

Winners and losers? Citizens and sceptics? European integration and the spread of cosmopolitanism

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Policy Brief

Winners and Losers? Citizens and Sceptics? European Integration and the Spread of Cosmopolitanism Adrian Favell and David Reimer

INTRODUCTION

European integration: an elite project?

It has become a commonplace in discussion on Europe to argue that European integration most benefits elites and upper classes -- people most likely to have international connections -- while being of much less benefit to lower classes. This fact in turn is then linked to the widespread mistrust and (sometimes) hostility among ordinary citizens to the European project.

Euroscepticism

Related to this, and which also threatens the integrity of the EU, is growing Euroscepticism in countries which are politically and economically important to the European project's success: notably the UK and Denmark, who have positioned themselves as outsiders to the core of much of the EU.

The 7th Framework Program EUCROSS research project provides new data to re-examine these issues and offer suggestions to how European policy makers might make a more constructive case for the positive effects of European integration, including in more Eurosceptic countries.

SUPPORT FOR THE EU VERSUS EVERYDAY TRANSNATIONALISM

The image of the EU and the economic crisis

Without a doubt, general support for the EU has suffered considerably as a result of the recent economic crisis in Europe and a perception of the EU going in the wrong direction.

When asked in Eurobarometer 2012 (Figure 1), it was found that EU citizens continue to support, or are at least neutral for the idea of the EU, but are much less happy about the "present direction of the EU". Clearly, EU citizens across the continent feel that the EU is not working as it should.

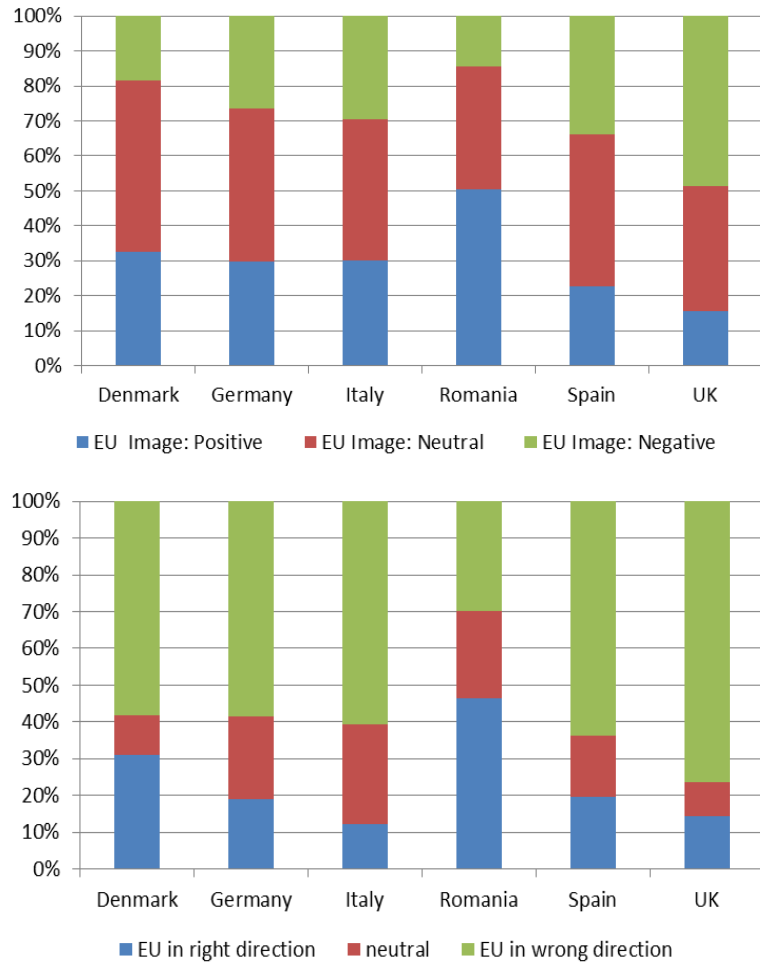
The results are as bad, if not worse, for countries with historically high support for or identification with the EU (such as Germany and Italy), as they are for more Eurosceptic countries like the UK or Denmark.

An Europe for winners?

American sociologist Neil Fligstein's widely read *Euroclash* (2008), which is based on secondary analysis of sources such as Eurobarometer, propagated the view that the growing legitimacy deficit indexed by these findings is linked to the fact that European integration only clearly benefits the winners in European society. Middle classes, meanwhile, are positioned ambiguously: they appreciate the EU on some issues, not on others. As times get tough, their consent is likely to waver. Support

for European integration certainly seems to line up with higher class or education, when it is broken down as Fligstein does. And, on the basis of existing surveys, there is evidence that in terms of social and professional networks, international experiences, education abroad and so on, elite and upper middle classes seem to make more use of what we might call "transnational opportunities" provided by the EU.

Figure 1: Reactions to the European Union (%)



Source: Eurobarometer 77.3, May 2012

Or a substantial "horizontal Europeanisation"?

An alternative view, though, is provided by German sociologists Steffen Mau and Roland Verwiebe. Based on a survey of the German population, in *European Societies: Mapping Structure and Change* (2010) they argue for the quite profound everyday transformation of the mass of European societies connected to European integration. When these effects are traced over time, not only can it be seen that there has been a substantial "horizontal Europeanisation"; it also suggests, in many ways, that the people whose lives have changed the most as a result of more international opportunities created by the EU are ordinary and average citizens rather than elites (who perhaps would have these opportunities regardless of whether Europe had open borders).

So which of these views is right? And how do they relate to the variation in the support levels across Europe, particularly in countries which may damage European integration by exiting?

The EUCROSS project (as in Steffen Mau and associates' work) focuses on "transnational practices" in the European Union. We argue that concrete behaviour is a more reliable guide to what matters in society than expressions of identity, and the inevitable fluctuations of political support.

12 questions for an index of transnational practices

To analyse our results, we have constructed an index of transnational practices, composed from a set of 12 questions asked to our respondents. Transnational practices, of course, may not be restricted to a European scale: certain kinds of cross-border transaction or tie may rather be linked to growing global interconnections and integration. Thought of this way, it is striking how transnational European populations have become, and also how much more they are transnational in countries that are often seen at the edge of Europe.

For example, the following three questions (table 1) give an indication of how internationalised European residents have become. We asked respondents about whether they had live abroad, their familiarity with other countries, and whether they knew anybody living in another country.

Table 1: Internationalisation of European residents (% yes-answers)

	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	UK	N
Lived abroad for more than three months (since turning 18)?	23.3	15.4	11.8	17.9	13.7	24.3	6013
Familiarity with one or more foreign countries?	59.6	66.2	41.6	48.0	48.6	63.7	6004
Know anyone else living in another country?	49.1	48.8	57.8	78.7	65.7	64.5	6005

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012

Europeanised practices and internationalisation

Note these questions are not restricted to Europeanised practices, but rather indicate general levels of internationalisation. And what we find is a quite strong degree of internationalisation, across the board. Markedly in Germany (which we would expect), but also especially Denmark and the UK, there is a higher experience of living abroad, familiarity with foreign countries, or knowing people in other countries.

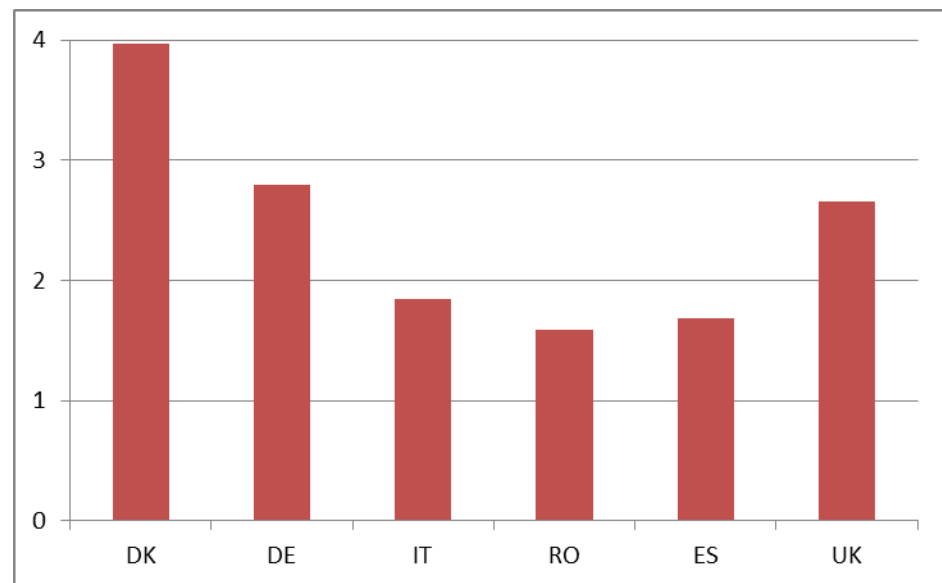
If we look at transnational practices linked more obviously to European integration the pattern does not change so much (table 2). But it is more pronounced as regards general free movement and open market opportunities than much trumpeted official EU policies, such as educational exchanges.

Table 2: Europeanised practices (% yes-answers)

	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	UK	N
Participated in EU sponsored exchange program?	3.7	3.9	4.5	8.1	6.8	2.9	5979
Bought goods in other EU MS in last 24 months?	40.5	27.2	17.4	13.0	19.7	32.1	5986

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012

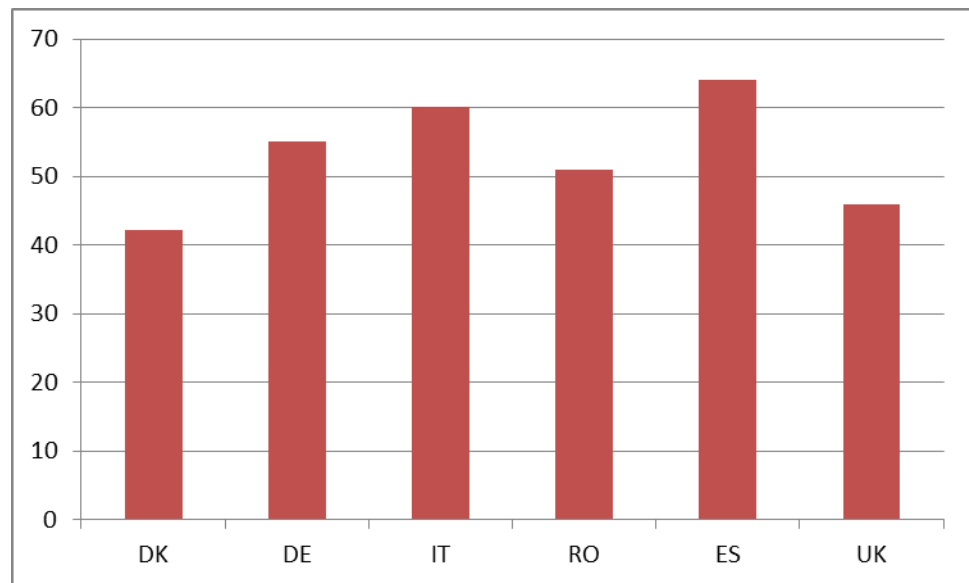
Only a tiny minority of respondents – also due to generational constraints – appear to have benefitted from this kind of formal transnational opportunity, with slightly more from the south and east of Europe. However, if we look at questions about more general transnational practices, only this time linked more obviously to European integration, the results are more marked. Danes, Germans and British are much more likely to have shopped abroad. They are also more likely to have engaged in short term business and pleasure trips abroad (figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of overnight trips abroad in the last 24 months (average by country)

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012

Willingness to move is not limited to southern Europeans

As figure 3 shows, on a question related to the central issue of freedom of movement of work, southern Europeans as might be expected are highly willing to move abroad for work, but close to half of Germans, British and Danes (a little less) are also ready to "get on their bike".

Figure 3: Willingness to move abroad (% yes-answers)

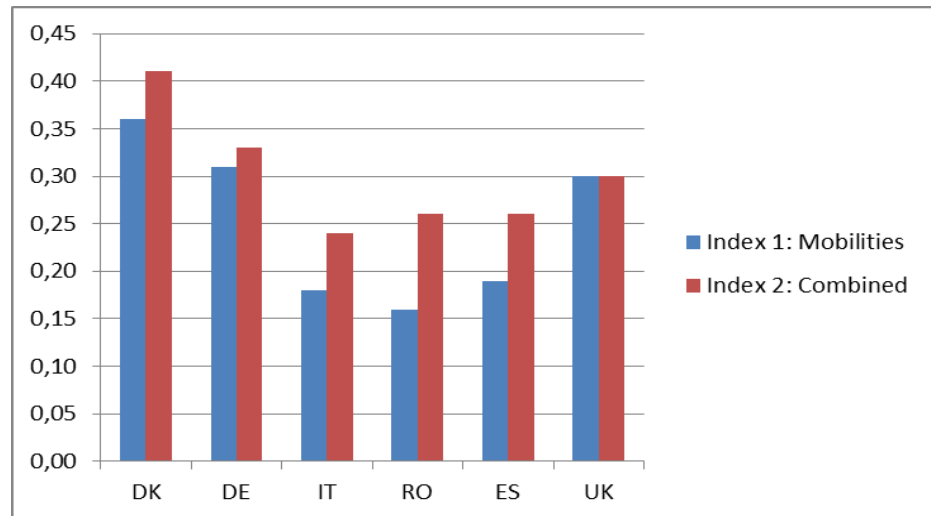
Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012

Transnational practices and European identification

These various indicators illustrate concrete effects of European integration that may in fact suggest a strong Europeanisation of, for example, Danish and British society, even if these countries express negative opinions about the EU or are unlikely to identify with it.

When we put 12 such questions together as an index of transnational practices, it is striking which of the countries studied is the most internationalised (figure 4). This is the rank order, first asking only 6 questions about cross-border migration and (physical) mobilities (in blue), then including other items to do with cross-border friendship networks, shopping and knowledge (in red).¹

¹ *Index 1- Mobilities* is a simple additive index consisting of six binary variables: (1) Familiarity with one or more countries (yes), (2) Lived in another country before turning 18 (yes), (3) Visited at least 3 countries before turning 18 (yes), (4) Lived in another country for at least 3 month after turning 18 (yes), (5), Participated in EU sponsored exchange program, (6) 3 or more overnight trips abroad in last 24 months. For *Index 2 – Combined*, six additional binary variables were added to the six mobility items: (1) Know anybody living in another country (yes), (2) Command of at least one foreign language (yes), (9) At least 10% of all received messages from abroad (email/phone etc.) (yes), (10) Ever sent money abroad for reasons other than purchasing goods/services (yes), (11) Purchased goods abroad (yes), (12) Watch foreign TV once a month or more (yes). In order to make the two indices comparable, each index was divided by the number of items (6 for index 1, 12 for index 2). A respondent who answered yes on 3 out of the 6 questions for the first index would thus receive a score of 0.5.

Figure 4: Indices of transnationalism (mobility and other practices)

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012

Distinguishing the political and the sociological bases of European integration

What these results display is that on a scale of 0-1 Danes score 0.36 on physical mobilities, which rises to 0.41 including other cross-border connections. This is nearly twice the transnational index of Italians and Spanish, whereas Germans and British are in-between.

There is a strong indication here, then, that everyday Europeanised practices in countries such as Denmark and the UK far outstrip the conscious identification with or support for the European project. This suggests both a certain illusion of independence among these countries, but also that they have a lot to lose from leaving the project. The politics of European integration in these countries is not the same as the sociology of European integration.

On the other hand, the support for the EU expressed in Spain and Italy is not connected with higher levels of transnationalism. Perhaps promoting the EU in terms of seeking European identity is not the political secret to heighten conscious support.

THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION

Higher education entails higher transnationalism

What, though, can EUCROSS say about the effect of social stratification on transnational practices? At this stage, we analysed the transnationalism index in relation to educational levels, which is often taken as a proxy for social class. For the entire sample (all countries), there is a pronounced relationship between higher levels of education and more transnationalism.

But the education gap is smaller in Denmark and Germany

But when we break out the differences between countries (Table 3), there seems to be quite some variation. While the relationship holds, the gulf in transnationalism between the highly educated and people with secondary schooling is smaller in Denmark and Germany than elsewhere.

Table 3: Transnationalism and education by country

Country by education	Low Transnationalism	High Transnationalism
Denmark		
Compulsory Schooling	81.0	19.0
Secondary Schooling	65.6	34.4
Tertiary Schooling	42.3	57.7
Germany		
Compulsory Schooling	96.5	3.5
Secondary Schooling	78.0	22.0
Tertiary Schooling	56.6	43.4
Italy		
Compulsory Schooling	98.4	1.6
Secondary Schooling	92.0	8.0
Tertiary Schooling	72.2	27.8
Romania		
Compulsory Schooling	95.6	4.4
Secondary Schooling	93.0	7.0
Tertiary Schooling	74.7	25.3
Spain		
Compulsory Schooling	99.4	0.6
Secondary Schooling	92.0	8.0
Tertiary Schooling	73.6	26.4
United Kingdom		
Compulsory Schooling	95.8	4.2
Secondary Schooling	88.6	11.4
Tertiary Schooling	65.4	34.6

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012. Note: Low transnationalism corresponds to 0.0-0.50 ; high transnationalism to 0.51-1.0 on the transnationalism index (see footnote 1 for further explanation).

The difficulties of measuring the effect of transnationalism on EU support

Contrary to Fligstein, then, we find a persistent but less marked social class divide, and the suggestion that middle classes are becoming more transnational in Germany and Denmark.

So what have been the effects of the routine, everyday transnationalism facilitated by European integration? At first sight, not growing European identification or support (see Hanquinet and Savage 2013). But asking people who have benefitted from the EU if they support the EU is perhaps not the right question, particularly given the politically contentious image of the EU in some countries and the way it gets identified with negativity about politics, politicians and bureaucrats more generally. Other researchers, such as Sophie Duchesne and associates (2013), have shown very clearly that 'European integration', at face value, has little sense or meaning to ordinary citizens.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Europeanisation and cosmopolitan values

We follow Steffen Mau in thinking that the more general internationalisation facilitated by European integration is an important side-effect of the process. That is, what might be important as a consequence of European integration is not conscious support for the EU (when asked), but the way it has encouraged a more

Dimensions of cosmopolitanism: tolerance for diversity, responsibilities for the fate of other countries and acceptance of supra-national governance

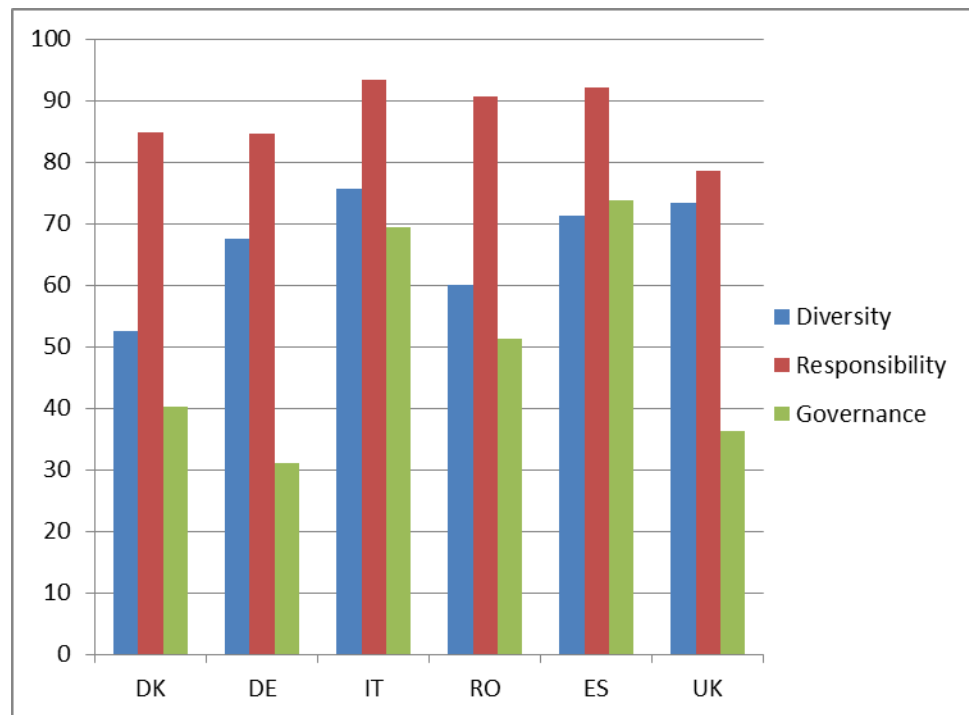
widespread embrace of cosmopolitan values.

Cosmopolitanism can be conceived in a number of ways. In our definition (and Mau's) we see it in terms of three important dimensions:

- the spread of tolerance for cultural/ethnic/religious diversity, i.e., the recognition of other cultures
- the willingness to accept some responsibility for the fate of foreign countries/populations
- the acceptance of international institutions as better ways to manage certain large scale (global or macro-regional) issues.

EUCROSS was able investigate in detail these three dimensions. The results reveal not only high and enthusiastic levels of cosmopolitanism among all citizens of the EU, but further particularities about the relationship of people in Denmark and the UK – the two most Eurosceptic populations – to Europeanisation and globalisation.

Figure 5: Dimensions of cosmopolitanism: tolerance for diversity, supra-national responsibility and supra-national governance



Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012. Note: *Diversity* is measured by the following item: “it is a good thing for society to be made up of people from different ethnic groups” (‘strongly’ and ‘quite’ agree, in %). *Supra-national responsibility* by the following item: “The whole EU should make financial contributions to reconstruct a member state struck by a natural disaster” (yes, in %). *Supra-national governance* by the following item: it is a good thing that “EU member states are currently pooling national state funds to help EU countries having difficulties in paying their debts” (‘strongly’ and ‘quite’ agree, in %).

National differences in cosmopolitanism

On toleration and recognition of other cultures, British respondents score high, and Danish low relative to all others (figure 5). Interestingly, though, less than 50% of Danes, British and Germans would describe themselves as "citizens of the world", while the majority of southern and eastern Europeans in our sample do (that is, 79.9% of the Spanish, 69.8% of Romanians and 64.4% of Italians).

A common and widespread sense of responsibility towards other Europeans...

Yet things level out when respondents are asked about the sense of collective responsibility and risk-sharing with fellow Europeans – the second of the three dimensions of cosmopolitanism. On this, even 78.6% of the British sample state that they would husband common financial efforts to help out 'financially' other EU populations in trouble. Proportions are over 80% in all other countries, and over 90% in Italy, Spain and Romania.

... provided the EU is left aside

However, though, when the EU as an institution is explicitly mixed into the questions about cosmopolitanism, for example suggesting the EU is the appropriate place to bail out member states, then the cosmopolitan enthusiasm of the British, the Danes but also the Germans begins to melt away. On whether the EU should have as an appropriate goal "the promotion of solidarity between the peoples of the EU", the British only record 64% against an average of 81%. Only 43% of British respondents in our sample would be sorry if the EU disappeared entirely. Unsurprisingly, in fact, southern Europeans are very enthusiastic for solidarity in the EU in all its forms.

Generally, there seems to be a positive association between transnationalism and cosmopolitan values all over the place, including Denmark and the UK. This has clearly been facilitated by the EU. This association weakens, however, when the EU is specifically invoked.

POLICY CONCLUSIONS

Cross-border practices foster cosmopolitanism but not necessarily EU legitimacy

A recent assessment of European citizenship concludes that 'connections beyond and across national boundaries can generate experience worth having and enriched life-options' (Kostakopoulou 2013: 44). Our research findings suggest that there is more to it: cross-border practices under the EU citizenship regime have helped the spread of cosmopolitan values, including to countries that claim to be sceptical or outside the European project. The policy conclusions we would draw relate more to recognising these outcomes of European integration among ordinary citizens, rather than in changing policies.

Stress the everyday life benefits of EU citizenship and single market policies

- ➡ It would be better for policy makers to focus on the EU's promotion of wider, global and multicultural values, than on European identity per se.
- ➡ Everyday experiences of mobility and international connections clearly have had good effects across the population (not just elites), and the Europeanisation of everyday life in these terms needs to be better known.
- ➡ Policy makers should be prepared to defend open single market policies

that have enabled the free movement of goods, services and persons. These market related benefits appeal more to EU citizens that are less keen on the overt political goals of the continent.

Avoid the Europeanisation-closure association

- However, much of the Europeanisation of Europe is intimately linked to, and embedded in, wider global processes. The two are not in opposition. Policy makers should avoid suggestions that promote the idea of closure or protection of a distinctive European mode of society and economy.

Beware of too abstract measurements of EU support

- Policy makers should rely less on the crude approach of Eurobarometer style surveys, and take notice of the more sophisticated indicators being offered by the current sociology of the European Union. They should in particular be aware that direct questions about European identity or support for the European project, may either confuse respondents or elicit their hostility.

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RESEARCH DESIGN

The EUCROSS research project examines the relationship between the manifold activities of EU residents (nationals, mobile EU citizens, and third-country nationals) across the borders of nation states and their collective identities. To disentangle empirically the factors and mechanisms that link together the cross-border practices facilitated by European integration, globalisation and/or other dimensions of collective identity, EUCROSS adopts a two-stage, mixed quantitative/qualitative approach.

In the first stage, a quantitative survey (8,500 cases) is carried out among nationals, intra-EU movers (Romanian citizens) and third-country nationals (Turkish citizens) who reside in six European countries (Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom). In the second stage, via 160 in-depth interviews, the meaning given by individuals to cross-border practices, their collective identifications, and the role that the European Union, globalisation, and the nation play in these personal narratives is investigated among a select typology of respondents to the quantitative survey.

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