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Public Support for Climate Policies in a Context of Low Politicisation: Evidence from Italy

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Abstract

Climate change is a major political challenge worldwide. However, political efforts to address it do not always receive support from the population. Drawing on data from a novel survey, this paper examines the determinants of public support for eight different types of climate policy. We focus on Italy, a country in which the issue of climate change has so far received limited attention on the political agenda. We analyse three key explanatory factors: what citizens think (political ideology), what they have (economic situation), and where they live (rural or urban areas, and perceived exposure to climate-related risks in their neighbourhood). Our results suggest that all three factors are relevant in explaining Italians' support for climate policies. Most importantly, their relevance varies depending on the specific type of policy under consideration and its level of politicisation.

1. Introduction

Public opinion on climate change is generally considered an umbrella concept encompassing at least four dimensions: belief in climate change, personal concern, pro-environmental behaviour and support for climate policy (Shwom et al., 2015). The factors influencing the first three dimensions have been extensively studied, often from a psychological perspective. Surprisingly, however, much less is known about public attitudes towards government action and climate policy preferences (Fairbrother, 2022). Understanding citizens' policy preferences on climate change is crucial for at least two reasons. First, public support for climate policies is essential for their successful implementation, as they aim to induce behavioural change among various actors, including companies and individuals. Second, unpopular green policies may deter politicians from proposing or adopting them, especially when re-election or voter backlash is a concern.

This article aims to identify the factors that influence public support for different climate policies in Italy. While previous research has mostly been restricted to a small number of policy instruments, or to a specific type of policy (usually carbon taxes: Rhodes, 2017), we look at eight different climate policies, including taxes, subsidies,

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bans/regulations and public investments. We thus add to the existing literature by examining the kinds of climate policy people prefer and whether the socio-political factors that correlate with public support (or opposition) depend on the specific type of policy under consideration.

After reviewing the explanatory factors commonly cited in the literature, we propose three fundamental sets of determinants of climate policy preferences: what people think (political ideology), what citizens have (economic situation), and where they live (urban or rural areas, and perceived exposure to climate-related risks in their neighbourhood). We rely on public opinion data from a survey on 'Climate Change and Eco-Social-Growth Divides', administered by YouGov in December 2022 (Ferrera et al. 2023). The analysis focuses on Italy, which stands out as a particularly well-suited case for studying climate policy preferences. Contrary to what happens in other broadly studied countries like the US, climate change and environmental issues in Italy show relatively low salience and have been scarcely politicised until recently (Ladini and Biancalana, 2022). In other words, in the Italian context, climate change is likely perceived as a valence rather than a positional issue. Therefore, factors other than ideological ones may also influence public opinion towards climate policies, which is exactly what this paper investigates.
The article is structured as follows. In section 2 we discuss and classify different types of policy to tackle climate change. Section 3 reviews previous literature on the determinants of public support for climate policies, highlighting the three fundamental socio-political divides on the basis of which we develop our hypotheses. Section 4 introduces the data and method. Section 5 presents the empirical results, while section 6 concludes and proposes avenues for future research.

2. Climate policy proposals: taxes, subsidies, regulations and bans

This article analyses climate policy preferences in Italy and explores the underlying determinants driving support or opposition towards different policy measures. To do this, it is crucial to first develop an analytical framework for categorising climate policies. We draw upon existing typologies of public policy instruments to effectively differentiate between distinct types of climate policy and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive analysis of public attitudes towards them. The first typology distinguishes between 'price-type' and 'quantity-type' policy instruments (Sivonen, 2023). Price-type instruments, such as subsidies and taxes, try to incentivize or disincentivize certain behaviours by affecting prices, while quantity-type mechanisms, such as regulations and bans, are designed to control quantities of pollution or production. Price-type policies usually prompt more support or opposition than quantity-type instruments because the effects of the former, in the form of economic costs or gains, tend to be more visible for citizens (Sivonen, 2023). Another method of categorising climate policy proposals is to consider their degree of coercion, as suggested by Drews and van den Bergh (2016). This framework differentiates between 'pull' and 'push' measures. Pull (or rewarding) instruments (for example subsidies) are less coercive and aim to foster specific actions, whereas push (or punishing) instruments such as taxes are more coercive and try to discourage certain behaviours. The former are considered a more effective way to change

people's behaviour than the latter, which impose more restrictions on individual freedom and tend to be less popular.

Borrowing from these typologies, we can classify the different policy proposals included in our analysis as shown in Table 1 (for more details on the survey items see section 4).

Table 1. Classification of climate policy proposals

Policy proposal	Type	Degree of coercion
Tax on flying	Price-type	Push
Subsidies for renewable energy	Price-type	Pull
Tax on fossil fuels	Price-type	Push
Vehicle efficiency regulation	Quantity-type	Pull
Banning energy-inefficient appliances	Quantity-type	Push
Aid for clean energy in low-income countries	Price-type	Pull
Subsidies for energy efficiency of private dwellings	Price-type	Pull
Nuclear power plants	Quantity-type	Pull

Source: own elaboration.

We have two main expectations regarding climate policy preferences. First, we anticipate finding variations in public support, depending on the type of policy and its degree of coercion. We predict that price-type measures will arouse more support or opposition than quantity-type proposals, and that pull instruments will be preferred over push instruments. More specifically:

> H1: We expect that, on a scale from less to more support, the different policy proposals will rank in the following order: taxation (price-type push), bans (quantity-type push), regulations (quantity-type pull), and subsidies (price-type pull).

Moreover, we expect the drivers of public support for climate policies to vary depending on the specific type of policy at stake. In the next section, we delve deeper into the primary factors influencing climate policy preferences and discuss how we expect their effect to change based on the type of policy.

3. Socio-political divides and support for climate policies

Previous research has considered a wide range of factors in explaining public support for climate policy. For an overview of the key predictors used in the literature, see McCright et al. (2016). We propose to organise the determinants of climate policy preferences into three fundamental socio-political divides arising from three essential questions: what people *think*, what people *have* and where people *live*.

3.1. What people think: political ideology

By 'what people think', we refer to their political ideology, which plays a pivotal role in shaping citizens' policy preferences. Ideology is one of the most widely used predictors in explaining public attitudes to climate change (McCright et al., 2016). Previous research shows that individuals with leftist ideology (or that identify with a left-wing party) report stronger environmentalist attitudes than those on the right (Dunlap and McCright, 2008). For example, compared to right-wingers, left-leaning individuals express more concern about the environment (Fairbrother, 2016) and show lower levels of climate change scepticism (Häkkinen and Akrami, 2014).

Previous research on the relationship between political ideology and climate change attitudes faces two main limitations: a US-centric focus and a primary emphasis on environmental attitudes rather than policy preferences. While the US demonstrates a significant ideological divide on climate change views (Dunlap and McCright, 2008), recent studies question the generalizability of these findings (Fairbrother, 2022). Cross-national research shows varying levels of politicisation of climate change, with stronger ideological effects in the US compared to 24 other countries (Hornsey et al., 2018). In Europe, while ideology influences attitudes towards climate change in Western nations, its impact is weaker or non-existent in Central and Eastern Europe (McCright et al., 2016). Overall, the correlation between left-leaning ideology and pro-environment attitudes varies globally (Fairbrother, 2016).

In the Italian political arena, climate change is a relatively low-salience, unpolarised issue (Biancalana and Ladini, 2022). The literature acknowledges that the effect of political ideology on public attitudes towards climate change is less pronounced in Italy compared to the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries (Biancalana and Ladini, 2022). However, previous studies have found that climate change concern in Italy is strongly influenced by political ideology (Lewis et al., 2019). Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate whether ideological inclinations, which appear to shape environmental attitudes, also inform environmental policy preferences. Consequently, we posit the following hypothesis:

> H2a: Individuals on the political left show greater support for climate policies compared to individuals on the political right.

Previous research on climate policy preferences indicates that ideology exerts an indirect influence on public support for climate policies through individuals' values and worldviews (Dietz et al., 2007). It is widely assumed that political ideology encompasses a wide range of more specific beliefs and values. Two different dimensions underlying ideological positions on the left-right spectrum are commonly identified in the literature (see for example de Vries et al., 2013): an economic dimension that structures citizens' opinions on the role of the state in the economy (free market economy vs state intervention), and a (socio-)cultural dimension rooted in value-based and identitarian issues (liberal vs conservative attitudes towards immigration, civil liberties and societal values). Individuals' positions on both the economic and the cultural ideological dimensions have been shown to have an independent impact on support for government action on climate change (Crawley, 2021).

Regarding the economic dimension, numerous studies have linked support for a free-market economy with lower concern for environmental risks (Lewandowsky et al., 2013) or less support for ambitious climate change measures (Dreyer and Walker, 2013). For instance, Dreyer and Walker (2013) found that economically liberal individuals were less inclined to endorse carbon pricing policies proposed by the Australian federal government. This association is intuitive: proponents of laissez-faire economic policies typically oppose government intervention, including climate change action.

With regard to the cultural dimension, previous research has found that conservative individuals are less likely to support environmental action compared to those expressing liberal attitudes on socio-cultural issues. For instance, authoritarianism and exclusionary views towards particular groups such as minorities or women are associated with higher climate scepticism and lower levels of support for environmental policy (Crawley, 2023).

Based on these considerations, we put forward the following expectations regarding the economic and cultural dimensions of political ideology:

> H2b: Individuals who favour state intervention in the economy show greater support for climate policies compared to proponents of market liberalism.
>
> H2c: Individuals with liberal attitudes on the cultural dimension show greater support for climate policies compared to culturally conservative individuals.

Given the enduring influence of ideology on individuals' political views, we anticipate that its effect will be consistent across all climate policy proposals, irrespective of the specific type of instrument. Instead, the effect of ideology is likely to vary depending on the degree of politicisation of each proposal. Therefore, *we expect political ideology to be particularly relevant in predicting preferences for policies that have gained salience in the Italian political arena*, such as fuel taxes (given the increase in fuel prices after the outbreak of the Ukrainian war); subsidies for energy efficiency in private dwellings (given the politicisation of 'Superbonus 110', a generous tax incentive for energy-efficient house renovations launched as a flagship measure by Movimento 5 Stelle, strongly opposed and then repealed by the current right-wing government); vehicle efficiency regulation (given the domestic politicisation of the recent EU ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035); or nuclear power, which has been a polarising issue in the Italian political debate ever since the 1980s (Ceri, 1988). Economic and cultural dimensions of ideology, as tested in hypotheses H2b and H2c, are expected to exhibit similar patterns, as they underlie ideological positions along the left-right spectrum (de Vries et al., 2013).

3.2. What people have: economic situation

Material resources and self-interest are recognised as pivotal factors shaping public opinion on policies involving the redistribution of resources. Approaches emphasising self-interest often portray individuals as utility-maximising rational actors that prioritise individual cost-benefit analyses, along the lines of classic *homo economicus* theory (Kangas, 1997).

Material resources and self-interest are also considered an important factor in explaining variation in public attitudes towards climate change. Previous studies have

linked wealth and support for environmental protection both at the macro-level (countries) and at the micro-level (individuals). At the macro-level, a large number of cross-national studies have detected a strong positive correlation between economic development and environmental concern (Franzen and Vogl, 2013; Kemmelmeier et al., 2002). Enhanced public support for environmental protection in affluent nations aligns with Inglehart's thesis on postmaterialism (Inglehart, 1995). This thesis posits that the rise of pro-environmentalism in economically advanced societies stems from a shift from material to 'post-material' concerns among individuals who have fulfilled their primary basic needs. However, the post-materialism thesis has faced criticism from researchers who question the validity of studies associating pro-environmentalism with national wealth (Clark and Carlisle, 2020). Indeed, in contrast to the so-called 'affluence hypothesis', research has found that public concern and people's willingness to pay for fighting climate change are actually higher in less affluent nations (Fairbrother, 2013; André et al., 2024).

At the individual level, findings regarding the relationship between income and views on climate change have demonstrated greater consistency. Most empirical studies indicate that higher income correlates with increased concern about climate change (Franzen and Vogl, 2013), a greater willingness to incur costs to protect the environment (Kemmelmeier et al., 2002), and stronger support for government environmental spending (Clark and Carlisle, 2020). Additionally, individuals with higher incomes tend to hold more favourable attitudes towards climate policy (Dietz et al., 2007).

The literature proposes two mechanisms to explain why individuals with higher incomes tend to be more supportive of climate policy. First, consistently with the post-materialism argument, affluent individuals may have fewer concerns about their economic situation, allowing them more time and resources to focus on issues such as environmental protection. Second, certain climate policies, such as increases in fuel taxes, can have adverse effects on personal finances. This is likely to activate utilitarian cost-benefit reasoning, particularly among economically vulnerable social groups. In relative terms, fuel taxes imply lower costs for wealthier individuals, who are likely to be less concerned about bearing higher petrol prices in exchange for the anticipated future intangible benefits of green policies. Conversely, low-income individuals may simply perceive that they cannot afford the additional expenses (Rhodes, 2017). We therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

> H3: Individuals with higher income show greater support for climate policies compared to individuals with lower income.

Since people are more likely to recognize their own economic self-interest when the personal costs and benefits of the policy are more evident (Chong et al., 2001), *we expect individuals' economic status to be especially relevant in predicting support or opposition to price-type policy instruments (taxes and subsidies)*; that is, policies with a direct impact on personal finances. Economic conditions are likely to have a weaker or no influence on support for policies that do not impose direct economic burdens on households, such as government investments in nuclear power plants or certain regulations primarily affecting businesses. Additionally, the anticipated effects may fluctuate depending on the degree of visibility of the associated costs and benefits, as well as the distributive implications of these policies in the specific Italian context.

3.3. Where people live: rural-urban divide and perceived risk exposure

The area of residence is another key factor in the literature on environmental attitudes, notably the rural-urban divide. Rural residents often have a utilitarian view of nature (Armstrong and Stedman, 2019). Economic ties to extractive industry, agriculture or farming typically align with limited concern for environmental degradation, and with the prioritisation of shorter-term tangible benefits such as income and employment. In contrast, urban residents tend to hold more pro-environmental attitudes due to their idealisation of nature as leisure spaces or to exposure to air pollution in large cities (Armstrong and Stedman, 2019).

The latter argument is also present in previous research on support for specific climate policies. Urban residents consistently show higher support for carbon taxes than their suburban or rural counterparts. This support aligns with their greater exposure to road transport pollution (Muhammad et al., 2021). Conversely, rural residents tend to oppose fiscal measures impacting fuel prices due to reliance on private transportation (Rhodes et al., 2017). Therefore, we expect that:

> H4a**:** Individuals living in urban areas show greater support for climate policies compared to individuals living in rural areas.

More specifically, *we expect this relationship to be especially strong for policies that directly affect petrol prices, as in the case of fossil fuel tax* (Rhodes et al., 2017). We also anticipate a less consistent effect of the rural-urban divide on all other policies, based on findings from empirical research that included measures beyond the carbon tax (Kitt et al., 2021).

Living in air-polluted areas such as cities is not the only geographical factor influencing environmental attitudes and support for certain climate measures. Together with poor air quality, the literature has highlighted the importance of exposure to other risks associated with climate change. Notably, experiencing extreme weather events has been widely cited as a determinant in attitudes towards climate change (Konisky et al., 2016). For example, the seminal study by Konisky et al. (2016) demonstrated that populations in the USA who had experienced events such as extreme heat, droughts or floods were more likely to express concern about climate change.

Studies examining the influence of risk exposure on support for specific climate policies are scarcer than those analysing its impact on general attitudes towards climate change. Furthermore, the results of these studies are inconclusive (Drews et al., 2016). Nonetheless, a positive association between experiencing floods and support for climate change mitigation has been observed. For instance, Demski et al. (2017) investigated a major flood in the UK and found that direct experience of the disaster not only heightened the salience of climate change and perceived risk but also increased support for mitigation policies. Taking these findings into account, we propose the following hypothesis regarding the impact of exposure to air pollution and extreme weather events:

> H4b: Individuals reporting to live in neighbourhoods affected by air pollution or extreme weather events show greater support for climate policies compared to individuals not affected by these circumstances.

Overall, *we expect these two factors to have a cross-cutting impact on all policies*. However, regarding poor air quality, we anticipate that it will be particularly relevant for

support of fossil fuel taxes. This type of pollution is primarily attributed to cars (Muhammad et al., 2021), and measures discouraging the use of combustion engine vehicles could therefore be viewed favourably by urban residents.

As discussed in each of the three preceding subsections, we expect to find variation in the effect of the different explanatory factors depending on the type of climate policy. Some factors, such as ideology, potentially shape people's general predispositions, and are thus susceptible to having a cross-cutting effect on all policy proposals. Factors related to economic conditions, by contrast, are likely to be more important in the case of policies implying direct costs or gains, that is, price-type instruments, while plausibly having a weaker or no effect in the case of regulatory policies with less obvious distributive implications, i.e., quantity-type instruments (Chong et al., 2001). Our main expectations in this regard are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Expected variation in the effect of the predictors based on the type of policy

Predictor	Type of policy	More support
Ideology	All; greater effect on salient, divisive policies	Left
Ideology (Economic)	All; greater effect on salient, divisive policies	Pro-State intervention
Ideology (Cultural)	All; greater effect on salient, divisive policies	Liberal
Income	Price-type policies, especially push instruments	Higher income
Urban-rural	All; greater effect on push/price-type policies, especially fossil fuel taxes	Urban
Air pollution	All; greater effect on push/price-type policies, especially fossil fuel taxes	Exposed

Source: own elaboration.

4. Data and Methods

To inspect the determinants of preferences for climate change policies in Italy we use data from an original survey on 'Climate Change and Eco-Social-Growth Divides', which was administered by YouGov on behalf of a research team from the University of Milan (Ferrera et al., 2023). The interviews were conducted between 1st and 9th December, 2022, via CAWI methodology (computer-assisted web interviews) across seven European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden. Each national sample included approximately 1,500 respondents, who were selected using a quota sample design so as to be representative of each country's population in terms of gender, age (18–34, 35–54, 55+), education (lower secondary or less, upper secondary, tertiary), and macro-area of residence (NUTS-1). Given the scope of this article, the empirical analyses presented below are based on the Italian sample.

The dependent variable in the statistical models comes from a survey question that focused on preferences for eight different types of climate change policy. The wording of the question is as follows:

> How much are you in favour or against each of the following policy proposals to fight climate change?

1. A tax on flying (increasing ticket prices)

2. Subsidies for renewable energy
3. A national tax on fossil fuels, such as oil, gas and coal (increasing gasoline prices)
4. A vehicle efficiency regulation that requires vehicles to be significantly more fuel efficient by the year 2035
5. Banning the sale of cheap but energy-inefficient household appliances
6. A contribution to a global climate fund to finance clean energy in low-income countries
7. Subsidies to increase the energy efficiency of private dwellings
8. Investing in nuclear power plants

Responses are given on a scale ranging from 0 ('strongly against') to 10 ('strongly in favour'). The number of missing answers in the Italian sample varies from 63 (subsidies for renewable energy) to 166 (nuclear power) out of a total of 1,524 respondents.

The analyses include three sets of independent variables corresponding to the socio-political divides outlined in the previous section. Political orientations ('what people think') are gauged through three variables. The first assesses respondents' ideological stance on a left-right scale from 0 to 10, categorised into six groups: left (0-1), centre-left (2-4), centre (5), centre-right (6-8) and right (9-10), with a residual category for those not placing themselves on the scale. Positions on the economic dimension are operationalized by averaging responses to two questions, both scaled 0-10: 'To what extent are you in favour or against State intervention in the economy?' and 'To what extent are you in favour or against wealth redistribution?', and creating categories of 'pro-market' (0-4.5), 'neutral' (5), and 'pro-State' (5.5-10), with missing values grouped separately. Similarly, cultural orientations are approximated using attitudes towards same-sex marriage (To what extent are you in favour or against same-sex marriage?) and immigration (To what extent are you in favour or against restrictive policies on immigration?). In the latter case we reverse the scale so as to have those fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration at '0' and those fully against at '10'. We then create categories of 'conservative-nationalist' (0-4.5), 'neutral' (5), and 'liberal-cosmopolitan' (5.5-10), with missing values again grouped separately.

Second, we measure 'what people have' (economic conditions) through a question on subjective perception of the economic situation. The responses are those commonly used in cross-national surveys such as the European Social Survey. Based on these, we construct a categorical variable distinguishing between those who 'find it (very) difficult on present income', those 'coping on present income' and those 'living comfortably on present income'; we group 'prefer not to say' and 'don't know' answers in a separate residual category. The survey does not include any objective measure of respondents' income.

Third, the last set of independent variables relating to 'where people live' includes proxies for geographical factors possibly influencing preferences towards climate policies. The first variable distinguishes between respondents who declared they lived in a 'large town', in a 'small or mid-size town' or in a 'rural area or village'. We also use two binary variables that directly gauge people's perceived exposure to risks associated with climate change: the first takes value 1 for respondents who reported that their neighbourhood was 'very much' or 'extremely' affected by air pollution over the last 12

months; the second equals 1 for those living in areas they perceived as having been 'very much' or 'extremely' affected by extreme weather (floods, droughts, wildfires, etc.).

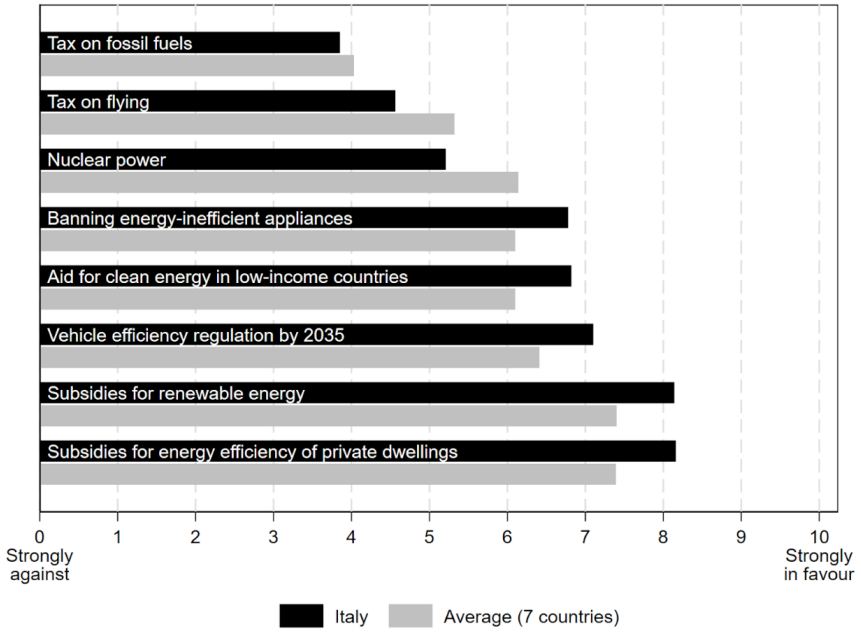
We analyse the impact of the above-mentioned determinants of climate policy preferences using eight linear regression models, one for each policy considered. These models sequentially include controls and the three sets of independent variables, both separately and together (results from stepwise regressions are reported in the Appendix). In the following section, we present results from full models encompassing all independent variables. Due to the high collinearity between political determinants ('what people think'), we conduct two separate regressions: one incorporating general ideological self-placement and another including economic and cultural political orientations. All models control for gender, age and education level, and a dummy that equals 1 for respondents who live in a household with at least one child, as having children translates into more support for climate policies (Muhammad et al., 2021). As well as socio-demographic characteristics, we also control for political factors that are known to have a positive influence on policy preferences: interest in politics (a dummy taking value 1 for those who declared they were 'very much' or 'quite' interested in politics), and trust in politicians (0-10 scale)[1]. Moreover, we run sensitivity checks by including fixed effects for Italian macro-regions (North-West, North-East, Centre, South and islands) to account for unobserved heterogeneity linked to socio-economic disparities and administrative capacity across regions. Table A1 in the Appendix displays the summary statistics of all variables included in the analyses.

5. Empirical results

We begin by examining respondents' preferences for the eight different climate policies. Figure 1 illustrates average support in Italy (represented by black bars) compared to the mean across all seven countries surveyed (grey bars). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, policies imposing higher costs on citizens – such as tax policies – are generally the least favoured across the board, scoring less than 5 on the 0-10 scale in Italy. Conversely, pull/price-type policies – namely subsidies – are overwhelmingly the most popular instruments. Other policies fall somewhere in between. Notably, the disparity between support for taxes and subsidies is more pronounced in Italy compared to the average across the seven countries: Italians exhibit below-average support for tax policies (and investments in nuclear power plants), while displaying above-average support for all other policy proposals.

[1] We consider 'trust in politicians' as a control variable because we believe its influence on support for climate policies has already been extensively analysed (Fairbrother, 2016; Kitt et al., 2021). Additionally, while the literature strongly establishes that trust in policymakers increases the acceptance of their legislative work, this finding provides limited insight into how this trust is formed. Therefore, we prefer to focus on other variables that underlie the foundations of policy preferences, such as ideology or economic and geographic factors, which may also determine the level of trust in politicians (Algan et al., 2017; Foster and Frieden, 2017).

Figure 1. Support for climate policy proposals in Italy and on average across the seven countries included in the survey



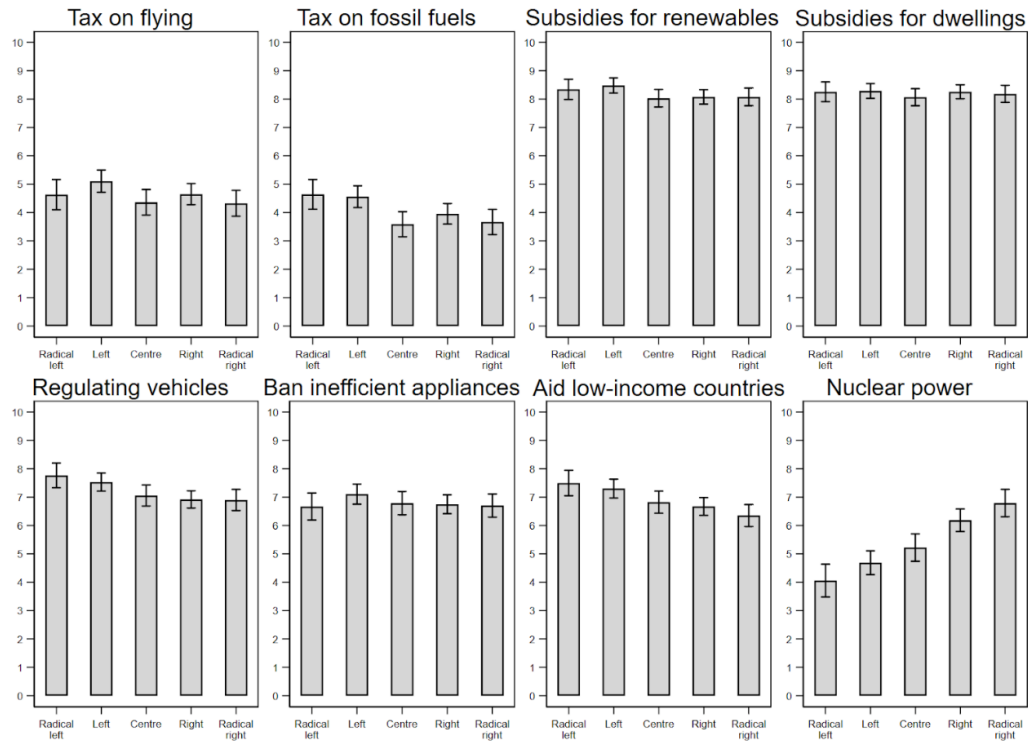
Source: own elaboration.

Next, we shift our focus to examining the factors influencing climate change policy preferences in Italy. The complete regression models can be found in Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix. Tables A4-A11 present, for each of the eight dependent variables under consideration, the models in which we incrementally added sets of independent variables. To facilitate interpretation, we offer a graphical representation of the results by plotting the linear prediction of support for the eight policies across various categories of the main independent variables of interest (Figures 2-5, based on the full regression models).

Overall, all three sets of drivers outlined in the third section – political ideology, economic conditions, and geographic factors – matter in explaining Italians' support for climate policies. However, most relevant to the scope of this article, they matter to varying degrees depending on the specific type of policy under consideration. In other words, both the relative importance and the direction of the effects of these explanatory factors fluctuate based on the characteristics of different climate change policies.

To begin with, ideology seems to be relevant only for more contentious policy proposals, as depicted in Figure 2 and detailed in Table A2. Instead of finding a positive association between leftist ideological self-placement and support for climate policies across all types of policy instruments (as postulated in H2a), we observe that left-leaning individuals show greater support than centrist and right-leaning respondents for some specific policies. Notably, the effect of ideology is evident regarding push/price-type policies (especially fossil fuels tax), aids to finance clean energy in low-income countries, and vehicle efficiency regulation.

Figure 2. Predicted support for eight different climate policy proposals (0-10 scale) depending on respondents' self-placement on the left-right ideological scale (95% confidence intervals)

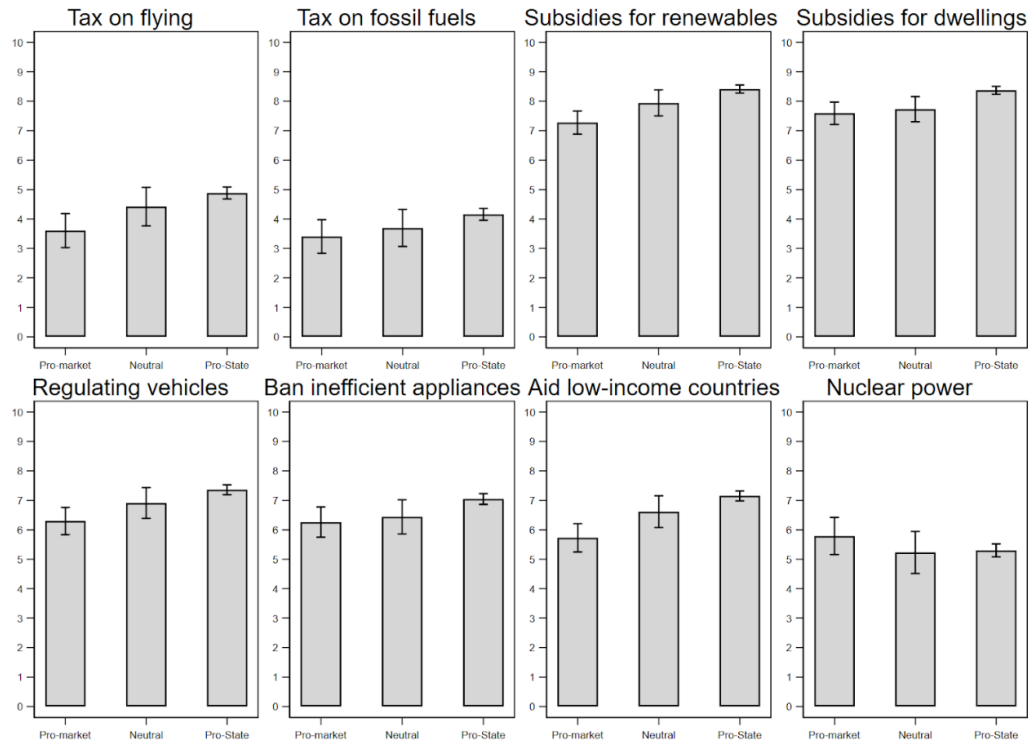


Source: own elaboration. Note: Linear predictions based on regression models shown in Table A2 (Appendix).

As anticipated in section 3, the latter association is plausibly contingent upon the domestic politicisation of the European Commission's recent proposal to ensure that all new cars and vans registered in Europe will be zero-emission by 2035. Italian centrist and centre-left parties, together with the *Movimento 5 Stelle*, endorsed the proposed regulation in the European Parliament. Conversely, right-wing parties (*Lega*, *Forza Italia* and *Fratelli d'Italia*) voted against it and opposed the proposal, as evidenced by statements made by Minister of Infrastructures Matteo Salvini (*Lega*), which refer to the regulation as 'yet another folly in the name of green fanaticism', and by Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy Adolfo Urso, who, alongside Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (*Fratelli d'Italia*), expressed concerns about potential harm to the automotive industry due to the regulation.

Ideology exhibits the strongest explanatory power concerning investments in nuclear plants, whose support increases considerably from left to right. Once again, this may be idiosyncratic to the Italian context. Nuclear power plants in Italy were effectively halted after a referendum held in 1987, shortly after the Chernobyl disaster (Ceri, 1988), and since then they have faced opposition from (radical) left parties and the Greens. In more recent times, however, right-wing parties and governments (including the current government led by Meloni) have committed to restarting nuclear energy production (Standish, 2009).

Figure 3. Predicted support for eight different climate policy proposals (0-10 scale) depending on respondents' economic political orientation (95% confidence intervals)

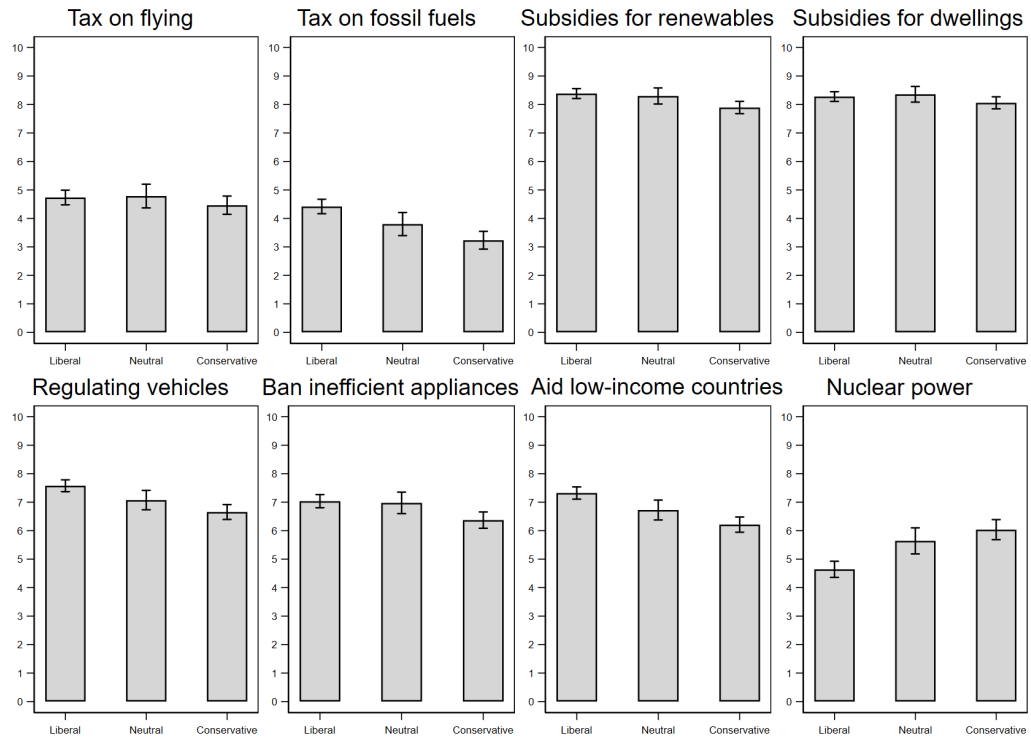


Source: own elaboration. Note: Linear predictions based on regression models shown in Table A3 (Appendix).

As shown in Figures 3 and 4 (also depicted in Table A3 in the Appendix), respondents' economic and cultural political orientations seem to matter more than the general left-right ideological position in explaining Italians' support for climate policies. Individuals with liberal inclinations on the cultural dimension (Figure 4) and, in particular, those who are in favour of State intervention in the economy (Figure 3) are generally more supportive of climate policies of all types (H2b, H2c). The clearest exception is, once again, nuclear power. It emerges as the only policy not polarised along the economic dimension; instead, it garners favour among culturally conservative individuals.

Respondents' economic situation (Figure 5) appears to be most relevant for price-type policies: individuals with lower incomes tend to be more averse to taxes and more supportive of subsidies compared to wealthier respondents. Those facing difficult or very difficult financial circumstances also exhibit significantly less support for nuclear power compared to their more affluent counterparts. The observed pattern for tax policies – where support increases alongside individuals' economic security – is actually the only one that aligns clearly with the expectations of H3. This social gradient is plausibly the result of different cost-benefit calculations among less affluent and more affluent individuals. The former are those who have more to lose, especially in the case of taxes on fossil fuels.

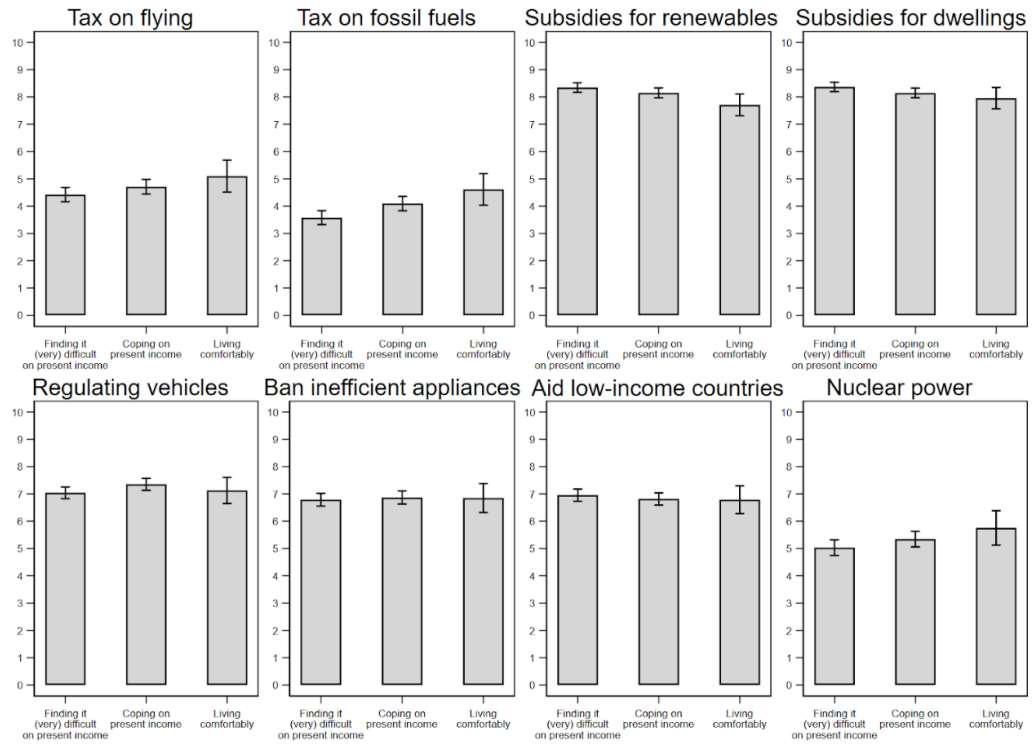
Figure 4. Predicted support for eight different climate policy proposals (0-10 scale) depending on respondents' cultural political orientation (95% confidence intervals)



Source: own elaboration. Note: Linear predictions based on regression models shown in Table A3 (Appendix).

The pattern observed for subsidies – higher support among financially disadvantaged respondents – may seem counter-intuitive, particularly regarding subsidies aimed at increasing the energy efficiency of private dwellings (although the coefficient is only marginally significant: Table A2). Such a policy has recently gained salience in the Italian public debate. During its time in government, the *Movimento 5 Stelle* introduced the so-called 'Superbonus 110', a highly generous tax incentive offering a 110 percent deduction for all expenses incurred by individuals making improvements to the energy efficiency of their private dwelling. Although generally well-received by the public, as is often the case with tax incentives of this nature, the measure turned out to be fiscally regressive. Therefore, one might have expected financially well-off respondents (e.g., homeowners who could potentially benefit the most from the Superbonus) to show higher support for this type of policy instrument. However, given the broad framing of the survey question and considering the potential benefits associated with 'subsidies', economically vulnerable respondents may have attributed greater value to these benefits, irrespective of the regressive distributional implications hidden in the technicalities of policy design.

Figure 5. Predicted support for eight different climate policy proposals (0-10 scale) depending on respondents' perceived economic situation (95% confidence intervals)



Source: own elaboration. Note: Linear predictions based on regression models shown in Table A2 (Appendix).

Finally, we examine the results concerning geographical factors – the 'where people live' question. We refer to the regression coefficients presented in Tables A2 and A3. Contrary to the expectation put forth in H4a, individuals residing in urban areas do not exhibit significantly higher support for climate policies compared to those living in rural areas. On the contrary, residents of rural areas or small-to-mid-sized towns show greater support for pull/price-type instruments (subsidies) than those living in large towns. This could be partly attributed to the fact that individuals in less urbanised areas may have benefited (or anticipate future benefits) from tax incentives like the Superbonus or from the installation of solar panels, which are more feasible in rural homes than in urban apartment buildings.

Findings regarding exposure to air pollution and, to a lesser extent, extreme weather events are much clearer, largely corroborating H4b. Residing in a neighbourhood heavily affected by air pollution consistently boosts support for all types of policies, except for investments in nuclear power, as shown in Figure 6. The same holds true for residents of areas affected by extreme weather events, particularly in the case of taxes on fuels, aids to finance clean energy in low-income countries, and taxes on flying (albeit only marginally significant).

The significant impact of perceived air pollution exposure on policy support deserves further elaboration. This variable is not merely a proxy for urban living, as the regression models incorporate an urban/rural variable. Furthermore, we control for ideology and political orientations, thus ruling out the notion that subjective perceptions of

air pollution depend solely on individuals' political stances. This constitutes a novel finding that contradicts the conclusions of Mayer et al. (2017), who did not find risk exposure to be significant. This discrepancy might be partly attributed to their inclusion of only one type of policy as a dependent variable, whereas our study encompasses eight different environmental measures.

Additionally, it is also noteworthy that the only regression model in which air pollution's coefficient is not statistically significant pertains to support for nuclear energy. This could be attributed to the controversial nature of nuclear energy in Italy (Ceri, 1988; Standish, 2009) and its lack of direct association with emissions reduction. Upon examining the eight regression models, it can be observed that the two measures where air pollution exhibits the least effect (manifested through smaller coefficients), after nuclear energy, are the two types of subsidies. What these three measures have in common is their nature as non-coercive instruments (they are pull and not push or punishing), which may lead to their being perceived as less effective in maintaining good air quality.

Lastly, among the control variables, 'trust in politicians' exhibits the most significant positive impact on support for the majority of policies, aligning with the findings of Rhodes et al. (2017). Age also shows a relatively consistent positive effect on policy support (except in the case of nuclear power). Male respondents exhibit higher support than females for tax policies and investments in nuclear power, and lower support for subsidies. Having children increases support for green taxes, while interest in politics correlates positively with support for subsidies, prohibition of polluting household appliances, and contribution to a global fund to finance clean energy in low-income countries.

The main findings remain robust even with the addition of macro-area fixed effects (see Tables A12 and A13 in the Appendix).

6. Conclusions

This article has explored various determinants of support for climate policy in Italy, focusing on three sets of drivers: what people *think* (political ideology), what they *have* (economic situation), and where they *live* (urban or rural areas, and perceived exposure to climate-related risks in their neighbourhood). Italy serves as a notable case for comparing the impact of diverse determinants on preferences for green policies: climate change and environmental issues have not (yet) been heavily politicised, suggesting that factors beyond political orientations are likely to shape people's views on climate policy. Indeed, this is what our empirical analyses have brought to light.

Overall, all three sets of determinants contribute to explaining Italians' support for climate policies. Most importantly, they matter to varying degrees depending on the specific type of policy under consideration, and on its level of politicisation. Most notably, the issue of nuclear power has polarised public debate in Italy since the 1980s (Ceri, 1988), with leftist political actors opposing it while right-wing forces (including the incumbent government) advocating its reintroduction. This ideological alignment is clearly reflected in our findings. While ideology is not relevant or plays a modest role in shaping public support for most of the climate policies analysed here, it has a strong explanatory power in the case of investments in nuclear power plants, whose support increases considerably from left to right.

Our findings show that preferences regarding the role of the State in the economy matter more than general left-right self-placement. Favouring a free market economy emerges as the most influential factor in explaining opposition to the majority of climate policies examined, followed by conservative values on the cultural dimension. The debate on which of the two ideological dimensions – economic or cultural – is the most influential is open in the literature (Crawley, 2021). Our findings lean the balance towards the economic dimension, suggesting that citizens' positions on state intervention in the economy matter more than cultural dispositions in the formation of preferences towards environmental policies.

Albeit to a lesser extent than economic and cultural political orientations, perceived economic conditions also contribute to explaining support for climate policy in Italy. This is mostly the case for 'push/price-type' policies. Green taxes are the least popular measure among people with greater economic difficulties, which is consistent with previous literature (Rhodes, 2017; Chong et al., 2001). This, together with the fact that fossil fuel taxation is the climate policy with the least social acceptance, should serve as a clear warning to policymakers: they should consider implementing economic compensation or methods to mitigate social unfairness when designing these kinds of policy (the Yellow Vest movement in France, which started as a political backlash to a carbon tax, in perhaps the most telling in this respect). On the other hand, those who experience economic hardship are more supportive of subsidies for renewable energy. This may be interpreted as a silver lining, suggesting that, overall, the energy transition is seen as an opportunity rather than a risk to economic wellbeing, even among the most disadvantaged.

Regarding geographical factors (urban-rural divide and risk exposure), we find that living in rural areas has little or no effect compared to living in cities. This finding adds to the mixed evidence provided by the literature (Kitt et al., 2021). Living in rural areas exhibits a significant and positive effect only for renewable energy subsidies. This potentially represents a second silver lining. One of the challenges of the energy transition is the impact that large renewable projects may have on the landscape or agriculture. Some radical right-wing populist parties are beginning to exploit the grievances stemming from this impact (Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach, 2021). However, this does not seem to apply to the Italian case: our results suggest that more ambitious deployment of renewable energy technologies could find a favourable socio-political context in the country.

Finally, we highlight the positive impact of climate change risk exposure on policy support, contrasting previous findings by Mayer et al (2017). Specifically, we found that exposure to air pollution significantly predicts support for climate policies, particularly those directly limiting emissions like fuel taxes, compared to measures related to efficiency or changes in energy sources. The stronger influence of perceived air pollution on policy support compared to extreme weather events, may be due to its constant and widespread impact on daily life, as opposed to less frequent extreme weather events like floods or wildfires. The daily experience of poor air quality may lead individuals to perceive it as a pressing concern, thereby influencing their support for climate policies. These may also be seen as more effective in mitigating air pollution than in avoiding extreme weather events, increasing support for climate policies. Additionally, people may

not attribute extreme weather events to climate change unless depicted as such by traditional media (Berglez and Al-Saqaf, 2021). In any case, further research is needed to confirm these extremes.

This study has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. Firstly, some of our findings, particularly those that appear to challenge prior studies, could in fact be unique to the Italian context and may require further investigation through cross-national research or in countries other than Italy. Secondly, since the survey does not include any objective measure of income, we relied solely on subjective measures of respondents' economic conditions. Further research should incorporate objective income measures, as well as exploring alternative proxies for material self-interest. The same is true for risk perception. Directly asking respondents about perceived air pollution or extreme weather events may not be the best way to measure the objective impact of these factors. The perception of risks and their salience may be conditioned by individual values, worldviews and political orientations. Using objective data on exposure to climate change risks in future research could help to validate the reliability of our results. Last, we did not directly test for party-cueing mechanisms. The survey we used only includes a question about vote intention, which we omitted because it is a rather poor measure of enduring party identification or attachment. Therefore, further work could complement our findings on the (lack of) politicisation of climate policy preferences in Italy by incorporating in the analysis more fine-grained measures of partisanship, either alongside or as an alternative to ideology.

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7. Appendix

Table A1. Summary statistics

	Mean	Min.	Max.	N.
Dependent variables				
Tax on flying	4.63	0	10	1364
Tax on fuels	3.9	0	10	1364
Subsidies for renewables	8.16	0	10	1401
Subsidies for dwellings	8.19	0	10	1400
Ban polluting vehicles	7.14	0	10	1354
Ban polluting appliances	6.81	0	10	1385
Aid low-income countries	6.86	0	10	1361
Nuclear power	5.23	0	10	1307
Independent variables				
Income: Finding it (very) difficult on present income	.452	0	1	637
Income: Coping on present income	.408	0	1	575
Income: Living comfortably on present income	.0859	0	1	121
Income: N.A./D.K.	.0539	0	1	76
Ideology: Radical left	.111	0	1	156
Ideology: Left	.195	0	1	275
Ideology: Centre	.14	0	1	197
Ideology: Right	.211	0	1	298
Ideology: Radical right	.14	0	1	197
Ideology: NA/DK	.203	0	1	286
Economic political orientations: Pro-market	.0859	0	1	121
Economic political orientations: Neutral	.0667	0	1	94
Economic political orientations: Pro-State	.68	0	1	958
Economic political orientations: DK	.167	0	1	236
Cultural political orientations: Conservative	.293	0	1	413
Cultural political orientations: Neutral	.169	0	1	238
Cultural political orientations: Liberal	.452	0	1	637
Cultural political orientations: DK	.0859	0	1	121
Area of residence: Rural area or villa	.276	0	1	387
Area of residence: Small or middle size town	.492	0	1	689
Area of residence: Large town	.232	0	1	325
Air pollution	.407	0	1	1409
Extreme weather	.369	0	1	1409
Male	.495	0	1	1409
Age	49.4	18	75	1409
Education: Lower education	.37	0	1	522
Education: Medium education	.443	0	1	624
Education: Higher education	.187	0	1	263
Children in the household	.293	0	1	1409
Interested in politics	.598	0	1	1409
Trust in politicians	2.48	0	10	1409
Independent variables (sensitivity check)				
Macro-area: North-West	.264	0	1	372
Macro-area: North-East	.195	0	1	275
Macro-area: Centre	.2	0	1	282
Macro-area: South & Islands	.341	0	1	480

Source: own elaboration.

Table A2. Results from linear regressions of determinants of individual preferences for eight climate change policies (including *self-placement on left-right ideological scale*).

Dependent variable:	Tax on flying	Tax on fuels	Subsidies for renewables	Subsidies for dwellings	Regulating vehicle efficiency	Ban polluting appliances	Aid low-income countries	Nuclear power
Perceived economic situation (Ref.: Living comfortably)								
Finding it (very) difficult	-0.677*	-1.032**	0.635**	0.413†	-0.087	-0.0634	0.166	-0.727*
Coping on present in-	-0.389	-0.515	0.437†	0.189	0.224	0.0174	0.027	-0.414
N.A./D.K.	-0.459	-0.683	0.144	-0.235	-0.721†	-0.294	-0.641	-0.577
Ideology self-placement (ref.: Centre)								
Radical left	0.270	1.049**	0.314	0.190	0.712*	-0.117	0.675*	-1.166**
Left	0.743*	0.970**	0.452*	0.220	0.477†	0.321	0.478†	-0.537
Right	0.284	0.365	0.0490	0.192	-0.136	-0.036	-0.151	0.962**
Radical right	-0.036	0.074	0.0474	0.119	-0.156	-0.082	-0.470†	1.567***
NA/DK	0.414	0.036	-0.090	0.008	-0.01	0.097	-0.104	-0.558†
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)								
Rural area or village	0.374	-0.075	0.463**	0.275†	0.281	0.395†	0.167	-0.060
Small or middle size	-0.0302	-0.168	0.422**	0.327*	0.283	0.227	0.326†	-0.337
Air pollution	0.579**	0.705***	0.366**	0.311*	0.593***	0.643***	0.595***	-0.257
Extreme weather	0.342†	0.584**	0.214	0.146	0.025	0.050	0.364*	-0.010
Male	0.512**	0.515**	-0.310*	-0.197†	-0.081	0.038	0.010	0.889***
Age	0.0298***	0.001	0.011**	0.0183***	0.011*	0.025***	0.003	-0.013*
Education (ref.: Lower education)								
Medium education	-0.322	-0.188	-0.017	-0.0978	-0.00653	0.063	-0.101	-0.121
Higher education	-0.299	0.202	-0.148	-0.119	0.104	0.137	0.122	0.008
Children	0.446*	0.498*	0.011	0.107	0.115	0.145	-0.041	-0.460*
Interested in politics	0.289	-0.070	0.424**	0.483***	0.239	0.432*	0.504**	0.280
Trust in politicians	0.223***	0.295***	-0.055*	-0.0636**	0.038	0.005	0.054†	0.195***
Constant	1.929***	2.706***	6.515***	6.492***	5.745***	4.626***	5.572***	5.652***
Observations	1364	1364	1401	1400	1354	1385	1361	1307
R^2	0.085	0.129	0.059	0.057	0.049	0.041	0.064	0.140

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A3. Results from linear regressions of determinants of individual preferences for eight climate change policies (including *economic* and *cultural political orientations*).

Dependent variable:	Tax on flying	Tax on fuels	Subsidies for renewables	Subsidies for dwellings	Regulating vehicle efficiency	Ban polluting appliances	Aid low-income countries	Nuclear power
Perceived economic situation (Ref.: Living comfortably on present income)								
Finding it (very) difficult	-0.859**	-1.220***	0.469*	0.274	-0.206	-0.214	-0.0270	-0.771*
Coping on present income	-0.534	-0.678*	0.297	0.080	0.107	-0.0929	-0.139	-0.369
N.A./D.K.	-0.469	-0.812+	0.0748	-0.281	-0.726+	-0.284	-0.669	-0.676
Economic political orientations (ref.: Pro-market)								
Neutral	0.817+	0.289	0.667*	0.140	0.614+	0.178	0.888*	-0.558
Pro-State	1.279***	0.752*	1.139***	0.779***	1.064***	0.784**	1.423***	-0.487
D.K.	0.849*	0.128	0.500*	0.483+	0.732*	0.054	0.569+	-0.690
Cultural political orientations								
Neutral	0.321	0.568*	0.405*	0.300+	0.418+	0.605*	0.513*	-0.395
Liberal	0.269	1.184***	0.490***	0.219	0.921***	0.665***	1.109***	-1.394***
D.K.	-0.292	0.806*	0.0371	-0.0924	0.0357	0.655*	0.819**	-0.978*
Area of residence (ref.: Large								
Rural area or village	0.354	-0.078	0.459**	0.268	0.255	0.406+	0.153	0.098
Small or middle size town	-0.031	-0.140	0.429**	0.332*	0.266	0.257	0.333+	-0.281
Air pollution	0.562**	0.673***	0.341**	0.282*	0.567***	0.590***	0.555***	-0.350
Extreme weather	0.326+	0.543**	0.175	0.127	0.004	0.026	0.325*	0.019
Male	0.487**	0.580***	-0.306*	-0.197+	-0.053	0.0623	0.022	0.902***
Age	0.029***	0.005	0.012**	0.018***	0.0148**	0.028***	0.007	-0.019**
Education (ref.: Lower educa-								
Medium education	-0.299	-0.219	-0.014	-0.099	-0.019	0.008	-0.131	-0.118
Higher education	-0.242	0.201	-0.136	-0.118	0.091	0.078	0.092	0.013
Children in the household	0.386+	0.483*	-0.037	0.081	0.080	0.121	-0.082	-0.368
Interested in politics	0.213	-0.0452	0.385**	0.462***	0.226	0.334+	0.482**	0.241
Trust in politicians	0.203***	0.292***	-0.065**	-0.067**	0.0286	-0.004	0.033	0.247***
Constant	1.276*	1.759**	5.600***	5.984***	4.455***	3.783***	3.923***	7.082***
Observations	1364	1364	1401	1400	1354	1385	1361	1307
R2	0.096	0.145	0.092	0.074	0.077	0.061	0.107	0.113

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A4. Linear regression models of *tax on flying*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Tax on flying	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	0.449*	0.427*	0.527**	0.465**	0.452*	0.448*	0.482**
Age	0.0249***	0.0254***	0.0280***	0.0264***	0.0267***	0.0270***	0.0301***
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	-0.229	-0.274	-0.247	-0.259	-0.237	-0.234	-0.299
Higher education	-0.110	-0.201	-0.124	-0.210	-0.135	-0.178	-0.279
Children in the household	0.453*	0.435*	0.419*	0.502*	0.434*	0.462*	0.412*
Interested in politics	0.374*	0.355+	0.311	0.368+	0.278	0.301	0.237
Trust in politicians	0.226***	0.214***	0.228***	0.235***	0.218***	0.225***	0.209***
Perceived economic situa-							
Finding it (very) difficult		-0.707*					-0.821*
Coping on present in-		-0.427					-0.505
N.A./D.K.		-0.493					-0.480
Area of residence (ref.:							
Rural area or village			0.321				0.355
Small or middle size			-0.0474				-0.0468
Air pollution			0.602**				0.542**
Extreme weather			0.322+				0.326+
Ideological self-placement							
Radical left				0.352		0.245	0.171
Left				0.823**		0.727*	0.637*
Right				0.292		0.316	0.288
Radical right				0.00924		0.0372	-0.0350
NA/DK				0.492		0.609+	0.514
Economic political orienta-				0.465**			
Neutral				0.0264***	0.810+	0.844+	0.846+
Pro-State					1.223***	1.201***	1.257***
DK					0.833*	0.728+	0.756*
Cultural political orienta-							
Neutral					0.395	0.356	0.283
Liberal					0.351	0.217	0.148
DK					-0.305	-0.411	-0.382
Constant	2.333***	2.926***	1.770***	1.890***	1.109*	0.805	1.023
Observations	1371	1371	1364	1371	1371	1371	1364
Adj. R^2	0.055	0.056	0.067	0.059	0.068	0.071	0.084

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A5. Linear regression models of *tax on fossil fuels*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Tax on fossil fuels	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	0.485**	0.433*	0.558**	0.504**	0.574**	0.564**	0.567**
Age	-0.00477	-0.00456	-0.00172	-0.00270	0.00276	0.00247	0.00561
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	0.0139	-0.0825	0.000548	-0.101	-0.130	-0.163	-0.248
Higher education	0.657**	0.478+	0.558*	0.423+	0.439+	0.351	0.126
Children in the household	0.486*	0.442*	0.449*	0.574**	0.561**	0.580**	0.501*
Interested in politics	0.259	0.215	0.109	0.0901	0.0977	0.0341	-0.101
Trust in politicians	0.303***	0.281***	0.311***	0.308***	0.308***	0.302***	0.286***
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		-1.124***					-1.134***
Coping on present income		-0.578+					-0.604+
N.A./D.K.		-1.023*					-0.693
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			-0.180				-0.0858
Small or middle size town			-0.224				-0.142
Air pollution			0.732***				0.666***
Extreme weather			0.539**				0.555**
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				1.190***		0.843*	0.730*
Left				1.044***		0.778*	0.712*
Right				0.364		0.553+	0.534+
Radical right				0.0956		0.417	0.374
NA/DK				0.0613		0.179	0.128
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.388	0.493	0.387
Pro-State					0.768*	0.763*	0.741*
DK					0.107	0.178	0.194
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.565*	0.595*	0.597*
Liberal					1.285***	1.162***	1.085***
DK					0.754*	0.800*	0.854*
Constant	2.678***	3.661***	2.279***	2.289***	1.123*	0.797	1.387*
Observations	1372	1372	1364	1372	1372	1372	1364
Adj. R^2	0.073	0.081	0.097	0.086	0.104	0.107	0.135

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A6. Linear regression models of *subsidies for renewable energy*, independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Subsidies for renewables	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	-0.354**	-0.333**	-0.322**	-0.355**	-0.351**	-0.356**	-0.316**
Age	0.00946*	0.00827+	0.0113**	0.0105*	0.0113**	0.0115**	0.0127**
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	0.000600	0.0280	0.0143	-0.0472	-0.0464	-0.0552	-0.0272
Higher education	-0.196	-0.130	-0.0978	-0.292	-0.280	-0.308+	-0.170
Children in the household	-0.0382	-0.0392	-0.0247	-0.00352	-0.0561	-0.0465	-0.0256
Interested in politics	0.551***	0.548***	0.506***	0.481***	0.426**	0.408**	0.362**
Trust in politicians	-0.0689**	-0.0592*	-0.0639**	-0.0675**	-0.0767**	-0.0774**	-0.0671**
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		0.671**					0.505*
Coping on present income		0.476*					0.324
N.A./D.K.		0.166					0.128
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.506**				0.454**
Small or middle size town			0.459**				0.425**
Air pollution			0.393**				0.335*
Extreme weather			0.212				0.182
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				0.342		0.171	0.168
Left				0.428*		0.270	0.297
Right				0.0406		0.0823	0.0974
Radical right				0.0695		0.145	0.136
NA/DK				-0.0220		0.0754	0.0228
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.648*	0.664*	0.685*
Pro-State					1.238***	1.228***	1.127***
DK					0.558*	0.561*	0.515*
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.412*	0.416*	0.410*
Liberal					0.497***	0.457**	0.446**
DK					0.130	0.130	0.0449
Constant	7.758***	7.253***	7.039***	7.639***	6.516***	6.428***	5.494***
Observations	1409	1409	1401	1409	1409	1409	1401
Adj. R^2	0.024	0.030	0.038	0.027	0.066	0.064	0.078

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A7. Linear regression models of subsidies for *energy efficiency of private dwellings*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Subsidies for private dwellings	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	-0.234*	-0.209+	-0.211+	-0.240*	-0.239*	-0.241*	-0.201+
Age	0.0176***	0.0165***	0.0193***	0.0178***	0.0181***	0.0180***	0.0189***
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	-0.105	-0.0844	-0.0940	-0.124	-0.126	-0.127	-0.102
Higher education	-0.193	-0.141	-0.120	-0.231	-0.228	-0.232	-0.124
Children in the household	0.0926	0.0852	0.111	0.0994	0.0703	0.0658	0.0753
Interested in politics	0.561***	0.552***	0.522***	0.530***	0.500***	0.497***	0.460***
Trust in politicians	-0.0663**	-0.0583*	-0.0656**	-0.0692**	-0.0718**	-0.0747**	-0.0705**
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		0.479*					0.286
Coping on present income		0.256					0.0881
N.A./D.K.		-0.132					-0.265
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.319+				0.261
Small or middle size town			0.358*				0.331*
Air pollution			0.327*				0.285*
Extreme weather			0.143				0.129
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				0.240		0.113	0.0873
Left				0.222		0.0930	0.0985
Right				0.180		0.163	0.185
Radical right				0.126		0.138	0.145
NA/DK				0.0296		0.0490	0.0356
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.103	0.129	0.171
Pro-State					0.841***	0.841***	0.779***
DK					0.480+	0.500*	0.509*
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.281	0.301+	0.323+
Liberal					0.236+	0.257	0.249
DK					-0.0243	0.000580	-0.0610
Constant	7.314***	7.014***	6.772***	7.219***	6.557***	6.460***	5.871***
Observations	1408	1408	1400	1408	1408	1408	1400
Adj. R^2	0.033	0.038	0.041	0.031	0.052	0.049	0.05

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A8. Linear regression models of *vehicle efficiency regulation*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Vehicle efficiency regulation	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	-0.129	-0.157	-0.0821	-0.0962	-0.0619	-0.0531	-0.0446
Age	0.00901^{+}	0.00737	0.0109*	0.0105*	0.0140**	0.0137**	0.0144**
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	0.0973	0.0450	0.111	0.0279	0.0162	0.00669	-0.0286
Higher education	0.277	0.191	0.310	0.136	0.135	0.106	0.0685
Children in the household	0.108	0.0616	0.0841	0.179	0.139	0.160	0.101
Interested in politics	0.478**	0.416**	0.399*	0.368*	0.339*	0.302^{+}	0.191
Trust in politicians	0.0214	0.0131	0.0320	0.0362	0.0282	0.0340	0.0347
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		-0.128					-0.195
Coping on present income		0.182					0.127
N.A./D.K.		-0.828*					-0.699^{+}
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.245				0.268
Small or middle size town			0.273				0.280
Air pollution			0.639***				0.553***
Extreme weather			0.0197				0.000454
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				0.716*		0.404	0.423
Left				0.503*		0.234	0.216
Right				-0.139		-0.0494	-0.0394
Radical right				-0.144		0.0343	0.0342
NA/DK				-0.0135		0.0616	0.0575
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.629^{+}	0.628^{+}	0.612^{+}
Pro-State					1.159***	1.147***	1.051***
DK					0.789*	0.780*	0.722*
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.418^{+}	0.397^{+}	0.401^{+}
Liberal					0.938***	0.818***	0.807***
DK					0.0478	0.00684	-0.00152
Constant	6.274***	6.507***	5.708***	6.125***	4.651***	4.647***	4.434***
Observations	1363	1363	1354	1363	1363	1363	1354
Adj. R^2	0.010	0.015	0.021	0.019	0.051	0.050	0.062

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A9. Linear regression models of *banning energy-inefficient household appliances*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Ban inefficient appliances	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	0.00245	-0.00329	0.0517	0.00164	0.0337	0.0218	0.0507
Age	0.0227***	0.0222***	0.0251***	0.0238***	0.0260***	0.0266***	0.0287***
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	0.0905	0.0771	0.0985	0.0745	0.0180	0.0336	0.0234
Higher education	0.129	0.109	0.215	0.0766	0.0235	0.0331	0.0872
Children in the household	0.149	0.137	0.139	0.173	0.142	0.143	0.119
Interested in politics	0.511**	0.498**	0.448**	0.512**	0.401*	0.440*	0.372*
Trust in politicians	0.00203	0.000277	0.00591	0.00670	-0.00249	-0.00296	-0.00553
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		-0.0106					-0.211
Coping on present income		0.0640					-0.105
N.A./D.K.		-0.178					-0.311
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.394+				0.396+
Small or middle size town			0.242				0.244
Air pollution			0.655***				0.596***
Extreme weather			0.0414				0.0211
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				-0.0628		-0.311	-0.338
Left				0.354		0.153	0.124
Right				-0.0409		0.0262	0.0290
Radical right				-0.0686		0.0870	0.0759
NA/DK				0.148		0.235	0.198
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.177	0.162	0.163
Pro-State					0.832**	0.820**	0.771**
DK					0.0753	0.0128	0.000779
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.613*	0.613*	0.609*
Liberal					0.703***	0.747***	0.716***
DK					0.753*	0.730*	0.641+
Constant	5.251***	5.291***	4.613***	5.123***	4.126***	4.011***	3.696***
Observations	1394	1394	1385	1394	1394	1394	1385
Adj. R^2	0.019	0.017	0.030	0.018	0.040	0.039	0.046

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A10. Linear regression models of *aid to finance clean energy in low-income countries*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Aid to low-income countries	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	-0.112	-0.0854	-0.0520	-0.0607	-0.0499	-0.0349	0.0304
Age	-0.000710	-0.00203	0.00239	0.00124	0.00490	0.00445	0.00651
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	-0.0115	-0.0185	-0.00261	-0.106	-0.136	-0.153	-0.150
Higher education	0.314	0.316	0.278	0.136	0.119	0.0785	0.0543
Children in the household	-0.0911	-0.118	-0.102	-0.00631	-0.0537	-0.0283	-0.0598
Interested in politics	0.725***	0.691***	0.646***	0.602***	0.555***	0.523**	0.454**
Trust in politicians	0.0288	0.0307	0.0361	0.0488	0.0278	0.0366	0.0403
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		0.123					-0.00832
Coping on present income		-0.0250					-0.112
N.A./D.K.		-0.770+					-0.655
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.143				0.173
Small or middle size town			0.337+				0.339+
Air pollution			0.650***				0.539***
Extreme weather			0.357*				0.330*
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				0.783*		0.436	0.359
Left				0.499+		0.217	0.198
Right				-0.173		-0.0327	-0.00777
Radical right				-0.457		-0.223	-0.229
NA/DK				-0.0621		0.0703	0.0246
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					0.874*	0.885*	0.900*
Pro-State					1.513***	1.514***	1.425***
DK					0.606+	0.591+	0.564+
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					0.525*	0.474*	0.468*
Liberal					1.152***	0.974***	0.953***
DK					0.803**	0.725*	0.760*
Constant	6.376***	6.449***	5.628***	6.259***	4.382***	4.433***	3.960***
Observations	1370	1370	1361	1370	1370	1370	1361
Adj. R^2	0.016	0.019	0.037	0.030	0.079	0.079	0.093

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A11. Linear regression models of *investing in nuclear power plants*; independent variables added stepwise.

DV: Nuclear power	Controls	What people have	Where people live	What people think (1)	What people think (2)	What people think (3)	All
Male	1.084***	1.051***	1.086***	0.899***	0.931***	0.859***	0.844***
Age	-0.00879	-0.00881	-0.0106	-0.0128+	-0.0168*	-0.0154*	-
Education (ref.: Lower)							
Medium education	-0.162	-0.222	-0.168	-0.0748	-0.0623	-0.0455	-
Higher education	-0.0692	-0.187	-0.0576	0.112	0.101	0.156	0.0617
Children in the household	-0.244	-0.279	-0.243	-0.435*	-0.335	-0.450*	-0.479*
Interested in politics	0.194	0.156	0.239	0.260	0.220	0.263	0.286
Trust in politicians	0.292***	0.278***	0.288***	0.211***	0.266***	0.211***	0.195***
Perceived economic situation (ref.: Living comfortably)							
Finding it (very) difficult on present income		-0.712*					-0.720*
Coping on present income		-0.330					-0.389
N.A./D.K.		-0.709					-0.570
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)							
Rural area or village			0.0223				-
Small or middle size town			-0.304				-0.331
Air pollution			-0.423+				-0.245
Extreme weather			-0.0328				0.0101
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)							
Radical left				-1.146**		-0.899*	-0.918*
Left				-0.498		-0.321	-0.355
Right				0.979**		0.885**	0.853**
Radical right				1.583***		1.420***	1.377***
NA/DK				-0.625+		-0.588+	-0.554
Economic political orientation (ref.: Pro-market)							
Neutral					-0.557	-0.403	-0.401
Pro-State					-0.581+	-0.534	-0.437
DK					-0.788+	-0.448	-0.356
Cultural political orientation (ref.: Conservative)							
Neutral					-0.407	-0.0765	-
Liberal					-1.354***	-0.627*	-0.677**
DK					-1.110**	-0.551	-0.466
Constant	4.393***	5.018***	4.790***	4.728***	6.194***	5.640***	6.502***
Observations	1316	1316	1307	1316	1316	1316	1307
Adj. R^2	0.069	0.071	0.072	0.124	0.094	0.127	0.130

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A12. Results from linear regressions of determinants of individual preferences for eight climate change policies. Sensitivity check adding *fixed effects for Italian macro-areas*.

Dependent variable:	Tax on flying	Tax on fuels	Subsidies for renewables	Subsidies for dwellings	Regulating vehicle efficiency	Ban polluting appliances	Aid low-income countries	Nuclear power
Perceived economic situation (ref.: living comfortably)								
Finding it (very) difficult on pre-	-0.643^{+}	-1.071**	0.655**	0.430^{+}	-0.111	-0.0944	0.108	-0.699^{+}
Coping on present income	-0.376	-0.506	0.445*	0.191	0.224	0.00884	0.0179	-0.415
N.A./D.K.	-0.433	-0.718	0.161	-0.220	-0.739^{+}	-0.316	-0.694	-0.543
Ideological self-placement (ref.: Centre)								
Radical left	0.270	1.028**	0.315	0.193	0.707*	-0.123	0.661*	-1.164**
Left	0.739*	0.975**	0.449*	0.216	0.482^{+}	0.323	0.488^{+}	-0.548^{+}
Right	0.282	0.348	0.0460	0.192	-0.137	-0.0341	-0.155	0.961**
Radical right	-0.0328	0.0748	0.0442	0.113	-0.151	-0.0831	-0.463^{+}	1.553***
NA/DK	0.429	0.00963	-0.0828	0.0167	-0.0333	0.0870	-0.123	-0.552
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)								
Rural area or village	0.337	-0.0834	0.446**	0.279^{+}	0.284	0.430^{+}	0.183	-0.0466
Small or middle size town	-0.0568	-0.205	0.413**	0.338*	0.271	0.248	0.311	-0.302
Air pollution	0.555**	0.745***	0.345*	0.288*	0.617***	0.665***	0.645***	-0.300
Extreme weather	0.360^{+}	0.544**	0.227^{+}	0.162	0.00398	0.0324	0.320^{+}	0.0209
Male	0.523**	0.515**	-0.304*	-0.197^{+}	-0.0842	0.0257	0.00527	0.880***
Age	0.0298***	0.00170	0.0112**	0.0180***	0.0112*	0.0256***	0.00378	-0.0141*
Education (ref.: Lower)								
Medium education	-0.326	-0.182	-0.0136	-0.0932	-0.00235	0.0688	-0.0900	-0.101
Higher education	-0.287	0.198	-0.136	-0.109	0.0986	0.127	0.110	0.0333
Children in the household	0.462*	0.478*	0.0186	0.114	0.103	0.132	-0.0655	-0.451*
Interested in politics	0.297	-0.0885	0.429**	0.491***	0.232	0.428*	0.491**	0.295
Trust in politicians	0.224***	0.295***	-0.0556*	-0.0638**	0.0385	0.00463	0.0544^{+}	0.194***
Macro-area (ref.: North-West)								
North-East	0.209	-0.129	-0.00672	-0.0826	-0.0317	-0.204	-0.0958	-0.243
Centre	-0.132	-0.165	-0.154	-0.0687	0.0211	0.112	0.0792	-0.126
South & Islands	-0.111	0.391^{+}	-0.103	-0.171	0.201	0.112	0.415*	-0.340
Constant	1.936***	2.649***	6.576***	6.575***	5.687***	4.622***	5.452***	5.830***
Observations	1364	1364	1401	1400	1354	1385	1361	1307
R^2	0.086	0.134	0.060	0.058	0.050	0.042	0.069	0.141

*† p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

Table A13. Results from linear regressions of determinants of individual preferences for eight climate change policies. Sensitivity check adding *fixed effects for Italian macro-areas*.

Dependent variable:	Tax on flying	Tax on fuels	Subsidies for renewables	Subsidies for dwellings	Regulating vehicle efficiency	Ban polluting appliances	Aid low-income countries	Nuclear power
Perceived economic situation (ref.: living comfortably)								
Finding it (very) difficult on pre-	-0.826*	-1.254***	0.489*	0.293	-0.229	-0.242	-0.0843	-0.736*
Coping on present income	-0.523	-0.664*	0.304	0.0828	0.109	-0.0994	-0.146	-0.369
N.A./D.K.	-0.443	-0.850+	0.0924	-0.263	-0.748+	-0.305	-0.725+	-0.633
Economic political orientations (ref.: Pro-market)								
Neutral	0.808+	0.288	0.661*	0.141	0.625+	0.190	0.903*	-0.568
Pro-State	1.291***	0.727*	1.143***	0.785***	1.059***	0.777**	1.410***	-0.483
DK	0.860*	0.121	0.506*	0.489+	0.730*	0.0467	0.552+	-0.677
Cultural political orientations (ref.:								
Neutral	0.331	0.578*	0.407*	0.295+	0.421+	0.598*	0.516*	-0.412
Liberal	0.268	1.201***	0.489***	0.216	0.927***	0.665***	1.122***	-1.400***
DK	-0.271	0.800*	0.0490	-0.0858	0.0288	0.642*	0.819**	-0.975*
Area of residence (ref.: Large town)								
Rural area or village	0.315	-0.0898	0.441**	0.269	0.256	0.438+	0.167	0.111
Small or middle size town	-0.0606	-0.179	0.419**	0.341*	0.253	0.276	0.316+	-0.243
Air pollution	0.538**	0.711***	0.320*	0.258*	0.594***	0.614***	0.605***	-0.403+
Extreme weather	0.344+	0.503**	0.189	0.145	-0.0197	0.00756	0.280+	0.0585
Male	0.499**	0.587***	-0.300*	-0.198+	-0.0529	0.0516	0.0215	0.890***
Age	0.0300***	0.00664	0.0123**	0.0185***	0.0151**	0.0281***	0.00769	-0.0193**
Education (ref.: Lower education)								
Medium education	-0.307	-0.212	-0.0128	-0.0966	-0.0162	0.0125	-0.120	-0.0943
Higher education	-0.234	0.202	-0.127	-0.110	0.0864	0.0685	0.0827	0.0409
Children in the household	0.400*	0.465*	-0.0299	0.0885	0.0690	0.110	-0.105	-0.355
Interested in politics	0.220	-0.0601	0.391**	0.470***	0.220	0.330+	0.469**	0.260
Trust in politicians	0.203***	0.295***	-0.0656**	-0.0672**	0.0295	-0.00457	0.0346	0.245***
Macro-area (ref.: North-West)								
North-East	0.242	-0.106	0.0172	-0.0633	-0.00137	-0.169	-0.0820	-0.283
Centre	-0.112	-0.184	-0.140	-0.0697	0.0342	0.113	0.0575	-0.169
South & Islands	-0.104	0.387+	-0.105	-0.177	0.220	0.119	0.427*	-0.400
Constant	1.267*	1.688**	5.653***	6.066***	4.376***	3.768***	3.792***	7.296***
Observations	1364	1364	1401	1400	1354	1385	1361	1307
R^2	0.097	0.150	0.093	0.075	0.079	0.062	0.113	0.115

*+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*