

To Accommodate or Not?

Balancing reputational and material concerns in international negotiations

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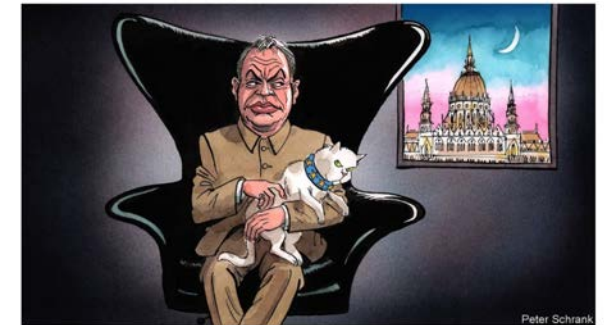
Motivation

- Some international situations put states' reputation on the line.
- Examples
 - Treaty renegotiations/IO withdrawal negotiations that would give one country better terms.
 - Responding to non-compliance (e.g., sanctions).
- This confronts the other member states with difficult questions.
 - Accommodate demands/behavior? Take a tough stance? Find some kind of compromise?
 - And how to take voters on board?

Europe | Charlemagne

How Hungary's leader, Viktor Orbán, gets away with it

He takes near-dictatorial powers, while the EU does nothing



Apr 2nd 2020

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Briefing | The economic weapon

Western sanctions on Russia are like none the world has seen

But they may weaken the system they are meant to defend



Mar 9th 2022

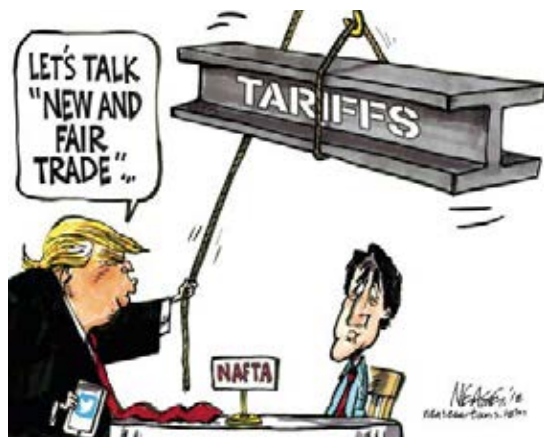
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Research question

- How do citizens want their government to respond in international situations that put their country's reputation on the line?
- Idea:
 - Build on research on resolve, audience costs, and material interest concerns, but broaden from security focus to a broader set of cases.-
 - e.g. (re)negotiation of international agreements, non-compliance with core norms, unilateral withdrawals from international organization

A dilemma for the other member states

- Countries confronted with challenging demands/behavior face a dilemma:



Accommodation

- Maintains cooperative relations, but changes the distribution of cooperation gains in favor of the challenging state
- Carries long-term reputational risks because it might encourage similar behavior in the future/by others.



Non-accommodation

- Can be very costly, and these costs can materialize quickly and broadly, if the challenging state does not back down.
- This can reduce domestic support for this strategy.

Emphasizing different aspects influences preferred response

- Especially for a non-accommodating strategy, it is important to take voters on board.
 - Here, framing is likely to matter:
- **Costs of Accommodation:**

Voters care about their country's reputation for resolve (Kertzer 2016; Brutger 2021; Walter 2021)

 - H1: Emphasizing the reputational risks associated with accommodating another state's challenge makes voters less supportive of such a response.
- **Costs of Non-Accommodation**

Voters care about their well-being and dislike material costs.

 - H2: Highlighting the costs of non-accommodation should decrease voters' support for a non-accommodating response.

Highlighting the dilemma

- What happens when governments highlight that both accommodating and not accommodating carry costs?
- Prediction unclear – two possible mechanisms:
 - a) Accommodation dilemma mechanism**

Emphasizing the costs of both accommodation and of non-accommodation *moderates* support for non-accommodation (H3a).
 - a) Costly signaling mechanism**

Emphasizing the costs of both accommodation and of non-accommodation *increases* support for non-accommodation (H3b).

Research Design

- Survey experiments in three different contexts:
 - Survey among 10,792 working-age EU27-Europeans, June 2019
 - **Future Switzerland-EU relations**
 - Survey among 11,543 working-age EU27-Europeans, December 2019
 - **Future EU-UK relations**
 - **EU response to rule of law crisis**
 - *Additional experiments in Sweden and Finland in late October 2022:*
 - *a) Turkey opposition to NATO membership b) Russia sanctions*
- Treatments highlight
 - Costs of accommodation
 - Costs of non-accommodation
 - Costs of accommodation AND costs of non-accommodation

Experimental design:

Control group: Intro text on context

Uk & Non-compliance: After Brexit, the UK and the EU will have to negotiate about their future relationship. [They disagree about ...]

Switzerland: The EU and Switzerland are negotiating about having closer economic relations. [They disagree about ...]

Treatment 2: Cost of Non-Accommodation

Control text + “The EU is concerned that **trade relations between the UK and the EU would deteriorate** if the negotiations failed .”

Treatment 1: Cost of Accommodation

Control text + “The EU is concerned that **other member states will also insist on exceptions** from EU rules if the UK/Switzerland were granted exceptions”

Treatment 3: Both types of cost

Control text + The EU is concerned that **other member states will also insist on exceptions** from EU rules if the UK/Switzerland were granted exceptions. At the same time, it worries that **trade relations between the UK/Switzerland and the EU would deteriorate** if the negotiations failed.”

Dependent variables: Willingness to accommodate

- **Future Switzerland-EU relations**

- What should the EU do? The EU should offer the UK wide access to the EU market with...
 - No (0) / only very few (1) / some (2) / many (3) exceptions from EU rules

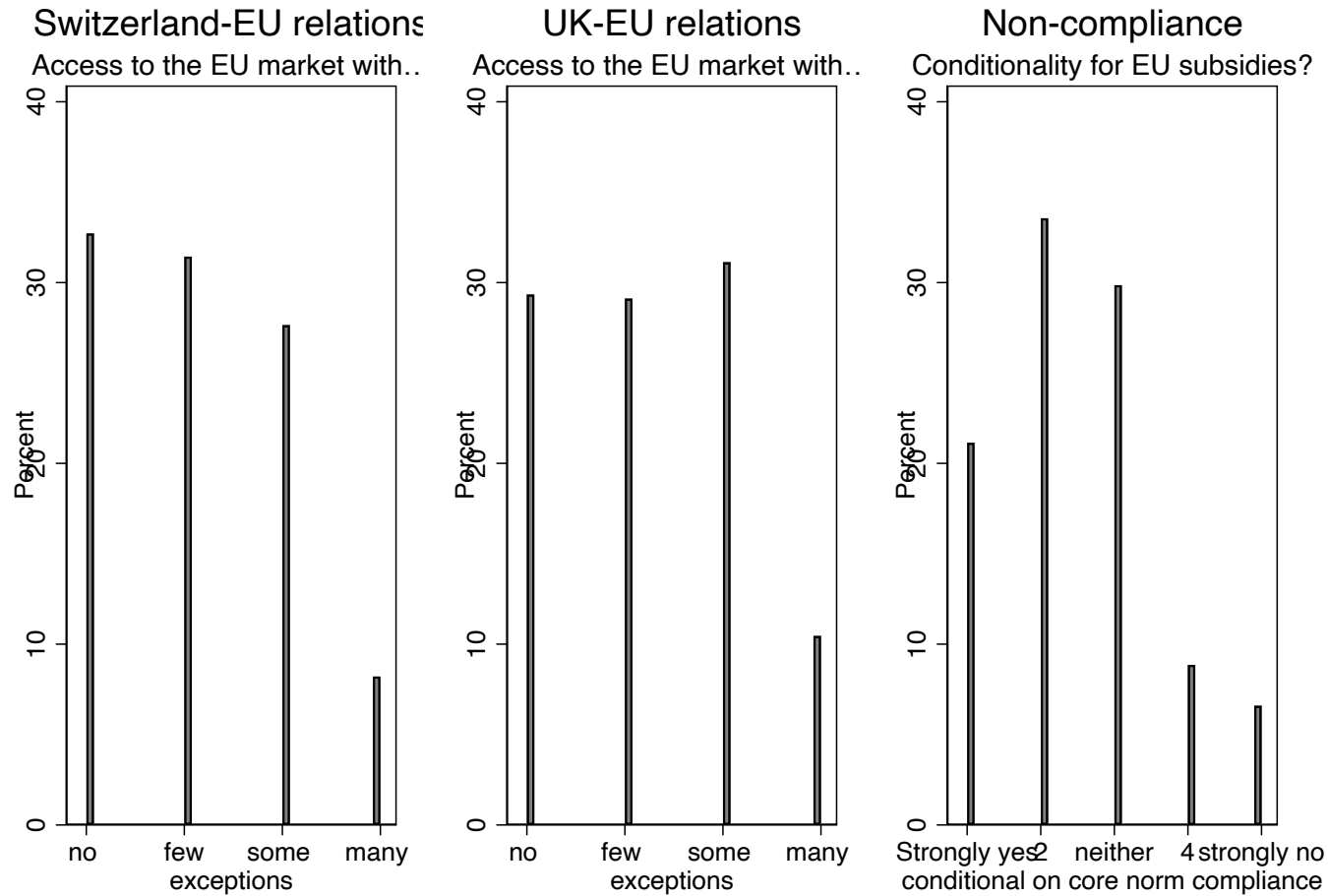
- **Future EU-UK relations**

- What should the EU do? The EU should offer the UK wide access to the EU market with...
 - No (0) / only very few (1) / some (2) / many (3) exceptions from EU rules

- **EU response to rule of law crisis**

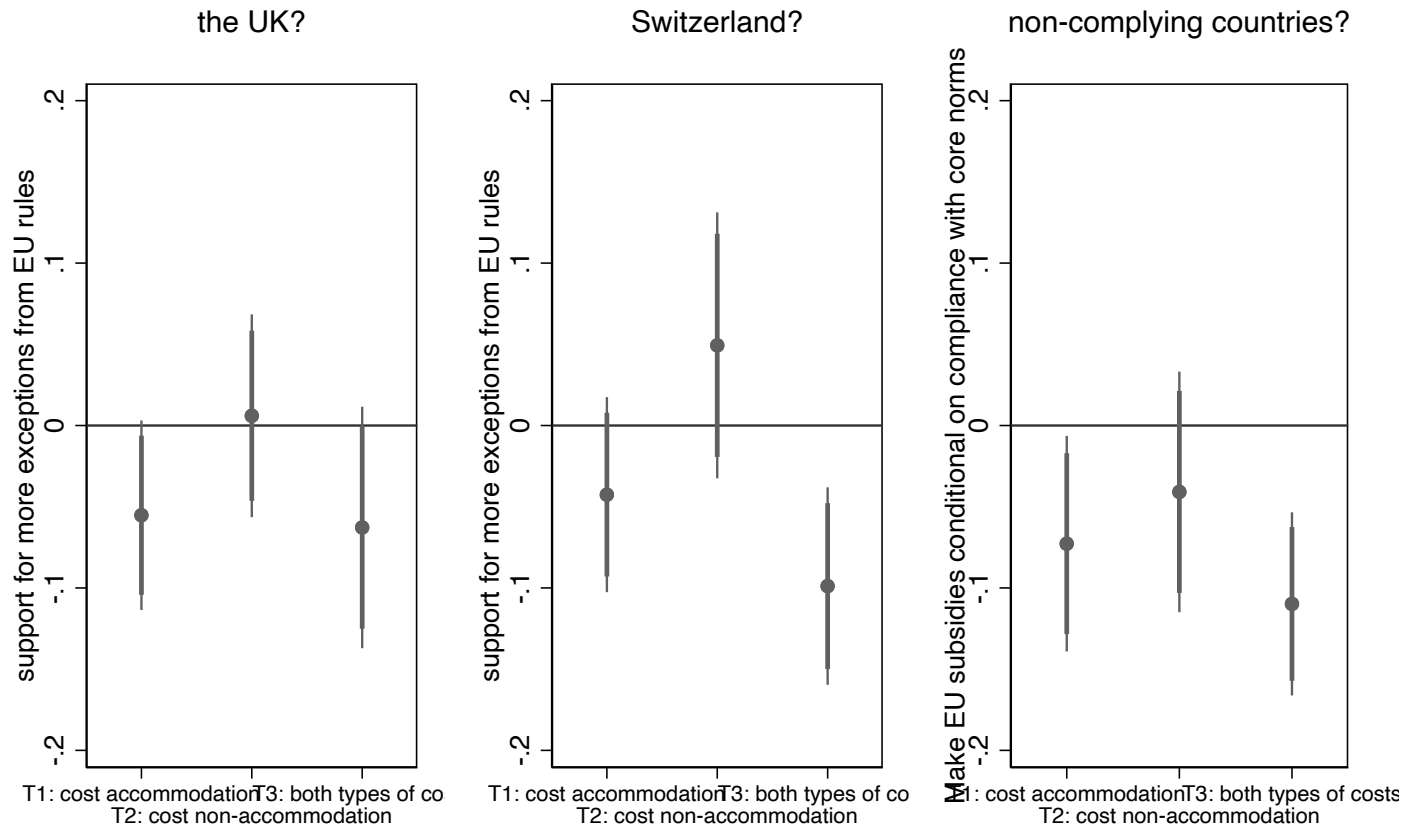
- The European Commission has recently proposed to make subsidies for member states conditional on their compliance with core EU norms, such as respect for the rule of law. Critics say that such a move would infringe too much on countries' national sovereignty. Are you for or against the EU proposal to make EU subsidies conditional on a country's adherence to core EU norms?
 - Strongly in favor (1) / Somewhat in favor (2) / Neither in favor nor opposed (3) / Somewhat opposed (4) / Strongly opposed (5)

Descriptives: Voters are critical of accommodation



Results

Should the EU accommodate... Survey experiments, analyzed without controls



What next? Survey experiments in Finland & Sweden

- Fieldwork planned for late October in Finland and Sweden
- Replication of accommodation experiments in two different contexts:
 - a) Finland/Sweden – Turkey negotiations about NATO accession [modified two-step experiment]
 - b) Russia sanctions



<p>Control group</p> <p>Intro texts</p>	<p>T2: Cost of Non-Accommodation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Security risks b) Economic risks: Inflation, energy prices, recession
<p>T1: Cost of Accommodation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reputational risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • future blackmail (FI) • human rights reputation (SE) b) Risk of future aggression by Russia/other countries 	<p>T3: Both cost</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Security and reputational risks b) Economic vs. future security risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • order randomized

Conclusion

- Findings
 - Highlighting the reputational risks of accommodation makes voters less willing to compromise.
 - Highlighting the (economic) costs of non-accommodation does not move voters' preferred response.
 - In line with the costly signaling mechanism, the willingness not to accommodate is particularly strong when both types of cost are emphasized.
- Implications
 - **Research:** Voters understand strategic foreign policy considerations and care about their country's reputation beyond the security realm.
 - **Policy:** Policymakers can garner public support for an uncompromising line if they communicate the rationale for their strategy and the risks associated with accommodation clearly.



Finnish president: "Oh Recep Turkije Erdoğan, the toughest guy in Europe! The Finns salute you!" [Swedish PM giggles next to him]

Russia sanctions experiment

Control group

“In response to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine, Western countries have imposed heavy economic sanctions on Russia”

T2: Cost of Non-Accommodation

Control text + “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..”

T1: Cost of Accommodation

Control text + “**Energy prices and inflation** in [Sweden/Finland] have risen and a **recession** is looming as a consequence of the sanctions. ”

T3: Both cost

Control text + „Energy prices and inflation [...] as a consequence of the sanctions. At the same time, lifting the sanctions [...] may encourage further aggression by Russia or other countries in the future..”