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BACES Working Papers
No. 02-2021

Supranational identification and migration attitudes in the European Union

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Jean Monnet Center of Excellence

Working Paper Series



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ISBN: 978-84-09-24452-2
ISSN: 2696-4554

BACES Web: <https://www.upf.edu/web/baces>
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Publications in the Series should be cited as: **AUTHOR, TITLE, BACES Working Papers No. X/YEAR. [ISBN][ISSN] [URL]**

The Barcelona Centre for European Studies (BACES) of Pompeu Fabra University (Spain) is a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. This Working Paper Series is peer reviewed by an Editorial Board led by prof. Javier Arregui and prof. Fernando Guirao.

Supranational identification and migration attitudes in the European Union

Aleksandra Sojka

Abstract

Existing research indicates that supranational identification in the European Union (EU) is associated with greater individual acceptance of international migration, pointing to a cosmopolitan logic in European identity. At the same time, social identity theory suggests a communitarian logic, as citizens who self-identify as Europeans should positively distinguish members of the European community and exhibit a higher acceptance of migrants from other EU member states than of other types of migrants. The goal of this article is to test which of these two logics prevails in European identifiers' migration attitudes. For this purpose, we develop a set of multilevel regression models of recent Eurobarometer data (2014-2017) to explore the effects of European identification on individual preference for internal migrants in the EU. The paper's main contribution is to show that adding a cosmopolitan layer of identification to the pre-existing national identities does not preclude the logic of identity demarcation in supranational communities. Instead, these processes become more complex. As illustrated by the case of perceptions of migrants from different origins, European identification entails both cosmopolitan and communitarian effects for individual attitudes. These findings challenge the prevailing normative understanding of European identity as inherently inclusive.

Introduction

The commitment to transcend national borders constitutes the driving force of European integration. Accordingly, the supranational collective identity underlying the European Union (EU) is envisaged as inclusive, as the ‘United in diversity’ motto indicates, while European identification correlates with cosmopolitan attitudes and openness to international migration at the individual level (Citrin and Sides, 2004; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Curtis, 2014). However, research in social psychology suggests that distinction between the in-group and the out-group is integral to all processes of social identification (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981; Brewer, 1991). Therefore, the emergence of collective identity in the European Union should also entail the delimitation of such group boundaries (Kaina and Karolewski, 2013; Kaina and Kuhn, 2016), bringing about a distinction between the in-group of European co-citizens and other foreign nationals. Such a development, however, would run counter to the EU’s cosmopolitan ideals. While several authors have theorized the underlying tensions between inclusiveness and exclusiveness in European integration (Brubaker, 1999; Delanty, 2000, 2006; Habermas, 2001; Balibar, 2004; Fligstein *et al.*, 2012), we know relatively little about how they translate to individual attitudes towards immigrants from different origins. Previous research shows that a majority of EU citizens do not distinguish between European and non-European immigration, which presumably indicates that the EU has failed to create a feeling of commonality among Europeans (McLaren, 2001). Some authors have attempted to explain the empirical observation above by arguing that, as a superordinate type of identity, European identity reduces out-group bias, which leads to its association with higher tolerance towards minorities (Citrin and Sides, 2004) and greater openness to immigration (Curtis, 2014). More recent studies show that few Europeans support EU mobility exclusively but suggest the existence of a ‘European migrant premium’ in migration attitudes (Ford and Mellon, 2019), especially among supporters of EU integration (Blinder and Markaki, 2019). Notwithstanding the empirical correlations above, so far, no systematic study has investigated the relative importance of community-building and cosmopolitanism in how self-identified Europeans view migration. This puzzle of communitarian logic within supranational identification constitutes the focus of our research.

The paper argues and verifies empirically that contrary to the prevailing interpretation of European collective identity as inherently inclusive, European identification entails both cosmopolitan and communitarian effects for EU citizens’ attitudes. The cosmopolitan logic is reflected in higher tolerance to migration among European identifiers of all types, as documented in previous research. However, within the context of such general openness to immigration, our analysis highlights the previously overlooked tendency of European identifiers to demarcate the supranational community

against the perceived out-group, non-EU migrants. We show that those dual European identifiers for whom the nation constitutes a primary identity frame display the strongest preference for internal EU migrants. These findings are robust and hold when we control for the key alternative explanatory factors for migration attitudes. The study results are particularly relevant as dual identification is the most widespread identity type among citizens of the EU, and its prevalence has increased in recent years. The paper's main contribution is to show that the addition of a supranational layer of identification to pre-existing national identities does not circumvent communitarian logic in European community-building. European identity does not escape the logic of boundary-drawing inherent to all social identities.

The paradox of supranational identity: between cosmopolitanism and community-building

Scholars of European integration tend to view the emergence of a collective supranational identity as a positive development for the European Union (Citrin and Sides, 2004; Bruter, 2005; Risse 2010, among others) and highlight its relevance for further European integration processes (Hooghe and Marks, 2009; Kuhn and Nicoli, 2020). The underlying normative expectation is that a sense of community could help overcome any residual hostility between European nations, improve the democratic quality of the Union, and constitute a source of solidarity within the community (Roose, 2016). European collective identity, as tied to a supranational community, is envisaged as a chance to overcome the exclusionary character of national identities (Delanty, 2000, 2006). In this sense, the values of liberal democracy, and not the pre-political elements characteristic of national identities, are expected to constitute the foundation for a European collective identity (Habermas, 2001). The EU also actively promotes a self-image that embodies such inclusive and cosmopolitan values towards both the world beyond (Rosamond, 2014) and internally, as part of its efforts to foster a shared feeling of belonging in Europe (Karolewski, 2016).

However, establishing difference and defining who does not belong constitutes a central dynamic of processes of community building and identity construction (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981; Brewer, 1991; Fligstein *et al.*, 2012; Kaina and Kuhn 2016). In particular, while the citizenship of the Union constitutes a key vehicle of social integration and the creation of a collective European identity (Kaina and Karolewski, 2013; Karolewski, 2016), it also amplifies the distinction between internal and external migrants and effectively excludes non-EU nationals from the supranational political community (Brubaker, 1999; McLaren, 2001; Balibar, 2004). Scholars of European collective identity have noted the inherent tension between the EU's cosmopolitan ideas and such demarcation against non-European out-groups (Delanty, 2000; Kohli, 2000; Balibar, 2004; Green, 2007; Fligstein,

2008; Fligstein *et al.*, 2012; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2015), but we know relatively little about how it translates to the individual attitudes of European identifiers.

Whether European identity is open and allows for the inclusion of others, or closed and exclusive like most national identities (Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2015, p. 118), is a question which warrants empirical investigation at the individual level. The existing scholarship provides strong empirical evidence for the association of European identification with positive attitudes towards minorities and migrants (Citrin and Sides, 2004), especially in the context of higher EU migration (Curtis, 2014). In line with this, some scholars also argue that greater openness to migration could constitute a positive effect of European integration (Böhmelt and Bove, 2019). These findings suggest a cosmopolitan interpretation of the emerging supranational identity in Europe. The alternative possibility of communitarian logic in European identification, tied to a preference for in-group members, has not yet been explored directly. Still, recent research indicates an association between positive EU attitudes and preference for EU migration (Blinder and Markaki, 2019). Thus the present study aims to advance the debate about the dynamics of multiple identities in Europe and analyse the relationship between European identification and individual preference for members of the European in-group, internal migrants.¹ In what follows, we will explore how existing theory and empirical research inform our understanding of this relationship.

European identification and preference for internal migration

What does previous research on European identity tell us about its expected link to a preference for internal migration? Empirical scholarship concerned with individual-level European identification often relies on social identity theory (SIT) developed within social psychology (Mols and Weber, 2013). From this perspective, social identity derives from an individual's perception of membership in a social group, together with the value and emotional significance of such attachment (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). The cognitive process of establishing boundaries between the in- and the out-group, based on perceived similarity, constitutes the foundation of social identification, together with its affective aspect, which relies on social comparison and positively differentiating the group one belongs to (Citrin *et al.*, 2001; Karolewski, 2009; Kaina and Karolewski, 2013; Ceka and Sojka, 2016). Therefore, and independently of its particular meanings or content associations, if the EU constitutes a meaningful category of identification, social identity theory invites the expectation that those who

¹ We use the term 'internal migrants' to refer to EU citizens who choose to move to another EU member state under the freedom of movement principle.

self-identify as Europeans will also demarcate between members of the EU community and citizens of non-EU countries.

While the concept of European identity and its implications for empirical research have been the topic of much academic debate in recent years (Bruter, 2005; Risse, 2010; Díez Medrano, 2010, 2020; Kaina and Karolewski, 2013; Roose, 2016, among others), there is no single theory of European identification. Most studies agree that as a process rooted in personal orientations, European identity is part of a host of un-conflicting socio-political identities (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez, 2001; Herrmann and Brewer, 2004; Bruter, 2005; Risse, 2010). In line with this, a crucial distinction in the scholarship is made between those who identify solely as nationals (exclusive national identifiers) and those who incorporate the European element into their identities (Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Fligstein, 2008; Risse, 2010). This basic categorisation has proved key in previous empirical research, as studies have found that exclusive national identity constitutes a significant obstacle to support for the EU in general (Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Kuhn, 2012; Hobolt and de Vries, 2016), as well as to its specific policies, particularly those related to migration and mobility, such as common migration policy (Luedtke, 2005), the free movement (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2018), or its border regimes (Karstens, 2020).

Recent public opinion data (Eurobarometer, 2017) indicates that the most widespread identity configuration in contemporary EU is that of dual identification. A majority of EU citizens report that they see themselves as ‘national and European,’ in that order, maintaining the nation as the first point of reference (54 per cent). Much less often, respondents indicate the European category first, while still combining it with national identity (six per cent). On the other hand, 39 per cent of European citizens recognise only national identification; that is, they do not acknowledge any European element to their identities, which remain focused on the national level. Finally, a tiny fraction of the public (around one per cent across EU-28) indicates that they see themselves as exclusively European.

The spread of dual identities is expected to increase openness to migration among Europeans (Böhmelt and Bove, 2019, p. 15). This study contends that while all citizens who incorporate a European element into their identities tend to be significantly more open towards migrants than exclusive national identifiers (cosmopolitan logic), we can also anticipate a preference for a specific type of migration based on the effects of communitarian logic of European identification implied in social identity. In particular, we focus on the predominant type of European identification in Europe: dual identification as national and European. National communities tend to be well-defined against out-groups (Delanty, 2000, 2006; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2015), and stronger national identification tends to reduce migration tolerance (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Curtis, 2014), especially if

it is expressed as nationalism or national chauvinism (Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; O'Rourke and Sinnott, 2006). On the other hand, the idea of the European community is characterised by its underlying diversity and a lack of clear-cut borders (Diez, 2006; Delanty, 2006). Therefore, the tendency towards demarcation suggested by social identity theory could be more or less pronounced depending on the primary identity frame of dual identifiers. Thus, we anticipate the strongest communitarian effect of European identification among those EU citizens for whom national communities continue to provide a primary identity frame (H1). On the other hand, we expect that the primary cosmopolitan input of European identification could moderate the communitarian logic of social identification. Consequently, we anticipate that the probability of expressing a preference for internal migration among dual identifiers who identify as Europeans first will be less pronounced in this group (H2). Exclusive national identifiers, overall the most negative toward all kinds of migration, constitute our reference category, as we explore the effects of European identification on individual preference for internal migration. In what follows, we test both assumptions while accounting for the geographical differences across EU-28 and controlling for a host of possible alternative determinants of individual-level preference for internal migration.

Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we use the data from the Eurobarometer (EB) standard surveys. The analysis comprises seven consecutive surveys and spans the period between autumn 2014 and autumn 2017.

Dependent variable: Preference for internal migrants

While intra-EU mobility constitutes one of the foundational elements of European integration as one of the four freedoms of the single market (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2018), it has become increasingly contested in recent years (Ruhs and Palme, 2018), particularly following the Eastern enlargement of the EU. Given the overall politicisation of the issue of immigration in European societies, especially since the 2015 migrant and refugee crisis, coupled with the sharply different status of EU and non-EU migrants, we expect that the in/out-group demarcation process of European collective identity could be reflected in the different attitudes towards these two groups.

We can gauge immigrant attitudes of European citizens with the help of the EB survey since 2014, when it incorporated questions regarding migration acceptance, distinguishing between attitudes towards immigrants from within the EU specifically and those who arrive from outside the Union. The survey question reads: 'Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive

or negative feeling for you: Q1. Immigration of people from other EU member states. Q2. Immigration of people from outside the EU.’ The main contention of this study is that such basic categorisation of internal and external migrants is useful for the research question posed as it operationalises the distinction between the in-group and the out-group in the context of the EU as an emerging political community.

The descriptive analysis of the data already provides some interesting findings. Europeans’ acceptance of internal migration is comparatively high (68 per cent view it favourably in 2017) and has increased considerably in recent years (over ten percentage points since 2014) (see Figure 1 below, left panel). On the other hand, while the level of acceptance of external immigration has remained stable at the aggregate level of the EU-28, it is significantly more contested as only around 36 per cent of European citizens view it positively. In summary, the first important finding is that there is a widespread and growing acceptance of internal migration across the EU, while acceptance of external migration remains significantly lower and has not varied at the aggregate level in recent years². This suggests that the share of European citizens who hold a more favourable view of internal than external migration has increased significantly since 2014.

To better comprehend this picture, we compare the two attitudes directly at the individual level. The outcome variable constitutes a measure of *Preference*³ for internal migration, independently of the individual level of migration acceptance. This approach makes it possible to check to what extent European citizens apply the communitarian logic in their immigration attitudes, even without data on their view of different migrant subgroups. As suggested by the social identity theory, those for whom European community as a category of belonging is meaningful should hold different opinions for internal and external immigration and indicate a more positive view of the in-group, internal migrants. Descriptively, a slim majority of Europeans continue to express the same attitude independently of the type of migration (51.4 per cent in 2018), but a significant and growing share view internal migrants more favourably (44.4 per cent in 2017, an increase of 12 percentage points from 2014) (see Figure 1 below, right panel).

² We observe a significant cross-country heterogeneity in the overall levels of acceptance of external migrants, reflecting the different developments in terms of how migration has become politicized in the different EU countries.

³ We subtract the value of ‘external migration’ from the value of ‘internal migration’ (both items on a scale of 1-4) to calculate preference for internal migration. If the value of the outcome variable is positive (max. value of 3), it indicates a more favourable view of internal over external migration. The closer its value is to zero, the lower the preference for internal migrants, and a value of 0 indicates the absence of preference for any type of migration, as both attitudes are identical. The variable can also take on a negative value (max. value of -3), which would indicate a preference for external over internal migration.

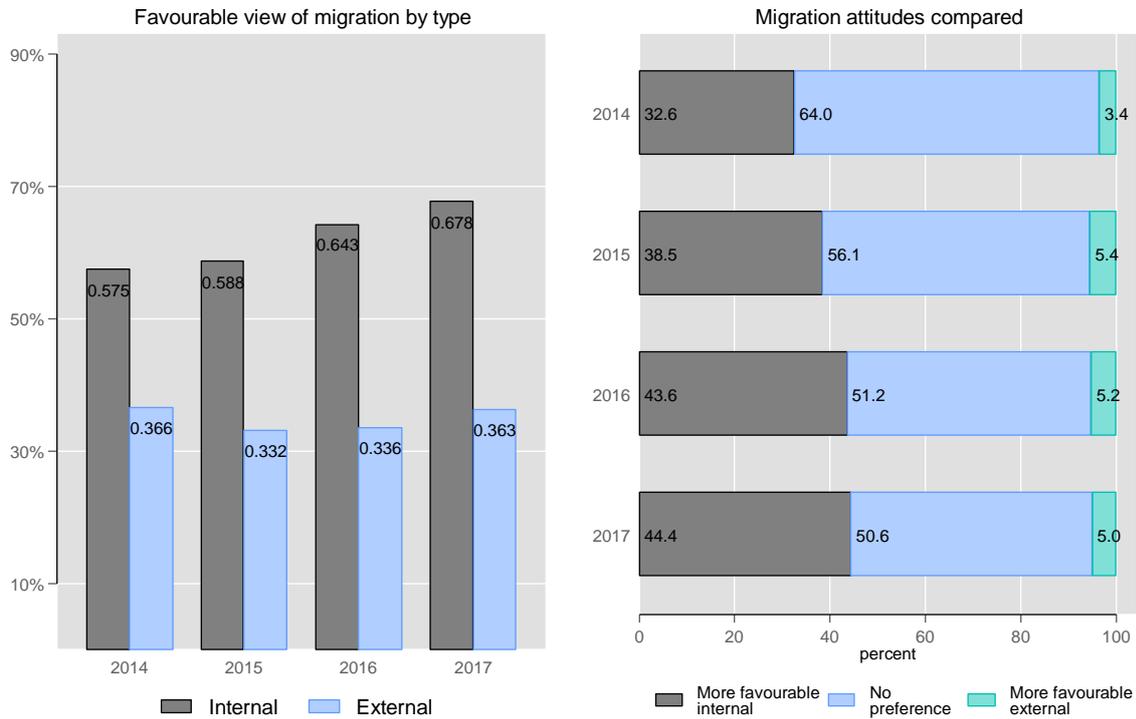


Figure 1 - Migration attitudes in the EU (2014-2017)

Note: Left panel: Favourable view of internal and external migration, by year. Right panel: View of internal and external migration compared, by year. Data: Eurobarometer standard survey 2014-2017. Survey questions: Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Q1. ‘Immigration of people from other EU member states.’ (Internal migration). Q2. ‘Immigration of people from outside of the EU.’ (External migration).

We can conclude that, while previous studies have argued that EU citizens do not view internal and external migration differently (McLaren, 2001), our data paints a different picture. Overall, Europeans hold a significantly more favourable view of their fellow EU citizens than of non-EU migrants. Moreover, the share of positive opinions towards internal migration continues to grow resulting in an increasing distinction between the two types of migrants in recent years. In the rest of this article, we will explore the links between such growing preference for internal migration and European identification.

Explanatory variables: European and national identification

Processes of group identification and differentiation constitute one of the most prominent explanatory factors of immigration attitudes (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014). Based on social psychologists' findings, two mechanisms are central to processes of social identification. On the one hand, the cognitive process, which refers to 'identification as' national, European and/or EU citizen, is based on perceived similarity. On the other hand, the affective aspect, which refers to 'identification with' the nation, EU, and/or Europe, is triggered by a psychological tendency towards positive social distinction (Citrin *et al.*, 2001; Kaina and Karolewski, 2013). The cognitive aspect of identification is of most interest to this study since it rests on perceived similarity/difference and thus relies on differentiation as key to processes of community building.

We operationalise the cognitive aspect of *identity* with the following item: 'Do you see yourself as... (Nationality only), (Nationality) and European, European and (Nationality), European only?' Even though this item has received its fair share of criticism (see, for instance, Sinnott, 2005), it is especially suitable for our study since it operationalises the dual character of national and European identification while not presupposing any antagonism between both (Bruter, 2005). In the analysis, we recode the variable into four dummies. National identifiers (Only Nation) constitute our reference category. We further distinguish those double identifiers who indicate nation as their primary category (Nationality & European) and those who indicate that Europe constitutes their primary identity frame (European & Nationality). The tiny fraction of European citizens who admit to identifying only with Europe is the fourth dummy (Only Europe).

Admittedly, the variable above does not explicitly address the political community of the EU. Previous research suggests that European identification can also be relatively high in non-EU member states (Schilde, 2013). Thus we could be measuring Europeanness as a more broadly-defined cultural or geographic identification (cf. Bruter, 2005). To test whether the observed preference for internal migrants is related to identification with Europe or, instead, identification with the political community of the EU, we also consider the affective dimension of identification (*Attachment*), operationalised with the question: 'Please tell me how attached you feel to... Q1. Our country. Q2. The European Union. Q3. Europe.' Some have argued that this item constitutes a more satisfactory measure of European identification (Sinnott, 2006). Moreover, it allows us to control for the relative strength of national and European/EU identification.

Finally, the specific criteria of community membership (Huddy, 2013) could constitute a critical explanatory factor for how European identification structures attitudes toward migration from different origins. By distinguishing between internal and external migrants, the EB survey

operationalises the complexity of immigration debates in the EU only partially, as we are unable to account for the fact that migrants from different regions (globally, but also within the EU itself) are viewed differently depending on their ethnicity, religion, or the economic standing of their country of origin (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Gorodzeisky, 2011; Bansak *et al.*, 2016). Perceptions of cultural and ethnic diversity/similarity can also vary significantly across EU countries, depending on each nation's historical legacies. Unfortunately, the data at hand is limited in terms of direct insight into the subjective meanings of Europeanness. However, recent research suggests that preferences related to ethnic origin and religion impact the general attitude toward migration rather than the specific preference for European over non-European migrants (Blinder and Markaki, 2019). Still, by including attachment to Europe/the EU, we can check whether the process of community-building reflected in a preference for internal migrants is rooted in rights and citizenship of the EU, or rather in culturally-based ideas of European differentiation. However, our objective is not to make a strong either/or argument on this point, as the civic-ethnic dichotomy has been the object of much criticism in studies of nationalism for its essentialist character and analytical and normative ambiguities (Brubaker, 1999), as well as evidence of its different meaning across contexts (Reeskens and Hooghe, 2010).

Alternative explanatory frameworks

To verify the impact of European identification on migration preference, we also need to consider the most relevant alternative explanations for migration attitudes as established in the scholarship. At the individual level, previous studies have often debated the relative importance of values and identities, as well as self-interest and socio-economic factors for immigration attitudes (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Heath *et al.*, 2019). Existing research suggests that the labour market competition theory does not constitute an important predictor of preference for European over non-European migrants (Blinder and Markaki, 2019), but we account for possible socioeconomic differences which might influence Europeans' migration preference with controls for the effects of being in a blue-collar occupation (*Manual worker*), as well as individual negative perceptions of the national economy (*Economy*) and one's employment situation (*Job*). We further operationalise the importance of skills and human capital by including the level of education. The impact of *Education* on migration acceptance tends to be positive even if the exact underlying mechanism is still unclear (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007; Lancee and Sarrasin, 2015). We further control for the effects of cognitive mobilisation (the fact that more educated and knowledgeable citizens tend to develop an attachment to supranational institutions more easily) with the inclusion of items which measure

discussion of European politics (*EU political discussion*) and objective knowledge about the basics of the EU (*EU knowledge*). In terms of values, we know that political *Ideology* offers important cues for individual migration attitudes. More specifically, left-right self-placement tends to matter more for attitudes towards external migrants than towards those from within Europe, with significantly more negative opinions among those on the right of the ideological spectrum (McLaren, 2001; Kessler and Freeman, 2005; Semyonov *et al.*, 2006). Finally, we must account for the effect of EU attitudes, as these perceptions are relevant for explaining migration attitudes in general (Kessler and Freeman, 2005; Böhmelt and Bove, 2019). In particular, previous research suggests that EU support and trust are relevant predictors of preference for European migration in particular (Blinder and Markaki, 2019). Thus we control for the effects of institutional trust in the EU (*EU Trust*).

Results: European identification and preference for internal migrants

To address our central research question, we analyse migration attitudes over different configurations of national and European identity. First, we look at the aggregate migration attitudes across EU-28 descriptively (Figure 2 below, left panel). Consistent with previous scholarship, it is clear that, on average, those who identify only as nationals are also the strongest opponents of migration in general. Positive perceptions of non-EU migrants are outstandingly low in this group (only 25.7 per cent view them favourably). On the other hand, all three identification types, which include the European element, are associated with significantly more favourable attitudes towards both kinds of migrants. This observation is in line with previous research pointing to the cosmopolitan effects of European identification.

However, there are also apparent differences in the character of such general openness to migration among the different types of European identifiers. Most importantly, the ‘national and European’ type stands out for their wide gap (almost 35 percentage points) between perceptions of internal (76 per cent in favour) and external migration (41.7 per cent favourable). Among those who identify as ‘European and National,’ this gap decreases to 24 percentage points and is even lower among those who see themselves as ‘European only’ (21 percentage points), similar to that of ‘Only national’ identifiers. While the perception of internal migration is almost equally positive among the three types of European identifiers, the difference stems from differential levels of tolerance of external migrants.

To verify this observation further, we look at levels of preference for internal migrants, again over different types of identity configuration (Figure 2 below, right panel). Here, the ‘National and European’ identifiers stand out as well, as the group in which we observe the highest share of

preference for internal migration (47 per cent hold a more favourable view of internal than external migrants). Therefore, the descriptive analysis suggests that those who identify as ‘national and European’ seem to be the closest to developing a sense of Europeanness understood as a positive distinction of the in-group from the out-group. Moreover, we see that those who identify as ‘Only nationals’ exhibit a stronger preference for internal migrants than those whose primary identification is with Europe. These observations are in line with our expectation that national identities might amplify the communitarian logic of European collective identity.

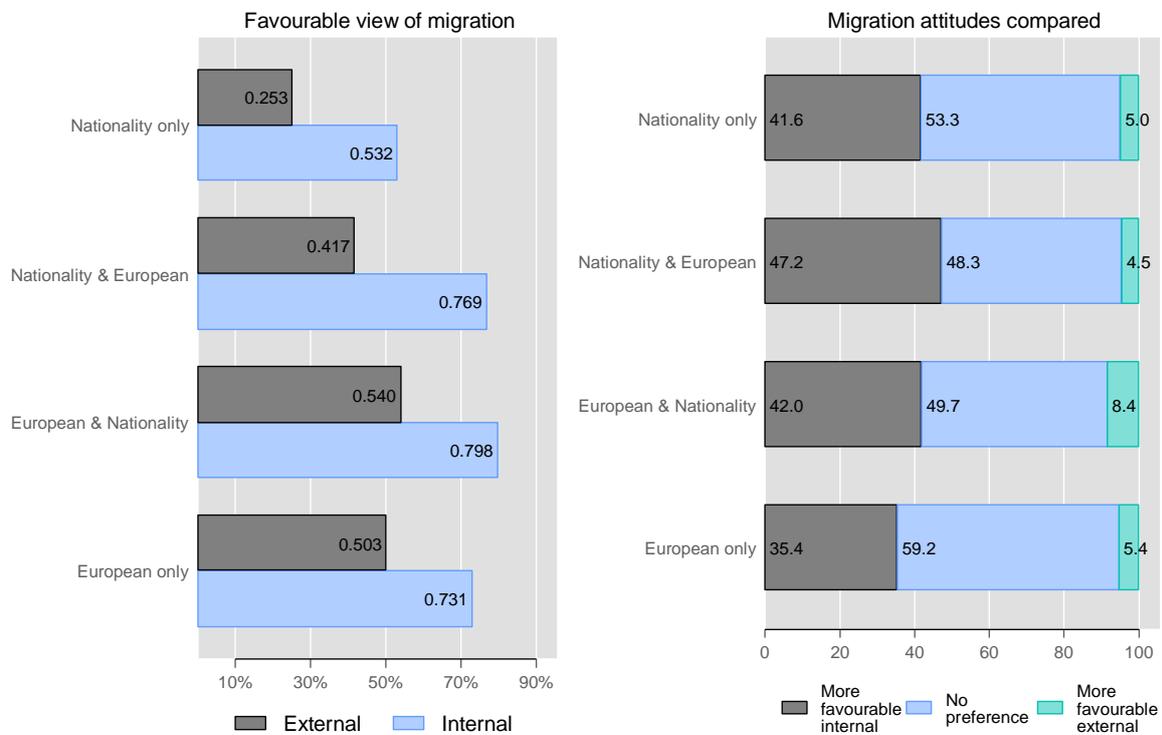


Figure 2 - Migration attitudes by identity type (2017)

Note: Left panel: Favourable view of internal and external migration, by identity type. Right panel: View of internal and external migration compared, by identity type. Data: Eurobarometer standard survey 2014-2017. Survey questions: Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Q1. ‘Immigration of people from other EU member states.’ (Internal migration). Q2. ‘Immigration of people from outside of the EU.’ (External migration).

A more conclusive answer to our main question can only be given if we control for a host of alternative explanations of the differences observed. To that end, we test our hypotheses with multilevel⁴ regression models of preference for internal migration. In addition to the individual variables that operationalise key determinants of immigration attitudes discussed above, we also include factors at the country level. The models control for the effect of *Eurozone* membership, as the common currency could contribute to the development of a more marked perception of European difference. The shape of the national economy (operationalised with the levels of *GDP* and *Unemployment*⁵) could also influence opinions on migration (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010), even if the direction of the effect is contested (Mayda, 2006). Moreover, to control for the different immigration trajectories across EU member states, we control for the presence of internal and external migrants as the share of each country's population (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Curtis 2014). Given the relevance of the recent refugee crisis for the politicisation of migration in the EU, we also account for the presence of *Refugees* with a variable that indicates the number of first-time asylum claims received in the country per 100,000 inhabitants in a given year.

The model fit information confirms that models which account for identity factors are significantly improved. The analysis reveals that holding all else constant, double identification as 'National and European' is associated with a higher preference for internal migrants when compared to those who identify exclusively as nationals (Figure 3 below, page 15). The effect is small, but it is one of the biggest coefficients in the model for individual-level variables, surpassed only by the effect of ideology and EU knowledge.⁶ In contrast, we do not find a similar effect of Europe as a primary identity frame, either on its own or when combined with a secondary national identification.

In the second step of the analysis, we introduce variables which operationalise the affective aspect of identity (attachment to the country, Europe, and the EU)⁷. Three main observations emerge from these analyses (Figure 4). First of all, the positive and significant effect of 'national and European' identification on preference for internal migration is maintained. These results further validate our initial hypotheses regarding the communitarian effects of European identification, even when we control for the emotional attachment to the nation, Europe, or the EU. Secondly, in terms of affective

⁴ An intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.514 warrants the use of a multilevel approach to account for the variation occurring within as well as between countries.

⁵ All country-level data from the Eurostat (2014-2017).

⁶ All variables are standardized allowing for a direct comparison of coefficients' magnitude.

⁷ Since Attachment to Europe and Attachment to the European Union are highly correlated, we include them separately to avoid problems with the specification of the models.

identity, preference for internal migration is strongly associated with national identification (*Attachment to Country*), which suggests that national identity amplifies the communitarian effects of European collective identity also in its affective dimension. Finally, we find that preference for internal migration tends to be associated with attachment to Europe, rather than to the EU.⁸ This finding suggests that preference for internal migration is more directly related to the idea of Europe as a geographical or cultural identity, rather than to the development of the Union as a political community. However, both are correlated, and it is not easy to disentangle the perceptions of a distinctive European collective identity from an identity that could have political consequences in the EU. This difficulty is illustrated further by the fact that also those who are better informed about the EU (*EU knowledge*) tend to express more positive views of internal than external migrants and we also observe a small positive effect of *EU political discussion*. In contrast, EU trust does not turn out to be a relevant predictor of preference for internal migration when we include variables directly related to identification (cf. Blinder and Markaki, 2019).

In terms of individual predictors, all the alternative explanatory dimensions turn out to be significant to some extent (Figure 3 below). *Ideology* is the strongest effect in the model at the individual level. People who self-identify as more right-wing tend to hold significantly more positive views of internal than external migration, in line with previous analyses. *Education*, which constitutes a key predictor of both EU attitudes and European identification, turns out to be less relevant, but there is a small positive effect for higher levels of education, and a negative one for lower levels. Older EU citizens and those living in rural areas tend to hold a stronger preference for internal migration. On the other hand, women and those who view their employment situation negatively are less inclined to distinguish between the two kinds of migrants positively, possibly owing to their perceived vulnerability in the labour market (Díez Medrano and Braun, 2012). However, when perceptions of the national economy are negative, EU citizens prefer internal immigration.

⁸ The robustness of these findings is further validated in multilevel logit models in which preference for internal migration is a dummy variable.

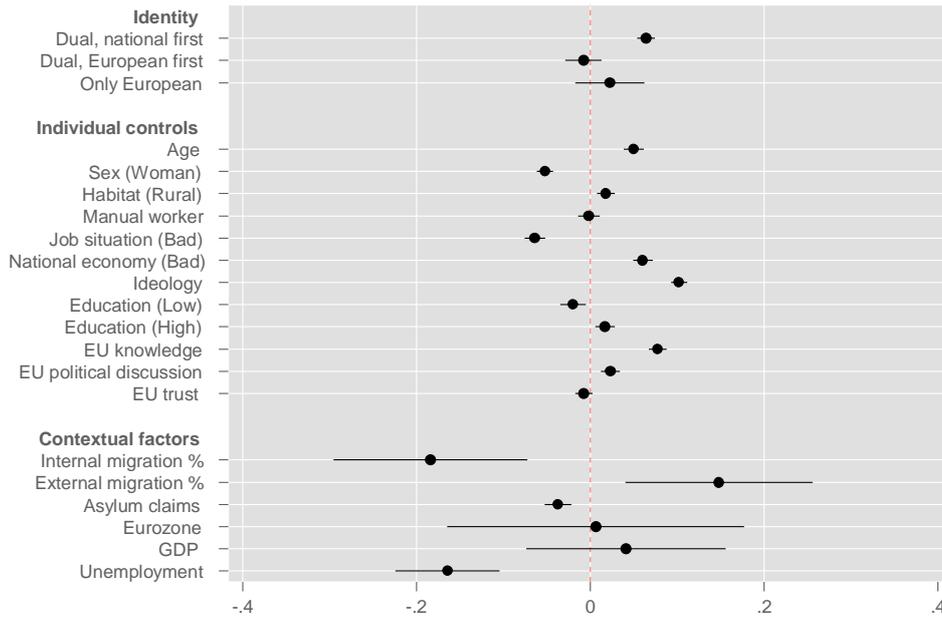


Figure 3 - Regression on preference for internal migration

Note: Graph displays the coefficients and standard errors from a multilevel regression (xtmixed command in Stata) plotted with coefplot. Dependent variable: preference for internal migration. Data: Eurobarometer 2014-2017 (studies 82.3, 83.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.3, 88.3).

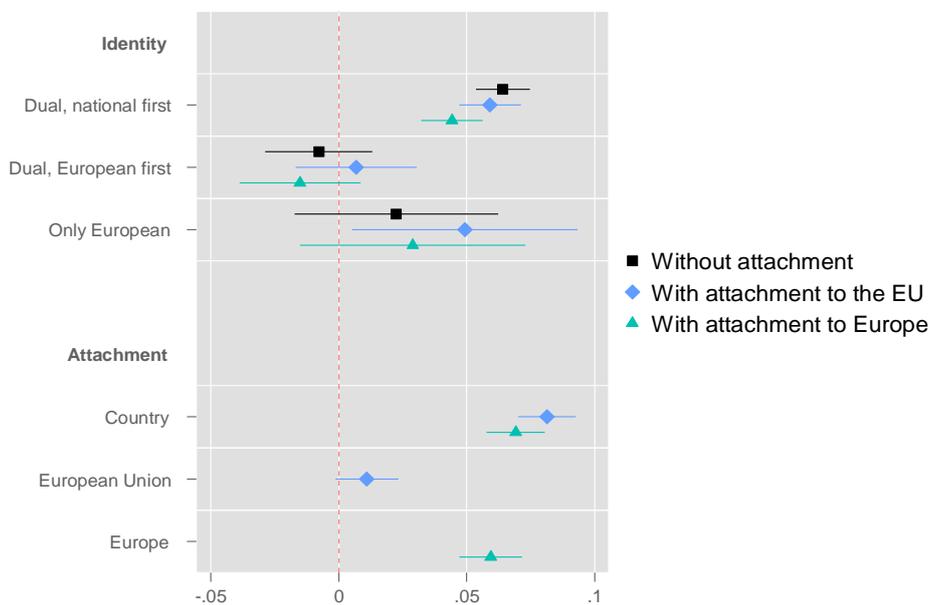


Figure 4 Regression on preference for internal migration, models with attachment to the EU/Europe

Note: Graph displays the coefficients and standard errors from a multilevel regression (xtmixed command in Stata) plotted with coefplot. Dependent variable: preference for internal migration. All control variables from previous model included. Data: Eurobarometer 2014-2017 (studies 82.3, 83.3, 84.3, 85.2, 86.2, 87.3, 88.3).

The relatively large effects of country-level variables suggest that social and economic context is also relevant to explaining the individual preference for EU migration. Unemployment is negatively associated with our dependent variable. In the context of perceived competition over jobs, preference for fellow EU citizens within the overall migrant pool is reduced. Interestingly, we also observe significant effects of the varying presence of migrants and asylum-seekers in different European member states. In countries with a higher share of internal migrants, Europeans tend to express a smaller preference for them. A higher presence of external migrants, on the other hand, is associated with a stronger preference for internal migrants, while a higher presence of asylum-seekers weakens such preference. These findings indicate that actual size of immigration from different origins might shape preference for one migrant group over another at the national level, in contrast to the more inconclusive findings about its effects for immigration attitudes in general (see discussion in Toshkov and Kortenska, 2015). The exact underlying mechanism, however, is not clear since the observed effects are contradictory, but could be explored in future research.

Discussion

Existing scholarship points to a link between European identification and a favourable view of international migration, suggesting a cosmopolitan character to the emerging collective identity in the EU. At the same time, social identity theory invites the expectation that European identifiers will demarcate the EU in-group from the non-EU out-group. To the best of our knowledge, no systematic study so far has explored the relative importance of such conflicting logic in how European identifiers approach migrants from different origins. This paper advances the debate on European identity through an empirical analysis of the puzzle of communitarian logic in cosmopolitan identification.

Our study shows that while all citizens who incorporate the European element into their identities tend to be more open towards migrants (cosmopolitan logic), we find significant differences among European identifiers when it comes to preference for migration from within the EU. Despite its cosmopolitan foundations, the emerging European collective identity also follows the logic of social identity. On average, Europeans are significantly more favourable to internal migration than to non-EU migration and increasingly so since 2014. Our analyses also show that the ‘national and European’ identity type, prevalent in contemporary Europe, is associated with the strongest demarcation of the European in-group. The fact that national communities tend to be well defined against out-groups could help explain this finding as the community-building logic of national identity could amplify the social identity mechanisms of European identity. On the other hand, those for whom Europe represents the first identity frame are no more likely to prefer internal migrants than

purely national identifiers. This could be because a primary European identification, with its underlying diversity and lack of clear-cut borders, weakens the mechanism of demarcation implied in social identity.

The exact character of such demarcation against outsiders remains unclear as we find evidence for both civic and cultural correlates of the growing preference for internal migration in Europe. With the data at hand, we cannot know the subjective meanings associated with the self-perception as European. However, the results point to a commonality based on civic elements (EU political discussion, knowledge about the EU), as well as a cultural idea based on the vague idea of shared Europeanness as preference for internal migration is related to attachment to Europe as a geographical or cultural entity, rather than attachment to the Union as a political community.

This study looks specifically at the level of personal socio-political identities and attitudes. However, we should interpret its findings in the context of broader debates regarding the changing character of European politics. In the wake of globalisation, the emergence of the integration vs demarcation cleavage has been restructuring European societies and political arenas (Kriesi et al., 2012). The processes of opening up to migration, trade, communication, and travel across borders in recent decades have brought about a backlash against the notions of open societies and economies, exploited by the radical populist right to mobilise significant portions of the electorate around ethno-nationalist ideas and rejection of diversity (Inglehart and Norris, 2017). As a result, the choice between closed versus open societies has become key to current political debates. This paper shows that in this context, a simple distinction between exclusive nationals and cosmopolitans is not enough to understand identity dynamics under the conditions of European integration.

While European integration as the process of bringing the peoples of Europe closer together rests on the cosmopolitan assumption of 'Unity in Diversity,' at the same time, the EU actively promotes community-building through the creation of citizenship of the Union and its associated rights, such as freedom of movement, setting internal mobility apart from external migration. The effects of this tension between the cosmopolitan and communitarian mechanisms of European integration are illustrated by a growing acceptance of internal migration in Europe in recent years, coupled with a growing preference for EU migrants, which, nevertheless, varies over different types of EU citizen identities. The results of our analysis indicate further that while European identification is indeed associated with cosmopolitanism, it has communitarian effects as well. These effects become amplified when European identity is combined with a primary national identification. These results are novel and expand our understanding of the dynamics of multiple identities in Europe by challenging the neat binary of exclusive national identifiers versus inclusive cosmopolitans in EU

attitudes and should be taken into account by policy-makers at the European level as they indicate the potential for political mobilisation of multiple identities.

To conclude, our findings do not indicate an inevitable turn towards exclusionary politics in Europe. Collective identities are socially constructed and subject to change over time. The mechanisms underlying social identification, perceived similarity, and social distinction, do not determine the exact character of such demarcation. Specifically, European collective identity rests on the premise of inclusiveness of difference, and European citizenship as the vehicle of civic identification offers an opportunity to re-draw the limits of the European community. However, this research suggests that mere promotion and fostering of a supranational identity in addition to national identification will not solve the problems of migrant acceptance in European societies, as long as the character of such identification remains rooted in national ideas of inclusion and exclusion.

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union