

Policy or Partisanship: Replicating Results From An Analysis of Quasi-Experimental Evidence From Brexit

Trisha Prabhu

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Note for Trisha: Change the title above to something other than the paper’s original title.

Acknowledgements

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I. Introduction: Overview of Original Paper

This replication examines the paper “Policy or Partisanship: Replicating Results From An Analysis of Quasi-Experimental Evidence From Brexit.” In the paper, the authors aim to explore one key question: “are voters motivated by policy preferences, or partisan identities?” The authors answer the question in the context of the UK’s political system, exploiting the UK’s Brexit referendum – which caused an abrupt change in the British Conservative Party’s stance on leaving the European Union, and via a vote “so narrow that it was more or less a coin flip.” The authors’ methodology is relatively simple: they employ an uninterrupted time-series design, examining panel survey data from the British Election Study to compare referendum attitudes and party affiliation in the data immediately before and after the referendum (“Wave 8” and “Wave 9” data, respectively). Given the brief gap between the 2 waves, and their ability to identify/eliminate potential confounders (e.g. a change in the Labour Party’s stance on Brexit), they assume their identification strategy is sound. They ultimately fit and run several linear regression models that find that voters are most motivated by policy: following Brexit, “Europhilic” (citizens that supported remaining in the EU) Conservatives disaffiliated from the Conservative party; indeed, the less Euroskeptic a Conservative was pre-referendum, the more likely they were to disaffiliate. The “policy story” holds when examining pre-referendum non-Conservatives; here, the authors determine that the more Euroskeptic pre-referendum non-Conservatives were, the more likely they were to switch to the Conservative Party.

The authors also explore various related questions, such as whether the intensity of pre-referendum Conservatives’ partisanship influenced to what degree they followed their party as it adopted a new position; they ultimately find that the positive relationship between Conservatives’ perception of their party’s position on Brexit and their position on Brexit is strongest for the most partisan Conservatives. The authors also look at whether newly minted Conservative voters also updated their stances on other policy issues to further align themselves with the Conservative party; looking specifically at the issue of redistribution, they find that this is indeed the case. The authors’ other results/conclusions are discussed in detail in the next section.

In the next section, I replicate ¹ the authors’ main results (6 tables and 2 figures), providing my analyses/interpretation. Then, in the third section, I consider ways to extend the authors’ work, in this case, by employing another regression method particularly suited to analyses with binary outcomes (such as switching parties) – logistic regression.

¹The data and code used in the report can be obtained here:

II. Replicated Results and Discussion

Table 1: Euroskepticism and Defection from the Conservatives

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Defect from Conservatives		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism	-0.003* (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.001)
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		0.011* (0.004)	0.009* (0.004)
Age			-0.001*** (0.0002)
Female			-0.007 (0.007)
White			-0.058** (0.019)
Scotland			0.002 (0.012)
Wales			0.021 (0.014)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism:Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		-0.001* (0.001)	-0.001* (0.001)
Constant	0.101*** (0.011)	0.084*** (0.011)	0.181*** (0.023)
Observations	7,330	6,476	6,216
R ²	0.001	0.001	0.006
Adjusted R ²	0.0004	0.001	0.005
Residual Std. Error	0.272 (df = 7328)	0.261 (df = 6472)	0.258 (df = 6207)
F Statistic	3.912* (df = 1; 7328)	2.709* (df = 3; 6472)	4.554*** (df = 8; 6207)

Note:

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

I began by replicating Table 1 of the paper, which aims to answer the paper’s most fundamental question: are voters motivated by policy or partisanship? As discussed, the authors operationalize that question by examining if/how party affiliation evolved in the wake of Brexit. In Table 1, the authors examine defection from the Conservative Party. Like the authors, I began by focusing in on Waves 8 and 9 of the data (immediately pre and post-referendum). I first created a “Conservative Party ID” variable that indicated if, for each wave, a given unit reported being a member of the Conservative party; I then used that information to subset to Wave 8 Conservatives, which I then merged with the Wave 9 data. I also created another variable, “partyswitcher,” that indicated switching out of the Conservative Party – a Wave 8 Unit that did not report affiliating with the Conservatives in Wave 9. Like the authors, I then regressed this “partyswitcher” variable on the respondent’s self-reported level of Euroskepticism (on a 0 - 10 scale) pre-referendum; in 2 other regressions, I also included the perceived change in Euroskepticism of Conservatives as an interaction, as well as threw in a range of demographic information (e.g. age, gender, etc.). The coefficient associated with the first regression, which is significant at the 0.05 level, suggests that “a one-point increase in pre-referendum Euroskepticism yields a 0.3 percent decrease in the probability of defection” (Schonfeld and Winter-Levy 2019). The interaction coefficient in the second/third column of the data is also significant at the 0.05 level; the negative value indicates that “less Euroskeptic Conservatives who perceive that the party has become increasingly Euroskeptic are especially likely to reject it” (Schonfeld and Winter-Levy 2019). Policy, not partisanship, it seems, is what matters.

Table 2: Euroskepticism and Joining the Conservatives

	Dependent variable:		
	Joined Conservatives		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism	0.007*** (0.0005)	0.007*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		-0.003* (0.001)	-0.004** (0.001)
Age			0.0004*** (0.0001)
Female			-0.002 (0.003)
White			-0.008 (0.007)
Scotland			-0.017*** (0.005)
Wales			-0.012 (0.006)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism:Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		0.001*** (0.0002)	0.001*** (0.0002)
Constant	-0.001 (0.003)	0.00004 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.009)
Observations	18,517	15,139	14,554
R ²	0.012	0.015	0.017
Adjusted R ²	0.012	0.015	0.017
Residual Std. Error	0.198 (df = 18515)	0.204 (df = 15135)	0.202 (df = 14545)
F Statistic	216.857*** (df = 1; 18515)	78.431*** (df = 3; 15135)	31.854*** (df = 8; 14545)

Note:

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

That conclusion was strengthened upon creating/examining Table 2. Here, I followed the same steps as I did to create Table 1, with alterations to examine not defection, but joining the Conservatives. Thus, like the authors, I subsetting to pre-referendum (Wave 8) non-Conservatives, which I merged with the Wave 9 data, and created a switching variable “switchtocons” that indicated joining the Conservative Party – a Wave 8 unit that reported affiliating with the Conservative Party in Wave 9. I repeated the 3 same regressions as in Table 1, regressing my new switching variable, “switchtocons,” on pre-referendum self-reported levels of Euroskepticism, including perceived changes in the Euroskepticism of the Conservative Party as an interaction, and finally, throwing a number of relevant predictors in. The “policy matters” finding held: as reported in the paper, the coefficient associated with the first regression, significant at the 0.001 level, suggests “a one-point increase in pre-referendum Euroskepticism generates a .7 percent increase in the probability of switching loyalties to the Conservatives” (Schonfeld and Winter-Levy 2019).

```
## Warning: Removed 6083 rows containing non-finite values (stat_smooth).
```

```
## Warning: Removed 6083 rows containing missing values (geom_point).
```

Table 3: Individual Shifts in Euroskepticism

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Change in Personal Euroskepticism:	
	Moderate Conservatives	Very Strong Conservatives
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism	0.139*** (0.011)	0.220*** (0.020)
Female	-0.055 (0.054)	-0.109 (0.113)
Age	0.006*** (0.002)	0.004 (0.004)
White	0.094 (0.154)	-0.186 (0.300)
Scotland	0.131 (0.096)	0.099 (0.192)
Wales	0.017 (0.111)	-0.324 (0.245)
Constant	-1.161*** (0.178)	-0.573 (0.340)
Observations	5,000	1,180
R ²	0.038	0.101
Adjusted R ²	0.036	0.097
Residual Std. Error	1.882 (df = 4993)	1.883 (df = 1173)
F Statistic	32.559*** (df = 6; 4993)	22.025*** (df = 6; 1173)

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

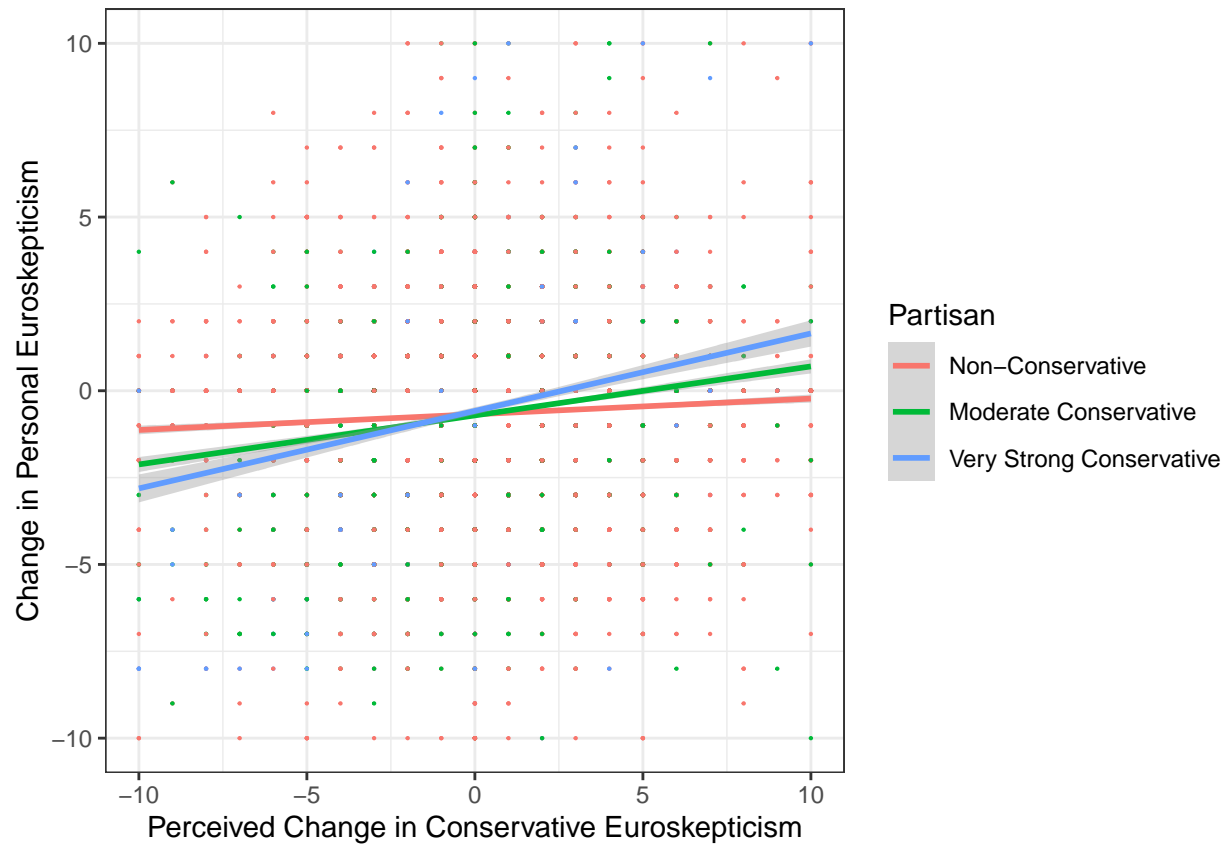
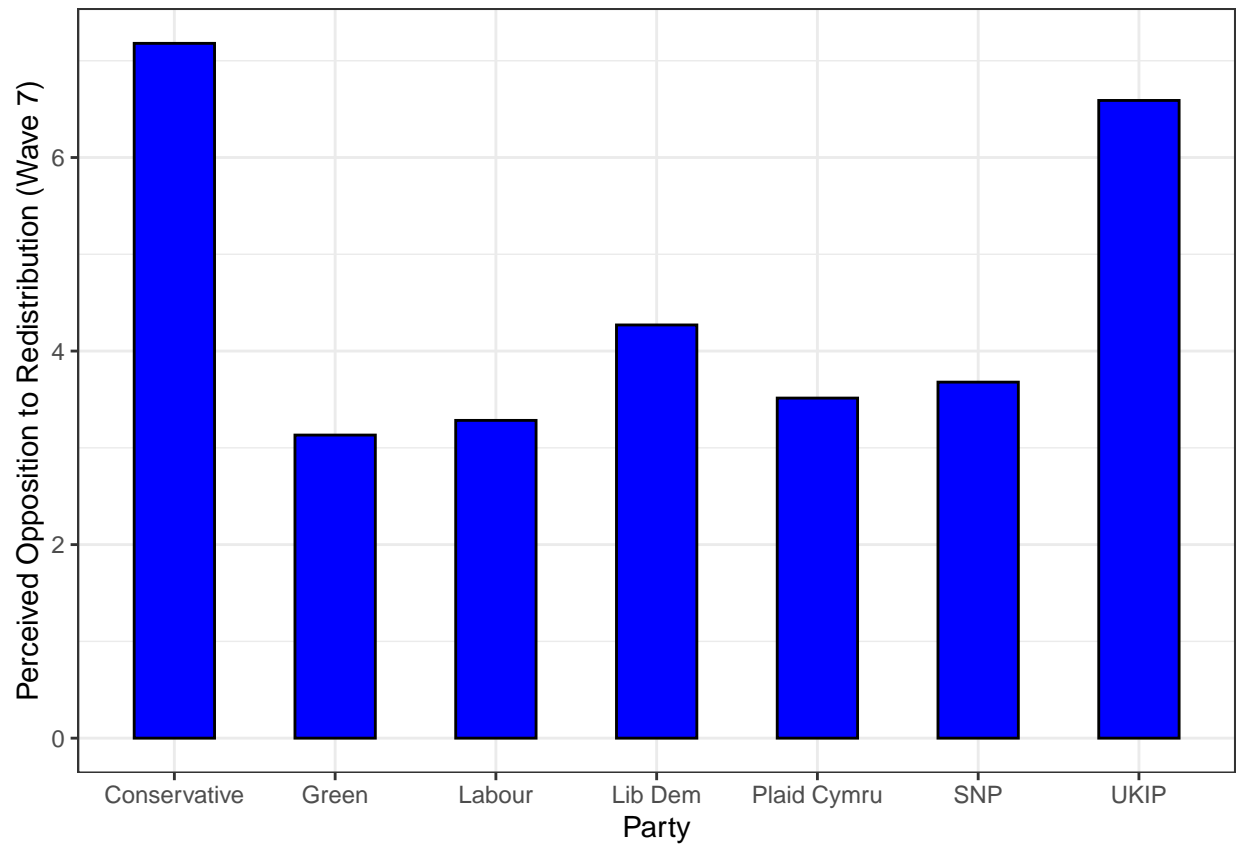


Table 4: Joining the Conservatives and Opposition to Redistribution

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Change in Opposition to Redistribution		
	Overall	Non-UKIP	UKIP
Joined Conservatives	0.542*** (0.133)	0.605*** (0.158)	0.042 (0.285)
White	0.179 (0.119)	0.155 (0.120)	0.360 (0.528)
Age	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	0.008 (0.007)
Female	-0.009 (0.052)	0.0001 (0.054)	0.003 (0.191)
Scotland	-0.162* (0.071)	-0.109 (0.071)	-0.472 (0.468)
Wales	-0.051 (0.091)	-0.112 (0.094)	0.536 (0.312)
Constant	-0.161 (0.144)	-0.094 (0.146)	-0.518 (0.631)
Observations	9,065	8,086	979
R ²	0.003	0.003	0.007
Adjusted R ²	0.002	0.002	0.001
Residual Std. Error	2.477 (df = 9058)	2.415 (df = 8079)	2.906 (df = 972)
F Statistic	4.155*** (df = 6; 9058)	3.804*** (df = 6; 8079)	1.090 (df = 6; 972)

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001



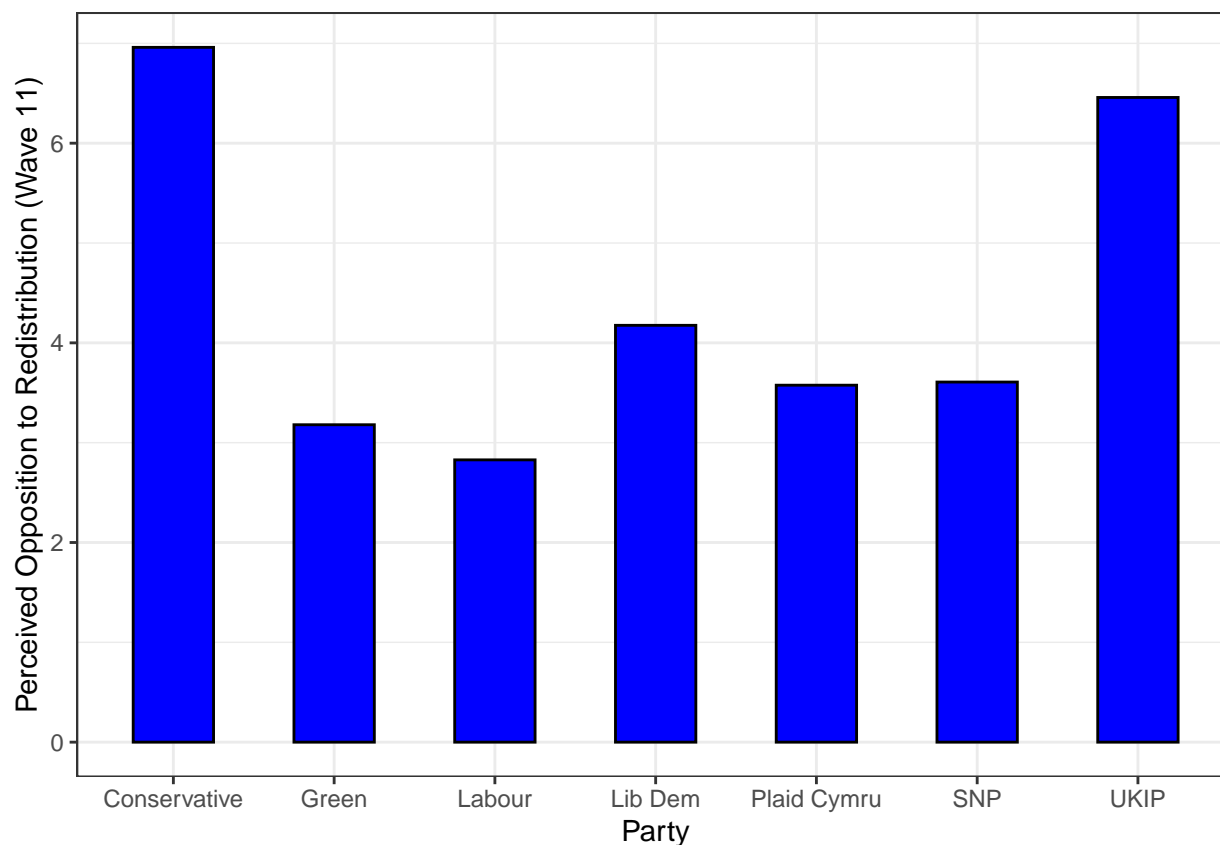


Table 5: Euroskepticism and Defecting from Conservatives

	Dependent variable:		
	Defected from Conservatives		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
2015 Euroskepticism	-0.029*** (0.003)	-0.031*** (0.003)	-0.026*** (0.003)
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		0.009 (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)
Age			-0.004*** (0.001)
Female			0.023 (0.015)
White			-0.020 (0.041)
Scotland			-0.053* (0.026)
Wales			0.024 (0.027)
Interaction		-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Constant	0.358*** (0.023)	0.362*** (0.028)	0.608*** (0.053)
Observations	2,142	1,902	1,902
R ²	0.047	0.059	0.096
Adjusted R ²	0.047	0.058	0.092
Residual Std. Error	0.332 (df = 2140)	0.321 (df = 1898)	0.315 (df = 1893)
F Statistic	105.620*** (df = 1; 2140)	39.927*** (df = 3; 1898)	25.150*** (df = 8; 1893)

Note:

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 6: Euroskepticism and Switching Vote to Conservatives

	Dependent variable:		
	Switched to Conservatives		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
2015 Euroskepticism	0.047*** (0.002)	0.049*** (0.002)	0.047*** (0.002)
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		0.005 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)
Age			0.002*** (0.0004)
Female			-0.015 (0.012)
White			0.061* (0.028)
Scotland			0.010 (0.015)
Wales			-0.034 (0.020)
Interaction		0.001* (0.001)	0.001* (0.001)
Constant	-0.068*** (0.011)	-0.076*** (0.012)	-0.228*** (0.035)
Observations	4,388	3,758	3,758
R ²	0.164	0.203	0.210
Adjusted R ²	0.164	0.202	0.208
Residual Std. Error	0.367 (df = 4386)	0.364 (df = 3754)	0.363 (df = 3749)
F Statistic	861.685*** (df = 1; 4386)	318.651*** (df = 3; 3754)	124.664*** (df = 8; 3749)

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

III. Proposed Extension

```
# Note that our dependent variable is binary (switching -- Yes or No).
```

```
# What if we re-created Table 1 using logistic regression?
```

```
table1reg_logistic <- glm(formula = partyswitcher ~ EUIntegrationSelf8,
  family = binomial(link = "logit"),
  data = merged)
```

```
intreg1_logistic <- glm(partyswitcher ~ EUIntegrationSelf8 * Conchange,
  family = binomial(link = "logit"),
  data = merged)
```

```
intreg1a_logistic <- glm(partyswitcher ~ EUIntegrationSelf8 * Conchange + age.x
  + gender.x + white + country.x,
  family = binomial(link = "logit"),
  data = merged)
```

```
stargazer(table1reg_logistic, intreg1_logistic, intreg1a_logistic,
  title = "Euroskepticism and Defection from the Conservatives (Logistic)",
  covariate.labels = c("Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism",
    "Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism",
    "Age",
    "Female",
    "White",
    "Scotland",
    "Wales",
    "Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism:Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskep",
    "Constant"),
  dep.var.labels = "Defect from Conservatives",
  no.space = TRUE, star.cutoffs = c(0.05, 0.01, 0.001),
```

```
font.size = "tiny",
header = FALSE)
```

Table 7: Euroskepticism and Defection from the Conservatives (Logistic)

	Dependent variable:		
	Defect from Conservatives		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism	-0.033*	-0.015	0.005
	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.021)
Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		0.140*	0.129*
		(0.058)	(0.062)
Age			-0.013***
			(0.003)
Female			-0.109
			(0.101)
White			-0.619**
			(0.214)
Scotland			0.036
			(0.178)
Wales			0.292
			(0.192)
Pre-Referendum Euroskepticism:Perceived Change in Conservative Euroskepticism		-0.017*	-0.016*
		(0.007)	(0.007)
Constant	-2.170***	-2.415***	-1.260***
	(0.139)	(0.165)	(0.293)
Observations	7,330	6,476	6,216
Log Likelihood	-2,052.692	-1,699.461	-1,588.203
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,109.383	3,406.922	3,194.406

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Let's look at the null and residual deviance for our last model:

```
pchisq(3209.2 - 3176.4, 6215 - 6207, lower = FALSE)
```

[1] 6.691329e-05

We're definitely in the tail, which suggests that our model is statistically different from the mean model. That's good!

Let's look at the odds ratios:

```
exp(table1reg_logistic$coefficients[])
```

```
(Intercept) EUIntegrationSelf8
0.1142154      0.9672463
```

Question for Le: How should I interpret/consider the logistic regression approach -- in particular, how should I compare it to the "regular" lm approach utilized in the paper?

Can plot some graphs -- look at the magnitudes across the scales of indep. variable.

Can do some inverse-logit/predict -- can define high level and a low level; compare # 1 to 2, 2 to 3, etc. -- and discuss your findings in your report.

Initial attempt at interpretation of Table 1 logistic regressions:

Here, for each model, we calculate the odds ratio of the various coefficients; the odds ratio represents: $P/(1-P)$ (or the probability of leaving the Conservatives/the probability of not leaving the Conservatives). With that said, if the value of an odds ratio is > 1 , then the ratio suggests the predictor is associated with

```
# an increase in the probability of leaving the Conservatives. The magnitude of  
# that effect can be directly compared via the numbers, with adjustment for  
# variation via multiplication by the standard deviation.  
  
# Let's consider the most simple regression/model:  
  
# The odds ratio for EUIntegrationSelf8 is 0.9672463; this suggests that a one-unit increase  
# in pre-referendum Euroskepticism is associated with a decrease in the  
# probability of defection from the Conservatives (as we would predict, given  
# that the Conservatives adopt an anti-integration view post-referendum).  
  
#...
```

IV. Bibliography

<https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=5270000671240250670951130750701061080390030240420710750930751120881EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

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