ONLINE APPENDIX

Till Austerity Do Us Part?

A Survey Experiment on Support for the Euro in Italy

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Appendix A: Further information about the survey

The survey was fielded by SWG, a leading Italian polling company. Fieldwork was completed during an eight-day period from 17 October to 24 October 2019. Overall, 4,257 respondents completed the survey. The entire questionnaire was designed to be completed in approximately fifteen minutes.

Quotas were used to generate a representative sample with regard to age, gender, and sector of the respondents. To correct for other sources of sampling bias, the survey includes additional post-stratification weights. Specifically, we created two types of weight to enhance the representativeness of the sample further. The simple weights account for age, gender, education, and region; the full weights (used in the main analysis above) account for age, gender, education, region, and party choice. Population targets were obtained by census information and other opinion polls that SWG conducted during the fieldwork period.

Overall, 12,540 people were invited to participate in the survey. Three respondents did not agree to participate after accepting our invitation; 224 respondents failed an attention check by the survey company; and 1,036 respondents were screened out because they fell into a quota that was already full. Respondents were randomly allocated into six experimental groups. All respondents were exposed to the basic scenario (included in the main text) and, depending on their experimental group, a combination of the following frames. An exemplary combination of the frames is shown in Box A.1 below.

1) National blame attribution (before the basic scenario):

The Italian government has decided to ignore the European fiscal rules and has allowed the public deficit to exceed the figure agreed with the European Commission. This has caused an increase in Italian public debt, already very high to begin with, and a downgrade of Italian bonds by rating agencies. As a consequence, now…

2) Foreign blame attribution (before the basic scenario):

The Italian government wants to rekindle growth and reduce unemployment and decides to increase the public deficit. However, the European Union, led by Germany and other northern countries, prevents it from doing so and launches an excessive deficit procedure

against Italy, which causes the downgrade of Italian bonds by rating agencies. As a consequence, now…

3) Austerity mention (after the basic scenario):

… but only if the Italian government commits to implementing some policy changes. The measures that the Italian government needs to implement to receive the bailout package involve making it easier for companies to fire employees, cutting public expenditures (e.g., pension cuts, health care cuts, etc.), increasing taxes (both income taxes and value-added taxes), privatizing state assets, and introducing a haircut on savings in troubled banks.

Box A.1: Example of the scenario shown to respondents for the combination of national blame attribution and austerity; content in brackets not shown to respondents

Please imagine the following scenario:

*[**National blame attribution frame**] The Italian government has decided to ignore the European fiscal rules and has allowed the public deficit to exceed the figure agreed with the European Commission. This has caused an increase in Italian public debt, already very high to begin with, and a downgrade of Italian bonds by rating agencies.*

*As a consequence, now [**Basic scenario**] Italy faces a crisis of confidence in financial markets. The European Central Bank is no longer willing to lend to Italian banks; capital flows out of the country; customers try to withdraw their deposits from banks; and the interest rate spread with Germany increases. As a result, the Italian government is unable to meet its financial obligations. Other European countries and European institutions offer a bailout package [**Austerity frame**] but only if the Italian government commits to implementing some policy changes. The measures that the Italian government needs to implement to receive the bailout package involve making it easier for companies to fire employees, cutting public expenditures (e.g., pension cuts, health care cuts, etc.), increasing taxes (both income taxes and value-added taxes), privatizing state assets, and introducing a haircut on savings in troubled banks.*

*[**Basic scenario**] Before deciding whether or not to accept the bailout package, the government calls a referendum. The referendum asks citizens whether they want to stay in the euro and thus accept the bailout package, or whether they want to reject the bailout package and therefore exit the euro.*

Table A.1: Variable coding

Variable	Survey question	Operationalization
Female	What is your gender? 1 Male 2 Female 3 Other 98 Prefer not to say	Binary categorical variable 1 coded as 0; 2 coded as 1; 3 and 98 coded as missing
Age	What is your date of birth (dd/mm/yy)?	Continuous variable
Education	What is your highest educational qualification?	Continuous variable based on a detailed list of Italian education levels according to the ISCED classification
Household income	Information about income is very important to us. Can you please tell us the income of all household members, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate.	Continuous variable, 1-10; income deciles
Export dependent	To what extent does the enterprise/organization for which you work depend on sales (exports) abroad?	Continuous variable, 1-5; 1 = Very little or not at all; 5 = Very much or entirely
Economic knowledge	1. What does the gross domestic product (GDP) measure? 2. What is an exchange rate? 3. Inflation is the term used to describe...	The variable is coded as the sum of correct answers to three knowledge questions. Four response options were given for each question
Non-standard employment contract	Do/did you have a work contract of... [five response options given]	Binary variable; coded as 1 if a respondent has a work contract of limited duration, works part-time or via an agency, or has no work contract (and is employed); 0 otherwise
Southern region	In which region do you live?	Coding based on classification of the Italian statistical office (ISTAT); "South" and "Islands" coded as South (1); others coded as 0
Past vote	Which party did you vote for in the last European parliamentary election on 26 May 2019?	Categorical variable based on detailed list of Italian parties; Lega, FI, FdI, PD and MS5 coded individually; all other parties as "Other party"; abstention, "I would prefer not to say" and "I don't remember" coded as "No party"

Table A.2: Summary statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Female	4,243	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age	4,249	50.41	17.31	18	91
Education	4,257	5.91	2.40	1	11
Household income	3,534	5.29	2.55	1	10
Export dependent	3,859	1.61	1.13	1	5
Economic knowledge	4,257	1.94	1.04	0	3
Non-standard employment contract	4,239	0.14	0.35	0	1
Southern region	4,257	0.33	0.47	0	1
Past vote					
Lega	4,019	0.19	0.39	0	1
M5S	4,019	0.19	0.39	0	1
PD	4,019	0.27	0.44	0	1
Other party	4,019	0.22	0.42	0	1
No party	4,019	0.13	0.34	0	1

Appendix B: Regression tables corresponding to figures in main text

Table B.1: Multinomial probit regression results underlying Figures 2 and 3

	(1) Referendum		(2) Referendum		(3) Referendum	
	Exit	Don't know	Exit	Don't know	Exit	Don't know
Austerity	0.746***	0.578***	0.746***	0.578***	0.746***	0.578***
	(5.38)	(3.67)	(5.38)	(3.67)	(5.38)	(3.67)
Government blame	0.113	0.328*	0.113	0.328*	0.113	0.328*
	(0.83)	(2.04)	(0.83)	(2.04)	(0.83)	(2.04)
Foreign blame	-0.0991	0.260	-0.0991	0.260	-0.0991	0.260
	(-0.71)	(1.61)	(-0.71)	(1.61)	(-0.71)	(1.61)
Austerity + gvt. blame	0.625***	0.735***	0.625***	0.735***	0.625***	0.735***
	(4.54)	(4.77)	(4.54)	(4.77)	(4.54)	(4.77)
Austerity + foreign blame	0.765***	0.672***	0.765***	0.672***	0.765***	0.672***
	(5.64)	(4.34)	(5.64)	(4.34)	(5.64)	(4.34)
Constant	-0.433***	-0.810***	-0.433***	-0.810***	-0.433***	-0.810***
	(-4.32)	(-7.01)	(-4.32)	(-7.01)	(-4.32)	(-7.01)
Observations	4257		4257		4257	
F	9.677		9.677		9.677	

t statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table B.2: Multinomial probit regression results underlying Figures 4 and 5

	M1		M2	
	Baseline category: Remain		Baseline category: Remain	
	Exit	Don‘t know	Exit	Don‘t know
Female	-0.0159	0.180	-0.0810	0.110
	(-0.17)	(1.62)	(-0.79)	(0.93)
Age	0.0859***	0.0187	0.0807***	0.0400
	(3.87)	(0.82)	(3.31)	(1.66)
Age^2	-0.000863***	-0.000230	-0.000776***	-0.000398
	(-4.06)	(-1.09)	(-3.33)	(-1.80)
Education	-0.0745***	-0.0449	-0.0519*	-0.0351
	(-3.61)	(-1.92)	(-2.27)	(-1.43)
Household income	-0.225	-0.228	-0.0713***	-0.0456
	(-1.21)	(-1.12)	(-3.33)	(-1.73)
Household income^2	0.0207	0.0184		
	(1.22)	(1.05)		
Export dependence	0.0460	0.0184	0.0374	0.0401
	(1.15)	(0.38)	(0.86)	(0.81)
Non-standard employment contract	0.113	0.188	0.0764	0.140
	(0.86)	(1.29)	(0.52)	(0.93)
Economic knowledge	-0.0846	-0.172**	-0.0664	-0.122*
	(-1.80)	(-3.24)	(-1.30)	(-2.22)
Southern region	0.0158	-0.0312	0.147	0.0846
	(0.16)	(-0.26)	(1.34)	(0.68)
Austerity	0.842	0.901	0.423	-0.0979
	(1.32)	(1.24)	(1.46)	(-0.28)
Government blame	0.291	0.817	0.376	-0.0476
	(0.47)	(1.11)	(1.29)	(-0.14)
Foreign blame	-0.421	-0.00990	0.133	0.476
	(-0.67)	(-0.01)	(0.43)	(1.42)
Austerity + gvt. blame	0.631	0.169	0.760*	0.888**
	(0.97)	(0.24)	(2.40)	(2.61)
Austerity + foreign blame	0.955	0.358	0.939**	0.471
	(1.61)	(0.50)	(3.09)	(1.31)
Austerity * income	0.0487	-0.0876		
	(0.18)	(-0.29)		
Austerity * income * income	-0.0109	0.00388		
	(-0.45)	(0.15)		
M5S			-0.139	-0.172
(Ref: Lega)			(-0.48)	(-0.51)
PD			-1.981***	-1.256***
			(-5.94)	(-3.58)
Other party			-0.617*	-0.455

			(-2.04)	(-1.29)
No party			-0.812*	-0.122
			(-2.44)	(-0.34)
Government blame * M5S			-0.708	-0.0880
			(-1.74)	(-0.18)
Government blame * PD			-1.408**	-0.200
			(-2.72)	(-0.37)
Government blame * Other party			-0.285	0.457
			(-0.68)	(0.91)
Government blame * No party			-0.00240	0.653
			(-0.01)	(1.29)
Constant	-1.438	-0.275	-1.062	-1.119
	(-1.95)	(-0.35)	(-1.57)	(-1.57)
Observations	3215		3122	

Note: t statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; survey weights applied; interactions between all treatment conditions and income (M1) and vote choice (M2) included in the models, but not shown.

Appendix C: Additional empirical results

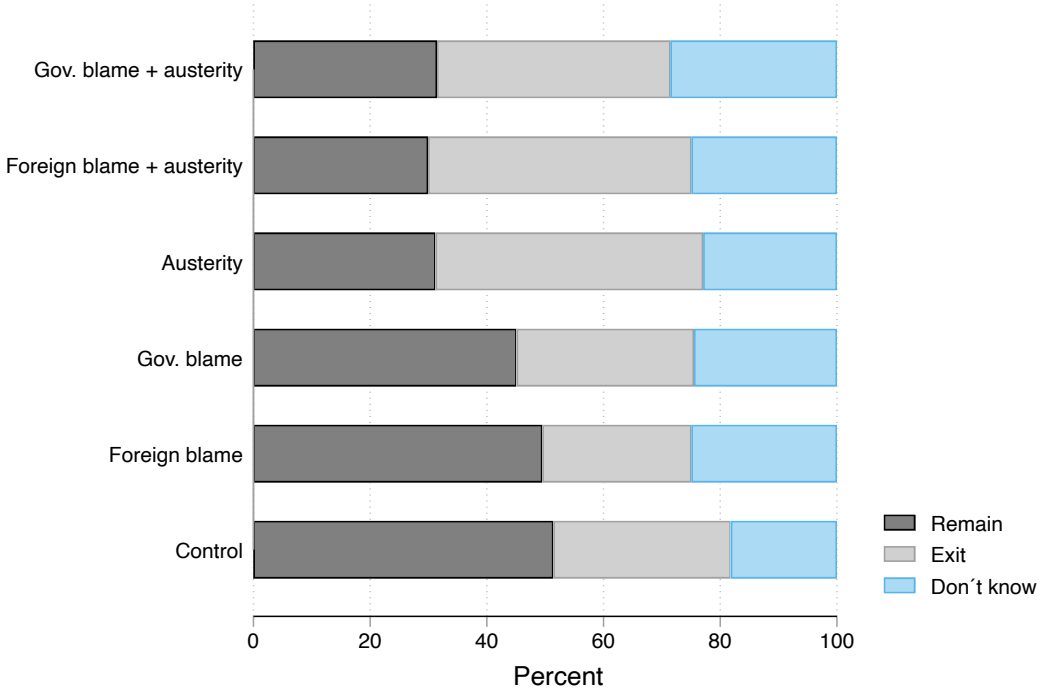


Figure C.1: Support for Italexit in a hypothetical referendum by experimental treatment

Note: Survey weights applied.

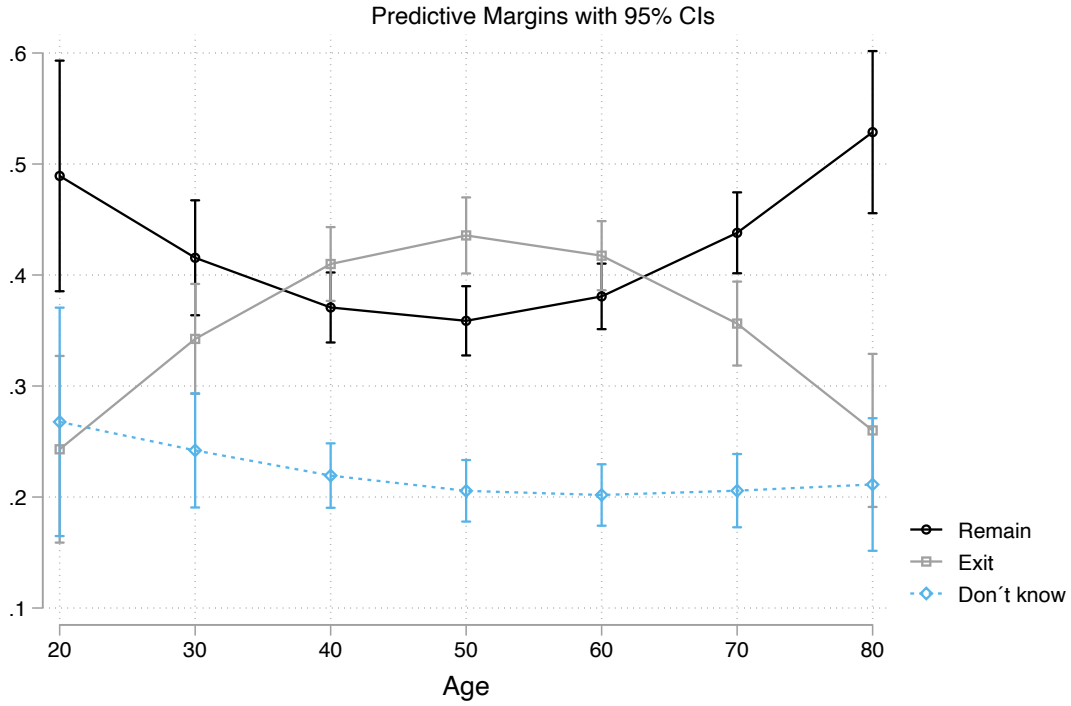


Figure C.2: Predicted probabilities by age, based on average marginal effects in Table 2

Note: Predicted probabilities of voting in a hypothetical referendum based on multinomial probit models presented in Model 1, Table 2.

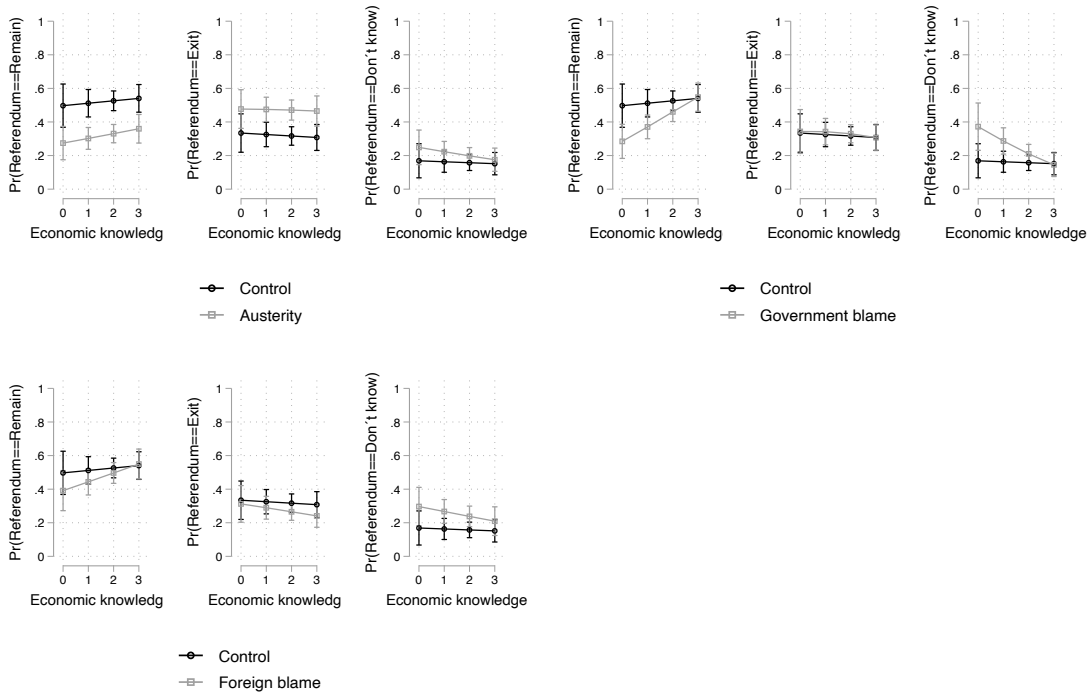


Figure C.3: Heterogeneous treatment effects for economic knowledge

Note: Predicted probabilities of voting in a hypothetical referendum based on multinomial probit models presented in Model 1, Table 2; including an interaction between treatment and economic knowledge.

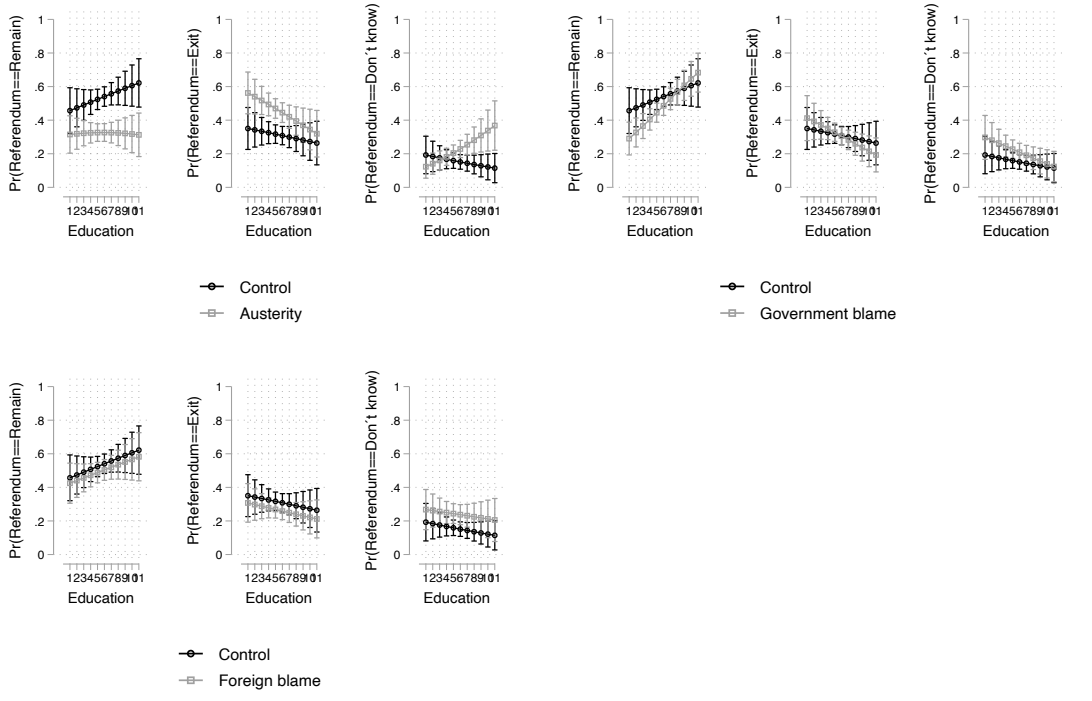


Figure C.4: Heterogeneous treatment effects for educational attainment

Note: Predicted probabilities of voting in a hypothetical referendum based on multinomial probit models presented in Model 1, Table 2; including an interaction between treatment and educational attainment.

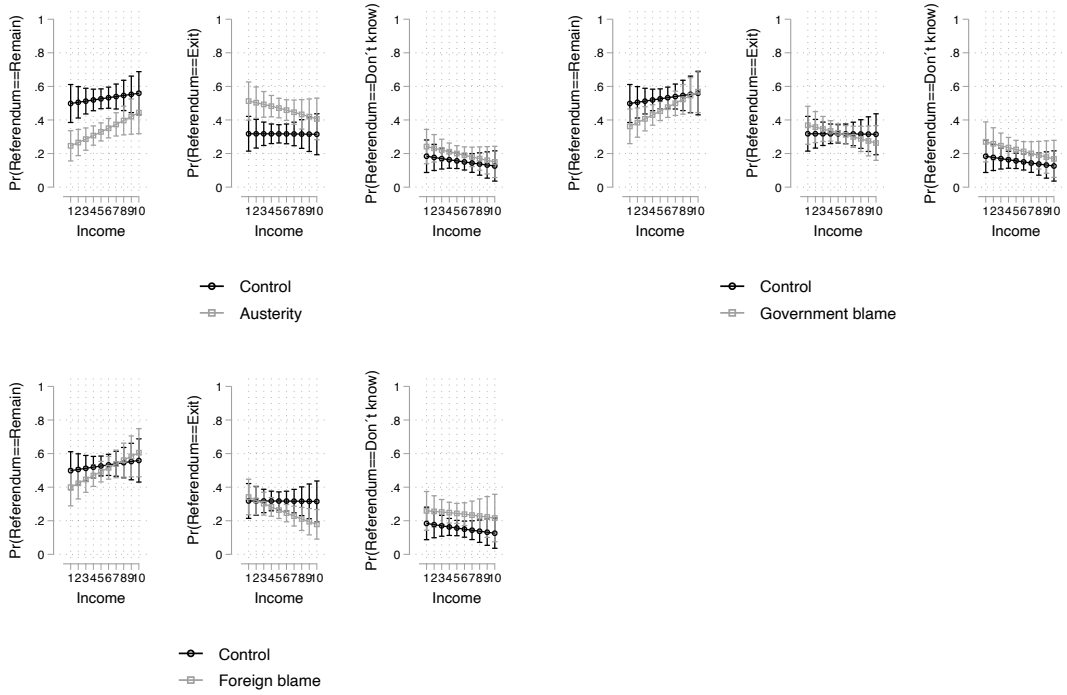


Figure C.5: Heterogeneous treatment effects for household income

Note: Predicted probabilities of voting in a hypothetical referendum based on multinomial probit models presented in Model 1, Table 2; including an interaction between treatment and household income.

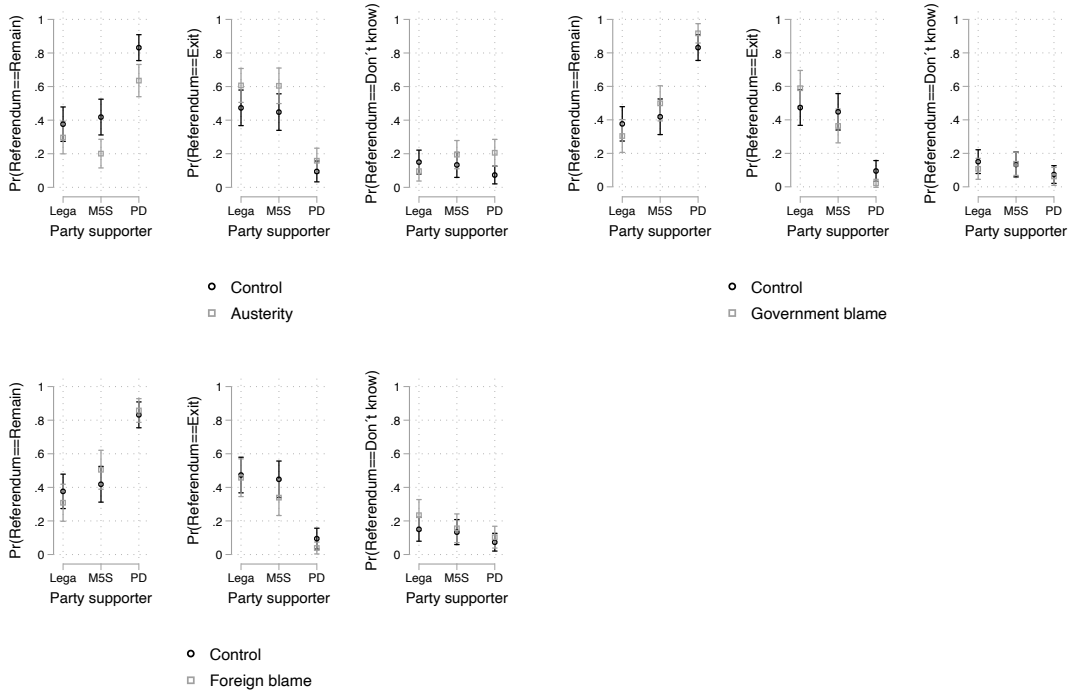


Figure C.6: Heterogeneous treatment effects for party vote choice

Note: Predicted probabilities of voting in a hypothetical referendum based on multinomial probit models presented in Model 2, Table 2; including an interaction between treatment and party vote choice.

Appendix D: Robustness tests

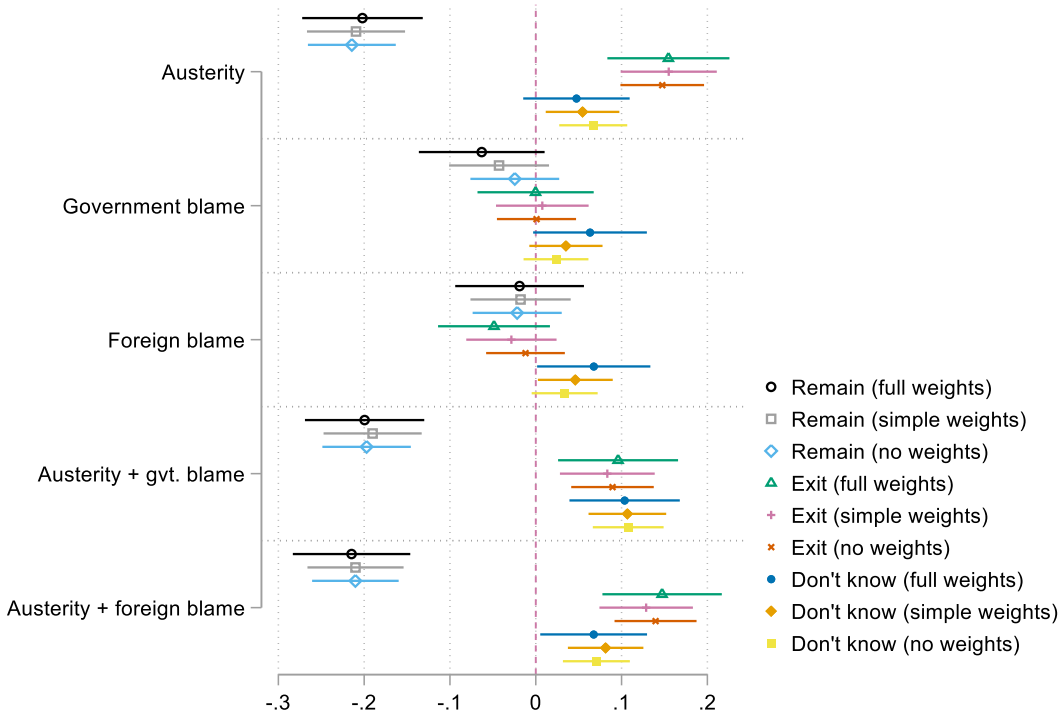


Figure D.1: Replicating Figure 2 with different weights

Note: Marginal effects and 95 percent confidence intervals. Simple weights account for the probability of a respondent to be included in the sample with respect to region, age, gender and education. Full weights account additionally for past vote choice.

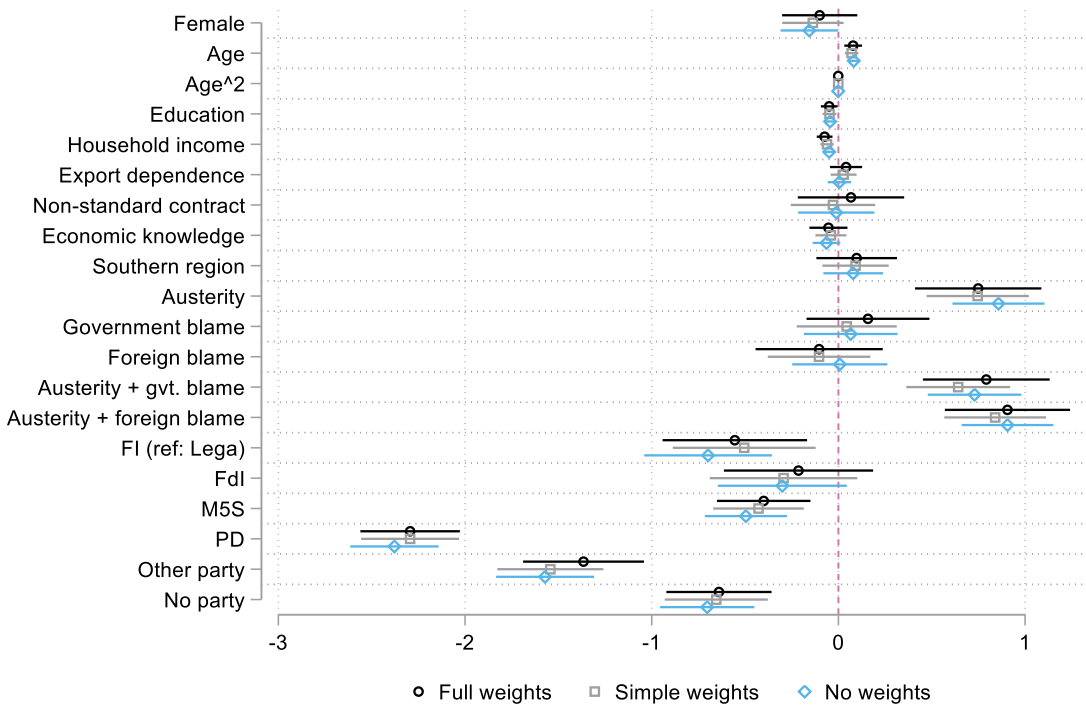


Figure D.2: Replicating Table 2, Model 2 with different weights

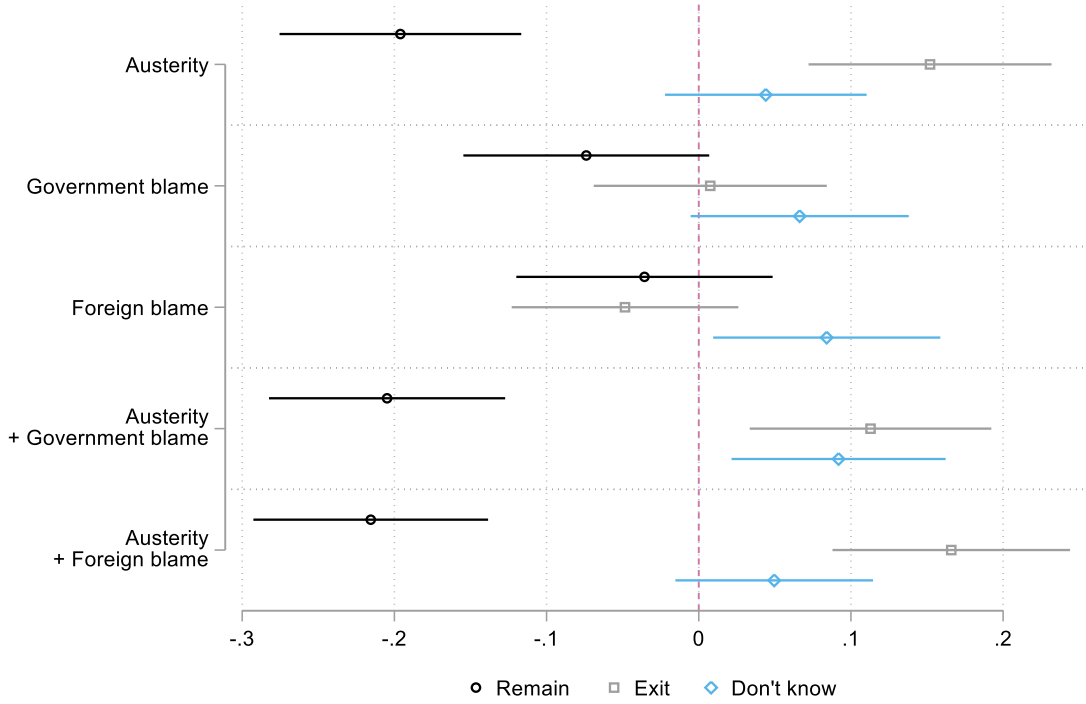
Note: Multinomial probit coefficients for voting exit against baseline category of voting remain and 95 percent confidence intervals. Simple weights account for the probability of a respondent to be included in the sample with respect to region, age, gender and education. Full weights account additionally for past vote choice.

Table D.1: Average marginal effects of the experimental frames and their interactions

	(1) Referendum		(2) Referendum		(3) Referendum	
	Exit	Don't know	Exit	Don't know	Exit	Don't know
austerity=1	0.746***	0.578***	0.746***	0.578***	0.746***	0.578***
	(5.38)	(3.67)	(5.38)	(3.67)	(5.38)	(3.67)
austerity=1 # govblame=1	-0.235	-0.171	-0.235	-0.171	-0.235	-0.171
	(-1.22)	(-0.78)	(-1.22)	(-0.78)	(-1.22)	(-0.78)
govblame=1	0.113	0.328*	0.113	0.328*	0.113	0.328*
	(0.83)	(2.04)	(0.83)	(2.04)	(0.83)	(2.04)
austerity=1 # foreignblame=1	0.117	-0.167	0.117	-0.167	0.117	-0.167
	(0.61)	(-0.76)	(0.61)	(-0.76)	(0.61)	(-0.76)
foreignblame=1	-0.0991	0.260	-0.0991	0.260	-0.0991	0.260
	(-0.71)	(1.61)	(-0.71)	(1.61)	(-0.71)	(1.61)
Constant	-0.433***	-0.810***	-0.433***	-0.810***	-0.433***	-0.810***
	(-4.32)	(-7.01)	(-4.32)	(-7.01)	(-4.32)	(-7.01)
Observations	4257		4257		4257	
F	9.677		9.677		9.677	

t statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Figure D.3: Average treatment effects of austerity and blame attribution on vote choice in hypothetical Italexit referendum; including control variables



Note: Marginal effects and 95 percent confidence intervals of austerity and blame attribution are calculated based on multinomial probit models presented in Table 2, Model 1.

Table D.2: Determinants of vote choice in a hypothetical Italexit referendum; average marginal effects based on linear probability regressions

	Remain	Exit	Don't know	Remain	Exit	Don't know	Remain	Exit	Don't know
Austerity	-0.202***	0.155***	0.0474	-0.196***	0.152***	0.0445	-0.182***	0.143***	0.0386
	(-5.64)	(4.26)	(1.50)	(-4.85)	(3.70)	(1.30)	(-4.52)	(3.55)	(1.15)
Government blame	-0.0630	-0.000208	0.0632	-0.0736	0.00599	0.0676	-0.0584	0.0181	0.0403
	(-1.68)	(-0.01)	(1.87)	(-1.78)	(0.15)	(1.85)	(-1.43)	(0.47)	(1.14)
Foreign blame	-0.0189	-0.0487	0.0676*	-0.0364	-0.0491	0.0854*	-0.0247	-0.0463	0.0710
	(-0.49)	(-1.46)	(2.01)	(-0.85)	(-1.28)	(2.22)	(-0.57)	(-1.23)	(1.87)
Austerity + gvt. blame	-0.199***	0.0959**	0.104**	-0.207***	0.114**	0.0933**	-0.210***	0.126**	0.0842*
	(-5.62)	(2.69)	(3.16)	(-5.22)	(2.79)	(2.58)	(-5.35)	(3.14)	(2.41)
Austerity + foreign blame	-0.215***	0.147***	0.0674*	-0.217***	0.167***	0.0504	-0.220***	0.166***	0.0543
	(-6.15)	(4.15)	(2.12)	(-5.50)	(4.15)	(1.50)	(-5.64)	(4.19)	(1.59)
Female				-0.0149	-0.0221	0.0369	0.00653	-0.0323	0.0257
				(-0.61)	(-0.91)	(1.59)	(0.27)	(-1.35)	(1.13)
Age				-0.0163**	0.0215***	-0.00525	-0.0160**	0.0167**	-0.000665
				(-3.00)	(4.05)	(-1.05)	(-2.95)	(3.06)	(-0.13)
Age^2				0.000169***	-0.000211***	0.0000425	0.000157**	-0.000160**	0.00000300
				(3.31)	(-4.17)	(0.94)	(3.07)	(-3.10)	(0.07)
Education				0.0178***	-0.0160**	-0.00184	0.0111*	-0.00911	-0.00197
				(3.46)	(-3.07)	(-0.39)	(2.14)	(-1.78)	(-0.43)
Household income				0.0200***	-0.0143**	-0.00565	0.0159**	-0.0143**	-0.00162
				(3.82)	(-2.79)	(-1.15)	(3.00)	(-2.94)	(-0.33)
Export dependence				-0.0107	0.0110	-0.000302	-0.00972	0.00644	0.00328
				(-1.05)	(1.04)	(-0.03)	(-0.96)	(0.62)	(0.34)
Non-standard contract				-0.0422	0.0109	0.0313	-0.0275	0.00271	0.0248
				(-1.33)	(0.32)	(0.99)	(-0.84)	(0.08)	(0.82)
Economic knowledge				0.0335**	-0.00268	-0.0308**	0.0207	0.000749	-0.0214
				(2.85)	(-0.22)	(-2.79)	(1.73)	(0.06)	(-1.96)
Southern region				0.00194	0.00806	-0.0100	-0.0215	0.0184	0.00312

				(0.08)	(0.32)	(-0.40)	(-0.84)	(0.71)	(0.13)
FI							0.145**	-0.117*	-0.0273
(Ref: Lega)							(2.95)	(-2.33)	(-0.73)
FdI							0.0507	-0.0448	-0.00591
							(1.02)	(-0.86)	(-0.17)
M5S							0.0892**	-0.0868**	-0.00242
							(3.03)	(-2.73)	(-0.10)
PD							0.456***	-0.464***	0.00822
							(17.01)	(-18.07)	(0.37)
Other party							0.294***	-0.329***	0.0357
							(7.95)	(-8.98)	(1.16)
No party							0.0921**	-0.210***	0.118***
							(2.75)	(-6.04)	(3.86)
Observations	4257	4257	4257	3215	3215	3215	3122	3122	3122

t statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: Based on the original dependent variable, we generated three dependent variables for these model specifications. Remain (coded as 1) versus exit and don't know (0) in Models 1, 4 and 7; exit (1) versus remain and don't know in Models 2, 5 and 8; and don't know (1) versus remain and exit (0) in Models 3, 6 and 9.

Appendix E: Results with partisan choice as DV

Table E.1: Multinomial probit regression results; framing effects on vote intentions

	M5S	PD	Other	Don't know/ abstain
Austerity	0.0376	0.139	-0.0489	0.0773
	(0.21)	(0.95)	(-0.32)	(0.48)
Government blame	-0.151	0.0208	-0.0216	0.0976
	(-0.89)	(0.14)	(-0.14)	(0.61)
Foreign blame	0.119	0.191	0.190	0.270
	(0.69)	(1.35)	(1.24)	(1.68)
Austerity + gvt. blame	-0.0386	0.272	0.0543	0.0317
	(-0.23)	(1.84)	(0.36)	(0.19)
Austerity + foreign blame	-0.0745	0.186	0.0100	-0.0408
	(-0.43)	(1.30)	(0.07)	(-0.26)
Constant	-0.400**	-0.570***	-0.00152	0.328**
	(-3.26)	(-5.62)	(-0.01)	(2.87)
Observations	4056			
F	0.882			

t statistics in parentheses; baseline category: Lega
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

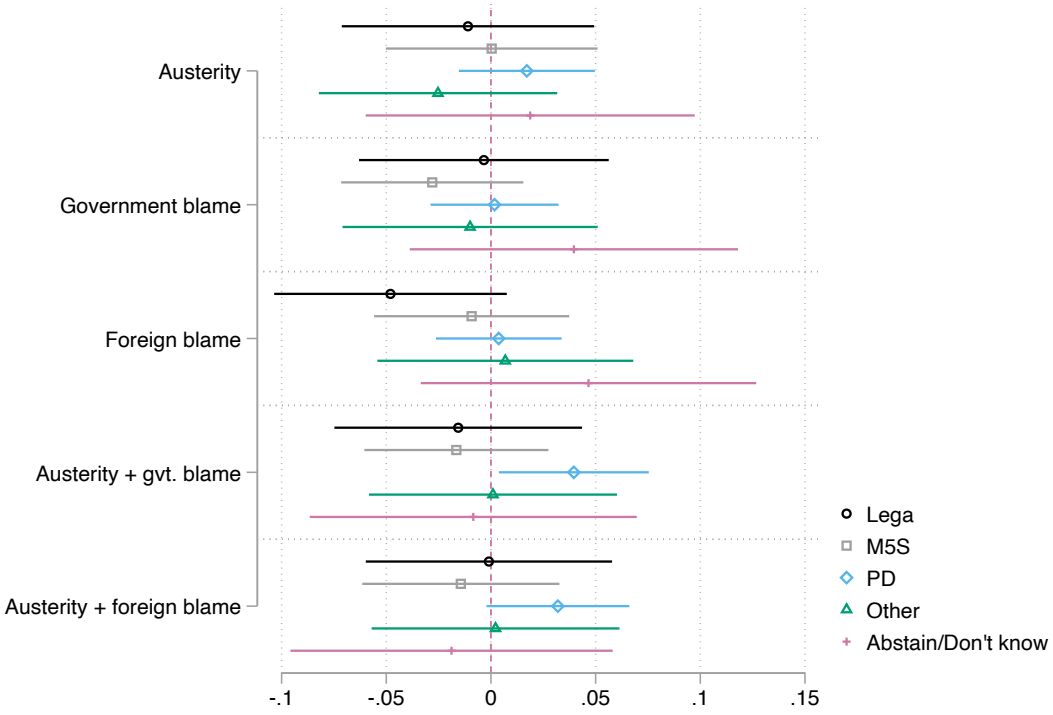


Figure E.1: Average treatment effects of austerity and blame attribution on support for different party groups

Note: The marginal effects and 95 percent confidence intervals are calculated based on multinomial probit models presented in the appendix.