

## **Euroskeptics among Euroenthusiasts. An Empirical Exploration of Lukewarm Europeanism in Greece, Portugal, and Spain.**

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This is a preliminary draft. Please do not quote.

### *Introduction.*

Public opinion in Greece, Portugal, and Spain has been traditionally characterized as highly pro-European and even Euroenthusiastic. These features can be perceived in recent surveys on public orientations towards the EU. For instance, in the Eurobarometer 61 (February-March 2004, Question 713) people trusting the EU ranged from 57.5% in the case of Spain to 60.6% in Portugal and 68.5% in Greece. Only in three other EU members did respondents trust the EU above the 50% level: Ireland (55.6%), Italy (54.2%), and Luxemburg (52.7%). Also in the Eurobarometer 61 (Question 10), respondents in these three countries (again in the company of Irish, Italian, and Luxemburg respondents) displayed highly positive views of the EU. If we were to use more complex and elaborate constructs to map public orientations, such as the index of Overall European Integration View (OEIV) elaborated by Brinegar, Jolly, and Kitschelt (2004), respondents from these three countries would also show, with Italian citizens, very high levels of Euroenthusiasm.

Our analysis here does not aim at comparatively explaining why these countries show such high levels of support for the EU. Instead, we are interested in examining which factors better account for variations in orientations towards the EU in these highly pro-European countries. In particular, we want to ascertain which kinds of preferences, views, and associations lead some Southern Europeans to hold negative or at least sceptical views of the European integration process. Our interests are both empirical and theoretical. We aim to identify sources of variation in the orientations towards the EU among these Southern European populations, and also to evaluate the ability of different theoretical frameworks to account for EU support and Euroskepticism within these societies. By focusing on these countries, we are selecting societies that not only share highly pro-European public opinions, but also certain socio-economic and historical features, such as their late capitalist development, comparatively low levels of per capita income, and long histories of institutional instability and democratic precariousness<sup>45</sup>.

The first section in this paper briefly lays out several theoretically-based expectations on the orientations of Southern European citizens towards the EU. Our second section presents an empirical analysis, based on the EB61, of how independent variables derived from the previously discussed theoretical frameworks actually affect views of the EU among citizens in these three Southern European countries. In our conclusions we identify some constraints and opportunities for the future development of Euroskepticism in these three countries.

### *Theoretical frameworks and expectations.*

Although our analysis is restricted to three Southern European societies, it starts first with the exploration of available explanations of differences in EU support across Europe. This exploration aims to identify factors that are likely to play a significant role in accounting for differences of EU support within these Southern European societies. For this analysis, we consider first two main groups of approaches to the explanation of attitudes towards the EU (Hooghe and Marks 2004). The first group of approaches emphasizes the role of political-economic variables, whereas the second focuses on cultural and cognitive elements. Among the first group of explanations, analyses focusing on the role played by types of capitalism have pointed out that citizens in Christian-Democratic political economies --with which the Southern European ones share several key features-- will be more supportive of a European integration process which has also important Christian-Democratic characteristics (Brinegar, Jolly, and Kitschelt, 2004). Another type of political-economic explanation has underlined the advantages that less

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<sup>45</sup> This does not mean that there are not important differences between these three countries. Whereas Portugal and Spain share a history of early statehood and Counter-reformation imperialism, Greece attained statehood only at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after several centuries of Ottoman rule. In addition, whereas Portugal and Greece are unitary and single-nation states, Spain is a federal and multi-national country.

affluent countries can derive from joining an economic and political union with more advanced societies. The positive financial flows experienced by poorer European countries as a result of the cohesion funds would help account for the especially positive EU views of Southern Europeans.

By contrast, cultural explanations have linked the favourable attitudes of Southern Europeans to the cognitive frameworks of these national publics, and indirectly, to the historical processes shaping those cognitive views. Particularly relevant among these explanations is Díez Medrano's comparative analysis of the way cultural frames shape public opinions in Spain, Germany, and the UK. Following Díez Medrano's analysis on Spain, and extending it to other Southern European countries, it is possible to see high levels of EU support in these societies as a result of their histories of authoritarianism and economic backwardness. It is because of these histories that Southern European publics have established strong associations between democratic stability, economic modernization, and EU integration (Díez Medrano 2003).

Cross-national explanations of Southern European euroenthusiasm are also relevant to the analysis of variations *within* Southern European national public opinions. Thus, if the type of capitalism argument is correct, orientations towards the EU will be weakly correlated, if at all, with the economic (left-right) preferences of individuals (Brinegar, Jolly, and Kitschelt, 2004: 84-86)<sup>46</sup>. According to a different type of political-economic argument (Ray, 2004), individuals could judge whether social expenditures are lower or higher on average in the EU than in their respective countries, and then decide, based on their preferences, whether they want more or less European integration. Given the fact that social expenditures in the EU tend to be higher than in Southern European countries<sup>47</sup>, Southern Europeans on the left should be more favourable to European integration than those on the right.

On the other hand, other features of the economic integration process may lead us to assume that sectors of the left will be reluctant towards the political-economic institutional framework the EU embodies. The restrictions posed on economic policies, public economic intervention, and public deficits by the Growth and Stability Pact, and the faster pace of negative integration and market liberalization when compared with the development of European social policies, might make left-wing oriented voters, even in Southern European countries, more reluctant towards the EU.

Finally, perceptions of economic outcomes (sociotropic or egocentric) can also have a strong bearing on individual orientations towards the EU. After all, the European integration process is driven also by the goal of improving the economic circumstances and life chances of Europeans, and citizens may judge the EU based on whether European unification has provided them, or is likely to do so, with better economic conditions.

Theories focusing on the cognitive frameworks of S.E. public opinions have direct implications for the analysis of national variations on EU support. Following Díez Medrano's argument, individuals who associate the EU with positive features absent from their respective national histories would be more likely to support the European integration process. Thus, individuals associating the EU with democracy, economic prosperity, and national influence in the world, would be more supportive of the European integration process<sup>48</sup>.

Finally, Hooghe and Marks's argument on the implications of national and exclusive identities (2004) can also be used, though with certain caveats, to account for variations in EU support in Southern European countries. According to this theory, individuals with exclusive identities and displaying

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<sup>46</sup> It is also possible to consider differently the interaction between types of capitalism and individual economic preferences for economic policies. From this perspective, individuals farther apart from the Christian-Democratic consensus (both on the right and the left) could be less favourable to an integration process that seems to extend and consecrate the Christian-Democratic type of capitalism. This hypothesis could be connected with the inverted U-shape distribution of parties in the two-dimensional space constituted by the left-right placements and levels of EU support (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson, 2004; Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004).

<sup>47</sup> For instance, in 1994 social spending as a percentage of the GDP was below the European average in these three countries (Ray, 2004: 61).

<sup>48</sup> Although these associations have different substantive contents (political, economic, and international), we assume, on the basis of Díez Medrano's work, that they actually map different components of the cognitive frameworks developed by Southern European populations as a result, or in light of their national histories. The fact that these associations were previous to experiences of belonging into the EU, and that they are not connected to a factual knowledge of the implications of EU membership, would show that they are components of historically formed cultural frames (Díez Medrano, 2003).

attitudes hostile towards multiculturalism should be less favourable to the EU than persons with multiple identities and pro-multicultural orientations<sup>49</sup>.

*Attitudinal and ideological conditionants of EU orientations.*

In this paper we examine the ability of these theories to account for variations in EU support and Euroskepticism within Greece, Portugal, and Spain. For this analysis we have selected as our dependent variable an easily interpretable question in the Eurobarometer (Q.10). This question maps whether citizens hold positive or negative views of the EU. Values in this variable range from 1 (a very positive view of the EU) to 5 (a very negative view of the EU)<sup>50</sup>. We have focused on this variable because it allows us to map orientations towards the EU as it is, or at least as it is actually perceived. We do not examine here, therefore, whether citizens dislike the EU because they want more or less European integration, nor what integration model they are favourable to, even though these questions remain crucial to a full understanding of the determinants of public opinion regarding European integration.

Table 1 shows the mean responses in Q10. We also include values for the rest of the EU countries in 2004 in order to show the comparative weakness of Euroskeptic orientations among the Southern European public opinions.

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<sup>49</sup> However, based on Hooghe and Marks's expectations the role of exclusive identifications and attitudes towards multiculturalism could be lower in Southern European countries. The reason for this is that the political elite in these countries seems to be much less divided around European integration, and that no national political force has successfully mobilized voters around the particularistic defence of cultural identities. Reasons for this could be the weakness of foreign immigration till very recently, the comparative weakness of the Southern European welfare states, and, consequently, the to this date minor importance of welfare state chauvinist attitudes.

<sup>50</sup> We placed DK respondents in the median point of the scale (value of 3).

Table 1. Average perception of the EU (values in this question range from 1 – very positive— to 5 –very negative--).

COUNTRY	MEAN	St. Dev.
Greece	2.25	0.86
Portugal	2.46	0.88
Spain	2.39	0.82
<i>Southern European countries</i>	2.37	0.86
<i>Rest of EU countries</i>	2.83	0.97

We have conducted two types of multivariate analyses based on the values in Q10. We have first run OLS regressions on this variable as it appears in the questionnaire (but recoding DK answers as 3, the median point of the scale). And we have run logistic analysis on a recoded dichotomous variable. For this analysis we have distinguished between individuals holding positive views of the EU (scoring 1 and 2, here recoded as 0), and the rest of respondents (values from 3 to 5, here recoded as 1). We have established this cut-off point because we are interested in examining the factors conditioning Euroskeptical or even potentially Euroskeptical orientations. This choice is reinforced by the highly pro European attitudes of most Southern Europeans, and by the very low numbers of individuals holding explicitly negative views of the EU. Due to this, it would be totally inadequate to see the individuals we label as "Euroskeptics" as if they were "hard Euroskeptics" (Taggart and Szczesniak 2002). A vast majority of them do not hold hard Euroskeptical positions, and are even favorable to a deepening of the European unification process.

For both types of analyses we have included independent variables aimed at assessing the predictive power of the explanatory frameworks we briefly presented above. Thus, based on the arguments developed by Díez Medrano on the importance of frames, we have included three variables to test the importance of associations between the EU and democracy (Q11c03), economic prosperity (Q11c02), and national influence in the world (Q1209)<sup>51</sup>. We have also constructed a variable to map the degree to which respondents see the EU from an exclusivist and anti-multicultural perspective<sup>52</sup>.

In order to map the importance of political-economic preferences and views, we have considered in our analysis the ideological self-placement of individuals in the left-right dimension. Finally, we have also included variables to map the sociotropic (retrospective) (Q9)<sup>53</sup> and egocentric economic perceptions of individuals<sup>54</sup>.

Tables 2 and 3 display the main results of our statistical analyses. In the first place, sociotropic retrospective evaluations do play a strong and statistically significant role in all countries and for both types of analysis. Views of the EU in these countries cannot be detached from factual judgements on the national benefits derived from EU membership. However, these judgements are sociotropic and not egocentric, in clear agreement with contemporary findings in the literature on economic voting.

<sup>51</sup> We have not created a unique variable based on these three indicators because we think that each of them maps substantively different connotations of the EU, and also because we are interested in establishing the importance of each of these indicators in the three societies we are examining. Running the analyses with a constructed variable adding all indicators did not alter the substantive findings we present below.

<sup>52</sup> To construct this variable we added the values for questions q38 (now recoded into 1 for "nationality only" and 0 for all other values), Q11c12 (1 if loss of cultural identity mentioned and 0 otherwise) and Q1503 (1 for fear of our language being used less and 0 otherwise). The highest value in this constructed variable reveals exclusive (anti- or non-European) identities and fear of losing cultural identity as a result of European integration. Observe that this variable does not map general anti-multicultural and anti-immigration orientations, but rather the rejection of the European identity and the presence of an anti-multicultural reading of the risks posed by European integration. It might be the case in these countries that individuals with anti-multicultural orientations do not see the European integration process as a risk to their national and traditional cultural identities.

<sup>53</sup> The inclusion of this variable (which explicitly asks whether the respondent's country has benefitted from membership in the EU) is also necessary to assess the role played by frames associating economic prosperity and the EU.

<sup>54</sup> This variable was created by adding the values for Q4 (recoded as 1 for better personal job situation and 0 otherwise), Q5 (recoded as 1 when the respondent's situation improved in the last five years), and Q6 (recoded as 1 when the respondent's situation is assumed to improve in the next 5 years).

Once perceptions of national benefits are taken into account, cultural and cognitive frames do play important and significant roles in the explanation of views of the EU. Indicators derived from Díez Medrano's theory on the importance of frames (like the associations between the EU and democracy, influence in the world, and, in particular, economic prosperity) condition views of the EU in both our models (though not all variables are significant in all countries: the association between the EU and democracy does not matter in Greece, and the association EU-national influence in the world is not important in Spain). The extent to which individuals hold a non European identity and link the EU to the loss of their language and identity plays a significant role in all countries in our logistic analysis, and in Greece and Spain in our OLS models. And finally, contrary to what some theoretical arguments suggest, in our OLS analysis left-right self-placement negatively affects EU views in Greece and in Spain (but not in Portugal)<sup>55</sup>, left-wingers being more Euroskeptic than right-wingers<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> We do not report the results for models including as independent variables squared distances from the respondent's left-right ideological position and the national average, nor a dummy for left-wing orientations. The former variable was not significant at the .05 level in any of these countries, and the latter did not render results different from those of the left-right variable. It might be the case though that the weakness of Euroskeptic attitudes among extreme right-wingers is conditioned by the absence of radical right parties shaping the (anti)European orientations of their sympathisers.

<sup>56</sup> In fact, in each of these countries the percentage of individuals holding Euroskeptic views is highest among the voters of the radical left parties, the communist or post-communist KKE, CDU, and IU (see Tables in Annex 1). In two of these countries (Portugal and Spain) voters of center-left parties are also more Euroskeptic than voters of center-right parties. The comparatively Euroskeptic views of radical left parties is revealed also by the 2002 UNC expert data base on political parties and European integration. In that survey radical left parties in these three countries showed the least favourable orientations to European integration.

Table 2. Conditionants of the EU image (1 to 5) in Southern Europe (OLS coefficients).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	GREECE		PORTUGAL		SPAIN	
	B	$\beta$	B	$\beta$	B	$\beta$
Constant	3.75**	-	3.50**	-	3.41**	-
EU meaning “Democracy”	-.09	-.05	-.21**	-.09	-.24**	-.13
EU meaning “Economic Prosperity”	-.27**	-.15	-.40**	-.19	-.33**	-.19
EU meaning “Country Influence Now”	-.45**	-.18	-.31**	-.15	-.14	-.06
Exclusive Cultural Identity	.10**	.09	.08	.06	.14**	.12
Left-Right	-.03**	-.08	-.02	-.04	-.03*	-.08
Egocentric Econ. Perceptions	-.02	-.02	-.05	-.06	-.03	-.05
Sociotropic Perceptions	-1.14**	-.45	-.96**	-.47	-.89**	-.40
N	682		602		646	
R-Squared	.39		.42		.41	
Adj. R-Squared	.39		.41		.40	

B: no standardized coefficients

$\beta$ : standardized coefficients

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

Table 3. Conditionants of the EU image in Southern Europe (logistic coefficients)

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	GREECE	PORTUGAL	SPAIN
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
EU meaning "Democracy"	.86	.33**	.45**
EU meaning "Economic Prosperity"	.32**	.14**	.32**
EU meaning "Country Influence Now"	.25**	.51**	.68
Exclusive Cultural Identity	1.84**	1.37*	1.55**
Left-Right	.97	1.00	.94
Egocentric Econ. Perceptions	.86	.77*	.89
Sociotropic Perceptions	.04**	.07**	.07**
Constant	20.67**	9.20**	12.00**
N	709	643	724
Correctly predicted	82%	82%	81%
Cox and Snell R-Squared	.33	.37	.36
Nagelkerke R-Squared	.47	.50	.49

Exp (B): Values below 1 indicate a negative relationship, values around 1 indicate no relationship, and values above 1 indicate a positive relationship.

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

Table 4. Changes in the probability of having a negative or neutral image of the EU.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	EXTREME VALUES	GREECE	PORTUGAL	SPAIN
EU meaning “Democracy”	0-1	-1%	-3%	-9%
EU meaning “Economic Prosperity”	0-1	-13%	-9%	-14%
EU meaning “Country Influence Now”	0-1	-17%	-1%	-3%
Exclusive Cultural Identity	0-3	18%	2%	12%
Sociotropic Perceptions	0-1	-58%	-17%	-46%

Table 4 simulates differences in the probability of holding a negative or neutral view of the EU between the extreme values of each variable when the other variables are held at constant values<sup>57</sup>. Data in this table show the importance of sociotropic perceptions and associations between the EU and prosperity in all these countries. Exclusive identities and anti-multicultural views of the effects of the EU play an important role in Greece and Spain. There are important national differences in the role played by other cognitive or cultural variables. Exclusive identities are important in Greece and Spain, but not in Portugal. Variations in two other variables determine important changes in just one country (international influence in Greece and democracy in Spain). We lack a comparative explanation of the sources of these differences.

*Conclusion.*

Analyses in this paper have allowed us to ascertain how different types of variables impinge on the attitudes of three Southern European publics towards the EU. Our analysis has shown that individual and within-nation variations in orientations towards the EU are linked directly and in a strong manner to judgments on the perceived benefits of EU membership. This association underscores the importance that consequential judgments play in the orientations of Southern Europeans towards the EU<sup>58</sup>. Views of the EU are also linked to the cognitive and cultural frameworks of respondents in these three countries. Thus, the associations that Southern European citizens are likely to establish between the EU, and certain positive ideas (economic prosperity, national influence in the world, and, to a lesser degree, democracy) play a critical role conditioning individual orientations to the EU. Also important is the extent to which citizens hold exclusive identities and fear for their national culture as a result of European integration.

To the limited extent that economic ideological preferences matter, they disconfirm the expectation that left-wing oriented citizens will be more favourable to the EU. Instead, our OLS model, and also data on the positions of party voters and political parties, endorse the idea that sectors of the left mistrust the political-economic arrangements on which the current EU is based.

Another, and not minor inference that can be drawn from this analysis is that the perceptions driving the Southern Europeans’ view of the EU are often connected to considerations on the implications of the EU for the respondents’ countries. This is clearly the case of the variable for perceptions on the benefits derived from EU membership. Also associations between the EU and certain features (like democracy, prosperity, and national influence in the world) are meaningful in the context of frames related to national experiences, as well as in connection to national responses to these historical experiences. Finally, also the antimulticultural and exclusivist reading of the EU is connected to perceptions of the effects of the EU on the respondents’ national societies. The country-based character of

<sup>57</sup> The other variables were held at the following values: “EU=democracy”, “EU=Economic prosperity”, “EU=Country influence now”, “Exclusive cultural identity”, “EU on Welfare State”, “Egocentric Economic Perceptions”, “Sociotropic Perceptions” at “1”, and “Left-Right” at “5”.

<sup>58</sup> A different question, also relevant to our research, would be to ascertain where these judgments on the effects of EU membership come from.



these judgements does not necessarily reveal the strength of nationalist orientations, but rather the continuing importance of nation-states as the locus and context within which political judgements, also on the European integration process, are made.

Finally, these data suggests that Southern European Euroskepticism has a fragile political basis but not that it will necessarily lack opportunities in the near future. It has a precarious political basis because, as of now, positive associations between the EU and highly valued economic and political characteristics, shape the attitudes of Southern Europeans towards European integration. This frailty is accentuated by the fact that two other sources of Euroskepticism (exclusivist views of the EU and, to a lesser degree, leftist orientations), relate to opposing groups of citizens in the Southern European political space<sup>59</sup>. That is, for both types of sources of dissatisfaction to crystallize in support of a single political actor, it would be necessary for the latter to articulate economically redistributive and culturally exclusivist political positions, a possibility that would entail important changes in the maps of political conflict and contestation of Southern European societies. Furthermore, the possibility of this outcome taking place is severely hampered by a crucial but not obvious feature of the Southern European polities, that is, the absence of important radical right parties<sup>60</sup>. In this context, and as long as the economic (left-right) and cultural (libertarian-authoritarian, or gal-tan) political preferences of citizens remain correlated with each other, it will be unlikely that any of the major existing political parties will be interested in linking, in an anti-European direction, economically redistributive and culturally exclusivist views<sup>61</sup>.

And, however, despite this precarious basis of Southern European Euroskepticism, the strong role that our analysis assigns to judgments on the benefits derived from EU membership suggests that consistent economic downturns might also affect negatively the EU orientations of Southern Europeans, provided, of course, that the argument is made, and that it is credible enough, that the EU policies have become a source of economic problems.

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<sup>59</sup> There are no statistically significant Pearson correlations between left-right self-placements and our variable indicating an exclusivist and anti-multicultural reading of the EU. However, analysis of the European Social Survey, which allows us to map more directly general anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural orientations, reveals significant correlations between overall anti-immigration attitudes and left-right self-placements in these three countries. Data excerpted from expert judgements (Norris, forthcoming, 2005) reveal also that party positions in the left-right and anti-immigration dimensions are connected with each other in these three countries.

<sup>60</sup> We cannot address here the conditionants of the political weakness of the radical right in these three countries. Suffice it to say that this weakness can be related to a complex combination of historical (the legacies of conservative authoritarian regimes), socio-economic (the comparatively minor development of welfare states and the recent character of massive immigration), and, at least in Greece and Spain, institutional features (the highly disproportional character of their electoral systems).

<sup>61</sup> This does not exclude the possibility of future changes in the articulation of these two dimensions. The argument for a non static reading of this relationship is made in Kitschelt (2004).

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**ANNEX 1. "Euroenthusiast" and "Euroskeptic" views by vote intention (row percentages). The group "Euroskeptics" includes also respondents with neutral views of the EU. (Totals include voters for other parties and dk responses).**

-Greece.

	Euroenthusiasts	Euroskeptics	N
Nea Demokratia	69.6%	30.4	316
PASOK	74.9%	25.1	247
KKE	35.7%	64.3	56
Totals	65%	35	1005

- Portugal.

	Euroenthusiasts	Euroskeptics	N
PS	59.4%	40.6	308
PPD-PSD	69%	31	187
CDU	49.1%	50.9	57
Totals	57.3%	42.7	1000

- Spain.

	Euroenthusiasts	Euroskeptics	N
PSOE	59.2%	40.8	277
PP	72.5%	27.5	222
IU	41.7%	58.3	48
Totals	56.9%	43.1	1000