Public opinion on foreign policy responses to non-cooperation

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

September 2025

This paper examines how voters prefer governments to respond to non-cooperative behavior in international politics, where states seek unilateral gains by violating agreements, coercing others, or undermining cooperation. Building on the Accommodation Dilemma Framework it argues that voters balance the short-term costs of non-accommodation against the long-term reputational and strategic risks of accommodation. When the costs of acting tough loom large, voters tend to favor compromise; when long-run risks dominate, they support tougher responses, and when both are significant, preferences moderate, reflecting an accommodation dilemma. Importantly, these dynamics hold only if voters perceive the other state's behavior as non-cooperative and view the consequences as harmful. Using a comparative survey experimental design embedded in seven different real-life contexts, the paper examines how voters respond to three types of non-cooperative behavior: serious violations of international law, coercive bargaining, and cherry-picking attempts. Across all cases, the experiments show that highlighting long-term and contagion reputational risks associated with a soft response reduces voter willingness to compromise relative to when they are informed about the costs of non-accommodation. Although dilemma situations are difficult, reputational concerns tend to dominate.

I thank Ala Alrababah, Pol Antras, Ryan Brutger, Tim Büthe, Lisa Dellmuth, Catherine de Vries, Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Julia Gray, Maria Groeneveld, Stephanie Hofmann, Tuuli-Anna Huikuri, Giorgio Malet, Raffaele Mastrorocco, Markus Patberg, Palma Polyak, Ryan Powers, Tyler Pratt, Jonathan Renshon, Arthur Silve, Christoph Steinert, Junwoo Suh, Rafal Syzmankowski, Jonas Tallberg, Denise Traber, Yueh-Ping Yang, as well as participants at APSA 2022, IPES 2022, the "Challenges to International Cooperation"-workshop, seminars at UC Berkeley,, the HfP-GSI Joint IR Speakers Series, the University of Cambridge, and the WTI Bern for helpful comments. I particularly thank Giorgio Malet who co-conducted the surveys in Finland, Sweden, and Hungary and provided support with the comparative experimental analysis and Michael Stelzig for excellent research assistance. This project has received funding from the University of Zurich, the Stiftung für Wissenschaftliche Forschung, and the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme grant agreement No 817582 (ERC Consolidator Grant DISINTEGRATION).

Non-cooperative behavior is a regular feature of international politics. For example, states seek to renegotiate or change the terms of existing international agreement to their own advantage, for example, while others withdraw, or threaten to withdraw, from them altogether. Others try to change the negotiated distribution of cooperation gains in their favor by failing to comply with the agreed terms of cooperation, sometimes on minor issues, but sometimes also in massive breach of core international norms. Yet others engage in coercive bargaining tactics and threaten to impose significant costs on another country in order to extract some advantage for themselves. In the most glaring cases, revisionist states try to force other states to change the status quo by military means. In essence, all of these actions aim at rebalancing the costs and benefits of cooperation in favor of the challenger state: Countries engage in non-cooperative behavior in order to improve their position vis-à-vis that of other countries. As a result, such behavior reduces the gains available to others or to makes it harder for them to meet their needs or goals (Milner 1992, 468, see also Dellmuth and Walter 2025).

For the targeted state, its government and its citizens, such non-cooperative behavior raises the difficult question of whether and how to respond (see e.g., Dijkstra et al. 2025; Drezner 1999; Fearon 1998; Simmons 2010). Should the government take a tough stance and refuse any changes to the status quo? Should it cave in and seek to accommodate the challenging country's demands? Or should it seek some kind of compromise in the middle ground? Answering these questions is not easy and confronts states with difficult choices (Dellmuth and Walter 2025; Walter and Plotke-Scherly 2025).

Answering these questions is complicated by the fact that such foreign policy responses tend to be closely watched by the public, making public opinion an increasingly important aspect in foreign policymaking (Reifler et al. 2011). International negotiations on salient issues, governments therefore tend to be responsive to their voters' preferences (Chu and Recchia 2022; Hagemann et al. 2017; McLean and Whang 2014; Peez and Bethke 2025; Schneider 2019; Tomz et al. 2020; Wratil 2018). Voters also have the ability to impose audience costs on leaders, with effects on governments' resolve (e.g., Fearon 1994; Kertzer and Brutger 2016; Tomz 2007) and bargaining power in international negotiations (Caraway et al. 2012; Hug and König 2002; Putnam 1988; Schneider and Cederman 1994). This dynamic is particularly pronounced in high-profile negotiations, where voters are most likely invest energy and effort to learn about international issues (Pelc 2013). More generally, issues related to international cooperation are increasingly politicized (Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019; De Vries et al. 2021; Dellmuth et al. 2022; Destradi et al. 2022; Zürn 2014; Zürn et al. 2012).

Policymakers are therefore well-advised to take public opinion into account when deciding about how to respond to non-cooperative behavior. This is particularly true when different responses carry significant costs and risks. This paper therefore seeks to further our understanding of individuals' foreign policy attitudes in such situations by examining how the public wants policymakers to react to non-cooperative behavior by other states. Building on the accommodation dilemma framework (ADF) laid out in Dellmuth and Walter (2025) and developed in Walter (2021b), Jurado, Léon and Walter (2022a), and Walter and Plotke-Scherly (2025), the paper examines how voters weigh the risks of accommodating and the costs of not-accommodating responses against each other, and analyzes how they evaluate the trade-offs and dilemmas inherent in these choices. It argues that voters tend to become more willing to tolerate non-cooperative behavior when the costs of non-accommodation are high and the long-run benefits uncertain. In contrast, when the contagion risks associated with accommodation clearly outweigh the loss of cooperation gains associated with non-accommodation, voters tend are more willing support an uncompromising stance. When the costs and risks associated with both strategies are high, however, voters face an accommodation dilemma and respond in a more muted way to the difficult trade-offs such situations create. The paper also explores the argument's scope conditions and argues that the ADF does not hold when voters either do not perceive the other state's actions as non-cooperative, or if they view the contagion effects of accommodation as an opportunity and the consequences non-accommodation as beneficial.

Empirically, I evaluate this argument using survey data and experiments across seven real-life contexts that vary in the type and severity of non-cooperative behavior. These cases cover responses to serious violations of international law (public support for sanctions against Russia in reaction to the Ukraine war in Hungary, Sweden and Finland), coercive bargaining (preferred responses to Turkey's blockage of Swedish/Finnish NATO accession), and attempts at cherry-picking (preferred responses by EU-27 Europeans to British and Swiss attempts to attain a more privileged access to the EU's Single market). The findings both from individual case analyses and a meta-analysis suggest that highlighting the long-term contagion risks of accommodation tends to make voters less willing to cave in and compromise. At the same time, highlighting the loss of cooperation gains that non-accommodation often entails results in more support for accommodation. When faced with dilemma situations, preferences about responses are typically more muted. These findings, however, are limited to those respondents who actually view the other country's behavior as non-cooperative and who see the consequences of non-accommodation and contagion risks associated with accommodation as negative.

Overall, the paper contributes to research on the domestic sources of resolve, coercive diplomacy, crisis bargaining, and audience costs in international relations (Brutger and Kertzer 2018; Chaudoin 2014a; Dafoe et al. 2014b; Fearon 1997; George 1991; Gueorguiev et al. 2020; Kertzer 2016; Kertzer and Brutger 2016; Tomz 2007; Walter 2009; Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015). It shows that across a whole range of different real-life situations voters understand strategic foreign policy considerations, care about their country's reputation beyond the security realm, and worry not just about the short-term, but also about the long-term consequences of foreign policy decisions.

Argument

When governments are confronted with non-cooperative behavior by other states, they have to decide how to respond. They can cave in and accommodate the challenging state's demands, or they can take a tough, non-accommodating stance and refuse to make concessions, offer only minimal compromise, threaten to end cooperation, or punish the challenging country for its uncooperative behavior. Both accommodation and non-accommodation responses have benefits, but both can also carry significant costs and risks. The ADF argues that two dimensions are particularly salient here: the cooperation gains that the response puts at stake especially in the short-to medium term and the long-term risks they pose (Dellmuth and Walter 2025; Jurado et al. 2022a; Walter and Plotke-Scherly 2025). A harsh, non-accommodating response can pose a serious threat to existing *cooperation gains*, especially if the challenging state does not back down, especially in the short term. Examples include retaliatory tariffs that curtail the benefits of commercial exchange, the exclusion of states from environmental treaties that makes effective protection more difficult, or a deterioration of mutual security arrangements. Although these costs can often be mitigated in the long run, for example by adjusting supply chains or finding alternative partners, in the short run, these costs can become sizeable and painful quickly. In contrast, accommodating the demands of the challenging country typically allows states to maintain a certain level of cooperation gains, even if the challenging state receives a greater share of these gains. Continuing to trade with a state involved in gross human rights violations, for example, weakens global human rights norms, but allows states to benefit from continued trade relations with the non-compliant state.

Accommodation also carries risks, however. Whether or not states accommodate non-cooperative behavior today affects their reputation for resolve and the likelihood that future non-cooperation can be deterred. Accommodation tends to damage the responding state's reputation for resolve (Dafoe et al. 2014b; Kertzer 2016; Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015)

Goldfien et al. 2025). This creates expectations among the challenging state and/or other countries that further non-cooperative behavior might similarly be accommodated, an expectation that has been shown to increase support for non-cooperation (Tingley and Walter 2011; Owen and Walter 2017; Walter et al. 2018). As a result, accommodation can generate serious political contagion risks (Adler-Nissen et al. 2017; Bamert et al. 2015). While accommodation can thus reuce costs in the short run, it increases the risks that these costs will accrue in the future. Non-accommodation, in contrast, reduces contagion risk. This strategy not only increases the odds that the challenging state abandons its non-cooperative behavior or drops its demands, but also bolsters the responding state's reputation as one that won't accept non-cooperative behavior. This disincentivizes future challenges (Hobolt et al. 2021; Hunter 2024; Katagiri and Min 2019; van Kessel et al. 2020; Malet and Walter 2023a; Martini and Walter 2023). By detering non-cooperative behavior, non-accommodation can thus help safeguard the long-run benefits of cooperation

Voters' preferred responses to non-cooperative behavior

Applied to the individual-level, the ADF allows us to derive hypotheses about whether and how individuals would like their governments to respond to non-cooperative behavior by other states. It suggests that the trade-off between the cooperation costs and contagion risks associated with different responses to non-cooperative behavior shapes how voters evaluate the desirability of these options.

Voters value international cooperation that aligns with their own interests and values, irrespective of whether the issue is security (Gartner 2008), support for international organizations (Hobolt and de Vries 2016; Kiratli 2020), trade policy (Chaudoin 2014a; Mayda and Rodrik 2005; Owen and Johnston 2017; Scheve and Slaughter 2001), or the environment (Bechtel et al. 2017; Gaikwad et al. 2022). They are thus likely to bristle at the costs associated with a non-accommodating response to non-cooperative behavior, especially when they are personally exposed to the negative impact. For example, the spike in gas and energy prices that resulted from the sanctions imposed against Russia in the aftermath of its invasion of Ukraine in the West significantly reduced support for these sanctions in Germany and Poland (Kantorowicz and Kantorowicz-Reznichenko 2023) and led to calls to negotiate with Russia about ending the Ukraine war rather than maintaining an uncompromising stance. Likewise, during the Brexit negotiations, European citizens living in regions that were heavily exposed to the potential fallout from a hard Brexit were significantly more supportive of compromises with the UK than those living in regions relatively sheltered from the economic costs of a hard Brexit

(Jurado et al. 2022a; Walter 2021b). There is evidence that even if people express outrage against another state's actions, they are not necessarily willing to engage in costly actions that would punish the non-cooperating state (Sung and Park 2022). When non-accommodation puts significant cooperation gains at stake, this strategy thus becomes less attractive in the eyes of the public.

However, people also worry about the worry about the long-term consequences of foreign policy decisions. They value their country's reputation for resolve (Brutger and Kertzer 2018; Kertzer 2016) and care about reciprocity (Chilton et al. 2017; Steinberg and Tan 2023; Tingley and Tomz 2014) and fairness (Lü et al. 2012) in international relations. In contexts in which accommodation is likely to generate significant contagion risks and reputational damage, public appetite for caving in is therefore likely to be low. One may question whether the public is able to correctly assess the strategic setting and the long-term contagion risks associated with accommodation. However, research suggests that many people live up to this task. For example, people have been shown to take the strategic motivations of prominent foreign leaders and the information their actions reveal into account when thinking about foreign policy issues (Gravelle 2018; Gueorguiev et al. 2020; Walter et al. 2018) or to voice concerns about potential contagion effects of accommodating a challenging state (Walter 2021, Goldfien et al 2025). This suggests that when voters understand the reputational dynamics and long-term contagion risks that an accommodation strategy can unleash, they should be less likely to support accommodation, especially when the long-run risks are large.

Against this background, the ADF suggests that people individuals evaluate potential responses to non-cooperative state behavior by assessing the short-term costs of non-accommodation relative to the long-term risks associated with accommodation. The choice between strategies is relatively straightforward when one type of cost is seen to clearly dominate the other: *The larger individuals perceive the cooperation costs associated with non-accommodation to be relative to the long-run accommodation-related-risks, the more they will support an accommodating response (H1).* In contrast, *the larger the long-run risks associated with accommodation are perceived to be relative to the non-accommodation-related costs, the more they are likely to prefer a tough, non-accommodating response (H2).* The choice is much harder when none of these costs dominates, especially when both types of costs and risks are large. In such instances, individuals face an "accommodation dilemma", which is likely to moderate their preferred response. I therefore expect that when *confronted with an accommodation dilemma, voters will be more likely to prefer a middle way in between full accommodation and uncompromising non-accommodation (H3).*

Perceived norm violation and cost assessment: Exploring the ADF's scope conditions

The ADF rests on two assumptions. First, it assumes that people actually perceive the other state's behavior as non-cooperative, and second, that they view both the costs of not accommodating as well as the long-run accommodation-related risks as negative. However, the extent to which these two assumptions hold is likely to vary significantly across contexts and individuals.

Whether or not individuals view a certain behavior as non-cooperative varies depending both on the specific context and individuals' norms, values and attitudes. Because international relations consists of repeated interactions between states, the question of which actor chose not to cooperate first is not always easy to answer. For example, Parizek (2025) shows that competing interpretations exist about what constitutes major acts of non-cooperation in the Ukraine-Russia and the Israel-Gaza conflicts. Individuals can thus interpret the same behavior in very different ways. Moreover, individuals vary with respect to the extent to which they think non-cooperative behavior should be pushed back against or punished. Such differences are driven by variation in personal values (Kertzer et al. 2014; Rathbun et al. 2016), cultural norms and traditions (Heinzel 2025)(Michalopoulos and Xue 2021), the norms in question (Bush et al. 2025) and respondents' peer context (Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017). As a result, individuals are likely to hold diverging views about whether or not the other country is engaging in a behavior that in principle warrants a negative response in the first place.

A second key assumption of the ADF is that voters view the non-accommodation-related loss of cooperation gains and/or the contagion risks associated with accommodation negatively.[1] However, some individuals are likely to benefit from non-accommodation strategies. People working in firms or industries that struggle to compete internationally and who therefore stand to benefit from a return to protectionist policies or sanctions on foreign competitors, for example, are much less exposed to retaliatory tariffs than high-productivity export-oriented firms. Likewise, some people favor the severing of international cooperative arrangements (von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2024; Jurado et al. 2022b).

Similarly, some individuals view accommodation-related contagion effects that may lead to an erosion of international cooperative institutions as an opportunity, rather than a risk. For example, during the Brexit negotiations, euroskeptics across Europe were hopeful that the UK would secure a beneficial Brexit deal, which would then set a precedent that would make

[1] Note that Dellmuth and Walter (2025) denote the case when both the short-term costs of non-accommodation and the long-run costs of accommodation as a «weak accommodation dilemma». The assumption in this case is, however, that the consequences are still seen as costs, rather than benefits.

it easier for other countries to leave the EU in the future (Walter 2021b). In such cases, individuals are unlikely to regard the long-term reputational consequences of accommodation as costly. This runs against the logic of the accommodation dilemma, which assumed that people view both the loss of cooperation gains caused by a non-accommodating response and the contagion risks associated with accommodation negatively.

Research Design

Non-cooperation is not an isolated phenomenon: it can happen in different realms of international relations and can be rather minor but also highly consequential. Despite these differences, the ADF suggests that public preferences about government responses to non-cooperative behavior of other states varies in systematic ways related to the cooperation costs and contagion risks associated with different responses and the trade-offs they present.

To explore whether we can indeed observe the ADF's empirical implications in a wide range of contexts, I use public opinion data and survey experiments in seven real-life contexts situations in which states faced non-cooperative behavior from others when the survey was fielded. This research design allows me to test the general individual-level implications of the ADF, while also exploring its limits and more specific scope conditions (Bassan-Nygate et al. 2024). I examine public opinion on three types of non-cooperation, which vary with regard to the severity of non-cooperative behavior, the nature of the costs of non-accommodation, and the severity of contagion risks associated with an accommodative response. Moreover, these settings differ with regard to public skepticism about the non-cooperative nature of the challenging state's behavior and the extent to which respondents differ in their assessment of the consequences of accommodation and non-accommodation. Table 1 gives an overview about the different cases included in the study.

A first set of analyses examines preferred responses to *serious violations of international law*, in this case the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Using data collected in Finland and Sweden (fall 2022) and Hungary (spring 2023), these analyses probe how respondents assessed a further tightening of sanctions against Russia several months into the war. The Russia sanctions offer a rather straightforward application of the ADF because both the rationale for the sanctions – forcing Russia to retreat, or at least to deter similar behavior from other countries – and the assessment of the sanctions as economically costly were uncontested. What was contested, however, was the question on whether or not Russia was to blame for the war, and the level of contestation varied significantly

across countries: whereas the Scandinavian public overwhelmingly saw Russia as mainly responsible for the war in Ukraine, the Hungarian public was much evenly more split, [2]

Table 1: Case overview

Type of non-cooperative behavior	Country & Issue	Cooperation costs related to non-accommodation	Accommodation-induced contagion risks	Non-cooperation contested?	Divergent cost/risk assessments
Serious violation of international law	**Sweden** Russia sanctions	Economic costs	Deterrence of continued & future aggression	Somewhat	No
	Finland Russia sanctions	Economic costs	Deterrence of continued & future aggression	Somewhat	No
	Hungary Russia sanctions	Economic costs	Deterrence of continued & future aggression	Yes	No
Coercive bargaining	**Sweden** Turkey's NATO veto	NATO accession	Human rights reputation	No	Yes
	Finland Turkey's NATO veto	NATO accession	Future blackmail	No	Yes
Cherry-picking	**EU27** UK exceptions to EU Single Market rules	Trade disruptions	Growing demands for exceptions	Yes	Yes
	EU27 Swiss exceptions to EU Single Market rules	Trade disruptions	Growing demands for exceptions	Yes	Yes

The second set of analyses explores responses to *coercive bargaining* in international negotiations, meaning that one state relies on the use of threats, pressure, or force to compel another state to agree to specific terms or concessions. The analyses study how the Finnish and Swedish public wanted their governments to respond to Turkey's blocking of their countries' plans to join NATO in late 2022 and early 2023. During that time, Turkey was using its veto as a NATO member to pressure Finland and Sweden to change their policy of providing a safe haven for Kurdish people. Turkey demanded that the two countries cut back on their support for Kurdish groups and extradite Kurds that Turkey considers terror suspects. There was no doubt that Turkey was behaving non-cooperatively in these situations. However, for those people who opposed NATO membership, a Turkish veto on NATO accession appeared as a benefit rather than a cost. The two cases also allow me to leverage the fact the public debate about the long-term risks of accommodating Turkey's demands differed across the two countries: whereas the Finnish debate revolved about the risk that compromises might encourage further blackmail in the future (contagion risk), the Swedish debate focused on how

[2] 90.5% of Swedish and 93.2% of Finnish respondents said that Russia was mainly or entirely responsible for the situation in Ukraine, compared with only 40.3% in Hungary.

complying with Turkey's demands could damage the country's human rights reputation. The two cases thus allow me to explore how different types of accommodation-related long-run risks matter.

The final two cases represent situations in which states negotiate to achieve a more privileged position in the context of an existing international institution. Here, I focus on British and Swiss *attempts to cherry-pick* in the context of the EU. Although the EU Single Market lays out common rules to which all member states have to adhere, both have sought to negotiate far-reaching Single Market access while enjoying significant exceptions that other EU member states are not granted.[3] In these set of cases, both the non-cooperative nature of the challenging state's behavior and the extent to which the consequences of accommodation (more demands for national exceptions to EU rules) should be seen as a negative consequence were contested, with strong euroskeptics seeing the behavior as both legitimate and the contagion effects as desirable.

Using real-life situations as context for analysis and asking respondents about actual instances of non-cooperation that their country are currently facing, rather than presenting respondents with abstract situations has advantages and disadvantages (Brutger et al. 2022). Asking respondents about actual situations allows us to glean their opinions on real issues confronting their government at the time of the survey. It also gives us a glimpse into the extent to which political elites can influence public opinion in a highly politicized debate by highlighting the consequences of different response strategies. At the same time, this setup also generates several challenges. For one, each case is different, so that tailored questions and experimental treatments are needed that vary across settings and create problems of comparability and external validity challenges both with regard to treatment and context validity (Egami and Hartman 2023). Moreover, the survey experiments provide contextual information on highly politicized issues, so that respondents are likely to have already formed opinions on the issue at hand. This makes it harder to elicit a response with experimental manipulations (Druckman and Leeper 2012) and typically dampens treatment effects (Brutger et al. 2022). The comparative, real-life setting is thus likely to make it harder to find strong and consistent effects both within and across settings. At the same time, it allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the generalizability and the scope conditions of the ADF.

[3] The negotiations between Switzerland and the EU focused on institutionalizing the country's bilateral treaties with the EU, whereas the UK negotiated to define ist new post-Brexit relations with the EU as a non-member.

Data

I use survey data collected in various waves, following a coordinated experimental design (Blair and McClendon 2021). The first wave of data collection focused on the cherry-picking scenarios. The data were collected in the context of two larger, EU-wide online omnibus surveys (the 'EuroPulse') conducted by Dalia Research in June 2019 (Switzerland case, 10 792 respondents) and December 2019 (post-Brexit UK case, 11 543 respondents). Negotiations with Switzerland and the UK were ongoing negotiations while the surveys were in the field. In each survey wave, a census representative sample of working-age[4] respondents from all EU member states were surveyed, with sample sizes roughly proportional to their population size. The data were weighted using information from the most recent Eurostat statistics. Data collection in Finland, Sweden, and Hungary was conducted by Bilendi&Respondi, who administered online surveys to approximately 3001 Finnish and 2999 Swedish citizens in November 2022, and 3255 Hungarian citizens between March and May 2023 (for more details see Malet and Walter 2023). The survey company used quota sampling to obtain representative samples of the national electorates, although this goal was only partially reached in Hungary.

Across all cases, the dependent variable is the extent to which voters are willing to support a tough, non-accommodating strategy in response to non-cooperative behavior by another country. To operationalize this willingness, respondents were given a short description of the situation at hand, followed by a question about how the government (and in the cherry-picking cases the EU) should respond in the respective situation. Higher values denote support for a more non-accommodating, uncompromising stance – such as imposing tougher sanctions on Russia, not complying with Turkey's demands over NATO accession, or not allowing any exceptions to cherry-picking states. The exact wording for each question is provided in Table 3. In most contexts, a majority of respondents tends to be rather unsupportive of accommodating challenges by other states, but this resolve varies significantly both across individuals and across cases.

Analysis

The empirical analysis proceeds in two steps. I first analyze public opinion dynamics for each type of non-cooperative separately. These analyses combine observational and experimental analyses and explore whether, when, and how the accommodation dilemma shapes individual preferences about foreign policy responses to non-cooperation. In a second step, I leverage the fact that similar experiments were fielded in a broad variety of contexts and

[4] Ages 18-65. See Walter (2021b) for more details about the survey.

conduct a comparative experimental analysis, including a meta-analysis of the experimental results (Bassan-Nygate et al. 2024; Egami and Hartman 2023).

Observational analyses. The observational analyses examine how exposure to and evaluations of the cooperation costs of non-accommodation and the accommodation-related long-run risks are correlated with support for a hard, non-accommodating stance. Because the types of costs and risk associated with different forms of responses to non-cooperative behavior vary across cases and contexts, case-specific operationalizations are used in each of the different scenarios. The analyses use weighted data and include a variety of additional controls. The case-specific operationalization and model specifications are discussed in the context of each set of analyses below. Because the surveys were not originally designed to test the observational implications of the ADF, some analyses use rough proxies to account for individual exposure and assessment of the different types of cost.

For each of the seven cases, I compute the predicted values for three ideal-type respondents: 1) Respondents exposed only to cooperation costs of non-accommodation, but not the accommodation-related long-run risks, who are expected to support accommodation, 2) respondents exposed only to contagion risks, but not cooperation costs, who are predicted to be most in favor of non-accommodation, and 3) respondents facing an accommodation dilemma, because they confront both high non-accommodation related costs as well as high long-run accommodation-related risks. These respondents are expected to exhibit more moderate preferences situated between the other two ideal types. The observational analysis also allows me to probe respondents' preferred responses when they have a reversed assessment of costs, that is they view both the cooperation costs of accommodation and the contagion risks of non-accommodation as positive (or at least not negative).. I expect respondents in this category to have more accommodating preferences than those facing an accommodation dilemma.

Experimental analyses. The main analyses are based on vignette survey experiments that randomly vary information on the costs and risks associated with different response strategies. To make the analyses as comparable as possible across the different case contexts, all survey experiments follow the same general setup, as shown in table 2. Respondents were randomly assigned to three treatment groups and a control group.[5] The control group received general

[5] The survey experiments on NATO accession negotiations followed a slightly modified, two-step design. In a first step, respondents were randomly distributed into a control group, which only received some information about the situation at hand, whereas a second group additionally received information about the costs associated with not accommodating Turkey's (in Sweden and Finland) demands. Using block randomization based on this first step, respondents then were asked a follow-up questions, with some respondents only informed that negotiations

information about the respective issue and the nature of non-cooperative behavior. Respondents in three treatment groups additionally received information about the long-run risks associated with accommodation (T1), the cooperation costs resulting from non-accommodation (T2), or both types of costs (the accommodation dilemma, T3). Because the contexts of these experiments vary considerably, treatments were tailored to the specific situations. Table 3 provides an overview about the specific wording of the vignettes used in each case. All analyses include controls for basic demographics (age, gender, education, rural residency).

Table 2: Experimental setup

		Cooperation costs emerging from non-accommodation	
		No mention	Mention
Long-term risks associated with accommodation	No mention	**Control group:** Introductory text describing the situation	**Treatment 2:** Introductory text + information about cooperation cost of non-accommodation
	Mention	**Treatment 1:** Introductory text + information about long-term risk of accommodation	**Treatment 3:** Introductory text + information about both types of cost (cooperation costs and contagion risk)

This experimental setup mirrors Dellmuth and Walter's (2025: Table 1) 2x2 matrix that summarizes the ADF's predictions about preferred responses to non-cooperative behavior and thus allows us to evaluate the individual-level implications of the ADF. The expectation is that only emphasizing the long-term reputational risks associated with accommodating another state's challenge (T1) makes respondents more supportive of a non-accommodating negotiation strategy, whereas information only about the cooperation gains at stake from non-accommodation (T2) decreases respondents' support for non-accommodation. Respondents presented with both types of costs and thus an accommodation dilemma (T3) are expected to moderate their support for non-accommodation.

were still ongoing (control), and others additionally receiving information about the reputational costs of accommodating. At the end of step 2, respondents were asked on how they thought the government should respond to the respective situation; these are the dependent variables discussed above. Taken together, this setup again reflects the 2x2 setup familiar from the other experiments.

Table 4: Overview comparative experimental research design

Type of non-cooperation	**Challenger & issue**	**Response + survey details**	**DV (non-accommodation)**	**Control**	**T1: Long-term reputation treatment**	**T2: Short-term cost treatment**	**T3: Dilemma treatment**
Serious violation of inter-national law	Russia: Invasion of Ukraine	**Sweden** Nov 2022 N=2999 **Finland** Nov 2022 N=3001 **Hungary** Mar-May 2023 N=3255	What should [Sweden/Finland/ Hungary] do regarding the current economic sanction regime against Russia?" Answer on a 0-10 scale, from fully lift sanctions (0) to imposing many more sanctions (10).	In response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, Western countries have imposed heavy economic sanctions on Russia.	Control + Lifting the sanctions before Russia complies with international law again is risky, because it may encourage further aggression by Russia or other countries in the future."	Control + "Energy prices and inflation in [Sweden/Finland/Hungary] have risen and a recession is looming as a consequence of the sanctions."	Control + T1+T2 or T2+T1 *(order randomized)*
Coercive bargaining	Turkey: blockade of NATO accession	**Sweden** Nov 2022 N=1703 2-stage design **Finland** Nov 2022 N=1831 2-stage design	In your view, how many compromises should Finland make in the negotiations with Turkey in order to enable the country to join NATO? Answer on a 0-10 scale, ranging from "no compromises at all" (0) to "fully comply with Turkish demands" (10).	Sweden/Finland] can only join NATO if all member states ratify [Swedish/Finnish] accession. Currently, Turkey is the only NATO member holding up this process. Turkey has said that it will only let [Sweden/Finland] join NATO if the country stops supporting Kurdish groups, for example by extraditing people that Turkey considers terror suspects. Negotiations between [Finland/Sweden] and Turkey about NATO accession are still ongoing.	Control + Some observers are concerned that complying with Turkish demands might damage Sweden's reputation with regards to human rights protection. Control + Some observers are concerned that complying with Turkish demands might encourage other countries to equally blackmail Finland on important policy issues in the future.	Control + The war in Ukraine has highlighted the security risks [Sweden/Finland] faces if it remains outside NATO. [Sweden's/Finland's] exclusion from NATO therefore poses a real threat to the country and the security of its citizens.	Control + T2 + T1
Cherry-picking	UK: exemptions from Single market rules	**EU27** Dec 2019, N=11 543	What should the EU do? The EU should offer [the UK/	After Brexit, the UK and the EU will have to negotiate about their future relationship. They particularly disagree about how much the UK will have to adhere to EU rules in this	Control + "The EU is concerned that other member states will also insist on exceptions from EU rules if [the	control + "The EU is concerned that trade relations between [the UK/Switzerland] and the EU would deteriorate if the negotiations failed ."	Control + T1 + T2

			Switzerland] wide access to the EU market with… no (0) / only very few (1) / some (2) / many (3) exceptions from EU rules	new framework in return for wide access to the EU market.	UK/Switzerland] were granted exceptions"		
	Switzerland: exemptions from Single market rules	**EU27** Jun 2019, N=10 792		The EU and Switzerland are negotiating about having closer economic relations. They disagree about how much Switzerland will have to adhere to EU market rules in this new framework.			

Context-specific analyses

The first set of analyses explores the empirical implications of the ADF separately for each of the three different types of non-cooperation: serious violations of international law, coercive bargaining, and cherry-picking.

Challenge I: Serious violations of international law

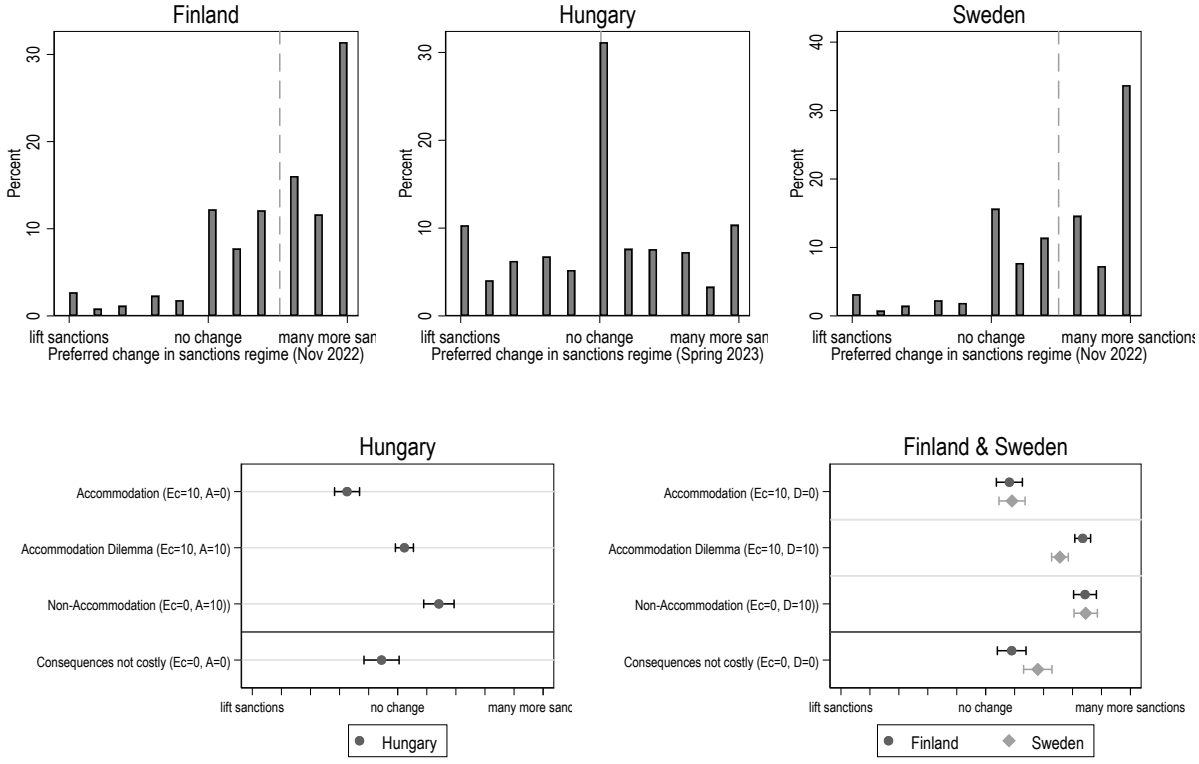
After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 in a clear breach of international law, Western countries imposed significant sanctions on Russia. These sanctions have not only hurt Russia, but have also been costly for the sanctioning countries. Public opinion on these sanctions has been divided, both among individuals and among countries (Ngo et al. 2022). Because Russia did not end its war against Ukraine in response to the sanctions, a tightening of the sanctions regime has been repeatedly discussed and implemented over the course of the war. The first set of analyses use this context to study how individuals assess a further tightening of Russian sanctions (as a non-accommodating response) in the context in which they are likely to be highly aware both of the high material costs of sanctioning and of the long-term risks that prematurely lifting the sanctions (and thus accommodating Russia) may pose in terms of encouraging further aggression by Russia or other countries. The three countries covered in the analysis – Sweden, Finland, and Hungary – are all geographically close to Russia, but vary in how they have reacted to the Ukraine war. While Sweden and Finland have sought NATO membership and have worked to strengthen the sanctions regime against Russia, the Hungarian government has taken a much more cautious approach and has openly criticized and opposed the EU's efforts to tighten sanctions.

The top row in Figure 1 shows respondents' preferences about sanctioning Russia for its invasion of Ukraine also vary significantly. Respondents were asked *"What should [Sweden/Finland/ Hungary] do regarding the current economic sanction regime against Russia?"* on a 0-10 scale ranging from a preference for accommodation (fully lift sanctions – 0) to non-accommodation (impose many more sanctions – 10). While Swedish and Finnish respondents were clearly in favor of tightening the sanction regime in November 2022, opinions were much more varied and much more accommodating on average in Hungary in spring 2023.

The lower part of Figure 1 shows that these preferences are systematically related to the extent to which respondents feel exposed to the negative consequences associated with different responses. It presents the predicted values for the three ideal type respondents discussed above, based on OLS regression analyses that control for political interest, left-right placement, government satisfaction, and gender, education, age, and rural area residence, as well as

whether or not respondents' see Russia as the main aggressor in Ukraine.[6] Exposure to the economic costs of further sanctions is operationalized with a measure of dissatisfaction with the economy on a 0 (very satisfied) to 10 (very dissatisfied) scale, because the additional economic strain of sanctions is likely to be higher for those who are troubled by the state of the economy. The long-term reputational costs of accommodation are measured with concern about Russia's growing military aggressiveness (Hungary) and proxied with respondents' support for more defense spending in Sweden and Finland. Both variables reflect long-term concerns about security, that also involve concern about the country's reputation for being able to defend itself. They range from 0 (not at all concerned about the growing military aggressiveness of Russia/greatly decrease defense spending) to 10 (very much concerned/ greatly increase spending). About 39% of respondents in Finland and Sweden support a significant increase in defense spending, reflecting heightened concerns about national security in these countries, whereas about 49% of Hungarian respondents are strongly concerned about Russian aggressiveness.

Fig. 1: Russian invasion Ukraine: Actual and predicted support for more sanctions



Predicted Values with 95% CI. Accommodation-related long-term risks = Concern about Russia's military aggressiveness (A - HU) / Support for more defense spending (D - FI/SE)), Cooperation cost of not accommodating = Dissatisfaction with the economy

[6] Full regression results can be found in table A1 in the appendix.

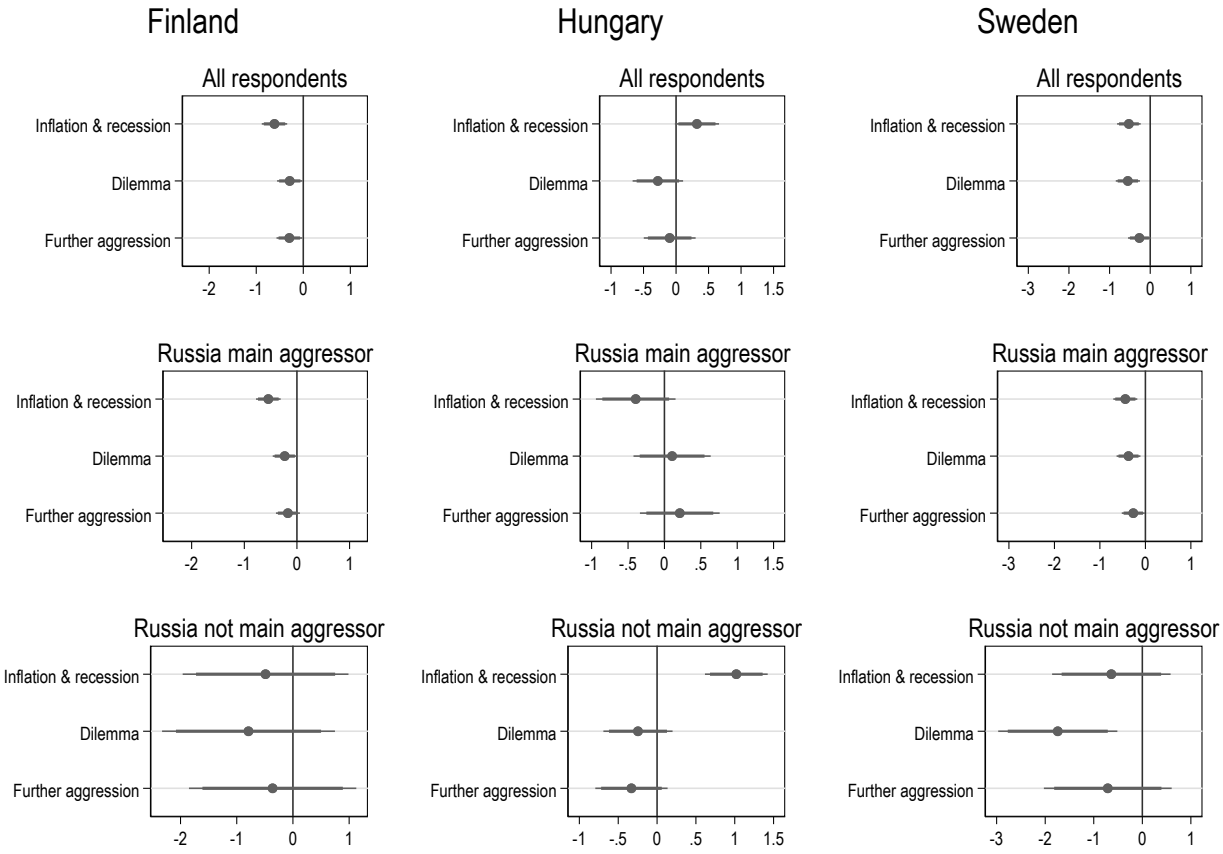
The observational analysis shows that the preferred responses to Russia's invasion follow the pattern predicted by the ADF. In all three countries, respondents who are dissatisfied with the economy and therefore more exposed to fallout in cooperation gains associated with further sanctions are less likely to support a further tightening of sanctions, whereas concern about national security is associated with a more non-accommodating stance. Figure 1 shows that the predicted values for the three ideal types also line up in pattern predicted by the ADF: Respondents who are particularly exposed to the economic cost of further sanction, but unconcerned about future military threats, are the least willing to support an expansion of the sanctions regime, and vice versa. In contrast, respondents who face a strong accommodation dilemma because they are concerned both about the economy and national security, hold more moderate between these two extremes (although in Finland national security concerns clearly dominate). However, they still support a significantly harsher response than individuals who are neither concerned about the economy nor national security. Finally, respondents who face a weak accommodation dilemma because their exposure to both kinds of consequences moderate their support even more.

Turning to the experimental analysis, I next explore how randomized information about the costs of non-accommodation – higher energy prices, inflation and a looming recession – (cost treatment T2) and the long-run contagion risks of accommodation – encouragement of further aggression by Russia or other countries in the future – (contagion treatment T1), as well as jointly providing information about both of these costs (the dilemma treatment T3) affect respondents' support for non-accommodation.[7] The top row in Figure 2 shows the average treatment effect (ATE) for all respondents, whereas the second and third row shows heterogenous treatment effects (HTEs) for those respondents who view Russia's behavior as non-cooperative because they view the country as main aggressor in Ukraine (middle row), and those who do not see Russia as the main aggressor in the Ukraine war (bottom row).

The results show that the treatments only move public opinion in the manner predicted by the ADF if respondents regard Russia's actions as non-cooperative behavior. Among those respondents who believe that Russia is the main aggressor in the Ukraine conflict, respondents treated with information about the economic costs of sanctions (T2) are significantly less likely to support further sanctions than those who receive the treatment that accommodation may invite further aggression T1).[8] The effect size of the dilemma treatment lies between those of T1 and T2 and behaves in a similar way as the contagion treatment in Hungary and Finland,

[7] The order of the cost and reputation statements in the «both» treatment were randomized in this experiment. There is no evidence that the ordering provided had an effect on responses.
[8] This difference is not statistically significant in the Swedish sample.

Figure 2: Support for Russia Sanctions: Experimental Results



whereas effects are indistinguishable from either treatment mentioning only one consequence in Sweden.[9] Because a large majority of Scandinavian respondents believe that Russia is behaving non-cooperatively, these results are similar to those of the entire sample. In Hungary, however, results for the full sample sharply diverge. A closer inspection reveals, however, that this effect is driven by those respondents who think that Russia is not predominantly responsible for the Ukraine war (ca. 53% of the sample). The bottom line shows that treatment effects do not follow any consistent pattern among those who are skeptic about the non-cooperative nature of Russia's behavior. These findings underscore the importance of clearly delineating the ADF's scope conditions.

[9] Somewhat surprisingly, in Finland and Sweden all treatments reduce support for tighter sanctions relative to the control group. One possible explanation for this surprising finding is the high politicization of the Russia sanctions issue, which implies that respondents probably had rather strong opinions on this issue going into the experiment. Another possible explanation is that the time needed to read the longer treatment vignettes gave respondents more time to reconsider their gut reaction, which may have prompted them to take a more measured stance across all treatments.

Challenge II: Coercive bargaining

We next turn to a case of coercive bargaining and explore how the public responded to Turkey's blocking of Finnish and Swedish NATO membership. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, both countries had decided to give up neutrality and join the NATO alliance. However, these plans were held up by Turkey, which used its veto power as a NATO member state to pressure both countries to change their policy towards Kurdish people seeking refuge in the two Scandinavian countries.[10] Turkey demanded that both countries stop supporting Kurdish groups and extradite rather than provide a safe haven to Kurdish people considered as terror suspects by the Turkish government. This was a big ask from two countries for whom a strong human rights record is a part of their identity.

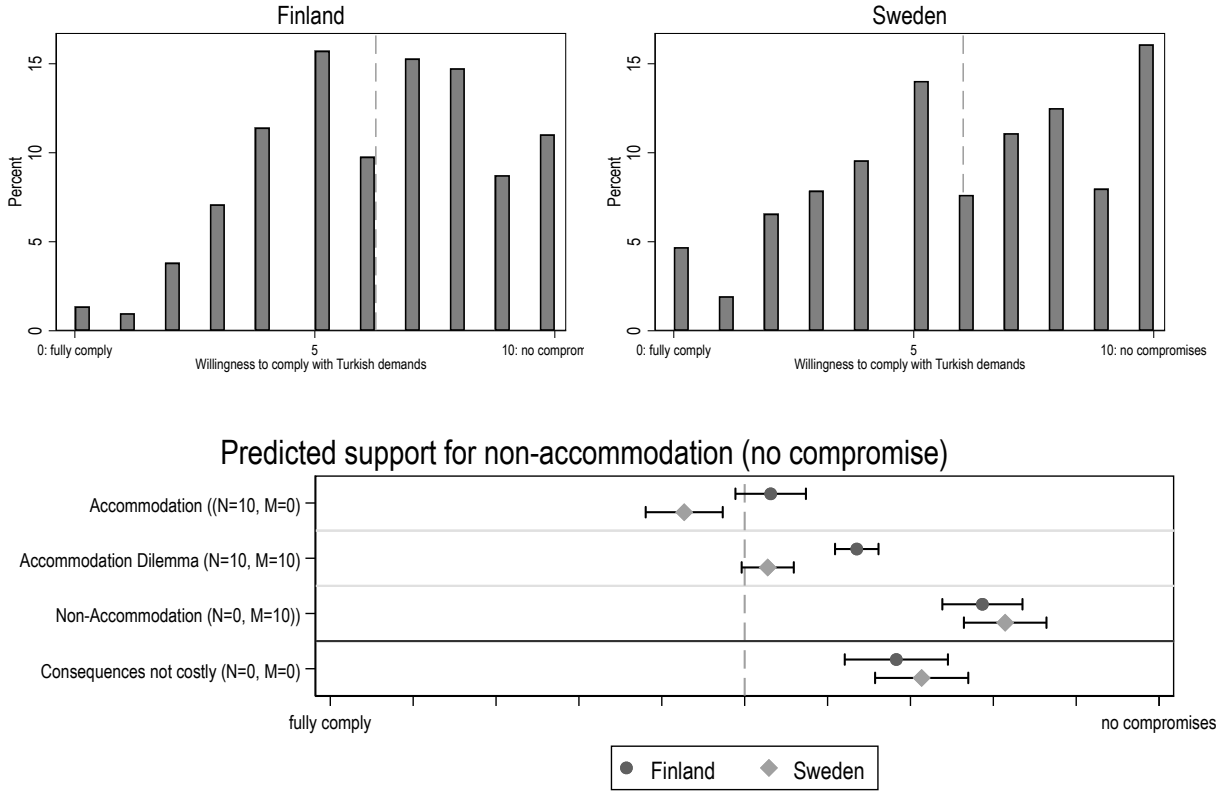
This context allows us to study the public's willingness to compromise on these issues in return for NATO membership. Respondents' preferred response to Turkey's veto threat was measured by asking "*In your view, how many compromises should Finland make in the negotiations with Turkey in order to enable the country to join NATO?"* Answers were recorded on a 0-10 scale, ranging from "fully comply with Turkish demands" (0, accommodation) and "no compromises at all" (10, non-accommodation). The histograms shown in the upper part of Figure 3 show that opinions were split, with a slight average preference for non-accommodation. Respondents' exposure to the negative consequences of different foreign policy responses were measured with two questions about the two key issues at stake: respondent's degree of approval of their country's decision to apply for NATO membership, as the key cooperation gain at stake from standing firm and their views about the importance of protecting the rights of minority groups, given the long-term damage to the human rights record of these countries associated with complying with Turkey's demands. Individual opinions on these issues were measured using questions about and on a zero to ten-scale. Average support for both NATO membership and minority rights protection is strong, but there is also considerable variation in opinions.

The bottom part of Figure 3 displays the results of OLS regressions that use weighted data and control for political interest, left-right placement, government satisfaction, support for more defense spending, risk propensity, gender, age, education, and rural residency. It shows that opinions on how the government should respond to Turkey's veto threat diverged sharply, with views about the desirability of NATO membership as a key dividing line. Respondents

[10] Because all other NATO members showed great support for Finland and Sweden's membership, so that there was a chance that by standing firm, the countries might call Turkey's bluff. Nonetheless, given the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Europe, however, delays and uncertainty about the prospects of NATO membership were costly in themselves.

strongly in favor of NATO membership were much more willing to accept compromises with Turkey than those opposed to NATO accession. As predicted by the ADF, support for accommodation is most pronounced among respondents who are unconcerned about the long-term effects on their country's reputation for human rights. In contrast, respondents who strongly care about minority rights, but who strongly oppose NATO membership, take the most non-accommodating stance towards Turkey. As expected, respondents confronted with a strong accommodation dilemma (because they care both about NATO membership and minority protection) have more moderate views. Finally, the bottom line shows that respondents who do not want to enter NATO tend to support a relatively hard line vis-à-vis Turkey, even if they do not care about minority rights protection.

Fig. 3: Turkey's blocking of NATO accession: Actual and predicted preferences for non-accommodation

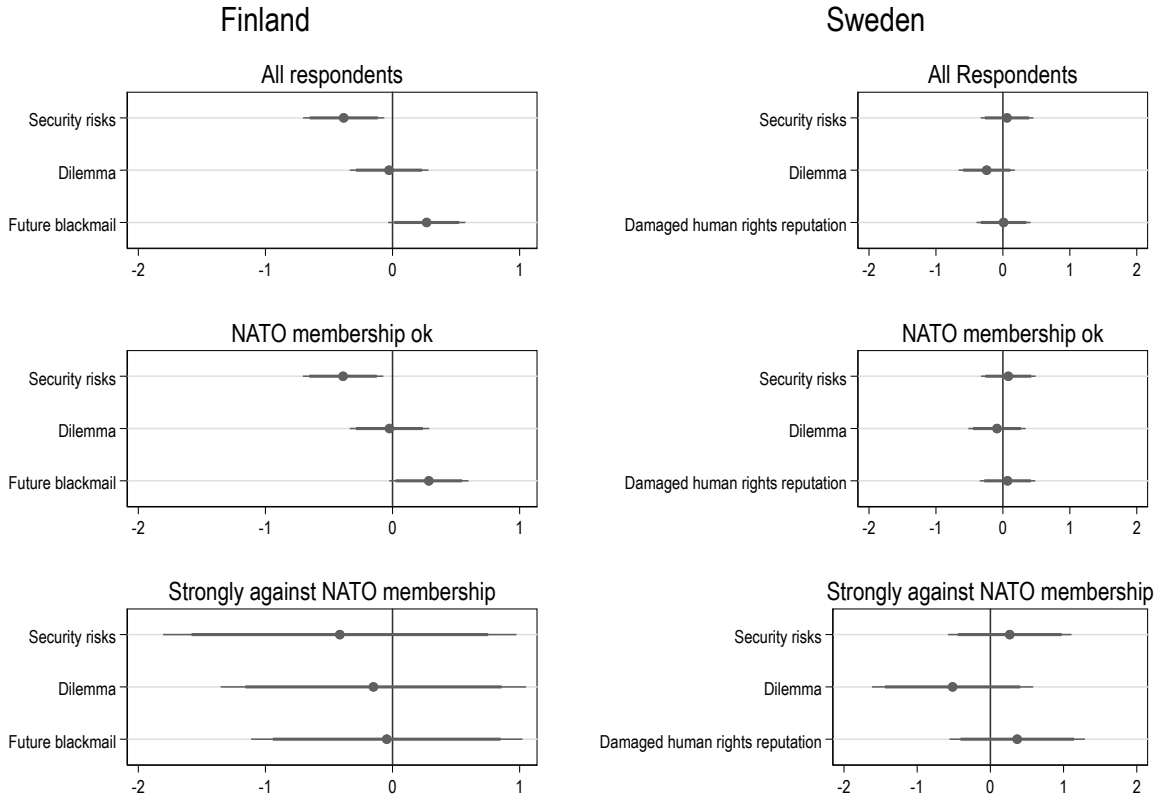


Cost of non-accommodation = Support for NATO Accession (N), long-run cost of acommodation = concern about minority rights (M); Predicted Values with 95% CI

I next turn to the experimental analysis of the NATO case. Here, I leverage the fact that this context allows us to explore the role of different narratives about the nature of the long-run consequences of accommodating non-cooperative behavior. Echoing differences in focus of national media discourses in both countries, the accommodation-risk treatment (T1) and the

dilemma treatment (T3) emphasized different types of long-term reputational costs associated with giving in to Turkey's demands. In Sweden, respondents were informed that "*some observers are concerned that complying with Turkish demands might damage Sweden's reputation with regards to human rights protection*" whereas the Finnish treatment highlighted the concern *"that complying with Turkish demands might encourage other countries to equally blackmail Finland on important policy issues in the future."* Respondents in both countries received the same treatment about the costs associated with non-accommodation (T2), which emphasized the heightened security risks for the country if it remained outside NATO, *"posing a real threat to the country and the security of its citizens."*

Fig. 4: Experimental results: Responding to Turkey's NATO accession veto threat



Note: Average and heterogenous treatment effects relative to control, 90 and 95% confidence intervals, controlling for education, age, gender and rural residency

Figure 4 shows that while the treatments elicit the predicted pattern of responses in Finland, they hardly move opinions in Sweden and also fail to line up in the way predicted by the ADF. In Finland, treating respondents with information about the costs of non-accommodation (the security risks of remaining outside NATO) makes respondents more willing to compromise, information that accommodation might open the country up to

blackmail risks in the future hardens their positions, and those treated with both types of cost (the dilemma treatment) fall in the middle of these two effects and very close to responses in the control group. In contrast, none of the treatments in Sweden have a significant effect, neither relative to the control group nor relative to each other, and this also holds when we exclude those respondents who are strongly opposed to NATO accession. The findings suggest that people care more about the blackmail risks than their country's human rights' reputation. Another possible explanation is that this issue, especially the reputational damage involved in compromising on core human rights norms and the trade-off with the country's security needs, was so heavily discussed in Swedish media that the survey experiment mentioning these issues did not move opinions much.

Challenge III: Cherry-Picking

The final set of analyses looks at recent British and Swiss attempts to negotiate a new (post-Brexit UK) or revised (Switzerland) set of rules for EU Single Market access that would give them wide-ranging access despite significant exceptions that other EU member states are not granted. For example, both countries tried to negotiate exceptions to the principle of free movement or the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. While this behavior meets the definition of non-cooperation because it shifts the distribution of cooperation gains in Switzerland's and the UK's favor, thus reducing the gains available to others, these cases represent a much weaker form of non-cooperation than the two challenges previously examined. In fact, euroskeptics would be quick to emphasize that these are legitimate pathways that should also be available to other countries. Skepticism about the "non-cooperative nature" of these actions was thus widespread. Likewise, evaluations of the likely consequences differed. Many euroskeptics saw the contagion risk posed by accommodating British and Swiss requests for exceptions – the risk that this might encourage other countries to similarly ask for exceptions and ultimately result in a fraying of the Single Market – as an opportunity, rather than a negative development.

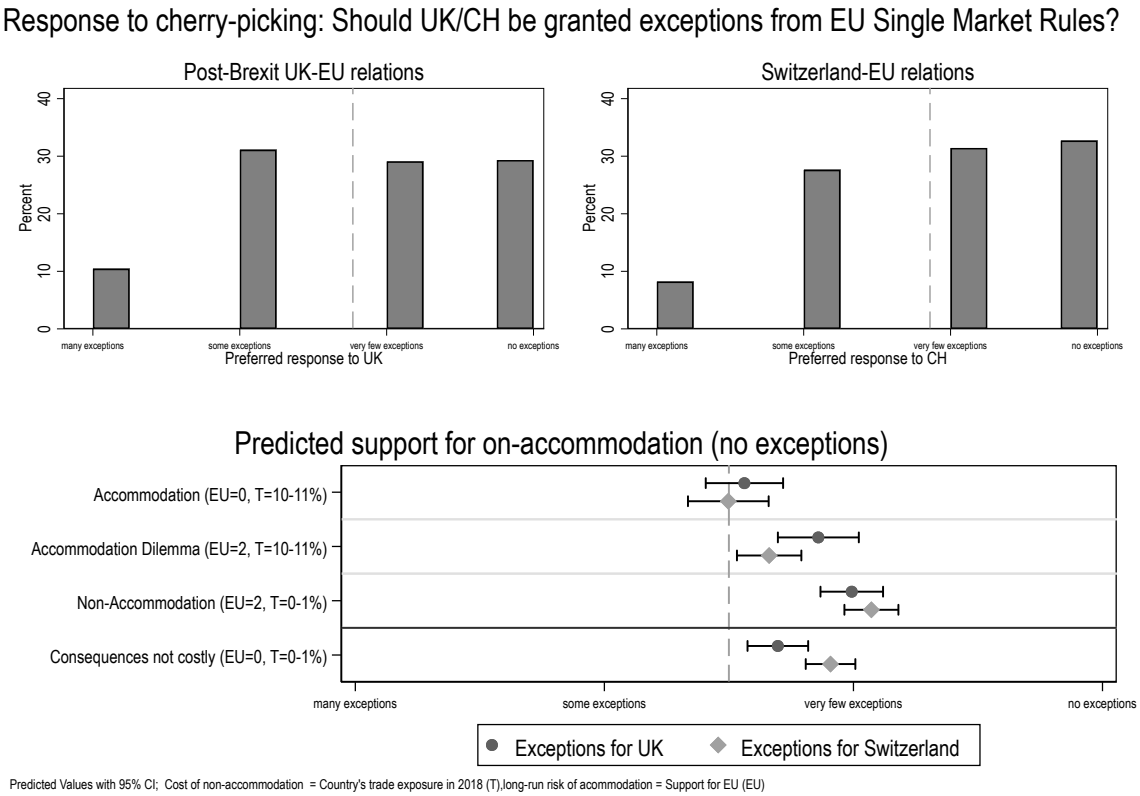
The survey used in these final sets of analyses come from a large cross-country survey that included respondents from all EU-27 member states.[11] Figure 5 shows that overall, EU27 respondents had little appetite of granting Switzerland and the UK far-reaching exceptions in the ongoing negotiations about the extent to which these countries would have to adhere to EU market rules in the future, although many were willing to accept several exceptions.

To examine to what extent the ADF can explain this variation, I exploit the fact that there is significant variation in member state's economic integration with the UK and

[11] National sample sizes reflect the relative size of each member state's population relative to the EU population.

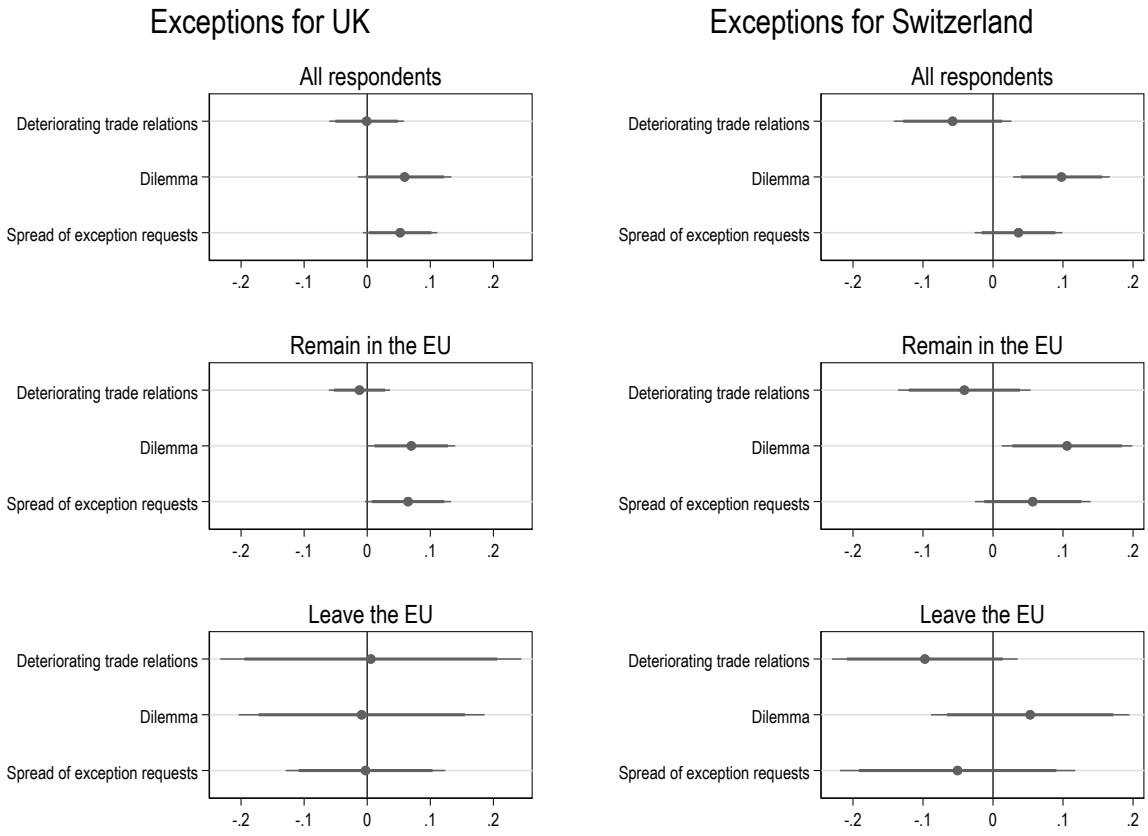
Switzerland. Austria's trade exposure to Switzerland, for example, is seven times as large as Spain's, and Ireland's trade exposure to the UK is about seven times as large as Italy's or Finland's exposure. Although the survey is not designed in a way that would allow for separate country-level analyses, this set-up does allow me to examine how actual exposure to the costs of trade disruptions caused by a non-accommodating response designed to reduce Swiss and British access to the Single Market shapes preferred responses to cherry-picking. I use data from COMTRADE (United Nations Statistics Division 2025) to compute trade exposure as the sum of goods and services imports from and exports to Switzerland and the UK respectively in 2018, divided by the respective country's GDP (World Bank 2025) and use the log of this measure because the data are skewed. Respondents' concern about the reputational consequences of accommodation is proxied with a question that asks whether power should be returned to national member states, kept as is, or transferred more to the EU. This follows evidence that respondents who prefer more European integration are most concerned about the possible contagion effects of accommodation (Walter 2021b). The observational analyses control for gender, education, age, rural residency and how interested the person is in news about Brexit, uses weights, and estimates a multilevel model that takes into account that the data were collected in 27 different national contexts.

Fig. 5: British and Swiss cherry-picking: Preferred and predicted responses



The results of the observational analysis displayed in the bottom part of Figure 5 shows that as predicted by the ADF, euroskeptics living in countries with a very high trade integration with Switzerland or the UK were most willing to grant exceptions to these countries, whereas strong EU supporters in countries with negligible trade ties to these countries are the most hawkish. Respondents facing an accommodation dilemma as well as those for whom the consequences are not very costly take a middle ground.

Fig. 6: Experimental results: Support for non-accommodation of cherry-picking



In the survey experiment designed to test the ADF in the cherry-picking context, respondents received randomized treatments about the cooperation gains at stake from non-accommodation (a deterioration in trade relations), the long-run contagion risks of accommodation (the risk that other member states would also insist on exceptions from EU rules), and a dilemma treatment that mentioned both of these effects. The top row in Figure 6 shows the average treatment effect (ATE) for all respondents. Compared to both the control groups and to treatment T2, which informs respondents about the risk of deteriorating trade relations, respondents who received the treatments mentioning contagion risks (alone (T1) or as a dilemma (T3)) were significantly more likely to support a more accommodating response,

a finding that holds for both countries. In contrast, T1 and T3 have rather similar effects, with the dilemma treatment turning respondents particularly hawkish on Switzerland. This runs counter to the ADF's prediction that the dilemma treatment should be associated with more moderate responses.

The middle and bottom rows explore how non-cooperation perceptions and assessments of contagion risks as opportunity matter. Europeans who have a desire to leave the EU are unlikely to view the push for national exceptions non-cooperative behavior, but rather as a model to follow (van Kessel et al. 2020; Walter 2021a). As a result, they should also view the possibility that granting exceptions to the UK and Switzerland may encourage further demands for national exceptions to common rules as an opportunity, rather than a risk. This suggest that the ADF logic should not apply to this subgroup. And indeed, the treatments do not move the opinions of those respondents who would leave the EU if they could. At the same time, the heterogenous treatment effects for remainers are somewhat more pronounced. This once more underlines that it is important to clearly specify the scope conditions of the ADF.

Comparative Experimental Analysis

The analyses so far suggest that the ADF can explain common patterns across a variety of cases and contexts which differ significantly from each other. This reflects the argument's wide coverage of non-cooperative behavior broadly defined. However, the details of the cases differ from each other, making it hard to compare the results and to generalize the findings. This last section therefore probes the external validity of the findings (Egami and Hartman 2023). The ADF predicts that the results of the survey experiments should be relatively consistent across the different contexts, especially when the argument's scope conditions are properly considered.

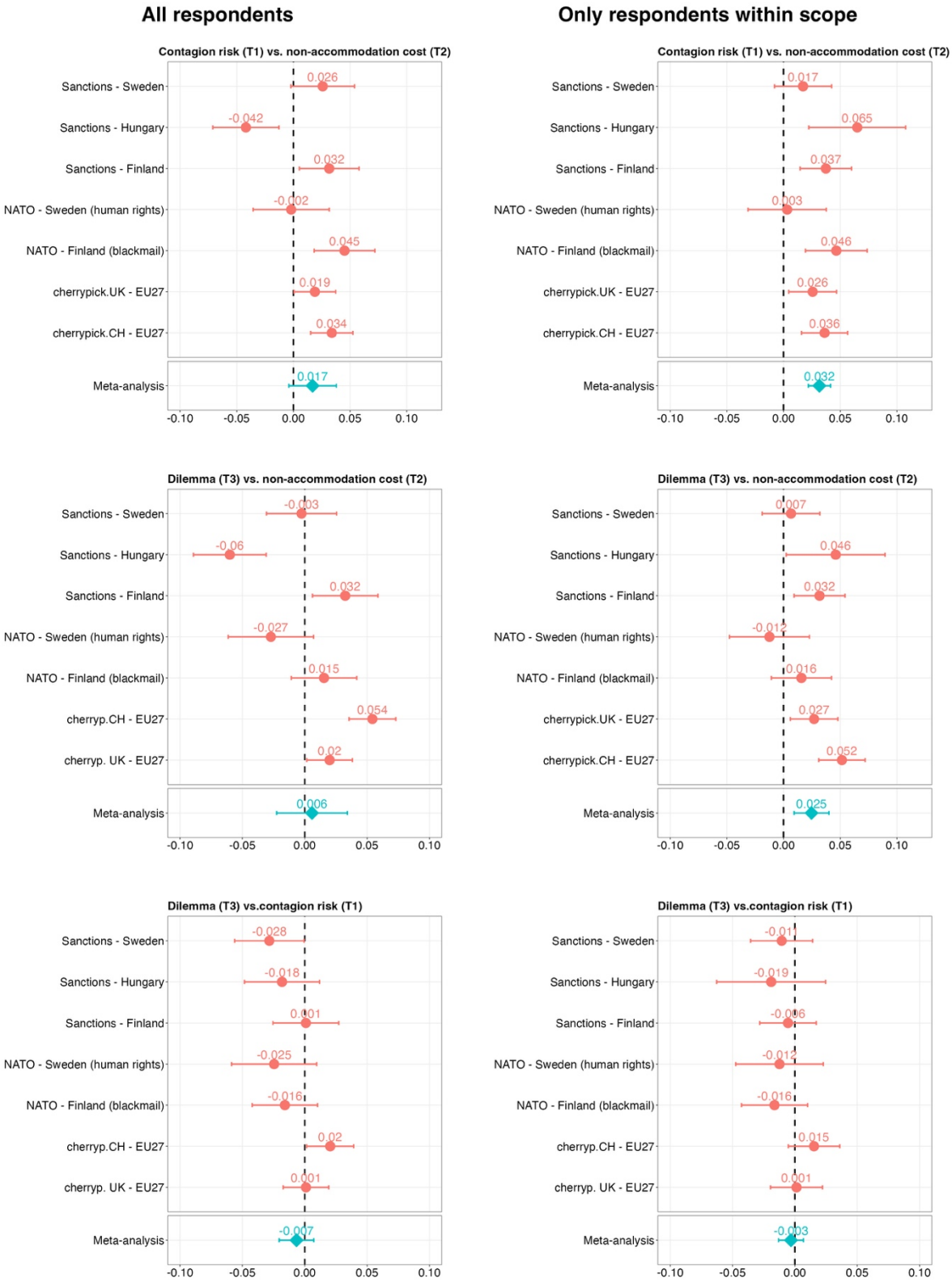
To examine the average treatment effects in a comparative manner in order to test this hypothesis, I follow recent research on analyzing multi-country experiments in international relations (Bassan-Nygate et al. 2024). Moreover, some adjustments in the data and model specification are necessary in order to enable a comparison across the seven experiments. In a first step, I rescale all variables on a 0-1 scale, to make the effect sizes comparable. This allows me to re-calculate the case-specific average treatment effects using individual OLS regression analyses in a comparable manner, and to then use these effects to estimate a weighted average of effects from all cases with a meta-analytic random-effects model (Bassan-Nygate et al. 2024; Malet and Walter 2023b). In addition, rather than estimate the treatment effects relative to the control group, I compute the differences between treatment groups. This addresses the

challenge that the cases differ considerably in the extent to which the non-cooperation issue is salient and politicized, the extent to which the domestic debate emphasizes the risks of accommodation over the risks of non-accommodation and vice versa, and the baseline views that people hold on the issue at hand. As a result, treatment effects relative to the control group are difficult to compare across cases. The ADF also makes clear predictions about differences across treatment groups, facilitating such an analysis. Specifically, respondents who receive the treatment highlighting the long-run reputational risks associated with accommodation (T1) should be more supportive of non-accommodation than those who receive the treatment highlighting the costs of non-accommodation (T2). Respondents receiving the dilemma treatment (T3) should be more supportive of non-accommodation than those receiving the material cost treatment, but less supportive than those who only receive the contagion risk treatment. Because of the moderating effect of the accommodation dilemma, these effect sizes should be smaller than those between the T1 and T3.

Finally, the case-specific analyses have shown that it is important to consider the scope conditions of the ADF and to account for the fact that not all individuals may view the other state's behavior as non-cooperative, and that some individuals actually evaluate the negative consequences of accommodation or non-accommodation as desirable. I therefore estimate a second set of analyses that restricts the samples only to those individuals who fall within the scope of the ADF. In the sanctions cases, this means that I restrict the analyses to those respondents who view Russia as the main aggressor in the Ukraine conflict. In the NATO cases, I restrict the analyses to those individuals who are not strongly opposed to NATO membership (and hence viewing the consequence of non-accommodation – a Turkish veto – as a benefit). And in the cherry-picking cases, I restrict the sample to those individuals who do not express a desire to leave the EU.

Figure 7 shows the results of these comparative analyses. It presents average treatment effects of the different treatments (in red), alongside the treatment effect obtained from the meta-analytic random-effect model (in turquoise). The upper row shows the treatment effects of T1, which emphasizes the long-term risks associated with accommodation relative to T2, which highlights the costs of non-accommodation. The middle row shows the ATE of the dilemma treatment T3, which highlights both types of risk relative to T2 (non-accommodation costs), and the bottom row shows the ATE of the dilemma treatment T3 relative to T1 (accommodation-related risks). The left-hand column shows the results for all respondents, whereas the right-hand column displays the results only for those respondents who fall within the ADF's scope conditions.

Fig. 7: Case specific normalized ATEs and results from a meta-analysis



The findings are in line with the expectations that respondents who receive information about the long-run reputational and contagion risks associated with accommodation (further military aggression, damage to the country's human rights reputation, risk of future bullying, or risk of growing demands for exceptions from common rules, T1) express more hawkish

preferences than those who are treated with information about the tangible costs of non-accommodation (higher prices and a recession, no NATO membership, and disrupted trade relations, T2). The meta-analysis shows that this effect is particularly large and statistically significant when the sample is restricted to those individuals, which fall under the ADF scope. Highlighting both types of costs (the dilemma treatment), rather than only the non-accommodation costs, likewise increases support for non-accommodation, although as expected, the effect is smaller. Interestingly, it makes hardly any difference whether people are only informed about the long run reputational/contagion risks, or whether respondents additionally are informed about the costs of non-accommodation.

In sum, the comparative experimental analysis underscores two core findings from the individual case analyses: First, the experimental analysis supports the individual-level implications of the ADF. Second, it is important to consider the scope conditions of the ADF.

Conclusion

How do voters want their governments to respond when other states behave non-cooperatively towards their country? Do they support a tough, uncompromising response? Or do they instead want their government to accommodate the challenging state so as not to risk what remains of the cooperation with that state? Applying the accommodation dilemma framework (Dellmuth and Walter 2025) to the individual-level, this paper has explored the sources of public support for accommodation and non-accommodation. Voters weigh the cooperation gains at stake from non-accommodation against the long-term risks of accommodation. While they often dislike the costs of non-accommodation, they also worry about the risks of reputational damage, a further spread of non-cooperation, or future exploitation that accommodation is likely to generate. As a result, they balance both considerations. When both types of costs appear large, voters face an accommodation dilemma and tend to moderate their stance, favoring compromises rather than either full accommodation or rigid non-accommodation. However, these dynamics tend to be limited to those respondents who view the other state's behavior as non-cooperation and who actually view the consequences as costly, rather than beneficial.

While much previous research on these questions has focused on the security realm (Brutger and Kertzer 2018; Chaudoin 2014b; Fearon 1994; Kertzer 2016; Tomz et al. 2020; Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015) this paper has broadened the focus to a broader set of cases in which other states behave in a non-cooperative manner, such as the violation of core international norms, coercive bargaining situations, and renegotiation of international

agreements. Presenting evidence from a variety of high-salience, real-life contexts in different countries, both observational and survey experimental analyses suggest that voters consider the consequences of different potential responses in such challenging situations. Across most of the diverse set of cases, statements that emphasizes the long term reputational risks of accommodation led to significantly more support for a "playing tough" strategy than statements that emphasized the costs associated with non-accommodation. Whereas vignettes that presented respondents with both types of costs usually moderated support for non-accommodation, demonstrating the difficulties of dealing with the accommodation dilemma, in many settings the reputation-effect seemed to dominate the cost effect.

These findings have important implications, both with regard to research and for policymakers. Substantively, these findings underscore the importance of reputational concerns that recent research has highlighted (Brutger 2021; Brutger and Kertzer 2018; Kertzer 2016; Goldfien et al. 2025) and show that such concerns also matter for foreign policy issues beyond the security realm (Dafoe et al. 2014a; Weisiger and Yarhi-Milo 2015). In terms of policy implications, the findings suggest that voters are open to considering difficult strategic decisions in foreign policymaking. This suggests that policymakers may have some room to garner public support for a tough foreign policy stance if they clearly communicate the rationale for their strategy and the risks associated with accommodation clearly. Incidentally, the findings also suggest that there can be a payoff for policymakers if they do not downplay the costs associated with non-accommodation, but rather emphasize that demonstrating a willingness to accept these costs is likely to make the sanctions more credible and thus ultimately more successful. More generally, the results suggest that voters are capable of understanding more complex and medium-term arguments about strategic foreign policy considerations than some previous research has assumed.

Bibliography

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, Charlotte Galpin, and Ben Rosamond. 2017. "Performing Brexit: How a Post-Brexit World Is Imagined Outside the United Kingdom." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19 (3): 573–91.

Bamert, Justus, Fabrizio Gilardi, and Fabio Wasserfallen. 2015. "Learning and the Diffusion of Regime Contention in the Arab Spring." *Research & Politics* 2 (3): 2053168015593306–2053168015593306.

Bassan-Nygate, Lotem, Jonathan Renshon, Jessica Weeks, and Chagai Weiss. 2024. "The Generalizability of IR Experiments Beyond the U.S." Unpublished manuscript.

Bechtel, Michael M, Federica Genovese, and Kenneth F Scheve. 2017. "Interests, Norms and Support for the Provision of Global Public Goods: The Case of Climate Co-Operation." *British Journal of Political Science*, 1–23.

Blair, Graeme, and Gwyneth McClendon. 2021. "Conducting Experiments in Multiple Contexts." *Advances in Experimental Political Science* 411.

Borzyskowski, Inken von, and Felicity Vabulas. 2024. "Public Support for Withdrawal from International Organizations: Experimental Evidence from the US." *The Review of International Organizations*, 1–37.

Brutger, Ryan. 2021. "The Power of Compromise: Proposal Power, Partisanship, and Public Support in International Bargaining." *World Politics* 73 (1): 128–66.

Brutger, Ryan, and Joshua D Kertzer. 2018. "A Dispositional Theory of Reputation Costs." *International Organization* 72 (3): 693–724.

Brutger, Ryan, Joshua D Kertzer, Jonathan Renshon, and Chagai M Weiss. 2022. *Abstraction in Experimental Design: Testing the Tradeoffs*. Cambridge University Press.

Caraway, Teri L, Stephanie J Rickard, and Mark S Anner. 2012. "International Negotiations and Domestic Politics: The Case of IMF Labor Market Conditionality." *International Organization* 66 (1): 27–61.

Chaudoin, Stephen. 2014a. "Promises or Policies? An Experimental Analysis of International Agreements and Audience Reactions." *International Organization* 68 (1): 235–56. Cambridge Core. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000386.

Chaudoin, Stephen. 2014b. "Promises or Policies? An Experimental Analysis of International Agreements and Audience Reactions." *International Organization* 68 (01): 235–56.

Chilton, Adam S, Helen V Milner, and Dustin Tingley. 2017. "Reciprocity and Public Opposition to Foreign Direct Investment." *British Journal of Political Science*, 1–25.

Chu, Jonathan A, and Stefano Recchia. 2022. "Does Public Opinion Affect the Preferences of Foreign Policy Leaders? Experimental Evidence from the UK Parliament." *The Journal of Politics* 84 (3): 1874–77.

Copelovitch, Mark, and Jon C W Pevehouse. 2019. "International Organizations in a New Era of Populist Nationalism." *The Review of International Organizations* 14: 169–86.

Dafoe, Allan, Jonathan Renshon, and Paul Huth. 2014a. “Reputation and Status as Motives for War.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (1): 371–93. DOI.org (Crossref). https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-071112-213421.

Dafoe, Allan, Jonathan Renshon, and Paul Huth. 2014b. “Reputation and Status as Motives for War.” *Available at SSRN 2332048*.

De Vries, Catherine, Sara Hobolt, and Stefanie Walter. 2021. “Politicizing International Cooperation: The Mass Public, Political Entrepreneurs and Political Opportunity Structures.” *International Organization* 75 (2): 306–32.

Dellmuth, Lisa, Jan Aart Scholte, Jonas Tallberg, and Soetkin Verhaegen. 2022. *Citizens, Elites, and the Legitimacy of Global Governance*. Oxford University Press.

Dellmuth, Lisa, and Stefanie Walter. 2025. “Responding to Non-Cooperation in Global Governance.” Paper presented at Responding to Non-Cooperation in Global Governance, Special Issue Workshop, Stockholm, Sweden, September 2025.

Destradi, Sandra, Johannes Plagemann, and Hakkı Taş. 2022. “Populism and the Politicisation of Foreign Policy.” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 24 (3): 475–92. https://doi.org/10/gqj6b2.

Dijkstra, Hylke, Laura von Allwörden, Leonard Schütte, and Giuseppe Zaccaria. 2025. *The Survival of International Organizations: Institutional Responses to Existential Challenges*. Oxford University Press.

Drezner, Daniel W. 1999. *The Sanctions Paradox: Economic Statecraft and International Relations*. no. 65. Cambridge University Press.

Druckman, James N, and Thomas J Leeper. 2012. “Learning More from Political Communication Experiments: Pretreatment and Its Effects.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (4): 875–96.

Egami, Naoki, and Erin Hartman. 2023. “Elements of External Validity: Framework, Design, and Analysis.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (3): 1070–88.

Fearon, James D. 1994. “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes.” *American Political Science Review* 88 (03): 577–92.

Fearon, James D. 1997. “Signaling Foreign Policy Interests Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (1): 68–90.

Fearon, James D. 1998. “Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation.” *International Organization* 52 (2): 269–305.

Gaikwad, Nikhar, Federica Genovese, and Dustin Tingley. 2022. “Creating Climate Coalitions: Mass Preferences for Compensating Vulnerability in the World’s Two Largest Democracies.” *American Political Science Review*, 1–19.

Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2008. “The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach.” *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 95–106.

George, Alexander L. 1991. *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*. US Institute of Peace Press.

Gravelle, Timothy B. 2018. "Trumping Foreign Policy: Public Diplomacy, Framing, and Public Opinion among Middle Power Publics." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72 (5): 473–90.

Gueorguiev, Dimitar, Daniel McDowell, and David A Steinberg. 2020. "The Impact of Economic Coercion on Public Opinion: The Case of US–China Currency Relations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 0022002720912323–0022002720912323.

Hagemann, Sara, Sara Hobolt, and Christopher Wratil. 2017. "Government Responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence from Council Voting." *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (6): 850–76.

Hobolt, Sara, Sebastian Popa, Wouter van der Brug, and Hermann Schmitt. 2021. "The Brexit Deterrent? How Member State Exit Shapes Public Support for the European Union." *European Union Politics2*.

Hobolt, Sara, and Catherine de Vries. 2016. "Public Support for European Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 413–32.

Hug, Simon, and Thomas König. 2002. "In View of Ratification: Governmental Preferences and Domestic Constraints at the Amsterdam Intergovernmental Conference." *International Organization* 56 (2): 447–76. https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802320005531.

Hunter, Tom. 2024. "Disintegration and Party Competition: Evidence from Parliamentary Speeches on Brexit." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–24.

Jurado, Ignacio, Sandra Léon, and Stefanie Walter. 2022a. "Brexit Dilemmas: Shaping Post-Withdrawal Relations with a Leaving State." *International Organization* 76 (2): 273–304.

Jurado, Ignacio, Sandra Léon, and Stefanie Walter. 2022b. "Brexit Dilemmas: Shaping Post-Withdrawal Relations with a Leaving State." *International Organization* 76 (2): 273–304.

Kantorowicz, Jaroslaw, and Elena Kantorowicz-Reznichenko. 2023. *Enhancing Public Support for International Sanctions*.

Katagiri, Azusa, and Eric Min. 2019. "The Credibility of Public and Private Signals: A Document-Based Approach." *American Political Science Review* 113 (1): 156–72.

Kertzer, Joshua D. 2016. "Resolve in International Politics." In *Resolve in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Kertzer, Joshua D, and Ryan Brutger. 2016. "Decomposing Audience Costs: Bringing the Audience Back into Audience Cost Theory." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (1): 234–49.

Kertzer, Joshua D, Kathleen E Powers, Brian C Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. 2014. "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes." *The Journal of Politics* 76 (3): 825–40. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381614000073.

Kertzer, Joshua D, and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2017. "A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (3): 543–58.

Kessel, Stijn van, Nicola Chelotti, Helen Drake, Juan Roch, and Patricia Rodi. 2020. "Eager to Leave? Populist Radical Right Parties' Responses to the UK's Brexit Vote." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, January, 1369148119886213–1369148119886213. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148119886213.

Kiratli, Osman Sabri. 2020. "Together or Not? Dynamics of Public Attitudes on UN and NATO." *Political Studies*, September, 0032321720956326–0032321720956326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720956326.

Lü, Xiaobo, Kenneth Scheve, and Matthew J Slaughter. 2012. "Inequity Aversion and the International Distribution of Trade Protection." *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (3): 638–54.

Malet, Giorgio, and Stefanie Walter. 2023a. "Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too? Switzerland and the Feasibility of Differentiated Integration after Brexit." *West European Politics*, April 13, 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2023.2192083.

Malet, Giorgio, and Stefanie Walter. 2023b. "How Threats and Promises Affect Support for International Cooperation." Unpublished manuscript. Zurich: University of Zurich.

Martini, Marco, and Stefanie Walter. 2023. "Learning from Precedent: How the British Brexit Experience Shapes Nationalist Rhetoric Outside the UK." *Journal of European Public Policy*, ahead of print. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2023.2176530.

Mayda, Anna Maria, and Dani Rodrik. 2005. "Why Are Some People (and Countries) More Protectionist than Others?" *European Economic Review* 49 (6): 1393–430.

McLean, Elena V, and Taehee Whang. 2014. "Designing Foreign Policy: Voters, Special Interest Groups, and Economic Sanctions." *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (5): 589–602.

Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Melanie Meng Xue. 2021. "Folklore." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 136 (4): 1993–2046.

Milner, Helen. 1992. "International Theories of Cooperation among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses." *World Politics* 44 (3): 466–96.

Ngo, Vu M, Toan LD Huynh, Phuc V Nguyen, and Huan H Nguyen. 2022. "Public Sentiment towards Economic Sanctions in the Russia–Ukraine War." *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 69 (5): 564–73.

Owen, Erica, and Noel P Johnston. 2017. "Occupation and the Political Economy of Trade: Job Routineness, Offshorability, and Protectionist Sentiment." *International Organization* 71 (4): 665–99.

Owen, Erica, and Stefanie Walter. 2017. "Open Economy Politics and Brexit: Insights, Puzzles, and Ways Forward." *Review of International Political Economy* 24 (2): 179–202.

Peez, Anton, and Felix S Bethke. 2025. "Does Public Opinion on Foreign Policy Affect Elite Preferences? Evidence from the 2022 US Sanctions against Russia." *International Studies Quarterly* 69 (1): sqae145.

Pelc, Krzysztof J. 2013. "Googling the WTO: What Search-Engine Data Tell Us About the Political Economy of Institutions." *International Organization* 67 (3): 629–55. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000179.

Putnam, Robert D. 1988. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42 (3): 427–60.

Rathbun, Brian C, Joshua D Kertzer, Jason Reifler, Paul Goren, and Thomas J Scotto. 2016. "Taking Foreign Policy Personally: Personal Values and Foreign Policy Attitudes." *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (1): 124–37.

Reifler, Jason, Thomas J Scotto, and Harold D Clarke. 2011. "Foreign Policy Beliefs in Contemporary Britain: Structure and Relevance." *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (1): 245–66.

Scheve, Kenneth, and Matthew Slaughter. 2001. "What Determines Individual Trade-Policy Preferences?" *Journal of International Economics* 54 (2): 267–92.

Schneider, Christina. 2019. *The Responsive Union: National Elections and European Governance*. Cambridge University Press.

Schneider, Gerald, and Lars-Erik Cederman. 1994. "The Change of Tide in Political Cooperation: A Limited Information Model of European Integration." *International Organization* 48 (04): 633–62.

Simmons, Beth. 2010. "Treaty Compliance and Violation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 273–96.

Steinberg, David A., and Yeling Tan. 2023. "Public Responses to Foreign Protectionism: Evidence from the US-China Trade War." *The Review of International Organizations* 18 (1): 145–67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-022-09468-y.

Sung, Rena, and Jonghyuk Park. 2022. "How Do Economic Sanctions Affect Public Opinion and Consumer Behavior in Target States? Evidence from China's Economic Sanctions on South Korea." *International Studies Quarterly* 66 (3): sqac023. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac023.

Tingley, Dustin, and Michael Tomz. 2014. "Conditional Cooperation and Climate Change." *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (3): 344–68.

Tingley, Dustin, and Barbara Walter. 2011. "Reputation Building in International Relations: An Experimental Approach." *International Organization* 65.

Tomz, Michael. 2007. "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach." *International Organization* 61 (04): 821–40.

Tomz, Michael, Jessica L P Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2020. “Public Opinion and Decisions about Military Force in Democracies.” *International Organization* 74 (1): 119–43.

United Nations Statistics Division. 2025. “UN COMTRADE: International Merchandise Trade Statistics.” http://comtrade.un.org/.

Walter, Barbara F. 2009. *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts Are so Violent*. Cambridge University Press.

Walter, Stefanie. 2021a. “Brexit Domino? The Political Contagion Effects of Voter-Endorsed Withdrawals from International Institutions.” *Comparative Political Studies* 54 (13): 2382–415.

Walter, Stefanie. 2021b. “EU-27 Public Opinion on Brexit.” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 59 (3): 569–88.

Walter, Stefanie, Elias Dinas, Ignacio Jurado, and Nikitas Konstantinidis. 2018. “Noncooperation by Popular Vote: Expectations, Foreign Intervention, and the Vote in the 2015 Greek Bailout Referendum.” *International Organization* 72 (4): 969–94. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000255.

Walter, Stefanie, and Nicole Plotke-Scherly. 2025. “Responding to Unilateral Challenges to International Institutions.” *International Studies Quarterly* 69 (2). https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaf022.

Weisiger, Alex, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2015. “Revisiting Reputation: How Past Actions Matter in International Politics.” *International Organization* 69 (2): 473–95.

World Bank. 2025. “World Development Indicators, GDP Data.”

Wratil, Christopher. 2018. “Modes of Government Responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence from Council Negotiation Positions.” *European Union Politics* 19 (1): 52–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116517735599.

Zürn, Michael. 2014. “The Politicization of World Politics and Its Effects: Eight Propositions.” *European Political Science Review* 6 (1): 47–71.

Zürn, Michael, Martin Binder, and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt. 2012. “International Authority and Its Politicization.” *International Theory* 4 (1): 69–106.