

**Winning Hearts and Minds:  
An Evaluation of How  
Ideological and Material  
Factors Shape the British  
Public's Positive and  
Normative Understanding  
of the EU**

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## 2 Abstract

Many post-2016 studies of British politics have focused heavily on the causes of Brexit, looking at factors that correlated with (or caused) people to vote Leave in 2016. Much of this scholarship focuses on this question through a socioeconomic lens, analyzing how the EU's liberalizing tendencies left certain Brits — namely older, poorer, less well-educated, ones — behind. Breaking with that, this study analyzes deeper-rooted British perceptions of the EU to understand how Brits conceptualize the EU as an institution. To do this, I develop a framework for distinguishing and understanding Brits' positive and normative opinions of the EU, hypothesizing that there is a key distinction between positive, performance-based opinions of the EU and normative, ideologically-based opinions of the EU, and the primary driver of that disparity is nationalism. Within this, I expected that ideological concerns would guide people's normative opinions, while material ones guide their positive ones. Using Eurobarometer data, I did not find a substantial discrepancy between positive and normative opinions. However, this study did find two interesting discoveries beyond the scope of the hypothesis itself: that there is perhaps a negative correlation between British economic development and support for the EU, and that education's correlation with support for the EU is potentially spurious and not causally significant.

### 3 Politics, Economics, or Both? Understanding British Opposition to the EU

“It was a free vote, without constraint, following a free democratic campaign, conducted constructively and without rancour. It means that 14 years of national argument are over,<sup>1</sup> said British Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1975, recounting the United Kingdom’s referendum on joining the European Economic Community (EEC). The final vote was decisive: by an overwhelming 67-32 majority, Britain elected to join the Community. However, Wilson’s declaration that the vote conclusively ended debate on the ‘European question’ could not have been further from the truth. From the moment it joined the EEC (later the European Community and then European Union), Britain has grappled with what exactly it meant to be part of a greater European project, how comprehensively to integrate itself into the bloc, and whether being part of the European project was even a worthwhile exercise.

Since first entering the EEC, Britain’s relationship with the bloc has been continually tumultuous. While other countries have at times expressed frustration with the EU on both popular and elite levels, the subject of European integration has been uniquely contentious in the UK. From keeping the Pound as its currency to demanding an opt-out from the Maastricht Treaty’s Charter of Fundamental Rights to insisting on the creation of a yearly rebate, Britain has consistently been reticent to cede too much of its power to EU authorities, rendering it a thorn in the side of the bloc’s officials. In the decades after the UK joined the EU, anti-EU sentiment became so prominent in Britain that some scholars even argue that British nationalism and Euroscepticism — or broad-based criticism of the EU and the European project more generally —

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1. Stewart 2016.



are fundamentally intertwined, suggesting that “Euroscepticism is in all but name English nationalism.”<sup>2</sup> In 2016, British Euroscepticism — compounded by the EU’s refugee crisis, a slew of false promises from the ‘Leave’ campaign, and a political establishment that refused to take the movement seriously — finally reached its apex. By a 52-48 margin, Britain elected to become the first (and to date, only) country to fully leave the EU. The result, which shocked the world, represented a direct rebuke to Wilson’s 1975 suggestion that the UK joining the bloc represented the end to the country’s “national argument” over Europe.

Interestingly, while the EU is (and was, historically, even more so) an economically oriented institution, British anti-European sentiment has typically been couched in a social, political, and cultural milieu. As an opposition member of Parliament in 1977, Margaret Thatcher suggested that the EC’s regulation-heavy governing style “was alien to the Anglo-Saxon tradition.”<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, columnists and academics have continually proclaimed that Britain’s values of individual freedom and liberty are incompatible with the continent’s politics and culture. Writing in *The Spectator*, Paul Johnson said that in France, “hatred of Britain and the individual freedom it stands for is a religion,”<sup>4</sup> while the professor Stephen Hill proclaimed that “liberty, as they [Germans] see it, is protected by their ‘Basic Rights’ enshrined in a legal code.”<sup>5</sup> Over the past several decades, many British writers, thinkers, and policy-makers have opposed European integration on ideological grounds, suggesting their political sensibilities and values do not align with those of continental Europeans.

Even during the 2016 referendum, the Leave Campaign’s slogans and talking points focused on social and political points, ignoring the fact that most

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2. Wellings 2010.

3. Wellings 2010.

4. Johnson 1992.

5. Hill 1996.

of the EU's directives were economic in nature. The Vote Leave campaign's official slogan was "Let's Take Back Control,"<sup>6</sup> highlighting their focus on political sovereignty, while the single-issue anti-EU UK Independence Party used a similar slogan, "We Want Our Country Back."<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Leave Campaign's main economically-oriented claim, that the UK sent £350m a week to the EU (which, the campaign suggested, could be reinvested in the country's National Health Services) was repeatedly debunked as completely untrue.<sup>8</sup>

Despite these realities, media outlets from across the globe nonetheless rushed to proclaim the Brexit outcome was powered by populism, particularly in the context of economic disenfranchisement. "The big 'Leave' vote in economically stagnant regions of Britain suggests that many of those who have lost out are fed up,"<sup>9</sup> wrote the New York Times. Meanwhile, The Washington Post opined that the results "reflected economic anxiety,"<sup>10</sup> adding that the "idea of dire consequences for a "leave" vote paled in comparison to their [voters] view of the current state of affairs and why it needed to change."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, academics focused on the "left behind" hypothesis, which suggests that the EU's socially and economically liberal policies had engendered a nationalist backlash from those less fortunate.

However, these insights fail to capture the dynamics of Brexit or British popular opinion of the EU more generally. Taken in totality, the UK's relationship to the EU between the years of 1975-2016 is more nuanced and complex than many proclaim/admit/believe it to be. On a basic level, the journalistic and academic focus on economic anxiety begs a simple question: if British opposition to the EU is so focused on economics, why do Brits rarely describe their

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6. Deacon 2016.

7. Reynolds 2016.

8. Stone 2018.

9. Yardley 2016.

10. O'Brien 2016.

11. Cillizza 2016.

concerns with the bloc in economic terms? If economic anxiety had been the factor driving the Brexit result, why did the Leave Campaign and UKIP devote so little energy to discussing the EU's economic shortcomings? It is curious that the Leave campaign, which was explicitly focused on convincing as many people as possible to leave the EU, focused so little on the economic consequences of integration.

In the context of studying British opinion of the EU, this lacuna provides the ideological space for developing a new understanding of how public perception of the EU is formulated. Thatcher, Johnson, and Hill's arguments represented a form of opposition to the EU which was specifically political and cultural, rendering it distinct from concerns about liberalization and economics — or, in more practical terms, they opposed the EC as an idea, not an institution. For instance, Thatcher's complaint about Anglo-Saxon tradition was purely ideological: it made no reference to the EC's performance as an institution, but instead focused on the conceptual idea of a united Europe. This contrasts strikingly with the idea that 'economic anxiety' drives anti-EU sentiment, which suggests that people's primary concern about the body is the impact of its policies.

This gap in coverage provides the impetus for this study. What if British aversion to the EU, which is not a nation-state but rather an expansive, economically oriented, and supranational institution, cannot simply be defined within a single dimension? In this paper, I suggest that British Euroscepticism (and, more broadly, British public opinion of the EU) manifests in two distinct ways: positive and/versus normative feelings towards the bloc.<sup>12</sup> Normative opinions of the EU are rooted in peoples' ideas, on the conceptual level, of a united

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12. Although it may seem repetitive throughout the article, I specifically chose to use the terms 'positive' and 'normative' exclusively on the basis that positive could otherwise be misconstrued to mean "favorable," and maintaining a single consistent term throughout the paper is imperative for clarity.

Europe. Arguments like Thatcher’s represent normative opposition to the EU, since they focus on the concepts and ideas underlying European integration —her complaints with the EU were qualitative and values-oriented. Meanwhile, positive perceptions of the EU are based on its successes or failures as a policy-making institution. These views are not informed by ideological questions, such as whether British and continental European cultures are compatible or whether multilateralism is a worthwhile pursuit, but by whether individuals believe the EU is delivering on its promise to materially enrich and strengthen its member nations.

If there is a difference between positive and normative opinions of the EU, this study argues that British nationalism would play a central role in creating that distinction. While it is likely that the two will correlate strongly, this paper predicts that there will be a slight difference produced by the psychological power of nationalism. Past studies into the concept of ‘welfare chauvinism’ (see Section 4) have shown that people will dismiss an economically beneficial policy if they believe its social cost (namely, that it might help outsiders who they believe are undeserving) is deemed too high. In the context of British public opinion, this framework leads to the sub-hypothesis that more nationalist Brits will maintain unfavorable normative opinions of the EU and disregard its material performance (even if they think it provides financial benefits), creating a slight disparity between positive and normative approval of the bloc.

In this thesis, I create a model that focuses on how Brits form positive and normative opinions of the EU, how those two might be distinct but related, and nationalism’s role in that process. This model utilizes both demographic and ideological factors in order to develop a framework for evaluating the formation of public opinion. I also created a component of the model which tests the ways in which both causal factors contribute to British nationalism and how

nationalism manifests vis-a-vis positive and normative perceptions of Europe. These models rely on data from Eurobarometer surveys taken between 2000-2019. Using the data and my models, I conclude by discussing the implications of my model for understanding public opinion of the EU and better analyzing the relationship between the UK and EU.

Ultimately, understanding how Brits think about Europe and the EU has enormous academic and real-world implications. Academically, reconceptualizing and further analyzing UK-EU relations can help understand how individual citizens — both in Britain and EU member countries — perceive the EU. Similarly, this can provide insight into how the mechanics of popular opinion on the EU differ from those of standard nation-states, an under-considered issue which is essential for understanding the EU's public perception. This research would ultimately allow academics to further consider how people's ideological and demographic identities influence support for the EU and other EU-like entities, contributing to our collective understanding of group identity dynamics. In a real-world context, better understanding what factors influence British popular opinion of the EU could inform how British politicians and policymakers approach relations with the bloc. As of April 2021, experts estimated that Brexit had reduced trade between the UK and EU by over £8 billion.<sup>13</sup> Given the enormous influence EU-UK relations have on the UK's economy, British political leaders and bureaucrats could use this as an opportunity to better understand how their citizens develop opinions about the EU, and use that information to craft policy going forward. My research, if studied and contextualized properly, can help inform both academic discourses and the British state's understanding of its own citizens.

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13. Springford 2021.

## 4 Nationalism and Euroscepticism in the Context of British Politics: A Systematic Review of the Literature

### 4.1 Introduction

Since the UK first entered the EU in 1973, and particularly since the UK elected to leave the EU in 2016, a great deal of ink has been spilled on its strange and unique relationship to both the European continent and the concept of European integration. With that consideration in mind, this literature review aims to both develop empirically sound definitions for the concepts which it relies upon for its research design and situate the study within the context of past work on the topic of UK-EU relations.

First, the review includes a comprehensive breakdown of the literature on key relevant concepts, namely *nationalism*, *Euroscepticism*, and *integration*. This is designed to justify and explain, through past work, how and why various questions from Eurobarometer surveys were selected to serve as proxies for concepts which this study tests for. This lends legitimacy to these conceptualizations, ensuring they are not merely my own personal definitions of each term but instead represent widely agreed-upon ideas which utilize the conclusions of past works.

The latter section of the literature review focuses on explaining how and why this study builds upon past research on British popular opinion of the EU. It demonstrates the rigor and utility of this study: it discusses both how this study integrates the work of past studies and how it provides new information which expands upon, but does not merely copy, that literature. To do that, I evaluate past studies, identify key alternative hypotheses, and discuss how and

why these hypotheses are conceptualized and included in my study.

## 4.2 Nationalism as a Sociological Concept

Analyzing the relationship between British nationalism and Britain's views on the European Union first requires understanding a simpler, more fundamental issue: what, precisely, is nationalism? The first key to conceptualizing nationalism is to delineate between that and similar concepts which could otherwise confound nationalism-oriented research. Building on that, it is additionally important to identify traits or behaviors which can collectively be considered components of nationalism.

A foundational delineation which must be made is the difference between nationalism and patriotism, which is rooted in a similar sense of pride towards a community, but is nonetheless a separate phenomena. Crucially, one of the major differences some social scientists have identified between the two is the role of negativity or exclusion in nationalism. As Druckman explains in a very basic definition, "patriotism is commitment — a readiness to sacrifice for the nation — while nationalism is commitment plus exclusion of others, a readiness to sacrifice bolstered by hostility toward others."<sup>14</sup> In effect, Druckman posits that while patriotism and nationalism might both manifest themselves as a desire to sacrifice for the nation, the motives underlying each sacrifice are meaningfully different. While Druckman's work provides a concise explanation of how nationalism and patriotism differ, other scholars' research posits that Druckman's analysis oversimplifies the distinction between the two (however, most generally nonetheless agree with his underlying argument). Crucially, Druckman effectively takes an either-or-stance: he posits that devotion to one's country can either be nationalist or patriotic, that patriotism and nationalism are inherently oppositional, and that the deciding factor between the two is whether hostility

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14. Druckman 1994.

towards others is a motivating factor.

Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) work from this same idea, building on Druckman's basic conceptualization by decoupling nationalism and patriotism. As such, they assert that nationalism and patriotism are multidimensional ideas and expand this conceptualization by pointing out that one's opinion of their own country is not necessarily tied to their opinion of foreign people and traditions within their own country. As they explain, "nationalists may score high on love of country and high on hostility toward foreigners, but one does not necessarily follow from the other. Internationalists, on the other hand, may score low on hostility toward foreigners, but it is not intuitively obvious which direction they would score on love of country."<sup>15</sup> However, while disagreeing about the range of emotions which an individual can feel and the relationship between those emotions, they make a similar distinction between patriotism and nationalism, calling them "functionally different psychological dimensions." They describe patriotism as "feelings of attachment to America" and nationalism as "the view that America is superior and should be dominant" (the study focused on evaluating these constructs in an American context).<sup>16</sup> Their definition of nationalism again includes a focus on "othering," as in order to be superior, there naturally must be others who are inferior.

Another branch of the literature focuses on nationalism from a slightly different lens, providing insights into what exactly nationalist ideologies include. These studies, while similar to those focusing on defining the term, provide further depth. For instance, Schatz, Staub, and Lavine describe the differences between "the blind patriot," who "views national criticism and dissent as inherently disloyal" and the "constructive patriot" who "may criticize and even actively oppose the nation's actions because he or she believes they vio-

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15. Kosterman and Feshbach 1989.

16. Kosterman and Feshbach 1989.



late fundamental national precepts.”<sup>17</sup> Crucially, this study highlights another key aspect of the nationalism-patriotism divide and builds upon other relevant works. As they point out, what social psychologists generally label ‘nationalism’ is often rooted in a sense of devotion towards abstract principles or symbols, while patriotism is more tied to a sense of productive discourse over the country and its evolution.

This definition of nationalism is tied to a subfield of literature which focuses on more extensively evaluating nationalism’s ideological components. Delamater et al contribute to this body of literature with their idea of levels of national attachment, which includes the symbolically committed (most ardent nationalist), the normatively committed, and the functionally committed (least ardent).<sup>18</sup> They describe the symbolic national, which is conceptually most closely aligned with what previously-mentioned works would consider “nationalist,” as somebody who “is characterized by a strong emotional investment in the nation and its values, and a positive affective orientation to its symbols. A symbolically integrated individual gives a high priority to his role as a national.” They provide examples of behaviors and emotions aligning with symbolic nationalism, which include things such as a strong sense of pride in national symbols, an emphasis on their national identity, and “hostility towards alien values.” The symbolic national is presented in contrast to the normative and functional nationals. Normative nationalism is premised as a relatively low-information ideology based around general support for the sociocultural status quo, while functional nationalism is characterized as a bureaucratic sense of attachment derived from one’s “institutional responsibilities.”<sup>19</sup>

As the past literature demonstrates, there are two key components of nationalism which must be considered. The first (and most prominent) is the

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17. Schatz, Staub, and Lavine 1999.

18. Delamater, Katz, and Kelman 1969.

19. Delamater, Katz, and Kelman 1969.

idea that nationalism is based on a sense of national identity which is rooted in exclusion, hostility, or other negativity. Within this definition, expressing general affection for a country is not enough; instead, to be truly nationalist that sense of attachment has to be (at least partly) derived from a feeling of negativity or scorn towards those who are not included. Second, researchers suggest nationalism typically manifests itself as a sense of national devotion which is particularly focused on symbolic, conceptual ideas of the country and what it stands for. This helps delineate it from more benign or constructive forms of national attachment, which can often be identified as productive and open to (or actively promote) criticizing the nation for the sake of encouraging national betterment or advancement.

Crucially, there is literature which supports the empirical idea that these two concepts are actually interconnected, and not merely two independent findings about the same issue. Blank and Schmidt use empirical survey information to identify the relationship between the values comprising nationalism and patriotism, and come to conclusions which reinforce the points this work has aggregated from other literature. They specifically find that while both “nationalism and patriotism presume national identity” and “represent positive evaluations of one’s own group,”<sup>20</sup> they conceptualize what that identity entails in distinct ways. They specifically find that nationalism leads to support for “blind obedience and idealized excessive valuation of one’s own nation,” as well as the “denigration of outgroups,” while patriotism promotes oppositional values.<sup>21</sup> This definition ties together disparate parts of the literature comprehensively, defining nationalism in both a negative context (how it is not patriotism) and a positive one (the values it is composed of).

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20. Blank and Schmidt 2003.

21. Blank and Schmidt 2003.

## 4.3 Euroscepticism

### 4.3.1 Euroscepticism as an Independent Concept

It is key to note that as compared to other relevant concepts analyzed in this literature review, there is a shorter tradition of research into both the concept of Euroscepticism and public opinion about the European Union more generally. This is because, as Hobolt and de Vries explain, the EU's history as a primarily technocratic institution meant that "for a long time public opinion toward the European integration was viewed as largely irrelevant for understanding political and economic integration in Europe." However, as the bloc has promoted more thorough and extensive integrationist policies, "the study of public support for, and opposition to, the European Union has become an essential part of the study of the Union."<sup>22</sup>

Given the relatively limited amount of research on Euroscepticism, it is important to establish, on a basic level, how exactly it can be analyzed as a concept. Weßels (2007) uses Easton's idea of political support to provide a foundational analysis of what Euroscepticism entails and how it can accurately be studied and measured, which serves as an empirical foundation for this study's conceptualization of Euroscepticism. According to Easton (1965), a shared identity, or as he defines it, "some cohesive cement — a sense or feeling of community among its members," is the foundational component of peoples' support for a political institution.<sup>23</sup>

Weßels (2007) places this idea within the context of popular support for the European Union. To do this, he identifies two groups of citizens who express disdain for the European Union: critical Europeans, who object to the mechanisms by which the EU is developing but support the concept of integration,

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<sup>22</sup>. Hobolt and Vries 2016.

<sup>23</sup>. Easton 1975.

and adamant Eurosceptics, who are opposed to the fundamental idea of the EU (and are more relevant to this study, as they lack the sense of community identity Easton posits is necessary). To operationalize the idea of a Eurosceptic, Weßels uses this sense of European identity as a way of quantifying their personal opinions about the EU, explaining that “identification with the political community creates a buffer against political scepticism or discontent.” Therefore, he explains, “self-identification as a European can serve as a buffer against discontent” and, subsequently, “European identity is the strongest factor preventing scepticism.”<sup>24</sup> Hooghe and Marks also frame popular opinion about Europe as deeply intertwined with national identity, saying that “opposition to European integration is couched as defense of the nation against control from Brussels,”<sup>25</sup> while “national attachment combined with national pride has a significant negative effect on support for European integration.”

This idea is reinforced by de Vries and van Kersbergen, who present a somewhat different theory, but end up reaching a similar conclusion. They propose that support for the EU requires a type of “double allegiance” in which one is loyal to one’s country first and the EU second. However, they explain that these two loyalties have a complex relationship, where “support for the EU tends to be low and problematic when citizens feel that the process of European integration hampers their national political elites’ capacity to provide political, social-psychological and socio-economic security and well-being,”<sup>26</sup> which in turn makes them feel their national interests are being overrun by the EU and promotes a defensive, nationalistic identity. McLaren provides a similar theory, finding that much of “Euroscepticism stems from identity politics, in which people see the nation-state as the appropriate point of reference for iden-

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24. Weßels 2007.

25. Hooghe and Marks 2005.

26. Vries and Kersbergen 2007.

tity and the EU as undermining the integrity of the nation-state.”<sup>27</sup> As with Weßels’s work, both studies demonstrate how Euroscepticism is, foundationally, a question of identity and ‘feeling’ European.

### **4.3.2 Education as a Promoter of European Integration**

Across the literature, a hypothesis which repeatedly emerges is the idea that Euroscepticism is inversely correlated with education. In a study, Inglehart finds that “rising levels of exposure to formal education” are correlated with support for EU integration and the European project.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent work has further reinforced Inglehart’s hypothesis, with Hakhverdian et al. explaining that education has a negative effect on Euroscepticism, saying that “people with low or medium levels of educational attainment were found to be significantly more eurosceptical than highly educated Europeans.”<sup>29</sup> They additionally find that this disparity has expanded over time, only widening since the date of Inglehart’s initial study. In a slightly different but analogous study, Gabel includes education as part of a larger variable which he terms “cognitive mobilization,” which he finds correlates positively with support for the EU in original member states, but has very little predictive power in other states (including the UK).<sup>30</sup> In the states where educational disparities emerged, Gabel attributed this to the impacts of the EU’s economic liberalization, suggesting that those with higher educational attainment were more likely to benefit from the EU’s policies and therefore view it favorably.

This study’s analysis does include education as a variable which could possibly influence EU approval, though the alternative hypothesis that educational attainment is a primary driver of British public opinion on the EU is not partic-

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27. McLaren 2002.

28. Inglehart 1970.

29. Hakhverdian et al. 2013.

30. Gabel 1998.

ularly compelling. First, historical evidence simply does not seem to support the hypothesis that more education leads to more support for the EU, at least in the UK specifically. In 1975, the UK voted overwhelmingly to approve the country's membership in the European Community, with 67% of voters supporting the move. Decades later in 2016, the country voted to leave the European Union, with 51.9% of voters explicitly rejecting the European Union. This dramatic downturn in support occurred despite the fact that educational attainment increased drastically at all levels — both absolutely and proportionally — across the UK between 1975 and 2016.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, although most previous literature does not focus specifically on the relationship between education and support for EU integration at a national level, it should be noted that the UK, despite its persistent Euroscepticism, is one of the most educated countries in the EU. This suggests that this relationship is perhaps overstated, as if it were stronger than the UK would likely be more supportive of European integration. Although this study does nonetheless include a metric on education attainment as a necessary variable for rigorous research, common sense indicates it is not a particularly important factor.

### **4.3.3 The “Euroscepticism as Nationalism” Hypothesis**

Having established a definition of nationalism which is based on past academic research, this study's next step is to investigate the past literature on British Euroscepticism. By studying this specific field of research, this study hopes to identify whether British nationalism has any specific sub-characteristics which render it distinct from nationalism more generally and have to be accounted for.

In the context of the UK, there is a distinct subsection of literature on Euroscepticism which focuses specifically on the relationship between British nationalism and opposition to Europe. This field of research posits that British

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31. McCarthy 2010.

nationalism is primarily a specific response to both the historical threat of ‘Europeanization,’ which stretches back centuries, and the more contemporary threat of EU encroachment, a concern which has arisen over the past 50 years. According to Smith (2006), British nationalism needs to be “grasped in terms of cultural, political and religious factors in English history, specifically, the antiquity and political character of a sense of English national identity, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the nature and impact of Protestant covenantalism.”<sup>32</sup> More recently, Wellings (2010) argues that “European integration laid important ideological foundations for contemporary English nationalism,” as it places “attention on the role of sovereignty, particularly parliamentary sovereignty.”<sup>33</sup> Wellings suggests that contemporary British nationalism revolves primarily around a focus on sovereignty that can only be debated in the context of European integration. Scholars in this camp thus assert that British nationalism has effectively evolved into an identity concerned with devolving power to Brussels.

The ‘Nationalism as Euroscepticism’ branch of research proposes a very interesting hypothesis which is in some ways complimentary to this study’s hypothesis, but is in some ways also contradictory. These studies propose that when people feel more strongly British, they are also more likely to feel more strongly anti-EU, something my own work would also assert. However, to this subsection of literature, these two traits are not distinct. Instead, it concludes that British nationalism and anti-Europeanism are not two separate variables, but are rather one and the same: according to this field of thought, being a nationalist Brit and being anti-European mean the same thing. This hypothesis is very bold and offers a theory which reaches the same conclusion as my study’s hypothesis, but arrives at that conclusion through a very different and much

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32. Smith 2006.

33. Wellings 2010.

narrower set of assumptions about nationalist sentiment among British people.

Although the “Nationalism as Euroscepticism” theory includes ideas which also appear in this study, there are crucial differences between the two. In the theory advanced by that branch of literature, British nationalism is a product of Euroscepticism, or concern over greater integration into the European system.<sup>34</sup> While there are certainly ties between these two concepts, it may be a step too far (and based at least partially on historical determinism, which is not particularly relevant to this study) to postulate that British nationalism is nothing more than a product of anti-European sentiment, something this study considers. This literature uses the same basic variables as my study, but presupposes the relationship between them, creating an entirely separate theory which simply includes similar material.

Additionally, other branches of the literature rebut this hypothesis, pointing out that nationalism was historically prevalent independent of fears of Europeanization<sup>35</sup> and explaining that internal issues (namely hostilities between the different nations within the UK)<sup>36</sup> are also responsible for the development of nationalist sentiment.<sup>37</sup> Although the aforementioned literature is often able to demonstrate the existence of a relationship between nationalism and Euroscepticism, it fails to show why the relationship is perfect or perfectly overlapping: ie, why Euroscepticism is not merely one of many possible manifestations of British nationalism. Taking everything into consideration, there is no reason to believe that British people have a sense of nationalism which is unique and does not simply rely on the traits associated with nationalist behavior in general. Therefore, there is no particular reason that nationalism in Britain would be different from nationalism anywhere — it is likely that Euroscepticism plays

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34. Wellings 2010.

35. Kohn 1940.

36. Kenny 2016.

37. Aughey 2010.



such an outsize role in British nationalism because the EU's omnipresence and proximity makes it an accessible target.

#### 4.4 Defining Integration

Although this study does not focus specifically on the technical components of integration, it is nonetheless important to survey past scholarship on the concept. Since a key component of this work revolves around understanding what exactly the British populace is supporting or rejecting, doing this provides important context: by establishing what European integration entails in general terms, I can ground my work and provide a basic idea of what precisely it means — in terms of real-world policy concerns — when Brits voice their opinions about the EU.

Perhaps because of the sheer scale of the term, there are very few studies which specifically aim to study the fundamental question of what political integration means or how it can be measured. Two of the field's most prominent scholars are Schmitter and Haas, who are largely credited with creating the neofunctionalist model of integration.<sup>38</sup> The pair primarily focus on creating and outlining complex models to analyze the sociology of national integration. However, while these works are academically impressive and seminal to the study of integration, they are unfortunately not particularly useful for this study. Since the pair's work is extremely complex and abstract, their studies do not provide narrow, concise definitions or operationalizable concepts. In consciously omitting Schmitter and Haas's work,<sup>39</sup> my study turns to other researchers for a more practical and usable definition of integration. According to Lindberg, "Political integration can be defined as the evolution over time of a collective decision making system among nations,"<sup>40</sup> specifically "without the use of vi-

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38. Rosamond 2005.

39. Schmitter 1970.

40. Lindberg 1970.

olence.” For the purposes of this study, it is to conceptualize integration as a multidimensional phenomenon. To that end, Nye explains that integration “can be broken down into economic integration (formation of a transnational economy), social integration (formation of a transnational society), and political integration (formation of transnational political interdependence).”<sup>41</sup> All of the EU’s past and present policy initiatives can all largely be broken down along the lines of economic, political, and social integration, so the study is highly relevant and applicable to this work. These studies provide a key framework for defining the concept of ‘integration’ in academic terms. This provides an understanding of what exactly British people are supporting or rejecting when they choose whether to support the EU, which helps ground my research and the responses this study analyzes.

Although this study does not focus specifically on the technical components of integration, it is nonetheless important to survey past scholarship on the concept. Since a key component of this work revolves around understanding what exactly the British populace is supporting or rejecting, doing this provides important context: by establishing what European integration entails in general terms, I can ground my work and provide a basic idea of what precisely it means — in terms of real-world policy concerns — when Brits voice their opinions about the EU.

## 4.5 Brexit

The largest relevant body of literature on the relationship between the UK and EU is likely analyses of Brexit, the UK’s 2016 referendum in which a majority of voters elected to leave the EU. Many researchers have conducted studies on Brexit, so it is important to explain these studies’ relevance and usefulness to this paper, as well as their shortcomings. First, an obvious benefit of synthe-

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41. Nye 1968.

sizing research on Brexit is the sheer amount of data and ideas this genre of research contains. Although the general relationship between the UK and EU has been thoroughly explored, studies of Brexit tend to focus more narrowly on popular opinion of the EU in the UK, a topic which is highly relevant to my work. Additionally, these studies tend to include lots of potential answers to the question of “why Brexit happened,” many of which can bolster alternative hypotheses which this study builds upon.

However, while studies of Brexit are useful, they also have certain drawbacks which must be acknowledged and accounted for. First, Brexit-oriented studies are fundamentally different because they focus primarily on the electoral outcome of that one referendum vote, not national attitudes over an extended period of time. On a basic level, this means that studies of Brexit capture the UK’s national mood at one particular point in time, and are not focused on understanding more general shifts in opinion. This limits the utility of certain data points which these studies rely on, and means that the studies themselves may promote ideas or theories which are reflected in the vote itself but are not consistent with longer-term trends. Additionally, since these studies are so narrowly focused on electoral outcomes, they tend to emphasize surface-level material and demographic factors while not fully exploring the underlying implications of these issues.

#### **4.5.1 The ”Left Behind” Hypothesis**

Perhaps the most common theory to emerge from Brexit studies is the “left behind” hypothesis: the idea that voters, particularly those who were economically struggling or lived in worse-off (often rural) areas, decided to vote leave because the EU’s focus on globalization, economic liberalization and integration had left them behind, generating wealth which flowed disproportionately to well-connected urban elites. Many papers written on Brexit, including some

of the most-cited, have reached this conclusion. Arnorsson and Zoega support the hypothesis, concluding that within a globalized economy, “it is clear from both theory and the data that not everyone gains equally,” and reiterating that the system produces winners and losers. In these circumstances, they explain, if the “losers are sufficiently many, they may vote for nationalist political parties or against free trade and the free mobility of workers in a referendum.”<sup>42</sup> This was echoed by Hobolt, who surmised “the ‘winners’ of globalization – the younger and highly educated professionals – were overwhelmingly in favour of Remain.” Meanwhile, those who were more vulnerable in the labor market (the ‘left behind’) explicitly rejected globalization, having determined it was responsible for their precarious economic standing.<sup>43</sup> Goodwin and Heath also concur, saying that Brexit was supported by those “that are united by a general sense of insecurity, pessimism and marginalisation, who do not feel as though elites, whether in Brussels or Westminster, share their values, represent their interests and genuinely empathise with their intense angst about rapid social, economic and cultural change.”<sup>44</sup> Finally, Colantone and Stanig (2018) add onto that, explaining that “support for the Leave option in the Brexit referendum was systematically higher in regions hit harder by economic globalization,” highlighting the regional impacts of globalization on political ideology.<sup>45</sup> Each of these studies, conducted independently, arrives at largely the same conclusion.

Although the ‘left behind’ theory does not necessarily contradict this study’s hypothesis, it is important to understand the contrasts between the two. First, the key similarity between them is that both theories propose nationalism was a key contributor to people’s decision to reject the EU (using common sense, voting leave in the Brexit referendum can reasonably be interpreted as analogous

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42. Arnorsson and Zoega 2018.

43. Hobolt 2016.

44. Goodwin and Heath 2016.

45. Colantone and Stanig 2018.

to not supporting the EU). However, there are several issues with the Brexit literature which my study aims to address. First, while both theories consider the impact of nationalism, this study's hypothesis and the 'left behind' hypothesis conceptualize nationalism in distinctly different ways. The 'left behind' theory proposes that nationalism is effectively an intermediary factor between economic — and, to an extent, social — marginalization and support for the exclusionary politics of Brexit. Within this literature, the boundaries of nationalism are expansive and loosely defined: factors such as economic insecurity and anxiety about changing social and demographic norms go in, nationalism develops, and support for Brexit emerges as the outcome. In this theory, nationalism is not an independent entity, but rather a catch-all manifestation of already-existing discontent. Meanwhile, my study treats nationalism as a specific concept unto itself, presenting it as the key independent variable. The result is that this study is less detailed than many analyses of Brexit but simultaneously deeper and more nuanced. It focuses on the specific characteristics of nationalism, instead of categorically concluding it is a natural response to economic anxiety which led to a wholesale rejection of the EU.

In part because of the assumptions most Brexit-oriented studies make about nationalism, another problem these studies face is their inability to disentangle various factors which might contribute to nationalism and/or rejecting the EU wholesale.

A key component of the 'left behind' hypothesis is a focus on backlash against immigration, which suggests that British people were motivated to vote for Brexit because of concern, either real or imagined, about the impacts of immigration on both Britain as a whole and their communities. This theory is based on the same general sense of resentment towards the European project as the broader 'left behind' one, but narrows in on the EU's focus on free move-

ment and the 2015 refugee crisis as a bogeyman for their fears over immigration. This theory is usually presented in tandem with the ‘left behind’ hypothesis and assigned varying degrees of importance within it: some researchers posit that immigration concerns were a major motivator for Brexit in and of themselves, while others fold it into the left behind hypothesis more generally. Goodwin and Milazzo suggest highlighting the role of immigration fears alone, saying “our evidence confirms that strong public concerns over immigration, and its perceived effects on the country and on communities, were central to explaining the 2016 vote for Brexit.”<sup>46</sup> In their study, the pair found that people who voiced concerns about immigration were specifically worried with how it would impact Britain culturally and economically. Meanwhile, Hobolt (2016) finds that concerns over immigration were merely a single component of the general left behind theory. She explains that while “concerns about immigration and the loss of a distinct national identity were important to many who favoured Brexit,” they were merely part of a larger tapestry which included resentment over increasing inequality in income and educational attainment.<sup>47</sup> While researchers may disagree on the specific impact immigration had on the Brexit vote, its consistent presence in studies demonstrates its general relevance to the issue of EU support.

To account for the the prominent hypotheses which have emerged from the literature on Brexit, this study includes several economic variables, including biannual GDP growth and the GINI measurement of inequality, as well as data on public opinion on immigration in the UK. However, it is important to note that since this study is not perfectly analogous to most studies of Brexit and its causes (the wider vs. deeper divide), it is difficult to fully capture the depth and complexity of the theories proposed in that literature. As such, it must

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46. Goodwin and Milazzo 2017.

47. Hobolt 2016.

be acknowledged that the metrics and methodologies this study uses to test the impact of economic growth, inequality, and immigration opinions on EU support are not perfect representations of the theories proposed in other works, and are significantly less sophisticated.

#### **4.5.2 Building on the Brexit Hypothesis**

A key distinction between my longer-run research on the EU-UK relationship and Brexit scholarship is the concept of positive and normative support for the EU. This conceptualization, which draws a distinct boundary between people's emotional and material feelings towards the EU, allows me to further disentangle various factors, ensuring greater insight into the nuances of British public opinion. In the past, most research has merely assessed EU public support through one individual variable. However, studying it through a two-pronged approach can help determine whether there is a meaningful difference between whether Britons perceive the EU to be materially beneficial and whether they believe those benefits are worthwhile when considered in the broader context of European integration.

This key distinction helps explain the ways in which this study builds on past work. As was mentioned in the previous section, the key distinction between my study and the 'left behind' hypothesis that is so central to studies of Brexit is how each conceptualizes nationalism. The fact that so much of the research on Brexit characterizes nationalism as an intermediary between various forms of discontent and support for Brexit itself actually provides a natural niche for this study. Since my work includes data on both the inputs the 'left behind' hypothesis relies on to study discontent (namely economic growth, inequality, and education) and data on people's sense of nationalism and relative support for the EU over extended periods of time, I can study the relationships which so many of these works presupposed. Through this, I will use my data to

track the relationship between factors that Brexit-focused studies posit informed support for leaving the EU and nationalism itself, studying the middle step of this hypothesis. This provides a valuable layer of depth to my research, allowing it to extend beyond merely analyzing the relationship between British nationalism and support for the EU in a vacuum and instead including analyses of how concern over various outside issues funnels into the relationship.

#### **4.6 On Measuring EU Support**

As was mentioned in the section on Euroscepticism, the idea of studying the EU's public perception is a relatively new concept which developed as the bloc expanded its competencies, became more involved in the everyday lives of European citizens, and began facing popular opposition. However, there is today a robust branch of the literature which focuses on both studying the raw numbers which comprise EU public opinion and analyzing both the factors which influence people's perceptions of the bloc and their significance. Although this section overlaps with the Euroscepticism section in some ways, there is a key distinction between the two: that section focuses on establishing how Euroscepticism could be defined conceptually, whereas this section aims to analyze the metrics which past studies have used to measure public opinion on the EU.

The first comprehensive attempt to understand support for the EU comes from Gabel, who tested five different theories for what shapes people's views of the EU. The individual theories are generally quite simple; for instance, one posits that people who are more educated support and more politically involved support the EU at higher rates, while another guessed that there is a positive correlation between benefiting economically from the EU and supporting it.<sup>48</sup> The design of Gabel's study is not necessarily of direct interest or use to my own work, but it is important to acknowledge his role in synthesizing the idea

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48. Gabel 1998.



that EU support could be based on numerous different factors, each working in tandem with the others, and presenting that in a cohesive paper.

Moving forward, one of the foundational contemporary studies of EU public opinion comes from Guinaudeau and Schnatterer, who set out to construct a measurement of public support they called the ‘national mood,’ which they took from Stimson’s studies of American politics.<sup>49</sup> To do this, the pair used a mechanism which is extremely similar to the one I use in this study: they compounded Eurobarometer data on a variety of metrics about how citizens of various European countries felt about the EU, and they then aggregated those results. The paper explicitly takes a narrow approach, as the authors choose to focus on explaining the mechanism itself and consciously decide against exploring the implications the mood indicator might present. Their basic goal was to create a metric which could serve as a general proxy for public support for EU integration and explain the contexts in which the metric could be used.

Another crucial study in the literature on measuring EU support is one already mentioned in a previous section of the literature review, Boomgaarten et al (2011). In their study, the authors make a key distinction which builds on Guinaudeau and Schnatterer’s work: they attempt to disentangle the ways in which people think about the EU as an entity from the ways in which people understand the process of European integration. In their work, they identified five key dimensions within which citizens could have distinct opinions towards the EU itself and the integration process, including initial emotional responses, performance of democratic and financial institutions, and the idea of a European identity.<sup>50</sup> Together, these two papers form a baseline for this study’s work, explaining how public opinion of the EU includes a multitude of factors and that public support for each individual factor might vary greatly. Subsequently,

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49. Guinaudeau and Schnatterer 2019.

50. Boomgaarden et al. 2011.

this points to the idea that evaluating public support for the EU is a complex undertaking and cannot be synthesized through any singular question or dataset.

Perhaps the most relevant study to date on this issue is Hobolt and de Vries.<sup>51</sup> In their paper, the pair identify what they determine to be three key influences on public support for the EU. The first and most widely-accepted option they identify is the utilitarian rationale: citizens evaluate the EU's performance based on the material and economic impacts of its policies, and public support reflects the bloc's economic performance. The next approach they highlight is the identity rationale, which suggests that as the EU continues to promote bonds between its member states, "individuals' attachment to their nation and their perceptions of people from other cultures influence their attitudes toward European integration." Finally, the last option they consider is the cue-taking approach, which posits that since citizens rarely interact with the EU directly, their impressions of it are shaped by political cues from national news media and the parties they support. This paper provides the most inspiration for my own personal research design, as Hobolt and de Vries clearly identify separate mechanisms of building support for the EU as well as factors which might lead people to operate within those mechanisms.

#### **4.6.1 Building on This Methodology**

These past works are all methodologically rigorous, well-designed, and serve, on a basic level, to contextualize and frame the work I plan to do. I build on these past metrics of EU popular opinion by proposing a simple question about the idea of popular support for the EU: what if there is a distinction between how individuals evaluate the EU's performance as an institution (their positive evaluations of it) and whether or not they believe it is a conceptually sound idea (their normative evaluations)? This is a question that much

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51. Hobolt and Vries 2016.

of the past literature has addressed in some capacity or another, but never focused on specifically or isolated out as a key issue. For instance, Guinaudeau and Schnatterer acknowledge that the questions they rely on “relate to different facets of European integration,” meaning that “utilitarian forms of support can further be distinguished between the evaluation of personal and collective (country-level) benefits gained from EU membership.” However, despite the fact that one could conceivably use those variables to conduct a study into studying support for different facets of European integration, this is not what they elect to focus on. Similarly, while Hobolt and de Vries conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the various possible driving factors for European support, they do not unpack the possible ramifications this might have for understanding public support for the EU more generally. By specifically disaggregating people’s conceptual opinions of the EU into both a positive understanding (whether or not the EU is doing its job well) and a normative understanding (if the EU is a good thing), I plan to analyze the concept of public support in a new manner.

In many ways, my focus on the possible distinction between popular opinion of the material benefits of EU membership and popular opinion of European integration more broadly flies directly in the face of our conventional understanding of the EU. As illustrated in the previous section of the literature review, the idea that the EU’s popular approval is tied to the economic benefits it provides to members is a widely-accepted theory — studies which include multiple possible hypotheses on the EU’s public perception always include this basic utilitarian idea. This is, in my view, partly the result of two separate factors. First, for much of its history the EU (or, previously, the European Coal and Steel Community and/or European Community) was generally considered a technocratic entity which had effectively no direct impact on people’s day-to-day lives. Indeed, the EU was seen this way up until the passage of the

Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which “marked a transformation of the EU from an intergovernmental project to a multi-level polity, with its own currency, citizenship rights and with supranational authority over an increasing number of policy areas.”<sup>52</sup> If the EU was historically perceived as a primarily economic union which citizens hardly noticed, it makes sense that it would be judged primarily by the economic results it provided.

In more modern times, policy makers and social scientists have come to understand the significance of public opinion to the legitimacy of the EU, and researchers have undertaken more diligent studies into the mechanics of EU approval. However, the contemporary EU is still a somewhat amorphous institution, which makes studying its public perception more difficult. This means that beyond merely asking people what they think of the EU directly, considering the basic economic benefits the bloc provides (the type of ubiquitous issues often referred to as “kitchen table issues” in American politics”) is seen as a consistent and reliable way to infer its popularity.

#### **4.7 The Positive-Normative Distinction**

Having established that my study will attempt to discern the differences between positive and normative opinion of the EU, it is obviously important to evaluate past work on this subject matter. There is generally very little UK-specific work on this topic, so most of this section is drawn from studies of the EU as a whole. The one pertinent UK-focused work on this topic from Vasilopoulou, which was published in the leadup to the Brexit vote. In her paper, Vasilopoulou analyzes factors which correlated most strongly with support for Brexit, ultimately surmising “that there is both an economic and a cultural component” to people’s opinions of the EU. Because of this, she presciently predicted that effective referendum campaigns would focus not only on the “costs and benefits

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52. Hakhverdian et al. 2013.

of EU membership,”<sup>53</sup> but also on cultural issues such as free movement within the EU. Although this work does not include a fully-developed analysis of the possible difference between normative and positive perceptions of the EU, its conclusions point towards this idea.

Outside of Vasilopoulou’s paper, most work analyzing the possible differences between normative and positive institutional evaluations focus on voting behavior, since analyzing voter preference allows researchers to understand how and why people might actively vote against their own economic interests. A series of Dutch papers, including Achterberg and Houtman (2006), van der Wall et al (2007), van der Waal et al (2010), and de Koster et al (2013) have focused on this specific phenomenon. Although these papers focus primarily on the relevance of class to voter behavior in the Netherlands, they are structured and focused in such a way that their conclusions are extremely useful to my work. The three papers ask the question “do people hold opinions which run contrary to conventional wisdom that individuals want to maximize their economic benefits, and if so, what motivates this?” Achterberg and Houtman find that “interests linked to cultural capital account for votes contrary to class interests.”<sup>54</sup> In this context, they explain that class interest still accounts for a large share of people’s vote choice, but that cultural capital supplements this explanation “by giving cultural interests, which also affect voting behaviour, their due attention.” van der Waal et al corroborates those findings, saying that traditional, economics-focused analysis of voter preference “inevitably and wrongly mix up class voting, driven by class-based economic interests, and reverse cultural voting, driven by a cultural dynamic.”<sup>55</sup> Van der Waal et al then expounds on this, introducing the concept of ‘welfare chauvinism,’ which hypothesizes that while lower-class members of an ethnic majority might generally support wealth redis-

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53. Vasilopoulou 2016.

54. Achterberg and Houtman 2006.

55. Waal, Achterberg, and Houtman 2007.

tribution and equality, their feelings of xenophobia towards outsiders overpower this, causing them to vote against economic redistribution when they believe it would disproportionately benefit minorities and other outgroups.<sup>56</sup> Finally, de Koster et al surmises that there is a “possibility that the electoral relevance of welfare chauvinism and welfare populism is currently higher than our analysis suggests,” pointing to the potentially underemphasized role of non-utilitarian perspectives in public opinion analysis.<sup>57</sup>

For a more comprehensive review of the possible contradictions between economic prosperity and popular approval we must turn to broader EU analyses. Anderson and Reichert (1995) and McLaren (2002) provide two of the most comprehensive analyses of the situation, as both highlight the possibility that economic concerns are just one component of overall EU approval, and that other sociocultural factors must be considered. Anderson and Reichert explain that “theories that seek to explain support for EU membership based on notions of economic benefits and attitudes are useful for understanding public opinion toward integration, yet not uniformly valid over time.”<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, McLaren takes a stronger stance, arguing that while “utilitarian concerns are indeed relevant in predicting attitudes toward the EU, a high threat perception produces equally strong, negative effects on support for the EU.” As McLaren points out, assumptions underlying the utilitarian theory of EU public opinion presuppose a level of knowledge about the bloc that many citizens might not have. This idea also aligns with the conclusion which Eichenberg and Dalton reached, which is that while economic conditions are one important indicator of the EU’s public approval, they are not the only relevant factor.<sup>59</sup>

It is clear that there is a (small) body of research into the disparities be-

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56. Waal et al. 2010.

57. Koster, Achterberg, and Waal 2013.

58. Anderson and Reichert 1995.

59. Eichenberg and Dalton 1993.

tween economic and sociocultural public opinion, namely in the context of voter behavior studies. While the pan-European studies are somewhat general in nature, van der Waal's idea of 'welfare chauvinism' is extremely well-aligned with my paper's ideas — it is effectively the same idea as my concept, but transposed onto studies of electoral behavior. As such, the welfare chauvinism hypothesis is effectively a higher-level conceptualization of the specific idea I am studying, and encompasses most of the analysis I plan to do. It does not help define any particular variable I am using, but instead the more general theory of how and why an individual's sociocultural concerns can outweigh economic ones. Thus, this study can be seen as something of an extension of that literature, building on it by fusing it with other work such as the aforementioned 'left behind' hypothesis.

## 4.8 Conclusion

In the first segment of the literature review, I draw upon past studies to define the variables I plan to use in my study. This process involved synthesizing past works' definitions of the various terms I am including in my study and to create definitions which are both academically-backed and relevant to my study. This was the comparatively simpler part of the review, since it involved analyzing papers from a purely technical perspective. Through this, I formulated definitions of nationalism, patriotism, Euroscepticism, and integration. These definitions will ground the remainder of my work, providing a framework for how I design, conduct, and analyze my research.

In the latter part of the review, I evaluated how my proposed research fits within the conceptual landscape. This meant reviewing the hypotheses, research, and conclusions of studies in various relevant fields, including studies of past Euroscepticism, Brexit, and public opinion. Through these, I also worked

to establish the ways in which my study progressed beyond the work other studies had conducted. My proposed project does this in two ways: first, it builds upon an innate assumption present in much of the Brexit literature, which is that a variety of economic and sociological factors contributed to ‘Leave’ voters’ decisions in an amorphous and imprecise way. By further exploring the relationship between British nationalism, the aforementioned factors, and peoples’ perceptions of the EU, I can develop a more nuanced and informed critique of this relationship. Second, I plan to redefine the measurements of EU public support by breaking public opinion down into positive (“does the EU provide benefits”) and normative (“considering those benefits, is the EU good”) factors. This builds upon past research in a meaningful way, helping re-conceptualize public support through the lens of ‘welfare chauvinism.’ Together, these provide for a fresh and innovative study into a highly-researched topic.



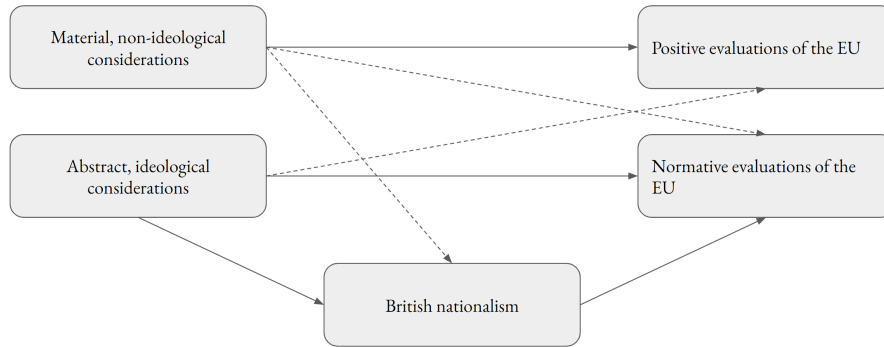
## 5 Theoretical Foundations of the Positive-Normative Hypothesis

### 5.1 Hypothesis

Having conducted an extensive analysis of the past research on both Brexit itself and the formulation of public opinion on the EU more generally, this work informs the premise of my study. My hypothesis is that there is a key distinction between positive, performance-based opinions of the EU and normative, ideologically-based opinions of the EU, and the primary driver of that disparity is nationalism. Positive opinions of the EU are people's views on whether or not it does a good job fulfilling its stated goals, while normative opinions are their views on whether those stated goals are worth pursuing on a conceptual level, and whether the bloc's perceived benefits are outweighed by those concerns. Since positive evaluations are supposed to be the product of empirical, objective evidence, I hypothesize that people's positive evaluations of the EU will, when compared to normative opinions, be more informed by material and non-ideological factors. Meanwhile, since normative judgements are based on subjective opinions which include no pretense of objectivity, I expect that people's normative evaluations of the EU to be more heavily reliant on abstract judgements and personal and political ideology.

Within this broader hypothesis, I expect British nationalism to play a key role in exacerbating the disparity between positive and normative opinions of the EU. As the 'welfare chauvinism' argument suggests, people can oppose materially beneficial programs if they believe the (more abstract) social cost of the program is too high. In the context of the British popular opinion on the EU, I expect that the EU should have a higher positive than normative rat-

Figure 1: Hypothesis and causal claims, visualized. Solid lines indicate stronger causal relationships



ing, and nationalist sentiment will be responsible for the discrepancy. This should be because, as the welfare chauvinism theory demonstrates, nationalist sentiment can overpower perceptions of economic gain. Therefore, nationalistic Brits would be predisposed to underestimate or downplay the material benefits of the EU and ignore them in favor of disdaining the EU, meaning any acknowledgement of the EU’s successes would be subjugated to prejudicial beliefs. In the context of studying positive and normative attitudes towards the EU, it is important to note that it is specifically nationalism, not merely patriotism, which should lead to this occurrence. As highlighted in the literature review, patriotism entails a sense of national attachment which is not inherently negative, and therefore does not necessitate being anti-EU. Meanwhile, nationalism specifically has an exclusionary or negative component, which means that it is rooted in the ideological position of being pro-Britain and anti-something (in this case EU). Nationalism’s distinct ideological composition suggests why and how nationalistic Brits are likely to maintain unfavorable normative opinions of the EU (even if they have favorable positive opinions of the bloc), and how that is distinct from patriotism, which does not suggest this should happen.

Alternatively, my hypothesis about the relationship between British nation-

alism and normative opinion of the EU could be inverted to suggest that favorable normative perceptions of the EU drive British nationalists to begrudgingly concede that EU membership has been beneficial. However, this is more of an intellectual exercise than a testable theory, since it would be extremely difficult to determine the directionality of the relationship between material benefits, British nationalism, and positive evaluations of the EU.

Because there is a distinction between positive and normative evaluations of the EU, people can hold and express independent (though obviously linked) opinions on the EU's quality as an institutional body and their personal feelings towards it. Essentially, it is entirely possible that people can maintain opinions about the EU based on evaluations of its performance as an institution, and opinions which are based purely on whether or not they like the idea of a political and economic union with other European countries. If my hypothesis is correct, that division would be primarily caused by British nationalism, which would facilitate a divergence between people's two types of opinions.

## **5.2 Developing the Positive-Normative Distinction**

Past works (Boomgaarten et al, Hobolt and de Vries), have postulated that people can evaluate the EU through multiple mechanisms (economic, cultural, and cue-taking from elites), an idea which aligns well with my hypothesis. Similarly, the concept of welfare chauvinism (van der Waal) suggests that people can formulate opinions about political concepts on the basis of both their perceived utilitarian and sociocultural benefits. My hypothesis creates a narrow framework out of both these ideas, allowing it to answer a more specific question about how positive and normative opinions of the EU are formulated amongst British people.

This positive-normative distinction rests on the idea that the EU's unique

role as a supranational institution, including its pattern of measured expansion, means it is perceived differently than most government entities. First, the EU's position as a supranational quasi-government institution means its fundamental existence is not universally accepted. Because politics is organized around the nation-state, national governments are conferred with a unique legitimacy: individuals frequently disapprove of their country's political direction or leadership, but that does not mean they oppose the existence of a national government. Therefore, these national governments do not have to worry about this positive-normative distinction. When a voter in a democratic state disapproves of their country's leadership, they can demonstrate this by voting for an opposing party, but this (almost universally) is not an indication they want to disband the nation-state entirely and devolve its powers to a different entity. In the context of the nation-state, the alternative to a bad government is a different government, not the dissolution of the governing institutions themselves.

Thanks to its precarious position as a supranational body, however, the EU is not afforded this same sense of inherent legitimacy. Instead, opposing the ideological direction of the EU can entail an opposition to the EU's mere existence. On a conceptual level, this phenomenon is precisely what allows for the positive-normative distinction. It is entirely possible for a British citizen to say "I think the EU is a good idea, but its performance and effectiveness as are underwhelming" (a unfavorable normative but favorable positive opinion), or "I think the idea of the EU is an affront to British sovereignty, but it has provided some benefit to us economically" (an favorable positive opinion, but an unfavorable normative view). This is not to say that these disparate positions are common, but rather that they can coexist conceptually. Additionally, the EU's expansion over time, from a technocratic framework for economic integration to a largely political entity with publicly elected officials, active policy making

power, and the types of symbolic regalia typically reserved for nations also helps crystallize the possibility of a positive-normative divide. Since the EU's various functions were not introduced contemporaneously, the public had the opportunity to evaluate the benefits of various levels of integration as they occurred. So, for instance, a person could believe that the introduction of tariff-free trade was a positive, but more recent political developments go too far, again creating room for the positive-normative distinction.

Finally, it is important to clarify that while there is a conceptual distinction between positive and normative views of the EU, I still expect the two positions to be highly correlated. People's normative and positive opinions are ultimately both informed by their evaluations of the world around them, so while the specific factors individuals use to develop these opinions might differ, each person can only utilize so much information. I also expect that there is something of a positive feedback loop between the two types of evaluations, with both views informing the other and subsequently driving the two to correlate. If people like something, they are more likely to think it is objectively good, and vice versa. For instance, if somebody has an unfavorable positive view of the EU but believes the economy is doing well, they would have a psychological incentive to downplay the EU's economic importance in order to fit their dislike of the EU into their understanding of the country's economic performance. Similarly, a person who holds the EU in high esteem might subconsciously emphasize abstract, non-quantifiable benefits it allegedly provides, even if they are frustrated with their material situation, in order to rationalize their support for it. Because of this, while I certainly expect to see some differences between normative and positive opinions of the EU, I expect them to have a strong relationship nonetheless. If the hypothesis is supported, we would first expect to see small but distinct differences between the factors that inform people's positive and

normative opinions of the EU.

## **6 Methodological Structure**

### **6.1 Data Collection, Conceptualization and Proxy Variables**

I collected data for this project via Eurobarometer surveys from the years 2000-2019, going from Eurobarometers 53 to 92.4. In collecting the data, my goal was to select questions which could be used, either individually or in aggregation with each other, as proxies for this study's underlying questions (see the literature review for an explanation of what these variables entail). I specifically selected variables from the Eurobarometer surveys which could be used to approximate three variables which I defined for this study's analysis: British nationalism, positive opinions of the EU, and normative opinions of the EU. Additionally, I also collected data on demographic variables and various opinion questions which I believed might be relevant to the broader topic of people's perceptions of the EU.

### **6.2 Longitudinal Focus**

I focused on collecting data longitudinally, combining responses from 53 surveys across the designated time period instead of simply utilizing any individual Eurobarometer survey. This was done for several reasons. First, using an extended time period allows me to analyze not just a snapshot of British public opinion at a particular junction in time, which could be influenced by any number of non-representative outside factors, but rather British public opinion of the EU in totality. This is an easy way to construct a more comprehensive picture of how Brits feel about the EU. Additionally, using data from an extended period of time allows for this study to conduct meaningful research which relies on

more variables. One feature of Eurobarometer surveys is that they do not ask the same questions during each survey period, so using data from a singular report would limit the number of variables this study could use. However, by using a much larger sample I can analyze all relevant variables, and I am not beholden to the whims of the Eurobarometer surveying process and its year-by-year deviations.

I also used longitudinal data because, as figure 2 indicates, political and ideological disagreements over EU membership are a longstanding issue, and not something which merely became politicized in the leadup to the 2016 referendum (although this chart only goes back to 2012, that is simply because there are no available visualizations of the debate which stretch back further). A potential critique of this longitudinal focus is that instead of measuring actual positions on the EU over time, a multi-decade study could instead effectively be obscuring individual data points by combining them into an aggregate blob which does not represent actual popular opinions from any particular point. However, as the graph on support for the UK's EU membership shows<sup>60</sup>, the public has remained (relatively) evenly split on this issue over time, so including data from a longer period does not run the risk of misrepresenting opinions from different time periods through statistical analysis.

In addition to data collected from Eurobarometer, I also added some outside data to supplement my dataset. I specifically selected variables which were relevant to the various hypotheses described in the literature review, as well as objective data on issues which Eurobarometer had asked for people's opinions on. Using these factors to guide my decision-making process, I ultimately ended up adding three economic variables: the UK's biannual GDP growth<sup>61</sup>, annual

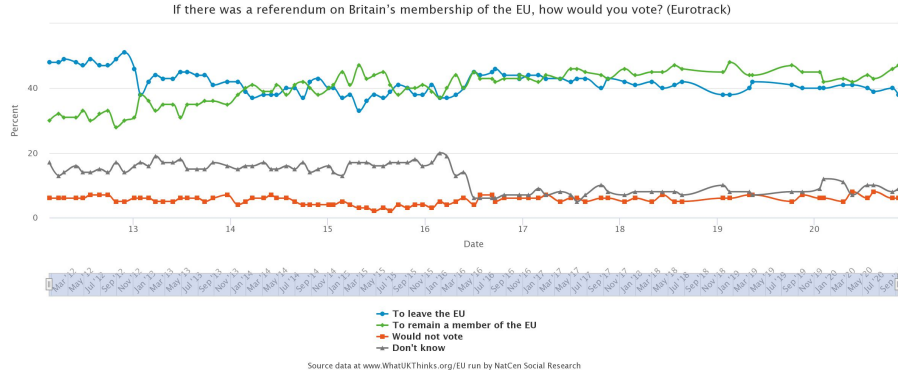
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60. Research 2020.

61. "Quarterly GDP growth UK 2021," n.d.



Figure 2: Support for leaving the EU vs remaining in it in the UK, 2012-2020



gini coefficient<sup>62</sup>, and annual unemployment rate<sup>63</sup>. I added these variables to better analyze both alternative hypotheses and how the British populace’s self-evaluation of economic well-being stacked up against actual data.

The first (and most straightforward) metric this study aims to quantify is the proportion of Brits who feel sufficiently attached to the country that they identify as “British.” This is a fairly simple measurement, and can be extracted directly from a recurring Eurobarometer survey question which asks respondents whether they identify with the United Kingdom. Although measuring British identity may seem unnecessary, it is essential for demarcating the difference between nationalism and mere national attachment. In this instance, having two separate measurements creates distinction between attachment and outright nationalism, two concepts which might otherwise overlap. Without disentangling the two, there is a possibility of conflating both under one label, therefore lumping them together and misrepresenting the prevalence of one or both. In tandem with that, this study then aimed to understand how people identify beyond merely a patriotic attachment to the UK, attempting to synthesize the more controversial and complex concept of “British nationalism.”

62. “Gini index of the UK 1977-2020” 2021.

63. “United Kingdom Unemployment Rate - February 2022 Data - 1971-2021 Historical” 2022.

Since nationalism is defined, conceptually, as a sense of loyalty and identity which relies (at least to some degree) on ‘othering’ or excluding certain groups, this study analyzed that through a series of carefully-selected questions. Crucially, to account for the negative and exclusionary beliefs which are specific to nationalism, this study measured British nationalism exclusively through questions within which respondents could explicitly claim or reject various identities. For instance, questions of basic national allegiance such as “please tell me how attached you feel to the United Kingdom” are insufficient for understanding nationalism, because they include no mechanism for understanding the root of the respondents’ sentiments. Instead, this study relied primarily on a question which asked respondents to describe their sense of attachment to both Britain and Europe. In answering the question, respondents had the opportunity to identify as both British and European (and could denote either as their primary identity), but also had the opportunity to explicitly reject Europe and identify as explicitly British. Because this question specifically provided respondents with the opportunity to frame their British identity as distinctly anti-European, it serves as a much more conceptually rigorous test of whether people are patriotic or nationalist (or both). Similarly, the second measurement of nationalism I relied upon was a question asking Brits if they felt connected to Europe. Again, this allowed respondents to explicitly reject any connection. Additionally, this question is particularly useful because it asked about Europe as a region, not just the EU as an entity — therefore focusing on the more general conceptual issue of regional attachment.

Next, I used Eurobarometer data to develop an understanding of how people felt about the EU on both positive and normative levels. This relied on identifying a simple difference between various Eurobarometer questions: did they ask respondents for their objective evaluations of the EU and its performance,

or did they ask respondents for their feelings about the EU? The three primary questions which the EU evaluation section comprises are whether respondents think the UK's membership in the EU is a good thing for the UK, whether they think it is beneficial for the UK, and what their personal image of the EU is. The first two questions ask respondents for their objective views on the utility of the EU, since they are concerned with whether or not the EU has made the UK better or worse-off. Meanwhile, the third question asks for respondents' subjective opinions of the EU, and does not ask the respondent to characterize the EU's performance. Instead of asking about whether the EU performs its various functions well or has served the UK effectively, it is merely concerned with the individual respondent's subjective opinion of it. Two additional questions which touch on this but are asked less frequently throughout the surveys are whether the UK could face the future better outside the EU and whether or not more decisions should be made at the EU level. These two questions skirt the line between positive and normative, because they are questions about one's preferred policies: they effectively ask what level of control the EU should have over the UK, from none (better future outside the EU, fewer EU decisions) to more (vice versa). In answering those questions, respondents would likely draw upon both objective, policy-based evaluations of the EU as well as their own personal feelings, so these represent an amalgamation of positive and normative opinion.

### **6.3 Relevant Variables, Codes, and Basic Summary**

This study includes data collected from 22 items covered in Eurobarometer surveys. The variables can be broken down into three key genres: demographic and logistical, opinion, and self-reflection. The demographic and logistical data was collected in order to both provide identifying information on each survey

respondent, test a number of ideas about how demographic factors (age, education) relate to support for the EU, and serve to control for outside factors as I tested my hypothesis.

The physical process of cleaning and combining the data was conducted in R. After downloading each continent-wide Eurobarometer dataset, I created a new, smaller dataset which included exclusively British respondents. From there, I found the respective label of each variable I was interested in, as well as what each numeric answer choice stood for from the codebook. Since the variable titles and answer coding change somewhat frequently, I was conscientious to check the codebook for every single dataset. After finding that information, I created a series of new variables with the fully-coded responses. When I had done that for all relevant questions, I created a new, even smaller dataset which included only the demographic variables, individual respondent's weight, and my newly created rows. I did this for all datasets within the time parameters of my study, then combined those into one single dataset. Finally, I redeveloped numeric codes for ordinal, testable variables in order to use them in linear regressions.

Finally, once I had created a singular file containing all the information I needed, I constructed a final dataset containing exclusively weighted data to ensure rigorous testing. Although Eurobarometer uses sophisticated methodology to ensure it surveys an adequately large and representative population for every report, it is nonetheless imperfect. Across the time period I studied, the two biggest issues were an overrepresentation of Northern Irish residents and people over the age of 65. To counter issues like this, Eurobarometer has both a weighting variable which re-proportions the significance of each respondent relative to the EU as a whole, as well as a weighting variable for the UK specifically. However, after the UK voted to leave the EU, the bloc removed

the UK's special weighting variable (the last survey which includes it is ZA7482 from 2018). To counter this, I created a dataset including exclusively weighted responses, which contains over 61,000 cases. I used this dataset for regressions, since R allows users to include a 'weight' variable, allowing me to easily take advantage of the weighted data.

Finally, to test the data I used linear regression models with robust error measurements. To conduct these regressions, I normalized my three key variables (whether EU membership was good, whether EU membership provided benefits, and respondents' personal image of the EU) on a 0-1 scale, with negative answers at 0, positive answers at 1, and neutral and more tempered attitudes somewhere in the middle. The breakdown of each question includes an explanation of the numerical scale used for the linear regressions.

## 6.4 Data Collected

To build the regressions, I collected Eurobarometer data on people's demographic situations, material well being, ideological positions, and national identities, which I then supplemented with outside economic statistics. This was done to both inform my hypothesis and control for outside factors which might have otherwise influenced the regressions. The demographic data I collected included basic information such as the respondent's age (coded into six categories) gender, as well as level of educational attainment (coded into three categories designed to represent attaining a secondary education, university bachelor's degree, and university postgraduate degree), type of community they lived in (urban, suburban, or rural) and place of residency, as determined by the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) level 1 divisions. To determine people's sense of well-being, I collected data on respondents' levels of general life satisfaction, satisfaction with their current financial state, and satisfaction

with the British economy more generally. The data on well-being was collected via survey questions which asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with each item on a 1-4 scale, with 4 representing strong approval and 1 representing strong disapproval.

While aggregating data on people's ideological positions, I specifically focused on selecting variables which provided information about their political leaning and opinions of the EU, with the ultimate goal of finding variables which could be taken to represent positive or normative perceptions of the bloc. To do this, I collected data on people's political leaning (calculated as self-responses along a 1-10 scale from left to right), as well as data on two questions I used as proxies for positive opinions of the EU (whether respondents thought EU membership good and beneficial) and one question I used as a proxy for normative perceptions (respondents' personal images of the EU). I additionally collected data on two supplementary questions which were slightly more policy-oriented, but nonetheless relevant for understanding respondents' opinions of the EU: one asked people whether or not they thought the EU should have more decision making power, while the other asked people whether they believed their home nation could better face the future inside or outside the EU.

Finally, to analyze identity I collected data on variables specifically related to how British and/or European respondents felt. This is because I was specifically concerned with understanding people's identities in the context of feeling British and European (as opposed to associating with Britain vs another country, feeling English vs Scottish, etc). I selected several variables to address this question, including a series of questions asking respondents how attached they felt to Europe, the European Union specifically, and their home country, as well as another which asked them to place themselves on a scale ranging from fully British to fully European.

Outside of the survey data I collected, I utilized three economic indicators to complement the economic satisfaction data from the Eurobarometer surveys. The three indicators I used were national GDP growth (calculated biannually), GINI coefficient, and unemployment rates (both calculated annually). Alongside the Eurobarometer responses, this provided the data I needed to both identify key correlations in my regressions while controlling for various outside factors.

I organized my regressions in alignment with the moderator-mediator theory,<sup>64</sup> with British nationalism serving as the mediator variable in accordance with the structural theory of normative and positive opinion development presented in the hypothesis and visualized in figure 1. The mediator theory suggests that the selected mediator variable (nationalism) serves to generate a particular movement among dependent variables (in this case, establishing a split between positive and normative perceptions of the EU). To format my analysis accordingly, I first ran an all-encompassing regression analyzing the influence of both the general factors and nationalism (the mediator) on positive and normative perceptions of the EU. I then regressed nationalism onto both the other independent variables, and positive and normative perceptions of the EU onto nationalism in order to isolate nationalism's mediatory role in the process of EU opinion formation. This provided the empirical foundation for my analytical structure, ensuring I isolated and tested the key independent variables as effectively as possible.

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64. Baron and Kenny 1986.

## 7 Regressions & Analysis

Table 1: Correlations among the 3 dependent variables

	<i>Variables:</i>		
	EU is Good	EU is Beneficial	EU Image
	Positive	Positive	Normative
EU is Good	1.000	0.555	0.450
EU is Beneficial	0.555	1.000	0.587
EU Image	0.450	0.587	1.000

Before using the selected dependent variables in the analyses themselves, it is first important to analyze how interrelated they are to each other, since this informs how the subsequent regressions can be interpreted. In line with what the hypothesis predicted, the three variables are strongly, but not perfectly, correlated. Interestingly, believing that the EU is beneficial, a positive opinion, is more strongly correlated with having a favorable normative opinion of the EU (a positive image of the bloc) than with believing the EU is good, the other positive variable. However, despite that slight eccentricity there is a high and relatively consistent level of correlation across the three dependent variables, suggesting they are interrelated but all still distinct. This validates their selection as the dependent variables on a statistical level, ensuring the rest of the regression analyses are worthwhile.



Table 2: Regressions 1-3: All key frequently-asked variables (demographic and opinion) on positive and normative perceptions of the EU

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	EU is Good	EU is Beneficial	EU Image
	Positive	Positive	Normative
	(1)	(2)	(3)
UK_attachment_num	-0.036*** (0.012)	0.002 (0.016)	-0.024*** (0.005)
eu_attachment_num	0.169*** (0.010)	0.163*** (0.013)	0.102*** (0.004)
Age_num	-0.026*** (0.005)	-0.024*** (0.006)	-0.018*** (0.002)
Gender_num	-0.049*** (0.016)	-0.099*** (0.021)	0.009 (0.006)
Community_num	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.014)	0.003 (0.005)
Political_leaning_num	-0.044*** (0.009)	-0.038*** (0.011)	-0.032*** (0.003)
Education_num	0.043*** (0.013)	0.108*** (0.017)	0.024*** (0.004)
UK_situation_life_num	0.020* (0.012)	0.039** (0.015)	0.030*** (0.005)
EU_identity_num	0.097*** (0.013)	0.147*** (0.017)	0.072*** (0.005)
GDP_growth	-0.053*** (0.012)	-0.025 (0.016)	-0.004 (0.007)
Unemployment	-0.034 (0.022)	0.014 (0.028)	0.009* (0.005)
Constant	0.533*** (0.137)	-0.140 (0.176)	0.163*** (0.035)
Observations	1,865	1,700	6,156
R <sup>2</sup>	0.299	0.280	0.300
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.295	0.275	0.298

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

The first three regressions focused on identifying the key factors driving both positive and normative perceptions of the EU, analyzing how various identitarian, economic, and quality-of-life factors contributed to people's opinions while holding demographic identifiers constant. The first two regressions use the

positive variables, whether or not EU membership is good for the EU and perceived benefits of EU membership, while the third uses the normative variable, personal image of the EU.

While the majority of the variables are significant in some capacity, the strength and influence of various factors deviates greatly across the different regressions. One of the most influential contributors to people's perceptions of the EU is their sense of European or anti-European identity. Holding everything else constant, feeling attached to the EU and identifying as European correlated more strongly with favorable positive and normative views of the EU than anything else. While British self-identity influenced whether people thought the EU was good and their personal image of it, the factor had no influence on whether or not people thought EU membership was beneficial.

It is noteworthy that most demographic variables also have a meaningful impact on perceptions of the EU. Higher rates of education and left-wing political leaning are both correlated with positive and normative support for the EU, while age negatively correlates with EU support. Economically, GDP growth was significant but unemployment was not. Overall economic growth is predictive of both decreased positive and normative support for the EU. Community size's lack of influence could potentially be the result of how the EU defines various states of urbanization; as demonstrated later on, London, the most urban region, is distinctly more supportive of the EU than anywhere else in England.

The next two regressions attempted to determine how economic factors and life satisfaction contributed to British nationalism, measured as the express rejection of European-ness and European identity<sup>65</sup>. To do this, I ran two separate models: the first was a conventional model within which people could choose to identify as British and/or European, and the second was a model

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<sup>65</sup>. To do this, the variables on identity were recoded inversely to how they are presented in the data collection table in the appendix. This was done to make the regressions as logical as possible.

Table 3: Regressions 4-5: Factor contributing to nationalist sentiment, measured against nationalism and anti-nationalism

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	EU Identity (inverted)	EU Attachment (inverted)
	(1)	(2)
Political_leaning_num	0.089*** (0.008)	0.110*** (0.013)
UK_situation_life_num	-0.018 (0.011)	-0.117*** (0.018)
UK_situation_econ_num	0.003 (0.010)	-0.057*** (0.016)
UK_situation_fin_num	-0.015 (0.011)	-0.056*** (0.017)
Education_num	-0.186*** (0.010)	-0.209*** (0.015)
Age_num	0.002 (0.004)	0.023*** (0.007)
Gender_num	0.084*** (0.014)	0.021 (0.021)
Community_num	0.015 (0.012)	-0.037** (0.017)
UK_gini	0.101*** (0.017)	0.057*** (0.019)
GDP_growth	0.276*** (0.046)	0.298 (0.015)
Unemployment	-0.082*** (0.020)	0.025 (0.017)
Constant	0.151 (0.535)	1.033* (0.624)
Observations	9,577	8,208
R <sup>2</sup>	0.111	0.168

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

which regressed the factors against people's sense of (anti)European identity, or Europeanism, measuring its relative absence.

Again, most factors were both strong and significant. Negative responses to all three quality of life variables (overall life satisfaction, feelings about the UK's economic situation, and feelings about one's personal financial situation)

correlated significantly with support for nationalism, though opinions of the UK's economic situation were the least influential of the three. Controlling for everything else, increased GDP correlates with higher levels of nationalism. However, rising inequality (increased gini) and higher unemployment also both correlate with increased nationalism as well.

Demographically, right-wing political leaning and low levels of education are both predictive of low support for nationalism. Older age, which had no correlation with opposition to the EU, correlates with increased nationalism through both questions.

Table 4: Regressions 6-7: Influence of nationalism on positive and normative perceptions of the EU Results (each tested independently but presented together)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	EU is Good	EU is Beneficial	EU Image
	Positive	Positive	Normative
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Eu_identity_num_inv	-0.199*** (0.005)	-0.234*** (0.007)	-0.142*** (0.002)
Constant	1.238*** (0.018)	1.261*** (0.024)	0.959*** (0.009)
Observations	12,186	9,717	24,512
R <sup>2</sup>	0.122	0.116	0.122
Eu_attachment_num_inv	-0.160*** (0.014)	-0.187*** (0.018)	-0.124*** (0.006)
Constant	1.238*** (0.014)	1.261*** (0.018)	0.959*** (0.006)
Observations	6,165	5,721	12,333
R <sup>2</sup>	0.131	0.122	0.176

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Regressions 6 and 7 specifically looked at how British nationalism, as measured by people's national identities and attachment (or lack thereof) to Europe

influenced their positive and normative perceptions of the EU. Although my hypothesis predicted that increases in these nationalist indicators would be most predictive of decreased normative support for the EU, that turned out not to be the case. In actuality, increased nationalism — as defined by both metrics — was more strongly correlated with decreased positive support for the EU. The question about the EU's benefits, which I personally considered to be the most positive, objective, and dispersonal metric of EU opinion, actually had the strongest negative relationship with both nationalist indicators. This suggests that nationalist sentiment most strongly correlated with thinking EU membership is objectively bad, not having an unfavorable personal image of the block. This data point directly contradicts my hypothesis.

Regressions eight and nine are a more targeted version of the first three: instead of studying factors which influence people's abstract opinions on the EU, they analyze how these factors affect people's positions on specific EU-related concerns. Unsurprisingly, holding identitarian, demographic, quality of life, and economic variables constant, having a positive image of the EU and feeling attached to Europe correlate most strongly with support for the EU in both contexts. Demographically, right-wing political leaning correlates with less support for these policy initiatives. However, while higher levels of education correlates with believing that remaining in the EU is good, they are also correlated with opposing giving the EU more decision making control. Older age is a significant predictor of the belief that the UK would do better outside the EU, but has no significance on the other dependent variable. Meanwhile, more urban environments slightly predict more support for EU decision-making, but are not a significant predictor of opinions on the UK's future. Economically, GDP growth, inequality, and unemployment have no significant impact on opinions about the EU's level of decision making, and provide mixed opinions on

Table 5: Regressions 8-9: Factors contributing to people desiring more or less EU involvement in Britain's political and economic spheres

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	More EU Decisions	Better future inside EU
	(1)	(2)
Political_leaning_num	-0.074*** (0.015)	-0.169*** (0.017)
EU_image_num	0.253*** (0.015)	0.352*** (0.016)
UK_situation_life_num	-0.025 (0.022)	-0.055** (0.024)
eu_attachment_num	0.170*** (0.018)	0.274*** (0.019)
Education_num	-0.082*** (0.018)	0.141*** (0.021)
Age_num	-0.091*** (0.008)	-0.013 (0.010)
Gender_num	0.060*** (0.026)	0.090*** (0.029)
UK_attachment_num	-0.089*** (0.023)	-0.167** (0.024)
Community_num	0.043* (0.024)	-0.032 (0.027)
GDP_growth	-0.072 (0.222)	-0.673*** (0.250)
UK_gini	-0.029 (0.022)	0.057** (0.025)
Unemployment	-0.017 (0.020)	0.343*** (0.017)
Constant	3.099*** (0.708)	-1.324*** (0.766)
Observations	4,812	4,811
R <sup>2</sup>	0.270	0.396

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

the UK's future. Increased GDP growth correlates strongly with believing the UK could do better outside the EU, while rising unemployment and inequality both correlate with thinking the UK can better face the future inside the EU.

## 8 Discussion: Understanding the Key Findings and their Alignment with the Hypothesis

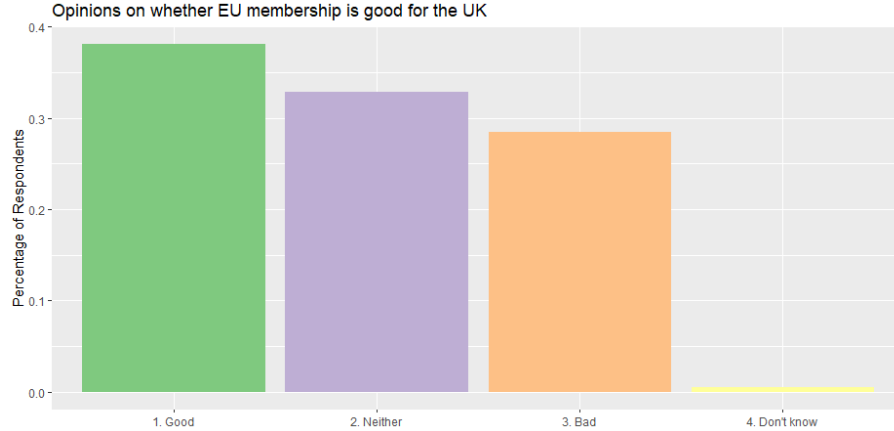
### 8.1 Analysis of responses to general survey questions

Before delving into the full data analysis, it is important to analyze responses to the fundamental questions this study focused on: the EU's benefits, whether or not EU membership is good (the two positive questions), and individuals' images of the EU (the normative question). It appears that on aggregate, slightly more respondents believe that EU membership has been harmful than helpful for the UK. Interestingly, 47% of people said that membership was beneficial, while 51% said it was not — numbers which almost perfectly correspond with the results of the 2016 Brexit referendum, where 48% of people voted remain and 52% voted leave (although my study does not focus on Brexit, it would be interesting for another study to investigate how accurately this Eurobarometer question predicted vote choice in the 2016 referendum).

However, what is both more interesting and more relevant is to break down the relationship between responses to these three questions. In comparing figures one and two, two key points emerge: a noticeable disparity in net support for the EU and a substantial difference in the number of undecided respondents. While a very slight majority of respondents said they felt that EU membership had not been beneficial for the UK (figure 3), a reasonably large plurality (38%) said that Britain's membership in the EU was a good thing (figure 4). Net support for the EU, if measured by the metrics from figures one and two, swings 14 points, from -4 to +10 — a large change, especially given how similar the questions were. One-third of respondents from figure 3 also said they thought being a member of the EU was neither good nor bad, which is surprising since

almost nobody said they were unsure whether EU membership was beneficial or not.

Figure 3: Breakdown of responses to whether or not EU membership is good for the UK

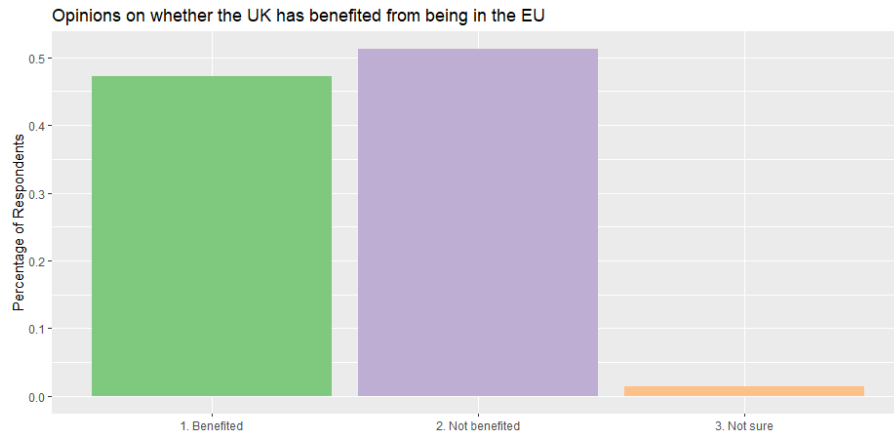


There are two important takeaways from comparing figures one and two. First, the disparity in undecideds across the two questions reflects a methodological issue with Eurobarometer, not an ideological inconsistency among respondents. There were likely many people who did not feel informed enough to decide conclusively whether or not EU membership was a good thing, so, when given the ‘unsure’ option in figure 3, they selected that. However, the question about the EU’s benefits has no neutral option, so people likely felt pressured to pick an option instead of admitting they did not know (throughout the data, people were exceedingly unlikely to choose “don’t know” for any question). This could simply reflect people’s unwillingness to admit they do not know something, and is not indicative of any ideological trend among Brits. Second, it appears that when forced to make a binary yes/no choice, Brits who are unsure about whether or not the EU is good lean towards saying it is not. This is the most rational explanation for why a plurality of respondents support the EU in figure 3, but a majority oppose it in figure 4. When the option to



remain neutral is removed, there is a marked increase in opposition to the EU and a much smaller increase in support for it.

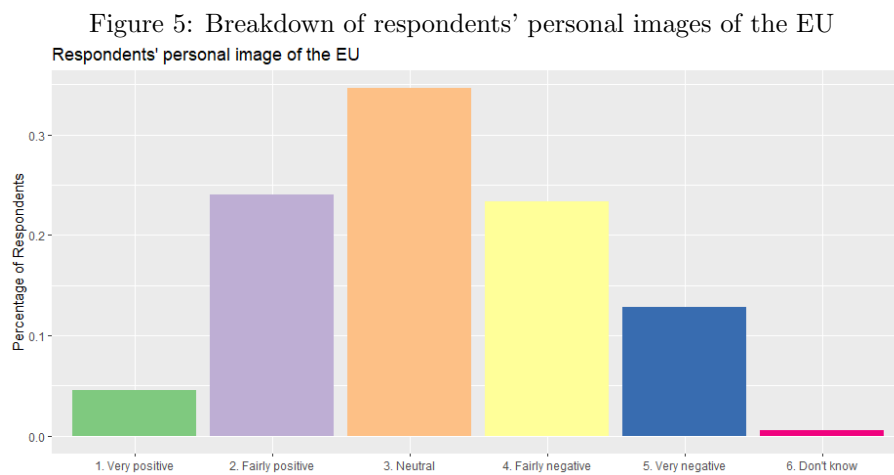
Figure 4: Breakdown of responses to whether or not the UK has benefited from EU membership



## 8.2 Asymmetrical Polarization and Widespread Indifference

Next, the data from figure 5 are also notable. Only 29% of respondents have a positive image of the EU (this includes both ‘very’ and ‘fairly’ positive), comparatively lower than the 48% who said EU membership was beneficial and the 38% who said it was good. On a very basic level, this fact supports my hypothesis that people have disparate positive and normative opinions about the EU, and that people’s positive perceptions of the EU are generally more favorable. The second insight which I gleaned from figure 5 is that views on the EU are asymmetrical in terms of intensity: a much larger proportion of negative respondents opted for the comparatively extreme answer. While only 17% of all people with a positive image of the EU said it was “very positive,” 36% of all negative respondents picked “very negative.” This demonstrates that British

people not only have unfavorable perceptions of the EU on aggregate, but also that opponents of the EU (as determined by normative opposition to the bloc) are much more passionate about their beliefs than its supporters are. Finally, it appears that a large contingent of the British population is generally indifferent to the EU: in figure 5, as in figure 3, about one-third of respondents said they were neutral towards the EU.



Ultimately, these figures allow for several conclusions. First, it appears that on a fundamental level, there is some disparity between people's personal images of the EU and their thoughts on whether membership in it has been both good and beneficial to the UK. In the context of this study, that would suggest that people's positive assessments of the EU appear to be more favorable than their normative assessments. However, because of the nature of the data and the idea of proxy variables more generally, this is merely an assumption: in reality, the only thing this finding specifically suggests is that people are more likely to think EU membership was good and beneficial to the UK than they are to have a positive image of the bloc. Second, the proportion of people who appear either indifferent, apathetic, or genuinely neutral toward the EU is substantially

higher than I had anticipated. From figures 3 and 5, it is apparent that roughly one-third of the British population appears to have almost no meaningful opinions about the EU. I had not anticipated such a significant proportion of the British public would not care about Europe, especially given how prominent debate about EU-UK has been at various junctures since 2000 (interestingly, this indifference persisted through the Brexit era, as UK-EU relations became the most salient and polarized issue in British politics — in data from 2016 onwards, 30% of respondents still claimed to have a neutral image of the EU). However, it should be noted that although a large proportion of the population is generally indifferent to EU-related issues, when forced to take a stance most undecideds lean towards being anti-EU. Finally, all of these past findings are contextualized by a political environment within which anti-EU Brits are both more common and much more zealous in their beliefs than pro-EU Brits.

### **8.3 Regression Analysis and Discussion**

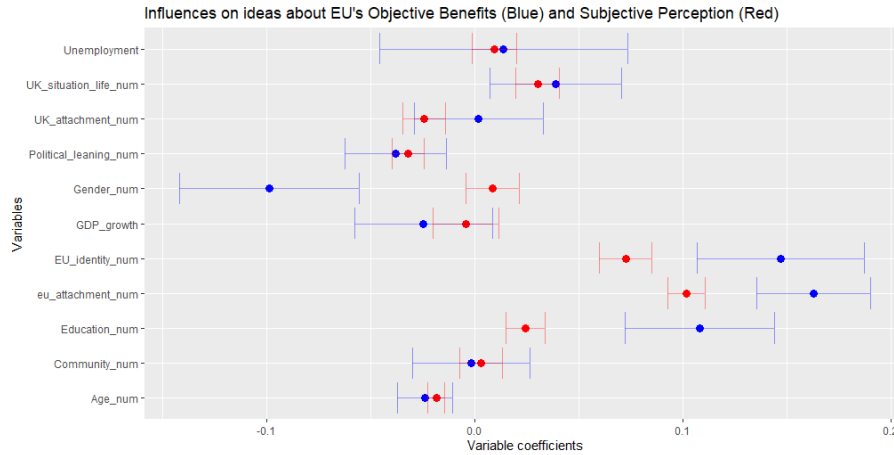
Moving into the data analysis itself, I used linear regressions to analyze which factors most meaningfully influence a person’s positive and normative opinions of the EU overall. This allows me to study both my own hypothesis as well as the various alternative hypotheses listed and explained in the literature review. Contrary to what the hypothesis predicted, ideological factors were not meaningfully more influential over people’s normative opinions of the EU than their positive ones. Left-wing politics, feeling attached to Europe, and general life satisfaction are major indicators of support for the EU overall, but the distinction between the two types of EU support is quite limited. Moving into the data analysis itself, I used linear regressions to analyze which factors most meaningfully influence a person’s positive and normative opinions of the EU overall. This allows me to study both my own hypothesis as well as the various

alternative hypotheses listed and explained in the literature review. Contrary to what the hypothesis predicted, ideological factors were not meaningfully more influential over people's normative opinions of the EU than their positive ones. Left-wing politics, feeling attached to Europe, and general life satisfaction are major indicators of support for the EU overall, but the distinction between the two types of EU support is quite limited.

#### **8.4 Key Findings and the Hypothesis**

As figure 6 demonstrates, this study's hypothesis does not appear to hold: to the (limited) extent there is a distinction between positive and normative opinions of the EU, ideological considerations consistently informed people's positive opinions of the EU more meaningfully. The two variables which demonstrate this most clearly are people's senses of national identity and European attachment. In both instances, higher levels of affinity for Europe predicted substantial increases in positive perceptions of the EU, but only marginal increases in normative perceptions. Across all the ideological variables tested, there was not one factor which clearly influenced normative perceptions of the EU more strongly than positive ones. Many of the variables' coefficients had overlapping possible margins of error, meaning those variables lack power to distinguish positive and normative evaluations and suggesting that the positive-normative divide may not exist. Between that and the direction and significance of the aforementioned identity variables' coefficients, this study's hypothesis lacks empirical support either because there is no distinction between positive and normative evaluations of the EU, or because the statistically significant factors correlate in opposite direction to what this study predicted.

Figure 6: Regression coefficients for selected key variables, regressed against EU benefit (blue) EU image (red)



## 8.5 Possible Explanations

There are several possible reasons why the results did not follow align with the hypothesis as closely as expected. First, it is possible that the positive-normative divide about which I hypothesized simply does not exist (or exists so minimally in practice that it is an ineffective concept). This would not be tremendously surprising: this study attempted to pioneer and operationalize a new conceptual distinction in analyzing and understanding popular opinion of the EU, and there was no past literature offering evidence this novel conceptualization would have empirical purchase. Although I was able to combine various ideas from different strains of research to justify, conceptually, the idea of a positive-normative divide, this merely demonstrated that it could exist, not that it would. Even the past work most substantively similar to mine, Guinaudeau and Schnatterer (2019), only looked at the idea of disaggregating opinions on the EU's different functions speculatively, and acknowledged it was breaking new ground and not attempting to draw any overarching conclusions. Similarly, while Weßels' (2007) findings suggested that this position-normative could plausibly exist, he stopped

short of attempting to identify the factors which contributed to it. Without previous empirical evidence specifically supporting both my theory's utility and the rationale behind it, its failure to materialize here is understandable.

On a practical level, it is also possible that the positive-normative distinction does not present a conceptual structure representative of how Brits think about Europe or EU membership. For instance, this study drew heavily on van der Waal's concept of 'welfare chauvinism.' However, the two factors van der Waal tests for in identifying welfare chauvinism, increasing economic welfare benefits and aiding immigrants, have much more distinct issue profiles than positive and normative views on the EU do. Most individuals likely had distinct, well-formed, and self-contained positions on both increasing welfare benefits and helping immigrants outside the context of that study. Therefore, van der Waal's study primarily analyzed how the two preexisting positions interacted, attempting to determine how they influenced each other.

My study used the same mechanical approach as van der Waal's, but attempted to study the interaction between two issues which most people presumably did not have fully developed opinions on. Although the issue of European relations is certainly highly salient in the UK, my findings suggest it is unlikely that most people had (at least consciously) distinct, specific opinions on both the EU's economic performance and political legitimacy. The distinction between the two issue dimensions was always going to be more tenuous in my study than in van der Waal's. It is likely that people simply do not formulate their opinions of the EU by coordinating multiple independent opinions of the bloc; instead, it now seems more probable that people simply aggregate their thoughts of the EU's social and economic components into one compound opinion about the EU. This idea is supported by the very small disparities between various factors' influence on peoples' positive and normative opinions, as

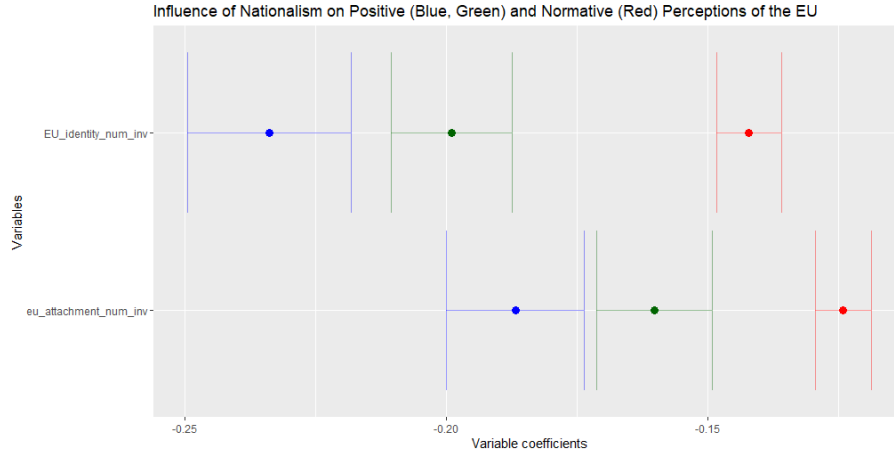
the differences between most of the coefficients were not statistically significant. Of the 11 variables included in figure 6, only three have meaningfully different impacts on the two dependent variables. Ultimately, this suggests that my hypothesis was most likely empirically unhelpful because my conceptual analysis did not accurately represent the real world thinking of most Brits. In a similar vein, it is also possible that there is no divide between normative and positive opinions of the EU because respondents were unable to effectively discern what accomplishments or shortcomings should be attributed to the bloc. This is an eminently reasonable option; according to a Eurobarometer survey from Spring 2017 — a period during which concerns about the EU and its functions dominated British news cycles — barely half of Brits said they understood how the EU worked.<sup>66</sup> Considering how poor Brits' understanding of the EU was, it can be inferred that the public was not able to accurately assess the material advantages and disadvantages of EU membership. Because of this, it seems highly probable that respondents would have been unable to develop objective analyses of the EU's performance distinct from their general sentiment towards it.

Second, it is also possible that my hypothesis was unsupported not because there was no positive-normative divide, but rather because the positive-normative divide was actually the opposite of what I anticipated. Among the three ideological variables in figure 6 whose correlations were statistically significant, increases in each were more closely correlated with increased positive perceptions of the EU than increased normative ones. Similarly, as figure 7 indicates, increasing nationalism correlates more strongly with unfavorable positive perceptions of the EU than normative ones. This suggests that if there is any disparity between positive and normative opinions of the EU, nationalism and ideological factors actually inform people's positive opinions of the bloc more than their normative ones.

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66. *Standard Eurobarometer 87 - Spring 2017* 2017.

Figure 7: Regression coefficients of inverted metrics of EU identity and attachment to Europe (proxies for nationalism) on positive perceptions of the EU (EU good: green, and EU benefit: blue) and normative perceptions (EU image: red)



Although there are a few reasons this could be true, none are particularly compelling. The most likely option is that Brits do not have a problem with the EU in an abstract sense and accept its existence, but are concerned with whether or they feel has benefitted Britain (for instance, respondents could believe that the EU is fine as an entity and can do whatever it wants in continental Europe, but that membership has weakened Britain). Similarly, Brits could be passionate about the benefits (or lack thereof) of membership because they present tangible concerns, but remain largely indifferent to the idea of the EU more generally. Brits might possibly also allow their ideological factors to determine how they believe the EU is performing (a ‘perception-is-reality’ type situation) while making independent judgements about its conceptual validity, which would explain ideology’s stronger correlation with positive perceptions of the bloc. Finally, it is also possible that Brits’ evaluations of the EU’s performance are biased on the basis of their personal feelings towards the bloc more heavily than expected. In this case, people would say the EU was beneficial if they wanted it to be beneficial (and vice versa), and not because they genuinely



believed the EU had contributed to their well-being. This outcome would suggest the same correlations for both positive and normative evaluations, which could in turn explain everything except the select few variables where significant differences in variable outcome were observed.

## **8.6 Secondary Explanation: The Hypothesis Lacked**

### **Support Because of Constraints on the Study Itself**

Alternatively, it is also entirely possible that the positive-normative divide my hypothesis predicted does exist, but the available data was simply neither detailed nor targeted enough for this to manifest empirically. While the Eurobarometer data was the best available resource for this project, it was not designed in a way which made it particularly conducive to studying the particular factors I was interested in. Eurobarometer aims to quantify the public's opinions on a litany of different EU-related issues, which means the surveys take a very broad focus, encompassing concerns which range from environmental policy to national security. This generalist focus meant the surveys only devoted a small amount of space to dissecting the specifics of EU approval. For instance, not every survey asked the specific questions I was collecting data on, the questions were not scaled consistently such that they could be easily compared, and there were no direct follow-up questions related to people's answers (these could have possibly provided more in-depth insights). This concern is particularly relevant to this study because a key feature of the research design was developing innovative, highly targeted variables which rely on small discrepancies between different concepts.

A consequence of using Eurobarometer data is that I was forced to use pre-existing survey questions as proxies for the underlying ideas I was attempting to analyze, which is not an ideal way to design a research project. For instance,

even if this study's underlying conceptual rationale was sound, and even if this conceptualization was in fact empirically important in Brits' thinking about the EU, the study's results and findings are entirely reliant on respondents perceiving the questions the same way I did. Since I did not have control over this, the data's reliability and validity is entirely the product of how people interpreted Eurobarometer's questions. This means that on a technical level, the only thing this study was able to ascertain is that there are no major discrepancies between what influences people's personal image of the EU and their ideas of whether or not it is good or beneficial to the UK. Because of this, running this same study again but specifically collecting a smaller sample of more precise, higher quality data which more directly targets the nuances of positive and normative might yield different results which better align with the hypothesis.

## **8.7 Alternative Hypotheses**

Beyond evaluating my own hypothesis, it is also important to consider what my new conceptual and methodological approach to studying British support for the EU reveals about various alternative theories. Although the alternative hypotheses I described in my literature review differ from this study's hypothesis in various ways, their underlying conceptual arguments — and the data they use to study these arguments — overlaps extensively with my own work. Evaluating how these alternative hypotheses fit within the context of my work is important because my idea of positive and normative perceptions of the EU is not intended to discredit or other theories, but instead to build upon and critique them through a new framework.

### 8.7.1 Alternative Hypothesis 1: Nationalism as Euroscepticism

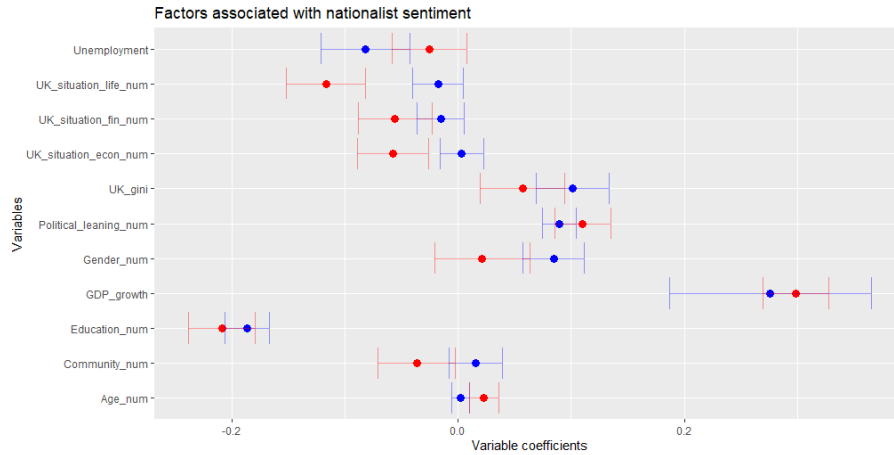
First, while my study corroborated the idea that British nationalism and Euroscepticism are strongly linked,<sup>67</sup> the data on perceptions of the EU and nationalism disputes the theory that they are effectively identical constructs. Within the context of the study, I identified the key factors which contributed to both positive and normative support for the EU (regressions 1-3, 8-9) and British nationalism (regressions 4-5). If the “British nationalism as Euroscepticism” hypothesis were to hold true, then the factors associated with unfavorable positive and normative perceptions of the EU should have an almost-identical relationship with nationalist sentiment. However, while there was some overlap between the factors contributing to nationalism and positive and normative Euroscepticism, their causes were still far from identical. This suggests that although the two ideologies are similar, they are nonetheless still independent and influenced by different factors. If nationalism and Euroscepticism are caused by different factors they would therefore not be identical and their relative appeal would shift independently, demonstrating they are, at least to some extent, disconnected from one another.

Additionally, my research into positive and normative perceptions of the EU does not address the other key component of the “British nationalism as Euroscepticism” theory, which is that all British nationalism must be associated with anti-European sentiment in some capacity or another. Since I was looking at nationalism in the context of its influence on public perception of the EU, this limits what my work can say about this theory. While I naturally found a substantial amount of evidence that nationalism was ideologically aligned with opposition to Europe, I did not analyze other possible sources of British nationalism, such as imperial nostalgia or racially-oriented notions of citizenship,

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67. Wellings 2010.

Figure 8: Regression coefficients for selected factors, regressed against the two proxies for British nationalism (inverted sense of European identity and European attachment)



which would have to be ruled out to support this theory. As a result, my work does not address the key second argument of the “nationalism as Euroscepticism” theory, which suggests that all these possible sources of nationalism relate back to anti-Europeanism in some capacity.

### 8.7.2 Alternative Hypothesis 2: Education predicts EU support

Next, the alternative hypothesis that higher educational attainment is predictive of EU support,<sup>68,69</sup> presents a very interesting and confounding conundrum when evaluated through the lens of my data and results. Within the framework of the study itself, the hypothesis appears to be highly compelling: consistently, higher levels of educational attainment (as measured by respondents’ final year of full-time education) correlated with higher levels of support for the EU. This included higher positive and normative opinions of the EU and less support for nationalism, indicating the relationship between EU support and educational

68. Inglehart 1970.

69. Hakhverdian et al. 2013.

attainment was meaningful. In a vacuum, this relationship would be tremendously useful and indicate that education is one of the most salient indicators of support for the EU, something which would both support this hypothesis and suggest that education is an essential factor behind both positive and normative opinions of the bloc.

However, while the relationship holds true throughout my study, it has systematic shortcomings which must be discussed. On a practical level, the hypothesis that education predicts support for the EU seems weaker in the context of real-world politics, undermining the significance of the relationship I observed between the two variables. If higher educational attainment was predictive of more support for the EU, then it follows that a more well-educated populace would be more supportive of European integration. However, in both a longitudinal and cross-cultural context, levels of educational attainment within the UK appear to either have no impact on EU support, or even possibly correlate with increased opposition to the EU.

First, the education-EU support hypothesis does not hold consistent when comparing Britain and EU member countries today. According to the hypothesis, more educated countries should generally be more supportive of the EU. However, this is demonstrably untrue in practice: ironically, the UK — the only country which has ever elected to leave the EU — has a higher proportion of university graduates than every EU member except for Ireland, Lithuania, and Luxembourg (39% of Brits between the ages of 35-64 have a tertiary degree, while 56% of Brits between ages 25-34 do).<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, support for the EU is much more widespread in less well-educated countries such as Germany, Poland, and Slovakia — the EU enjoys a net favorability rating of at least +40 percentage points in all three countries,<sup>71</sup> despite the fact that they all have a significantly

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70. OECD, n.d.

71. Wike et al. 2019.

smaller proportion of university graduates than the UK. This observation serves to undermine the suggestion that educational attainment predicts EU support; otherwise the UK, with its highly educated population, would be substantially more supportive of the EU.

However, analyzing the relationship between education and support for the EU in a cross-national context alone is not necessarily enough. For instance, it is possible that increased education predicts higher support for the EU within an individual national population, but its effects are relative to the population's general level of EU support. The UK could just be distinctly more Eurosceptic on aggregate, such that the baseline level of overall EU support is lower but nonetheless increases within the populace in accordance with educational attainment. However, analyzing British support for the EU over time also demonstrates that even within the UK specifically, educational attainment does not seem to meaningfully influence EU support. In the 2016-17 academic year (around the time of the Brexit vote), there were 2.3 million students enrolled in UK universities,<sup>72</sup> a figure which represents approximately 3.4% of the UK's population. Meanwhile, in 1970 (5 years before the UK's referendum to join the EU), there were 621,00 students in higher education,<sup>73</sup> representing about 1.1% of the British population. This means that between 1970 and 2016, the number of Brits in higher education increased almost fivefold in absolute terms, and tripled relative to the general population. But, contrary to what the hypothesis that education predicts EU support would suggest, this dramatic increase in educational attainment was not followed by a proportional increase in support for the EU; instead, the opposite happened. In 1975 Brits voted 67-32 in favor of joining the EU, while, after decades of improved educational outcomes, Brits then voted 52-48 to leave the bloc in 2016, a 39 point swing. Despite the con-

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72. "Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2019/20 — HESA" 2021.

73. McCarthy 2010.

temporary UK's high levels of education, the country is both substantially less supportive of European integration than less-educated EU members are today, and then it has been in its own past.

Reconciling the hypothesis that education is correlated with support for the EU, which is strongly backed up by my data, and the real-world scenarios that show this appears to be untrue is difficult, given the strength of both points. However, there are a few reasons these phenomena could coexist. First, it is possible that educational attainment does influence people's opinions of the EU, but is comparatively unimportant vis-a-vis other factors, and statistical analyses have overstated its impact. This is highly probably likely since there is a lot of noise and randomness in studying the specific factors which influence people's opinions of the EU, and it is difficult to determine which factors form people's opinions and which simply correlate with them. Because educational attainment appears to be consistently (if not causally) related to EU support, that means statistical analyses might mistake this consistency for importance, and take this correlational relationship to be more influential to opinion formation than it actually is. In a broader context, this could also suggest that while relative levels of EU support between more and less educated Brits have remained the same (ie, more educated people remain proportionally more supportive of the bloc over time), this has been offset by an absolute, society-wide decrease in EU favorability. In this instance, higher educational attainment would correlate with more support for the EU, but would clearly not actually be a meaningful influence on public opinion, since support was being moved primarily by other factors which are more complicated, less consistent, or harder to identify.

Collectively, all of this means that while the alternative hypothesis that education informs support for the EU is correct in the narrowest sense, it does not necessarily provide a useful framework for studying or contextualizing EU

popular opinion in the UK. While I did find strong evidence that higher levels of education correlate with support for the EU in the context of my research project, real-world evidence shows that this relationship, while not spurious, is too weak or non-influential to meaningfully drive public perception of the EU in the UK or inform structured analyses of the underlying issues. While the relationship appears statistically significant, the aim of the social sciences is to conduct research with the aim of accurately and comprehensively analyzing developments as they take place in the real world, not just describing them using various overlapping metrics. The statistical value of the relationship is therefore limited, since the hypothesis does not appear able to tell us anything meaningful about how popular opinion of the EU is formed, and instead merely reflects a possible underlying correlation.

### **8.7.3 Alternative Hypothesis 3: The Left Behind Hypothesis**

Finally, my study largely agreed with perhaps the most widely-discussed hypothesis in the post-Brexit era, the ‘Left Behind’ hypothesis.<sup>74</sup> It is not surprising that my findings align with this hypothesis, because although this idea and my own hypothesis focus on slightly different concepts (“why did the UK vote to leave the EU” vs “how are popular perceptions of the EU formed”), they are generally very similar. In my work, I found that more educated, younger, left-leaning, and more satisfied people were generally all more supportive of the EU (in both positive and normative terms), which is precisely what the left behind hypothesis suggests.<sup>75</sup> Although my research was less economically-oriented than many papers studying the Left Behind hypothesis, which focus on more objective economic metrics such as regional income, inequality, and GDP<sup>76</sup> (often under the title of ‘economic anxiety’), there is nonetheless a great

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74. Goodwin and Heath 2016.

75. Goodwin and Heath 2016.

76. Arnorsson and Zoega 2018.



deal of common ground between those styles of studies and my own work.

On a more conceptual level, my hypothesis and the Left Behind hypothesis are primarily so similar because that hypothesis inspired my analysis of positive and normative opinions of the EU. I relied on many of the same foundational concepts as the Left Behind hypothesis had established, and worked from the same background information. My goal was not to rebuke or challenge the theory, but rather find ways to advance its methodologies and findings. The only major difference between my work and the Left Behind hypothesis is the complexity with which I evaluated perceptions of the EU: instead of using a simple binary of support/do not support, I created a more complex methodology for measuring popular opinion. This was a conscious decision and represented my attempt to build a more nuanced definition of nationalism in the context of Euroscepticism, advancing beyond merely using it as a catchall funnel for social, political, and economic discontent. However, this study's findings were unable to substantiate this conceptual advancement, suggesting that either that the left behind hypothesis's analysis of nationalism are sufficiently nuanced or that the differences I predicted observing are too small to study with existing data. Again, this study did not attempt to rebut anything which Left Behind-oriented studies found, but rather to build upon its findings in a constructive way.

## **8.8 The Economic Situation: Understanding GDP's Role**

In the context of my hypothesis, one particularly surprising component of the data is the influence of economic factors — particularly GDP growth — on both support for the EU and nationalism. Most variable relationships correlated directionally with the way my hypothesis (and most conventional wisdom) expected them to on a general level, even if they did not perfectly correspond with my prediction. For example, higher educational attainment correlated with

stronger support for the EU and decreased nationalism, while rightward political leaning correlated with less support for the EU and increased nationalism.

However, GDP growth was an exception to this pattern. Going back to the hypothesis, it was predicted that an increase in material growth would correlate strongly with a more favorable positive image of the EU — in my hypothesis specifically, it was assumed that measurable economic advancement would improve people’s perception of the EU’s performance. Outside of that, it was also assumed this would hold true for numerous reasons. First, much of the past literature on public opinion of the EU has used a utilitarian lens, suggesting that people’s perceptions of the bloc are the product of the economic benefits it provides. Similarly, there is empirical research showing that EU membership improves national economic performance,<sup>77</sup> so it could be inferred that if people were aware of that relationship and observed it personally, they would therefore support the EU. Finally, given the popularity of the left-behind hypothesis, which correlates economic anxiety with nationalism, it was predicted that rising GDP would assuage this problem and limit nationalist sentiment. However, contrary to these assumptions, the relationship between GDP growth and positive support for the EU was negative: economic growth was a predictor of decreased support for the EU and increased nationalism.

### **8.8.1 Economics Part 1: Is GDP misguided?**

Given the strength and consistency of this relationship, a few possible explanations emerge. First, it is possible that economic growth is simply not particularly influential over people’s opinion of the EU, especially when controlling for other, more immediately significant factors, such as political leaning and personal life satisfaction. If it was not an important variable, it stands to reason that the relationship between economic growth and EU approval would be subsumed

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<sup>77</sup>. Campos, Coricelli, and Moretti 2019.

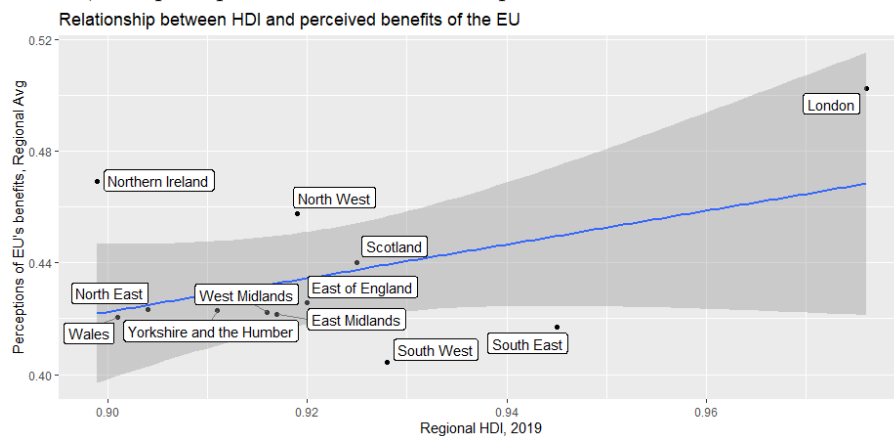
to these other factors, therefore influencing its relationship to the dependent variable.

A similar but more substantive explanation of the GDP-EU-support-nationalism relationship is that people's evaluations of both national and individual well-being are not aligned particularly closely with actual economic growth. Although increased GDP was consistently predictive of decreased support for the EU and increased nationalism, people's personal evaluations of both their own well-being and the UK's overall economic position predicted exactly the opposite: being more satisfied with life, feeling more financially secure, and thinking the UK economy was doing well all correlated with higher support for the EU and decreased nationalism. Considering this, it is possible that people's personal evaluations of how both they and the UK are doing are not based on — or correlated with — how the country is doing according to official economic metrics. This could be caused by any number of things. For instance, it is possible that subnational GDP would correlate more closely with people's life satisfaction, and that national level GDP data does a poor job capturing the nuances of economic growth and development within the UK. Alternatively, it is possible that people did not experience the impacts of economic growth or contraction until months or years after it occurred, which would create a lag time in their evaluations. This could also simply indicate that GDP is not a relevant or accurate metric of economic growth, since it could be overshadowed by phenomena such as inflation, which could in turn eliminate the perceived benefits of GDP growth.

Another piece of evidence suggesting that GDP alone might be an inaccurate or incomplete measure of overall well-being and development is figure 9. As the plot demonstrates, there is a positive correlation between human development (a metric which assesses a region by aggregating its average life expectancy,

mean years of schooling, and GNI per capita) and belief the EU is beneficial on a regional level (as measured from 2004 on). This suggests that even if there is a negative correlation between GDP growth and support for the EU, higher life quality, as measured by a more comprehensive metric, nonetheless still predicts a more favorable positive attitude towards the EU. This, as with most of the other theories in this section, suggests that the issue is not that GDP growth is indicative of rising nationalism and Euroscepticism, but rather that GDP growth is not the most useful metric of growth, development, or prosperity.

Figure 9: Correlation between regional Human Development within the UK, as of 2019, and perceptions of EU membership’s benefits



If any of these explanations were to be true, then it would undercut the idea that economic performance, as measured by GDP growth, correlates meaningfully with decreased support for the EU and reveals anything meaningful. Instead, it would suggest that support for the EU is based primarily on how people think the economy is doing, as evidenced by the positive correlation between EU support (both positive and normative) and personal well-being.

In a philosophical sense, it would therefore pose the question of whether the relationship between economic growth and EU support should be based on actual economic growth or people’s personal views of how the economy is doing.

Although that is certainly not a question which this study aims to answer, its mere existence decreases how certain we can be about the GDP-EU support relationship. Ultimately, this issue is a specific feature of working with both objective data and public opinion simultaneously: sometimes the two do not line up, and there is not specifically a clear reason why they do not.

### **8.8.2 Economics Part 2: Einstein, GDP growth, and (supra)national identity: Was the EU doomed to fail in Britain?**

Opposite to the ideas posed in the previous section, it is also possible that GDP correlates strongly with decreased support for the EU and increased nationalism for directly causal reasons which are not influenced by outside factors or justifications.

One issue which this study's hypothesis did not explore is how economics shapes identities. Therefore, economic performance may contribute to identity construction in meaningful and significant ways which this study did not account for. As Albert Einstein once said, "if my theory of relativity is proven correct, Germany will claim me as a German and France will declare that I am a citizen of the world. Should my theory prove untrue, France will say that I am a German and Germany will declare that I am a Jew."<sup>78</sup> The relationship between economic performance and nationalism may represent an example of that same phenomena, but in the context of constructing British national identities: when the British economy thrives people feel prouder to be British (at the expense of feeling European), but when the British economy struggles, people reconstruct their identities to assign blame to the EU and demand its support.

The idea that identity can be reshaped by the successes or failures of entities one associates with is supported by academic research, primarily from

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78. Ratcliffe 2016.

the field of psychology. Scholars have developed the terms “BIRGing” (basking in reflected glory) and “CORFing” (cutting off reflected failure),<sup>79</sup> to describe situations in which people alter their identities on the basis of a performance — in the context of this study, this suggests people would adjust their normative perceptions based on positive perceptions. Although this research has primarily focused on how smaller-scale entities such as sports teams influence self-identification, its principles and findings fit well into the framework of this discussion. For instance, one study concluded that after a university won a football game, students demonstrated higher levels of allegiance to the school: the Monday following the game, students were more likely to say “we” when discussing the football team and wear clothing indicating their association with the university.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, another study found that when members of a problem-solving group believed they’d done badly on a task, members were conscious to avoid associating themselves with the group.<sup>81</sup> This theory helps explain how economics might shape national identity: when the British economy is doing well, citizens bask in its glory, associating themselves with the UK and crediting it for its strong performance. When the UK struggles economically, people then shift to CORFing, downplaying the UK and shifting the blame to the only other possible subject: the EU.

The second component of this Einsteinian theory, CORFing, is corroborated by the relationship between other non-GDP economic indicators, EU support, and nationalism. Rising inequality and unemployment are both correlated with decreasing nationalism and disagreement with the idea that the UK could best face the future outside of the EU. This seemingly indicates that as people struggle economically, they turn to Europe for answers, the importance of Britain and their affinity towards it. Similarly to Einstein’s quote, these findings reaf-

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79. Stelzl, Janes, and Seligman 2008.

80. Cialdini et al. 1976.

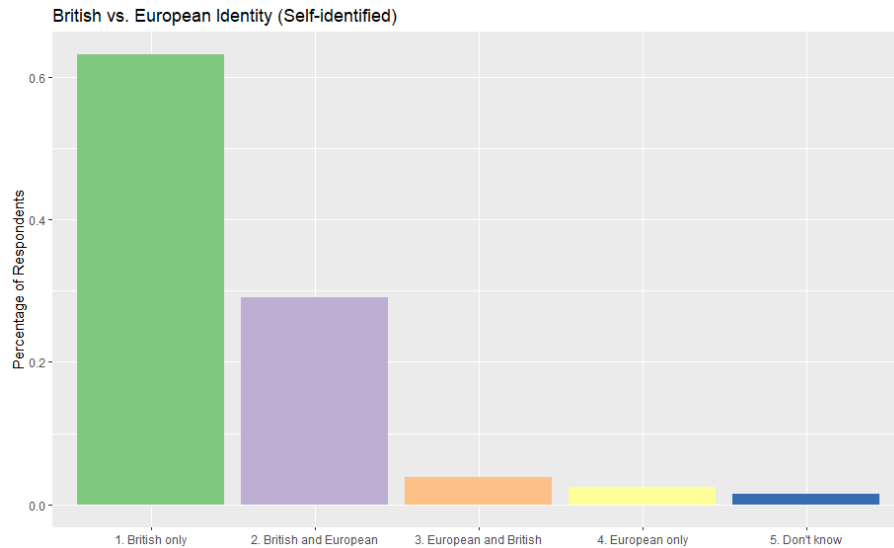
81. Snyder, Lassegard, and Ford 1986.

firm that economic success might influence how identities are shaped. Brits cast off Europe when their economy is strong, crediting the nation alone for its successes, but then distribute blame to the EU when the UK struggles, expecting more from it. Given the body of evidence which exists, this theory seems equally as plausible as the ideas suggested in the previous section.

Contextually, the idea that GDP growth influences Brits' identity through BIRGing and CORFing also makes sense because of how Brits self-identify nationally. According to the data collected for this study, Brits almost unanimously consider themselves primarily British, not European — 92% of respondents said they were either exclusively British or British first and European second. Drawing on this, it makes sense that Brits would assign praise or blame to their national government first (since they associate primarily with it), then use that position to inform their perception of the EU. If a majority of citizens felt they were primarily European, it would stand to reason that the relationship would be flipped, and people would associate EU-induced economic advancement with the EU instead. This theory also makes sense in the context of de Vries and van Kersbergen's work (2007), which suggests that citizens' allegiance towards the EU is often lower when they feel that integration is interfering with their home country's ability to pursue its political and economic goals. Together, these concepts suggest how and why EU-induced economic growth might actually serve to lower the bloc's approval rating in the UK.

If this theory about economic growth and British approval of the EU is true, it indicates that broad-based, long-term British support for the European project is perhaps fundamentally impossible. According to the rationale of the Einsteinien theory, if the EU achieved its mission of encouraging economic development within Europe and helped strengthen the British economy, then Brits would actually become more Eurosceptic, crediting the UK alone for these suc-

Figure 10: Breakdown of how Brits self-identify with regards to British and European identities



cesses and shifting further towards nationalism. This, coupled with empirical research demonstrating that European integration has been economically beneficial, suggests that Brits would never acknowledge the benefits of the EU and would actually become more and more opposed to it over time.

With all that said, there are two slight caveats to the theory that economic performance influences how people's identities are shaped. First, it is possible that GDP growth could clash with these other economic factors, undermining its own relevance. If GDP growth occurred during a period of increased inequality and rising unemployment, then people could be more attuned to those factors and discount overall economic growth. In this situation, people would not be directly responding to GDP growth, so its influence would be misleading. Second, there is the concern that, just as in the previous section, the influence of economic factors is largely meaningless because people's perceptions of the economy align poorly with its actual measured performance.



## 8.9 Broader Implications of the Findings

### 8.10 Possibilities for Future Research

Although this paper did not find evidence of the specific hypothesis it was looking for, it nonetheless provides a roadmap which could guide future research projects. First, the most straightforward way to further investigate the possibility of a positive-normative divide is to conduct a near-identical study, but collect original data for the project. This way, scholars could more precisely tailor their questionnaires and data collection processes to addressing the particular nuances of positive and normative conceptualizations of the EU. While a more rigorous and precise survey methodology does not guarantee the hypothesis would be supported, it could provide greater confidence in whatever outcome it did arrive at.

Beyond directly improving upon this study, it would also be interesting to further investigate the relationship between national economic performance and identity construction discussed in the “Economics Part 2” section of the discussion. As with my initial hypothesis, the theories laid out in that section question the conventional wisdom that the EU is supported primarily because of the material benefits it provides. Alternative theories on how and why public opinion on the EU develops are generally somewhat under-researched, so studying whether (and if so, how) domestic economic growth actually harms the EU’s public perception could be a fruitful pursuit. Additionally, it would be interesting to see whether the inverse relationship between GDP growth and EU approval holds true in other EU nations, or whether it is a phenomenon which is unique to the UK.

## 9 Limitations

There are several limitations which must be acknowledged in order to contextualize my work and findings. While conducting this study, I faced both conceptual and methodological limitations.

### 9.1 Conceptual Concerns

First, some of the work's limitations were the result of my study design. Since I created a new conceptual framework for analyzing popular opinion, I was limited by the difficulty of aligning abstract conceptual ideas with already-existing data. Although I based my terms and definitions on past academic research, I had to operationalize these definitions using data which had been collected for other purposes, and therefore did not fit perfectly with my work (I had to use Eurobarometer, since it was the only source which provided a sufficiently large longitudinal dataset). Thus, the variables I selected to represent and measure different concepts were not perfect proxies for the concepts themselves, an unavoidable consequence of combining new ideas and outside data. For instance, while responses to the two questions which I used to measure positive opinion of the EU were largely similar, it is possible that respondents perceived the question about the benefits of the EU as 'more' normative than the question about whether or not EU membership is a good thing for the UK. This can be observed through analyzing how attachment to the UK itself influences people's perceptions of the EU. While UK attachment has no impact on whether people think EU membership is beneficial, attachment to the UK has a slightly negative influence over whether people think EU membership is a good thing for Britain. This example demonstrates one of the pitfalls of using proxy variables: I can suggest those variables stand for larger conceptual attitudes within the

context of my research, but that does not guarantee that survey respondents viewed them the same way as I did, or the same way as other respondents did.

## 9.2 Methodological Concerns

The other limitations this study faced were technical and methodological, and were specifically related to data collection process and Eurobarometer’s surveying techniques. Although Eurobarometer conducts multiple surveys every year, their inconsistencies in sampling limited the number of available responses for each question. Specifically, the EU does not ask the same questions in every survey, nor do they have a standardized schedule for asking individual questions. Additionally, the surveyors did not ask all the questions equally frequently, so there is much more data for certain variables than others. For example, Eurobarometer surveyors asked about people’s personal image of the EU in nearly every survey, but rarely asked respondents whether they felt the UK had a strong future outside the EU — that particular question was not even asked until 2010. As a result there are gaps in the data, and each particular survey does not have data for every question. Although I mitigated this issue by collecting a large quantity of data, it was nonetheless still somewhat limiting.

In practical terms, this meant that regressions which included many variables could only utilize a subsection of the data, and had samples which were smaller than the overall dataset. Additionally, timing is a key component of the sampling issue: there are certain extended periods where specific questions were not asked, thereby creating the possibility that the data is not perfectly representative. For instance, no surveys during the height of the Great Recession asked questions about people’s opinions of the economy, which could skew the overall results. Finally, the EU removed the UK-specific data weighting metric in 2018, which meant that the final one and a half years of data were

not usable. This metric was created to weight responses from the UK such that they could be analyzed independently from the rest of the data, and without it doing so was not possible. Although this was not prohibitive, it prevented me from meaningfully analyzing whether there were any significant shifts in public opinion during the post-Brexit period.

On a more general level, relying on subjective, self-provided survey data — especially for an extended period of time, as I did — also makes my work more susceptible to the “rubber ruler effect,” which dictates that different people might have different standards for what various terms entail. For instance, two respondents might have a different threshold for what entails having a “very negative image of the EU,” so even if their actual opinions of the EU are largely identical, one might say they only have a fairly negative image of the bloc, while the other believes their position is more extreme. Additionally, since this study used data spanning almost 20 years, there is the potential that changing cultural standards or linguistic perceptions exacerbated this rubber ruler effect over time.

## 10 Conclusion: Evaluating the Purchase of the Positive-Normative Model & Other Major Takeaways

Ultimately, this study did not find compelling evidence that there is a distinct difference between Brits' positive and normative evaluations of the EU, or the causal factors which influence them. The results suggest that there is effectively no disparity between what informs citizens' positive and normative perceptions of the EU, and to the extent that this (very minimal) difference does exist, ideological considerations actually inform normative views of the bloc more strongly than positive ones. This consequently means this study also found no substantive evidence that nationalism conditioned how these aforementioned factors shaped positive and normative perceptions of the EU, since there were no factor disparities to analyze. There are numerous reasons that people might not have independent, self-contained positive and normative opinions of the EU, ranging from the nuance of the topic in question to the difficulties associated with accurately assessing what the EU does.

To the very limited extent this study did find disparities between the factors which informed Brits' positive and normative opinions of the EU, these findings suggest that the hypothesis is possibly backwards. Ideological factors, which the hypothesis predicted would inform people's normative opinions more strongly than their positive opinions, actually did the opposite: identifying more closely with Europe and feeling more attached to the continent actually correlated with greater increases in people's positive, as opposed to their normative, views of the bloc. Although these discrepancies were limited in size and scope and therefore provide limited evidence, this outcome is nonetheless interesting.

Similarly, a second possibility is that while a positive-normative disparity does exist and is driven by particular factors, this study was unable to detect it with the available data. Although Eurobarometer — the best resource for this study — is an excellent data source which collects important information on a broad range of topics and covers a long time period, its generalist nature makes it ill-suited for this specific type of research. This study focused on very precise and nuanced components of EU public approval and how it is formed, which Eurobarometer did not ask about particularly extensively. Because of this, it is also possible that the difference this study’s hypothesis predicted does exist, but is not observable through the existing data.

However, while it was unable to support its initial hypothesis this study nonetheless delivered several interesting insights. First, several of this study’s regressions highlighted that growth in the UK’s biannual national GDP is both inversely correlated with support for the EU and positively correlated with nationalist, anti-EU sentiment. This opens the door to two possibilities, both of which are relatively plausible and discussed at length in the study’s analysis. It is possible that national-level GDP does not correlate with how individuals perceive the economy to be performing, which could happen for any number of reasons. Alternatively, it is also possible that national economic performance actually influences people’s identities, leading Brits to develop a strong, somewhat-exclusionary sense of pride in their nation when it prospers and reject the EU. This second possible explanation is particularly interesting because it contradicts the prevailing wisdom on EU approval, which suggests that much of the EU’s popularity is derived from the material gains it provides. Additionally, it suggests that the EU faced a paradoxical challenge in gaining British support: by helping Britain grow economically, it was actually hurting its own approval ratings. If this trend were to hold true in other countries which share similar

characteristics (namely, a significant proportion of citizens who identify exclusively or primarily with their home nation instead of with Europe), it could complicate understandings of how EU support develops.

Additionally, this paper further reinforces the idea — observed in many past studies — that increased educational attainment correlates with increased support for the EU, but is clearly not influential enough to be considered a major causal factor. Although education predicted higher support for the EU and lower levels of nationalist sentiment, the relevance of this correlation is undermined by both basic cross-national and longitudinal analyses of the relationship between education and EU support. Despite their correlation, higher education does not seem salient enough to sway public opinion meaningfully in British politics. Therefore, the idea that educational attainment is a factor worth weighing heavily when constructing models to predict and measure support for the EU should be largely dismissed.

Although this study focused exclusively on the UK, it provides a framework which could be used to study the EU's approval ratings within current member states, both those which are highly ingrained within Europe and those which are more Eurosceptical. It would be particularly interesting to see whether the patterns which emerged in the UK, namely the relationship between nationalism and economic growth, are found in any other European countries. For instance, is the pattern observed in the UK common to all countries whose citizens are highly Eurosceptic, or is it uniquely British? This type of analysis could provide an interesting cross-section of how the EU is perceived at a national level.

Although this study did not ultimately confirm its hypothesis, it nonetheless furnished an interesting set of findings and helped highlight several interesting components of how EU public opinion is shaped in the UK.

## 11 Appendix

### 11.1 Eurobarometer Questions & Codes

The following is a complete account of the variables I used, including (where relevant) the specific wording of each question and its responses.

Demographic data: Study number- this is simply the number of the particular Eurobarometer survey within which each response was collected.

ID serial number: the individual ID of each survey respondent. In tandem with the study number, I collected this in order to ensure each response could be traced back to its original survey and respondent.

Time period: an aggregate variable I constructed to delineate when the survey was conducted. Each period is half a year, inspired by Eurobarometers biannual reports, and range from 2000-1 to 2018-1.

UK old region: which region within the United Kingdom the respondent lives in, kept the same from 2000-2019. The seven regions, as categorized by Eurobarometer, are:

- (A) Scotland
- (B) North, Yorks, Humberside and North West
- (C) East and West Midlands, East of England
- (D) Wales
- (E) South East/London



(F) South West

(G) Northern Ireland

UK region: which region within the United Kingdom the respondent lives in (detailed more precisely than 'old region'). Unlike the 'old region' variable, these were not kept contiguous throughout; this variable was introduced in 2004. Because of this, I included both to ensure I could conduct as longitudinal research as needed.

(A) Belfast

(B) Outer Belfast

(C) East of Northern Ireland

(D) North of Northern Ireland

(E) West and South of Northern Ireland

(F) North East

(G) North West

(H) Yorkshire and the Humber

(I) East Midlands

(J) West Midlands

(K) East of England

(L) London

(M) South East

(N) South West

(O) Wales

(P) Scotland

Age: a measurement of the respondents' ages, divided into groups, scaled 1-6 for regressions.

1. 15 - 24 years

2. 25 - 34 years

3. 35 - 44 years

4. 45 - 54 years

5. 55 - 64 years

6. 65 + years

Gender: the respondents' gender

1. Male

2. Female

Living community: the built environment which the respondent lives in.

(A) 3: City/large urban area

(B) 2: Town or suburb/small urban area

(C) 1: Rural area

Finished education: the age at which each respondent completed their last year of full-time schooling. For these, the variable codes were designed to mimic levels of educational attainment: secondary education or below was represented by

completing school between the ages of 14-18, university degree or some university education was represented by completing school between 19-21, and education beyond an undergraduate university degree was represented by completing school when older than 22.

- (A) 1: 14
- (B) 1: 15
- (C) 1: 16
- (D) 1: 17
- (E) 1: 18
- (F) 2: 19
- (G) 2: 20
- (H) 2: 21
- (I) 3: 22 and above
- (J) 2: Still in school

This category also includes self-reflection questions. These aim to capture how satisfied people are with their lives, including in the context of whether or not they think Britain is doing well.

UK situation-life: “On the whole, how satisfied or not are you with the life you lead?”

- (A) 4: Very satisfied
- (B) 3: Fairly satisfied

(C) 2: Not very satisfied

(D) 1: Not at all satisfied N/A: Don't know

UK situation-economy: "How would you judge the current situation in the UK economy?"

(A) 4: Very good

(B) 3: Rather good

(C) 2: Rather bad

(D) 1: Very bad N/A: Don't know

UK situation-finances: "How would you judge your current financial situation?"

(A) 4: Very good

(B) 3: Rather good

(C) 2: Rather bad

(D) 1: Very bad N/A: Don't know

Ideological data:

The next category is opinion data, which is a collection of information about respondents' feelings on various issues. These provide insights into the four key variables I identified in the research design segment of this study, as well as political orientation.

Positive Opinion of the EU EU good: "Generally speaking, do you think that the UK's membership of the EU is...?"

(A) 1: A good thing

(B) .5: Neither

(C) 0: A bad thing

(D) N/A: Don't know

EU benefit: "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that the United Kingdom has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?" (for the purposes of running linear regressions, I recoded this variable when changing it back to an ordinal one such that "not sure," the middle option, was number 2 and "not benefited," the negative option, was number 3).

(A) 1: Benefited

(B) 0: Not benefited

(C) .5: Not sure

Normative Opinion of the EU

EU image: In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

(A) 1: Very positive

(B) .75: Fairly positive

(C) .5: Neutral

(D) .25: Fairly negative

(E) 0: Very negative

(F) N/A: Don't know

Supplementary EU-oriented Questions:

More EU decisions: "Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement: More decisions should be taken at EU level"

(A) 4: Totally agree

(B) 3: Tend to agree

(C) 2: Tend to disagree

(D) 1: Totally disagree

(E) N/A: Don't know

UK future: "Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement: The UK could better face the future outside the EU"

(A) 4: Totally agree

(B) 3: Tend to agree

(C) 2: Tend to disagree

(D) 1: Totally disagree

(E) N/A: Don't know

Sense of British and European Identity

EU identity: "Do you see yourself as..." (note: for EU identity inv, the scale is flipped to make the regression as intuitive as possible to read, such that the high score of 4 represents feeling completely British and the low score of 1 represents feeling completely European)

(A) 1: British only

(B) 2: British and European

(C) 3: European and British

(D) 4: European only

(E) N/A: Don't know

UK attachment: "Please tell me how attached you feel to the United Kingdom"

(A) 1: Very attached

(B) 2: Fairly attached

(C) 3: Not very attached

(D) 4: Not at all attached

(E) N/A: Don't know

eu attachment: "Please tell me how attached you feel to Europe" (note: for eu attachment inv, the scale is flipped to make the regression as intuitive as possible to read)

(A) 1: Very attached

(B) 2: Fairly attached

(C) 3: Not very attached

(D) 4: Not at all attached

(E) N/A: Don't know

EU attachment: "Please tell me how attached you feel to the European Union"

(A) 1: Very attached

(B) 2: Fairly attached

(C) 3: Not very attached

(D) 4: Not at all attached

(E) N/A: Don't know

Political leaning: “In political matters people talk of ”the left” and ”the right.” Thinking about your views, how would you place yourself on this scale?” (Respondents are presented with a scale from 1-10, with 1 being the furthest left)

(A) 1,2: Left

(B) 3,4: Center left

(C) 5,6: Center

(D) 7,8: Center right

(E) 9,10: Right

## 11.2 P and T-values for Regression Tables

Table 6: P and T-Values from Figure 6

	<i>Dependent variables: EU Benefit, EU Image</i>	
	T-Value	P-Value
	(1)	(2)
UK_attachment_num	1.610	0.054
eu_attachment_num	4.510	0.001
EU_identity_num	4.260	0.001
Political_leaning_num	-0.519	0.302
Age_num	-0.845	0.199
Gender_num	-4.992	0.001
Community_num	-0.338	0.368
Education_num	4.698	0.001
UK_situation_life_num	0.534	0.296
GDP_growth	-1.165	0.122
Unemployment	0.158	0.437



Table 7: P and T-values from Figure 7

<i>Dependent variables:</i> <i>EU Good, EU Benefit, EU Image</i>		
	T Value	P Value
	(1)	(2)
EU Good: EU Benefit		
Eu_identity_num_inv	4.234	0.001
eu_attachment_num_inv	3.128	0.001
EU Good: EU Image		
Eu_identity_num_inv	-10.379	0.001
eu_attachment_num_inv	-6.234	0.001
EU Benefit: EU Image		
Eu_identity_num_inv	-12.977	0.001
eu_attachment_num_inv	-8.826	0.001

Table 8: P and T-Values from Figure 8

<i>Dependent variables:</i> <i>EU_identity_num_inv, eu_attachment_num_inv</i>		
	T-Value	P-Value
	(1)	(2)
Political_leaning_num	-1.680	0.046
UK_situation_life_num	5.536	0.001
UK_situation_econ_num	3.883	0.001
UK_situation_fin_num	2.429	0.007
Education_num	1.497	0.067
Age_num	-3.103	0.001
Gender_num	2.865	0.002
Community_num	2.953	0.001
UK_gini	2.153	0.016
GDP_growth	-0.538	0.295
Unemployment	-2.589	0.004

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