



5-4-2016

How Voters Hold the European People's Party Accountable in European Parliament Elections

Douglas D. Page
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/poliscifac>

 Part of the [Comparative Politics Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Page, Douglas. "How Voters Hold the European People's Party Accountable in European Parliament Elections." *Journal of European Integration* 38, no. 6 (2016). pp. 671-685.

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/poliscifac/30>

This open access article is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

How Voters Hold the European People's Party Accountable in European Parliament Elections

Abstract

The established consensus is that voters do not hold European Union leaders accountable for their management of the economy in European Parliament elections, which contributes to the EU's democratic deficit. However, the existing research misses a comparison between those who feel that the national government is responsible for their economic situation and those who feel the EU is responsible. The analysis is based on surveys of the 28 EU members. I find that when one assigns more responsibility to the EU than the national government for national economic conditions, satisfaction with the economy increases the likelihood of voting for the European People's Party, the dominant party group in the EU. This study presents the first evidence of individuals' accountability-holding behaviour towards the EPP.

Keywords

European People's Party, voting behaviour, public opinion, European Parliament, elections

Disciplines

Comparative Politics



How voters hold the European People's Party accountable in European Parliament elections

Journal:	<i>Journal of European Integration</i>
Manuscript ID	GEUI-2016-0015.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	European People's Party, Voting Behavior, European Parliament, Public Opinion, Economic Voting

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3 TITLE: How voters hold the European People's Party accountable in European Parliament
4
5 elections
6
7
8
9
10

11
12
13 ABSTRACT
14

15 The established consensus is that voters do not hold European Union leaders accountable for
16
17 their management of the economy in European Parliament elections, which contributes to the
18
19 EU's democratic deficit. However, the existing research misses a comparison between those who
20
21 feel that the national government is responsible for their economic situation and those who feel
22
23 the EU is responsible. The analysis is based on surveys of the twenty-eight EU members. I find
24
25 that when one assigns more responsibility to the EU than the national government for national
26
27 economic conditions, satisfaction with the economy increases the likelihood of voting for the
28
29 European People's Party, the dominant party group in the EU. This study presents the first
30
31 evidence of individuals' accountability-holding behavior towards the EPP.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 Key words: European People's Party, Voting Behavior, Public Opinion, European Parliament,
40
41 Elections
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 A growing body of scholarly research points to European Parliamentary elections as a
4 sign that the European Union (EU) possesses a democratic deficit, where citizens cannot hold
5 EU leaders accountable. The role of the European Parliament (EP) is to serve as an electoral
6 connection, but existing research shows that EP elections reflect domestic political conflicts
7 involving the national government, and the performance of EU leaders do not shape voters'
8 choices (Hix and Marsh 2007; Hix and Marsh 2011; Hobolt and Tilley 2014a; Weber 2011; de
9 Vreese et al. 2006). These findings have major implications for democratic accountability,
10 because they suggest that the role of elections has diminished in policy-making in Europe. This
11 study presents evidence to the contrary by showing that citizens evaluate the EU's management
12 of economies and vote in EP elections based on its performance.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

27 Do voters reward EU leaders for their performance, and under what conditions does this
28 behavior occur? The established consensus is that voters do not reward EU leaders. In other
29 words, Europeans do not engage in 'economic voting' based on the EU level of governance in
30 the EP elections. While the existing research addresses the responsibility one assigns to the EU,
31 what it misses is a comparison between those who feel that the national government is
32 responsible for their economic situation and those who feel the EU is responsible. In a context
33 where national governments and the EU share authority, the responsibility one assigns to both
34 the EU *and* one's government for the economy needs to be used when explaining vote choice.
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 Following the competency model of economic voting, voters condition their choice on
47 the incumbents' record of economic performance "because this is the optimal way to identify and
48 elect competent economic managers under conditions of uncertainty" (Duch and Stevenson 2008,
49 2). I argue that voters recognize the center-right parties of the European People's Party (EPP) as
50 the most powerful party group in EU politics. **The European People's Party is a party group**
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 **in the European Parliament comprised of center-right parties throughout the EU's**
4 **members. They won 36 percent of EP seats in 2009 and 29 percent of EP seats in 2014,**
5 **making the EPP the largest party group in the parliament. Politicians from the EPP not**
6 **only have the most votes in the parliament, but they also have led the European**
7 **Commission in recent years (the Barroso Commission and the Juncker Commission).**
8 **Moreover, the first two elected Presidents of the European Council have been members of**
9 **the EPP (Herman Van Rompuy and Donald Tusk). The EPP held the most representation**
10 **in the European Councils with thirteen heads of government at the time of the 2009 EP**
11 **election and eleven heads of government at the time of the 2014 EP election, which include**
12 **German Chancellor Angela Merkel who arguably is the most influential politician in**
13 **Europe.** If the voters hold the EPP accountable, the EU signals competence in economic
14 management to voters, alongside the signals they receive from the national government. Voters
15 recognize the EU's influence over national economies, discern whether the EPP's leadership
16 subjectively acts in their economic interest, and vote accordingly. I expect that the positive
17 effect of satisfaction with the national economy on one's likelihood to vote for the EPP increases
18 as one views the EU as more responsible for the economy *in comparison to* one's government.

19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41 In this study I gauge the conditions under which economic voting affects votes for the
42 European People's Party (EPP), the dominant, incumbent political group at the EU level, which
43 includes the largest number of European Parliament members (MEPs), the European
44 Commission Presidency, and the European Council Presidency. The analysis is based on the
45 European Election Studies' surveys of 28 European states, representing the 2009 and 2014
46 European Parliament elections. In order to operationalize the responsibility one assigns to the
47 EU, I construct a measure that separates those who attribute more responsibility to the national
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 government for the economy and those who attribute more responsibility to the EU for the
4
5 economy.
6
7

8 I find that the positive effect of economic satisfaction on the likelihood of voting for the
9
10 EPP increases, as voters assign greater responsibility to the EU for national economic conditions.
11
12 Hence, Europeans exhibit key behaviors that are necessary for an accountable EU democracy, a
13
14 political system where people make their political decisions based on the performance of the
15
16 EU's leadership (desiring more competent managers of the economy). I show that these results
17
18 do not hold when I exclude respondents' considerations of the responsibility of the national
19
20 government. The analysis shows that these effects are stronger in the Eurozone, where the stakes
21
22 in the EU's economic management are high.
23
24
25
26

27 **Holding the European Union Accountable in European Parliament Elections**

28
29 While the European Union has acquired more powers over the years, existing research
30
31 suggests that the people do not pay attention to the European Union level governance, they are
32
33 not excited by EP elections (reflected in low voter turn-out), and they make their vote choice in
34
35 EP elections based on national issues (Hix and Marsh 2007; Hix and March 2011; Schmitt 2005).
36
37 Hence, elections arguably are functioning less as mechanisms to influence policy-making, and
38
39 the EU institutions shape more policies in an environment that is insulated from electoral
40
41 outcomes (Nanou and Dorussen 2013). This phenomenon is called the 'democratic deficit' and
42
43 it presents a puzzle for researchers: if the EU has power over important policies, why have we
44
45 not observed an economic vote in EP elections? If the EU's performance as managers of the
46
47 economy shaped vote choice, a higher quality electoral connection between citizens and the EP
48
49 would exist; thereby alleviating the democratic deficit. Do voters hold EU leaders to account for
50
51 their governance?
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

The existing research suggests that EU elections are second-order elections where the national context dominates the voters' considerations. Hix and Marsh (2007) examine changes in the vote shares received by parties between a European Parliament election and the last national election. They show that losses in the EP elections are a function of the government size. They suggest that European Parliamentary elections provide voters with an opportunity to punish the national incumbents, more so than a protest against the EU. They further argue that "Europe remains at best a minor element in these elections in most cases... these general findings were as true in 2004 and they were in 1979" (Hix and Marsh 2007: 506). In their follow-up article, Hix and Marsh (2011) include data from the 2009 election, and once again they find that the second-order election model holds across all the EP elections. The parties in government and parties with large vote shares tend to be punished by the voters in the European Parliament elections.

On the other hand, Hobolt and Spoon's (2012) suggest that economic voting influences EP elections (see also Bartkowska and Tiemann 2015; Clarke and Rohrschneider 2009; Tilley et al. 2008). When modeling citizens' choices to vote or abstain, and citizens' choices to switch parties between the EP election and the last national election, they find that concerns about European integration had a statistically significant effect. They attribute these effects to the politicization of the EU in one's country, which increases the salience and controversy of the issue of integration. However, they do not examine whether party groups benefit in terms of popular support, which would indicate that voters can hold EU party groups accountable.

Hobolt and Tilley (2014a) provide a comprehensive analysis in terms of opinions on responsibility assignment towards the EU and accountability-holding in the EP elections. Alongside Hobolt and Tilley (2014b), they show that dissatisfaction with economic conditions influences the responsibility assigned to the EU. They show that when one supports the EU and

1
2
3 has a positive economic evaluation, one is more likely to assign responsibility to the EU for the
4 economy. They refer to this responsibility-assignment as group serving attribution bias (people
5 who like the EU assign it credit for subjectively good things). They elaborate on the economic
6 vote and how voters evaluate the performance of the incumbent EU leadership. They define
7 incumbency by membership in the European People's Party, the dominant political group at the
8 EU level. Voters recognize the center-right parties as the most powerful forces in EU politics. It
9 follows that a positive evaluation of the national economy would be expressed in a vote for the
10 EPP (an economic vote). They find null results, which suggest that we cannot be confident that
11 voters make their EPP vote choice based on their economic situations. They interpret this result
12 to mean that voters do not hold EU leadership to account for its past performance. Voters
13 ostensibly were not able to discern who to blame at the EU level for the management of the
14 economy.

15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

What Hobolt and Tilley's approach misses are the different targets of voters' blame in Europe's multi-level system of governance: both the EU and the national government. In a study of national elections in Southern European countries, Lobo and Lewis-Beck (2012) show that voters are less likely to reward governments for good economic performance when they assign more responsibility to the EU for the economy. They also show that those who assign more responsibility to the EU than the national government are less likely reward governments with their votes. However, voters may be able to find new targets of blame in their economic voting. EP elections provide a context where voters can vote directly for politicians who help make regional policies that constrain the national governments.

I incorporate the competency model of economic voting into the study of EP elections (Duch and Stevenson 2008). In this model, the signals received by voters about their economic

1
2
3 context are altered by institutions. This suggests that the European Union's perceived role in
4 economic affairs affect who one rewards for one's economic satisfaction, which one expresses
5 with one's vote choice. A subjective signal is picked up by individuals about the EU's role in
6 economic affairs which leads them to discern the EU leadership's responsibility, and makes the
7 EU's leadership an object of judgement for one's economic evaluations. Voters then make their
8 choice based on who performs best in terms of their economic interest.
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

17
18 Furthermore, citizens can receive signals from the multiple levels of governance (Duch
19 and Stevenson 2008). Europeans live in a context where national governments and the European
20 Union share sovereignty over economic matters. Citizens can assign more responsibility to the
21 national government, more responsibility to the EU, or similar levels of responsibility to both
22 (Hobolt and Tilley 2014b). The EU's signals regarding competence in economic management
23 become clearer as one views the EU as more responsible in comparison to the national
24 government, which produces a stronger economic vote in favor of or against the EPP. Those
25 who assign similar levels of responsibility to both levels, or more responsibility to the national
26 government, receive a murkier, less clear signal from the EU which is less likely to compel votes
27 for or against the EPP.
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 It follows that as one assigns more responsibility to the European Union for one's
42 national economic situation in comparison to the national government, the effect of economic
43 satisfaction on votes for the EPP intensifies, because voters perceive whether or not the EPP acts
44 in their economic interest.¹ The strength of the economic vote is defined by the difference in the
45 probability of an EPP vote between those who are satisfied and dissatisfied with the economy
46 (the effect of economic satisfaction).
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Hypothesis: The effect of economic satisfaction on the probability of an EPP vote
4 is greater among those who assign responsibility to the EU for the national
5 economy in comparison to those who assign responsibility to the national
6 government for the national economy.
7
8
9

10 **Research design**

11
12 In order to test the hypothesis, I estimate statistical models using data from the European
13 Election Study (EES). The theory posits that Europeans' attitudes about the economy and the
14 EU's policy competences influence their vote choices in European Parliamentary elections, and
15 the EES provides survey data on these topics that is collected from nationally representative
16 samples of populations in European states. These data include two years of EES surveys: 2009
17 and 2014, representing the European Parliamentary elections from those years. I select these
18 years due to the availability of the variables for the statistical models, described below. These
19 data include the 28 EU member states (Croatia is represented in the 2014 data, after it became an
20 EU member).
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 *Variable measurements*

34
35
36 In order to operationalize votes in favor of the EPP, the dependent variable, I use the EES
37 variable based on the party the respondent chose in the elections. I created a variable where "1"
38 represents respondents who voted for an EPP member party in the European Parliament
39 elections, and where "0" represents respondents who voted for a non-EPP member party.
40
41 Center-right Christian democratic and conservative parties make up the EPP. Voters supporting
42 the EPP represent 26 percent of the data in the following statistical models, the largest share of
43 the vote (the socialist S&D group represents 23 percent of the votes, the second largest share).
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53 The EPP provides a target for voters' blame since it represents the most powerful group
54 throughout the EU's institutions (Hobolt and Tilley 2014a).
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 I expect that voters base their choice in favor of or against the EPP on their evaluation of
4 the economy. In order to operationalize evaluations of the economy, I use the EES variable
5
6 based on the question:
7
8

9
10 What do you think about the economy? Compared to 12 months ago, do you think
11 that the general economic situation in [country] is... A lot better (1), A little better
12 (2), Stayed the same (3), A little worse (4), A lot worse (5) (EES 2014, 13).
13
14

15 Around 56 percent of respondents believed that the economy got a little worse or a lot worse, 24
16 percent believed that the economy stayed the same, and 20 percent believed the economy got a
17 little better or a lot better.
18
19

20
21 In order to operationalize the responsibility assigned to the national government, I use the
22 EES variable based on the question:
23
24

25
26 First, thinking about the economy, how responsible is the [country] government
27 for economic conditions in [country]? Please indicate your views using any
28 number on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "no responsibility" and 10 means
29 "full responsibility". (EES 2014, 9-10)
30
31

32
33 Around 78 percent of the respondents believe that the national government is largely responsible
34 for the economy (a score above "5"), which indicates that most people attribute responsibility for
35 the national economy to the national government. However, this measure is only part of puzzle.
36
37

38 In order to operationalize the responsibility assigned to the EU, I use the EES variable based on
39 the question:
40
41

42
43 [Following the question above] And what about the European Union, how
44 responsible is the EU for economic conditions in [country]? Please indicate your
45 views using any number on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "no
46 responsibility" and 10 means "full responsibility". (EES 2014, 9-10)
47
48

49
50 Around 58 percent of the respondents believe that the EU is largely responsible for the economy
51 (a score above "5"), which indicates that most people also attribute the national economy to the
52 EU's governance to some extent. When respondents answer these two questions, they tend to
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 ascribe responsibility to the institutions. I use information from both of these items to construct
4
5 the measure of responsibility assignment.
6
7

8 If the scores respondents provided for these two items are different, then I know whether
9
10 they feel the EU or national government is more responsible. For instance, one could provide an
11
12 “8” for the national government item and a “6” for the EU item, and I conclude that they assign
13
14 more responsibility to the national government. I subtract the national government scores from
15
16 the EU scores, which produces a scale (-10 through 10) where positive values represent those
17
18 who feel the EU is more responsible and negative values represents those who feel the national
19
20 government is more responsible (in the statistical models below, the variable is rescaled to 0
21
22 through 20).
23
24
25

26
27 Around 27 percent of respondents provided the same score for EU responsibility and
28
29 national government responsibility (the modal category), while 55 percent of the respondents
30
31 assigned more responsibility to the national government and 18 percent assigned more
32
33 responsibility to the EU. These data suggest that while most respondents feel the national
34
35 government is more responsible, a sizeable portion believe that responsibility is either balanced
36
37 or that the EU is more responsible. The inclusion of this measure as an independent variable is
38
39 important, because Hobolt and Tilley (2014a, 132) use only the EU responsibility scale, and they
40
41 claim that any potential “accountability effects” in their statistical models would be an
42
43 incumbency phenomenon. By including a measure that distinguishes national government and
44
45 EU responsibility, the statistical model can represent the social process of citizens relating their
46
47 economic situations to the responsibility of the national government (whether or not it is member
48
49 of the EPP). Hobolt and Tilley (2014b) deploy this type of measure as a dependent variable, but
50
51 Hobolt and Tilley (2014a) do not use it as an explanatory variable.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

[Table 1 Around Here]

In Table 1, I present cross-tabulations of the percentage of votes for the EPP across the groups of theoretical interest. Those who feel that economy was doing well and assign responsibility to the EU exhibit a higher percentage of votes (27.7 percent) for the EPP in comparison to those who feel that the economy was doing well and assign responsibility to the national government (24.6 percent). The three percentage points may seem small, but it is substantively meaningful in EP elections. For instance, the EPP's loss of around eight percent in the 2014 election yielded a 49 seat loss, while the right-wing's eight percent boost yielded a gain of 89 seats. Among those who feel that the economy was doing badly, the percentage of EPP votes was similar between those who assign responsibility to the EU (25.9 percent) and the national government (26.5 percent).

Other factors may confound the theoretical links between these variables. The EPP may benefit from group-serving attribution bias among those who feel that the economy is doing well (see also Hobolt and Tilley 2014a; 2014b). In other words, people who like the EU attribute a good economy to the EPP more readily than those who dislike the EU (Hobolt and Tilley 2014a: 21; Tilley and Hobolt 2011). Hence, I include a control variable for support for the EU so I can be more confident that I am estimating a performance-evaluation effect as opposed to a group-bias effect. Similarly, I introduce a control for left-right ideology (11 point scale) because conservatives may be more likely to reward the EPP with their vote if they perceive a good economic management, while socialists may be less likely to reward the EPP for successes.

Hobolt and Tilley (2014) introduce a control variable for affiliation with the EPP in their statistical model explaining vote choices for EPP. These data suggest that EPP affiliation predicts 86 percent of EPP vote choices, suggesting they measure the same

1
2
3 **phenomenon. Including EPP affiliation does reduce statistical significance in the EPP vote**
4 **model, but the hypothesized directions of the effects hold when I hold this variable at EPP**
5 **supporters and non-supporters in the statistical models. I also include a variable for age in**
6 **order to account for the pro-EU stances among young people, as well as favorability to**
7 **conservative parties among older voters (Gabel and Palmer 1995). Socioeconomic**
8 **variables did not have comparable scales across the 2009 and 2014 surveys, but their**
9 **inclusion within models representing each year did not change the substantive findings. A**
10 **variable representing subjective social class (10 point scale: (1) the lowest level in society –**
11 **(10) the highest level in society) is included in the models containing only 2014 data.**

24 *Model estimation*

25
26
27 To test the hypotheses, I estimate statistical models which allow me to compare changes
28 in one's likelihood to vote for the EPP among the groups of theoretical interest, with respect to
29 important control variables. I create an interaction term between one's economic evaluation and
30 one's responsibility assignment. This interaction allows me to test for the effect of economic
31 evaluation conditional upon the institutions to which one assigns responsibility for the economy.
32
33

34 I estimate a logit model due to the binary dependent variable (1 = EPP vote, 0 = non-EPP
35 vote), where 26 percent of the observations are EPP votes. I estimate a mixed effects logit
36 model, where I let the intercepts vary by country-years, which represents the 55 European
37 Parliament elections that occurred across the nations in the two years of data. The mixed effects
38 model is appropriate because these data include individuals within the member-states across two
39 election cycles. In order to avoid biased parameter estimates, I model the context of the 55
40 elections, where individuals may have distinctive experiences (Luke 2008). The intra-class
41 correlation coefficient (ICC) for the null model with no independent variables shows that the
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 election-level accounts for around 47 percent of the variation of the dependent variable, which
4 demonstrates the necessity of including the random effects. The results hold if I estimate the
5 models with fixed effects dummy variables for country-years. I also conducted a cross-
6 validation of the results where I split the data randomly into two groups estimated the statistical
7 models, and calculated the mean squared error (Brier scores) for each group: 0.272 and 0.268,
8 respectively. The similar mean squared errors between the groups suggest the statistical model
9 accurately represents the theoretical social process of interest.

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20 As a robustness check, I substituted the subjective economic evaluation with GDP growth
21 (for country-year), which yielded statistically significant results in the expected direction. The
22 results also hold if I include a control for political knowledge (correct answers to political
23 questions). In order to check for temporal effects (years are a component of the random effect),
24 including a dummy variable representing the year 2014 yielded a statistically significant,
25 negative effect on EPP votes (the EPP lost votes that year), but did not affect the findings.

33 34 **Results**

35
36
37 **Table 2** presents the results of the mixed effects logit model with random intercepts for
38 country-years. In the model in the middle, I did not include interaction terms. In the model on
39 the right, I did not include control variables. The coefficient for the *EU responsibility scale* is
40 positive statistically significant in the interaction-less model, which suggests that finding the EU
41 responsible for the economy increases the likelihood of an EPP vote. *Feeling the economy got*
42 *worse* was negative and statistically significant in the interaction-less model which suggests that
43 negative economic evaluations reduce the likelihood of an EPP vote.

44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53 **[Table 2 Around Here]**

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

Moving to the model on the left with interaction terms, *EU responsibility scale* is positive and statistically significant which suggests that finding the EU responsible for the economy increases the likelihood of an EPP vote, when one thinks that the economy is doing well (when *Feeling the economy got worse* equals zero). Assigning responsibility to the EU helps the EPP when someone feels the economy got better over the past twelve months. *Feeling the economy got worse* was positive and statistically insignificant, suggesting that I cannot be confident about the direction of the effect on EPP voting from economic evaluation when someone feels that the national government is completely responsible for the economy. The interaction term *EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse* is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that as one assigns responsibility to the EU for the economy, the effect from a bad economic evaluations increases. These results also hold among those who did not vote for the EPP's constituent parties in last national election, although they have a lower level of statistical significance.

34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

When considering the control variables, the results for the interaction model that contained the controls and the model that did not contain the controls yield the same substantive results, although the model with controls had a better model fit (a lower BIC). The coefficients for the controls yielded the assumed signs and possessed statistical significance, suggesting the older, more conservative, pro-EU people are more likely to vote for the European People's Party. Moreover, including a squared term for ideology in order to take the anti-EPP views of the radical left and radical right into account did not affect the substantive results (although it was statistically significant).

53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

For the hypothesis, I graph the predicted probabilities of an EPP vote among those who feel the economy got worse and those who feel the economy got better, across the different

1
2
3 levels of responsibility assignment. I represent those with good economic evaluations with
4 respondents who said “a lot better”, and I present those with bad economic evaluations with
5 respondents who said “a lot worse”. When I use the “A little better” and “A little worse”
6
7
8 categories, the substantive findings remain the same with smaller effect sizes.
9
10
11

12 [Figure 1 Around Here]
13

14
15 The results were calculated using statistical simulations, holding the control variables at
16 their mean values. Figure 1 suggests that the difference between who think the economic did
17 well and poorly is greater among those who feel the EU responsible in comparison to those who
18 feel that the national government is responsible, at a 95 percent confidence level. This result is
19 further suggested by the difference in predicted probabilities (**the bottom panel of Figure 1**),
20 which are greater (**in terms of positive values**) among those who feel the EU is responsible in
21 comparison to those who feel that the national government is responsible.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

31
32 The aforementioned results follow my expectations. If voters can hold EU leaders
33 accountable, those who feel the EU is responsible for good economic conditions should be more
34 likely to support the EPP, the dominant political group at the EU level. The results support this
35 line of argumentation. Those who feel the economy is doing well reward the EPP as they feel
36 the EU is more responsible for the economy. On the other hand, those who feel the economy is
37 doing worse sustained a similar probability of voting for the EPP across different levels of
38 responsibility assignment. However, when looking across the available two years of data, only
39 2009 had substantive results. In 2009, the EU’s average GDP growth across the 27 members (-
40 5.8, in these data) was considerable lower than the growth in 2014 (0.4). The findings hold with
41 respect to control variables for GDP growth. The average *Feeling the economy got worse score*
42 was 3.2 in 2009 and 2.2 in 2014, suggesting that European’s felt better about the economy in
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 2014. **More data collection in upcoming elections is necessary, but this initial trend**
4
5 **suggests that worse economic conditions produces a stronger economic vote in European**
6
7 **Parliament elections.**
8
9

10 [Table 3 Around Here]
11

12
13 These results are counterintuitive in the context of the aforementioned literature which
14 suggests that Europeans do not consider the EU's leadership when making their vote choice in
15 European Parliament elections. Hobolt and Tilley (2014a) estimate models concerning vote
16 choice for the EPP, and they use an EU responsibility scale which does not incorporate opinions
17 about the national government. Their approach does not distinguish between those who assign
18 more responsibility to the EU and national levels. Hence, I estimated models using their
19 measure (EU responsibility assignment alone) and this study's measure, which include EU and
20 national responsibility assignment (see Table 3). The Hobolt and Tilley models yield the weak
21 effects on EPP voting from their study, while this study's model yields the hypothesized effects.
22
23 The smaller and statistically insignificant *EU responsibility scale* in the Hobolt and Tilley model
24 indicates that responsibility assignment do not substantively influence one's probability of voting
25 for the EPP when one feels satisfied with the economy (a key posit from the competency theory
26 of economic voting). Moreover, the larger and statistically significant *Feeling the economy got*
27 *worse* indicates that economic evaluations affect voting for the EPP when voters assign no
28 responsibility to the EU for the economy. But voters should not reward the EPP if the EU has no
29 responsibility for the economy. Their measure does not take one's responsibility assignment for
30 the national government into account. In this study's model, those who assign full responsibility
31 to the national government (and no responsibility to the EU) do not reward the EPP based on
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 their economic evaluations (a small and statistically insignificant *Feeling the economy got worse*
4
5 in this study's model).
6
7

8 These results as well as the worse model fit (higher BICs in the Hobolt and Tilley models
9
10 in comparison to this study's model) suggest that the inclusion of responsibility assignment for
11
12 the national government matters. When I split the data by year, Hobolt and Tilley's approach
13
14 also did not yield statistically significant findings. These results suggest that EU considerations
15
16 were stronger in the 2009. The findings from these comparisons further suggest the presence of
17
18 an accountability vote among Europeans in EP elections, although this voting may be qualified
19
20 by the context of the election year.
21
22
23

24
25 [Table 4]
26

27 Overall, the models above suggest that voters reward the EPP for a good economic
28
29 performance. But where is this economic voting occurring? The results suggest that places
30
31 where people do not hold the EU responsible for the economy (but hold the national government
32
33 responsible instead), there will not be an economic vote. Following Hobolt and Tilley (2014b),
34
35 the EU's influence over national economies vary systematically, with nineteen EU members
36
37 being part of Economic and Monetary Union (the Eurozone). In these countries, the European
38
39 Central Bank has power over monetary policy and the Councils set fiscal obligations for the
40
41 member governments. Therefore, I expect that citizen considerations of the EU's economic
42
43 management has a stronger effect on voting for the EPP in the Eurozone in comparison to
44
45 citizens outside of the Eurozone.
46
47
48
49

50 For the measure of responsibility, the mean score was "9" for Eurozone countries and "8"
51
52 for non-Eurozone countries, which indicates that Eurozone citizens assign more responsibility to
53
54 the EU in comparison to non-Eurozone citizens but this difference is small. When I subset the
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 data by Eurozone status, the statistical models suggest the economic vote occurs in the Eurozone
4 countries where the citizens arguably have a higher stake in the economic policies of the EU (see
5
6 **Table 4**). In the Eurozone countries, the interaction term *EU responsibility scale x Feeling the*
7
8 *economy got worse* is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that as one assigns
9
10 responsibility to the EU for the economy, the effect from economic evaluations increases.
11
12 Meanwhile, the effects in the non-Eurozone countries are smaller and statistically insignificant. I
13
14 estimated the non-Eurozone countries with and without the UK (which does not have an EPP
15
16 member, so in the logit models the UK has no “1” observations), and the results of the non-
17
18 Eurozone model in Table 4 hold with and without the UK. This difference between the
19
20 Eurozone and non-Eurozone held in 2009, but in 2014 statistical models representing Eurozone
21
22 and non-Eurozone states did not yield statistically significant results.
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 **I also need to estimate effects with respect to the national government leadership**
30
31 **under EPP parties. In several cases, the national EPP party leads the national government.**
32
33 **The EPP had thirteen heads of government at the time of the 2009 EP election and eleven**
34
35 **heads of government at the time of the 2014 EP election. When an EPP leader is head of**
36
37 **government, then voters’ likelihood of voting for the EPP may be positively correlated with**
38
39 **voters’ economic satisfaction regardless of whether the voter believes the EU is responsible**
40
41 **for the economy or the national government. Hence, I estimate models for when the head**
42
43 **of government is an EPP member and when the head of government is not an EPP member**
44
45 **(see Table 5).**
46
47
48
49

50 **The main finding holds across these two models. As one assigns more responsibility**
51
52 **to the EU for the economy, satisfaction with the economy increases one’s likelihood of**
53
54 **voting for the EPP, whether the EPP parties are in or out of power in the national**
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 government. In the “EPP in Power” model, economic satisfaction had a greater positive
4 effect among those who assigned more responsibility to the EU, in comparison to those who
5 assigned more responsibility to the national government. In the “EPP Not in Power”
6 model, those who feel the national government is responsible for the economy are less likely
7 to vote for EPP parties when they think the economy is doing better. This lower likelihood
8 of voting for the EPP suggests a greater willingness to support the incumbent leadership,
9 which is rewarded for better economic conditions. Among those who feel the EU is
10 responsible for the economy, this ‘economic vote’ towards the national incumbent goes
11 away. In the “EPP Not in Power” model, those who feel the EU is responsible for the
12 economy are more likely to vote for EPP parties when they think the economy is doing
13 better (although the difference between those who think the economy is doing better and
14 those who think the economy is doing worse is not statistically significant).
15
16 Overall, those who feel that the EU is responsible for the economy treat the EPP parties as
17 the incumbent when voting in European Parliament elections, in comparison to those who
18 feel the national government is responsible. This comparison holds when the EPP parties
19 are in power or out of power.

20
21
22 I also need to estimate effects with respect to one’s partisanship in elections for the
23 national governments. Around 6.5 percent of citizens voted against the EPP parties in the
24 most recent national elections, while they did vote for the EPP parties in the next European
25 Parliament elections. What explains their change of heart between the national election
26 and the EP election? This questions poses a more robust test of the hypothesis, because
27 these voters turned away from the center-right parties in elections for the national
28 government. If responsibility assignment to the EU for economic conditions drives voting,
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 **then they should drive votes for the EPP, even among those that did not support the EPP's**
4 **constituent parties in the member states (see the non-EPP partisan models in Tables 2 and**
5
6
7
8 **3). The findings hold in the non-EPP partisan models.**
9

10 11 12 13 **Conclusions**

14
15 Do voters reward EU leaders, and under what conditions does this behavior occur? I
16
17 show that the economic performance matters when voters choose to vote for the European
18
19 People's Party. This study presents the first empirical evidence in favor of individuals'
20
21 accountability-holding behavior towards the EU's leadership. This study builds on the research
22
23 on voting behavior in EP elections by taking considerations of the national government and EU
24
25 responsibility into account.
26
27

28
29 The findings indicate that existing evidence and arguments in favor of a 'democratic
30
31 deficit' may be overstated. This study suggests that voters who recognize the EU's powers over
32
33 national economies, discern whether the EPP subjectively acts in their economic interest, and
34
35 vote accordingly. Hence, Europeans exhibit key behaviors necessary for a competitive EU
36
37 democracy, where voters choose which the EU's direction through their evaluations of the EPP's
38
39 performance. The findings also indicate that countries which arguably have the biggest stakes in
40
41 EU economic policies (the Eurozone) exhibit economic voting in EP elections; suggesting that
42
43 voters recognize the influence of the economic management of the EU on their national
44
45 economic conditions. The findings point scholarly research towards questions about the factors
46
47 that lead to this recognition in the Eurozone (such as political messages from the EU and national
48
49 governments). However, the findings are qualified by the lack of statistically significant results
50
51 in 2014, when responsibility assignment did not affect voting. The year 2009 experienced a
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 worse economic condition in comparison to 2014, which may have contributed to the urgency of
4 economic voting. This project points to future research which can substantiate the argument that
5
6 the economic crises increases economic voting with regards to the EU's leadership (as more data
7
8 is collected in EP elections).
9
10

11
12
13 These findings not only have implications for the EU but also worldwide, where
14 globalization arguably constrains national governments (Duch and Stevenson 2008; 2010;
15 Hellwig 2008). Globalization, stronger international agreements, and more international
16
17 organizations do not necessarily have to limit voters' say in politics (Hix and Marsh 2007; Hix
18
19 and Marsh 2011). Legislative bodies at the regional and international level could provide
20
21 opportunities for voting based on the politicians' management of economies. On the other hand,
22
23 Hobolt and Tilley (2014a, 136) point out that there is no parliamentary government in the
24
25 European Parliament, where the number of MEPs in each party group would determine who
26
27 governs the EU. The influence of economic voting is constrained in EP elections in comparison
28
29 to the national context, where members of parliament select the government. Voters have the
30
31 capacity to evaluate the EU's economic management in EP elections, and institutional reforms
32
33 could allow these votes to directly inform who rules Europe.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- Bartkowska, M. and G. Tiemann. 2015. The impact of economic perceptions on voting behaviour in European Parliamentary elections. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53: 201-217
- Clarke, N. and R. Rohrschneider. 2009. Second-order elections versus first-order thinking: How voters perceive the representation process in a multi-layered system of governance. *Journal of European Integration* 31: 645-664.
- de Vreese, C., S. Banducci, H. Semetko, H. and H. Boomgaarden. 2006. The news coverage of the 2004 European Parliament election campaign in 25 countries. *European Union Politics* 7: 477-504.
- Duch, R. and R. Stevenson. 2008. *The economic vote: How political and economic institutions condition election results*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Duch, R. and R. Stevenson. 2010. The global economy, competency, and the economic vote. *Journal of Politics* 72: 105–123.
- European Election Studies. 2009. European Parliament Election Study 2009, voter study. Available from <http://eeshomepage.net/ees-2009-study/voter-study/>
- European Election Studies. 2014. European Parliament Election Study 2014, voter study. Available from <http://eeshomepage.net/voter-study-2014/>
- Fernández-Albertos, J. 2006. Does internationalization blur responsibility? Economic voting and economic openness in 15 European countries. *West European Politics* 29: 28–46.
- Gabel, M. & H. Palmer. 1995. Understanding variation in public support for European integration. *European Journal of Political Research* 27: 3–19.
- Hellwig, T. 2008. Globalization, policy constraints and vote choice. *Journal of Politics* 70: 1128–1141.
- Hellwig, T. and D. Samuels. 2008. Electoral accountability and the variety of democratic regimes. *British Journal of Political Science* 38: 65–90.
- Hix, S. and M. Marsh. 2007. Punishment or protest? Understanding European Parliament elections. *Journal of Politics* 69: 495-510.
- Hix, S. and M. Marsh. 2011. Second-order effects plus pan-European political swings of European Parliament elections across time. *Electoral Studies* 30: 4-15.
- Hobolt, S. and J. Spoon. 2012. Motivating the European voter: Parties, issues and campaigns in European Parliament elections. *European Journal of Political Research* 51: 701-727.

1
2
3 Hobolt, S. and J. Tilley. 2014a. *Blaming Europe? Responsibility without accountability in the*
4 *European Union*. New York: Oxford University Press.

5
6
7 Hobolt, S. and J. Tilly. 2014b. Who's in charge? How voters attribute responsibility in the
8 European Union. *Comparative Political Studies* 47: 795-819.

9
10 Lobo, M. and M. Lewis-Beck. 2012. The integration hypothesis: How the European Union
11 shapes economic voting. *Electoral Studies* 31: 522-528

12
13
14 Marsh, M. 1998. Testing the second-order election model after four European elections. *British*
15 *Journal of Political Science* 28: 591-607.

16
17
18 Nanou, K. and H. Dorussen. 2013. European integration and electoral democracy: How the
19 European Union constraints party competition in the member states. *European Journal of*
20 *Political Research* 52: 71-93.

21
22
23 Powell, G. and G. Whitten. 1993. A cross-national analysis of economic voting: Taking account
24 of the political context. *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 391-414.

25
26
27 Schmitt, H. 2005. The European Parliament elections of June 2004: Still second-order?" *West*
28 *European Politics* 28: 650-679.

29
30
31 Tiemann, G. and M. Bartkowska. 2015. The impact of economic perceptions on voting behavior
32 in European Parliament elections. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53: 201-217.

33
34
35 Tilley, J. and S. Hobolt. 2011. Is the government to blame? An experimental test of how
36 partisanship shapes perceptions of performance and responsibility. *Journal of Politics* 73: 1-15.

37
38
39 Tilley, J., J. Garry, and T. Bold. 2008. Perceptions and reality: Economic voting at the 2004
40 European Parliament elections. *European Journal of Political Research* 27: 665-686.

41
42
43 Weber, T. 2011. Exit, voice, and cyclicity: A micrologic of midterm effects in European
44 Parliament elections. *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 906-921.

Table 1: Percentage of European People's Party votes by one's feeling the economy is getting worse and one's assignment of responsibility for economic conditions.

	The European Union more responsible	The national government more responsible
Feeling the economy got better	27.7% (990)	24.6% (2,822)
Feeling the economy got worse	25.9% (2,420)	26.5% (8,060)

EU responsibility scale: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). “The EU more responsible” represents values above 10 on the scale. “The national government more responsible” represents values below 10 on the scale. Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). “Feeling the economy got better” represents values below 2 in the variable. “Feeling the economy got worse” represents values above 2 in the variable. Number of survey responses in parentheses. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014.

Table 2: Effects on one’s likelihood of voting for the European People’s Party.

	Full Model	No Interaction	No Controls	Non-EPP Partisans	2009 Only	2014 Only
EU responsibility scale	0.062*** (0.02)	0.016*** (0.006)	0.056*** (0.01)	0.058* (0.03)	0.089*** (0.03)	0.031 (0.02)
Feeling the economy got worse	0.0031 (0.05)	-0.14*** (0.02)	0.0020 (0.04)	0.11 (0.1)	0.12 (0.07)	-0.21** (0.08)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.017*** (0.005)		-0.016*** (0.004)	-0.019* (0.01)	-0.026*** (0.008)	0.0009 (0.009)
Age	0.0064*** (0.001)	0.0063*** (0.001)		-0.0058*** (0.002)	0.0012 (0.001)	0.013*** (0.002)
Left-Right Ideology	0.39*** (0.007)	0.39*** (0.007)		0.28*** (0.01)	0.38*** (0.01)	0.41*** (0.01)
EU Support	0.042*** (0.006)	0.042*** (0.006)		0.030** (0.01)	0.029*** (0.007)	0.061*** (0.009)
Constant	-4.24*** (0.2)	-3.83*** (0.2)	-1.34*** (0.2)	-4.72*** (0.4)	-3.93*** (0.3)	-4.65*** (0.3)
Random Effect						
Country-Year Variance	1.43 (0.3)	1.43 (0.3)	1.27 (0.3)	1.15 (0.3)	1.26 (0.4)	1.52 (0.5)
Survey Responses	25,519	25,519	25,519	16,469	13,227	12,292
Bayesian Information Criterion	21,749	22,798	26,711	6,715	12,744	10,065

Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). “Non-EPP Partisans” represents respondents who did not vote for EPP parties in the last national elections. Results calculated using mixed effects logit models. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: Effects on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party, comparing this study's approach with Hobolt and Tilley's approach.

	This study's EU resp. scale	Effects using Hobolt and Tilley's EU resp. scale: No EU responsibility (0) – Full EU responsibility (10)			
	Full Model	Full Model	2009 Only	2014 Only	Non-EPP Partisans
EU responsibility scale	0.062*** (0.02)	0.026 (0.02)	0.0011 (0.03)	0.039* (0.02)	0.018 (0.04)
Feeling the economy got worse	0.0031 (0.05)	-0.078* (0.04)	-0.098* (0.05)	-0.085 (0.0740)	0.018 (0.08)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.017*** (0.005)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.0034 (0.009)	-0.016 (0.01)	-0.013 (0.01)
Age	0.0064*** (0.001)	0.0063*** (0.001)	0.0011 (0.001)	0.013*** (0.002)	-0.0061*** (0.002)
Left-Right Ideology	0.39*** (0.007)	0.39*** (0.007)	0.38*** (0.009)	0.41*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.01)
EU Support	0.042*** (0.006)	0.042*** (0.006)	0.029*** (0.007)	0.059*** (0.009)	0.030*** (0.01)
Constant	-4.24*** (0.2)	-3.84*** (0.2)	-3.13*** (0.3)	-4.62*** (0.3)	-4.31*** (0.3)
Random Effects					
Country-Year Variance	1.43 (0.3)	1.43 (0.3)	1.27 (0.4)	1.51 (0.5)	1.14 (0.3)
Survey Responses	25,519	25,519	13,286	12,313	16,514
Bayesian Information Criterion	21,749	22,812	12,820	10,097	6,728

Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). This study's EU responsibility scale: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). Results calculated using mixed effects logit models. Data source: European Election Studies 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Effects on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party, by status as a Eurozone member.

	Eurozone	Non-Eurozone	Together
EU responsibility scale	0.091*** (0.02)	0.020 (0.02)	0.062*** (0.02)
Feeling the economy got worse	0.071 (0.07)	-0.077 (0.07)	0.0031 (0.05)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.025*** (0.007)	-0.0048 (0.008)	-0.017*** (0.005)
Age	0.0086*** (0.001)	0.0018 (0.002)	0.0064*** (0.001)
Left-Right Ideology	0.42*** (0.01)	0.34*** (0.01)	0.39*** (0.007)
EU Support	0.035*** (0.008)	0.059*** (0.01)	0.042*** (0.006)
Constant	-4.47*** (0.3)	-3.93*** (0.4)	-4.24*** (0.2)
Random Effect			
Country-Year Variance	0.67 (0.18)	2.68 (1.0)	1.43 (0.3)
Survey Responses	15,556	9,953	25,519
Bayesian Information Criterion	14,779	8,020	21,749
Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). Results calculated using mixed effects logit models. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

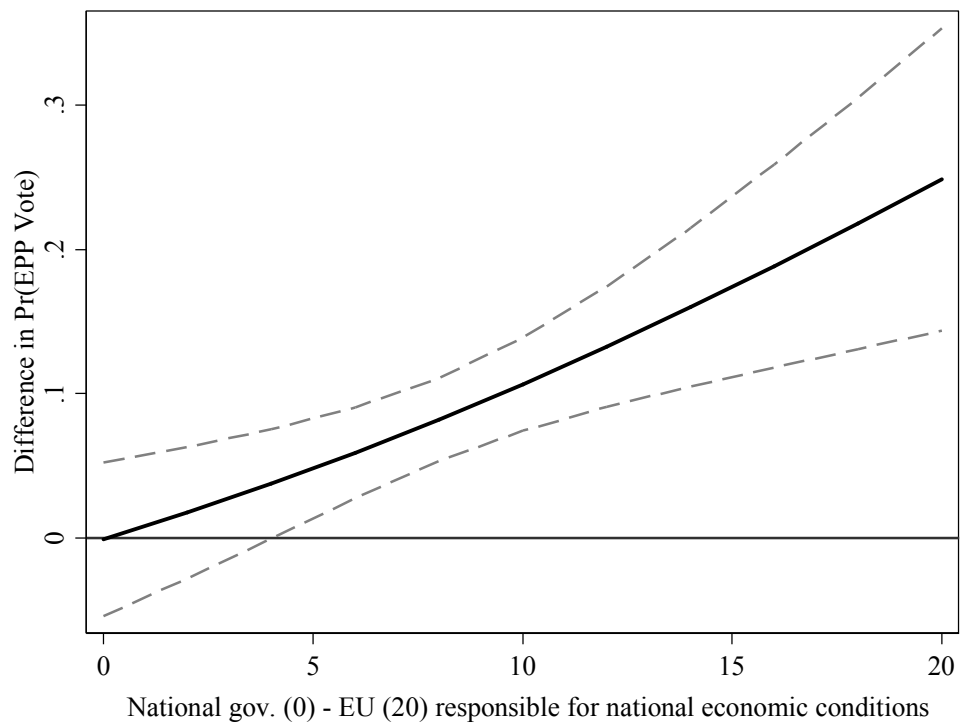
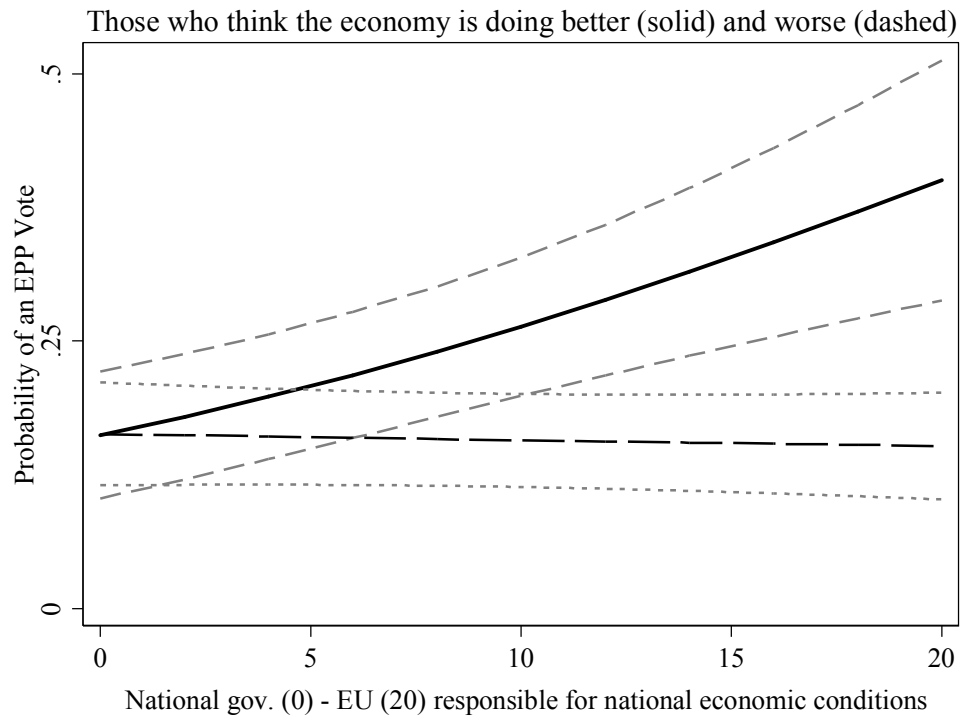
Table 5: Effects on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party.

	Full Model	EPP in Power	EPP Not in Power
EU responsibility scale	0.062*** (0.02)	0.085*** (0.02)	0.023 (0.02)
Feeling the economy got worse	0.0031 (0.05)	-0.25*** (0.07)	0.23*** (0.07)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.017*** (0.005)	-0.013* (0.008)	-0.014* (0.008)
Age	0.0064*** (0.001)	0.0092*** (0.001)	0.0034** (0.001)
Left-Right Ideology	0.39*** (0.007)	0.41*** (0.01)	0.35*** (0.01)
EU Support	0.042*** (0.006)	0.037*** (0.008)	0.047*** (0.008)
Constant	-4.24*** (0.2)	-3.60*** (0.3)	-4.64*** (0.4)
Random Effect			
Country-Year Variance	1.43 (0.3)	0.29 (0.09)	2.02 (0.60)
Survey Responses	25,519	11,583	13,936
Bayesian Information Criterion	21,749	11,521	11,102

Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). “EPP in Power” represents respondents in a country where an EPP member is head of government. “EPP Not in Power” represents respondents in a country where an EPP member is not head of government. Results calculated using mixed effects logit models. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 1: The effects of economic evaluations on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party by the responsibility one assigns to the EU with 95% CIs



Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014

ONLINE APPENDIX**Satisfaction with the economy and trust in EU institutions**

The competency theory raises questions not only with regards to holding the incumbent responsible. One's competence has implications for the ability to assess the institutions which are governed by the incumbent. An economic vote in EP elections suggests that the EU signals serve as a perceptual screen that makes itself an object of judgement (Hobolt and Tilley 2014b). I assume that EU signals regarding competent economic management alter perceptions of responsible institutions as well as the EPP's leadership. Hobolt and Tilley (2014a) examine the influence of EU responsibility and economic evaluations on trust in the European Union, and they show that economic evaluations influence trust in the European Union under the condition of assigning responsibility to the EU for the economy. They argue that since the EU lacks the institutional clarity to structure voters' choices, "institutions themselves... are on trial" in terms of assessments of economic performance (Hobolt and Tilley 2014, 133). In their study, trust in the EU serves as a sign of its legitimacy, and they posit that the trust/legitimacy of the European Union "hinges almost exclusively on its performance" (Hobolt and Tilley 2014, 134). They show that performance matters for trust in the EU, suggesting that the EU receives credit for good and bad performances.

It follows that if the EPP is held to account for its performance, then economic evaluations should influence the trust in the institutions this party group controls (further evidence of assigned blame). If the EPP is doing a subjectively good job, trust in these institutions would increase.

Hypothesis: The effect of economic satisfaction on trust in the European Union is greater among those who assign responsibility to the EU for the

1
2
3 national economy in comparison to those who assign responsibility to the
4 national government for the national economy.
5
6

7 People who feel that the EPP is responsible for good economic conditions also
8
9 should exhibit higher levels of trust in the EU. In order to operationalize trust in the EU, I
10
11 use the EES variable based on the question:
12
13

14 For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it
15 corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion. Your trust the institutions of
16 the EU: Yes, definitely (1) Yes, to some extent (2) No, not really (3) No, not
17 at all (4). (EES 2014, 9).
18
19

20 Around 65 percent of the respondents trust the EU institutions at least to some
21
22 extent, which demonstrates Europeans' general support for EU institutions.
23
24

25 In order to estimate the statistical models regarding trust in the EU, I use mixed
26
27 effects ordinal probit models for the four-point ordinal dependent variable (with random
28
29 intercepts for country-years). I estimate models from 2014 because the two years do not
30
31 have equivalent measures of trust, but models from both years yield the same substantive
32
33 finding (although the effects on trust in 2009 were smaller and held at the 90 percent
34
35 confidence level). I estimated the predicted probabilities for those who at least trusted the
36
37 EU to some extent (whether one was in the "Yes, definitely" or "Yes, to some extent"
38
39 categories). I include control variables for age, social class, and EPP affiliation, but these
40
41 control variables do not change the substantive findings. In the online appendix, I graph
42
43 the results from the trust model in Table 1, including predicted probabilities and
44
45 differences in predicted probabilities (Appendix Figure 1). These results were calculated
46
47 while holding the control variables at their mean values except *EPP affiliation* (a dummy
48
49 variable) which I held at its modal value, zero (the results hold when I hold *EPP affiliation*
50
51 at one). The predicted probabilities show that as one assigns more responsibility to the EU,
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 **trust in the EU decreases among those who feel that the economy is getting worse; while**
4
5 **trust in the EU increases among those who feel that the economy is getting better. The**
6
7 **differences in predicted probabilities further substantiate this finding by showing that**
8
9 **one's belief the economy is getting better has a larger positive effect on trust among those**
10
11 **who feel the EU is responsible in comparison to those who feel the national government is**
12
13 **responsible. The evidence from this statistical model back up Hobolt and Tilley's (2014)**
14
15 **claim that "the legitimacy of EU institutions is dependent on performance and on the**
16
17 **extent to which people credit or blame those institutions for good and bad performance"**
18
19 **(125).**

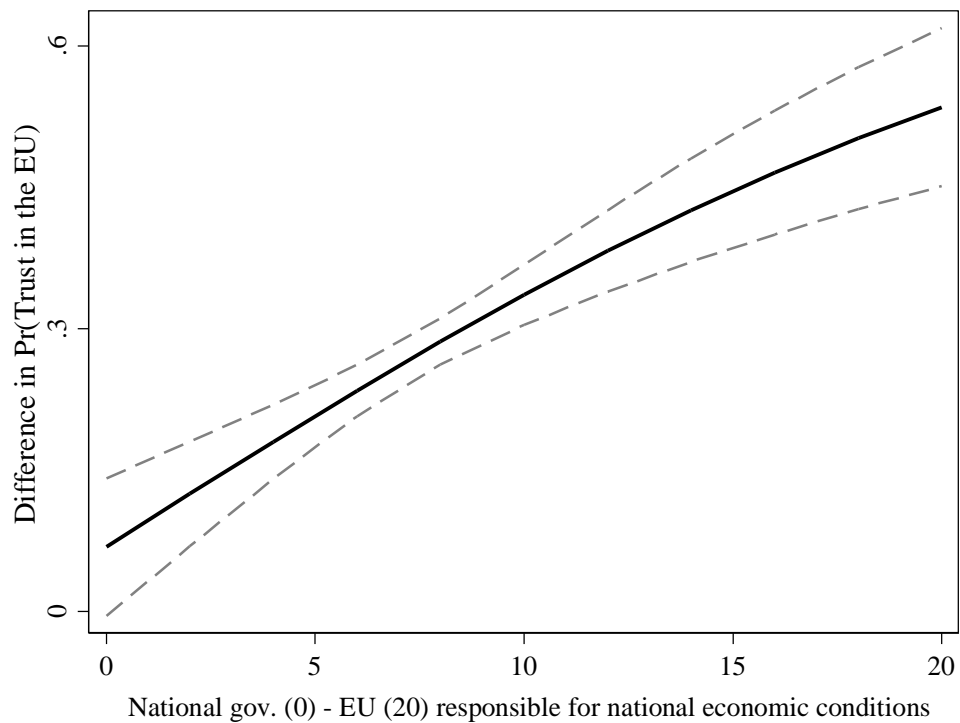
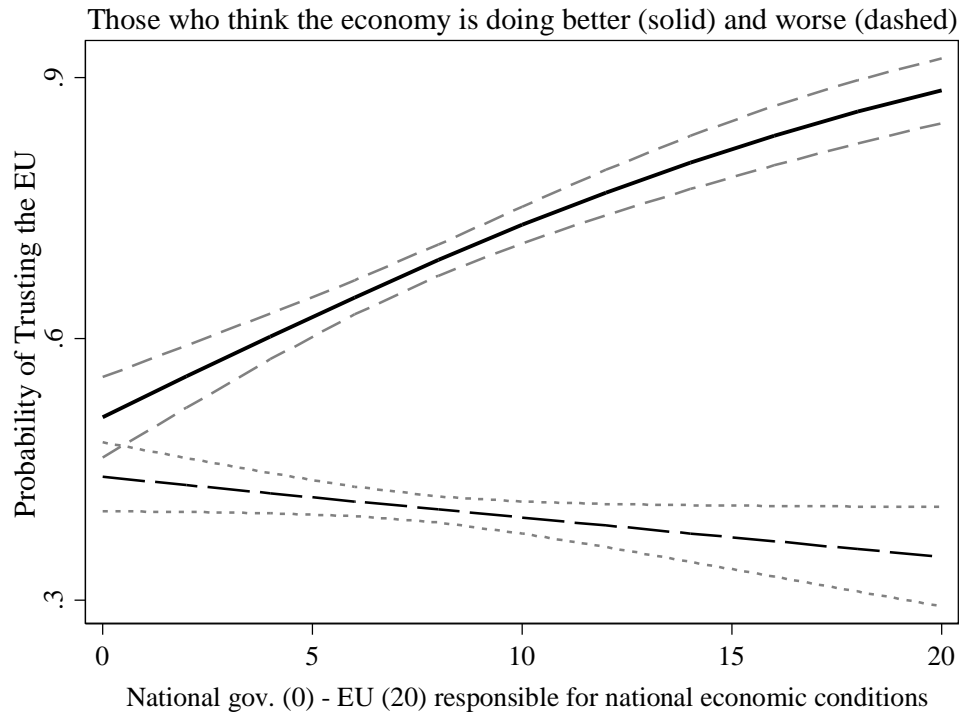
20
21
22
23
24
25 **[Table 1 Around Here]**
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 1: Effects on one's likelihood of trusting the European Union.

	Full Model	No Interaction	No Controls
EU responsibility scale	0.059*** (0.007)	0.019*** (0.003)	0.073*** (0.007)
Feeling the economy got worse	-0.042** (0.02)	-0.18*** (0.008)	-0.065*** (0.02)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.018*** (0.003)		-0.022*** (0.003)
Age	0.0007 (0.0005)	0.0008* (0.0004)	
Social Class	0.071*** (0.005)	0.072*** (0.005)	
Left-Right Ideology	0.0093*** (0.003)	0.0079*** (0.003)	
EU Support	0.11*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)	
EPP affiliation	0.35*** (0.02)	0.36*** (0.02)	
Cut Point One	0.037 (0.07)	-0.25 (0.06)	-1.02 (0.06)
Cut Point Two	1.08 (0.07)	0.79 (0.06)	-0.048 (0.06)
Cut Point Three	2.69 (0.08)	2.40 (0.06)	1.47 (0.06)
Country-Year Variance	0.061 (0.005)	0.065 (0.005)	0.084 (0.005)
Survey Responses	19,524	19,524	19,524
Bayesian Information Criterion	43,938	43,964	46,020

Dependent variables: Trust in EU institutions: No, not at all (0) – Yes, definitely (3); Agreeing with the bailouts: Totally disagree (0) – Totally agree (3). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsible (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). Results calculated using mixed effects ordinal probit models. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2014. Standard errors in parentheses.*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 1: The effects of economic evaluations on one's likelihood of trusting the European Union by the responsibility one assigns to the EU with 95% CIs



Data source: European Election Study surveys 2014

Effects from non-voters

Table 2: Effects on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party, while accounting for the selection bias of voting in European Parliament elections.

EU responsibility scale	0.037*** (0.009)
Feeling the economy got worse	-0.00012 (0.03)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.0096*** (0.003)
Age	0.0029** (0.001)
Left-Right Ideology	0.22*** (0.005)
EU Support	0.033*** (0.005)
<u>Whether One Voted in EP Elections</u>	
EU responsibility scale	0.001 (0.006)
Feeling the economy got worse	-0.059*** (0.02)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.0009 (0.002)
Age	0.014*** (0.0004)
Left-Right Ideology	0.012*** (0.003)
EU Support	0.034*** (0.002)

Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). Dependent variable (for the selection model): Voted in the EP election (1), Did not vote in the EP election (0). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). Results calculated using a Heckman probit models with fixed effects of country-years. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Controlling for partisanship towards EPP parties in EU countries.

Hobolt and Tilley (2014) introduce a control variable for affiliation with the EPP in their statistical model explaining vote choices for EPP. These data suggest that EPP affiliation predicts 86 percent of EPP vote choices, suggesting they measure the same phenomenon. Including EPP affiliation does reduce statistical significance in the EPP vote model, but the hypothesized directions of the effects hold when I hold this variable at EPP supporters and non-supporters in the statistical models.

Table 3: Number of survey responses by whether one voted for the European People's Party in European Parliament elections and whether one affiliates with the European People's Party.

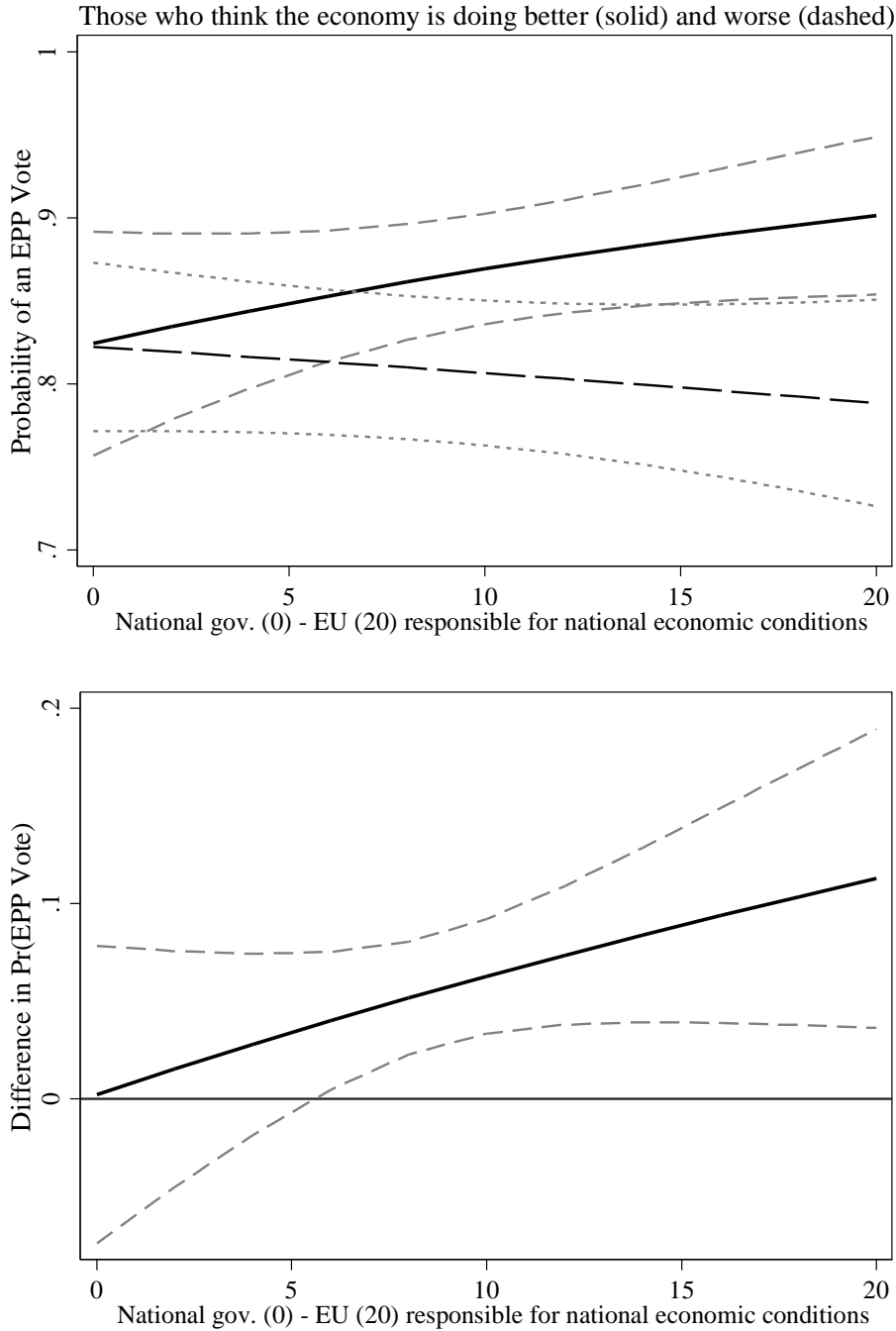
	Not Affiliating with the EPP	Affiliating with the EPP
Did not vote for the EPP	17,595	571
Voted for the EPP	1,913	4,536

Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Affiliating with the EPP (or not) predicts 22,131 observations and does not predict 2,484 observations, so Affiliating with the EPP predicts 86% of Voting for the EPP.

Table 4: Effects on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party.

EU responsibility scale	0.062*** (0.02)	0.033 (0.02)
Feeling the economy got worse	0.0031 (0.05)	-0.0067 (0.07)
EU responsibility scale x Feeling the economy got worse	-0.017*** (0.005)	-0.011 (0.007)
Age	0.0064*** (0.001)	-0.00034 (0.001)
Left-Right Ideology	0.39*** (0.007)	0.24*** (0.009)
EU Support	0.042*** (0.006)	0.032*** (0.008)
Affiliating with the EPP		4.0*** (0.06)
Constant	-4.24*** (0.2)	-3.85*** (0.3)
Random Effect		
Country-Year Variance	1.43 (0.3)	0.86 (0.2)
Survey Responses	25,519	24,615
Bayesian Information Criterion	21,749	14,289
Dependent variable: EPP vote (1), non-EPP vote (0). EU responsibility: national government responsible (0) – EU responsibility (20). Feeling the economy got worse: A lot better (0) – A lot worse (4). Affiliating with the EPP: Affiliating (1), Not affiliating (0). Results calculated using mixed effects logit models. Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014. Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

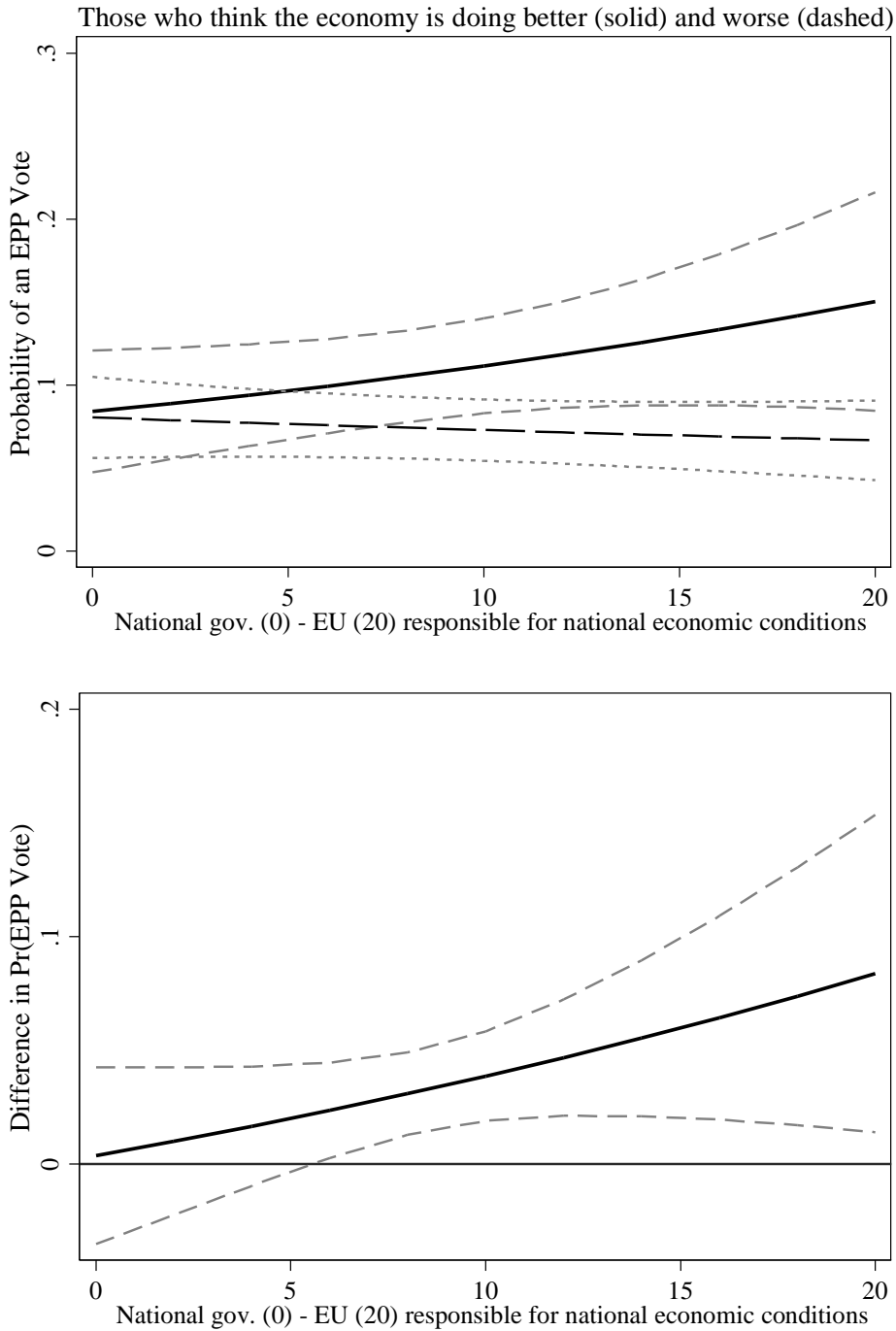
Figure 2: The effects of economic evaluations on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party by the responsibility one assigns to the EU with 95% CIs



Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014
 Results calculated while holding Affiliating with the EPP at one, an affiliate

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 3: The effects of economic evaluations on one's likelihood of voting for the European People's Party by the responsibility one assigns to the EU with 95% CIs



Data source: European Election Study surveys 2009 and 2014
Results calculated while holding Affiliating with the EPP at zero, or not affiliating