



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

European Journal of Political Economy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ejpe

Full length article

What drives pro-EU preferences? Territorial identities, immigration and redistribution attitudes

 Ingrid Mauerer , Andrea Pili , M. Socorro Puy* 

University of Malaga, Faculty of Economics, Campus El Ejido, Málaga, 29013, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

JEL classification:

 C25
 D02
 F55
 H77

Keywords:

 Identity
 EU membership
 Immigration
 Redistribution
 Europeanism
 Euroscepticism

ABSTRACT

Public opinion on European integration reflects not only policy preferences but also citizens' emotional attachments to territory. This study examines how two key policy domains, immigration and redistribution, together with territorial identities, shape support for the European Union (EU). We develop a theoretical framework in which citizens evaluate their vertical integration into the EU, emphasizing discrepancies between national and EU-level policies and clarifying how regional, national, and European identities structure attitudes toward integration. Using cross-sectional survey data from a broad sample of EU member states, we find that pro-immigration attitudes consistently predict support for EU integration in most countries, whereas preferences for redistribution exert a modest and inconsistent influence. Territorial identities play a critical role. Individuals who prioritize larger territorial units—the EU over the nation, and the nation over the region—are more likely to hold pro-EU attitudes, whereas those who feel a stronger attachment to smaller territorial units—such as their region over the nation, and the nation over the EU—are more likely to be eurosceptic. These findings indicate that immigration and identity-based cleavages are associated with public support for European integration, whereas classical redistribution concerns appear to play a more limited role.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, regions have repeatedly cycled from localism to empire and back. While today's world is not ruled by empires, major geopolitical blocs, including the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union (EU), compete for global influence. These powers differ significantly in institutional design. This contribution examines the EU, a unique supranational union of 27 member states. As the youngest global actor, formed after World War II, the EU has already consolidated many of its core structures and policies, marking a significant step toward a more integrated and cohesive union.

This study draws on Deutsch (1953a,b) seminal reflection on nationalism as a political force. Deutsch argued that economic growth can either promote national unification or intensify national diversity, meaning territorial identities may act as assets or liabilities for integration. In the EU, regional and national identities remain powerful and can challenge both the Union's global orientation and the development of a shared European identity. As Deutsch noted, national sentiments may even override individuals' economic interests, limiting the expected gains from integration. Building on this insight, we examine how territorial identities shape public support for European integration amid key political challenges. We focus on two central pillars of the EU—redistribution and immigration—through which tensions between identity and integration most clearly unfold. Redistribution reflects a longstanding commitment to

* Corresponding author.

Email addresses: ingridmaurerer@uma.es (I. Mauerer), andrea_pili@uma.es (A. Pili), mgs@uma.es (M.S. Puy).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2026.102827>

Received 8 August 2025; Received in revised form 20 March 2026; Accepted 22 March 2026

Available online 28 March 2026

0176-2680/© 2026 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

welfare and equality (Alesina et al., 2018; Piketty, 1995) while immigration has gained prominence since the 2015 refugee crisis, influencing views on solidarity and boundary-making within the Union (Stockemer et al., 2020).¹

We introduce a theoretical model in which citizens evaluate their vertical integration within a federal union, such as the EU. Each individual has identity-based attachments to their territory and a perception of the ideological orientation of both their nation and the EU. This framework allows us to theorize which level of governance best aligns with their preferences. These preferences are modeled as a function of individual territorial identities—regional, national, and supranational—and of their ideological positioning within the redistribution-immigration policy space. The theoretical model yields clear predictions regarding the factors that drive pro-EU attitudes versus euroscepticism, which can be assessed empirically. For this purpose, we use the PERCEIVE Survey Dataset (Bauhr and Charron, 2020), providing individual-level observations from citizens across 14 EU countries. The survey includes questions about the support for EU membership, immigration and redistribution preferences, and self-reported identities across regional, national, and European levels.

We obtain three main findings. First, in most of the 14 European countries studied, pro-immigration attitudes are a more powerful and consistent predictor of support for EU membership than pro-redistribution attitudes. Second, in almost all cases, territorial identities exert a greater influence on preferences for EU membership than attitudes toward immigration and redistribution. Third, stronger attachment to one's region—relative to one's nation or to Europe—is generally associated with heightened eurosceptic views. Conversely, stronger identification with the largest territorial unit, the EU—relative to one's nation or region—is associated with more pro-EU attitudes.

The existing literature explaining pro-EU and eurosceptic attitudes is mostly empirical and lacks a formal model that reflects individual-level opinions on EU integration versus the counterfactual of becoming a nation independent of EU influence. We fill this gap by developing a theoretical framework that combines two influential strands of literature: the political economy of nation formation and theories that emphasize identity-based motivations for political behavior.

First, the theory of nation formation offers key insights into the dynamics of supranational unions, such as the EU. While economies of scale create incentives for integration, cultural heterogeneity among member states imposes constraints on the optimal size of the Union or the degree to which it can command majority support (Alesina and Spolaore, 1997, 2003; Alesina et al., 2000; Bolton et al., 1996; Chu, 2010; Flamand, 2019; Mauerer et al., 2025; Wittman, 2000). Divergent preferences over redistribution, the provision of public goods, and broader legislative priorities generate tensions that must be offset either through fiscal transfers (Bolton and Roland, 1997; Haimanko et al., 2005; Le Breton and Weber, 2003; Wittman, 2000) or increased political participation and representation (Ansolabehere and Puy, 2022). These models emphasize the trade-off between the benefits of centralization and the costs of heterogeneity. Alternatively, we do not examine the broader benefits or costs of EU integration, but instead model a scenario in which citizens evaluate whether national or supranational governance better aligns with their preferences.²

Second, identity-based theories have gained increasing relevance in the economic literature. Akerlof and Kranton (2010) highlight the role of identity in shaping economic behavior, and a growing body of literature has applied identity-driven motivations to various economic contexts.³ We incorporate into our theory *territorial identities*—regional, national, and supranational. At the same time, forming a supranational European identity has proven fundamental to sustaining support for the EU project (Beetsma et al., 2023; Ciaglia et al., 2018).⁴ On the other hand, the EU project threatens national and regional identities (Carey, 2002; Jérôme and Vaillant, 2005; McLaren, 2002). Unlike previous contributions, our theory integrates the three-level territorial identities and examines the potential benefits of the European identity in supporting the EU, at the expense of diminishing the relevance of national and regional identities.

Our research also contributes to the expanding empirical literature on support for EU membership from two key perspectives. First, it examines the divisions within Europe regarding immigration and redistribution. Second, it offers a new interpretation of the relationships among the various multilevel territorial identities within the EU.

The relationship between preferences for redistribution and the support for the EU has been the focus of several contributions (Brinegar et al., 2004; Brinegar and Jolly, 2005; Burgoon, 2009; Garry and Tilley, 2015). These authors demonstrate that the impact of attitudes toward redistribution is contingent upon national contexts, including income inequality and the welfare state. In the last few decades, however, scholars have shifted their attention from redistribution to immigration preferences. Consistent evidence shows a strong link between negative attitudes toward immigrants and higher levels of euroscepticism (Kentmen-Cin and Erisen, 2017; Stockemer et al., 2018).⁵ The dominant explanations for this negative correlation are cultural identity and economic threat

¹ These dimensions have evolved with the political agenda. Recent evidence from Toygür and Sojka (2025) indicates that the costs of climate policies also contribute to rising euroscepticism.

² This approach has two advantages: it accommodates individual heterogeneity without dimensionality constraints, since it does not rely on median-voter theorems (Persson and Tabellini, 2002), and it enables empirical validation using large-scale survey data.

³ There are several important effects to consider. For instance, Shayo (2009) demonstrates that national identification tends to reduce support for redistribution. Ansolabehere and Puy (2016) show that national identity plays a significant role in determining voting behavior. Additionally, Grossman and Helpman (2021) find that national identity shapes policy perceptions and influences trade preferences. Finally, Mauerer and Puy (2026) demonstrate that social identities influence party placement perceptions.

⁴ In line with Deutsch (1953a), nationality may become so important to individuals that it can override other interests. As an anecdotal example, Josep Borrell, former Secretary of State of Finance of Spain, managed to implement the Value Added Tax (VAT) by explaining: "It is a good tax because it is a European Tax. Everyone in Europe is paying it, and the Spanish Society accepted it because it had the European quality seal" (fragment of an interview by Jose Ignacio Torreblanca, May 22, 2019).

⁵ Several contributions demonstrate that anti-immigration attitudes cause euroscepticism (e.g., Azrout and Wojcieszak, 2017; De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2005; Kentmen-Cin and Erisen, 2017; Yeung, 2021).

(Garry and Tilley, 2009; Hobolt et al., 2011; McLaren, 2002; Ringlerova, 2022). This relationship has remained stable even during the refugee crisis (2012–2016), as demonstrated by Stockemer et al. (2020).⁶ We contribute to this body of literature by examining the impact of these ideological factors alongside a comprehensive description of territorial identity profiles.

Public support for EU membership has also been explained by identity-driven factors (e.g., Hobolt and De Vries, 2016; Lubbers, 2008; Ringlerova, 2022; Van Klingeren et al., 2013). According to Carey (2002) and McLaren (2002), national identities tend to reduce the support for the EU as a reaction against the primacy of European laws and a perceived cultural threat. However, there is an ongoing debate on whether national identities exhibit such unidirectional effects, as national identities have been shown to positively impact attitudes toward the EU in some countries (see, e.g., Deflem and Pampel, 1996; Kritzinger, 2003; Medrano and Gutiérrez, 2001; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). Even when there is a unique national identity, different degrees of patriotism (Huddy, 2001) and different conceptions (ethnic or civic, exclusive or inclusive) of national identity can produce distinct EU integration preferences (Aichholzer et al., 2021; Fligstein et al., 2012; Foster and Frieden, 2021; Hooghe and Marks, 2004). Other studies focused on the relationship between subnational and supranational identities.⁷ We contribute to this debate by demonstrating that the effect of national identity in isolation is less decisive than when compared with other subnational and supranational identifications.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 outlines the theoretical and empirical model. Section 3 describes the data. Section 4 reports the results and Section 5 concludes. The Online Appendix contains proofs and additional details on the data analysis.

2. A model on endogenous pro-EU preferences

We propose a framework in which citizens evaluate vertical integration into a federal system, namely the EU. Identitarian aspects and ideological orientations, particularly those related to immigration and redistribution, serve as key variables to explain how individuals form their preferences over EU membership and, consequently, whether they express pro-EU or eurosceptic views.

2.1. Theory

Individuals compare the EU political context with the national one, treating the latter as independent of EU influence. Let $j \in \{EU, N\}$, where $j = EU$ refers to the EU context and $j = N$ to the national context. Each option is associated with specific policies on immigration, $x_j \in [0, 1]$, and redistribution, $y_j \in [0, 1]$, where 0 means no redistribution and no additional immigration, 1 means full redistribution and maximal immigration, and values in between reflect intermediate policy positions. Thus, (x_{EU}, y_{EU}) represents the EU policies and (x_N, y_N) the national policies. Policy positions are assumed to be exogenous. Nonetheless, the model is motivated by the institutional distinction between domestic political processes and supranational decision-making within the EU multilevel governance system. At the national level, policy choices are shaped by domestic political competition and electoral incentives. By contrast, EU-level outcomes largely emerge from negotiations that aggregate heterogeneous national preferences within the European Council, which brings together the heads of government of the member states.⁸

Each individual i is characterized by their most preferred immigration and redistribution policies (x_i, y_i) . The triple $(e_i, n_i, r_i) \in [0, 1]^3$ indicates individual i 's identification with the European (or supranational) e_i , national n_i and regional (or subnational) r_i levels, respectively. A value of 0 reflects no identification, 1 indicates full identification, and intermediate values signify varying degrees of attachment to each level.⁹

Individual preferences over the EU and national contexts, $j \in \{EU, N\}$, are represented by the following utility function:

$$u_i(j) = I_i(j) - \alpha_x d(x_j, x_i) - \alpha_y d(y_j, y_i), \quad (1)$$

where $I_i(j)$ is the utility derived from territorial identities; function d captures the ideological costs by measuring the distance between an individual's preferred policies and those promoted by the EU ($j = EU$) or by their nation ($j = N$). The parameters $\alpha_x > 0$ and $\alpha_y > 0$ represent the salience of immigration and redistribution issues.

European identity can be understood as partially displacing national and regional attachments through subtle processes of cultural homogenization. When the national context is evaluated, the component of European identification is omitted and the territorial identity utility, $I_i(N)$, is based solely on national and regional identities (n_i and r_i). Analytically,

$$I_i(N) = \gamma_1 r_i + (1 - \gamma_1) n_i \text{ with } \gamma_1 \in [0, 1], \quad (2)$$

⁶ Interestingly, while Stockemer et al. (2020) show that the peak of migrants did not, surprisingly, enhance euroscepticism in Europe, it produced a divide, notably between countries like Germany and Sweden, and Eastern European states such as Poland and Hungary.

⁷ The early work by Inglehart (1970, 1977) shows that citizens with a national outlook, rather than a 'parochialist' view, are more likely to identify themselves with supranational units. Also, Medrano and Gutiérrez (2001) show that regional and national identities could be compatible with Europeanism and able to explain attachment to Europe, and Brigevid (2018) delves into these ideas by exploring different types of regionalism, some of which are more inclusive and open to accepting a supranational identity.

⁸ We abstract from modeling the supranational decision-making process here. In related work, Mauerer et al. (2025) incorporates this mechanism explicitly and shows that it plays an important role in shaping individual preferences over the degree of EU integration.

⁹ Immigration and redistribution represent ideological considerations (in line with Alesina et al., 2021; Rodden, 2002; Zimmermann, 1995), and territorial identity motivations are incorporated as an alternative theory to explain support for EU integration (see Alesina and Spolaore, 2003; Carey, 2002; Hobolt, 2016; Hobolt and De Vries, 2016; Hooghe and Marks, 2004).

where the salience of regional and national identities, γ_1 and $1 - \gamma_1$, are normalized to sum one.¹⁰ When the EU context is evaluated, $I_i(EU)$ includes the European identity component e_i , which reduces the relative salience of national and regional identities:

$$I_i(EU) = \gamma_2 e_i + (1 - \gamma_2) I_i(N) \text{ with } \gamma_2 \in [0, 1], \quad (3)$$

where γ_2 represents the salience of the European identity, and all identity weights are similarly normalized. According to this expression, the European identity is a competing identity that can either enhance or diminish the overall territorial identity utility.¹¹

Individuals' evaluation of the EU context versus the national one depends on additional factors, captured by a random component $\mu \sim (0, \sigma^2)$, which is continuously and symmetrically distributed across the population.¹² This random component captures idiosyncratic biases, such as those stemming from personal experiences or information distortions, that increase the evaluation of the European context when $\mu_i > 0$ and reduce it when $\mu_i < 0$. These factors cannot be explained by observable individual characteristics—such as income, education, or age—which we later include as control variables in the empirical model. An individual is indifferent between the EU context and the national context when $u_i(EU) = u_i(N) - \mu_i$. Substituting Eqs. (1) through (3), and using a quadratic form to measure $d(x_j, x_i)$ and $d(y_j, y_i)$ yields

$$u_i(EU) - u_i(N) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + \beta_2 y_i + \beta_3 (n_i - e_i) + \beta_4 (n_i - r_i) - \mu_i, \quad (4)$$

where $\beta_0 = \alpha_x(x_N^2 - x_{EU}^2) + \alpha_y(y_N^2 - y_{EU}^2)$, $\beta_1 = 2\alpha_x(x_{EU} - x_N)$, $\beta_2 = 2\alpha_y(y_{EU} - y_N)$, $\beta_3 = -\gamma_1$, and $\beta_4 = \gamma_1 \gamma_2$. Thus, the differential utility depends linearly on individual preferred ideologies, x_i and y_i , and on the *identity differentials* between national and European identities ($n_i - e_i$), and between national and regional identities ($n_i - r_i$). Taking n_i as the reference identity, the gap $n_i - e_i$ measures the perceived gain (if $n_i > e_i$) or cost (if $n_i < e_i$) of renouncing the supranational identity. Similarly, $n_i - r_i$ captures the perceived gain (if $n_i > r_i$) or cost (if $n_i < r_i$) of renouncing the subnational identity.¹³

The fraction of pro-EU individuals, those who prefer the EU context over the national one, is given by the probability $P(\mu > u_i(N) - u_i(EU))$, whereas the fraction of eurosceptics, those who prefer the national context over the EU context, is $1 - P(\mu > u_i(N) - u_i(EU))$. Hence, we deduce the following result.

Proposition 1. *In each nation, the fraction of pro-EU individuals:*

- (a) increases (decreases) in pro-immigration preferences when $x_{EU} > x_N$ ($x_{EU} < x_N$),
- (b) increases (decreases) in pro-redistribution preferences when $y_{EU} > y_N$ ($y_{EU} < y_N$),
- (c) decreases in the national-European identity differential $n_i - e_i$,
- (d) increases in the national-regional identity differential $n_i - r_i$.

Regarding the ideological considerations in (a) and (b), the condition $x_{EU} > x_N$ indicates that EU policy is more pro-immigration than national policy, while $y_{EU} > y_N$ implies that EU policy is more pro-redistribution. In both cases, individuals with pro-immigration or pro-redistribution preferences are more likely to prefer the EU context. Conversely, when $x_{EU} < x_N$ and $y_{EU} < y_N$, such individuals are more likely to exhibit eurosceptic preferences. By statements (c) and (d), pro-EU preferences increase among individuals who express stronger attachment to the EU relative to their nation, and to their nation relative to their region. In other words, individuals who prioritize larger territorial units—i.e., the EU over the nation, and the nation over the region—are more likely to be pro-EU. Conversely, those who identify more strongly with smaller territorial units are more likely to be eurosceptic.

Following the classification by Kuhn and Nicoli (2020), we define five *Territorial Identity Profiles* (TIPs).¹⁴ First, *Nationalists* are individuals who place national identity above both regional and European identities. Second, *Regionalists* prioritize regional identity and assign the lowest importance to European identity. Third, *Europeists* rank European identity highest and regional identity lowest. Fourth, *Euroregionalists* are those who rank either regional, European, or both identities above national identity. Finally, *Neutrals* assign equal importance to all three territorial identities (see Table 1).

The distribution of these profiles across the population plays a key role in shaping the prevalence of pro-EU versus eurosceptic attitudes.¹⁵ Based on this classification, we derive the following result.

Proposition 2. *In each nation, the fraction of pro-EU individuals:*

- (a) diminishes in the fraction of Regionalists,
- (b) increases in the fraction of Europeists.

¹⁰ Alternatively, formulations that incorporate national and regional identities in a nonlinear manner could either amplify or reduce the identity gap between territorial affiliations. Such nonlinear specifications might artificially distort the empirical results, either by obscuring individual differences across identities or by exaggerating them. We therefore adopt a linear specification as a baseline, providing a consistent reference point for further exploration of how identity shapes the assimilation of EU integration.

¹¹ Specifically, $I_i(EU) > I_i(N)$ when the strength of European identity, e_i , exceeds $I_i(N)$, and $I_i(EU) < I_i(N)$ when e_i falls below $I_i(N)$.

¹² The proposed theoretical model adapts the widely used probabilistic spatial voting framework developed by Lindbeck and Weibull (1987).

¹³ A strength of this approach is that individual differences in interpreting the identity scale are neutralized when using identity differentials rather than actual values e_i , n_i , or r_i .

¹⁴ These authors apply the concept of nested identities and identify six types: localists (strongest attachment to the local level), nationalists (strongest attachment to the national level), supranationals (attachment increases with the scale of the political level), cosmopolitans (equal attachment to all levels), apolides (low attachment to all levels), and globalists (strong attachment to both local and supranational levels but weak attachment to the national level). We do not consider identity intensity and exclude the apolides category. See also Medrano and Gutiérrez (2001); Guinjoan and Bermúdez (2020).

¹⁵ Alternatively, Nicoli et al. (2020) reduce these six combinations to three general ideal types: localists, who feel most strongly attached to their region; nationalists, whose national attachment exceeds both regional and supranational attachments; and Europeans, whose attachment to Europe is stronger than to any other level.

Table 1
Constellation of territorial identity profiles (TIPs).

$n_i \geq r_i$		$n_i < r_i$
$n_i \geq e_i$	$n_i > r_i = e_i$	$r_i > n_i \geq e_i$
	$n_i \geq r_i > e_i$	
	$n_i \geq e_i > r_i$	
Nationalists		Regionalists
$n_i < e_i$	$e_i > n_i \geq r_i$	$e_i \geq r_i > n_i$ $r_i > e_i \geq n_i$
	Europeists	
$n_i = r_i = e_i$ Neutrals		

Note: For each individual i , n_i is the national identity, r_i the regional identity, and e_i the European identity.

Since the condition $I_i(EU) > I_i(N)$ requires that $e_i > I_i(N)$, Europeists consistently satisfy this inequality, making them more likely to support EU membership. By contrast, for Regionalists, $e_i < I_i(N)$, which implies that $I_i(EU) < I_i(N)$ and, consequently, a greater likelihood of euroscepticism. The preferences of Nationalists, who prioritize national identity, and Euroregionalists, who place national identity last, are more ambiguous. These individuals may assign a value to European identity that lies between their national and regional attachments, resulting in less predictable preferences regarding EU membership.

Fig. 1 illustrates the ideological positioning of an imaginary nation and the EU, each defined by distinct stances in the policy space of immigration and redistribution, with the EU typically promoting more open borders and greater redistribution within a globalized framework.¹⁶ The figure depicts the dividing lines between those who favor supranational assimilation—thus supporting integration into the EU—and those who prefer national isolation. Ceteris paribus, identities can either foster or constrain preferences for EU integration. The left panel shows a larger share of individuals who prefer EU integration due to stronger attachments to a European identity, whereas in the right panel, this area shrinks as individuals’ primary attachments shift from the nation to the region, and only lastly to a European identity. This rationale offers a theoretical foundation for Deutsch (1953a,b) claim that identity-related concerns may weaken the anticipated benefits of integration.

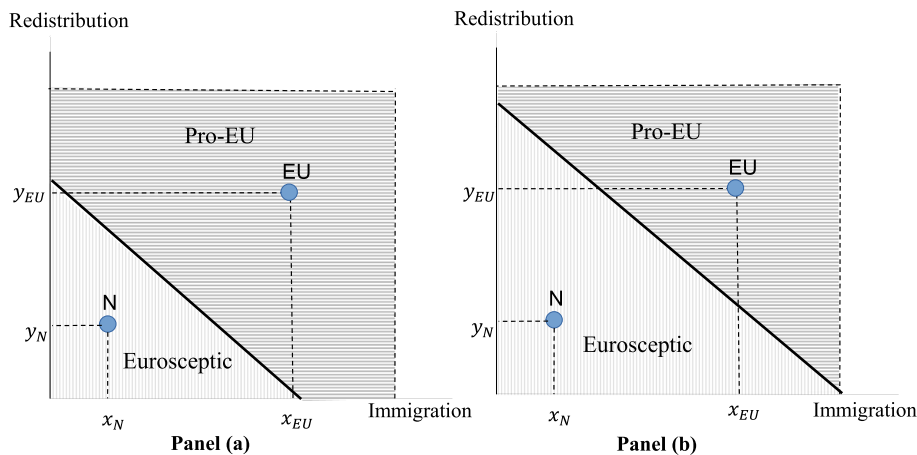


Fig. 1. Ideological Division between pro-EU and eurosceptic individuals in the Immigration–Redistribution policy space. Note: Points EU and N denote the positions of the European Union and the national government. The area above (below) the dividing line represents pro-EU (eurosceptic) individuals. Panel (a) models Europeists. Panel (b) models Regionalists.

Although the EU adopts a common ideological position across its member states, each country advances its own national stance within the immigration-redistribution policy space, shaped by historical, cultural, and ideological factors. For example, France may be perceived as favoring greater redistribution on its own than when acting within the EU framework. In such a context, individuals with stronger pro-redistribution preferences may find EU integration less attractive. Since country-specific policy positions play a central role in our theoretical analysis, when taking the model to the data, we opt for country-specific regressions, which better capture national heterogeneity across EU member states.

¹⁶ This representation is conceptual and intended to illustrate relative ideological tendencies rather than empirical positions.

2.2. Empirical strategy

We employ binary logistic regressions to empirically test our theoretical framework.¹⁷ Following Expression (4), let η denote the linear predictor:

$$\eta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + \beta_2 y_i + \beta_3 (n_i - e_i) + \beta_4 (n_i - r_i) + \mathbf{z}_i^T \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \quad (5)$$

where \mathbf{z}_i is a vector of control variables and $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ are the corresponding coefficients.

Assuming that the random variable μ follows a logistic distribution, the linear predictor η is connected to the probabilities with a logistic response function: $P(G_i = 1) = \frac{\exp(\eta)}{1 + \exp(\eta)}$, where $G_i \in \{1, 0\}$ denotes the binary dependent variable, taking the value 1 when individual i expresses pro-EU preferences and the value 0 when expressing euroscepticism.

We estimate separate logistic regressions for each country in the sample, obtaining country-specific estimates $\hat{\beta}_1$, $\hat{\beta}_2$, $\hat{\beta}_3$, and $\hat{\beta}_4$, thereby enabling cross-national comparisons.¹⁸ Based on the theoretical model, we test four key theoretical questions:

(1) Do redistribution and immigration help explain pro-EU and eurosceptic views?¹⁹ Cross-national relevance is tested by assessing whether $\hat{\beta}_1 = 0$ and $\hat{\beta}_2 = 0$ can be rejected.

(2) Are pro-redistribution and pro-immigration citizens, on average, associated with more pro-EU attitudes? This can be assessed by testing whether $\hat{\beta}_1 > 0$ and $\hat{\beta}_2 > 0$ hold.

(3) Do territorial identities shape EU membership preferences? Evidence against $\hat{\beta}_3 = 0$ or $\hat{\beta}_4 = 0$ would indicate such effects, with different nonzero combinations signaling distinct identity-based influences. Furthermore, following Proposition 2, we can assess whether Regionalist and Europeist identities help explain pro-EU or eurosceptic preferences.

(4) Can the coefficients be compared to assess whether ideological or identitarian factors exert greater influence on EU membership preferences? To address this question, we standardize the explanatory variables, allowing for direct comparability of effect sizes.

3. Dataset and summary statistics

We use the PERCEIVE Survey Dataset (Bauhr and Charron, 2020), which includes measures of support for EU membership, individual attitudes toward redistribution and immigration, and territorial identities. The dataset is cross-sectional and was collected in 2017, avoiding temporal proximity to European Parliament elections that could otherwise introduce bias in responses. The survey was conducted in 14 EU member states (ordered by population size): Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Sweden, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, and Estonia. Together, these countries account for over 85 percent of the EU population.²⁰

Next, we describe the variables used in the empirical analysis (see also Online Appendix A.2 for details on operationalization and survey question wordings). In all tables and figures, member states are ordered by population size, with Germany listed first and Estonia listed last.

Our analysis focuses on respondents who stated that their country's membership in the EU is a good thing or a bad thing. The former are classified as pro-EU in our theoretical model, and the latter as eurosceptics. This self-categorization serves as the dependent variable in our empirical model.²¹ Fig. 2 displays the distribution of opinions on EU membership across countries. The data indicate a broad consensus that EU membership is viewed positively. In particular, Eastern European countries such as Slovakia, Poland, and Romania—along with Germany and Spain—show very high levels of support, around 90 percent. In contrast, Northern European countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden exhibit somewhat lower support, at around 70 percent. Italy stands out as the most divided case, with only 52 percent of respondents viewing EU membership as a good thing.

Regarding the independent variables, attitudes toward immigration and redistribution capture the ideological dimension of preferences.²² Both are measured on 11-point scales, indicating the degree of agreement with increased immigration and redistribution policies. The endpoints for the immigration scale are 1 'Fully disagree with more immigration' and 11 'Fully agree with more immigration'. For redistribution, 1 'Fully disagree with reducing income differences' and 11 'Fully agree with reducing income differences'.²³

Territorial identities are captured with survey questions where respondents indicated the strength of identification with their country (*national identity* n_i), their region (*regional identity* r_i), and Europe (*European identity* e_i). All identities are measured on an 11-point scale ranging from 1 'I don't identify at all' to 11 'I identify very strongly'. The two territorial identity differentials capture the national-European identity gap $n_i - e_i$, and the national-regional identity gap $n_i - r_i$. In the estimations, we use standardized versions of these variables to ensure the comparability of effect sizes.

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics on the ideological and territorial identity variables by country. It reports the mean values (denoted with an overbar) of ideological preferences and territorial identities, along with their corresponding standard deviations

¹⁷ See, e.g., Aldrich and Nelson (1984) or Tutz (2011).

¹⁸ See also Brinegar and Jolly (2005); Burgoon (2009); Garry and Tilley (2015).

¹⁹ This question has also been examined in the US context (Bonomi et al., 2021; Norris and Inglehart, 2019).

²⁰ The dataset also includes the United Kingdom, which is excluded from our analysis due to differences in survey questions related to Brexit.

²¹ Respondents who indicated indifference or uncertainty were excluded from the analysis. This decision is revisited in the section on robustness checks.

²² Additional dimensions, such as attitudes toward climate change, would enrich our analysis; however, the dataset used in this study does not include comparable measures of preferences related to climate change or environmental policy.

²³ According to Fauvelle-Aymar (2014), preferences on immigration are linked to migrants' rights to vote.

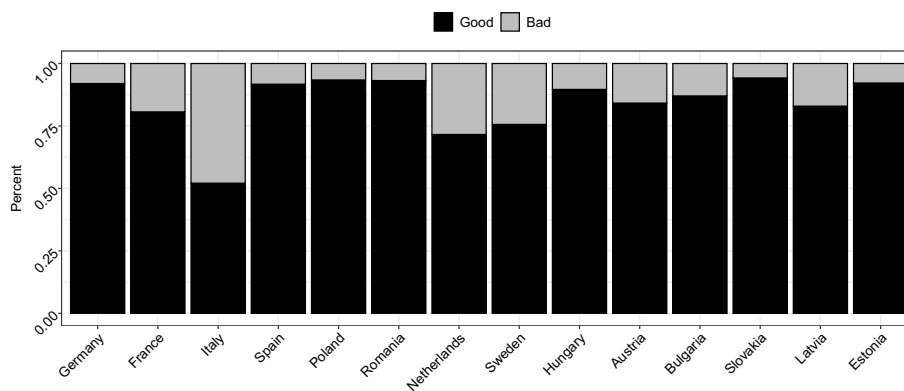


Fig. 2. Support for EU membership across countries. Note: The black bars represent the fraction of citizens who view EU membership as a good thing; the grey bars represent those who view it as a bad thing.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics on ideological and territorial identity variables.

	Ideology			Territorial identity					
	Immigration \bar{x}	Redistribution \bar{y}	Corr. (x, y)	National \bar{n}	Regional \bar{r}	European \bar{e}	Corr. (n, r)	Corr. (n, e)	Corr. (r, e)
Germany	5.60 (3.47)	8.05 (2.76)	-0.07	8.22 (2.28)	7.20 (2.58)	7.97 (2.68)	0.49	0.48	0.34
France	5.55 (3.34)	8.62 (2.42)	-0.04	8.49 (2.32)	7.43 (2.37)	7.25 (2.80)	0.50	0.53	0.29
Italy	4.15 (2.62)	8.52 (2.03)	-0.28	7.44 (2.50)	7.43 (2.64)	6.92 (2.78)	0.54	0.56	0.28
Spain	5.92 (3.53)	9.21 (2.25)	0.02	8.65 (2.54)	8.26 (2.51)	8.09 (2.43)	0.35	0.52	0.41
Poland	6.65 (3.66)	8.89 (2.86)	-0.16	9.48 (2.29)	8.85 (2.22)	8.87 (2.37)	0.48	0.36	0.40
Romania	5.68 (3.17)	10.15 (1.39)	0.06	8.75 (2.19)	8.54 (1.98)	7.65 (2.43)	0.59	0.48	0.32
Netherlands	4.12 (2.89)	7.66 (2.84)	-0.25	7.94 (2.47)	7.66 (2.51)	6.67 (2.77)	0.66	0.54	0.43
Sweden	5.79 (3.42)	7.77 (2.92)	0.02	9.30 (1.92)	7.95 (2.47)	7.60 (2.55)	0.33	0.43	0.13
Hungary	4.98 (3.78)	9.58 (2.34)	-0.10	8.64 (2.68)	7.86 (2.53)	8.28 (2.66)	0.48	0.33	0.34
Austria	4.80 (3.18)	8.06 (2.56)	-0.05	8.60 (2.41)	8.00 (2.59)	7.74 (2.83)	0.53	0.38	0.34
Bulgaria	2.72 (2.61)	9.24 (2.07)	-0.27	9.85 (2.00)	9.05 (2.43)	8.11 (3.00)	0.71	0.24	0.20
Slovakia	5.24 (3.41)	9.13 (2.40)	-0.11	9.07 (1.91)	8.34 (1.93)	8.96 (2.27)	0.53	0.43	0.26
Latvia	4.57 (3.22)	9.32 (2.42)	-0.26	9.49 (2.20)	8.92 (2.30)	7.53 (3.01)	0.55	0.33	0.18
Estonia	4.51 (3.17)	9.18 (2.40)	-0.22	9.16 (2.14)	8.50 (2.26)	7.49 (2.61)	0.63	0.44	0.26

Note: Entries report mean values (with standard deviations in parentheses) and correlations (based on Pearson's method). Variables are measured on 11-point scales: Immigration (1 less, 11 more), redistribution (1 less, 11 more), national/regional/European identity (1 not at all, 11 very strongly).

and key bivariate correlations. Overall, the data suggest moderate immigration attitudes and high preferences for redistribution. Respondents in Poland and Spain express the most pro-immigration views, with average scores around 6, while respondents in Bulgaria report the least support, with scores below 3.²⁴ Eastern European countries—such as Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, and Bulgaria—show strong support for redistribution, with average values above 9. Spain also exhibits high support, whereas the Netherlands and Sweden display the weakest preferences for redistribution. Preferences for immigration and redistribution are typically weakly correlated, reflecting distinct ideological dimensions. This suggests that survey wording does not bias responses by conflating views on immigration with attitudes toward redistribution (Alesina et al., 2023).²⁵

On average, respondents across all countries report high levels of territorial identity, with mean values ranging from 7 to nearly 10. National identity is, on average, the strongest, followed by regional and then European—that is, $\bar{n} > \bar{r} > \bar{e}$. Exceptions to this pattern are observed in Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, where $\bar{n} > \bar{e} > \bar{r}$. In most countries, territorial identities are highly correlated, particularly between national and regional, as well as between national and European identity in more populous member states.²⁶

The average territorial identity differentials by country are displayed in the Online Appendix, Table A2: the national-European identity gap ($n_i - e_i$) and the national-regional identity gap ($n_i - r_i$). All values are positive, indicating that, on average, national

²⁴ We find no clear relationship between average attitudes toward immigration and actual immigration rates by country (Eurostat, 2017). Sweden and Estonia recorded the highest immigration rates relative to their resident populations, while Slovakia had the lowest. Yet, in terms of mean support for immigration, these countries rank third, eleventh, and seventh, respectively. This suggests that public attitudes toward immigration are not directly aligned with objective immigration levels.

²⁵ Moreover, individuals with lower income are generally more pro-redistribution. Still, the differences between the means of the pro-redistribution variable for distinct income levels are not substantial. See Online Appendix Table A3.

²⁶ Since the three identity measures are substantially correlated, including all three simultaneously raises significant concerns about multicollinearity, which in turn affects the stability and interpretability of the estimates. The corresponding estimation results appear in Online Appendix C.3, Table A19.

identity is the strongest form of identification in every country. The identity gaps exhibit a weaker correlation compared to the highly correlated territorial identities. In 9 out of the 14 member states, the national-European gap exceeds the national-regional gap, suggesting that individuals perceive renouncing subnational identity as more costly than giving up supranational identity. Exceptions are Germany, Hungary, and Slovakia, while in Poland the two are approximately equal. The largest disparities between national and European identities are observed in Sweden, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia, pointing to a relatively low valuation of European identity.

The empirical models control for standard socioeconomic variables. These are: gender (1 female, 0 male), age (measured in decades and centered around the sample mean), population size of place of residence (1 rural, 2 small town, 3 large city; reference category: rural), education level (1 elementary, 2 high school, 3 university; reference category: elementary), satisfaction with the regional economic situation (1 satisfied, 0 unsatisfied), income level (1 low, 2 medium, 3 high; reference category: low), and perceived benefit from EU funds in daily life (1 yes, 0 no). Table 3 presents descriptive statistics on these control variables. The average values are broadly similar across countries, with two notable exceptions. First, satisfaction with the regional economy is considerably higher in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Estonia, and approximately half as high in Italy, Spain, and Romania. Second, perceived benefits from the EU are reported as very high in Poland and Estonia, but exceptionally low in Italy, France, and the Netherlands.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics on control variables.

	female	age	Population size			Education			econ. sat.	Income			EU funds
			rural	small	large	elem.	high s.	uni.		low	med.	high	
Germany	0.50	53.16	0.32	0.38	0.30	0.33	0.26	0.41	0.89	0.25	0.29	0.46	0.20
France	0.47	50.45	0.43	0.34	0.23	0.21	0.19	0.60	0.51	0.20	0.26	0.54	0.19
Italy	0.49	50.39	0.27	0.52	0.20	0.19	0.50	0.31	0.33	0.35	0.29	0.36	0.12
Spain	0.47	48.61	0.27	0.36	0.36	0.22	0.35	0.43	0.41	0.30	0.38	0.32	0.39
Poland	0.51	48.91	0.38	0.32	0.30	0.14	0.38	0.48	0.74	0.29	0.24	0.47	0.73
Romania	0.45	47.81	0.20	0.46	0.34	0.11	0.44	0.45	0.41	0.39	0.24	0.37	0.24
Netherlands	0.43	48.78	0.24	0.42	0.33	0.08	0.42	0.50	0.85	0.28	0.26	0.46	0.19
Sweden	0.44	49.31	0.27	0.46	0.27	0.11	0.40	0.49	0.67	0.25	0.22	0.52	0.29
Hungary	0.52	50.72	0.38	0.33	0.29	0.31	0.31	0.39	0.57	0.21	0.42	0.37	0.62
Austria	0.48	52.16	0.57	0.24	0.19	0.25	0.34	0.41	0.86	0.25	0.19	0.56	0.24
Bulgaria	0.51	49.92	0.27	0.33	0.40	0.06	0.38	0.55	0.47	0.21	0.17	0.62	0.53
Slovakia	0.52	44.76	0.32	0.41	0.27	0.16	0.44	0.40	0.61	0.26	0.31	0.43	0.65
Latvia	0.53	49.02	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.11	0.39	0.51	0.47	0.34	0.43	0.23	0.55
Estonia	0.54	50.30	0.47	0.33	0.21	0.15	0.40	0.45	0.81	0.26	0.40	0.34	0.70

Note: Entries report mean values for the continuous variable age and percentages for all remaining categorical variables: female (binary), population size (1 rural, 2 small town, 3 large city), education (1 elementary, 2 high school, 3 university), economic satisfaction (binary, 1 satisfied), income (1 low, 2 medium, 3 high), benefit from EU funds (binary, 1 yes).

4. Empirical results

We begin by comparing the baseline model, which includes only control variables, to extended models that incorporate policy preferences and identity differentials. Second, we assess the impact of ideological considerations and identity differentials. Third, we discuss the role of the control variables. Finally, we conduct robustness checks by validating our results using alternative regression specifications.

4.1. Model comparisons

We estimate three models to evaluate the importance of ideological and territorial identity considerations in shaping support for EU membership. The first model (M1) contains control variables x_i only. The second (M2) adds the ideological variables (immigration x_i and redistribution y_i). The third (M3) additionally contains the territorial identity differentials, $(n_i - e_i)$ and $(n_i - r_i)$. Table 4 assesses their performance based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC).²⁷ The smallest AIC indicates the best model fit.

The comparison of the performance measures reveals two points. First, ideological considerations do shape support for EU membership. Including the ideological variables (M2) improves model fit in 12 out of 14 countries; only in Bulgaria and Latvia does it not. Second, additionally accounting for the territorial identity differentials (M3) delivers the best model in all countries with the exception of Bulgaria. Considerable improvements are observed for France, Spain, and Poland, suggesting that territorial identity considerations are of special relevance in explaining opinions on EU membership in these countries.

4.2. Impact of ideological considerations and identity differentials

The estimates for the ideological variables and the identity differences are presented in Table 5. The last row reports the estimates obtained by pooling the observations from all countries into a single data set. The last two columns report model fit measures (log-likelihood and McFadden's R^2). The lowest model fit is observed in Bulgaria, with a pseudo- R^2 of 0.10. By contrast, the highest fit is found in Estonia, where the pseudo- R^2 reaches 0.44, indicating a considerably better explanatory power for EU support.

²⁷ The Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), reported in the Online Appendix, Table A4, yields similar results.

Table 4
Explaining support for EU Membership: Model Comparisons.

	Obs.	M1:	M2:	M3:
		Controls z_i	$M1 + x_i + y_i$	$M2 + (n_i - e_i) + (n_i - r_i)$
Germany	1123	615.49	613.67	566.68
France	966	867.62	802.64	625.71
Italy	1313	1720.27	1689.24	1624.07
Spain	1278	715.25	713.29	620.27
Poland	1216	521.10	503.94	405.72
Romania	761	334.09	325.33	296.04
Netherlands	278	321.33	309.20	287.84
Sweden	369	396.22	382.43	360.82
Hungary	569	357.67	327.27	314.83
Austria	732	623.26	600.53	564.01
Bulgaria	316	249.00	250.40	249.50
Slovakia	657	263.31	252.44	214.55
Latvia	287	243.39	246.91	226.29
Estonia	282	147.10	132.49	117.08

Note: The dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1) or bad (0). Entries report AIC values. M1 contains control variables z_i only; M2 adds ideological variables (immigration x_i and redistribution y_i) to M1; M3 adds territorial identity differentials ($n_i - e_i$) + ($n_i - r_i$) to M2.

Table 5
Effects of ideological variables and territorial identity differentials.

	Ideological variables				Territorial identity differentials				Model Fit	
	Immigration x_i		Redistribution y_i		$(n_i - e_i)$		$(n_i - r_i)$		Loglik.	pse. R^2
	β_1		β_2		β_3		β_4			
Germany	0.09	(0.12)	0.12	(0.11)	-0.75***	(0.11)	0.03	(0.12)	-268.34	0.14
France	0.54***	(0.12)	-0.28*	(0.12)	-1.34***	(0.13)	0.90***	(0.12)	-297.86	0.37
Italy	0.25***	(0.07)	0.35***	(0.07)	-0.51***	(0.07)	0.22***	(0.06)	-797.04	0.12
Spain	-0.30*	(0.12)	0.06	(0.10)	-1.15***	(0.13)	0.84***	(0.14)	-295.14	0.19
Poland	0.28	(0.15)	0.49***	(0.13)	-1.38***	(0.16)	0.72***	(0.18)	-187.86	0.36
Romania	0.63***	(0.19)	0.17	(0.16)	-0.88***	(0.16)	0.27	(0.18)	-133.02	0.30
Netherlands	0.44*	(0.19)	-0.09	(0.17)	-0.78***	(0.18)	0.58**	(0.18)	-128.92	0.22
Sweden	0.47**	(0.16)	-0.19	(0.15)	-0.61***	(0.14)	0.53**	(0.16)	-165.41	0.19
Hungary	0.95***	(0.25)	0.02	(0.17)	-0.70***	(0.18)	0.32	(0.18)	-142.42	0.25
Austria	0.49***	(0.13)	-0.01	(0.11)	-0.72***	(0.12)	0.10	(0.13)	-267.00	0.17
Bulgaria	0.28	(0.20)	0.02	(0.19)	0.04	(0.17)	0.43*	(0.22)	-109.75	0.10
Slovakia	0.46	(0.25)	-0.01	(0.25)	-1.04***	(0.18)	0.81***	(0.24)	-92.27	0.36
Latvia	-0.05	(0.20)	0.30	(0.21)	-0.84***	(0.19)	0.58*	(0.23)	-98.15	0.25
Estonia	1.08**	(0.39)	0.46	(0.31)	-1.00***	(0.25)	0.44	(0.31)	-43.54	0.44
Pooled	0.40***	(0.03)	0.25***	(0.03)	-0.68***	(0.03)	0.44***	(0.03)	-3612.06	0.19

Note: The dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1) or bad (0). Entries give Maximum Likelihood estimates (standard errors in parentheses). Variables are standardized. n_i is the national, r_i the regional and e_i the European identity. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The right part reports model fit measures: Loglikelihood and pseudo R^2 , defined as $1 - (\text{Residual.Deviance}/\text{Null.Deviance})$. All models contain control variables. Complete estimation tables and the pooled regression are reported in the Online Appendix (Tables A5–A18 and A21).

The estimates reported in Table 5 are visualized in Fig. 3, which plots the same estimation results along with their corresponding confidence intervals. Support for increased immigration and redistribution, along with a wider gap between national and regional identities, is generally associated with more pro-EU attitudes, as indicated by positive coefficients. By contrast, a larger gap between national and European identities is strongly linked to euroscepticism and constitutes the most substantial effect observed, with negative coefficients. Among the ideological variables, preferences regarding immigration exert a stronger influence than attitudes toward redistribution.

While Table 5 presents the numerical estimates, Fig. 3 offers a more intuitive comparison of the direction and relative impact of each variable's effect, helping to address the theoretical questions discussed in Section 2.2.²⁸ We systematically address each of these aspects. For clarity, we omit hats denoting estimated coefficients.

Question (1) examines whether redistribution and immigration attitudes shape opinions on EU integration. We find that in only two countries (France and Italy) both issues are statistically significant predictors of EU membership preferences ($\beta_1 \neq 0$, $\beta_2 \neq 0$). Immigration attitudes have a strong and more consistent effect on EU membership preferences, whereas redistribution attitudes show weak and inconsistent effects across countries.

²⁸ We do not report marginal effects or predicted probabilities because, in binary logistic regression, the marginal effect of a covariate depends on the values of the other covariates due to the non-linear link function. Since the models are estimated separately for each country and covariate distributions differ across countries, marginal effects evaluated at particular covariate values would not be directly comparable across countries.

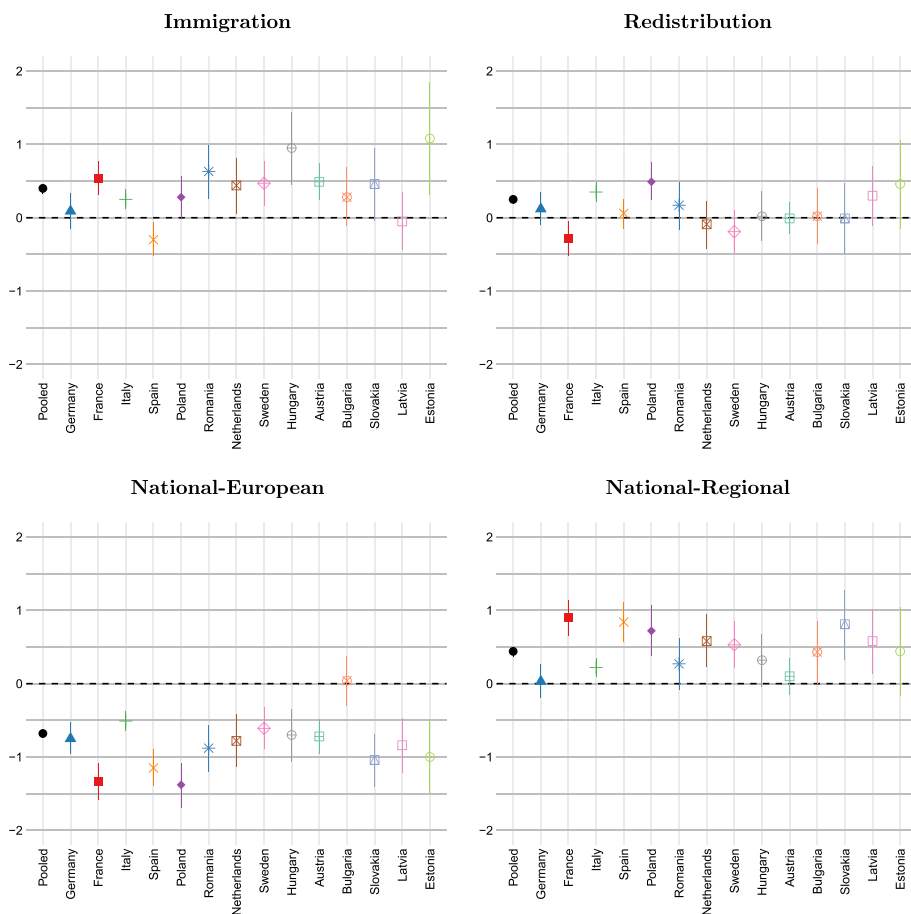


Fig. 3. Impact of ideological considerations and territorial identity differentials. Note: The dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1) or bad (0). The figures display pooled and country-specific Maximum Likelihood estimates for immigration, redistribution and territorial identity differentials with 95% confidence intervals. Variables are standardized. All models contain control variables. Complete estimation tables and the pooled regression are reported in the Online Appendix (Tables A5-A18 and A21).

Question (2) investigates whether pro-redistribution and pro-immigration citizens are associated with more pro-EU attitudes. We find that in nearly all countries where the immigration and redistribution estimates are statistically significant, they are positive. We therefore interpret that pro-immigration and pro-redistribution citizens tend to be more pro-EU. We observe some exceptions. Regarding immigration, Spain and Latvia exhibit negative coefficients, although in the latter case, the estimate is not statistically significant. In Spain, *ceteris paribus*, individuals with more pro-immigration views are more likely to express eurosceptic attitudes. We hypothesize that, following the migration crisis, Spaniards came to perceive the EU as adopting a stricter stance on immigration than their traditional position. France also represents an exception: *ceteris paribus*, pro-redistribution attitudes are strongly associated with eurosceptic opinions. This may reflect a perception among French citizens that EU integration has constrained their traditional welfare-protection policies. A similar relationship is present in the Netherlands and Sweden, although the estimates are not statistically significant.

Question (3) examines the role of territorial identities in shaping attitudes toward EU membership. In nearly all countries, the coefficient for the national-European identity gap is highly significant, with Bulgaria being the only exception where this factor does not exert an effect. Moreover, in 9 out of 14 countries, the difference between national and regional identities is also statistically significant. These findings suggest that both types of identity differentials generally contribute to explaining variation in EU membership preferences. The results are consistent with the theoretical expectations outlined in Propositions 1 and 2. Specifically, we observe that $\beta_3 < 0$, indicating that a smaller gap between national and European identity attachments is associated with greater support for EU membership. Conversely, $\beta_4 > 0$, suggesting that a larger gap between national and regional identities increases the likelihood of supporting EU membership.

Finally, Question (4) focuses on comparing the relative influence of different factors in explaining preferences toward EU membership. Fig. 3 presents the coefficients for the standardized variables, allowing for a direct comparison of how each factor contributes to explaining variation in opinions about the EU being a good or bad thing. The figure shows that identity-related factors play a larger role than ideological ones in shaping support for EU membership. Across a large majority of countries, stronger national (relative to European) or regional (relative to national) identities are associated with lower support for EU integration, with effects that

are generally larger than those of immigration or redistribution attitudes. Immigration views have a consistent and significant impact, while redistribution attitudes show weak and inconsistent effects across countries. These findings are consistent with Deutsch (1953a,b) argument that identity concerns can undermine the political benefits of integration, which in our model are captured by pro-immigration attitudes (in 9 out of 14 countries) and pro-redistribution attitudes (in 3 out of 14 countries).

The pooled estimates indicate positive effects for immigration and redistribution. However, the country-specific results show substantial cross-national variation.²⁹ Table 6 ranks the salience of the issues shaping preferences on EU membership and permits a comparison across countries. For each country, the ranking is derived by ordering the coefficients of the variables—from largest to smallest—among those that are statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Since all variables are standardized, the ranking reflects which variable is a stronger predictor of individuals' views on EU membership. The national-European identity gap ranks first in nearly all countries, followed by the national-regional identity gap. The issue of immigration is the most influential factor in only 2 out of the 14 countries. However, in 8 out of 14 countries immigration is more relevant than redistribution.

Table 6
Ranking of the salience of Ideology and territorial identities in shaping preferences on EU membership.

Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Germany	National-European			
France	National-European	National-Regional	Immigration	Redistribution
Italy	National-European	Redistribution	Immigration	National-Regional
Spain	National-European	National-Regional	Immigration	
Poland	National-European	National-Regional	Redistribution	
Romania	National-European	Immigration		
Netherlands	National-European	National-Regional	Immigration	
Sweden	National-European	National-Regional	Immigration	
Hungary	Immigration	National-European		
Austria	National-European	Immigration		
Bulgaria	National-Regional			
Slovakia	National-European	National-Regional		
Latvia	National-European	National-Regional		
Estonia	Immigration	National-European		
Pooled	National-European	National-Regional	Immigration	Redistribution

Note: Ranking of the issues with the greatest effect on the variability of opinions on EU membership as good (1) or bad (0). Results are based on the regression analysis in Table 4.

An additional question of interest is whether the relevance of immigration in shaping pro-EU preferences is primarily driven by individuals who exhibit greater geographic mobility, as opposed to those who have lived permanently in the same location. To explore this, we divide the full sample in each country into two groups: natives and non-natives. This classification relies on the difference between respondents' age and the number of years they have resided in the area where the interview was conducted, allowing us to approximate their place of origin. We hypothesize that non-natives may hold more pro-immigration attitudes than natives. Results are reported in the Online Appendix, Table A20. In the full sample, immigration shows a significant association with EU support in 9 out of 14 countries. When disaggregating the data, the effect remains significant in 7 countries for non-natives and in 6 countries for natives. These relatively small differences suggest that the link between pro-immigration attitudes and EU support is not solely driven by more mobile individuals.

In summary, our results underscore the comparatively limited influence of the traditional ideological concern of redistribution and highlight the greater salience of identity-based factors, followed by immigration attitudes in shaping public opinion toward EU integration.

4.3. Impact of control variables

The effects of individuals' socioeconomic characteristics are presented in Table 7. A positive sign (+) indicates that the variable is associated with more pro-EU preferences, while a negative sign (−) denotes an association with more eurosceptic views. Blank cells correspond to coefficients that do not reach statistical significance at the 5 percent level.

Economic satisfaction emerges as the only variable that consistently influences citizens' attitudes toward EU membership across all countries in the sample. Specifically, individuals who are satisfied with the economic situation in their region are more likely to support EU membership. Perceived benefits from EU funds also play a significant role in 10 out of 14 countries, where they are positively associated with pro-EU attitudes, with Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Hungary as exceptions. Other socioeconomic variables show significant effects only in a limited number of countries. For example, women are more likely to support EU membership in Germany and Romania. Age has a positive effect in Germany, France, Poland, and Hungary. The residence size is also relevant: living in a small town is positively associated with pro-EU views in Poland, while living in a large town has a positive effect in France but a negative effect in Romania. Higher levels of education are positively associated with EU support in France, Italy, and Estonia. Finally, high income correlates positively with pro-EU attitudes in Spain, the Netherlands, and Austria; medium income has a positive effect in Slovakia and Latvia, but a negative effect in Poland.

²⁹ Online Appendix, Table A22, also reports the pooled regression with random intercepts, which yields similar results.

Table 7
Impact of control variables.

	Female	Age	Population size		Education		econ. sat.	Income		EU funds
			small	large	high school	university		medium	high	
Germany	+	+					+			
France		+		+			+			+
Italy							+			+
Spain							+		+	+
Poland		+	+				+	-		+
Rumania	+			-			+			+
Netherlands							+		+	
Sweden							+			
Hungary		+					+			
Austria							+		+	+
Bulgaria							+			+
Slovakia							+	+		+
Latvia							+	+		+
Estonia					+		+			+
Pooled	+	+	-				+		+	+

Note: Dependent variable is the individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1) or bad (0). Entries summarize the significant effects (p-val. < 0.05) of the control variables. Reference categories: population size (rural), education (elementary school), income (low). Positive sign means pro-EU, negative sign means contra-EU. See Online Appendix, Tables A5–A18 and A21 for estimates.

4.4. Robustness checks: alternative ordinal regression models

To further validate our estimation results, we conduct robustness checks. In our empirical model, we use only respondents who stated that their country's membership in the EU is a good thing or a bad thing. However, this restricted sample may not be fully representative and could potentially bias the results. To address this concern, we estimate two types of ordinal logistic regression models that incorporate respondents who perceive EU membership as neither a good nor a bad thing (a detailed analytical description of these models, along with additional results presented in tables, can be found in Online Appendix D). This approach allows us to assess whether our findings hold when accounting for undecided or neutral attitudes toward EU membership.

The results of the cumulative logistic regression are reported in Table 8, while those of the adjacent-categories logistic regression appear in Table 9.

Table 8
Cumulative logistic regression estimates.

	Ideological Variables				Territorial Identity Differentials				Model Fit	
	Immigration x_i		Redistribution y_i		$(n_i - e_i)$		$(n_i - r_i)$		Loglik.	pse. R^2
	β_1		β_2		β_3		β_4			
Germany	0.11	(0.08)	0.13	(0.07)	-0.61***	(0.08)	0.10	(0.08)	-733.46	0.08
France	0.38***	(0.07)	-0.13*	(0.06)	-0.93***	(0.07)	0.56***	(0.07)	-1021.56	0.19
Italy	0.22***	(0.05)	0.27***	(0.05)	-0.37***	(0.05)	0.19***	(0.05)	-1948.10	0.06
Spain	-0.10	(0.06)	0.00	(0.06)	-0.83***	(0.07)	0.66***	(0.07)	-1087.42	0.14
Poland	0.38***	(0.07)	0.21**	(0.07)	-0.97***	(0.08)	0.24**	(0.08)	-886.86	0.15
Romania	0.22**	(0.08)	0.12	(0.08)	-0.50***	(0.08)	0.23**	(0.08)	-603.82	0.07
Netherlands	0.28**	(0.11)	-0.01	(0.10)	-0.48***	(0.10)	0.34***	(0.10)	-404.43	0.11
Sweden	0.30**	(0.10)	-0.19*	(0.09)	-0.52***	(0.10)	0.47***	(0.10)	-480.30	0.09
Hungary	0.43***	(0.08)	0.05	(0.07)	-0.50***	(0.08)	0.02	(0.08)	-708.64	0.13
Austria	0.44***	(0.08)	0.05	(0.08)	-0.49***	(0.08)	0.02	(0.08)	-668.73	0.09
Bulgaria	0.17	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)	-402.27	0.07
Slovakia	0.18*	(0.08)	-0.05	(0.09)	-0.73***	(0.08)	0.33***	(0.08)	-601.34	0.18
Latvia	0.12	(0.10)	0.11	(0.10)	-0.45***	(0.10)	0.19	(0.10)	-398.19	0.10
Estonia	0.30*	(0.13)	-0.02	(0.12)	-0.56***	(0.12)	0.26*	(0.12)	-270.85	0.15

Note: The dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1), neither good nor bad (2), or bad (3). Entries give Maximum Likelihood estimates (standard errors in parentheses). Variables are standardized. n_i is the national, r_i the regional and e_i the European identity. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The right part reports model fit measures: Loglikelihood and pseudo R^2 , defined as $1 - (\text{Residual.Deviance}/\text{Null.Deviance})$. All models contain control variables. See Online Appendix D1, Tables A24 and A25, for details.

First, the results of the cumulative logistic regression are broadly consistent with those of the binary models. In 11 out of 14 countries, pro-immigration preferences significantly increase the likelihood of viewing EU membership as either a good thing or neither good nor bad, rather than considering it a bad thing. The coefficient is no longer significant for Spain, but remains significant and positive in both Poland and Slovakia. Redistribution preferences are found to influence attitudes toward EU membership in only four out of 14 countries. In Sweden, as in France, pro-redistribution attitudes are associated with more eurosceptic opinions, which may reflect a distinctive conception in which EU integration is perceived as potentially constraining welfare-protection policies.

Table 9
Adjacent-Categories logistic regression estimates.

	Ideological variables				Territorial identity differentials				Model Fit	
	Immigration x_i		Redistribution y_i		$(n_i - e_i)$		$(n_i - r_i)$		Loglik.	pse. R^2
	β_1		β_2		β_3		β_4			
Germany	0.07	(0.05)	0.09	(0.05)	-0.40***	(0.05)	0.06	(0.05)	-735.64	0.08
France	0.29***	(0.05)	-0.10*	(0.05)	-0.69***	(0.06)	0.43***	(0.05)	-1028.06	0.19
Italy	0.14***	(0.03)	0.18***	(0.03)	-0.25***	(0.03)	0.12***	(0.03)	-1950.44	0.06
Spain	-0.10*	(0.05)	0.01	(0.04)	-0.63***	(0.06)	0.49***	(0.06)	-1103.63	0.12
Poland	0.29***	(0.06)	0.19***	(0.05)	-0.75***	(0.06)	0.21***	(0.06)	-886.91	0.15
Romania	0.21**	(0.07)	0.09	(0.06)	-0.39***	(0.07)	0.17**	(0.07)	-597.24	0.08
Netherlands	0.21*	(0.08)	-0.02	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)	0.26**	(0.08)	-406.32	0.10
Sweden	0.22**	(0.07)	-0.13	(0.07)	-0.35***	(0.07)	0.31***	(0.07)	-480.98	0.09
Hungary	0.40***	(0.07)	0.04	(0.06)	-0.42***	(0.07)	0.04	(0.07)	-711.41	0.13
Austria	0.29***	(0.06)	0.02	(0.05)	-0.33***	(0.06)	0.02	(0.06)	-669.11	0.09
Bulgaria	0.14	(0.08)	0.00	(0.08)	-0.09	(0.08)	0.11	(0.08)	-405.11	0.06
Slovakia	0.17*	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.60***	(0.07)	0.31***	(0.08)	-604.95	0.17
Latvia	0.07	(0.08)	0.10	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)	0.18*	(0.08)	-398.18	0.10
Estonia	0.29**	(0.11)	0.03	(0.10)	-0.49***	(0.10)	0.24*	(0.10)	-270.01	0.16

Note: Dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1), neither good nor bad (2), or bad (3). Entries give Maximum Likelihood estimates (standard errors in parentheses). Variables are standardized. n_i is the national, r_i the regional and e_i the European identity. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The right part reports model fit measures: Loglikelihood and pseudo R^2 , defined as $1 - (\text{Residual.Deviance}/\text{Null.Deviance})$. All models contain control variables. See Online Appendix D.2, Tables A26 and A27, for details.

Similarly, the identity gap between national and European identity remains a significant predictor in all countries except Bulgaria. The gap between national and regional identities is significant in 9 out of 14 countries, indicating that individuals with a greater divergence between these identities are more likely to adopt a pro-European or neutral stance, rather than a eurosceptic one. Notably, the inclusion of the neither good nor bad category renders this identity variable significant in Romania and Estonia, whereas it does not in Bulgaria and Latvia. Overall, identity-related factors, followed by immigration preferences, exert the strongest influence on attitudes toward EU membership.

Second, the results from the adjacent-categories logistic regression further corroborate our main findings. Pro-immigration preferences significantly increase support for EU membership in 11 of 14 countries, with additional significance in Poland and Slovakia compared to the binary specification. Redistribution attitudes remain relevant in only three countries. The national-European identity gap continues to be negatively associated with EU support in all countries except Bulgaria, while the national-regional identity gap is positively associated with pro-EU attitudes in 10 countries, including Romania and Estonia—two additional cases not obtained in the binary model. We find that identity-related factors, followed by immigration preferences, are the considerations that most consistently influence individuals' opinions on the desirability of EU membership.

4.5. Robustness check: alternative redistribution specification

Our study shows that traditional ideological concerns such as redistribution exert comparatively limited influence. When pooling data in a single regression, redistribution is shown to have a weak positive impact on citizens' assessment of EU integration. However, when studying country specific effects, we find that in countries such as France and Sweden, individuals with pro-redistribution attitudes are, on average, more eurosceptic, while in Italy and Poland the opposite effect holds.³⁰ Thus, redistribution attitudes do not structure support for the EU. To compare the two potential redistribution aspects—within own country and across countries—we use a survey question on cohesion policy: 'In your opinion, should the EU continue this policy, where wealthier countries contribute more, and poorer EU regions receive more funding?'³¹ This question does not measure the same concept, as the correlation between support for cohesion policy and support for income redistribution is very low in almost all countries (see Table A28 in Online Appendix). Instead, it taps into solidarity among countries and does not directly capture the demand for redistribution.

We substitute the previous redistribution attitude question with this one on support for cohesion policy. Whereas the effects of immigration show similar tendencies, we observe major changes in this alternative redistribution concept. In almost all countries, the effect is positive and substantial, meaning that those favoring cohesion policy tend to view EU integration as positive. The estimates for the identity differentials are largely unaffected (see Table 10).

Whereas the policy-oriented question that we used about whether the government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels has been widely used as a measure of demand for redistribution (Finseraas, 2009) and as a general indicator of support for the welfare state (Peters and Ensink, 2015), the alternative question—whether wealthier countries should contribute more—captures a distinct, supranational notion of solidarity. This distinction helps explain our results: support for EU membership

³⁰ Related evidence is provided by Costa-Font and Cowell (2025), who show that in the UK EU Referendum, men's aversion to income inequality was associated with a lower probability of voting Leave.

³¹ Responses are measured on a four-point scale ranging from (1) strongly agree to (4) strongly disagree (see Online Appendix A.2 for details on the operationalization).

Table 10
Alternative specification for redistribution: agreement with cohesion policy.

	Ideological Variables				Territorial Identity Differentials				Model Fit	
	Immigration x_i		Cohesion Policy y_i		$(n_i - e_i)$		$(n_i - r_i)$		Loglik.	pse. R^2
	β_1		β_2		β_3		β_4			
Germany	0.00	(0.12)	0.41***	(0.11)	-0.71***	(0.11)	0.03	(0.12)	-261.42	0.16
France	0.47***	(0.12)	0.51***	(0.11)	-1.29***	(0.13)	0.90***	(0.12)	-288.55	0.39
Italy	0.14*	(0.06)	0.39***	(0.06)	-0.49***	(0.07)	0.23***	(0.06)	-789.96	0.13
Spain	-0.37**	(0.12)	0.41***	(0.10)	-1.11***	(0.13)	0.84***	(0.14)	-287.18	0.21
Poland	0.22	(0.16)	1.02***	(0.15)	-1.27***	(0.17)	0.71***	(0.20)	-153.37	0.45
Romania	0.58**	(0.19)	0.68***	(0.14)	-0.81***	(0.17)	0.40*	(0.20)	-120.71	0.36
Netherlands	0.34	(0.20)	0.79***	(0.19)	-0.68***	(0.20)	0.57**	(0.19)	-118.65	0.28
Sweden	0.22	(0.17)	0.73***	(0.16)	-0.60***	(0.15)	0.42*	(0.17)	-150.78	0.25
Hungary	0.91***	(0.25)	0.44**	(0.16)	-0.70***	(0.18)	0.28	(0.18)	-138.53	0.27
Austria	0.44***	(0.13)	0.41***	(0.11)	-0.63***	(0.12)	0.10	(0.13)	-259.76	0.18
Bulgaria	0.26	(0.20)	0.08	(0.18)	0.05	(0.17)	0.42	(0.22)	-108.26	0.10
Slovakia	0.40	(0.24)	0.52*	(0.23)	-0.90***	(0.18)	0.83**	(0.25)	-88.39	0.38
Latvia	-0.09	(0.19)	0.63***	(0.18)	-0.77***	(0.19)	0.54*	(0.22)	-91.39	0.30
Estonia	1.07*	(0.48)	-0.05	(0.31)	-1.04***	(0.27)	0.50	(0.33)	-38.24	0.46

Note: The dependent variable is individual opinion on whether EU membership is good (1) or bad (0). Entries give Maximum Likelihood estimates (standard errors in parentheses). Variables are standardized. n_i is the national, r_i the regional and e_i the European identity. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The right part reports model fit measures: Loglikelihood and pseudo R^2 , defined as $1 - (\text{Residual.Deviance}/\text{Null.Deviance})$. All models contain control variables.

is associated with support for solidarity among member states, whereas attitudes toward within-country income redistribution are not systematically related to evaluations of EU integration.³²

5. Conclusion

This contribution examines how territorial identities and attitudes toward redistribution and immigration shape public support for European integration. In recent decades, social class consciousness has weakened, reducing the explanatory power of redistribution-based accounts in favor of other concerns. At least for the US, this trend has been confirmed by [Norris and Inglehart \(2019\)](#) and [Bonomi et al. \(2021\)](#).

We develop a theoretical model in which individuals evaluate their country's integration into the EU by comparing European and national policies on immigration and redistribution, alongside their attachments to the regional, national, and European levels. The model shows how heterogeneity in these attitudes leads individuals to either support or oppose their country's integration into the EU.³³

Our empirical analysis confronts the model with the data and shows that pro-immigration attitudes are more consistently associated with support for EU membership than pro-redistribution preferences.³⁴ Beyond these policy preferences, territorial identities are also associated with attitudes toward the EU: individuals who prioritize larger territorial units—the EU over the nation, and the nation over the region—are more likely to hold pro-EU attitudes. Conversely, those who feel a stronger attachment to smaller territorial units—such as their region over the nation, and the nation over the EU—are more likely to be eurosceptic.

Our findings highlight policy implications across several EU domains, including migration governance, identity-building programs, and cohesion policy, that could enhance citizens' assimilation of EU membership. First, policies that foster more positive attitudes toward immigration. This includes measures that facilitate migrants' social and economic integration and improve the governance of migration and labor mobility across member states.³⁵ Second, policies that cultivate a shared European identity may strengthen support for European integration. Programs such as the Erasmus+ promote cross-border mobility and foster networks that transcend national borders. Additional initiatives could bring EU governance closer to citizens, for example, by rotating certain high-level meetings or public institutional events across member states. Third, making the EU's contributions more visible could reinforce European identity and attachment to the European project. Transfers through instruments such as the European Union Cohesion Policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility are often implemented by national governments, which can obscure their EU origin. Greater visibility of these programs could help citizens associate public investments with EU action.

³² A recent study by [Martinangeli and Windsteiger \(2023\)](#) links information on migration flows and redistribution, showing that making people think about immigration or poverty affects demand for redistribution. See also [Bettin and Sacchi \(2020\)](#).

³³ While racial and ethnic identities are relevant in the US ([Alesina and Glaeser, 2004](#)), the EU is different, and multilevel identities associated with one's region, nation and Europe, produce divided attachments among citizens.

³⁴ In recent decades, attitudes toward immigration have been shaped by perceived economic threats from new migrants, which reflect the economic dimension of individuals' openness to migration ([Alesina et al., 2021](#); [Colantone and Stanig, 2018](#)).

³⁵ The recent EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is not primarily designed to foster pro-immigration attitudes. Rather, it aims to improve migration governance through common procedures. Although its implementation may indirectly affect public attitudes, for example, by reducing perceptions of disorder and improving integration outcomes, promoting pro-immigration sentiment is not among its stated objectives.

While the discussion above outlines potential policy implications, several limitations of the empirical analysis should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional nature of our data constrains our ability to draw causal conclusions. Future research should draw on longitudinal or panel data to better assess how contextual changes, such as shifts in the salience of immigration or recent geopolitical threats, shape attitudes toward the EU. In addition, a more direct question asking whether citizens perceive their protective welfare state to be threatened by EU integration could help clarify whether redistributive concerns play a limited role, as our findings suggest. Finally, regional-level datasets would enable more granular analyses of the mechanisms at play and, when combined with alternative explanations, such as immigration inflows, institutional trust, or media framing, could further enrich our understanding of how identity and ideology shape support for the EU.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the drivers of euroscepticism. It shows that individuals who prioritize attachment to smaller territorial units—especially their region over their nation, and both over the supranational EU—are more likely to oppose European integration, particularly when such preferences are accompanied by anti-immigration attitudes. Overall, the results suggest that redistribution attitudes play a relatively limited role compared with identity-based factors and immigration attitudes in shaping public opinion toward the EU.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Ingrid Mauerer: Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Validation, Software, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Data curation. **Andrea Pili:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation. **M. Socorro Puy:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Funding sources

Ingrid Mauerer received financial support from the [Junta de Andalucía, Spain](#), under the research project [EMC21-00256](#). M. Socorro Puy received support from the research project [PID2023-147391NB-I00](#), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. Andrea Pili acknowledges the training received at the University of Malaga through the PhD Program in Economics and Business (Doctorado en Economía y Empresa).

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

M. Socorro Puy reports financial support was provided by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. Ingrid Mauerer reports financial support was provided by the Government of Andalusia. If there are other authors, they declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 31st *Encuentro de Economía Pública* (Pamplona, 2024), the Spanish Network on Microeconomic Theory (Vigo, 2024), the 8th Spain–Japan Meeting on Economic Theory (Ronda, 2024), the 4th International PhD-Student Conference on Economics and Business (Malaga, 2025), the Annual Meeting of the Association of Southern-European Economic Theorists (Rabat, 2025), the workshop *Applications of Game Theory: Incentives, Conflict, and Public Policy* (Alicante, 2026), and the UNED Seminar. We thank participants and audiences at these meetings for their helpful comments and suggestions. We are also grateful to the editor and three anonymous referees for their constructive comments that significantly improved the paper.

Appendix A. Online Appendix

The Online Appendix to this article can be found online at [doi:10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2026.102827](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2026.102827).

Data availability statement

The datasets analyzed, the code and the documentation for the code are available in the Harvard Dataverse repository: [Mauerer et al. \(2026\)](#): “Replication Data for: What Drives Pro-EU Preferences? Territorial Identities, Immigration and Redistribution Attitudes”, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/YLMG3U>, Harvard Dataverse, Version 1.

References

- Aichholzer, J., Kritzing, S., Plescia, C., 2021. National identity profiles and support for the European Union. *Eur. Union Polit.* 22 (2), 293–315.
- Akerlof, G.A., Kranton, R.E., 2010. *Identity Economics: How Our Identities Shape Our Work, Wages, and Well-Being*. Princeton, US: Princeton University Press.
- Aldrich, J.H., Nelson, F.D., 1984. *Linear Probability, Logit, and Probit Models*. Newbury Park, US: Sage Publications.
- Alesina, A., Glaeser, E.L., 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York, US: Oxford University Press.
- Alesina, A., Miano, A., Stantcheva, S., 2023. Immigration and redistribution. *Rev. Econ. Stud.* 90 (1), 1–39.
- Alesina, A., Murard, E., Rapoport, H., 2021. Immigration and preferences for redistribution in Europe. *J. Econ. Geogr.* 21 (6), 925–954.
- Alesina, A., Spolaore, E., 1997. On the number and size of nations. *Q. J. Econ.* 112 (4), 1027–1056.
- Alesina, A., Spolaore, E., 2003. *The Size of Nations*. Cambridge, US: The MIT Press.

- Alesina, A., Spolaore, E., Wacziarg, R., 2000. Economic integration and political disintegration. *Am. Econ. Rev.* 90 (5), 1276–1296.
- Alesina, A., Stantcheva, S., Teso, E., 2018. Intergenerational mobility and preferences for redistribution. *Am. Econ. Rev.* 108 (2), 521–554.
- Ansola-behere, S., Puy, M.S., 2016. Identity voting. *Public Choice* 169 (1–2), 77–95.
- Ansola-behere, S., Puy, M.S., 2022. Constitutions, federalism, and national integration. *Eur. Econ. Rev.* 148, 104225.
- Azrou, R., Wojcieszak, M.E., 2017. What's Islam got to do with IT? Attitudes toward specific religious and national out-groups, and support for EU policies. *Eur. Union Polit.* 18 (1), 51–72.
- Bauhr, M., Charron, N., 2020. The EU as a savior and a saint? Corruption and public support for redistribution. *J. Eur. Public Policy* 27 (4), 509–527.
- Beetsma, R., Burgooon, B., Nicoli, F., 2023. Is European attachment sufficiently strong to support an EU fiscal capacity: evidence from a conjoint experiment. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 78, 102357.
- Bettin, G., Sacchi, A., 2020. Health spending in Italy: the impact of immigrants. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 65, 101932.
- Bolton, P., Roland, G., 1997. The break-up of nations: a political economy analysis. *Q. J. Econ.* 112 (4), 1057–1090.
- Bolton, P., Roland, G., Spolaore, E., 1996. Economic theories of the break-up and integration of nations. *Eur. Econ. Rev.* 40 (3–5), 697–705.
- Bonomi, G., Gennaioli, N., Tabellini, G., 2021. Identity, beliefs, and political conflict. *Q. J. Econ.* 136 (4), 2371–2411.
- Brigevech, A., 2018. Regional identity and support for integration: an EU-wide comparison of parochialists, inclusive regionalist, and pseudo-exclusivists. *Eur. Union Polit.* 19 (4), 639–662.
- Brinegar, A.P., Jolly, S.K., 2005. Location, location, location: national contextual factors and public support for European integration. *Eur. Union Polit.* 6 (2), 155–180.
- Brinegar, A.P., Jolly, S.K., Kitschelt, H., 2004. Varieties of capitalism and political divides over European integration. In: Marks, G., Steenbergen, M.R. (Eds.), *European Integration and Political Conflict*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 62–89.
- Burgooon, B., 2009. Social nation and social Europe: support for national and supranational welfare compensation in Europe. *Eur. Union Polit.* 10 (4), 427–455.
- Carey, S., 2002. Undivided loyalties: is national identity an obstacle to European integration? *Eur. Union Polit.* 3 (4), 387–413.
- Chu, A.C., 2010. Nation states VS. United Empire: effects of political competition on economic growth. *Public Choice* 145, 181–195.
- Ciaglia, S., Fuest, C., Heinemann, F., 2018. What a Feeling?! How to Promote “European Identity”. Technical report. *EconPol Policy Report*.
- Colantone, I., Stanig, P., 2018. Global competition and Brexit. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 112 (2), 201–218.
- Costa-Font, J., Cowell, F., 2025. An unconsidered leave? Inequality aversion and the Brexit referendum. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 86, 102648.
- De Vreese, C.H., Boomgaard, H.G., 2005. Projecting EU referendums: fear of immigration and support for European integration. *Eur. Union Polit.* 6 (1), 59–82.
- Deflem, M., Pampel, F.C., 1996. The myth of postnational identity: popular support for European unification. *Social Forces* 75 (1), 119–143.
- Deutsch, K.W., 1953a. *Nationalism and Social Communication*. London, UK: Chapman & Hall.
- Deutsch, K.W., 1953b. The growth of nations: some recurrent patterns of political and social integration. *World Politics* 5 (2), 168–195.
- Fauvelle-Aymar, C., 2014. The welfare state, migration, and voting rights. *Public Choice* 159 (1), 105–120.
- Finseraas, H., 2009. Income inequality and demand for redistribution: a multilevel analysis of European public opinion. *Scand. Polit. Stud.* 32 (1), 94–119.
- Flandard, S., 2019. Partial decentralization as a way to prevent secessionist conflict. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 59, 159–178.
- Fligstein, N., Polyakova, A., Sandholtz, W., 2012. European integration, nationalism and European identity. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 50, 106–122.
- Foster, C., Frieden, J., 2021. Economic determinants of public support for European integration, 1995–2018. *Eur. Union Polit.* 22 (2), 266–292.
- Garry, J., Tilley, J., 2009. The macroeconomic factors conditioning the impact of identity on attitudes towards the EU. *Eur. Union Polit.* 10 (3), 361–379.
- Garry, J., Tilley, J., 2015. Inequality, state ownership and the European Union: how economic context and economic ideology shape support for the European Union. *Eur. Union Polit.* 16 (1), 139–154.
- Grossman, G.M., Helpman, E., 2021. Identity politics and trade policy. *Rev. Econ. Stud.* 88 (3), 1101–1126.
- Guinjoan, M., Bermúdez, S., 2020. Nested or exclusive? The role of identities on blame attribution during the Great Recession. *Nat. Natl.* 26 (1), 197–220.
- Haimanko, O., Le Breton, M., Weber, S., 2005. Transfers in a polarized country: bridging the gap between efficiency and stability. *J. Public Econ.* 89 (7), 1277–1303.
- Hobolt, S.B., 2016. The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent. *J. Eur. Public Policy* 23 (9), 1259–1277.
- Hobolt, S.B., De Vries, C.E., 2016. Public support for European integration. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 19, 413–432.
- Hobolt, S.B., Van der Brug, W., De Vreese, C.H., Boomgaard, H.G., Hinrichsen, M.C., 2011. Religious intolerance and euroscepticism. *Eur. Union Polit.* 12 (3), 359–379.
- Hooghe, L., Marks, G., 2004. Does identity or economic rationality drive public opinion on European integration? *Polit. Sci. & Polit.* 37 (3), 415–420.
- Huddy, L., 2001. From social to political identity: a critical examination of social identity theory. *Polit. Psychol.* 22 (1), 127–156.
- Inglehart, R., 1970. Cognitive mobilization and European identity. *Comparative Politics* 3 (1), 45–70.
- Inglehart, R., 1977. Long term trends in mass support for European unification. *Gov. Oppos.* 12 (2), 150–177.
- Jérôme, B., Vaillant, N.G., 2005. The French rejection of the European constitution: an empirical analysis. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 21 (4), 1085–1092.
- Kentmen-Cin, C., Erisen, C., 2017. Anti-immigration attitudes and the opposition to European integration: a critical assessment. *Eur. Union Polit.* 18 (1), 3–25.
- Kritzinger, S., 2003. The influence of the nation-state on individual support for the European Union. *Eur. Union Polit.* 4 (2), 219–241.
- Kuhn, T., Nicoli, F., 2020. Collective identities and the integration of core state powers: introduction to the special issue. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 58 (1), 3–20.
- Le Breton, M., Weber, S., 2003. The art of making everybody happy: how to prevent a secession. *IMF Staff Pap.* 50 (3), 403–435.
- Lindbeck, A., Weibull, J.W., 1987. Balanced-budget redistribution as the outcome of political competition. *Public Choice* 52 (3), 273–297.
- Lubbers, M., 2008. Regarding the Dutch see to the European constitution: a test of the identity, utilitarian and political approaches to voting no. *Eur. Union Polit.* 9 (1), 59–86.
- Martinangeli, A.F.M., Windsteiger, L., 2023. Immigration VS. Poverty: causal impact on demand for redistribution in a survey experiment. *Eur. J. Polit. Econ.* 78, 102348.
- Mauerer, I., Puy, M.S., 2026. Ingroup and outgroup effects on party placement perceptions. *Eur. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 18 (1), 18–39.
- Mauerer, I., Pili, A., Puy, M.S., 2026. Replication data for: what drives pro-EU preferences? Territorial identities, immigration and redistribution attitudes, Harvard Dataverse, V1, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/YLMG3U>.
- Mauerer, I., Puy, M.S., Urzay-Gómez, S., 2025. Explaining preferences for EU integration: theory and empirical evidence. *Eur. Econ. Rev.* 176, 105038.
- McLaren, L.M., 2002. Public support for the European Union: cost/benefit analysis or perceived cultural threat? *J. Polit.* 64 (2), 551–566.
- Medrano, J.D., Gutiérrez, P., 2001. Nested identities: national and European identity in Spain. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* 24 (5), 753–778.
- Nicoli, F., Kuhn, T., Burgooon, B., 2020. Collective identities, European solidarity: identification patterns and preferences for European social insurance. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 58 (1), 76–95.
- Norris, P., Inglehart, R., 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Persson, T., Tabellini, G., 2002. *Political Economics: Explaining Economic Policy*. Cambridge, US: MIT Press.
- Peters, Y., Ensink, S.J., 2015. Differential responsiveness in Europe: the effects of preference difference and electoral participation. *West European Politics* 38 (3), 577–600.
- Piketty, T., 1995. Social mobility and redistributive politics. *Q. J. Econ.* 110 (3), 551–584.
- Ringlerova, Z., 2022. The impact of immigration on attitudes toward the EU: evidence from a three-country survey experiment. *J. Common Mark. Stud.* 60 (2), 391–407.
- Rodden, J., 2002. Strength in numbers? Representation and redistribution in the European Union. *Eur. Union Polit.* 3 (2), 151–175.
- Sánchez-Cuenca, I., 2000. The political basis of support for European integration. *Eur. Union Polit.* 1 (2), 147–171.
- Shayo, M., 2009. A model of social identity with an application to political economy: nation, class, and redistribution. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 103 (2), 147–174.
- Stockemer, D., Niemann, A., Rabenschlag, J., Speyer, J., Unger, D., 2018. Immigration, anti-immigrant attitudes and euroscepticism: a meta-analysis. *French Politics* 16, 328–340.
- Stockemer, D., Niemann, A., Unger, D., Speyer, J., 2020. The “refugee crisis”, immigration attitudes, and euroscepticism. *Int. Migr. Rev.* 54 (3), 883–912.
- Toygür, I., Sojka, A., 2025. Does climate policy backlash fuel eurosceptic vote? Exploring the link in the European Parliament elections. *J. Eur. Public Policy* 1–27.

- Tutz, G., 2011. *Regression for Categorical Data*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Klinger, M., Boomgaarden, H.G., De Vreese, C.H., 2013. Going soft or staying soft: have identity factors become more important than economic rationale when explaining euroscepticism? *J. Eur. Integr.* 35 (6), 689–704.
- Wittman, D., 2000. The wealth and size of nations. *J. Confl. Resolut.* 44 (6), 868–884.
- Yeung, E.S.F., 2021. Does immigration boost public euroscepticism in European Union member states? *Eur. Union Polit.* 22 (4), 631–654.
- Zimmermann, K.F., 1995. Tackling the European migration problem. *J. Econ. Perspect.* 9 (2), 45–62.