



Democracy in Retreat?: Vox Populi, Custodum Acta

Jack Citrin

Department of Political Science

University of California, Berkeley

Table 1: Trends in Political Support 1999-2008

	Confidence in Parliament		Confidence in the Justice System		Democratic Values: Oppose strong leader, no parliament /			System Performance Rating		National Pride	
	2008	Δ 1999-2008	2008	Δ 1999-2008	2008	Δ 1999-2008	2008	Δ 1999-2008	2008	Δ 1999-2008	
Austria	38.5	-7.6 *	58.2	-2.0	76.3	-4.3 *	40.4	-13.3 *	78.1	-2.4 *	
Belgium	43.6	4.3 *	48.1	9.5 *	60.3	-6.1 *	39.6	-3.7 *	72.2	8.7 *	
Denmark	59.9	10.9 *	70.3	6.2 *	80.4	0.4	53.5	7.6 *	79.8	-0.2	
Finland	45.6	-0.9	62.4	4.7 *	79.4	2.5 *	51.5	-2.0	82.7	-0.2	
France	47.6	7.6 *	51.3	7.4 *	70.3	-2.7 *	33.6	-7.5 *	74.9	-0.2	
Germany	40.7	-0.8	53.5	-1.7	77.9	0.7	52.2	-3.8 *	63.3	4.5 *	
Greece	36.4	3.2 *	47.3	3.1 *	88.9	0.8	31.6	-10.7 *	85.8	5.6 *	
Iceland	44.2	-17.1 *	59.4	-3.2 *	73.7	-1.1	40.5	-15.6 *	84.1	-3.8 *	
Ireland	47.4	7.4 *	46.9	-6.6 *	66.5	-7.0 *	52.1	-0.3	91.8	1.7 *	
Italy	39.9	-0.8	41.3	1.8	79.2	-0.2	32.8	-3.4 *	77.5	2.3 *	
Luxemburg	58.6	3.8 *	60.1	7.0 *	63.3	4.0 *	57.0	-2.3 *	81.0	2.7	
Netherlands	47.9	-3.8 *	51.2	2.6 *	61.6	-3.5 *	52.2	-6.6 *	70.6	5.7 *	
Portugal	40.9	-6.1 *	45.2	3.9 *	51.3	-5.5 *	30.1	-23.9 *	84.8	-6.8 *	
Spain	47.6	-0.4	45.1	-0.7	76.1	8.6 *	43.3	-8.3 *	82.0	1.5	
Sweden	53.2	3.0 *	57.8	3.1 *	81.8	5.4 *	54.7	8.1 *	77.4	1.8	
United Kingdom	33.5	-8.1 *	50.7	2.5	68.6	-5.3 *	35.7	-11.1 *	80.5	1.0	
	2005	Δ 1995-2005	2005	Δ 1995-2005	2005	Δ 1995-2005	2005	Δ 1995-2005	2005	Δ 1995-2005	
Australia	41.8	2.1 *	51.3	8.9 *	72.4	-4.0 *	---	---	88.3	-1.9 *	
Canada	42.8	-1.2	58.0	NA	74.7	-1.4	---	---	88.8	2.1 *	
New Zealand	41.8	12.0 *	48.1	-0.2	78.7	-2.0 *	---	---	89.1	2.2 *	
United States	35.9	-3.8 *	53.5	10.6 *	65.2	-10.4 *	---	---	85.4	-6.6 *	
Weighted Mean	41.5	40.2 *	51.8	6.3 *	71.0	-3.0 *	44.7	-5.0 *	79.7	-1.7 *	

Notes: all scores are sample means rescaled 0-100 and, where necessary, recoded so that higher scores indicate greater support. Asterisks indicate change is significant at p<.05.

Confidence items: "How much confidence do you have in [institution], a great deal, quite a lot, not very much, or none at all?"

Democratic values: "Would you say the following is very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad: having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections?"

System performance rating: "People have different views about the system for running our country. Here is a scale for rating how well things are going: 1 (bad) -10 (very good)."

National pride: "How proud are you to be a [country] citizen: very proud, quite proud, not very proud, or not at all proud?"

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

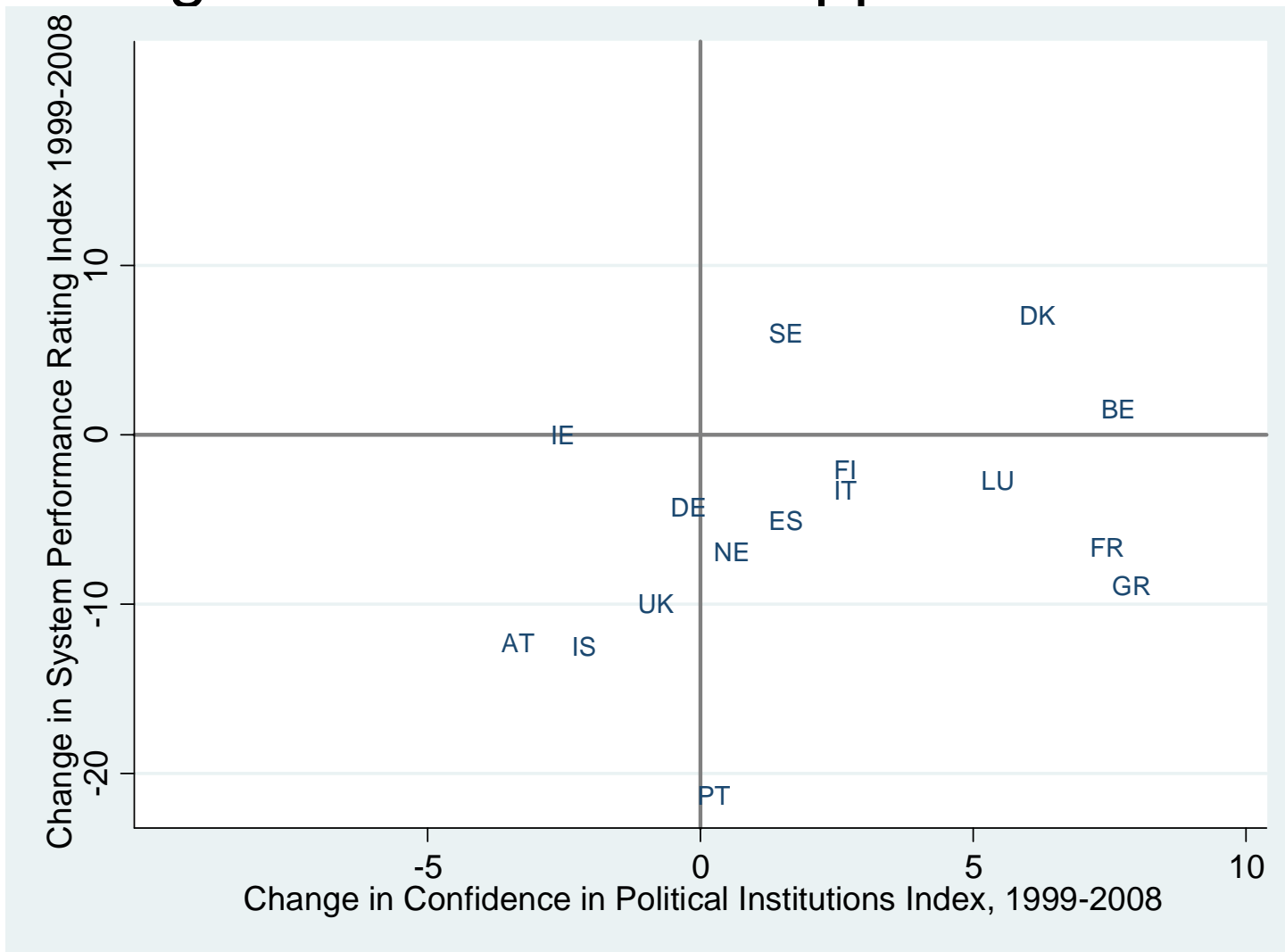
Table 2: The Balance of Change in Support

Trends in Measures of Support, 1999-2008		
	Number of Countries with Rising Support	Number of Countries with Declining Support
Confidence in Political Institutions		
Parliament	9	6
Justice System	11	2
System Performance Rating		
Rating of how system is functioning	2	12
Satisfaction with how democracy is developing	3	12
Democratic Values		
<i>Political System Attributes</i>		
Oppose strong leader with no parliament / elections	5	8
Oppose army rule	4	10
Favor democracy	6	8
Oppose experts' deciding	5	9
<i>Beliefs about Democracy</i>		
Imperfect but better than other systems	6	9
Disagree: bad at maintaining order	6	5
Disagree: fosters indecision	4	8
Disagree: fosters bad economy	4	9
National Pride	8	5

The strong leader, army rules, experts decide, bad at maintaining order, fosters indecision, and fosters bad economy items ask about agreement with or support for these propositions. We reverse code these so that an increase in any measure reflects an increase in democratic values. System performance rating and beliefs about democracy measures only available for the 16 European countries and not for the four Anglo-American countries. Only statistically significant ($p < .05$) changes are tallied here. See accompanying handout for question wordings.

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

Figure 1: Trends in Support Indices



System performance rating index is the mean of two items: how democracy is developing in [country] (very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied, not at all satisfied) and view about how well things are going with respect to the political system (1=very bad - 10=very good). Confidence in institutions index is the mean of confidence in parliament, justice system, civil service, and police (a great deal, quite a lot, not very much, none at all). Both indices rescaled 0-100, where 100 indicates maximum support.

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

Table 3A: Correlates of Political Support: Age and Education

	Support for Democracy Index		Confidence in Political Institutions Index		System Performance Rating Index	
	Age	Education	Age	Education	Age	Education
Austria	0.07*	0.14***	0.16***	0.06*	-0.01	0.15***
Belgium	-0.01	0.33***	-0.03	0.11***	-0.02	0.03
Denmark	0.00	0.22***	0.02	0.11***	0.01	-0.05
Finland	-0.05	0.18***	0.06*	0.15***	0.00	0.09**
France	-0.02	0.28***	0.10***	0.03	0.09***	0.10***
Germany	0.00	0.19***	0.13***	0.01	0.05*	0.07**
Greece	0.07**	0.04	0.23***	-0.13***	0.10***	-0.02
Iceland	-0.01	0.27***	0.06	0.12***	-0.08*	0.25***
Ireland	0.04	0.18***	0.16***	0.05	0.02	0.13***
Italy	0.03	0.20***	0.19***	-0.08**	0.10***	-0.03
Luxembourg	-0.01	0.34***	0.04	0.03	0.06*	0.14***
Netherlands	-0.07**	0.30***	-0.09***	0.19***	-0.06*	0.15***
Norway	0.04	0.21***	-0.09**	0.15***	-0.08**	0.20***
Portugal	0.01	0.11***	-0.08**	0.07**	-0.09***	0.15***
Spain	-0.07**	0.11***	0.14***	0.00	-0.01	0.05
Sweden	0.00	0.29***	-0.02	0.20***	-0.02	0.23***
Switzerland	0.00	0.22***	-0.04	0.05	-0.05	0.09***
United Kingdom	0.12***	0.22***	0.01	0.12***	-0.03	0.17***
Australia	0.13***	0.20***	0.02	0.11***	---	---
Canada	0.13***	0.20***	0.01	0.13***	---	---
New Zealand	0.04	0.22***	0.15***	0.11**	---	---
United States	0.10***	0.28***	0.09**	0.07*	---	---
# Countries with Positive Correlation	6	21	10	14	5	13
# Countries with Negative Correlation	2	0	3	2	4	0
Full Sample, Weighted	0.07***	.22***	.09***	.06***	.03*	.10***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: In counts of positive and negative correlations, only statistically significant ($p < .05$) correlations are tallied.

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

Table 3B: Correlates of Political Support: Religiosity and Libcon

	Support for Democracy Index		Confidence in Political Institutions Index		System Performance Rating Index	
	Religiosity	Libcon	Religiosity	Libcon	Religiosity	Libcon
Austria	-0.09***	-0.06*	0.23***	-0.07**	0.12***	-0.04
Belgium	-0.05*	-0.07**	0.21***	-0.03	0.17***	0.00
Denmark	-0.01	-0.04	0.06*	0.09***	0.02	0.44***
Finland	-0.04	-0.20***	0.23***	0.22***	0.17***	0.38***
France	-0.07**	-0.17***	0.11***	0.12***	0.15***	0.43***
Germany	0.06**	-0.22***	0.33***	0.12***	0.31***	0.13***
Greece	-0.01	-0.08**	0.30***	0.33***	0.16***	0.37***
Iceland	0.00	-0.10**	0.14***	-0.02	0.10**	-0.12***
Ireland	-0.01	-0.05	0.35***	0.20***	0.18***	0.23***
Italy	-0.06*	-0.29***	0.23***	0.02	0.24***	0.44***
Luxembourg	-0.06*	-0.02	0.22***	0.16***	0.15***	0.13***
Netherlands	-0.07**	-0.18***	0.12***	-0.06*	0.17***	-0.05
Norway	0.00	-0.06*	0.04	-0.15***	0.01	-0.13***
Portugal	-0.05	-0.03	0.14***	0.05	0.10***	0.00
Spain	-0.18***	-0.24***	0.23***	0.12***	0.01	-0.22***
Sweden	-0.02	-0.10**	0.09**	0.04	0.06*	0.37***
Switzerland	-0.10***	-0.05	0.16***	0.05	0.08**	-0.04
United Kingdom	0.04	0.01	0.20***	-0.04	0.17***	-0.07*
Australia	-0.01	-0.03	0.14***	0.08**	---	---
Canada	-0.04*	-0.17***	0.11***	0.04	---	---
New Zealand	-0.04	-0.09*	0.13***	-0.06	---	---
United States	-0.01	-0.02	0.13***	0.11***	---	---
# Countries with Positive Correlation	1	0	21	10	15	9
# Countries with Negative Correlation	9	14	0	3	0	4
Full Sample, Weighted	-0.20***	-.13***	.05***	.08***	.09***	.16***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Religiosity is the mean of a question about frequency of religious services attendance (1=more than once a week – 8=never or practically never) and importance of religion in life (very important, rather important, not very important, not at all important), rescaled 0-100 where 100 is maximum religiosity. Libcon is the response to “In political matters, people talk of ‘the left’ and ‘the right.’ How would you place your views on this scale generally speaking (1=Left, 10=Right), rescaled 0-100. In counts of positive and negative correlations, only statistically significant ($p < .05$) correlations are tallied.

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

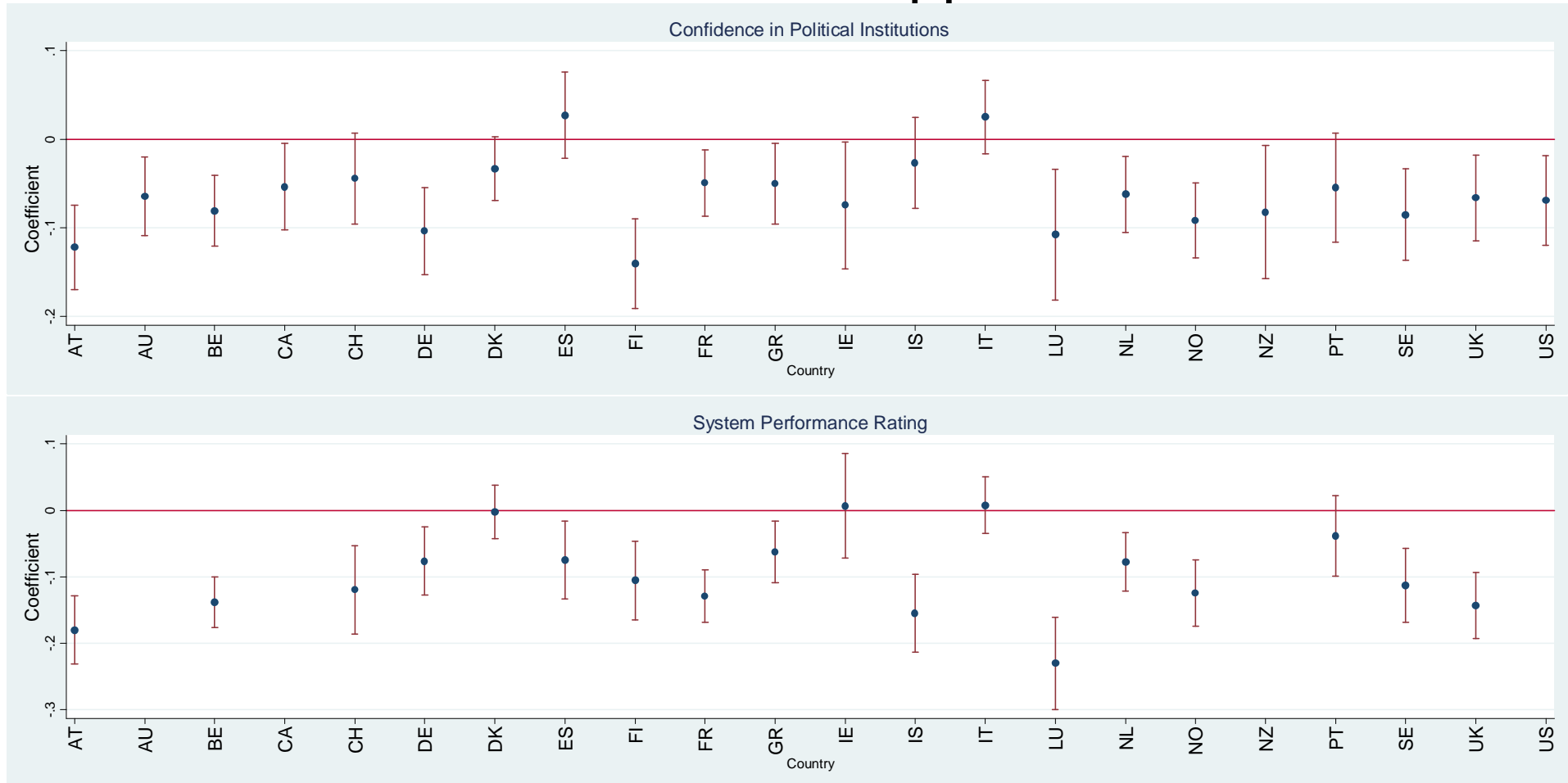
Table 4: Full Sample Multivariate Analysis – WVS & EVS

	Support for Democracy	Confidence in Political Institutions	System Performance Rating
Immigration Attitudes	-0.10*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.09*** (0.02)
Satisfaction with Life	0.04* (0.02)	0.08*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.02)
Pref. for Govt. Responsibility	-0.13 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.10** (0.03)
National Pride	-0.01 (0.01)	0.16*** (0.01)	0.12*** (0.01)
Libcon (Ideology)	-0.09*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.11 (0.06)
Post-materialism	2.28*** (0.35)	-1.12*** (0.23)	-1.73** (0.49)
Tolerance for Income Inequality	0.31* (0.12)	0.14 (0.10)	0.57** (0.15)
Membership	1.23 (0.62)	0.38 (0.23)	-0.51 (0.33)
Religiosity	-0.03* (0.01)	0.07* (0.02)	0.09** (0.02)

Note: Not shown but included in models: controls for country fixed effects and individual political interest, age, education, sex, and personal unemployment. Standard errors, in parentheses, are clustered by country. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Immigration attitudes, life satisfaction, national pride, and libcon are single item measures, all re-scaled 0-100. Preference for government responsibility is the mean of four items – support for government control of business, support for government regulation of firms, belief that government is responsible for providing for citizens, and belief that competition is harmful. The index is re-scaled 0-100, where 100 is maximum preference for government responsibility. Post-materialism is a three point scale derived from the standard battery of questions, where higher scores indicate greater post-materialism. Tolerance for income inequality is a single item asking respondents whether they believe government should do something about income inequality or whether it is necessary to provide incentives for innovation.

Source: World Values Survey 2005-08 and European Values Survey 2008-10.

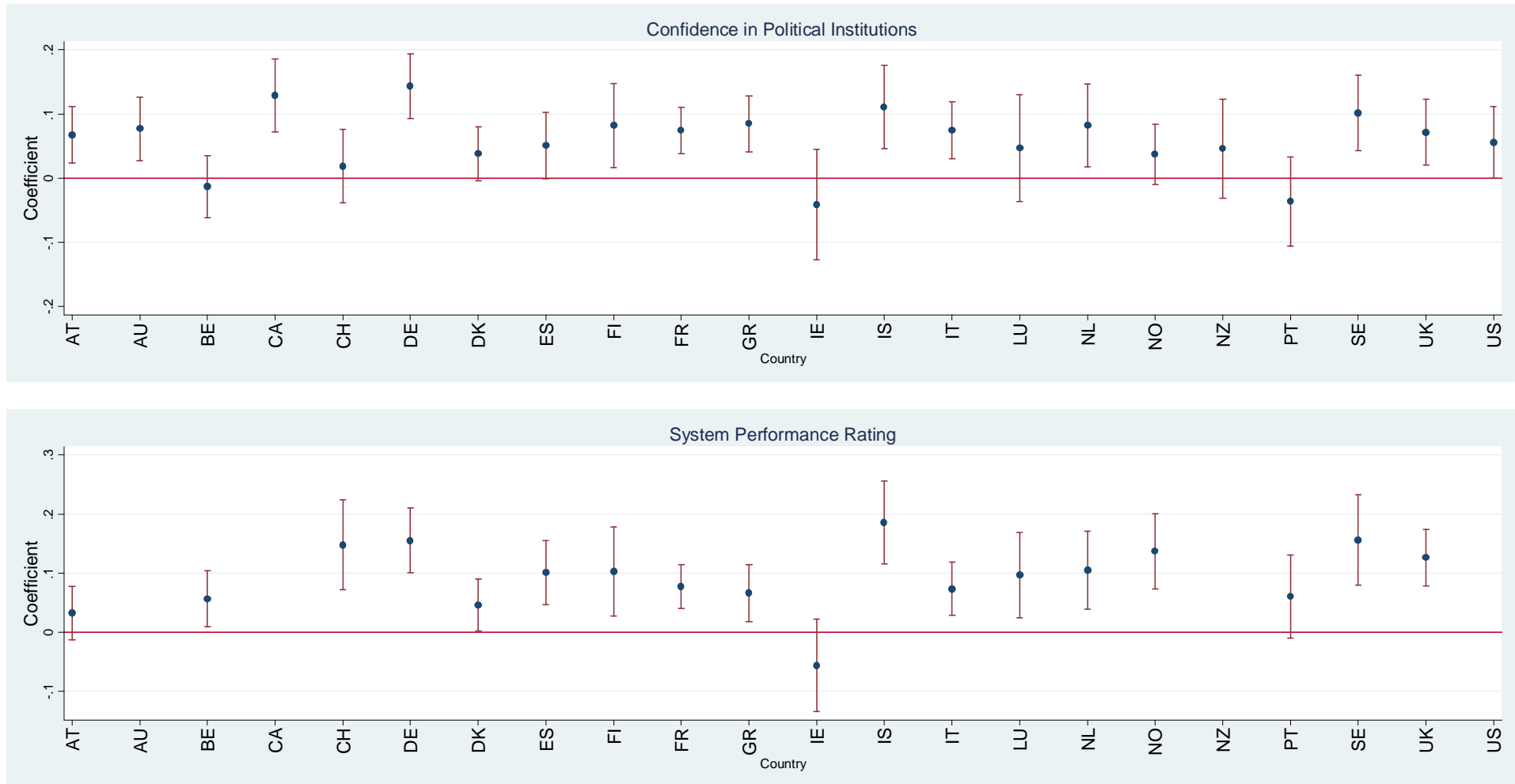
Figure 2: Effect of Immigration Attitudes on Political Support



Note: Plots the coefficient and 90% confidence interval for a regression conducted on each individual country's sample (2004/6 for the Anglo-American countries and 2008/10 for the European countries) of the support measure on the specified covariate.

Source: World Values Survey and European Values Survey most recent data.

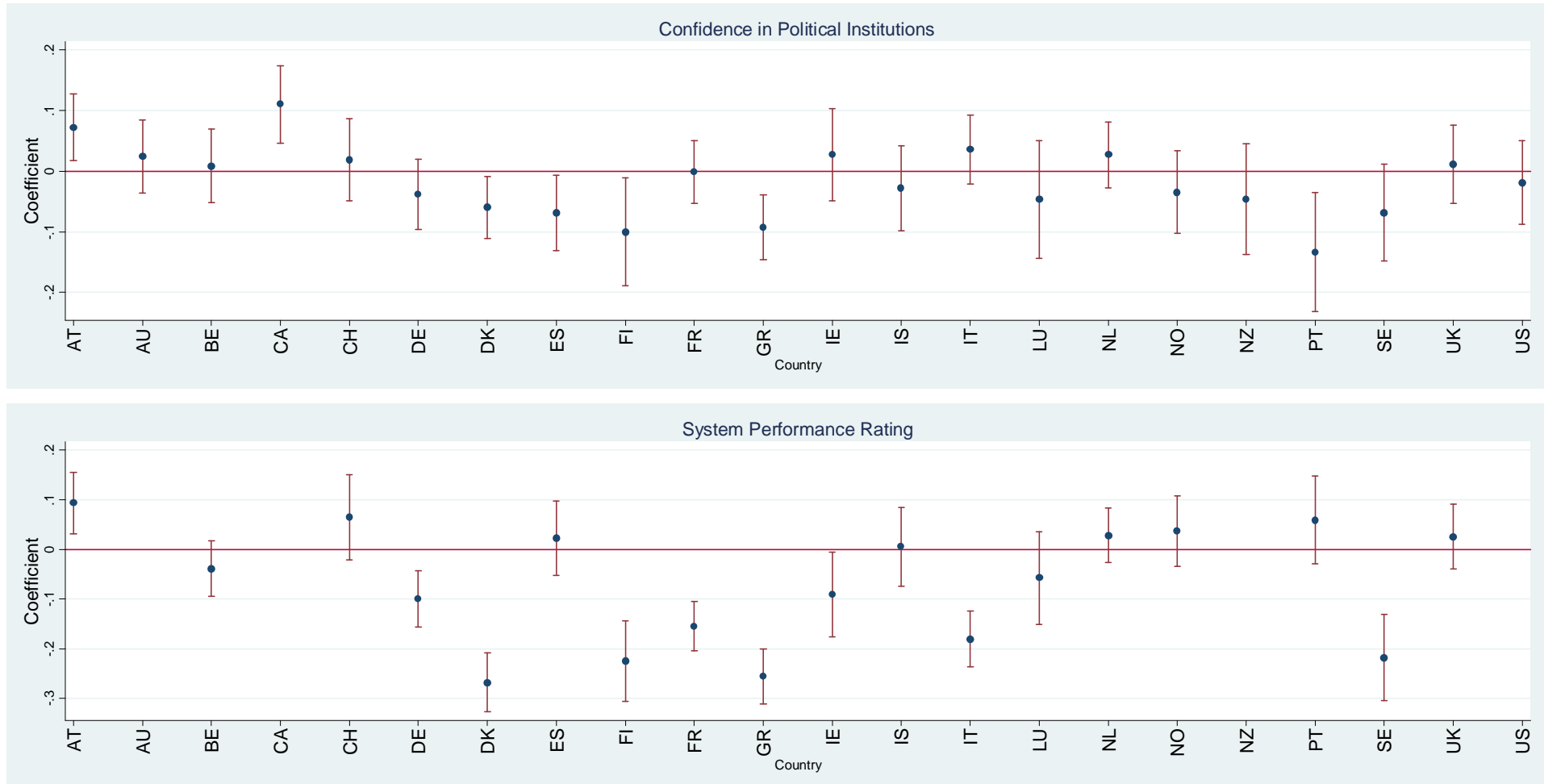
Figure 3: Effect of Life Satisfaction on Political Support



Note: Plots the coefficient and 90% confidence interval for a regression conducted on each individual country's sample (2004/6 for the Anglo-American countries and 2008/10 for the European countries) of the support measure on the specified covariate.

Source: World Values Survey and European Values Survey most recent data.

Figure 4: Effect of Preference for Govt. Responsibility on Political Support



Note: Plots the coefficient and 90% confidence interval for a regression conducted on each individual country's sample (2004/6 for the Anglo-American countries and 2008/10 for the European countries) of the support measure on the specified covariate.

Source: World Values Survey and European Values Survey most recent data.