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Marrying European and Domestic Politics? Investigating the European Dimension of the 2013 Croatian Marriage Referendum using a Value-Based Euroscepticism framework

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Abstract

On 1 December 2013, Croatia voted in a referendum on the constitutional definition of marriage. Whilst recent scholarship highlighted the symbolism nature of the referendum in domestic politics, its European dimension has not been reflected on. Using Leconte's notion of value-based Euroscepticism this article explores the role of European politics in the marriage referendum, using electoral data at the municipal level. As the analysis demonstrates that the referendum, at least partly, was a proactive attempt to halt the Europeanisation of same-sex marriage, the article also sheds light on local resistance to EU's homonationalist politics.

Keywords: Value-based Euroscepticism, LGBT, Same-sex Marriage, Euroscepticism, Referendum, Croatia

Introduction

Five months after Croatia joined the European Union (EU), voters approved a citizen-initiated referendum to constitutionally define marriage as heterosexual matrimony, with campaigners both for and against the initiative tying Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) rights to the EU and a notion of 'Europeanness.' Such link between European Union (EU) and LGBT rights is not new, and has often been highlighted during 'Eastern' enlargement for post-socialist European states (see Slootmaeckers, Touquet and Vermeersch 2016), including during Croatia's accession process. Indeed, whilst Croatia was pressured by the EU to improve its record on the protection of LGBT people during accession processes, especially in the field of discrimination (Badanjak 2014; Kahlina 2015), local LGBT activists used the EU leverage to strengthen their advocacy work (Kahlina 2015; Slootmaeckers and Touquet, 2016), with some politicians instrumentalising relevant issues by asserting the 'Europeanness' of LGBT rights (Vuletić 2013). Despite the fact that the link between the EU and LGBT rights has been acknowledged by both supporters and opponents of LGBT rights (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014), the academic analysis

of the 2013 marriage referendum (see e.g. Glaurdić and Vuković 2016) has paid little to no attention to the European dimension of LGBT politics. Political analysts, on the other hand, did make the link with the fact the Croatia recently joined the EU. They argued that the success of the civic initiative's *U Ime Obitelji* ('In the name of the Family') campaign against same-sex marriage could partly be explained by the initiative's ability to tap into growing disappointment of the Croatian people in the EU, which many blamed for the nation's economic recession (Bilefsky 2013). These claims, however, have never been tested against voting behaviour in the referendum. Whilst our contribution seeks to provide empirical evidence for these political analysts' claims, its main aim is to further recent scholarly debates on the referendum that concluded that the results could be primarily explained by support for the main electoral blocs in the country, with value-based and other factors being secondary (Glaurdić and Vuković 2016). Indeed, we argue that the European dimension of same-sex union politics cannot be ignored for at least two reasons. First, the referendum campaign was initiated at a time in which Croatia formally joined the EU, which raises the question whether the co-occurrence of both historical moments was a coincidence or not. Second, and more importantly, it is undeniable that LGBT issues in Croatia have a European character. Indeed, as already mentioned, as part of Croatia's EU accession process, LGBT rights have increasingly been framed as a European value (Kahlina 2015; Kuhar 2011; 2012; Moss 2014).[1] This was especially the case in the closely related parliamentary debates same-sex partnerships. Indeed, Kuhar (2011) has shown that both supporters and opponents have used a 'Europeanisation' frame in the debates on same-sex partnerships, both before and during accession negotiations. Whilst the idea of an LGBT-tolerant Europe served as an example for those willing to advance LGBT rights, opponents often argued that Croatia should refrain from adopting legislation which goes against Croatian values (Kuhar

[1] It is important to note, however, that LGBT activism precedes the start of Croatia's EU integration process, and that the first same-sex partnership law (2003) was adopted before the start of accession negotiations. We, therefore, do not argue that LGBT politics in Croatia are solely the result of the EU accession process, but rather that the EU has become an important part of LGBT politics in Croatia (see also Kahlina 2015).

2011). Thus, taking this historical and discursive context into account, our analysis highlights the on the international dimension of the referendum.

By doing so, this article also contributes to more general debates on international LGBT politics and its symbolism in the field of European politics. In particular, we seek to add to the recent debates on local resistance against (European) 'homonationalism.' Homonationalism, as a conceptual framework, was developed by Puar (2007; see also Puar 2013) following the observation that nation states are increasingly defined and judged by their gay-friendliness or homophobia. Puar defined homonationalism as 'a facet of modernity and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states, a constitutive and fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the state, capitalism, and sexuality' (Puar 2013, p. 337). Whilst some countries and entities, including the EU, have embraced this historical moment by increasingly using LGBT rights as a symbol for what it means to be modern or even European (see also Ayoub and Paternotte 2014), others, like e.g. Putin-led Russia, have been resisting this development by emphasising an alternative value system based on so-called traditional values. Whilst examples of such resistance to EU's homonationalist politics have been documented in the EU's neighbourhood, e.g. in Ukraine, it can also be found within the boundaries of the EU. Consider for example recent developments in Central and Eastern European (CEE) member states. Although the CEE EU member states have passed several laws regulating LGBT rights (mostly in the field of anti-discrimination) during the period leading up to accession (Kochenov 2006), LGBT rights are said to have only entered the political agenda as a result of international (EU) pressure (Roseneil and Stoilova 2011). Consequently, LGBT rights in some of the new member state became pollicised accession (O'Dwyer 2012; Slootmaeckers and Touquet 2016). Indeed, whereas the pressure for equal LGBT rights was seen as a litmus test for modernity and Europeanness by those supporting the 'civilizing mission' of the EU (Graff 2006), it fuelled anger towards the EU for those who consider the pressure for LGBT equality as a threat to the nation and local culture (Renkin 2009). For

example, in Latvia, the pressure for equal rights for LGBT persons was seen as a direct attack of the so-called international gay lobby on the future of the nation (Mole 2011). In Poland, the Kaczyński government stated at one point that it needed to prevent the 'aggressive promotion of homosexuality' because it felt that 'although Poland may have joined the EU, they will have none of the "loose" attitudes toward sex' (Graff 2006, p. 436). Thus, by analysing the European dimensions of the Croatian marriage referendum, we also analyse resistance to 'European homonationalism,' i.e. the article demonstrates how international LGBT politics can be employed in domestic politics, guiding voting behaviour in a referendum on a policy field seemingly free from international influence.

Whilst some have linked this the opposition to nationalism (see e.g. Mole 2011, 2016), Ayoub (2014) draws attention to 'threat perception.' Doing so, he expanded the nationalism argument by highlighting that domestic opposition to the international promotion of LGBT rights, and thus the homonationalist moment, is mediated by the relative role of religion in the imagining of the nation. He has argued that '[t]hreat perception concerning LGBT norms depends largely on the degree to which the moral authority of religious institutions is tied to the histories of political transition and national identity' (Ayoub 2014, p.357). Thus, in countries where the Church has a considerable role in defining the 'nation' (like in the case of Croatia, see Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers 2015), LGBT rights as promoted by the EU can be perceived as a threat to the nation. Whilst these ideas are indeed valuable, we believe they do not necessarily reflect explicitly enough on the European dimension of LGBT politics. As such, and based on the observation that LGBT issues have seemingly settled themselves on the schism of pro- and anti-EU politics (Mole 2011), we propose the notion of 'value-based Euroscepticism' (Leconte 2014) as an alternative analytical framework for the study of domestic resistance to European homonationalist politics. *Value-based Euroscepticism*, Leconte (2014) argues, is a negative attitude towards the EU fundamental rights policy, which is perceived as potentially infringing on domestic value systems. Distinct from negative attitudes towards EU membership, value-

based Euroscepticism should be defined as 'the subjective perception that, as integration deepens, EU institutions unduly interfere in matters where not only strongly held collective and societal preferences, but more fundamentally value systems are at stake' (Leconte 2014, p. 85), including issues such as the definition of marriage.[2] Although this value-based Euroscepticism might seem unjustified in policy areas outside EU competences, such as the definition of marriage, Leconte (2014, p. 86) continues, 'many Eurosceptics fear that there might be some kind of spillover process where, ultimately, EU legislation in one policy area might have an indirect impact on policy areas within the remit of Member States'. Fears that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights would help to spread alternative understandings of the family are not new in Europe (Leconte 2008). Kopecký and Mudde (2002, p. 315), for example, found that that the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement 'openly expresse[d] fears that the EU will pressure Slovakia to adopt policies such as the legalization of gay marriages.' Although the EU does not actively pressure (candidate) member states to adopt same-sex union policies — the EU has no family law competences —, recent evidence has shown that such spillover effects do exist. With respect to same-sex partnership legislation, Kuhar (2012) has shown that Europeanisation frames act as soft pressure on member states to organise same-sex partnership issues in line with EU standards or trends. Kollman (2009) and Paternotte and Kollman (2013) have also highlighted the role of informal European processes of norm diffusion and elite socialisation in the increased recognition of same-sex unions across the continent.

Thus, it could be expected that the referendum represents, at least partly, a proactive reaction to the EU's fundamental rights policy. Whilst anecdotal evidence supports this hypothesis — a lead campaigner for the referendum, for example, stated: 'There is a feeling that gay marriage and adoption by gays was on the agenda, and this vote was an attempt to show that there is strong

[2] It is important to note that value-based Euroscepticism does not need to align with anti-EU membership attitudes. Although both dimensions of Euroscepticism are certainly correlated, it is quite possible that individuals sceptical of the fundamental rights policy of the EU and its potential domestic impact do not question EU membership. Although this distinction goes in both directions, it is much more likely that individuals opposing EU membership also question the fundamental rights policy of the EU.

opposition to this' (quoted in Bilefsky 2013). However, it is yet to be demonstrated whether the outcome of the referendum was indeed guided by value-based Euroscepticism.

Empirically, we examine the European dimension of the marriage referendum at the level of cities and municipalities, following common practice in referendum research (on marriage referendums see, e.g., Glaurdić and Vuković 2016; McVeigh and Diaz 2009; for other types of referendums see, e.g., Charnysh 2015; Muñoz and Guinjoan 2013). By linking the marriage referendum to the previous (2012) EU referendum and the 2013 European Parliament elections, the article explores whether there is evidence of a relationship between the Croatian marriage referendum and anti-EU politics, and thus whether referendum voting behaviour is associated with value-based Euroscepticism in Croatia. To do so, we have compiled a dataset that combines the results from the 2012 EU accession referendum, the 2013 marriage referendum, and the 2013 European Parliament Elections,[3] and added socio-demographic characteristics of the cities and municipalities using data from the 2011 census data. Due to the fact that aggregate-level data does not allow for drawing conclusions on individual-level behaviour, we deem it important to first establish whether value-based Euroscepticism can contribute to homonegative attitudes. This preliminary analysis is not to determine the role of value-based Euroscepticism in individual voting behaviour, but is a baseline analysis to establish whether there is sufficient evidence suggesting a link between value-based Euroscepticism and attitudes towards homosexuality at the individual level. We do this because we believe that analysing the referendum's aggregate voting behaviour using a value-based Euroscepticism analytical framework would only make sense if such a link would exist at the individual level. In sum, the reader should bear in mind that our results only speak to the aggregate level and cannot and should not be translated to the individual analysis.

[3] These European Union related electoral data is included as a proxy for Euroscepticism. It is beyond the scope of this article to conduct a comparative analysis of the 2012 and 2013 referendums.

To summarise, our contributions to existing scholarship are three-fold.[4] Our most obvious contribution is extending the current debates on the marriage referendum by demonstrating that there were 'European' dimensions to the result. Doing so, we also provide empirical evidence for various claims made by Croatian political analysts regarding the referendum results. Our third contribution, which also relates to more general scholarly debates is our analysis of how international LGBT politics can guide political behaviour in terms of domestic resistance to European 'homonationalism,' using value-based Euroscepticism alternative analytical framework to explain feelings of threats to national values. The latter contribution is particularly salient not only in Croatia, but across new EU member states as well as for understanding LGBT politics in the EU's near neighbourhood.

In the next section, we briefly present the background of the marriage referendum, followed by a discussion of our datasets and the variables used to measure attitudes towards the EU at the individual level and proxies used for value-based Euroscepticism at the municipal level. In the subsequent sections, we present the results of our analyses and discuss the extent to which the framework of value-based Euroscepticism helps explaining the outcome of the marriage referendum.

The 2013 Croatian Marriage Referendum

[4] A potential fourth contribution of our analysis relates to discussions on Euroscepticsm. In recent years, scholars have sought to understand the growing public opposition to the EU, increasingly focussing on the role of social identity attitudes. In these studies, Euroscepticism is explained by a strong identification with their nation (e.g. Carey 2002), xenophobia and opposition to migration (e.g. De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005), and religious intolerance (e.g. Hobolt et al. 2011). Whilst most of these studies focus on the determinants of Euroscepticism, little has been written on how Euroscepticism can contribute to these social identity variables. This article addresses this gap; it does so by analysing to what extent the outcome of the 2013 marriage referendum in Croatia was inspired by a value dimension of Eurosceptic attitudes.

The history of the 2013 Marriage referendum starts in 2010, when a Croatian constitutional amendment was passed that removed the requirement for 50% turnout for referendums. This constitutional change was the result of a widespread believe amongst politicians and scholars a low turnout requirement would be an obstacle for a valid referendum result on EU accession – which would block any further progress towards membership (Podolnjak 2014). Whilst these fears were justified, and the constitutional amendments removing the quorum did allow Croatia to successfully vote for EU accession (with a turnout of less than 44 percent; 65.32 percent voted in favour), it 'indirectly facilitated' the passage of the 2013 marriage referendum (Orsolic Dalessio 2014).

Within a structural context characterised by relaxed requirements for a referendum by citizen petition and faced with Government's plans enact a law to recognise same-sex 'life partnerships' (Barilar and Turčin 2013), the civic initiative *U Ime Obitelji* (In the Name of the Family), led by Željka Markić and with extensive yet indirect support of the Catholic Church[5], collected around 700,000 signatures over a two-week period in May 2013 in support of a referendum on the question: 'Do you support introduction of a provision into the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia to the effect that marriage is a living union of a woman and a man?' (Zenit 2013). The number of signatures crossed the threshold of ten percent of the electorate, necessitating a referendum of which the result would be legally binding. It was the first Croatian referendum held at citizens' request.

Whereas government-initiated referendums appear to provide governments with opportunities for strategic manoeuvring, including the evasion of accountability for difficult decisions (Setälä 2006, p. 712), this citizen-initiated referendum created a precarious situation for the Croatian government. Moreover, the petition for the referendum presented a number of awkward legal questions, particularly whether the constitutionally defined mechanism for a referendum can be

[5] Over 80 percent of Croatian citizens are Catholic, according to the 2011 census. The Catholic Church thus has an influential role in shaping the political and legal order in the 'most Catholic country in Europe' (Perica 2006).

used on issues which may be discriminatory to a group of citizens, contravening constitutional protections of fundamental freedoms (Podolnjak 2014). In November 2013, the month before the referendum was held, the Constitutional Court delivered an opinion that there was no legal impediment for the referendum to proceed. However, the Court also said that a positive result in the referendum should not be detrimental to future developments in rights for same-sex partnerships in accordance with the fact that '[r]espect for and legal protection of each person's private and family life, dignity, reputation shall be guaranteed'.[6] Moreover, a joint statement by legal scholars from the University of Zagreb expressed the opinion that blocking the referendum would have dire consequences for the democratic legitimacy of the country and that approval must be legally binding (as per constitution; Podolnjak 2014).[7]

The campaign leading up to the referendum divided the country. The Prime Minister and President Ivo Josipović, along with left-leaning parties in Croatia urged the electorate to vote against the question in the referendum. Meanwhile, the leader of the opposition, Tomislav Karamarko, his HDZ (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* [Croatian Democratic Union]) colleagues, and other parties from the right said that they supported the constitutional definition of marriage (Beta 2013). Although the referendum was endorsed by religious organisations, and representatives of the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, and Islam, the campaign was framed in terms of democratic will and the protection Croatian values related to marriage and family.[8] Markić described the *U Ime Obitelji* position as follows: 'it is precisely with an opportunity for the citizens to express their view on such an important aspect of the society as marriage, in a most democratic of all procedures – a referendum – that justice will be confirmed as the very

[6] Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (2010), art. 35. This is briefly summarised in Orsolic Dalessio (2014).

[7] The full statement (in Croatian) can be found here: http://www.pravo.unizg.hr/?@=6fkw

[8] Whilst the churches, and the Catholic Church in particular played a significant role in making the referendum resonate with the wider population — for example, it would urge people to vote for the inclusion of the heteronormative definition of marriage in the constitution —, its support in the actual debates on the referendum was much more indirect. Hence, although the influence on religion is an a question worth researching, it is beyond the scope of this particular study, which aims to draw attention to the international dimension of the referendum. See Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers (2015) on how the Church used the referendum to define the Croatian 'nation'.

basis of permanent piece in the Croatian society' (U Ime Obitelji 2013). Although the Catholic Church did not directly campaign, Cardinal Bozanić, Head of the Catholic Church in Croatia, said that elected officials have the duty to represent their citizens, so officials who had come out against the referendum were unfairly discriminating against a group of its citizens (Hina 2014). Cardinal Bozanić also wrote a letter declaring 'Marriage is the only union enabling procreation,' which was read aloud across churches in the country the day after the referendum (Bilefsky 2013). Framing the referendum in terms of Croatian family values further resonates with latent nationalist feelings in Croatia, as the future of the nation would be threatened by the introduction of same-sex marriages (Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers 2015). Although an explicit link to the EU was avoided by the Catholic Church, it was clearly suggested that a (European) threat to the Croatian family, and nation in extension, existed (cf. Ayoub 2014 on perceived threat). This view resonated well with the Croatian population. Indeed, a brief look at personal statements of volunteers on the website of *U Ime Obitelji* further corroborates the importance of 'saving the nation' as a motivation to support the initiative, as they include phrases like: 'A healthy family is the foundation of a healthy society and a stable society guarantees the stable state', 'This is a very important thing for Croatia and it is necessary to involve all. The family is the fundamental unit of society, with no family no people,' and 'saving the marriage and family is the only thing that will rescue the Croatian society from collapsing.'[9] Although not always made explicit, the frequent use of this nationalist rhetoric calls for the protection and preservation of *true Croatian* values, family, and nation from Western (i.e., European) vices, such as same-sex partnerships, which undermine the fundamental unit of the Croatian society (Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers 2015).

On the other side, the opposition (the *Protiv* [Against] campaign) was strongly supported by a number of academicians, human rights organisations, and LGBT groups. The campaign was framed in terms of minority protection and as a dangerous move away from 'European' ideals.

[9] For more personal statements see: http://referendumobraku.uimeobitelji.net/category/volontiram-jer/

President Josipović said: 'A nation is judged by its attitude toward minorities' (Associated Press 2013). One political analyst, Jaroslav Pecnik, noted that the referendum showed that Croatia was not 'mature enough' to be in Europe and that it indicated a fascist turn (Kartus 2013). The major daily newspaper *Jutarnji list* made an editorial decision to oppose the referendum, since it was discriminatory, and would donate banner advertisement space for organisations opposing the vote (Radić 2013). The *Protiv* campaign cautioned that the same-sex marriage referendum would be only the start, and that new citizen-initiated referendums could be used to curb ethnic and other minority group rights. *Protiv* supporters actively tried to extend the campaign against the referendum beyond the LGBT issue, linking it to a more general minority protection discourse (Glasaj Protiv 2013). In similar vein, Vesna Pusić, the Deputy Prime Minister, warned that the referendum was being used as an instrument of discrimination against a minority, and that it would be used in the future against other minorities whether by race, ethnicity, political affiliation, or gender (Hina 2013). She added that everyone is a member of some minority group at some point in their lives. The link between the marriage referendum and general minority rights was further foreshadowed by anti-Cyrillic protests in the eastern city of Vukovar (April 2013) and the campaign of *Stožer za Obranu Hrvatskog Vukovara* [The Committee for the Defence of Croatian Vukovar], launched in November 2013, to collect signatures to call for a referendum to curb minority language rights (Ivanovic 2013a).[10]

Despite the organised opposition by the Croatian Government and a number of civil society actors, the marriage referendum passed with a majority of 66% on 1 December 2013, with a turnout of less than 38%. The result of the referendum did not differ much from those predicted in opinion polls conducted six months before the vote to the referendum itself; support only changed from 55% to 66% (see Žic 2013). The existing literature suggests three reasons for relatively low volatility in marriage referendum voting intentions. First, when partisan cues on

[10] Campaigners managed to collect 680,000 signatures (Ivanovic 2013b). The Government confirmed in July 2014 that the requirement to trigger a referendum had been fulfilled (Ivanovic 2014), though the Constitutional Court subsequently declared the question unconstitutional in August 2014 (Milekic 2014).

referendums are strong, there tends to be predictable patterns (Leduc 2002), and indeed, nearly 86% of HDZ supporters and less than 40% of SDP supporters said that they would vote for the referendum a week before the actual poll (Lukić 2013). Second, preferences for the issue were defined by voters' core beliefs, which tend to be difficult to change (Leduc 2002). Third, campaigns during citizen-initiated referendums may make a difference, but there is little comparative evidence of reversals of voting intention (Bowler and Donovan 2002), though effective campaign mobilisation might affect voter turnout (Leduc 2002).

Additionally, drawing on claims by Croatian commentators in the wake of the marriage referendum result, a number of hypothesis about the voting patterns can be identified, of which the most important ones are summarised here. First, one columnist in *Jutarnji list* reduced the results to a referendum on satisfaction with the current Croatian government, stating: 'This vote is not about marriage or the definition of marriage, this is a referendum against the current government' (quoted in EurActiv 2013). Second, although Serbian Orthodox leaders joined the Catholic Church in supporting the referendum, the minority rights framing by those against the referendum may have found some resonance with the Serb minority in Croatia, especially after the aforementioned 'anti-Cyrillic' protests and petition for a language rights referendum. For example, the tiny village of Negoslavci, near Vukovar, had a vote of 75% against the referendum, which earned it the title of Croatia's 'most tolerant place' by *Jutarnji list*. It has fewer than 1200 inhabitants, who are overwhelmingly Serb. A commentary written after the referendum surmised that the citizens of the village linked the question in the referendum to the ongoing anti-Cyrillic campaign (Patković 2013). The importance of socio-economic woes in the wake of the global economic downturn is connected to a third explanation, which links attitudes towards the EU and economic conditions. As mentioned in the introduction, some analysts believed that advocates for the referendum were able to harness voters' disillusionment with the EU, which they link to the economic downturn in Croatia. Fourth and most importantly to this study, the EU is also connected with 'creeping secularism' in the country, or as a campaigner for the

referendum stated: 'There is a feeling that gay marriage and adoption by gays was on the agenda, and this vote was an attempt to show that there is strong opposition to this' (Bilefsky 2013). In other words, there is a clear suggestion of the presence of a value-based Eurosceptic fear that a spillover process would take place, where the increasing number of same-sex union policies within the EU would indirectly impact the definition of marriage in Croatia (cf. Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Leconte 2008; Leconte 2014). Such feeling could only have been fuelled by reporting on EU discussions on 'mutual recognition' of same-sex partnership across the EU, which the media reported on as the EU forcing Croatia's hand (Palokaj 2013).

The question remains, however, whether this value-based Euroscepticism was indeed reflected in the referendum results. In other words, was Kevin Moss (2014, p. 228) right to remark that: 'the referendum results also showed that the more European (and less Balkan) parts of Croatia were indeed more tolerant'?

The primary objective of this article is to examine municipal-level voting: to see whether contemporary commentaries about voting patterns during the referendum can be verified or refuted, especially the link between support for the EU and support for constitutional protection of heterosexual marriage. Since the data are only disaggregated at the municipal level, we are unable to ascertain individual motives for voting behaviour, but we can establish how voting varied amongst communities across the country.

Data and Analyses

Individual-level Data and Analysis

Since value-based Euroscepticism is an individual-level phenomenon, we first sought to establish whether there is sufficient evidence suggesting a link between value-based Euroscepticism and attitudes towards homosexuality at the individual level. To do this we

analysed the most recent social attitudes survey conducted in Croatia that contained questions about attitudes towards homosexuality as well as an acceptable operationalization of value-based Euroscepticism — in the case of Croatia, this is the 2008 European Values Survey (EVS). We used respondents' answer to the question 'Do you justify homosexuality?' (Q68H) as the dependent variable. The variable is originally coded as a ten-point Likert-scale, but due to its highly skewed distribution, we have decided to dichotomise the variable. We recoded the variable as 1 'Homosexuality is not justified' for the answers ranging from 1 to 5, and 0 'Homosexuality is justified' for the answers 6 to 10. The explanatory variable of interest is whether respondents fear EU integration would lead Croatia to 'lose [its] national identity / culture' (Q73B). This variable is negatively coded as a ten-point scale, with 1 as 'very much afraid that the EU will cause a loss of national identity/culture' and 10 as 'not afraid at all that EU will cause a loss of national identity'. Thus a higher score in this variable represents less value-based Euroscepticism.

These two variables allow us to analyses whether there is a link in Croatia between value-based Euroscepticism and attitudes towards homosexuality. Using a binary logistic (logit) regression, and adding controls for gender, age, education, and religious affiliation,[11] we find evidence of such a relationship, *ceteris paribus*. We find that the odds of justifying homosexuality decreases by 8.5% for an increase of one point in the level of fear that the EU will cause a loss of national identity, *ceteris paribus*. The regression results are reported in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

[11] We use religious affiliation as measure for religion to maintain consistency with the aggregate-level analysis. However, we also conducted the same analysis using 'attendance of religious services' as a measure for religiosity. Although not reported here, the findings of both analyses were similar and the link between value-based Euroscepticism and homophobia was found in both analyses.

Although this individual data dates back to 2008, we believe it to be a strong indicator for the relevance of our current study. Since 2008, LGBT rights have only become more closely connected to the idea of Europe (Ayoub and Paternotte 2014), and more prominent in the EU Enlargement process (Slootmaeckers and Touquet 2016). Hence, it is only reasonable to believe that this link between value-based Euroscepticism and homonegativity has become stronger as well. Moreover, in the course of the Croatian accession process, the issue of fundamental rights reached its peak after 2009, when the chapter on fundamental rights finally opened for negotiations, in which LGBT was one of the topics. And more recently, the issue same-sex marriage (often seen as a European, foreign-imposed agenda) has been framed as a threat to the Croatian family, and in extension to the Croatian nation (cf. supra, but also see Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers 2015).

With this initial confirmation that a link between value-based Euroscepticism and homonegativity exists at the individual level in Croatia, we now turn to the main focus of the article, which seeks to explore whether the 2013 marriage referendum can (partly) be interpreted as a proxy for value-based Euroscepticism. To do this, we analyse municipal-level electoral data to see whether we observe similar patterns.

Municipal-level Data

Our examination of the relationship between attitudes towards the EU and voting in the constitutional referendum of 2013 uses cities and municipalities (henceforth also shortened as municipalities) as units of analysis. We obtained electoral data from detailed results available on the State Electoral Commission of the Republic of Croatia and the demographic data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics. Results for three recent polls were included in the analysis: the Croatian Marriage Referendum (December 2013); the Croatian EU referendum (January 2012); and the first Croatian European Parliament election (April 2013). Since we want to establish

factors explaining the level of support for the marriage referendum, we excluded the 2014 European election and the 2011 parliamentary election, since the former occurred after the marriage referendum, and the latter occurred long before the referendum and with different constituency boundaries.[12]

In addition to the referendum data, we also used data from the 2013 European Parliament to gauge the right-left ideological tendencies of municipalities and cities. Given the complex party landscape of Croatia, with many small parties, we focused in our analysis on the main right-leaning party HDZ, and the main left-leaning party SDP (*Socijaldemokratska Partija Hrvatske* [Social Democratic Party of Croatia]). As a proxy for the average ideological orientation of a municipality, we used the difference of the vote-shares (in percentages) in the 2013 European election between HDZ and SDP, with a positive figure representing higher levels of electoral support for the mainstream (right-wing) nationalist HDZ.[13]

Using 2011 Croatian census data at the city/municipality level, we included controls for: gender; age; education; and religiosity. These control variables were selected based on previous research on individuals' attitudes towards homosexuality. Previous individual-level comparative research on the Western Balkans has shown that levels of homonegativity tend to be lower for women compared with men; those with higher levels of education; and those with lower levels of religiosity (Brajdić Vuković and Štulhofer 2012, p. 224). Based on the above-mentioned suggestions that the referendum tapped into economic grievances and on minority issues in general, we included additional controls for unemployment and ethnicity, which have been found to have significant effects on voting patterns for the marriage referendum (Glaurdić and Vuković 2016). Gender was expressed as a percentage of females in the locale. The mean age of the active population (> 15 years old) was calculated using group midpoints (age is categorised

[12] The two referendums and European Parliament election take Croatia as a single constituency, whilst parliamentary elections are run in ten different Croatian constituencies, one constituency for Diaspora, and one constituency for national minorities.

[13] We also use the relative vote-share between SDP and HDZ as a proxy for government support, since the former are the main ruling party and the latter are the main opposition party.

in five-year intervals in the census data, with the oldest category being 95 years of age and above). We calculated the percentage of active populations that completed higher education as a measure for average education in a municipality. To gauge the mean religiosity within a municipality, we used the percentage of census respondents who said that they were not religious or atheists. Unemployment is measured as the percentage of unemployed people aged 15 or older. This percentage excludes economically inactive people, e.g. students and retired people. Finally, we included the percentage of census respondents within a municipality who said that they were Serbs since they are the largest national minority in Croatia (with 4.36% of the population).

The descriptive statistics for all variables are summarised in Table 2.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Municipal-level Analysis

We conduct a path analysis in order to examine the extent to which the outcome of the marriage referendum can be explained by attitudes towards the EU. We selected this technique over regular multivariate regression for two reasons: the structure of our data; and the complexity of our causal model. As our dataset is compiled by combining census data and electoral data from three different events, the variables in our model are temporally sequenced, and there is no feedback between events. A dynamic path model allows the explicit modelling of such a data structure. The temporal sequence of the variables, furthermore, supports the causality assumptions of path analysis (Tacq 1997). A second reason why we prefer path analysis to regular multivariate regression analysis is the complex causal structure of our variables. Path analysis allows for modelling and testing intermediate causal links, and detecting spurious relationships. While multivariate regression can control for variables, reducing the problem of

spuriousness and intermediate effects, the temporal sequence of our variables suggests that explicitly modelling these indirect paths is warranted. We estimate the path model using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

To estimate the model, we use the *Lavaan* (v0.5-16) R package (Rosseel 2012). We estimated our final model by starting with a model of the electoral data (see Figure 1), where we control for all socio-demographic variables of the census data. To improve the goodness-of-fit of this initial model, we deleted non-significant paths from the model stepwise (backwards modelling), whilst keeping an eye on the modification indices in order to ensure that we did not wrongly omit some of the non-significant paths. To test the indirect effects, we follow the recommendation to use bootstrapped standard errors (see e.g. Preacher and Hayes 2008). Bootstrapping standard errors has the additional advantage of overcoming potential violation of the normality assumption of the sampling distribution of the estimates of proportion-based variables (Moore and McCabe 2005).

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

Results of the municipal-level analysis

Figure 2 presents the final model of our analyses with standardised coefficients for all statistically significant paths. Looking at the model, it becomes immediately clear that we did not find any effect for the gender balance of the community on any of our endogenous variables. While gender is often cited as one of the main explanations of individuals' behaviour, we believe that the lack of a gender effect in this study is due to our unit of analysis. By studying the aggregate level, we believe the individual differences between men and women are cancelled out by a gender composition of the community. This is because the variation in gender balance

across municipalities is small: the proportion of women in a municipality is on average 50.75% (stand. dev. = 1.198) and ranges from 45.26% to 54.00% (see Table 1).

Although the outcome of the marriage referendum is the main variable of interest, for the sake of completeness, we will discuss the results of our analysis step-by-step, from left to right. Thus, although we start our discussion with by a brief discussion of our results for the EU referendum variables and work our way through the path model all the way to the outcome of the marriage referendum, i.e. the proportion of 'yes' votes, such description should not be interpreted from a comparative angle.[14] In fact, we provide such detailed description to enable a full understanding of the path model and the complexity of indirect effects of different variables on the marriage referendum outcome.

First, regarding the turnout for the EU referendum in January 2012, we find that in municipalities with a lower age average, a higher percentage of higher educated people, less unemployed people, and a lower proportion of Serbs the turnout for the EU referendum tends to be higher (Table 3). When it comes to the percentage of Eurosceptic votes (that is, votes against EU accession), we find that communities with fewer unemployed people, fewer Serbs, and fewer non-religious people were more likely to have voted against EU accession. In addition to these socio-demographic effects, we find that the percentage of 'no' votes tend to be higher in municipalities with a higher turnout for the EU referendum. These results, however, do not necessarily reflect the relation between these characteristics and votes against EU accession at the individual level. This difference between individual level and aggregate level effects is clearly illustrated by the effects of education and age on Euroscepticism. While older and lesser educated people tend to say no to EU accession at the individual level (Štulhofer 2006; Tverdova and Anderson 2004), we do not find such an effect on the aggregate level.

[14] Indeed, the aim of this article is not to explain the outcome of the EU referendum. Rather we seek to shed light on the link between the EU referendum and the marriage referendum. In order to test this relationship accurately, it is important to understand the determinants for both referendum variables in order to be assured that our conclusions are not an attribute of spurious relationships. Moreover, the step-by-step presentation follows common practice for the reporting of path models.

The above aggregate-level analysis also provides an interesting result regarding religion, whereby communities with more religious people (i.e., Catholics) tended to have higher levels of Eurosceptic votes. This is surprising, given that the Catholic Church urged voters to support accession in the 2012 referendum (Vatican Insider 2012), and Catholics are comparatively more likely to have positive attitudes towards European integration in other countries (Nelsen, Guth & Fraser 2001). Perica (2006) found two dominant strands in Croatian Church framings of accession, both of which are pro-EU: *clericalists* see Croatian Catholicism as special, and as a bulwark against the 'East', which should be rewarded with membership; and *liberals* see Croatia as being a modern country with strong European credentials which would be furthered through accession. This being the case, one would expect that support for EU membership is not determined by religiosity. Nevertheless, it has been observed that Croatian Church played and still plays a balancing act of being a 'pro-EU Eurosceptic,' taking critical positions on the foreign ownership of real estate (by Cardinal Bozanić) and the delay of accession tied to war-crimes prosecution (Perica 2006), as well as some of EU values (see Pavasovic Trost and Slootmaeckers 2015). Indeed, drawing on the case of the Polish Catholic Church during accession in Poland, Guerra (2015) argues that the Croatian Church (and its privileged domestic position) might be threatened by EU-triggered modernisation/democratisation processes. The Catholic Church may see itself in the role of a defender against secularism from the 'outside', and take a Eurosceptic position to defend national sovereignty and values (as it did during the marriage referendum). Thus, whilst it would be reasonable to interpret the municipal-level relationship between religiosity and Eurosceptic vote in 2012 as a consequence of the Church's 'mixed signals,' we remain cautious of this interpretation as individual-level effects do not always play out at the aggregate level. Alternatively, the finding could reflect a spurious relationship due to a variable omitted from our analysis.

Turning to the vote difference between the main opposition party (HDZ) and main government party (SDP) during the European Parliament elections, we find that communities that had a

higher turnout for the EU referendum were more likely to vote in favour of the current governing party. This finding combined with the positive relation between the proportion of votes against EU accession and the votes in favour of the opposition supports Anderson's (1998) notion that when citizens have little knowledge or experience with the EU, they use the national context as a proxy for the EU. Studying Croatia, Babarović, Čilić Burušić, and Burušić (2011) found that support for the then HDZ-led government was positively associated with attitudes towards EU accession. Although the authors urged for a cautious interpretation of their results, our finding — that communities which tended to vote against EU accession are more inclined to vote for the opposition party (i.e., HDZ; since 2011 the government is SDP-led)— suggests that Anderson's (1998) 'support for government' hypothesis is credible within the Croatian context. The negative relationship between turnout for the EU referendum and opposition votes, furthermore, corroborates this notion, since the turnout variable, which in the model is controlled for Euroscepticism, can be interpreted as a proxy for favourable attitudes towards the EU. The vote difference between the opposition and government party is further explained by the average age, as well as the proportion of Serbs, unemployed people and non-religious people in a municipality, with the opposition party receiving more votes in those communities with, on average, an older population, more unemployed people, a smaller proportion of Serbs, and less non-religious people.

[FIGURE 2 HERE]

The turnout for the 2013 marriage referendum in 2013 is positively related to the turnout for the EU referendum. This effect can easily be understood as a path dependency. The marriage referendum turnout also tends to be higher in municipalities with a higher percentage of people with higher education and a lower proportion of religious people. While the effect of religion is easy to explain (the Croatian Catholic Church strongly opposes same-sex marriage, and the civic

initiative had strong ties with the Church in Croatia), the effect of higher education is less obvious. One explanation could be that higher educated people were more aware of the consequences of the referendum, and were, therefore, more likely to go and vote. One has to be very cautious, though, when interpreting the effect in those terms, as we cannot be certain that this individualistic effect also operates at the aggregate level. Another, more aggregate level explanation would be that higher educated people tend to live in places where there is a higher turnout, like in urban areas, i.e. there is a possibility that the relationship between the proportion of educated people and the marriage referendum turnout is spurious. However, we lack the data to test this aggregate-level interpretation. Additionally, we find that municipalities with a higher percentage against EU accession and with more votes for HDZ generally have a higher turnout for the marriage referendum. From this, we can conclude that more Eurosceptic municipalities tend to have a higher turnout for the referendum. Again, one has to be cautious when interpreting the effect of the votes for the opposition party, though. Although we have earlier said that the votes for the opposition party can indeed be seen as a proxy for Euroscepticism, the effect of this variable on other variables might follow other causes, for it can also point to the different between a vote for a more right-wing versus a more left-wing party, or between a conservative and progressive party. So, while we do find an effect for the opposition vote on the turnout of the marriage referendum, the causes of this effect remain unclear.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

Finally, the outcome of the marriage referendum is very well explained by our model (R^2= .846; see Table 3). As the percentage of 'yes' votes for the marriage referendum is the variable of main interest, we decomposed the effects of all variables into direct and indirect effects (see Table 3). If we look at the effects of the socio-demographic variables on the proportion of 'yes' votes, we first find that there is no direct effect of the average age of a municipality. So while age is a

strong predictor for homophobia at the individual level, we do not find such an effect (at least not directly) at the aggregate level. This, however, does not mean that there is no effect at all of the average age on the referendum result, for age has a positive indirect effect (b = .681; ß .148) on the proportion of yes votes via the 'EU turnout' and the difference between shares of the main opposition and government party in the European Parliament elections. For the other socio-demographic variables, we find a rather large and strong effect of the percentage of non-religious people (both directly and indirectly). We also find a negative effect of the proportion of Serbs on the outcome of the marriage referendum. While the effect of the proportion of unemployed people is positive, with the indirect path being the strongest component, the direct effect of education is negative (the combined indirect effect of education is not significant as both indirect paths cancel each other out). Taking all this together, we find that the proportion of votes in favour of the constitutional definition of marriage tends to be higher in those municipalities with a higher average age, more unemployed people, and a smaller proportion of higher education people, Serbs, and non-religious people.

Turning to the variables of main interest, if the outcome of the referendum was partly guided by value-based Euroscepticism, we would expect a significant effect of our EU variables (vote against EU accession and outcome for EU referendum) on the percentage of yes votes for the marriage referendum. At the same time, we would expect this effect to be smaller than some other dimensions that dominated the debates prior to the referendum (i.e. religiosity and moral orientation, conservative versus progressive, and the ethnic minority frames). Our results indeed support these hypotheses. We find confirmation that the outcome of the marriage referendum is partly guided by value-based Euroscepticism, at least at the aggregate level. First, we find positive indirect and direct effects of Eurosceptic votes in the EU referendum on the outcome of the marriage referendum. In municipalities with a higher proportion of votes against EU accession the proportion of yes votes in the marriage referendum tends to be higher (ß = .111; $p < .001$). This significant direct effect supports the hypothesis that the marriage

referendum tapped into disenchantment with the EU. A finding which is further corroborated by the indirect effect via the difference in vote share of the main opposition and government parties, which as we have shown above can be interpreted as a proxy for Euroscepticism (ß= .153; $p < .001$).[15] The European dimension of the referendum outcome, albeit secondary, is also confirmed by the strong effect of Europhile measure (EU referendum turnout) on the outcome of the marriage referendum. In municipalities with a higher EU turnout, which here is interpreted as a proxy for pro-EU attitudes, the proportion of votes in favour of the constitutional definition of marriage tends to be lower (ß = - .543; $p < .001$). Our interpretation of the EU referendum turnout and 'yes' votes for the marriage referendum as a link between pro-EU attitudes and the marriage referendum is further supported by our finding that the indirect effect of the EU turnout via its Eurosceptic paths (via votes against EU accession) is not significant (see Table 3).

In sum, our model is very successful in explaining the outcome of the marriage referendum at the municipal level. We find four main dimensions that influenced the proportion of yes votes in a community: religious, minority, domestic politics, and EU dimensions. We found that in communities where there are proportionally less non-religious people, i.e. more religious communities, the support for the constitutional definition of marriage was generally higher. This result is not surprising given the origin of the civic initiative and the support it gained from the Church. Secondly, we find that the tactic of the *protiv* campaign to make the referendum about minority rights, rather than just LGBT rights, found resonance since our results show that in community with a larger proportion of the Serb minority the support for the marriage referendum was generally lower. Thirdly, our analyses support the claim of some political analysts that the referendum was able to tap into the growing disenchantment with the EU and

[15] When interpreting the effects of the difference in vote share of the opposition and government parties, one has to remain cautious as this variable also reflects Euroscepticism when included in a path containing an EU variable. On its own, however, the variable reflects the difference between more right-wing conservative, and more left-wing progressive parties, especially when not included in path including a Eurosceptic measure. Therefore, we are inclined to interpret the positive direct and indirect effects of the difference in vote share as a consequence of this conservative-progressive dimension.

thus value-based Euroscepticism. We find that support for the EU (measured here as turnout for the EU referendum) and scepticism towards the EU (measured as votes against EU accession) are respectably negatively and positively related to the proportion of 'yes' votes in the marriage referendum. These effects become stronger when we take into account the difference in votes for the opposition and government parties, which as part of the EU related paths can be interpreted as a proxy for disenchantment with the EU. Finally, in line with the work of Glaurdić and Vuković (2016), who argued that the referendum can be explained by support for the main electoral block in Croatia, we identified governmental support as the fourth dimension influencing the marriage referendum outcome. Thus, we find partial support for the statement of the *Jutarnji list* commentator that 'This vote is not about marriage or the definition of marriage, this is a referendum against the current government' (quoted in EurActiv 2013). Municipalities, where the governmental parties did better than the oppositional parties in the 2013 EP elections, showed less support for the marriage referendum.

Conclusion

We started this analysis with the modest goal to empirically test claims made in the immediate aftermath of the 2013 Croatian marriage referendum. However, by doing so the article also extends our understanding of the proxy politics of the referendum by adding a European dimension. Indeed, whereas Glaurdić and Vuković (2016) focussed their analysis on the domestic proxy politics of the referendum, we argued that the topic of the referendum has an undeniable international and European characteristic and failing to recognise the European politics of same-sex marriage would provide only a partial analysis of the referendum outcome. This is especially the case if one considers that the referendum campaign started around the time of Croatia's accession to the EU, and when the actors within the EU were engaged in a

discussion on the freedom of movement of LGBT couples — and thus of mutual recognition of same-sex partnerships. In order to analyse the European dimension of the referendum, we employed Leconte's (2014) notion of value-based Euroscepticism as analytical framework, as a bridge between the domestic and European political dimensions of the marriage vote. The value-based Euroscepticism framework suggests that the EU's fundamental rights policy sparked a fear that closer European integration would alter and threaten the fundamental values of the nation. Thus, the increasing recognition of same-sex marriages and the EU's creeping homonationalism lead the feeling that Croatia's membership of the EU would put the same-sex marriage on the political agenda. That being the case, the referendum could then be interpreted as a pre-emptive measure to block any spillover effect from EU membership on Croatian family values.

Empirically, we analysed the politics of the 2013 marriage referendum in two stages. First, we established at the individual level that a link between value-based Euroscepticism and attitudes towards homosexuality is indeed present in Croatia. Whilst we believe this preliminary analysis was a prerequisite for analysing the referendum's aggregate voting behaviour using a value-based Euroscepticism analytical framework —such analysis would only makes sense if such a link would exist at the individual level — this initial analysis should not be mistaken for an invitation to extrapolate our results to the individual level. Indeed, the reader should bear in mind that the results of our main analysis only speak to the aggregate level and cannot and should not be translated to the individual level. Whilst the lack of individual data is indeed an important limitation of our study — which leaves other vital research questions unanswered (e.g., relating individual-level church attendance or age (particularly younger cohorts) to value-based Euroscepticism) —, the analysis of the aggregate level, nevertheless, still provides important results that provide insights in the different dimensions that guided the outcome of the referendum, as well as insights in the interaction between European and domestic LGBT politics.

Indeed, our study discerned four distinct, yet related, factors that explain the level of support in municipalities for the marriage referendum. The first two dimensions are not a surprise giving the campaign leading up to the referendum. Both the religious character of the citizens' initiative and it support from the Church, and the efforts of the *protiv* campaign to frame the referendum in terms of minority rights (and not just about LGBT) are reflected in the results of the referendum. We found that less religious and more ethnically diverse communities, i.e. having a larger Serb minority, showed less support for the introduction of a constitutional definition of marriage. The two other main dimensions support the notion that LGBT rights have increasingly become a symbolic political issue. In line with the previous analyses of Glaurdić and Vuković (2016), we found strong effects of domestic politics variables, i.e. support for the ruling government. However, our results also indicate that the European context is an important, albeit secondary, part of the explanation of the outcome of the marriage referendum. In municipalities/cities where the main governing party did better than the main opposition party in the 2013 European Parliament elections, and where there were larger turnout and less anti-EU votes in the 2012 referendum, showed less support for the marriage referendum. Based on these results — and guided by the existing link between EU and homonegativity at the individual level —, we conclude that the referendum, at least partly, can be interpreted as an expression of value-based Euroscepticism and a proactive attempt to halt the Europeanisation of same-sex marriage.

Our analysis, thus, has shown support for the idea that European politics cannot be discarded in Croatian same-sex marriage debates, and there is sufficient evidence to conclude that value-based Euroscepticism played a role during the referendum, albeit as a secondary mechanism. And while we cannot draw conclusions about the role of value-based Euroscepticism in individual voting behaviour, our findings have several implications for future research. First, it provides an analytical framework to understand and research the politics of more recent same-sex marriage referendums in other countries. Second, and potentially more importantly, our

findings show the value of including value-based Euroscepticism in the analysis of (political) homophobia in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. Our findings, thus, contribute to and expand the existing theoretical lenses on the homophobic backlashes in new EU member state by bridging the arguments that rely on nationalism (Mole 2011) or perceived threat (Ayoub 2014). Indeed, whereas value-based Euroscepticism can combine elements of both the nationalism and perceived threat arguments, it explicitly places the discussion within the international context of the EU's fundamental rights policies. As such, our analysis contributes to the overall scholarship of EU enlargement process in candidate (or new) member states, especially in relation to the domestic reaction to and rejection of the EU's self-portrait fundamental rights identity.

Moreover, the case of Croatia also provides an interesting comparative case to further explore the link between religion/religiosity and Euroscepticism more generally (Nelsen, Guth & Fraser 2001). Previous studies have concluded that micro-level features of religion are not sufficient to explain levels of Euroscepticism. Thus, it may be more instructive to focus on the macro-level role of religious institutions like the Catholic Church in how they can enter political debates and ally themselves with Eurosceptic parties (see, for example, Guerra 2012 on Poland). As outlined above, the Croatian Catholic Church plays a fine balancing act as a 'pro-EU Eurosceptic' pushing for the country's return to European Christendom whilst remaining cynical of some of the Union's policies (Perica 2006), and/or more vehemently resisting threats to national values and sovereignty (cf. Ayoub 2014) in the face of a secular supra-national structure (Guerra 2015). Value-based Euroscepticism, then, proves to be a valuable analytical framework to analyse the balancing act of national religious institutions, especially in a comparative context including other new and candidate EU member states, such as Serbia and its Orthodox Church.

Finally, we believe the limitations of our analysis, which only presents an initial exploration of the role of value-based Euroscepticism in the marriage referendum, should be considered as an inspiration for avenues for further research. Indeed, the precise (individual-level) link between

value-based Euroscepticism and homophobic politics and voting behaviour, for example, requires further scholarly attention. Thus, In order to fully understand the European dimension of same-sex marriage referendums, in Croatia and elsewhere, additional qualitative analyses are needed to better understand individual-level motivations to support or oppose such initiatives.

This being said, we want to conclude our article with a remark on the political consequences of the referendum in Croatia. Despite the marriage referendum results, Croatian political elites have nonetheless been able to preserve the country's homonationalist and European credentials (see also Moss 2014). A few months after the December 2013 poll, the Croatian parliament adopted new legislation defining registered 'life partnerships' for same-sex couples. Although *U Ime Obitelji* tried to use the referendum results to block this new law, the law passed by an overwhelming majority (89 for; 16 against) in parliament. Despite the fact that *HDZ* showed some support for the 2013 marriage referendum, a majority of its parliamentary members voted in favour of the life partnership bill. The marriage referendum results led to more symbolic rather than substantive changes in LGBT rights, but worryingly, foreshadow how linking traditionalist and Eurosceptic perspectives can be mobilised effectively against the Croatian (and European) status quo.

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Table 1: Binary logistic regression of Croatian attitudes towards the justification of homosexuality

	Justification of homosexuality	
	B	Exp(B)
gender (reference: male)	.762*** (.180)	2.142
Religious affiliation (reference: not practicing religion)	- .806*** (.204)	.446
education (reference: middle education)	***	
lower education	- 1.232*** (.352)	.292
higher education	.614** (.190)	1.848
Age (reference: 30-49 years)	***	
15-29	.447* (.209)	1.563
50+	- .606** (.216)	.545
Fear of losing national identity / culture (negatively coded)	- .089** (.026)	1.093
Constant	- 2.245*** (.300)	.106
Nagelkerke R^2	.142	

*** p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; SE in parentheses. The dependent variable is whether homosexuality can be justified (0=justified, 1=not justified). -2LL = 909.479; chi^2 = 12.016 (Df = 8) p = .150.**

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Min-max
Electoral Data				
% Yes votes marriage ref.	74,31	15.058	77.05	25.00 – 98.13
Turnout marriage ref.	32.70	8.938	32.47	3.03 – 73.20
% No votes EU ref.	34.68	8.337	34.16	15.57 – 63.24
Turnout EU ref.	44.45	8.992	45.62	6.18 – 82.32
Opposition – Government votes (EP Elec.)	6.96	24.523	4.97	-83.71 – 77.44
Control Variables				
% Non-religious	2.20	2.581	1.23	0.00 – 16.66
% Higher educated	8.83	5.037	7.26	0.88 – 29.56
Average age	51.06	2.459	50.67	45.87 – 66.85
% Unemployed	8.04	2.814	7.728	0.26 – 17.59
% Serbs	5.64	14.402	0.910	0.00 – 97.19
% Female	50.75	1.198	50.77	45.26 – 54.00

Table 3: Results (unstandardised and standardised [in parentheses] coefficients) of the path analysis.

	EU Referendum turnout	Votes against EU accession	Opposition – Government votes (EP elections)	Marriage referendum Turnout	Yes votes marriage referendum		
					Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects
Age (average of adults [15+])	- .686*** (- .204)		1.284*** (.141)			.687*** (.123)	.687*** (.123)
% Higher educated people	.349*** (.196)			.631*** (.357)	- .485*** (- .164)	.133 (.045)	- .352*** (- .119)
% Unemployed people	- .901*** (-.282)	- .447*** (- .151)	2.169*** (.250)		.483*** (.091)	.814*** (.153)	1.297 *** (.245)
% Serbs	- .282*** (- .452)	- .085** (- .147)	- .922*** (- .545)		- .272*** (- .262)	- .128*** (- .123)	- .399*** (- .385)
% Non-religious people		-.548*** (- .169)	- 3.008*** (- .3118)	- .323* (- .094)	- 2.217*** (- .383)	- 1.189*** (- .205)	- 3.406 *** (- .589)
EU Referendum turnout ('12)		.166** (.179)	- 1.212*** (- .447)	.497*** (.501)	- .543*** (- .327)	.018 (.011)	- .525*** (- .316)
Votes against EU accession ('12)			.638*** (.218)	.223*** (.208)	.199*** (.111)	.274*** (.153)	.476*** (.265)
Opposition – Government votes (EP elections '13)				.214*** (.586)	.148*** (.241)	.107*** (.175)	.255*** (.417)
Marriage referendum Turnout ('13)					.501*** (.299)	/	.501*** (.299)
R^2	.505	.143	.466	.677		.846	

*** p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; significant levels are based on bootstrapped standard errors (1000 draws).**
Goodness-of-fit: Chi^2 = 2527.981 (Df = 35; p < 001); CFI = .997; TLI = .987;
RMSEA = .042 (90% confidence interval: .005 – .072); SRMR = .014

Figure 1: Starting model for SEM analyses (control variables omitted).

Figure 2: Final Path model with standardised path coefficients, with bold lines representing effects of main interested and dotted lines for control effects.

Note: Goodness-of-fit: Chi^2 = 2527.981 (Df = 35; p < 001); CFI = .997; TLI = .987;
RMSEA = .042 (90% confidence interval: .005 – .072); SRMR = .014