

*Prelude to Brexit:*  
*Euroscepticism in Great Britain, 2014*

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## **Abstract**

The decision of British voters in June 2016 to leave the European Union (EU) surprised many analysts, despite the uncertainty haunting the last polls before the referendum. Although there have been several scholarly efforts to parse public attitudes before the vote and a number of postmortem analyses, we still do not have a full picture of the forces that moved a majority of British voters into the ‘leave’ column. In this paper, we utilize the converging literatures on popular support for the EU, the sources of Euroscepticism, and the constituencies for ‘populist’ movements such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). After identifying the putative sources of Euroscepticism in various demographic, economic, cultural and political factors, we test these perspectives for pre-Brexit Great Britain, drawing on the 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study (EPES). Using a robust measure of Euroscepticism, we find support for each approach, with attitudes toward national government and immigration the strongest predictors of anti-EU sentiments. Nevertheless, religion, economic status, regionalism and partisanship also play a role. We argue that the pattern of attitudes toward the EU remained remarkably constant between 2014 and the referendum, suggesting that Euroscepticism was even more strongly entrenched in the electorate than many analysts—and perhaps David Cameron—suspected.

The decision of British voters in June 2016 to leave the European Union probably surprised most analysts, despite the uncertainty characterizing the last polls before the referendum. Although there have been a number of scholarly efforts to study public attitudes before the vote and several postmortem analyses, Euroscepticism in Britain remains an ‘under-researched’ phenomenon, despite its ‘long and entrenched’ history (Goodwin and Milazzo 2015a, 2). Although we have some rich studies of the development of elite Euroscepticism (see, e.g., Grob-Fitzgibbon 2016), we still lack a full picture of the factors that moved a majority of British voters to be skeptical enough to push them into the ‘leave’ column.

In this paper, we review the converging literatures on (1) popular support for the European Union, (2) the sources of Euroscepticism, and (3) the public constituencies for the ‘populist’ movements such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which seek to mobilize anti-EU sentiments. After identifying the putative roots of public Euroscepticism in various economic, cultural and political factors, we test these perspectives for Great Britain, drawing on the 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study (EPES). Using a robust measure of Euroscepticism, we find support for each approach, with attitudes toward the national government and immigration the strongest direct predictors of anti-EU sentiments, but with religion, economic status, regionalism and partisanship also playing a role.

### ***Public Support for the EU, Euroscepticism, and Populist Movements***

Our theoretical perspective is derived from three converging literatures on the nature of public support for the European Union. The richest literature goes back almost to the founding of the integration project and asks what factors produced a ‘permissive’ public consensus that allowed elites to push European unity forward (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). Invariably this academic endeavor cast the topic in a positive light, as scholars sought to understand the strong

public backing that characterized most national publics in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Later the target of the enterprise ‘flipped,’ however, as scholars reacted to the increasingly critical perspectives spreading across the EU in the 1990s by seeking the sources of ‘Euroscepticism’ (Hooghe and Marks 2008; Hobolt 2012, 717). And in the past few years the research focus has shifted again, attending to the rise of ‘populist’ parties, such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in Britain, the National Front in France, and the Freedom Party in Austria, to name just a few (Dennison and Pardijs 2016; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004; Vasilopolou 2009). As these parties have almost invariably mobilized anti-EU sentiments, studies of their bases of popular support are, in effect, studies of Euroscepticism as well.

Although it is beyond our purposes here to do a full review of all three literatures (see Hobolt 2012; Hooghe and Marx 2012; Inglehart and Norris 2016), we will summarize the strongest expectations derived from these perspectives, noting a few instances where there is some disagreement. On the whole, however, there is a remarkable consensus about the factors influencing public attitudes toward the EU, with some controversy over their relative weight. Like many other analysts, we classify these perspectives into two broad categories: those that stress demographic factors, identifying the social location of Euroscepticism, and those emphasizing political factors, tapping partisan, ideological and issue influences.

Of course, this division is hardly perfect: partisan, ideological and issue positions usually have distinct social locations, and are typically more direct and powerful influences on other ‘political’ variables than social characteristics are. But this approach allows us to consider valuable insights from each perspective in turn, before combining them in a single multivariate analysis of British attitudes at the time of the 2014 European parliamentary election. We find that

both social and political perspectives help us understand the 2016 results, but discover some interesting variations in the British case.

***Demographic Sources of Euroscepticism:  
Religion, Economic Utility and Regionalism***

***Religion and the EU***

Religion has often been the ‘neglected’ variable in studies of public attitudes toward the European Union, but surveys as far back as 1970 have shown that Catholics favor integration, while Protestants express far less support (Nelsen, Guth and Fraser 2001; Nelsen, Guth and Highsmith 2011; Scherer 2014). Orthodox Christians are somewhat less favorable than Catholics, but generally demonstrate positive attitudes on integration. In addition, religious practice usually heightens the dominant tendency of each confessional culture, as observant Catholics show the strongest support, and committed Protestants voice deeper skepticism. These patterns have long persisted at every level of analysis, under stringent controls, whether comparing member states (Foret 2015), evaluating the attitudes of national political elites (Lazić et al. 2012; Hamerly 2010), considering the role of religious institutions and interest groups or, most important for present purposes, explaining the attitudes of individual citizens (Nelsen and Guth 2015; Chaplin and Wilton 2016).

Of course, recent changes in the nature of European religion may well require modification of this picture: religious differences (and the influence of religion) are being eroded by secularization, especially in more recent age cohorts, so that ancient Catholic-Protestant differences have almost disappeared among younger citizens (cf. Nelsen and Guth 2003, 2016b). And there is some evidence that the relevant religious divide may now be between the religiously-engaged of all faiths, who tend to favor the EU, and secular citizens, who are more critical (Kuhlman and Katalin Koós 2014; Nelsen and Guth 2016b). Finally, the growth of

ethnoreligious minorities, most notably Muslims, have diversified European faith communities (Kaufmann 2010). Although there has been relatively little scholarly work on the attitudes of such minorities, several studies hint that non-Christian minorities tend to be positive about the EU, often seen as friendlier to their interests than national regimes more wedded to their own historic religious traditions (Pastorelli 2012).

Does all this apply to Britain? Certainly, an abundant historical literature ties British national identities to Protestantism, suggesting potential resistance to joining with continental ‘Catholic’ projects (see, e.g. Colley 1992; Marx 2003, 153-168). Until recently there has been little empirical analysis of British public attitudes toward the EU by religion, but in a careful study Ben Clements has demonstrated that Anglicans and ‘Other Christians’ have had the most negative attitudes toward EU membership and the euro over the past thirty years, with Catholics and those with no religious affiliation somewhat more positive (Clements 2015, 198-220). Religious minorities, of growing political importance, tend to be most enthusiastic about the European Union (McAndrew 2016; Dysch 2016).

It is true that Protestant religious elites, especially in the Church of England, have become friendlier toward the EU over time, perhaps reflecting their growing ecumenism. Nevertheless, their stance during the 2016 campaign was a cautious formal ‘neutrality’, albeit one clearly slanted toward ‘remain’, a position that was ‘personally endorsed’ by many prominent Anglican clerics, including Archbishop of Canterbury Welby (Erlanger 2016; Wells 2016; Gomes 2016). More sectarian Protestants, like their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, have always been Eurosceptic, and press reports during the campaign suggested that such attitudes were still being expressed, either from the pulpit or in informal settings (Bell 2016;

Farley 2016).<sup>1</sup> Subtle religious cues may have emanated from some politicians as well: several leading Tory ‘Brexiters’ were active Anglicans or otherwise identified with traditional religious movements—more than might be expected in a government that ‘does not do God’. Most Catholic bishops, also officially neutral, made little secret of their preference to ‘remain’, although voicing concern about the EU’s increasing social liberalism. The hierarchy’s dominant ‘remain’ preference was vocally supported by prominent Catholic scholars, but met with some resistance from traditionalist laity (Stephens 2016; Pentin 2016).

Based on the both historical tendencies and the predominant direction of religious elite ‘cues’ (gentle and ambiguous as they often were), we would expect religious minorities to exhibit the strongest support for the EU, followed by Catholics, the religiously unaffiliated, ‘Protestants’ and, finally, ‘Other Christians’. We also expect that the most devout believers in every religious tradition should be friendlier toward the EU than their less observant brothers and sisters, although that expectation is more qualified.

### ***Economic Utility Theories***

One of the earliest perspectives on public support for integration was the ‘utilitarian’ or ‘cost/benefit’ theory, focusing on economic advantages accruing from the process (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel 1998). At the individual level, a person’s ability to exploit such opportunities may be influenced by education, the nature of employment, gender (men are in a better position to take advantage of economic openings, see Nelsen and Guth 2000), age (older people have fewer options), size of place (urban areas offer better vistas), and income (the well-off will support integration). There is a truly massive literature buttressing this perspective, with

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<sup>1</sup> One suspects that such strong sectarian perspectives may obtain in low-church or evangelical Anglican congregations as well. As one leader of a large evangelical congregation in Oxford told one of the authors in December 2014 when chatting about our study of religion in the EU: ‘you are sure in the wrong place—you won’t find any “Europeans” here’.

some nuance and variation, although such factors typically explain a frustratingly small part of the variation in individual attitudes (Hobolt 2012).

The more recent literature on populist movements presents the other side of the coin, arguing that while integration supporters represent the ‘winners’ in the modern global economy, populist movements attract the ‘losers’, a theory labeled ‘the economic inequality perspective’ by Ingelhart and Norris (2016, 2). Like studies on Euroscepticism, this perspective is generally confirmed but, again, economic utility explains relatively modest amounts of variation in support for populist parties. If the utilitarian theory applies in our case, we would predict that Euroscepticism in Britain will be strongest among the aged, poorly educated, women, rural residents, working class folks and the economically stressed. Nevertheless, we do not expect such factors to provide a complete explanation (cf. Goodwin and Milazzo 2015a).

### ***Regional and ‘National’ Perspectives***

One potential shaper of public attitudes has received virtually no attention from the scholarly literature on public support for the EU: regional differences within countries. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to consider such possibilities. First, regions often have very distinct histories, sometimes as independent political entities, histories that have produced distinct political cultures (for Spain, see Olivieri 2011). In the present instance, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland often exhibit political traits different from those of England, reflecting such distinctive histories. Even within England, the Home Counties differ in many ways from the Midlands or Northern England. Second, the EU itself might have different meaning for regions within a country, perhaps based on the benefits received from EU development funds or other subsidies, although ironically some of the strongest ‘exit’ votes came from just such areas. Or, in

the case of Northern Ireland, a hard-won peace agreement might seem dependent on continued EU membership of both Ireland and Great Britain).

Of course, regional differences may also reflect compositional effects, produced by the distribution of the kinds of people who live in each region. For example, Greater London might have pro-EU attitudes, largely because of the significant number of immigrants, ethnoreligious minorities and young people living there, not because of any historic ‘cosmopolitan’ or ‘pro-Europe’ sentiment among residents. Or the North might be Eurosceptic because of the large number of working class folks confronting economic hardship in a globalizing world. Based on such considerations, we anticipate that the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish will favor the EU, along with Greater London, while support will be lower in other English regions, especially the North. But we are agnostic on whether these differences will survive controls for other demographic factors.

### *Partisanship, Ideology and Issues as Sources of Euroscepticism*

#### *Partisan Sources*

Although demographic factors such as religion, personal traits and regionalism may provide considerable insight into the location and meaning of Euroscepticism, we suspect that ideational factors will be more powerful and direct influences. One such perspective is what we call ‘the partisan model’ or, as others have it, the ‘cue-giving perspective’ (Hooghe and Marks 2005). Many scholars explaining popular support for the European Union have emphasized the role that political parties play in providing guidance for their followers. In the early years of the integration project, Christian Democratic parties across ‘core Europe’ not only supplied the governmental leadership, but helped bolster popular support, particularly among loyal Catholics. At other times, Social Democratic parties have joined in fostering such public support, or even

taken the lead when dominating community governments (for a list of studies in this vein, see Hobolt 2012). A correlative finding recently is that the ‘Left’ tends to be more supportive of the EU and the ‘Right’ more Eurosceptic, given the respective cues provided by national figures on the poles of the ideological continuum. In parallel fashion to this literature, discussions of populist parties have often stressed ‘supply side’ explanations of their anti-EU sentiment: charismatic figures have provided critiques of the EU and its institutions, helping to foment popular resistance, especially among citizens with more authoritarian attitudes (Inglehart and Norris 2016; Vasilopolou 2009).

Such descriptions seem to fit the UK, especially with the rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) (Goodwin and Milazzo 2015b). While UKIP’s activities exacerbated bitter divisions within the Conservative party over EU membership, other parties have held to a more favorable posture, with the Liberal Democrats, Greens, Scottish Nationalists, and Labour all opposing Brexit with varying degrees of commitment. If party cues are important, we would suspect that those voting for these parties in the 2014 European Parliamentary elections will have distinct attitudes. We also expect the Right to be more Eurosceptic than the Left, based both on the historical literature and observation of the British scene (cf. Grob-Fitzgibbon 2016).

### ***Political Issues and Evaluations***

A final perspective on support for the EU focuses on political issues and evaluations. And here as well the literatures on public support for the EU and that on populist movements converge, if not perfectly. One uniform—if somewhat counterintuitive—finding on public attitudes toward the EU is that those who evaluate their *national* governments favorably are more supportive of the supranational entity as well (Anderson 1998; Nelsen, Guth and Highsmith 2011; Nelsen and Guth 2016b). Adherents to populist movements and parties, on the other hand,

invariably exhibit little confidence in their national institutions, and distrust European ones as well. Another perspective stresses perceived challenges to deeply held national identities. Although the 2014 EPES has no good items tapping the detailed identities (such as ‘only English’) examined by some polls in 2016, the survey does have a question on immigration, an excellent proxy for ‘identity threat’ (McLaren 2006; Goodwin and Milazzo 2015a, 3). Presumably those most critical of immigration will be more likely to vote for Brexit, thereby allowing the UK to preserve traditional ‘British’ or ‘English’ identities by limiting the influx of other nationalities.

Students of populist movements argue that ‘social traditionalism’ has also contributed to their rise, but there has been less analysis of such factors with respect to attitudes about the EU. Nevertheless, scholars often assume that traditionalism works against support for the integration project, while ‘postmaterial values’ emphasizing sexual freedom, environmental concerns and personal liberty foster approval (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Norris 2016). In earlier work, we also found that those holding neo-liberal economic attitudes have a more favorable view of the EU across the community (Nelsen, Guth and Highsmith 2011). Some British observers, however, saw this factor working in the opposite direction during the referendum campaign, with Tory ‘Brexiters’ motivated to *leave* the insufficiently neo-liberal EU (Marliere 2016).

Finally, a long research tradition suggests that evaluation of governments is strongly influenced by assessments of economic performance. If people believe the economy is doing well or is likely to improve soon, they are more likely to support a particular government. Although this literature has focused on national governments, the favorable or unfavorable effects of economic assessments may well extend to the EU as well, if only indirectly by influencing citizens’ approval of their national governments.

## *Data and Methods*

We use data from the 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study (EPES) (see Appendix for references). Not only is this survey ideally timed to examine British attitudes toward the EU as UKIP's strong showing raised the issue to the top of the national agenda, but the survey also has a good-sized sample (*weighted N*=1421). The EPES asked a variety of questions that allow us to test the factors identified by earlier research as influences on integration attitudes, including both demographic and political indicators. Most importantly, the survey asks respondents multiple questions about the EU's value to their country, its contemporary performance, confidence in EU institutions, and preference for further political integration. The richness of these batteries presents an opportunity for researchers: multiple questions permit development of robust and highly reliable attitudinal measures with maximum variation. Indeed, a fundamental limitation of most studies on public attitudes is dependence on one or two dichotomous questions, most often whether the EU has been 'good' or 'bad' for one's country or whether one's country should 'stay' or 'leave' (cf. Curtice and Evans 2015 and Curtice 2016 for items in the British Social Attitudes Survey).

As we have argued previously (Nelsen, Guth and Highsmith 2011), there are good methodological reasons for incorporating a wider variety of items in a single measure. Although some scholars favor a 'multidimensional' perspective on such evaluations (Boomgaarden et al. 2011), even in surveys with multiple items there is usually one dominant dimension of generalized support subsuming most questions.<sup>2</sup> And such a broad measure may well unveil a

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<sup>2</sup> Boomgaarden et al. (2011) argue cogently for five distinct dimensions of EU evaluations, based on a test of 25 items administered in the Netherlands. Although they do not report the unrotated results of their principal components analysis, it seems likely that several items located on second through fifth rotated dimensions load highly on the first unrotated dimension, which has by far the largest eigenvalue and accounts for almost 60 percent of the explained variance. Indeed, correlations among all their dimensions range from .36 to .64.

broader perspective on Euroscepticism than any one or two dichotomous items.

The 2014 EPES has over a dozen questions which reference the EU at least tangentially. After inspection, we identified eight that represent direct evaluation (see the Appendix for specific wordings). And these questions show every evidence of tapping a single dimension: indeed, a principal components analysis produced only one significant component underlying all eight items. That component accounted for half the variation, with the weakest item loading at a solid .64 and the *theta* reliability score a robust .85.<sup>3</sup> We have every confidence, then, that this measure of ‘Euroscepticism’ taps quite well British citizens’ fundamental attitudes during the 2014 European Parliamentary elections.

Although the principal component score used in the multivariate analyses below has the merit of incorporating many facets of Euroscepticism while having a wide range, scores are not amenable to easy interpretation (what does a mean of -.3201702 for voters under the age of thirty signify?). For more cogent illustration of the factors influencing Euroscepticism, we calculated hypothetical ‘exit’ and ‘remain’ votes, produced by dividing the continuous score by the 2016 referendum margin (51.9 ‘leave’ to 48.1 percent ‘remain’). We will often refer to these ‘simulated’ votes in the text when discussing the prospective referendum choices of various types of voters. And although we do not want to make too much of this experimental score, the ‘outcomes’ are often uncannily similar to the real divisions in the 2016 referendum.<sup>4</sup>

We proceed as follows: Using the full Euroscepticism measure as our dependent variable, we test the perspectives offered on public support for the European Union and ‘populist’ movements, considering first theories that emphasize demographic characteristics: religious

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<sup>3</sup> Although ‘attachment to Europe’ also loaded strongly on this component, we did not include this item in the measure, for reasons elaborated in note 17 below.

<sup>4</sup> See Table A1 in the appendix for estimated votes for the variables considered in this analysis. For conservative pollster Lord Ashcroft’s postmortem see Ashcroft (2016).

factors, measures of economic utility ('winners and losers'), and finally national and regional sources of evaluation. Then we turn to political and 'cultural' factors: first, partisan attachments and self-positioning on a left-right ideological scale, and then public attitudes toward government and about critical contemporary issues. Finally, we combine all these perspectives in a potent multivariate analysis which accounts for almost half the variance in Euroscepticism among British citizens in 2014.

### ***Religion and Euroscepticism***

As we argued in previous work (Nelsen and Guth 2015), religion has been a 'neglected variable' in studying popular attitudes toward the EU. Nevertheless, over the course of EU history Catholics have been the strongest supporters of integration, while Protestants have usually been more reluctant, or even hostile to the endeavor. Such antipathy has been most evident among sectarian or Free Church Protestants, whose theologies have often retained strong elements of anti-Catholicism. Religious observance historically reinforced the 'natural' tendency of each religious tradition, bolstering pro-EU attitudes among Catholics and Euroscepticism among Protestants, although as we suggested above, that may be changing.

As Clements notes, however, one obstacle to delineating the impact of religious affiliation is crude measurement in most European surveys (2015, 240). The 2014 EPES is no exception, providing these options to respondents: 'Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Other Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Non-believer/Agnostic, Other (SPONTANEOUS)'. Although capturing some affiliations with a fair degree of accuracy, such categories lack American academic surveys' more precise placement of Free Church, 'evangelical,' or sectarian Protestants, who often fall in the 'Other Christian' or 'Other' categories. As different kinds of Protestants have had varying orientations toward the EU,

inability to distinguish between state church or ‘mainline’ Protestants and Free Church or sectarian ones is a major limitation. Indeed, the importance of making such distinctions is strikingly demonstrated by Stuart Fox’s analyses of referendum preferences of various Protestant denominations (Fox 2016a, 2016b; cf. McAndrew 2016). As we shall see, in this study the ‘Other Christian’ category is not only quite sizeable,<sup>5</sup> suggesting that it includes many non-Anglican Protestants, but such respondents are also distinctive in their attitudes.

A quick examination of the 2014 Euroscepticism score shows the same basic patterns as Clements’ (2015) study, with some modest variation. Using our simulated ‘vote’, we see rather sizeable differences in religious groups’ propensity for ‘exit’: ‘Other Christians’ and Eastern Orthodox<sup>6</sup> (both 60 percent), ‘Protestants’ (57 percent), the unaffiliated (50 percent), Catholics (48 percent), and ethnoreligious minorities (36 percent). Clearly, religious groups exhibited rather different attitudes toward the EU in 2014 and, presumably, in 2016 as well. Of course, the dichotomous ‘vote’ figure actually understates the group differences on the underlying Euroscepticism measure.

Finally, we find that religiosity (measured by religious service attendance) was *negatively* related to Euroscepticism ( $r=-.106$ ), contrary to some scholarly assumptions (Inglehart and Norris 2016). If we bifurcate the eight-point scale into those who attend at least a few times a year and those who don’t, we can assess the possible influence on the referendum vote: the observant give over 53 percent of their vote to ‘remain,’ but an identical proportion of the non-observant vote to ‘leave’. Inspection shows that religiosity pushes in the same direction in each religious tradition, if not exactly to the same magnitude. For example, among ‘Other Christians,’

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<sup>5</sup> The ‘Other Christian’ category here is 21.6 percent of the sample, compared to ‘Protestants’ with 19.6 percent.

<sup>6</sup> We suspect that the anti-EU attitudes of the small group of Eastern Orthodox respondents reflects sympathy with their Greek coreligionists’ struggle with the European Union over financial ‘bailout’ arrangements. This may explain their departure from previous Orthodox support for the integration project.

the ‘leave’ vote declines from 62 percent among the non-observant to 54 percent among churchgoers, while among ‘Protestants’, the comparable figures are 62 and 55 percent. For Catholics, the effect of observance is slightly greater, with only 42 percent of churchgoers ‘voting’ to leave, compared to 52 percent of the non-observant. Within our catch-all category of ethnoreligious minorities, religious observance is not only more frequent than among British Christians, but may have a bigger impact, with the observant giving only 34 percent to leave, compared with 45 percent among the non-observant. And even among the religiously unaffiliated, observance has a considerable impact, with only 6 percent of the small coterie of churchgoers voting to ‘exit,’ compared to 50 percent of the truly secular.<sup>7</sup> In most cases the greater propensity of the religious to ‘stay’ may reflect the dominant, though not universal, pro-integration stances of most British religious institutions and leaders, whether Catholic, Protestant or ethnoreligious minority—stances more likely to be perceived and acted upon by the faithful than by marginal adherents.

To summarize religion’s effect on Euroscepticism, we used multiple regression (OLS). The results are reported in the first section of Table 1. As the religiously unaffiliated are conveniently closest to the mean of the dependent variable, they constitute the omitted reference group. (Positive coefficients identify variables contributing to Euroscepticism.) The regression confirms the bivariate patterns: ‘Other Christians,’ a group which includes many traditional nonconformists and new evangelicals, are the most Eurosceptic group, followed by ‘Protestants’ and the small coterie of Eastern Orthodox. Interestingly, neither Roman Catholics nor religious minorities are significantly different from the unaffiliated reference group, although the Catholic

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<sup>7</sup> As religiosity’s impact is comparable across the sample—and some of the subsamples are relatively small—we incorporate religiosity directly in the analysis and do not interact it with each religious tradition. The introduction of interaction terms does not substantially alter the interpretation here.

sign runs in the ‘wrong’ direction and the minority religions’ in the ‘right’ one. Perhaps more importantly, religiosity has a relatively strong and significant attenuating effect on Euroscepticism.<sup>8</sup> These crude religious measures account for a little over 4 percent of the variation, a modest amount but one that exceeds that in many ‘fuller’ models (cf. Inglehart and Norris 2016, 33).

[Table 1 about here]

At this juncture we should make an important methodological point. Although affiliations (however inadequately measured) and religiosity are important dimensions of religion, they are very poor proxies for religious belief or theology. As any astute observer knows, ‘Catholics,’ ‘Anglicans’ or ‘Muslims’ may differ enormously in belief from others within their own traditions. And it is usually religious beliefs that have the most direct and powerful impact on political attitudes, at least within traditions. Thus, for example, a ‘Catholic’ is most likely to oppose same-sex marriage if she holds to a traditional theology. And although religious involvement often serves as a proxy for traditional beliefs, it is a poor substitute for direct measurement of those beliefs (Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth 2009).

In the present case, for example, much of the Euroscepticism among ‘Other Christians’ and ‘Protestants’ may well derive from echoes of historic tenets dating back to the Protestant Reformation, beliefs which many have left behind (Nelsen and Guth 2015). As Stuart Fox observes, ‘the heightened Euroscepticism (compared with those of no affiliation) of the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Evangelicals are at least in part a reflection of the distinct beliefs

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<sup>8</sup> The insignificant coefficients for the Catholic and minority religious categories suggests that much of the significant negative relationship to Euroscepticism at the bivariate level is accounted for by their religiosity, not religious affiliation. As our hypothetical referendum results suggest, non-religious Catholics are not much different than the unaffiliated reference group. Even the nonobservant members of religious minorities are much closer to the mean group than their observant brethren.

and ideologies of those religious groups....’(Fox 2016b). Survey researchers would do well to assess these beliefs directly, rather than by proxy.

### *Economic Utility*

Perhaps the dominant scholarly perspective on public attitudes toward the European Union, as well as that predicting adherence to ‘populist’ movements such as UKIP, stresses certain demographic traits: those that allow citizens to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the new political economy (Gabel 1998). Although sometimes theorists look at aggregate ‘national’ benefits to predict public attitudes, more often they focus on individual citizens, arguing that the EU will be supported by the economically ‘able’: younger citizens (especially students), those with higher education, men, urbanites, members of higher social classes and, finally, those who have prospered. Conversely, those with the opposite traits are likely to be critical of the EU and support ‘populist’ movements for ‘Brexit’.

To be sure, some interpret these patterns in a ‘cultural’ framework, arguing that those who oppose the EU are also those uncomfortable with modern ‘postmaterial’ values, who may also be among the economically disadvantaged (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Norris 2016). Whether couched in an economic or cultural vein, press coverage of the 2016 referendum often emphasized such factors, as did the polls taken before and after the vote. The 2014 EPES has a wide range of demographic measures; we have chosen those that best capture the thrust of economic utility theories.

In 2014 British citizens clearly conformed to the predictions of utility theorists, with a notable exception. Older citizens were much more Eurosceptic than their younger counterparts (our ‘vote’ shows 38 percent of 16 to 30 year-olds choosing to leave, compared to 64 percent of those over 65) and higher education produced distinctly more favorable attitudes toward the EU

(with 70 percent of those with only an elementary education voting to leave, compared with 40 percent of university graduates and 25 percent of those still in school). In a reversal of earlier studies of popular EU support (but consistent with recent ones and those on new populist movements), men were more Eurosceptic than women (56 to 48 percent ‘exit’), perhaps reflecting the impact of the combined financial and economic crises of 2008 and after. Size of place has a small effect, with those closer to the metropolitan centers of modern commerce slightly more pro-EU (45 percent ‘exit’) than those in smaller cities and rural areas. (Of course, larger cities also have more ethnoreligious minorities who favor the EU.) Direct measures of economic status also show significant impact: respondents calling themselves ‘working class’ are more critical of the EU (63 percent ‘exit’), while those in white collar occupations are more sympathetic (45 percent ‘exit’). Finally, respondents who have experienced economic stresses such as lost income or unemployment are more Eurosceptic. These results are remarkably consistent with earlier analyses of support for the EU and for opposition populist movements. The results of our OLS analysis are reported in the second section of Table 1, and shows that all these factors have a significant direct impact on Euroscepticism, with the economic utility model accounting for a respectable 15 percent of the variance.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Regional Differences***

Although there was much media discussion of ‘national’ and regional differences leading up to the 2016 referendum campaign, scholars have devoted relatively little attention to the

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<sup>9</sup> The careful reader will note that we have used a subjective measure of class status for the ‘working class’ and an occupational definition for white collar occupations. This simply reflects our use of the most predictive measures. Subjective working class status is more powerful in predicting Euroscepticism than merely holding manual occupations, while white collar occupational status is a better predictor than subjective ‘middle class’ standing. Surprisingly, the detailed distinctions among various white- and blue-collar occupational groups found in other studies do not obtain here. Clerical employees are not much different than professional and managerial workers, nor do different kinds of manual workers have clearly distinct attitudes. This is especially true when current economic status is in the mix. Thus, we have relied on broad categories, but alternative more detailed occupational specifications produce very similar results.

possibility of subnational differences in orientations toward the EU, although distinct histories might seem to play a role. Several observers have suggested that regions benefitting from EU development funds should be especially pro-EU, just as citizens of EU member states who are beneficiaries of such assistance should have more positive views toward Brussels. Another perspective suggests that any regional differences in attitude are more likely to reflect compositional effects: those regions that have more of the kinds of individuals who support or dislike the EU will display those attitudes, perhaps with some intensification via social reinforcement.

The regional model in Table 1 tests these expectations, both by separating Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish citizens from English respondents and by dividing the English by region (Southern England is the omitted reference category, closest to the mean on Euroscepticism). The most notable findings are the strong negative coefficient for residents of London, and the solid positive one for denizens of the North of England. Our simulated vote has only 32 percent of London respondents wishing to leave, compared with 73 percent of Northerners, roughly in line with the 2016 referendum results (for the North, see Groom 2016). Those living in Eastern England, Northern Ireland, and Wales are also significantly less Eurosceptic, and Scotland just misses significance.<sup>10</sup> Yorkshire and the Midlands are not significantly different than Southern England (our predicted exit vote for both is 56 percent, slightly above the UK average but close to that for England as a whole in the referendum). Area of residence alone accounts for over 6 percent of the variation, more than religion, but much less than other individual demographic characteristics.

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<sup>10</sup> The Scottish coefficient might seem out of order, given the Scots' vote for 'remain' in 2016 (and even our 'predicted' vote has 52 percent for remain), but as Curtice (2016) notes, 'this kind of scepticism is even quite common in Scotland,' despite most research showing a solid preference for remaining part of the EU.

### *Combined Demographic Model*

Of course, many of these variables are intercorrelated. To sort out their direct effects, we included the religious, economic and regional variables in a single demographic model of British attitudes toward the EU in 2014. Given the number of variables and size of the sample, we included only those measures contributing significantly to the explanation. Among religious variables, affiliation as ‘Other Protestant’ and ‘Eastern Orthodox’ predicts more critical attitudes toward the EU, while the other religious groups are not significantly different from the unaffiliated, once all the variables are accounted for. On the other hand, religiosity has a smaller but still significant effect reducing Euroscepticism. With the exception of size of place, all the economic utility variables remain in the full demographic model, usually with only minor reductions in coefficients from the economic model. Older respondents, those with less education, males, the working class and the economically stressed are solidly more Eurosceptical, while the young, highly educated, women, white collar workers and the prosperous feel more positively about the European Union.

Finally, the persisting significance of the national and regional variables suggests that Euroscepticism is not entirely accounted for by either the religious or the economic traits of people living in different parts of Great Britain: residents of London, Eastern England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland are all less negative about the EU, while those in the North of England are more critical, even taking into account the much-discussed economic plight of individuals living there. Taken together, the religious, economic and regional variables account for a very respectable 20 percent of the variance.

As Inglehart and Norris (2016) have recently noted, these demographic variables can be interpreted in either an ‘economic utility’ or ‘cultural’ model of public attitudes. Although the

most obvious perspective might seem to be the economic one, each of our individual models could also be interpreted in cultural terms: ‘Other Christians’ and ‘Protestants’ might be more attached to English nationality and to traditional values than the religiously unaffiliated are, something that may also be true of the religiously committed (although our findings here run contrary to Inglehart and Norris’ contentions). In the same vein, older citizens, men, those with poorer educations and members of the working class may also have more traditional values—or at least feel further from the ‘cosmopolitan’ mores of the economic and social elites or of polyglot regions such as Greater London. Similarly, Londoners rub shoulders with dozens of nationalities each day and may be more comfortable with immigrants and citizens of other nations, especially members of the EU, while those in the remote North may have fewer such experiences, or regard them as negative when they do. To cast light on these possibilities, we turn to an analysis that taps cultural and political variables more directly, in the form of partisan, ideological and issue evaluations.

### ***Partisan Cues and Euroscepticism***

Party cues have long played an important role in shaping public attitudes toward the European integration project: citizens tend to follow the lead of their chosen party. The Partisan Model in Table 2 considers the impact of partisanship and ideology on Euroscepticism, with nonvoters the omitted reference category.

(Table 2 about here)

There are few surprises on this front. A UKIP vote in 2014 is the best partisan predictor of Euroscepticism, while votes for all the other parties, save the Tories, predict more positive attitudes, although that for the SNP barely misses significance. The deep division within the Conservative party is confirmed by the failure of that identification to move the needle

significantly in either direction. An inspection of our hypothetical vote shows the following predictions for a Brexit vote: UKIP (88 percent), nonvoters in 2014 (54 percent), Conservatives (48 percent), Labour and SNP (both 34 percent), Liberal Democrats (25 percent) and Greens (18 percent).<sup>11</sup> Note that *all* the party voters from 2014 (except UKIPers) favored remaining in the EU, if narrowly in the Tory case; the Brexit ‘majority’ was provided by those not participating in the 2014 contest. This hints that the high turnout rate for the referendum was perhaps responsible for the outcome, bringing less politically active but more Eurosceptic voters to the polls.<sup>12</sup>

Once party identification is in the model, the full ‘Left-Right’ ideological scale shows no significant effect, although the left is mildly less Eurosceptic. Inspection of the bivariate data reveals why: the relationship between ideology and support for the EU is not monotonic and rather complex: the most ‘leftist’ respondents (point 1 on the ten-point scale) are quite critical of the EU, but a small movement toward the center produces much stronger support among those we might call the ‘center-left’. Conversely, the most conservative group (point 10 on the scale) falls in the midpoint of the Euroscepticism score, but a slight movement toward the center produces *much more* Euroscepticism among the ‘center-right’. These complex results may simply reflect the oft-noted obsolescence of the economic-based ‘Left-Right’ continuum or perhaps its irrelevance to questions of integration.<sup>13</sup> (If we reduce the 10-point scale to a simple Left-Center-Right trichotomy, however, matters seem clearer, with the broader Left providing

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<sup>11</sup> Reassuringly, these party estimates are quite close to those for ‘continue’ in the EU found in the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey taken about this same time (Curtice and Evans 2015, 47).

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, if we shift the focus to all respondents who reported a partisan choice for the next general election, not just those who voted in 2014, the ‘leave’ vote for the Tories, Labour and Liberal Democrats increased from 48 to 56 percent, 35 to 44 percent, and 25 to 32 percent, respectively. See Table A1 for figures for other parties.

<sup>13</sup> There are several possible explanations for this weakness. Dalton, Farrell and McAlister (2011: 155) find that EU issues have not been fully assimilated to the Left/Right continuum—or have been dislodged from it. Hooghe and Marks (2012) emphasize the complexity in EU public support over time and issue domains. Indeed, here even the ‘cultural’ issues of immigration, crime and environmentalism are only weakly related to each other and to Left-Right ideology (data not shown). See also van Elsas and van der Brug (2015).

only 40 percent for leaving the EU; Centrists, 54 percent; and, the Right, 60 percent (cf. Goodwin and Milazzo 2015a, 7). This trichotomous ideological measure works somewhat better in the regression, but mainly shares more variance with the party variables, reducing their coefficients. To parry charges of excessive data manipulation we used the full original measure. In any case, the Partisan Model explains around 15 percent of the variance, about the same as the Economic Model in Table 1.

### *Issues and Evaluations*

In the Issue Model of Table 2 we include items that tap several important ideational variables: whether the respondent approves of the performance of the government in London, to what extent immigration should be restricted, the degree of ‘traditionalist’ opposition to same-sex marriage (Freedland 2016), a preference for attention to the economy over concern for the environment (a proxy for ‘postmaterialism’), and finally, a judgment about the future performance of the economy. A look at our hypothetical vote shows that those who approved the performance of the Conservative-led coalition government provide only 41 percent for ‘exit,’ while those disapproving give 64 percent. Immigration was also a powerful influence with those wanting to restrict entry severely voting 67 percent to leave, compared to only 27 percent of those favoring more open policies (cf. Goodwin and Milazzo 2015a, 8). The gap between social liberals (pro-gay marriage) and traditionalists (anti-gay marriage) is smaller (44 and 60 percent leave, respectively), and postmaterialism is even weaker, with those favoring economic concerns voting 55 percent to leave, compared to 47 percent among those having environmental priorities. Other assessments seem to have some power as well. There is a big gap in the ‘leave’ vote between those expecting the economy to be much better in the next year (42 percent) and those who anticipate that it would be much worse (73 percent).

As the OLS issue model in Table 2 shows, a negative evaluation of the British government is a powerful driver of Euroscepticism, as is the desire to restrict immigration. Opposition to same-sex marriage, an indicator of social traditionalism, adds some explanatory power, as does a desire to stress ‘materialist’ economic rather than ‘postmaterialist’ environmental concerns (Inglehart 1990). A negative economic outlook, on the other hand, just misses statistical significance at a modest level. These five variables account for fully 37 percent of the variance in Euroscepticism, a robust performance.

We might say a word about some issues that failed to make even a preliminary cut in the analysis. Some scholars have suggested that economic ideology might influence assessment of the EU. Indeed, in previous work we found that a neo-liberal ideological scale provided added explanatory power, bolstering support for the EU across the community (Nelsen, Guth and Highsmith 2011). Although the 2014 EPES had several questions on support for *laissez-faire*, government ownership of major industries, and economic redistribution, these items bore little monotonic relationship to the dependent variable (and, surprisingly, only weak relationships to each other). Nor did a question on the trade-off between privacy rights and security, which might tap ‘authoritarian’ orientations, provide much help (cf. Inglehart and Norris 2016). Surprisingly, even a retrospective evaluation of *past* economic performance provided little explanatory power. As a result of these preliminary findings, we omitted these items from the OLS analysis.<sup>14</sup>

We also investigated the possibility that voters’ priorities might provide some insight.

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<sup>14</sup> As in the case of ideology, we refrained from excessive manipulation of these variables, although careful inspection sometimes suggested some interesting conclusions. For example, although those taking ‘socialist’ positions on these economic questions were usually less Eurosceptic, this was not true of the substantial numbers taking the most ‘leftward’ position on each scale. These respondents were usually mildly Eurosceptical (perhaps channeling the posture of Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader with a very modest and recently developed enthusiasm for the EU). Or, perhaps, they were the ‘high-minded leftists who object to the EU as a tool of global capitalism’ (Smith 2016).

Unfortunately, the query on the most important problem confronting the country produced many ‘nonresponses’: almost a quarter of those surveyed could not or would not offer an opinion. Not surprisingly, by far the two most common responses named problems related to immigration (26.5 percent), and those concerning the economy and unemployment (21.1 percent). As we might expect, those worrying about immigration were more Eurosceptic ( $r=.28$ ), while those concerned with economic performance were mildly supportive of the EU ( $r=-.08$ ). Translated into our simulated election terms, the former group ‘voted’ to leave by a margin of 75 to 25 percent, while the latter chose to ‘remain’, 55 to 45 percent. If these items were incorporated in the Issue Model, the immigration problem variable was significant, but simply reduced the coefficient for the immigration policy item, without substantially increasing the total variance explained. (Most of those listing immigration as the most important national problem naturally wanted to restrict it severely.) The economic problem variable had no influence whatever, despite the modest but significant bivariate showing. Thus, we omitted these variables from the final analysis as well.

Nevertheless, the findings of the Issue Model would not be particularly surprising to anyone reading press reports of the Brexit campaign, which stressed the role that distrust of political elites and opposition to immigration played. The role of social traditionalism and skepticism about postmaterial values received less attention, and no doubt played a smaller role. Perhaps the insignificant results concerning prospective economic evaluations are somewhat surprising, as these have a fairly strong bivariate relationship to the EU score, but it appears from further analysis that most such effects are mediated by citizens’ evaluation of the national government’s performance: economic optimists approved their national government (and feel better about the EU), pessimists didn’t like either.

### ***Full Political Model***

To provide a full Political Model in the third section of Table 2, we included the significant variables from both the Partisan and Issue Models. As the last columns show, the Issue Model variables dominate the results, with only slight reductions in the coefficients (although the ‘postmaterialist’ indicator narrowly falls out of significance). UKIP affiliation still points toward Euroscepticism, while Labour and Green voters remain slightly more pro-EU, even when their political attitudes are taken into account.<sup>15</sup> The combination of partisanship and issue orientations bolsters the variance explained to 41 percent, a truly impressive performance.

### ***Summing It Up: A Complete Model of Euroscepticism in Britain, 2014***

Although all our models help us identify the sources of Euroscepticism in Britain, a complete picture requires that we draw on both demographic and political perspectives. For the sake of parsimony, we included in Table only variables that reached significance (or nearly did) in Tables 1 and 2. We find that each perspective provides some assistance in predicting Euroscepticism among British citizens in 2014. Even after all other factors are accounted for, ‘Other Christians’ are still distinctly more critical of the EU than other religious groups and non-religious citizens. On the other hand, religious observance drops out of the equation, with its influence mediated by other variables (exploration suggests that attitudes on same sex marriage and immigration are key here, albeit working in different directions<sup>16</sup>). The economic utility

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<sup>15</sup> We used the 2014 partisan vote for the analysis; voting intentions for the next general election actually provided slightly less explanatory leverage if used as an alternative.

<sup>16</sup> Religiosity influences political attitudes in complex ways. For example, among all the Christian groups the more committed believers are much *friendlier* to immigration and among *all* religious groups the committed are more *opposed* to same sex marriage, but in this study the first effect far outweighs the second in impact on Euroscepticism. And, as Clements (2015) has reiterated, religion in Britain is still related to party alignments. In this survey, perhaps surprisingly, Liberal Democratic voters are most observant (36 percent), followed by Labour (32 percent), and then the Tories (21 percent), who barely match the overall sample. UKIP voters are among the *least* observant partisans (17 percent), trailing even the Greens (24 percent). The same pattern appears in the larger group of prospective general election partisans.

variables mostly survive the regression, with older citizens and men more critical of the EU and white collar employees more supportive. Note, however, that education drops out as a direct predictor, although its sign is still in the proper direction, and working class identification and economic stress factors also drop out. Clearly, the effects of these variables are mediated by political issues and evaluations, especially those on immigration and performance of the national government, which have the most powerful direct influence on Euroscepticism. Interestingly, the regional variables persist, with Londoners, the Northern Irish, Welsh and Scots more positive about the EU, and the North of England significantly more negative—even when other factors are accounted for. Party membership remains an important direct influence, lining UKIP up against Labour, the Liberal Democrats and Greens. Finally, social traditionalism provides a modest push toward ‘exit’. The full model accounts for 46 percent of the variance, a solid improvement over any of the individual models and a result that far exceeds that typical in the literature on public support for the EU.<sup>17</sup>

(Table 3 about here)

### *Summary and Conclusion*

Although the outcome of the Brexit referendum obviously reflected a variety of

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<sup>17</sup>Much scholarly ink has been devoted to the role of ‘European identity’ in support for integration; we have spilt a good bit ourselves. Some readers will wonder about the absence of such a measure from our model. The reasons are both theoretical and empirical. First, like many analysts, we are not sure whether ‘European identity’ is an independent or dependent variable—or both. Scholars often treat it as a source of public support for integration, while others see it as an outcome of that process (Hobolt 2012). Second, the question used here (‘How attached are you to Europe?’) has some limitations. Respondents may view this query in different ways, either as a kind of cultural reference to ‘Europe,’ or as a query about the European Union (cf. Bruter 2005). We think it is closer to the latter. In fact, if included in our principal components analysis with the other eight EU items, ‘attachment’ has the third highest loading, suggesting that British respondents view this query much like items explicitly asking about the EU. And if we incorporate this item in our Euroscepticism score the results are virtually identical to those reported in Table 3. If, on the other hand, we use it as a predictor of Euroscepticism, it has a massive effect ( $\beta = .425$ ;  $\text{adjusted } R^2 = .60$ ), wiping out most of the other variables. This latter alternative is really putting a different measure of the dependent variable in the equation as an independent predictor. All this suggests that this item is not a useful proxy for ‘European identity’. For use of attitudes toward the European flag as a proxy for identity, see Nelsen and Guth 2016a.

influences, including the character of the campaigns waged by both sides, in a more fundamental sense the results flowed from many influences that had long contributed to Euroscepticism in the British public. Our study has the advantage of using a very robust measure of Eurosceptic orientations, one that taps very effectively the deep underlying attitudes of British citizens. And although we cannot make too much of the comparison, our predicted ‘vote’ figures in 2014 conform quite nicely with the actual results two years later: the social, demographic and political forces that produced ‘exit’ votes in 2016 were clearly existing earlier and seem to have influenced public attitudes in very much the same fashion. Although the dichotomous ‘in or out’ question asked in many polls often showed a firm ‘remain’ majority, such measures may well have underestimated the deep vein of critical perspectives on the EU among much of the public.

As is often the case in the social sciences, no one theoretical perspective provides a full picture of British Euroscepticism. We found that each theory reviewed finds some support in the data. There continues to be a clear religious divide within Great Britain, with Protestants of various types more antagonistic toward the EU, Catholics and the unaffiliated somewhat more favorable, and ethnoreligious minorities the staunchest pro-EU contingent. Although this is the expected or ‘traditional’ pattern, we find that in Britain—as elsewhere in secularizing Europe—the observant of all faiths are friendlier to the integration project, a finding that begs for more analysis. Is this tendency the result of cues from religious leaders? Efforts by Brussels institutions to cooperate with religious groups? Or, perhaps the result of new theological understandings among the faithful? Although not all the religious variables survive the full multivariate model, we suspect that religious factors often exercise indirect influence, as in the strong tendency for the observant to favor immigration, thereby muting Euroscepticism. On a methodological note, better measurement of religious affiliations and much more attention to

religious beliefs might well produce additional significant findings on the role of religion in shaping public attitudes.

The utilitarian theory finds much confirmation in the data as well. The very social groups identified as supporting or opposing the EU (or populist parties) in the literature behave very much as expected in the 2014 survey. Eurosceptics are older, less educated, male, live in smaller urban or rural areas, identify as working class or are retired, and are especially likely to hail from England's North country. They are also much more likely to have experienced economic stress, whether in the form of unemployment or lost income in the year before the survey. On the pro-EU side, we find young people, the highly educated, women, white collar workers of all levels, and metropolitan residents (especially Londoners)—and those who are doing well financially. National differences are also present, with people from the other three nations in the UK less favorable to 'exit' than the English majority.

Partisans differ quite significantly as well, suggesting that cues from political leaders may have at least some impact. UKIP identifiers are substantially more likely to dislike the EU, even when everything else is in the equation, while Liberal Democratic, Labour and Green partisanship provides at least some added push toward support for continuing British membership. The mildly pro-EU sentiments of Tory voters in 2014 (and the substantial anti-EU perspective of Tory nonvoters) suggests that the defection of Boris Johnson, Samuel Gove and a number of other prominent Conservative leaders to the 'exit' camp may have been a key factor in the 2016 result. They provided countervailing cues to the Cameron government's 'remain' campaign, thereby mobilizing those less active Tory voters and perhaps pushing some others on the fence toward 'exit'. The case with ideology is not so simple, but on the surface at least, the center-left is the bulwark of pro-EU sentiments, while the center-right runs in the opposite

direction. Global ideology, however, proves much less important than other political assessments. Indeed, immigration was already a potent influence on attitudes toward the EU in 2014, well before the announcement of the referendum. Only disapproval of the coalition government in London came close to matching the impact of the immigration issue: like the European Parliamentary contest itself, the referendum was indeed a ‘second order’ election, with voters using it as an opportunity to critique those in power and their policies. Voters’ attitudes toward the future of the economy also produced different evaluations of the EU, but largely as these were channeled through evaluations of the government’s overall performance.

All these findings paint a vivid picture of the ‘ideal typical’ member of each camp. ‘Remainers’ and ‘Leavers’ experience life differently: their religious backgrounds and observance, social and economic status, national and regional location, and political attitudes shape them in very different ways. Although these differences are reflected in many political differences, in 2014 (and 2016) the most crucial were varying attitudes toward immigration, and different assessments of the Cameron government. And our analysis of the 2014 data suggests that high turnout in the referendum did not work in favor of the ‘remain’ camp: the large number of nonvoters in the 2014 European elections were substantially more hostile toward the EU than were voters. Their mobilization by the Brexit campaign may well have been the critical factor in the outcome. As many pundits concluded, distrust of political elites and discontent with the economic (and cultural) globalization represented by immigrants were the big forces behind Brexit. In retrospect, the basic defect of the ‘Remain’ campaign was its failure to take the depth of British Euroscepticism seriously.

**Table 1. Religious, Economic Utility, and Regional Sources of Euroscepticism in Great Britain, 2014 (weighted  $N=1421$ )**

	Religious Model		Economic Model		Regional Model		All Demographic Model	
	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta
<b>Religious Tradition*</b>								
(Constant)	-0.008 (.047)						-0.002 (.155)	
“Other Christian”	.411 (.074)	.168***					.224 (.060)	.092***
Protestant	.322 (.076)	.131***						
Eastern Orthodox	.482 (.215)	.059*					.560 (.197)	.069**
Roman Catholic	.089 (.088)	.030						
All Non-Christian	-.125 (.117)	-.032						
Religiosity	-.049 (.011)	-.132***					-.018 (.009)	-.049*
<b>Economic Utility</b>								
(Constant)			-0.111 (.159)					
Age			.009 (.001)	.176***			.009 (.001)	.162***
Education level			-.167 (.032)	-.146***			-.178 (.031)	-.157***
Male			.171 (.049)	.085***			.168 (.048)	.083***
Size of place			-.052 (.024)	-.053*				
Subjective working class			.344 (.051)	.171***			.260 (.050)	.129***
White collar occupation			-.199 (.057)	-.086***			-.198 (.056)	-.086***
Economically stressed			.178 (.034)	.129***			.147 (.033)	.107***
<b>Regional**</b>								
(Constant)					.077 (.055)			
London					-.582 (.092)	-.190***	-.424 (.081)	-.138***
Eastern England					-.277 (.101)	-.080**	-.284 (.086)	-.082***
Northern Ireland					-.398 (.154)	-.070**	-.342 (.139)	-.060***
Wales					-.270 (.130)	-.058*	-.343 (.114)	-.073**
Scotland					-.185 (.105)	-.051	-.194 (.090)	-.053*
Yorkshire and Midlands					.063 (.076)	.027		
Northern England					.303 (.086)	.108***	.251 (.071)	.090***
<b>Adj. R squared=</b>		<b>0.043</b>		<b>0.153</b>		<b>0.064</b>		<b>0.204</b>

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ . Reference category: \*religiously unaffiliated; \*\*Southern England.

Source: 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study

**Table 2. Political Sources of Euroscepticism in Great Britain, 2014**

	Partisan Model		Issue Model		Full Political Model	
	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta
<i>Partisanship and Ideology*</i>						
(Constant)	-0.150 (.068)				.153 (.063)*	
UKIP	.986 (.084)	.290***			.605 (.071)	.182***
Conservative	-.047 (.099)	-.012				
Liberal Democrat	-.545 (.171)	-.079***			-.197 (.142)	-.029
Scottish Nationalist	-.577 (.366)	-.039				
Labour	-.379 (.086)	-.115***			-.210 (.069)	-.063**
Greens	-.693 (.132)	-.132***			-.349 (.110)	-.066**
Left ideology	-.023 (.014)	-.045				
<i>Issues and Evaluations</i>						
(Constant)			.346 (.099)***			
Distrust London Government			.386 (.023)	.374***	.383 (.022)	.371***
Restrict Immigration			.107 (.007)	.353***	.089 (.007)	.294***
Oppose same-sex marriage			.036 (.006)	.137***	.028 (.005)	.106***
Stress economy, not environment			.019 (.008)	.050*	.015 (.008)	.040
Economic outlook worse			.045 (.024)	.042		
<i>Adj. R squared=</i>		<b>0.144</b>		<b>0.372</b>		<b>0.410</b>

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

Reference category: \*nonvoters in 2014

Source: 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study

**Table 3. Full Model: Euroscepticism in Britain, 2014**

	<b>B (SE)</b>	<b>Beta</b>
<b>(Constant)</b>	-.118 (.140)	
<b>Religious</b>		
“Other Christian”	.151 (.049)	.062**
Eastern Orthodox	.312 (.163)	.038
Religiosity	-.003 (.008)	-.008
<b>Economic Utility</b>		
Age	.007 (.001)	.125***
Education	-.038 (.026)	-.034
Male	.166 (.040)	.082***
Working class	.078 (.042)	.039
White collar	-.096 (.047)	-.042*
Economically stressed	.039 (.028)	.028
<b>National and Regional</b>		
London	-.149 (.069)	-.049*
Eastern England	-.067 (.072)	-.019
Northern Ireland	-.315 (.115)	-.055**
Wales	-.240 (.094)	-.051*
Scotland	-.192 (.075)	-.053*
North	.299 (.060)	.107***
<b>Parties</b>		
UKIP	.487 (.070)	.147***
Liberal Democrats	-.282 (.139)	-.041*
Labour	-.321 (.068)	-.097***
Greens	-.329 (.106)	-.063**
<b>Issues and Evaluations</b>		
Distrust London Government	.356 (.022)	.344***
Restrict Immigration	.075 (.007)	.247***
Oppose same-sex marriage	.016 (.006)	.060**
Stress economy, not environment	.011 (.008)	.029
<i>Weighted N</i>		(1421)
<i>Adj. R squared</i>		0.461

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

Source: 2014 European Parliamentary Election Study

**Table A1. Hypothetical ‘Leave Vote,’ 2014 European Parliamentary Elections in Great Britain**

<i>Demographic Factors</i>	<i>‘Leave’ (%)</i>	<i>Partisanship, Ideology, Issues</i>	<i>‘Leave’ (%)</i>
<b>Religious Tradition</b>		<b>Partisanship 2014</b>	
‘Other Christians’	60	UKIP	88
Orthodox	60	Tory	48
Protestant	57	Labor	35
Catholic	49	Lib Dem	25
Nonaffiliated	48	Green	18
Minority Faiths	38	SNP*	35
<b>Religiosity</b>		<b>Partisanship 2015</b>	
Non-observant	53	UKIP	80
Observant	47	Tory	56
<b>Age</b>		Labor	44
Under 31 years	38	Lib Dem	32
31-41 years	49	Green	27
42-53 years	55	SNP	20
54-65 years	59	<b>Ideology</b>	
Over 65 years	64	All Left	40
<b>Education</b>		Center	54
Only Elementary	70	All Right	60
Secondary	57	<b>Government Performance</b>	
University	40	Approve	41
Still Student	25	Not Sure	48
<b>Gender</b>		Disapprove	64
Male	56	<b>Immigration</b>	
Female	48	Restrict	67
<b>Size of Place</b>		Not Sure	39
Rural	52	Do Not Cut	27
Town/Small City	58	<b>Same-sex Marriage</b>	
Large City	45	Approve	44
<b>Social/Occupational Status</b>		Not Sure	58
‘Working Class’ identification	63	Disapprove	60
‘Middle Class’ identification	42	<b>Postmaterialism</b>	
Retired	64	Environment priority	47
Blue Collar occupation	57	Not Sure	56
White Collar occupation	45	Economy priority	55
<b>Recent Economic Distress</b>		<b>Economy Next Twelve Months</b>	
Unemployed and Lost Money	61	Much Better	42
Employed but Lost Money	54	Better	45
Employed, Did Not Lose	49	Same	55
<b>National/Regional</b>		Worse	62
London	32	Much Worse	73
Northern Ireland	37	<b>Biggest National Problem</b>	
Wales	42	Immigration (26%)	75
Eastern England	43	Economy (21%)	45
Scotland	48		
Southern England	56		
Midlands, Yorkshire	56		
North	73		

\*N=7.

## *Appendix on Measures*

Data: 2014 Study

*Schmitt, Hermann; Popa, Sebastian Adrian; Devinger, Felix (2015): European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study, SVoter Study, Supplementary Study. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5161 Data file Version 1.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.5161.*

### *Derivation of EU Support Scores, 2014*

Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? (ten-point scale from ‘already gone too far’ to ‘go much further’)

You trust the institutions of the EU (five-point scale, with don’t knows at center)

The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens (five-point scale, with don’t knows at center)

Generally speaking, do you think that our country's membership of the EU is: a good thing; a bad thing; neither a good thing nor a bad thing?

Do you approve or disapprove of the actions of the EU during the last 12 months?

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. My voice counts in the EU.

At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction in the European Union?

For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your attitude or opinion: You feel you are a citizen of the EU.

These eight items were entered into a principal components analysis, producing a single component with an eigenvalue of 3.938, accounting for 49.2 percent of the variation in the items. The item loadings for this component are ‘trust EU institutions’ (.805), EU parliament considers citizens’ interests (.712), ‘EU membership is good for our country’ (.724), feel a citizen of the EU (.721), EU is going in the right direction (.634), approve the EU’s actions in last year (.687), my voice counts in the EU (.638), and EU unification should go further (.673). The theta coefficient score is .85, confirming that this is a very reliable measure of EU support.

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