

# Between Hope and Fear?

## Regional and social dividing lines in popular attitudes towards a Social Europe



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# Reflection on the social dimension of Europe

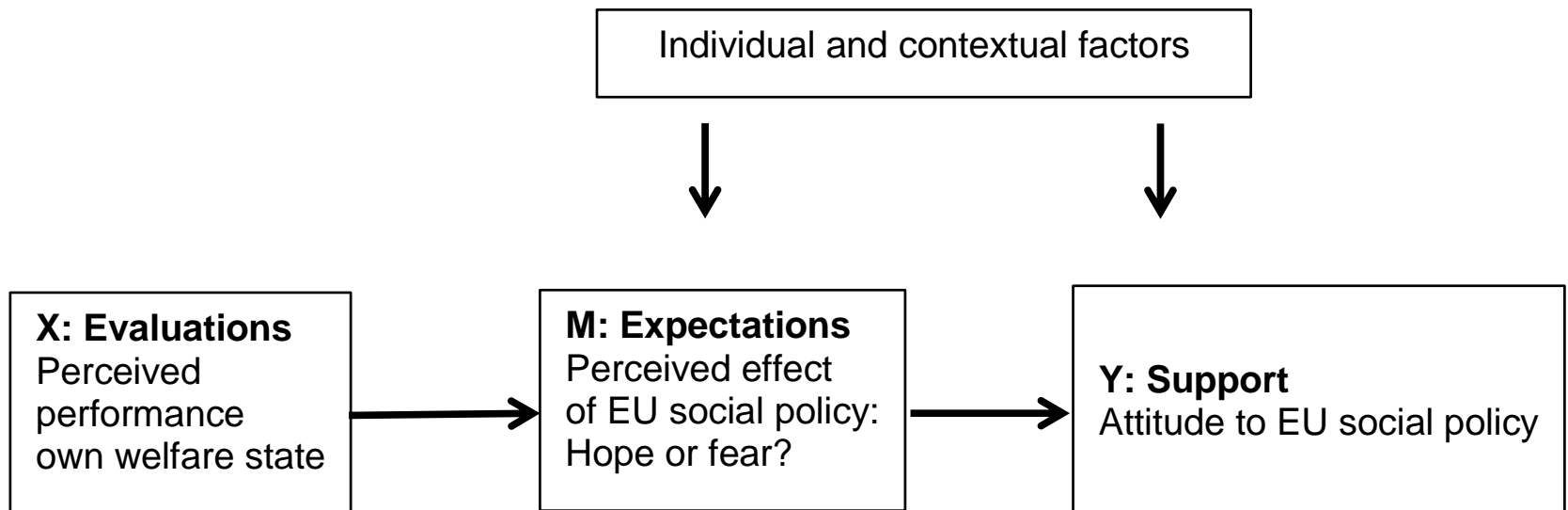
## European Pillar of Social Rights



### Minimum income

*Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.*

# Hope or fear reasoning



# Data and measures

## European Social Survey 2016 - 18 EU member states

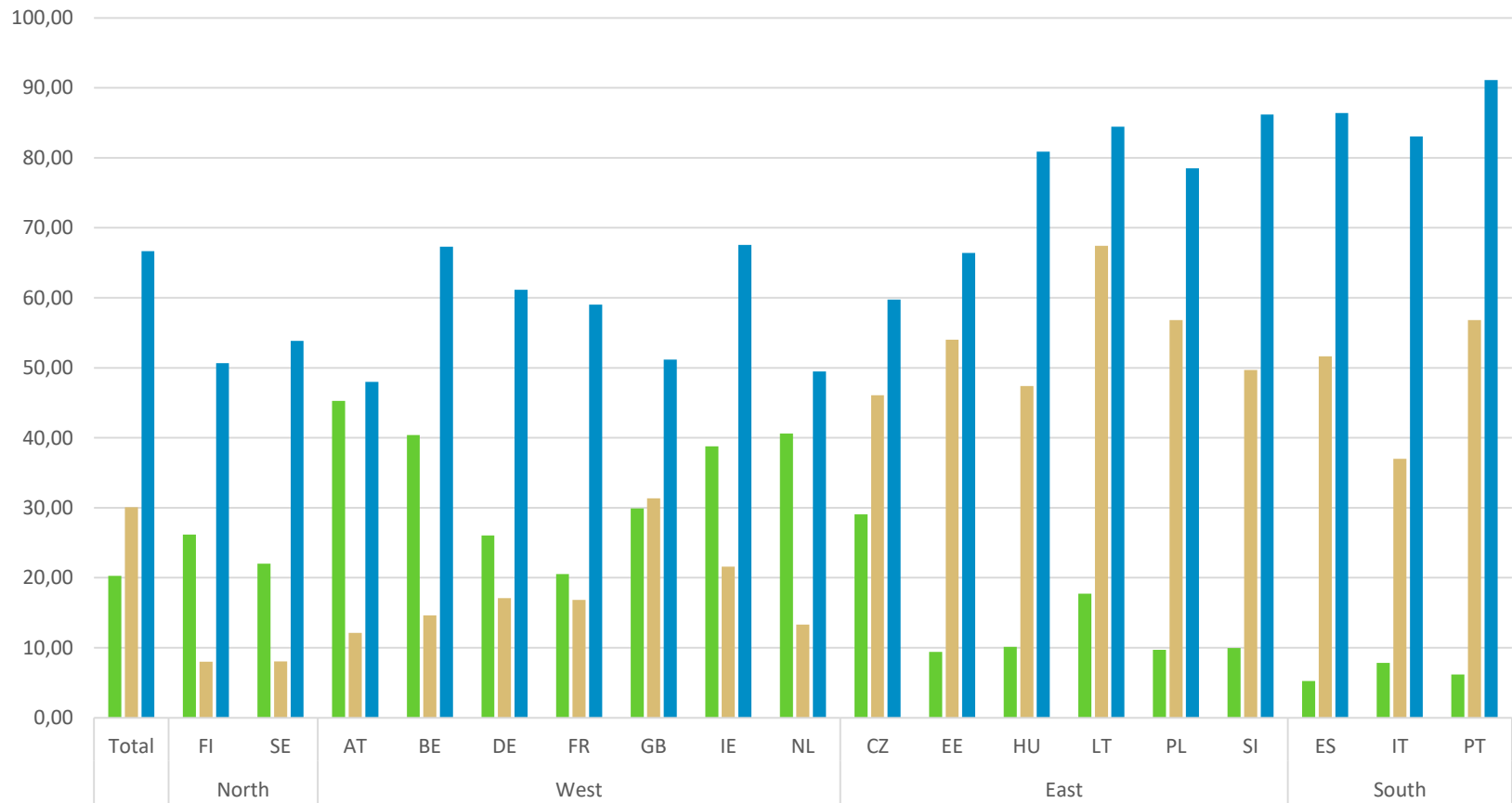
### Support EU social policy

- *A European Union-wide social benefit scheme includes all of the following: The purpose is to guarantee a **minimum standard of living for all poor people in the European Union**; The level of social benefit people receive will be **adjusted to reflect the cost of living** in their country; The scheme would require **richer European Union countries to pay more** into such a scheme than poorer European Union countries. Overall, would you be **against or in favour** of having such a European Union-wide social benefit scheme?*

### Expectations

- *If more decisions were made by the European Union rather than by national governments, do you think the **level of social benefits and services** provided in [country] would become higher or lower?*

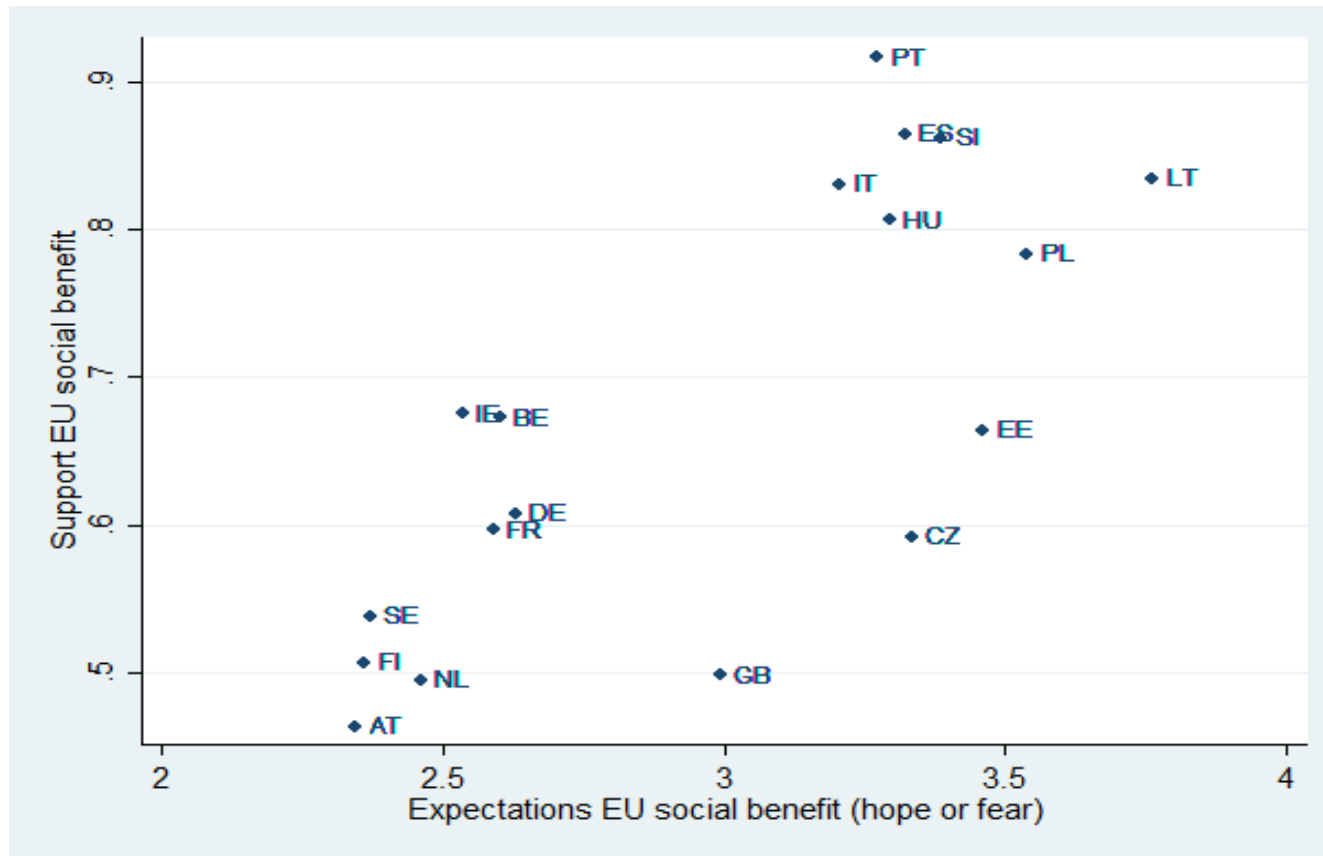
# Hope or fear in European countries



- Evaluation standard of living unemployed (% score > 5)
- Expectations EU benefit scheme (% (much) higher benefits)
- Support EU social benefit scheme (% (strongly) in favour)

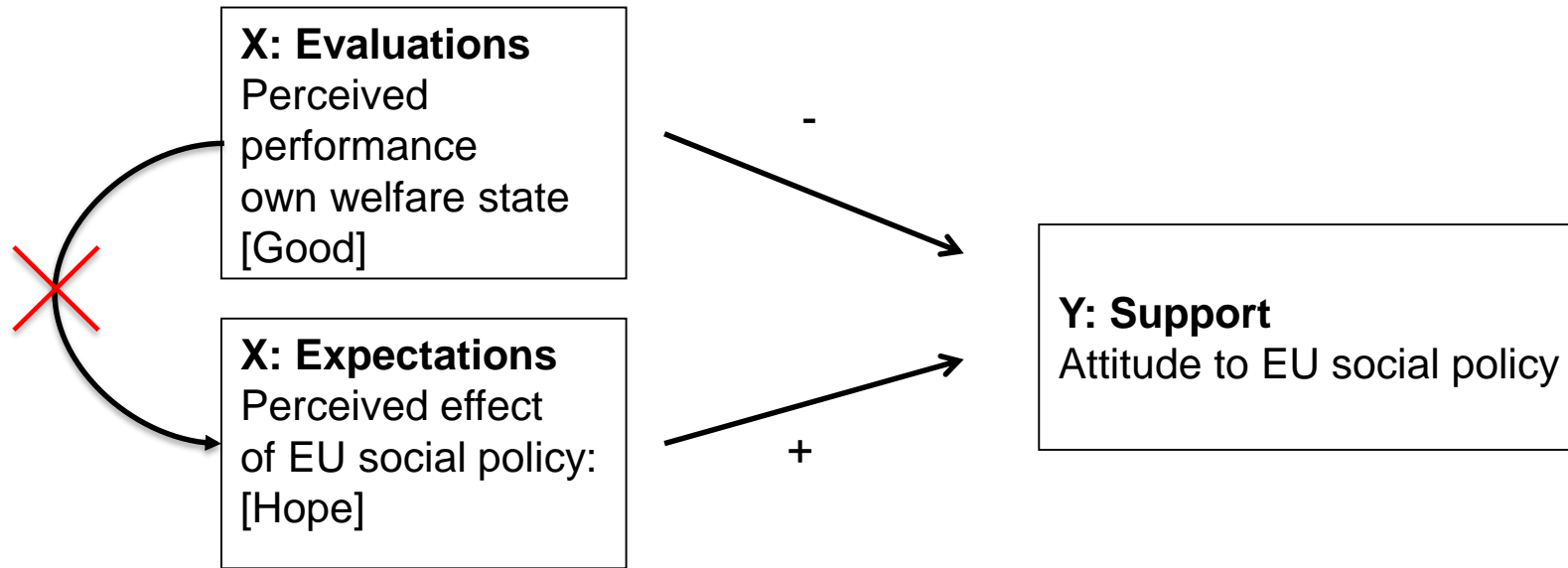
# Higher expectations, more support for EU social policy?

**Figure 4:** Relationship between expectation (hope/fear) and support for EU social benefit

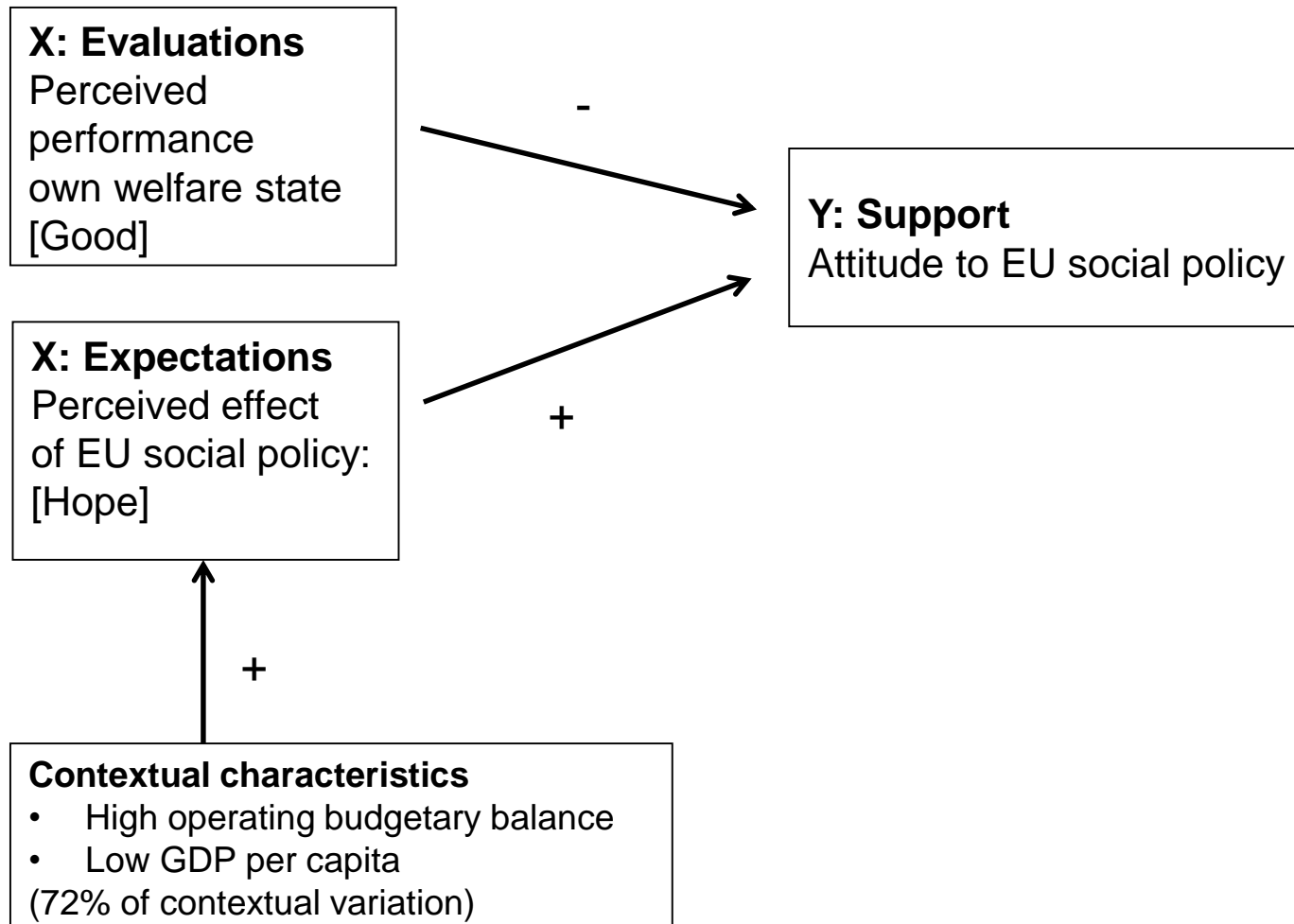


Corr. .73

# No hope or fear reasoning...

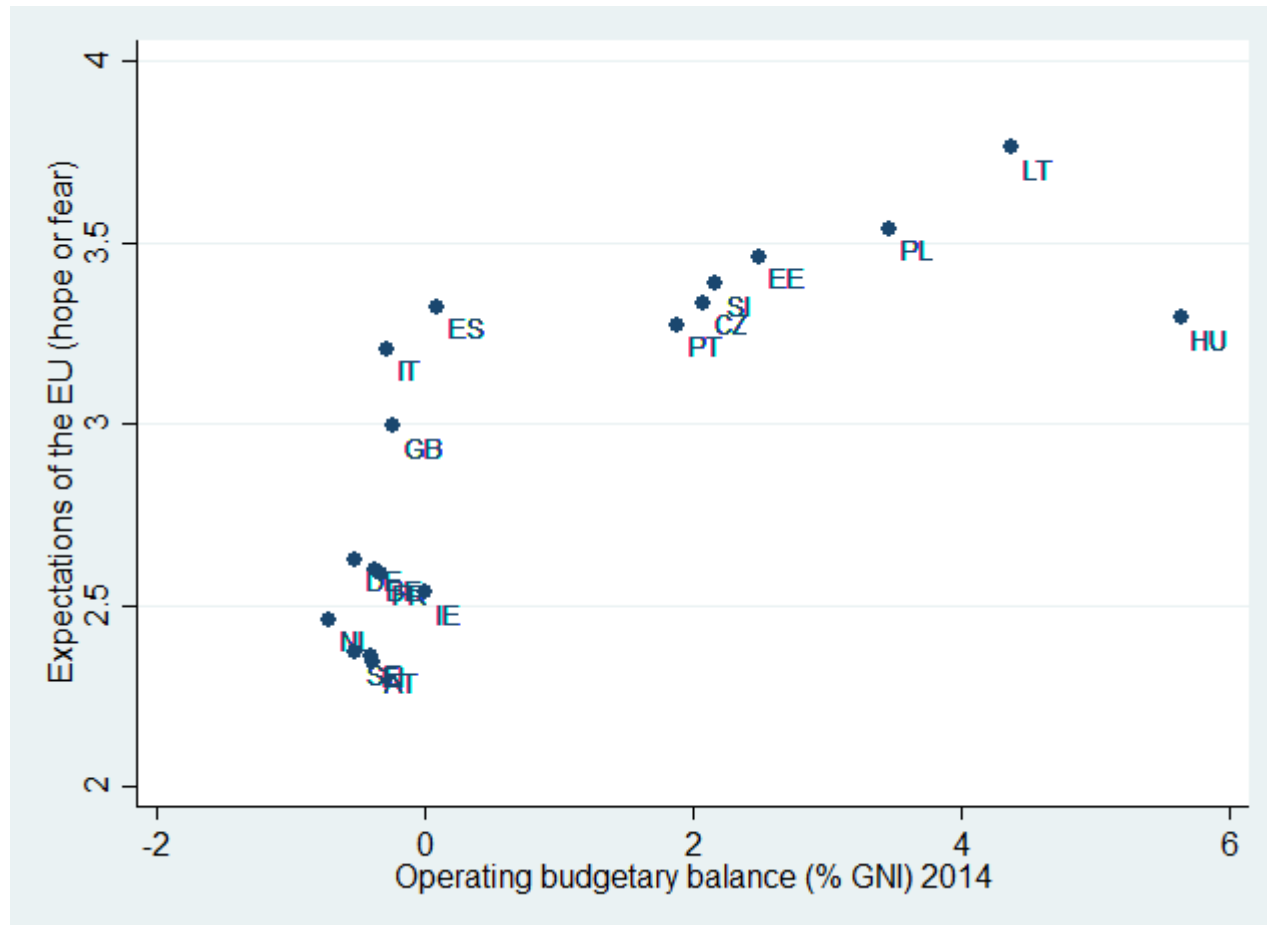


# Regional dividing lines in EU expectations



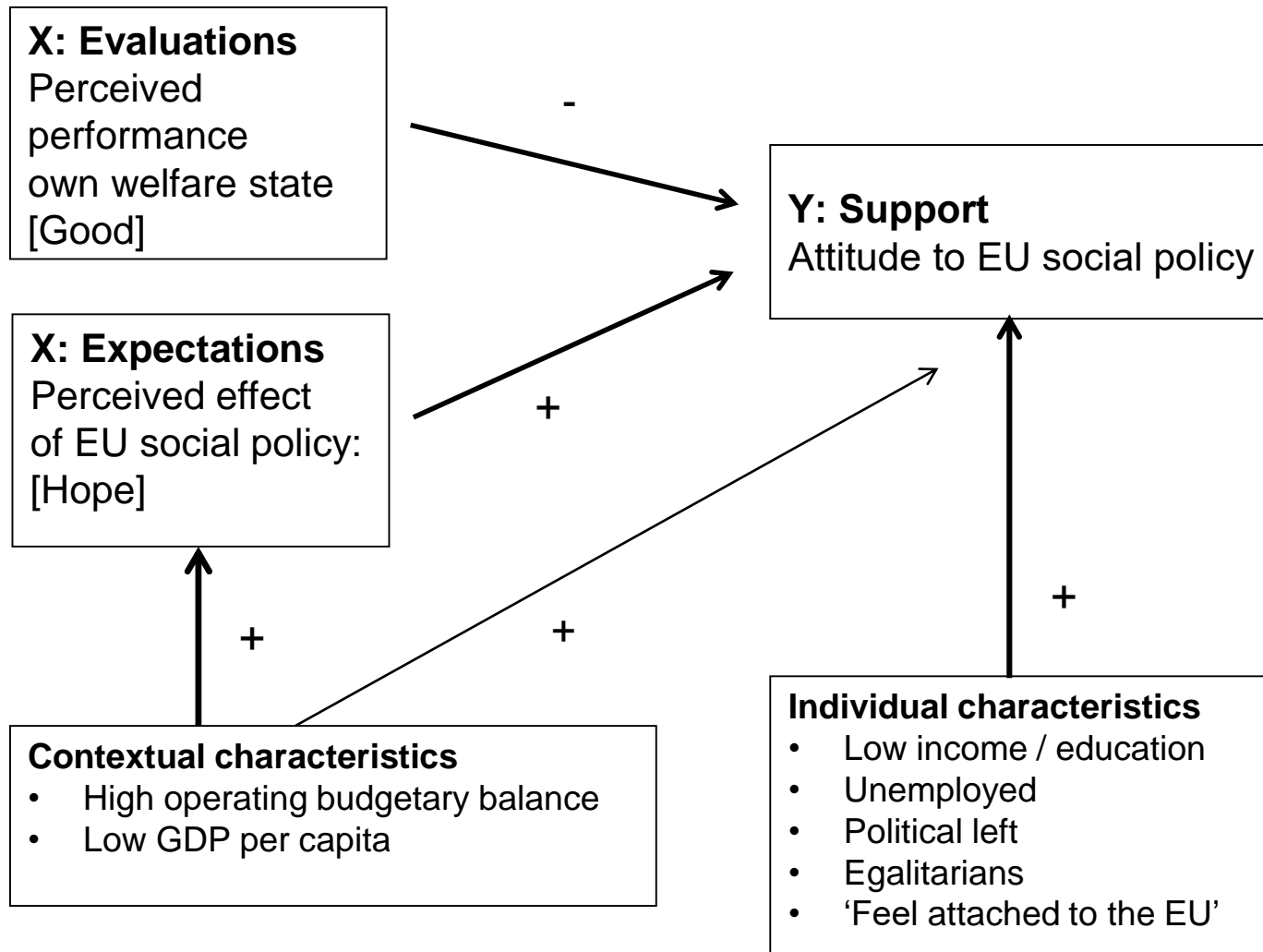


# Regional dividing lines in EU expectations



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# Social dividing lines in support for Social Europe



# Conclusions

- High support across Europe for EU minimum income scheme, also in Western and Northern countries.
- No 'hope-or-fear reasoning' leading to higher support for EU social minimum
- Regional dividing lines (GDP and benefiting from EU) explain expectations towards the EU
- Social dividing lines are more relevant in explaining support for EU social policy
  - Is this an expression of European solidarity?
  - Or just strong support for guaranteeing a social minimum in a country?
- More specific (and more qualitative?) data is to test underlying mechanisms of EU (social policy) support.
- What are implications for debates about the social pillar of Europe?



# Public opinion on varieties of Social Europe

- EU social citizenship (e.g. coordination of social security, portability of rights and benefits)
- Redistribution between EU member states (e.g. structural funds, debt pooling funds)
- Harmonization of social policies between EU countries (e.g. working time directive)
- Social policy decisions at EU level (e.g. regulations, directives)
- Redistribution between EU citizens (e.g. EU social benefits as unemployment insurance fund, minimum income benefit, etc.)

(Baute, 2018)