started out by asking respondents on their position on both policy issues. The question on financial aid for Greece was phrased as:³

“Now, we are interested in your opinion about the debt crisis in Greece. Some believe that Greece should receive another financial rescue package from the EU. Others believe that Greece should not receive another financial rescue package from the EU. In general, how much are you in support for or in opposition to another financial rescue package for Greece?”

The question on immigration was phrased as:⁴

“Now, we are interested in your opinion on the European refugee policies. Last year, more than one million people have tried to immigrate into the EU. Some believe that the EU should accept

¹In the following, I will use the terms “bailout” and “financial package” simultaneously. In the survey, I exclusively used the term “financial rescue package” (*Finanzhilfe*) as the term bailout tends to carry negative connotations.

²The terms “refugee,” “immigrant,” and “asylum seeker” are concepts to refer to different groups. In the survey, I decided to use the German word for refugee (*Flüchtling*) even though the current debate focuses more on asylum seekers who illegally enter the borders of the EU. However, the media tends to refer to the term refugee, and much of the public debate connotes the term in this matter. In the following, my discussion will therefore use the words “immigrants” and “refugees” interchangeably to refer to both refugees and asylum seekers.

³The question is translated from the German survey question: “Wir sind nun an Ihrer Meinung zur Schuldenkrise in Griechenland interessiert. Manche sind der Auffassung, dass Griechenland von der Europäischen Union weitere Finanzhilfe erhalten sollte. Andere sind der Auffassung, dass Griechenland von der Europäischen Union keine weitere Finanzhilfe erhalten sollte. Wie sehr sind Sie im Allgemeinen für oder gegen weitere Finanzhilfe für Griechenland?”

⁴The question was translated from the German question: “Jetzt sind wir an Ihrer Meinung zur europäischen Flüchtlingspolitik interessiert. Im vergangenen Jahr haben mehr als eine Million Menschen versucht, in die EU einzureisen. Manche sind der Auffassung, dass man weitere Einwanderer aufnehmen sollte. Andere hingegen sind der Auffassung, dass man keine weiteren Einwanderer aufnehmen sollte. Sind Sie eher für oder eher gegen die Aufnahme weiterer Flüchtlinge in der Europäischen Union?”

more refugees. Others believe that the EU should not accept further refugees. Are you generally for or against accepting the immigration of further refugees into the EU?"

For both policies, answer categories ranged from strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, neither in favor nor opposed, somewhat opposed, to strongly opposed.⁵ The responses served as important baseline on which to draw expectations about respondents' reactions to politician's policy positions.

The policy opinion questions were followed by the conjoint experiment. The directions for the conjoint experiment appeared two pages before the respondent began choosing between politicians. First, respondents were given detailed instructions. For the bailout conjoint, these instructions were:

Further financial aid for Greece would require negotiations between EU members. These negotiations also involve German politicians. These politicians can represent different opinions and have more or less influence on the outcomes of the negotiations. We will now show you some examples of such a negotiation behavior. We will show you among other things:

- the position which the politician represented at the start of negotiations,
- the position for which the politician voted at the end of the negotiations, and
- the final result

We will always show you two possible scenarios to compare. For each comparison, we would like to know which of the two politicians you would prefer if there was an election next Sunday. Even if you like or dislike both politicians equally, please let us know which one you would prefer to the other. In addition, we will ask you how likely you would vote for each politician if there was an election next Sunday. There are neither correct nor incorrect responses for this question. *Please read the scenarios carefully before you make a decision.*

For the immigration conjoint, the instructions were:

⁵I randomly reversed the ranking of the response categories.

EU member states currently negotiate about a common refugee policy, in order to react to the increase of refugees in the EU. These negotiations also involve German politicians. These politicians can represent different opinions and have more or less influence on the outcomes of the negotiations. We will now show you some examples of such a negotiation behavior. We will show you among other things:

- the position which the politician represented at the start of negotiations,
- the position for which the politician voted at the end of the negotiations, and
- the final result

We will always show you two possible scenarios to compare. For each comparison, we would like to know which of the two politicians you would prefer if there was an election next Sunday. Even if you like or dislike both politicians equally, please let us know which one you would prefer to the other. In addition, we will ask you how likely you would vote for each politician if there was an election next Sunday. There are neither correct nor incorrect responses for this question. *Please read the scenarios carefully before you make a decision.*

Respondents could not proceed to the next page until they spent at least ten seconds on the page with these instructions. On the next page, respondents were shown Figure ?? with further instructions, explaining to them that the figure shows attributes of two possible politicians that they have to choose between, and informing them that the order of the features can vary.

Each respondent was shown two such binary comparisons for each policy field. For each politician that a given respondent considered, I measured a variable *Politician Support* and coded it 1 if the individual chose to vote for that politician, and 0 if she or he did not. In addition to asking respondents which of the two politicians they prefer, I asked:⁶

⁶Half of the respondents received the answer categories in reverse order. The question was translated from the German survey question: “Wenn am nächsten Sonntag eine Wahl stattfindet, wie wahrscheinlich wäre es, dass Sie den jeweiligen Politiker wählen würden?”

“If you could vote on each of these agreements in a referendum, how likely is it that you would vote in favor or against each of the agreements? Please give your answer on the following scale from definitely against (1) to definitely in favor (10).”

This measure provides an assessment of the absolute support for a given politician.

Table A-2 shows the dimensions used in the conjoint experiment. All values were randomly assigned to each dimension based on the list of values in Table A-3 (the order of categories was also randomized). I added a number of politician characteristics that have been demonstrated to affect voter choice in past research. Aside from the politician’s gender and political experience, whether the politician’s partisanship is similar to the respondent’s partisanship should play a crucial role in their vote choice.

	Politician A	Politician B
Negotiation Position in the EU		
Voting Behavior in the EU		
Negotiation Outcome in the EU		
Partisan Affiliation		
Gender		
Political Experience (in years)		
Your Choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table A-2.: Conjoint Experimental Design

Bitte geben Sie Ihre Antwort auf einer Skala von sehr unwahrscheinlich (1) bis sehr wahrscheinlich (10).

Dimension	Possible Values	
	Financial Package	Refugees
<i>Negotiation Position in the EU</i>	In favor of financial aid	In favor of more refugees
	Against financial aid	Against more refugees
<i>Voting Behavior in the EU</i>	In favor of financial aid	In favor of more refugees
	Against financial aid	Against more refugees
<i>Negotiation Outcome in the EU</i>	More financial aid	More refugees
	No more financial aid	No more Refugees
<i>Partisan Affiliation</i>	CDU/CSU	CDU/CSU
	SPD	SPD
	FDP	FDP
	The Greens	The Greens
<i>Gender</i>	Male	Male
	Female	Female
<i>Political Experience (in years)</i>	0	0
	2	2
	4	4
	6	6
	8	8
	10	10

Table A-3.: Dimensions and Values for the Conjoint Experiment on Position Defending Behavior

B. Position Taking and Vote Choice

I analyze how much a politician's position on the issue, and her or his voting behavior affect public support for that politician, controlling for all the other dimensions in the conjoint. Theoretically, respondents should be more likely to favor politicians who take positions that are similar to their own. Figure B-1 presents the results graphically. For both policies, I analyze whether the politician's position and his or her voting behavior affected the respondent's vote choice. I split the sample by respondents who generally support the policy (dark-grey circles) and those who generally oppose the policy (light-grey diamonds), based on their initial positions on each policy. For both policies, I find that opponents of the policy are likely to blame and reduce their support for politicians who vote in favor of the policy. Supporters of the policy, on the other hand, are more likely to vote for politicians who vote in favor of the policy.

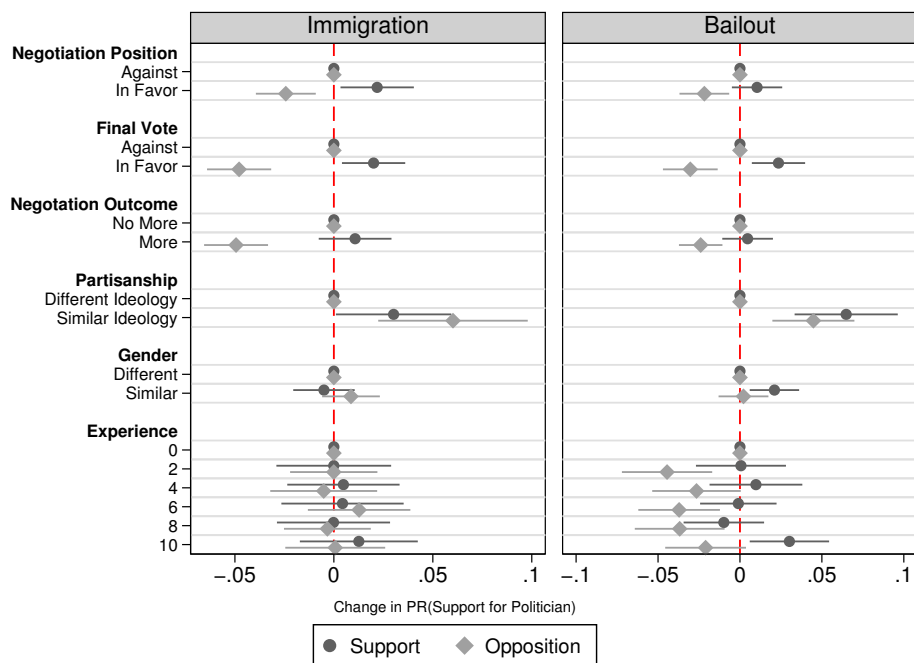


Figure B-1.: Position-Taking and Voter Support. The graph displays the results of a linear probability model where I regress the support for a politician on a number of index variables. The left hand side graph represents the results for the EU policy on refugees; the right-hand side graph presents the results for the EU policy on financial aid for Greece. The y-axis presents all included variables. The x-axis displays the marginal effect sizes for the probability that respondents would vote for the politician. The coefficients are displayed with dark-grey circles (for respondents who are generally supportive of the policy) and light-grey diamonds (for respondents who generally oppose the policy). The bars mark 90% confidence intervals. The circles/diamonds without bars indicate the reference category for a given dimension. The red vertical line represents the value 0.

C. Results of Unweighted Regressions

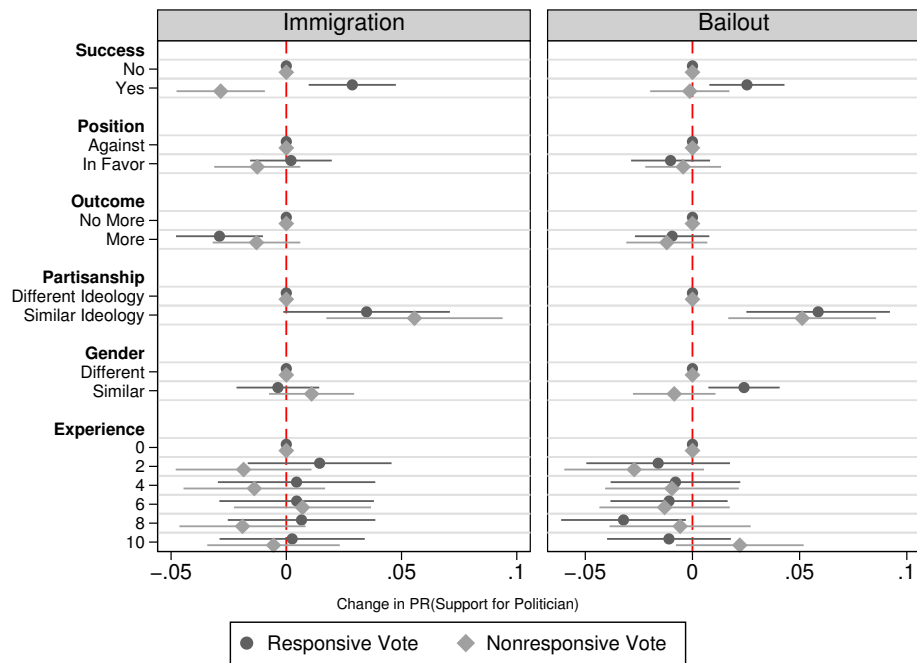


Figure C-2.: Bargaining Success and Voter Support.

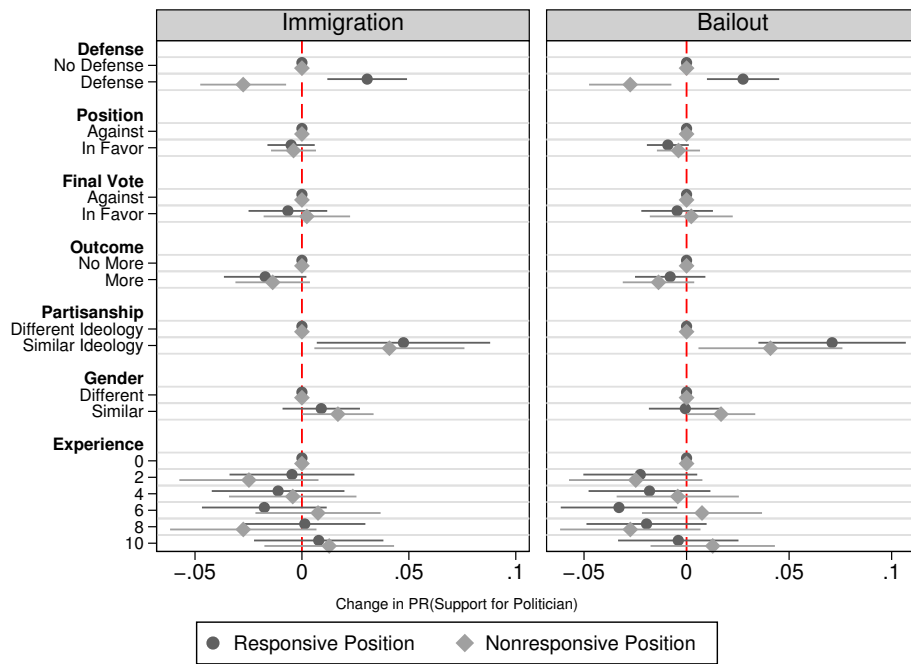


Figure C-3.: Position Defense and Voter Support.

D. Results of Weighted Regressions with Continuous Vote Choice

This section provides the results for re-estimating all main regressions, using as the dependent variable the continuous vote choice of respondents. In particular, after respondents decided which of the politicians they would prefer in the comparisons, I further ask them the following question:

If there was an election this Sunday, how likely would you vote for each of these politicians?

Respondents rated each politician individually on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely).⁷ The following tables present results using this dependent variable. The estimations are based on the re-weighted data (see previous section for a discussion).

⁷The order of categories was reversed for half of the respondents.

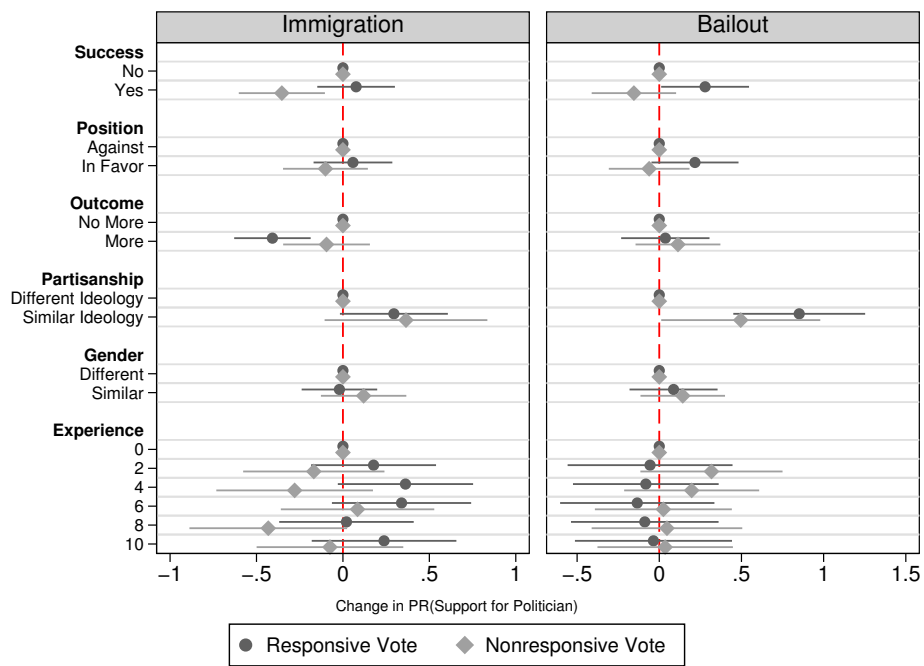


Figure D-4.: Bargaining Success and Voter Support.

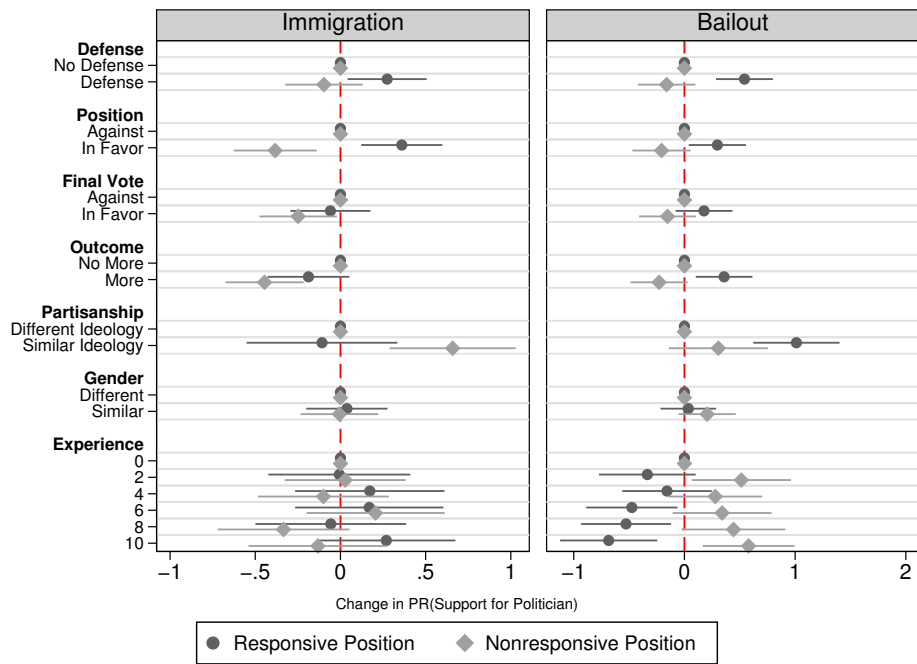


Figure D-5.: Position Defense and Voter Support.

E. Descriptive Statistics

Table E-4 provides descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Saliency	57.21628	25.30805	0	100
QMV	.8219118	.3826287	0	1
Voting Power (%)	5.107047	3.278103	1.0531	11.7
Distance from EP	45.66521	39.33693	0	100
Distance from Commission	42.44457	40.58272	0	100
Position Extremity	27.45674	22.38565	0	100
multidimensional	.791794	.4060693	0	1
N	4582			

Table E-4.: Position Defending Strategies – Descriptive Statistics. The table provides descriptive statistics for all variables in the main estimations and the robustness checks. Mean is the average value of the variable, SD represents the standard deviation, Min the minimum value and Max the maximum value of the variable.

Table E-5 provides descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Saliency	53.10425	26.26169	0	100
Position Defense	.3638778	.4812739	0	1
Voting Power (%)	5.193873	3.345124	1.0531	11.7
Distance from Commission	39.83201	40.64347	0	100
Distance from EP	43.10691	38.95084	0	100
Distance from Status Quo	48.60292	42.38625	0	100
Position Extremity	28.53312	22.2896	0	100
N	1506			

Table E-5.: Bargaining Success – Descriptive Statistics. The table provides descriptive statistics for all variables in the main estimations and the robustness checks. Mean is the average value of the variable, SD represents the standard deviation, Min the minimum value and Max the maximum value of the variable.

F. Robustness Checks – Position Defending Behavior

The Tables in this section provide some additional robustness checks. All robustness checks use the main estimation model as the baseline.

Model 1 in Table F-6 is the main model, which focuses on the effect of national elections that take place throughout the legislative negotiations. It serves as comparison. Model 2 estimates the model for legislative proposals that are concluded within 36 months. EU governments should have incentives to engage in position-defending strategies throughout the entire legislative process, but the effect should be the strongest when elections fall within (or shortly after) the first Council reading, where most of the EU government's positions are solidified. Model 3 therefore focuses on the effect of national elections that take place until the Council votes on the proposal. Finally, Model 4 uses a placebo to analyze the plausibility of results. In particular, the election indicator in this estimation is measured as 1 if an election takes place within six months of the final adoption of the proposal, and 0 otherwise. According to the theory, I would not expect that elections taking place *after* the conclusion of the negotiations affect bargaining strategies during the elections.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Main	Duration	DV	Placebo
Election Year	0.224*	0.232*	0.216*	0.087
	(0.118)	(0.130)	(0.115)	(0.072)
Saliency	0.007*	0.006	0.007*	0.007*
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
QMV	0.299	0.287	0.297	0.287
	(0.446)	(0.482)	(0.446)	(0.441)
Voting Power (%)	0.018	0.017	0.018	0.017
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Distance from EP	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Distance from Commission	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Position Extremity	-0.018**	-0.010	-0.018**	-0.017**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Multidimensional	-1.431**	-1.440**	-1.431**	-1.435**
	(0.265)	(0.312)	(0.265)	(0.266)
Constant	0.205	0.130	0.206	0.212
	(0.480)	(0.522)	(0.480)	(0.477)
Observations	2073	1797	2073	2073
Wald χ^2	65.19**	55.46**	65.22**	75.23**

DV: Position Defense

Specification: Multilevel mixed-effects probit model

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05

Table F-6.: Position Defending Behavior – Robustness Checks.

Table F-7 presents the results of some additional robustness checks. All robustness checks use the main estimation model in the book (Model 1) as the baseline. Model 1 in estimates the main model with country fixed effects. Model 2 adds dichotomous variables for different Council types. *Agriculture Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for Agriculture or Fisheries, and 0 otherwise. *Ecofin Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin), and 0 otherwise. And *General Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for General Affairs, and 0 otherwise. All data are from the DEU II data set. Since an EU member's formal voting power is highly correlated with its income (the pairwise correlation is 0.83), I only included *Voting Power (%)* in the main estimation. Model 3 replaces *Voting Power (%)* with a variable for a EU member's logged income levels (*GDP (log)*). *GDP (log)* is measured as the annual logged gross domestic product of each EU member. Data from Eurostat. Model 4 uses a measure of relative salience instead of the absolute salience measure. *Relative Salience* is coded as the absolute distance between the salience that the EU member attaches to any given issue and the average salience that all EU members attach to the issue (excluding the EU government under observation). The variable ranges from -84 to 100. Negative values imply that EU government attach a lower saliency to an issue than other EU members; positive values indicate that the issue is more salient to the EU government than to other EU governments in the Council. Finally, Model 5 uses a non-hierarchical probit estimator. The main results are robust to any of the changes in the model specification.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Country FE	Control I	Control II	Control III	Probit
Election Year	0.196*	0.226*	0.214*	0.219*	0.189*
	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.120)	(0.121)	(0.104)
Saliency	0.007*	0.007*	0.007*		0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)		(0.001)
QMV	0.358	-0.003	0.286	0.214	0.311**
	(0.460)	(0.492)	(0.446)	(0.451)	(0.080)
Voting Power (%)	0.082	0.018		0.018	-0.003
	(0.097)	(0.016)		(0.017)	(0.010)
Distance from EP	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.007**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)
Distance from Commission	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)
Position Extremity	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.018**	-0.017**	-0.005**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.002)
multidimensional	-1.477**	-1.426**	-1.436**	-1.446**	-1.143**
	(0.259)	(0.264)	(0.263)	(0.256)	(0.062)
Agriculture Council		0.393			
		(0.544)			
Ecofin Council		-0.682			
		(0.865)			
General Council		-0.112			
		(0.696)			
GDP (log)			0.028		
			(0.041)		
Relative Saliency				0.007**	
				(0.003)	
Constant	-0.245	0.335	-0.035	0.637	0.395**
	(0.707)	(0.531)	(0.623)	(0.429)	(0.118)
Observations	2073	2073	2073	2073	2073

DV: Position Defense
Specification: Multilevel probit model
Robust standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05

Table F-7.: Position Defending Behavior – Robustness Checks

G. Robustness Checks – Bargaining Success

The Tables in this section provide additional robustness checks. All robustness checks use the main estimation model as the baseline.

For reference, Model 1 in Table G-8 is the main model. Model 2 uses an election period that includes one year after the adoption of the proposal. Model 3 uses a placebo election indicator; here, whether elections occurred any time during the negotiations but *before the final adoption*. These elections should not directly affect a country's bargaining success.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Main	12 Months	Placebo
Election Year	1.893*	2.597**	-4.523**
	(1.014)	(1.166)	(2.027)
Salience	0.050	0.049	0.051
	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Position Defense	20.879**	20.900**	21.099**
	(4.713)	(4.722)	(4.715)
Voting Power (%)	-0.115	-0.121	-0.114
	(0.232)	(0.231)	(0.232)
Distance from Commission	-0.110	-0.109	-0.107
	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)
Distance from EP	-0.102	-0.102	-0.101
	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.094)
Distance from Status Quo	0.180*	0.181*	0.179*
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.093)
Position Extremity	-0.449**	-0.449**	-0.447**
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.133)
Constant	69.290**	68.547**	69.845**
	(10.351)	(10.320)	(10.367)
Observations	1506**	1506**	1506**
Wald χ^2	138.49**	144.89**	158.29**

DV: Bargaining Success

Specification: Multilevel mixed effects linear regression model

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05

Table G-8.: Bargaining Success – Robustness Checks

Table G-9 presents the results of some additional robustness checks. All robustness checks use the main estimation model in the book (Model 1) as the baseline. Model 1 in estimates the main model with country fixed effects. Model 2 adds dichotomous variables for different Council types. *Agriculture Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for Agriculture or Fisheries, and 0 otherwise. *Ecofin Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for Economic and Financial Affairs (Ecofin), and 0 otherwise. And *General Council* is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if the issue is negotiated in the Council for General Affairs, and 0 otherwise. All data are from the DEU II data set. Since an EU member's formal voting power is highly correlated with its income (the pairwise correlation is 0.83), I only included *Voting Power (%)* in the main estimation. Model 3 replaces *Voting Power (%)* with a variable for a EU member's logged income levels (*GDP (log)*). *GDP (log)* is measured as the annual logged gross domestic product of each EU member. Data from Eurostat. Model 4 uses a measure of relative salience instead of the absolute salience measure. *Relative Salience* is coded as the absolute distance between the salience that the EU member attaches to any given issue and the average salience that all EU members attach to the issue (excluding the EU government under observation). The variable ranges from -84 to 100. Negative values imply that EU government attach a lower saliency to an issue than other EU members; positive values indicate that the issue is more salient to the EU government than to other EU governments in the Council. Finally, Model 5 uses a non-hierarchical probit estimator. The main results are robust to any of the changes in the model specification.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Country FE	Control I	Control II	Control III	OLS
Election Year	2.061** (0.892)	1.878* (1.028)	1.838* (1.051)	1.867* (1.028)	2.606* (1.565)
Saliency	0.058 (0.061)	0.050 (0.053)	0.056 (0.059)		0.004 (0.024)
Position Defense	20.869** (4.623)	20.875** (4.720)	20.890** (4.733)	20.844** (4.712)	10.601** (1.363)
Voting Power (%)	-1.180 (1.194)	-0.111 (0.232)		-0.105 (0.221)	-0.112 (0.211)
Distance from Commission	-0.109 (0.090)	-0.110 (0.090)	-0.111 (0.090)	-0.109 (0.089)	-0.177** (0.023)
Distance from EP	-0.101 (0.091)	-0.102 (0.094)	-0.104 (0.093)	-0.104 (0.094)	-0.104** (0.023)
Distance from Status Quo	0.181** (0.092)	0.180* (0.093)	0.179* (0.093)	0.179* (0.093)	0.106** (0.021)
Position Extremity	-0.447** (0.133)	-0.450** (0.133)	-0.448** (0.133)	-0.446** (0.136)	-0.484** (0.036)
Agriculture Council		-3.084 (5.606)	-3.122 (5.625)	-2.928 (5.523)	
Ecofin Council		3.459 (6.057)	3.372 (6.074)	3.908 (6.039)	
General Council		3.306 (12.030)	3.321 (12.112)	3.468 (11.878)	
GDP (log)			-0.443 (0.624)		
Relative Salience				0.044 (0.049)	
Constant	72.756** (12.890)	70.006** (9.856)	74.714** (9.874)	72.440** (9.431)	81.745** (2.591)
Observations	1506	1506	1506	1506	1506
chi	724.78**	168.74**	162.03**	167.15**	

DV: Bargaining Success
Specification: Multilevel model
Robust standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05

Table G-9.: Bargaining Success – Robustness Checks