

Exclusive vs. Inclusive Identities and Brexit –Testing Cultural and Institutional Theoretical Approaches on Determinants of a Leave Vote in England

Master's Thesis

Author: Andrew Ramsay

Student number: 515459ar

Thesis supervisor: G. Custers, MSc

Second reader: prof. dr. G. B. M. Engbersen

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to compare the mediating effects of cultural and institutional mechanisms on the relationship between English citizens' conception of their identity and a leave vote in the Brexit referendum of 2016. Political trust at both the EU and the domestic level, represent the institutional mechanisms, and ethnocentrism the cultural mechanism. A typology based on the distinction between an exclusive vs. inclusive conception of identity is operationalized as the independent variable, based on how strongly people identify as English and/or British. A logistic regression analysis performed on survey data collected after the referendum took place is performed to test this relationship ($N = 7384$). The findings show that both institutional and cultural mechanism mediate the direct relationship and that the institutional mechanism of political trust at the EU level has the strongest (although still partial) mediating effect. Another notable finding is that strong English identification itself rather than an exclusive conception of identity *per se*, greatly increased the likelihood of a leave vote. The implications of this last finding are discussed in line with potential avenues for further research.

Key words: *Brexit, exclusive, Euroscepticism, identity, inclusive*

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1 - Introduction – England Speaks up.

“The English will never develop into a nation of philosophers. They will always prefer instinct to logic and character to intelligence. But they must get rid of their downright contempt for 'cleverness'. They cannot afford it any longer. They must grow less tolerant of ugliness, and mentally more adventurous. And they must stop despising foreigners. They are Europeans and ought to be aware of it.”

- George Orwell (1941) – *The Lion and The Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius*

Although a political visionary, Orwell could have never predicted events occurring 75 years after his essay on a vision for an ‘English Socialism’ was published. Whilst his wishes for a revolution did not materialize, his instinct that the citizenry of the United Kingdom (UK), particularly its English cohort, would prefer its ‘instinct to logic and character to intelligence’ may well have been realised.

On the 23rd of June 2016, the British public returned the result of a referendum that saw them (narrowly) vote to terminate their membership in the European Union. Whilst the four countries of the UK each had their say, one of them was particularly influential in determining the result. With 84% of the total population in the UK, the English electorate, whose vote resulted in a 7-point margin in favour of leaving the EU, were instrumental in deciding the outcome of the referendum. In other words – “Brexit was made in England” (Henderson et al, 2017: p.631).

Providing the perfect answer, the golden ticket as it were, as to exactly why and how Brexit occurred in an impossible task. Comprehensive studies have been conducted however, and they point to factors such as globalization (Colantone and Stanig, 2018), socio-demographic shifts and ‘left-behind citizens’ (Goodwin and Ford, 2017), utilitarian evaluations of EU membership (Vasilopoulo, 2016) and a rise of populism (Iakhnis, 2018). Drawing attention to such studies highlights the many ways in which the Brexit question can be approached.

Hooghe and Marks (2009) first identified a shift from a ‘permissive consensus’ to a ‘constraining dissensus’ regarding public opinion in the EU. They cite the increased salience of identity in defining anti-EU sentiments when the EU is politicized (p.21). Seeing as Brexit was by nature hyper-politicized, good cause is given to conduct research explicitly from the perspective of *identities*, the importance of which is generally underappreciated (Swales, 2016 Einhorn, 2018). More specifically, it explores the role *conceptions of English national identity* play in shaping attitudes towards the EU.

In a poll conducted on the day of the referendum, it was found that of those who identified as English and *not* British, 79% voted to leave the EU, whereas those who identified as *both* English and British were much more evenly split at 49% remain and 51% leave (Ashcroft, 2016). By applying terminology first operationalized by Hooghe and Marks (2005), these two groups can be distinguished by their conceptions of their identity. An *inclusive* conception of identity means multiple identities are acknowledged simultaneously (e.g. English, British, and/or European) (p.424). An *exclusive* conception

of identity on the other hand only acknowledges one of the multiple territorial identities that are available to them (idem).

Scholars such as Carey (2002) and McLaren (2007) have highlighted for some time now the importance of identity in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards EU integration. Specifically in the context of Brexit, the relationship between an exclusively English national identification and a propensity to vote leave has been reported by a number of academics in broad scale analyses of the referendum (see Curtice, 2017; Hobolt 2016; Henderson et al, 2017), although this was not found in every case (Clarke et al, 2017). Whilst these studies provide a necessary and interesting overview, they lack a proper theoretical explanation specifically aimed at understanding the relationship between such conceptions of identity and voting to leave. This paper seeks to address this gap in the literature.

Political trust has been found to vary between people based on the conception of their identity as well as playing a decisive role in how the referendum panned out. At a European level, McLaren (2007) finds that espousing an exclusive national identity is an indicator for people expressing hostility and distrust towards EU institutions, as integration threatens their “key terminal identities” (p.248). Also, Hjern and Berg (2010) report that ‘thick’ ethnic national identification results in less trust in political institutions as people feel closer to the cultural traditions of a country rather than the state. Importantly, the issue of institutional and political trust is deemed to have been a key element of the Brexit debate (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018: p.311).

Immigration and concerns thereof were also key grounds upon which debate regarding EU membership was fought upon (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Wadsworth et al, 2016). Public hostility towards immigration and anxiety over its perceived effects were particularly pertinent for British voters as “feelings of national identity and [a] sense of change over time” (Swales, 2016: p.2) concurrently enhanced ethnocentric attitudes and prompted a leave vote (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017).

Those in England who identified exclusively appear to be more Eurosceptic than those who do not. It still remains unclear however, what aspects of this exclusive conception of identity were mobilized in the determination of a leave vote in the referendum. The main contribution of this study lies in the unpacking of the mechanisms relating to ethnocentrism and political distrust as incentives for voting to leave in the referendum and how they relate to specific conceptions of English identity. Ethnocentrism and political trust are here considered proxies for *cultural* and *institutional* theoretical approaches respectively. The general question addressed in this thesis is then - *to what extent do cultural and institutional mechanisms explain the connection between exclusive and inclusive English national identities and the leave vote?*

In order to answer the research question, survey data from wave 10 of the *British Election Study* (hereafter BES) is operationalized. The surveys from this wave were conducted between November and December of 2016, less than six months after the referendum took place.

2 - Theoretical Framework

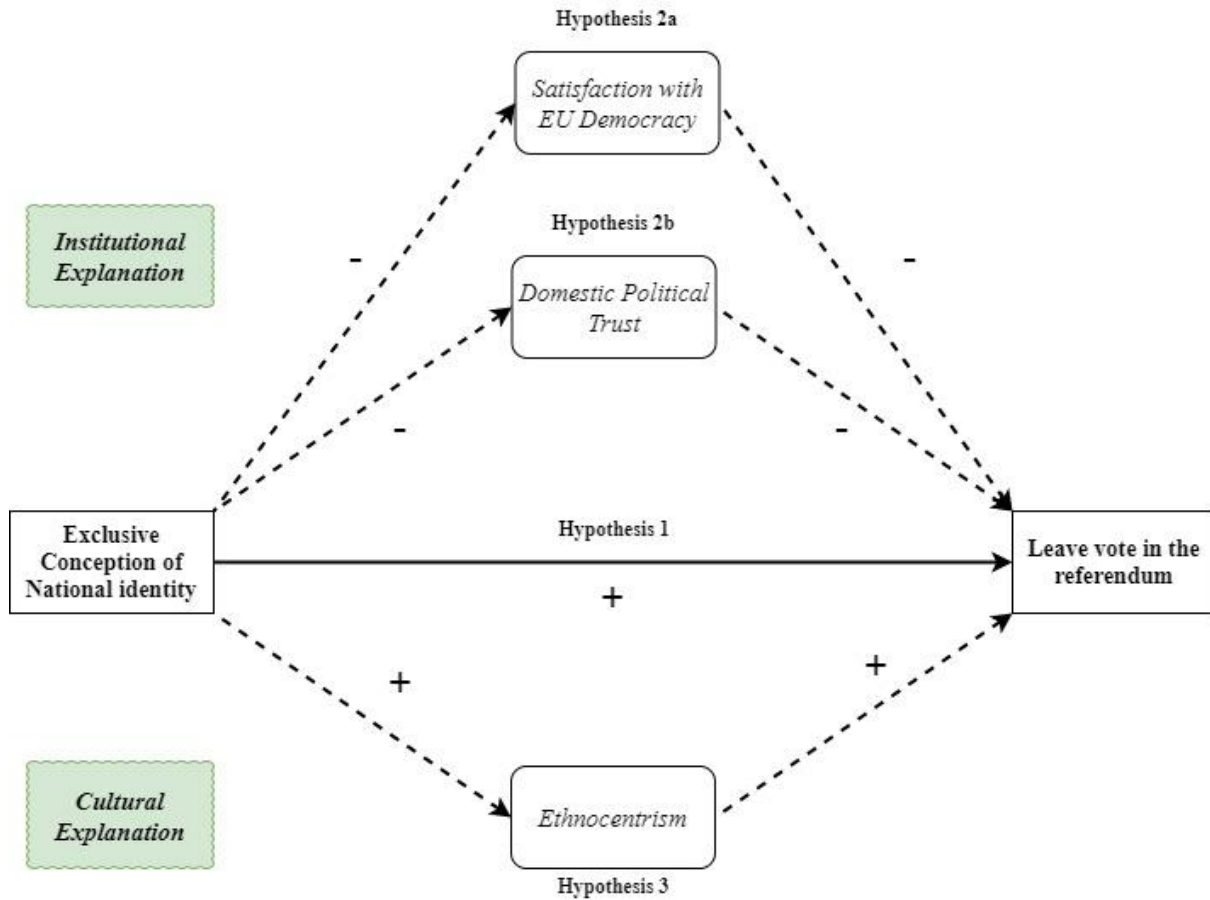


Figure 1: *Conceptual Model depicting theoretical relationships in line with the hypotheses.*

2.1 Conception of National Identity and Opposition to EU Membership

2.1.1 Defining (national) identity

Although contested by some as to its application to political identities (see for example, Huddy, 2001), Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) has been used by numerous scholars engaged in research about identity-based opposition to EU integration (McLaren, 2007; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Curley, 2009) and is thus a benchmark for this study. SIT postulates that identification stems from the knowledge of and the emotional attachment to a group, promoting in-group favouritism and outgroup hostility (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hogg, 2016). Conceptualizing political identities in such a way facilitates an understanding as to how and why individuals attribute meaning to an association with an ‘imagined community’ such as a nation state or a supra-national institution (Anderson, 1991), and in turn help to define the political attitudes and behaviours of individuals (Tyler and Blader, 2003).

2.1.2 - Exclusive vs. Inclusive Conceptions of Identity: How do they relate to the EU and UK?

Even for people from the same country, the manner in which group membership is formulated depends on how the people perceive themselves. Hooghe and Marks (2004, 2005) acknowledge the fact that people can readily adopt multiple identities concurrently, for example being English *and* British. This *inclusive* conception of a national identity is at odds with an *exclusive* one whereby a person only identifies with one of the territorial identities available to them. In this case a person would consider themselves as English *not* British. McLaren (2007) suggests that those who conceptualize their national identity as exclusive are more likely to be hostile to European integration because of a threat to their ‘terminal communities’, that is, the group to which they identify themselves (p.236). This has more to do with fears of symbolic threat to the national community than personal economic losses or feelings towards EU institutions. Moreno (2006) also finds that when citizens identify themselves in an exclusive manner, opposition to the “[d]ilution’ of state national features into the ‘melting pot’ of a bureaucratised EU’(p.2) is imbued. In such an instance, conceding sovereignty to the EU, devalues the ‘power’ and/or status of a country, translating into a perceived threat imposed on their (national) identity. When given the opportunity then, exclusive identifiers should have translated their concerns over conceding sovereignty to the EU by voting to leave at a higher rate than inclusive identifiers, who are less concerned about being part of a detached and distinct ‘terminal community’.

If conceptions of national identity are so important in explaining variation of attitudes towards membership in the EU, it is also instructive to note how these identities have developed alongside a changing institutional climate both within the UK and the EU. Firstly, the creation of distinct political institutions in Scotland and Wales and the general devolution of power in the UK, may have served to make people in England more aware of the distinction between Britain and England, potentially reinforcing exclusive conceptions of identity (Curtice, 2013). Secondly, on an EU level, the ascension of 10 new countries in 2004 followed by 2 more in 2007, coupled with the ratification of the Lisbon treaty in 2009 which strengthened the EU’s collective decision-making powers, meant that the influence of individual countries decreased significantly and more burden was placed on the net ‘givers’ to the EU¹ (Curtice, idem). This made the ‘melting pot’ of the EU even bigger and at a cost to certain countries including those in the UK. These institutional shifts should have exacerbated the Euroscepticism of exclusive identifiers in England and provided more cause for them to vote leave in the referendum. These assertions lead to the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 – An exclusive conception of identity leads to a higher propensity to vote leave.

¹ All EU countries give roughly equal proportion of their GDP although given differences in sizes of economies some countries contribute more than they receive – in 2019, the UK was (whilst still a member state) the second largest ‘giver’. (Kovacevic, 2019)

2.2 - National identity, Political Trust and voting to leave the EU

2.2.1 - Exclusive Identity as an Inhibitor to Trust in the EU

Trust plays an essential role in the functioning and maintenance of institutions, including governments and supra-national institutions such as the EU (Weinert, 2018). In a political sense, trust is “a bet on the future contingent action of others” (Sztompka, 1998: p.20) on account of their credibility, and “the glue that keeps the systems together” (Van der Meer, 2010: p.76). If you do not believe that the ‘others’ are going to serve your best interests, the glue will lose its adhesive properties and relations will break down.

According to Wessels (2007), as an expression of diffuse support, political trust is related to diffuse entities such as identity and community (p.289). Here, diffuse support relates to general or ‘affective’ evaluation of government rather than a specific or ‘utilitarian’ evaluation. In this sense, people are concerned about “what the object represents, not what it does” (Easton, 1975: p.444). As such, trust (in the form of diffuse support) is harboured in circumstances where citizens identify with the state, or in more general terms, with the ‘community’ within which they are governed on a more abstract level.

The multilevel and supra-national governance of the EU which “devalues [...] the national frame of reference as the operative unit of collective self-recognition” (Offe, quoted in Hartevelde et al, 2013: p.546) is more likely to promote distrust of said institutions and the representatives thereof in those with an exclusive conception of identity rather than someone with an inclusive conception of identity. From the perspective of exclusive identifiers, the expression of the EU as a community in which alien bureaucrats take the decisions, should be met with defiance, as they would much rather someone from their own (national) ‘community’ make (some of) the policy decisions that influence their lives. As such, citizens are less likely to have political trust in institutions that operates at a level with which they do not experience a shared identity. For such a group, removing themselves from the EU altogether would alleviate the problem of being governed by a body they do not inherently trust or feel a part of. This rationalization underlies the next hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2a - : Exclusive conception of identity leads to more distrust in the EU which increases the likelihood to vote to leave

2.2.2 - Domestic Political Trust and Identity – Shaping Attitudes Towards the EU

Due to low levels of information available about the EU and the minimal direct involvement of national governments in European policy- making, citizens may find it hard to evaluate the performance of the EU and its institutions (Arnold et al, 2012). In such an instance, citizens level of trust is largely a reflection of their satisfaction with domestic politics (Muñoz et al, 2011; Ares et al, 2017; Kriesi et al, 2007). Hartevelde et al (2013) aptly coin this mechanism as the “logic of extrapolation” (p.574). Political trust they affirm, is an ‘upward’ extrapolation of experiences in the local context. If this is the case, and if an exclusive or inclusive conception of national identity has a specific influence over trust in domestic politics, then it can be inferred that this form of identification will indirectly influence the likelihood of

someone lacking trust in the EU and its politics. In the context of English voters, this in turn should increase their propensity to vote to leave in the referendum.

Hjerm and Berg (2010) answer the question of whether specific conceptions of identity influence levels of (domestic) political trust². They conceptualize *ethnic* and *civic* forms of identity resulting in different levels of political trust. An ethnic identity prioritises cultural and ethnic sameness (*idem*). In this sense, political institutions ought to make decisions on behalf of a national community with “shared ancestry and lengthy connections” (McLaren, 2017: p.380). A civic identity on the other hand tends to prioritise support for formal institutions and procedures of society and is thus “output oriented” (Hjerm and Berg, 2010: p.394). As such, identity in this form is defined by attachment to the state as embodied by its institutions and rules rather than traditions, language, or religion. Civic identity is acquired, ethnic identity is inherited.

By adopting insights from Kiss and Park (2013), a telling link is made between Hjerm and Berg’s conceptualization of civic and ethnic identities to the exclusive and inclusive conceptions of identity that are operationalized in the context of this research. In ‘Exploring Britishness’, Kiss and Park (*idem*) assert that “when we think of national identity in civic terms, we think of an inclusive form of identity” (p.62). This results from the fact that in such a conception, the nation and the citizenry are one in the same. Feeling British (as opposed to English) is the result of an understanding that everyone has the same passport, abides by the same laws, and is governed by a (somewhat) centralized government. Conversely, an ethnic national identity is conceptualized as being exclusive. Feeling exclusively English (as opposed to concurrently British) is because you can only be born into such a categorization, regardless of how you feel or what you do (*idem*).

Hjerm and Berg (2010) returned the conclusion that the stronger the *ethnic* national identity the *less* people trust political institutions. A craving for cultural homogeneity is generally unsatisfied in Western democracies and blame is placed on politicians by those who desire it. With regards to a civic national identity this effect was not observed (pp.402-403). Whilst Hjerm and Berg do not specifically distinguish between trust in domestic or EU level institutions, it can be tentatively assumed that it applies to both. Regardless, if it were the case that this mechanism is more relevant to domestic institutions, the expectation that an ethnic identity will lead to lower political trust in EU institutions stands, as the ‘extrapolation effect’ should come into force.. Under this premise, hypothesis 2b is presented.

Hypothesis 2b: Political distrust in the domestic context is most prevalent amongst exclusive identifiers and this distrust extrapolates to the EU. This leads to a higher likelihood of voting to leave in the referendum.

² Without distinguishing between specific and diffuse support, Hjerm and Berg (2010) define political trust in their analysis as “trust individuals have in their state-wide legal-political institutions and actors” (p.391)

2.3 - National identity, Ethnocentrism and voting to leave the EU

2.3.1 - Ethnocentrism and its Relationship to Identity

In the context of the EU, increased integration, and the proliferation in the mobility of people both coincides and conflicts with the many distinct and enduring national loyalties that thrive in this region. Immigration and the consequences thereof have thus been at the forefront of the political agenda at each focal point in the development of the EU (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Boomgarden et al, 2011). The UK is no exception to the rule. Public concerns over immigration were an integral factor in explaining why people voted to leave as well as informing long-term volatility in British attitudes towards EU membership (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017). Such concerns over immigration can originate in, or lead to, *ethnocentrism*. Ethnocentrism is defined here as “seeing one’s own group (the in-group) as virtuous and superior, one’s own standards of value as universal, and out-groups as contemptible and inferior” (Hammond and Axelrod, 2006: p.926)

Often it is the case that perceived threat from the presence of migrants arouses hostilities on behalf of the natives which can spark ethnocentrism. This threat is manifested as either *realistic* or *symbolic*³ (Hjerm and Nagayoshi, 2011). Minorities pose a ‘realistic’ threat as a “function of their competitive positions” (p.818), i.e. increasing competition on the labour market. Their existence as a symbolic threat however, that is, stemming from a perceived threat to the *national identity* and cultural traditions of a country has consistently been shown to have greater explanatory power in determining attitudes towards immigration (Sides and Citrin, 2007; McLaren, 2002) and in turn levels of xenophobia (Hjerm and Nagayoshi, 2011). As such, (political) attitudes and behaviours towards immigrants are determined more by the perceived cultural ramifications that ensue from their integration, rather than material evaluations of the threat they may pose. Symbolic politics theory (Sides and Citrin, 2007) provides an explanation of this mechanism through its emphasis of “[...] the potency of values and identities on opinion formation, arguing that the role of these 'ideal interests' frequently overrides the influence of material concerns”: (p.479) . An individual with an exclusive national identification will likely take this *symbolic threat* more seriously than someone with an inclusive national identity as they attribute greater importance to the distinctiveness of their own culture over others. This should lead to high levels of ethnocentrism within this group.

Such theoretical expectations also have empirical validations in the English context. Curtice and Heath (2000) report that those who adopt a particularly English identity are less tolerant of immigrants and ethnic minorities than those who adopt a British identity. Equally, members of ethnic minorities themselves are less likely to adopt an English identity as opposed to a British one, highlighting an antagonism between English identity and ethnic minorities. Curtice (2017) also extends this observation

³ There is extensive literature on such mechanisms, often described in terms of (perceived) economic vs. cultural threat. For example, see Manevska and Achterberg (2013); Lucassen and Lubbers (2012); Ben-Nun Bloom et al (2015)

to the referendum itself, suggesting that EU membership may have challenged the English sense of identity (and inspired a leave vote) “not least as a result of migration” (p.12).

2.3.2 - Cultural Framing of Societal Malaise

De Koster et al (2016) state that people’s cultural predispositions mediate their interpretations of social life, resulting in what they call ‘cultural frames’ (p.3). Framing “refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue” (Chong and Druckman, 2007: p.104). Cultural framing then pertains specifically to the ‘cultural’ aspects of life. Contextualizing this in conjunction with conceptions of identity, a person with an exclusive conception of identity, who as a starting point are less inclined to support a multicultural society, possesses a cultural frame that makes them predisposed to be critical of immigrants.

With this in mind, the compelling study on the dynamics of ethnocentrism in Europe conducted by Aschauer and Mayerl (2019) show how such a framing effect can be embodied by exclusive identifiers. Aschauer and Mayerl (idem) report that during periods of rapid societal change, immigrants frequently serve as scapegoats in that they are attributed blame as perpetrators of said change by the natives, and that this results in ethnocentrism. This is particularly the case when the rapid societal change carries negative consequences for the native population (e.g. shifting labour markets or changing cultural landscape) (p.673). Aschauer and Mayerl label this perception of negative social change as ‘societal malaise’ (idem). It could be said then, that ‘societal malaise’ is *framed* in a way that situates immigrants unfairly as the root cause. The predisposed cultural frame held by exclusive identifiers should exacerbate this effect resulting in particularly high levels of ethnocentrism in comparison to inclusive identifiers.

The EU has forever championed its commitment to multiculturalism and diversity (Hooghe et al, 2007) and these ‘European’ values are coupled with the institutionalization of common immigration policies as well as de facto denationalization due to EU membership (Toshkov and de Haan, 2013; Koopmans et al, 2012). If English citizens, particularly exclusive identifiers, believed that EU membership had a direct link to increased levels of immigration, they would have voted in high numbers to leave due to their ethnocentric beliefs and framing of ‘societal malaise’. This provides the basis for hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 – Those with an exclusive conception of identity are more likely to be ethnocentric which will in turn lead to an increased likelihood of voting to leave.

1. Methodology:

3.1 The Data set

To answer the research question and test the hypotheses, data from wave 10 of the *BES* Internet panel was analysed. This data was collected between the 24th November and 12th December of 2016, a few months after the referendum took place. The data set consists of 30,237 respondents from England Scotland and Wales and includes a wide range of questions, capturing the social, cultural, and political

attitudes of its respondents, and is used extensively for academic research in the UK. Importantly for this study, it also includes items on the identity of respondents. This data set has been used by a number of scholars in pre- and post – Brexit analyses (Goodwin and Millazzo, 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016; Ormston, 2015)

The data for the internet panel is collected by the British polling agency *YouGov* and uses purposive sampling in order to try and obtain a representative cross-sectional sample. The goal has been to maintain as high a retention rate as possible between each wave. The retention rate from wave 9 to 10 was 64.5% (Mellon, 2019). Respondents are sampled proportionately at the regional (country) level according to population size. As the analysis in question relates solely to the conceptions of English identities, only respondents from England who are born in England are included in the analysis, leaving 8,972 respondents⁴. Depending on the variables, listwise deletion or series mean replacement was operationalized to deal with missing values in the dataset. The final sample consisted of 7,384 respondents. A descriptives table is found in the appendix.

3.2 - Dependent Variable – Voting to leave the EU

The dependent variable denotes the choice of a leave or remain vote in the referendum. The question, ‘If there was a referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union, how do you think you would vote?’ had possible responses of: ‘Leave the EU’, ‘Remain in the EU’, ‘Don’t know’ and ‘Wouldn’t vote’. Respondents who answered ‘Don’t know’ or ‘Wouldn’t vote’ are excluded because they do not have relevance to the research question⁵. This group represented 7.3% of the original sample.

3.3 - Independent Variable – Conception of National identity

The independent variable of an exclusive or inclusive conception of identity is more difficult to quantify. The so called ‘Moreno question’ was devised to measure the intensity of different parts of one’s regional and national identity and is now one of the most frequently used measurements for (hierarchical) identities in political science and sociological research (Guinjoan and Rondon, 2015). For example, the Moreno question would ask if you felt ‘English *not* British, *more* English than British, *equally* English and British, *more* British than English or, British *not* English (Ormston, 2015). Unfortunately, the *BES* internet panel does not have an item in this form. Instead, it contains items on the extent of identification with regional identities, i.e. Englishness, Britishness and Europeanness on a scale of 1-7.

In order to try and emulate the hierarchical rankings of identity alternatively operationalized through the Moreno question, a bespoke categorical variable for identity was computed based on responses to the ‘Englishness’ and ‘Britishness’ items. This variable has four categories. How the four categories are configured is reported below in Figure 2.

⁴ There were many missing values for country of birth which accounts for this lower than expected number

⁵ The *BES* internet panel uses the same template questionnaire throughout each wave. Even though wave 10 took place after the referendum, this is the only item they have indicating vote choice in the referendum.

Figure 2 – *Typology of identities as operationalized from self-identification variables in the dataset*

Exclusive Conception of identity	Inclusive Conception of identity
Englishness 4-7 and Britishness 1-3 N = 694 (8.7)*	Englishness 4-7 and Britishness 4-7 (strong identity intensity) N = 5,894 (75%) – Category 1
	Englishness 1-3 and Britishness 4-7 (Inclusive although prioritizing Britishness) N = 595 (8.1%) – Category 2
	Englishness 1-3 and Britishness 1-3 (low identity intensity) N = 640 (8.1%) – Category 3

**Note* – In the Lord Ashcroft poll referenced in the introduction, 12% of respondents identified exclusively (English not British) (Lord Ashcroft, 2016).

3.4 – Mediating Variables – Political Trust and Ethnocentrism

In order to answer the research question, we must also measure the constructs of political trust and ethnocentrism. In line with the theoretical expectations, the measurement of political trust in both domestic politics, as well as politics at the EU level is necessary. Thus, the following items in the survey data are operationalized.

‘How much trust do you have in MPs in general’

‘On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way that democracy works in the European Union?’

Responses to the first question are measured on a 7-point scale from no trust (1) to a great deal of trust (7) and responses to the second question are measured on 4-point scale from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (4). In combination, these items have a low level of reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .397). Although the theoretical expectations are that low trust in MPs will lead to low trust in the EU, these constructs are nonetheless conceptually distinct from each other as the low Cronbach’s alpha suggests. This also gives cause for applying separate hypotheses to these constructs as described in the theoretical framework. Respondents with missing values on the ‘Trust MPs’ item were removed from the dataset (2.6%). With a high number of missing values for the ‘Satisfaction with EU democracy’ item (11.6%), rather than list-wise deletion, missing values were replaced with the series mean and a dummy variable was created for these missing values. This way, the degree to which these values deviate from the mean response to the dependent variable can be inferred.

The concept of Ethnocentrism is operationalized by the following questions⁶:

‘The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the British’

‘I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world’

‘People in Britain are too ready to criticize their country’

⁶ Ideally, there would be an item that replaces ‘British’ for ‘English’ in all these survey items - however this does not exist in the data set.

Responses to these statements are measured on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). In combination, these items produced a single factor solution with a high level of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .795) and thus a single scale variable was computed out of these three items. After computing this variable, a series mean was used in place of the missing values (5.2%). Originally the items 'Do you think immigration undermines or enriches Britain's cultural life?' and 'Do you think immigration is good or bad for the economy' were included, but a factor analysis found that these items existed on another dimension and thus they are alternatively included as controls.

3.5 – Control Variables

Standard socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, and education (Arnold et al, 2012; Coenders and Scheepers, 2003 Nelsen and Guth, 2000; Aschauer and Mayerl, 2019) are included and controlled for as are higher order values (i.e. libertarian vs. authoritarian) due to their influence on both ethnocentrism (Davidov et al, 2008) and political trust (Flanagan and Lee, 2003). For ethnocentrism, perceived economic and cultural threat from immigrants are included as controls (Hjerm and Berg, 2010). Finally, for political trust, general societal trust would ideally be included (Harteveld et al, 2013) but is unfortunately not available in the dataset⁷. Respondents with missing values on any of the control variables were removed from the dataset. The only exception was the authoritarian/libertarian scale variable whereby missing values were replaced by the series mean. Correlations between variables were measured in order to test for multicollinearity. None of the variables displayed unacceptably high levels of correlation aside from perceived cultural and economic threat (Pearson's correlation = .776). This makes sense given their theoretical connectedness (Hjerm and Nagayoshi, 2011). Despite the high correlation in this data, these items are not combined into a scale as the distinction between these concepts is commonplace in the literature (Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012; Manevska and Acheterberg, 2013) and in the context of this research, cultural threat is theorized to pertain more to identities than economic threat (Sides and Citrin, 2007).

3.6 - Analytical strategy

A logistic regression analysis using IBM SPSS statistics version 25 formed the basis of the analysis due to the dependent variable being dichotomous. In the regressions, a leave vote is the reference category (coded 1). Six models include the odds ratios of each different independent variable's effect on the dependent variable – that is, the likelihood of voting to leave or voting to remain in the EU. The first and second models test the direct relationship between conception of identity and vote choice, with and without control variables. Then, in the following models, the mediating variables are incorporated one by one independently of each other as additional variables in order to discern their mediating effects on

⁷ Harteveld et al (2013) report the same issue but note that after reviewing other studies, the explanatory power of societal trust on political trust is less than 8% on average and thus should not significantly affect conclusions.

the direct relationship (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Finally, all the mediators were included in one model together to see their combined total effects in relation to one another.

A necessary step in a mediation analysis is confirming the statistical significance between the independent variable and each of the mediators (*idem*). Because all the mediators are scale variables, a linear regression was required. Three separate regressions were run, with the three (theoretical) mediators as the dependent variable in each. These regressions included models with and without controls.

4 - Results

4.1 - Direct relationship between identity and vote leave (Logistic Regression analysis)

Vote leave or vote remain?

Model 1 gives an overview of this theoretical relationship without accounting for controls. All values for the identity categories in these models are determined in relation to the reference category (exclusive conception of identity). For inclusive identifiers with a high identity salience (category 1), the odds of voting to leave decreased by a factor .662 (OR = .662; $p < .001$) although this relationship became statistically insignificant when the controls were added. In all the remaining models, this relationship remained statistically insignificant. For inclusive identifiers prioritizing Britishness, the odds ratio of voting to leave increased by 36 % after controls were added (OR = .141; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .505; $p < .001$ *after* including controls) meaning the effect became less negative. The odds ratio increased by a further 6% when all mediators were accounted for (OR = .505; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .565; $p < .001$ *including all* variables), making the effect less negative again. For inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience the odds ratios between models 1 and 2 increased by 26% (OR = .073; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .333; $p < .001$ *after* including controls). These odds ratios decreased by a further 18.2% when all the variables were included together (OR = .333; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .515; $p < .001$ *including all variables*). Again, both increases in the odds ratios made the effect less negative.

The results from the complete model (model 6) however, are the basis for ultimately determining the nature of the relationship between one's conception of identity and a leave vote as all the variables are controlled for. Inclusive identifiers prioritizing Britishness displayed an odds ratio of .565 ($p < .001$) expressing a markedly lower likelihood of voting to leave than exclusive identifiers. There was an additional reduction in the odds ratio for inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience meaning they were the least likely to vote to leave (OR = .515; $p < .001$). As mentioned before, the effect for inclusive identifiers with a high identity salience was statistically significant in all but model 1.

The main takeaways from these observations are that in the context of identities, whilst identifying exclusively is the biggest deterrent, strong English identification in and of itself, increased peoples desires to gain independence from the EU (note the relative differences in odds ratios between categories

Table 1 – *Effects of Conception of Identity, Domestic Political Trust, Satisfaction with EU Democracy and Ethnocentrism on Voting to Leave in the Referendum (ref=leave; Coefficients are Odds Ratios and 95% Confidence Intervals): N = 7384*

	Model 1 (Basic Model)	Model 2 (Including Controls)	Model 3 (Sat Dem EU)	Model 4 (Trust MPs)	Model 5 (Ethnocentrism)	Model 6 (Complete Model)
Inclusive, high identity Salience (1)	.662*** (.557, .786)	1.023 (.825, 1.270)	1.143 (.901, 1.449)	1.015 (.817, 1.261)	.919 (.737, 1.145)	1.001 (.786, 1.274)
Inclusive, prioritizing Britishness (2)	.141*** (.109, .182)	.505*** (.370, .690)	.573*** (.408, .805)	.503*** (.369, .688)	.507*** (.370, .695)	.565*** (.401, .796)
Inclusive, low identity salience (3)	.073*** (.055, .097)	.333*** (.236, .471)	.422*** (.290, .613)	.335*** (.237, .473)	.411*** (.290, .584)	.515*** (.353, .752)
Satisfaction with EU Democracy			.248*** (.255, .274)			.240*** (.217, .266)
Trust MPs				1.017 (.978, 1.057)		1.112*** (1.064, 1.163)
Ethnocentrism Scale					1.640*** (1.485, 1.811)	1.458*** (1.305, 1.628)
Perceived Cultural threat		1.472*** (1.409, 1.539)	1.321*** (1.258, 1.387)	1.474*** (1.410, 1.541)	1.455*** (1.391, 1.521)	1.318*** (1.255, 1.384)
Perceived Economic Threat		1.346*** (1,279, 1.416)	1.355*** (1.281, 1.432)	1.349*** (1.281, 1.419)	1.348*** (1.280, 1.419)	1.368*** (1,293, 1.447)
Authoritarian vs. Libertarian scale		1.184*** (1.142, 1.227)	1,181*** (1.136, 1.227)	1.184*** (1.143, 1.227)	1.133*** (1.091, 1.175)	1.141*** (.979, 1.268)
Gender (ref = female)		.908 (.808, 1.021)	1.126 (.989, 1.282)	.907 (.807, 1.020)	.939 (.835, 1.057)	1.114 (.979, 1,268)
Education level		.883*** (.843, .926)	.812*** (.771, .855)	.883*** (.842, .925)	.885*** (.844, .927)	.812*** (.771, .855)
Age group		1.148*** (1.101, 1.197)	1.041 (.994, 1.090)	1.146*** (1.099, 1.195)	1.124*** (1.078, 1.173)	1.019 (.9.73, 1.068)
Missing Value (1) – Sat Dem EU*			.680*** (.545, .848)			
Constant	2.095***	.018***	.523*	.017***	.005***	.145***
Nagelkerke's R ²	.130	.471	.577	.471	.483	.585

Note: at significance levels *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$ and * $p < .05$

1 and 2, and between 2 and 3 of an inclusive conception of identity across all models)⁸. It is perhaps an aspect of English nationalism rather than the general notion of identity exclusivity *per se* that connotes Euroscepticism in this context.

4.2 - Mediating effects of cultural and institutional mechanisms

Satisfaction with EU democracy

The results from Model 3 show that for an inclusive identifier who prioritises Britishness, the odds ratios expressing the likelihood to vote leave increased (i.e. moved closer to 1 – OR = .573; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .505; $p < .001$ not controlling for Satisfaction with EU democracy). The relative difference in the odds ratios increased by 6.8% after controlling for Satisfaction with EU. This value also reflects the degree to which Satisfaction with EU democracy mediated the relationship between this conception of identity and voting to leave. A decrease in the likelihood of voting leave is also observed for an inclusive identifier with a low identity salience in model 3. The relative difference in the odds ratios increased by 8.9% (OR = .422; $p < .001$ vs. OR .333; $p < .001$ not controlling for Satisfaction with EU democracy) – also an indicator of mediation.

Another important value to report is the direct effect of Satisfaction with EU democracy and likelihood to vote leave. The odds ratio of .248 ($p < .001$) indicates that satisfaction with EU democracy significantly increases the likelihood one voted to leave. Nagelkerke's R^2 (which can be considered an accurate although not perfect proxy for variance in a model explained by the predictors (Peng et al, 2002)) is .577 in model 3, which is the highest of any of the models that include a single mediator. All this evidence unsurprisingly points to satisfaction with EU democracy playing an important role in determining one's propensity to vote leave. Additionally, a small note on the dummy variable for missing values in this model. An odds ratio of .680 ($p < .001$) implies that those who entered a 'don't know' in response to this item were less likely to vote remain than the average respondent.

Domestic Political Trust

The results of model 4 do not support the assumption that domestic political trust is a proxy for levels of trust/support people have for the EU. For the sake of brevity, these results are not discussed at length. What can be said however, is that Trust in MPs had little to no influence in terms of mediating the relationship between and conception of identity and voting to leave, inferred through the fact that the odds ratios remained stable after controlling for this construct. Additionally, the direct effect of trusting MPs on influencing the likelihood of voting to leave was statistically insignificant.

⁸ In response to this, a separate logistic regression was run with Englishness and Britishness substituting the Moreno identity item as the main independent viable. For every unit increase in Englishness the odds of voting to leave increased by a factor of 1.310 ($p < .001$). For Britishness, this relationship was statistically insignificant (see appendix for this model)

Ethnocentrism

The results from model 5 show indications that ethnocentrism does mediate the relationship between identity and vote choice, but this does not hold true for all conceptions of identity. For an inclusive identifier who prioritises Britishness, ethnocentrism does not mediate this relationship (OR = .507; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .505; $p < .001$ *not* controlling for ethnocentrism). For inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience however, the odds ratio denoting likelihood of voting to leave increased by 7.8% (OR = .411; $p < .001$ vs. OR = .333; $p < .001$ *not* controlling for ethnocentrism). As in the other models, this value indicates the level of mediation that took place, in this case controlling for ethnocentrism.

In terms of the direct effect ethnocentrism has on influencing the likelihood one voted to leave, the odds ratio of 1.640 ($p < .001$) means that for every unit increase in ethnocentrism, the odds ratio increased by 64%. Cultural insularity, as expressed by feeling one's culture is superior to others, appears to obstruct one's support for the EU.

Testing all the mediators in combination

From the perspective of the mediating variables, the most notable change observed from previous models is the direct effect of Trust MPs on the dependant variable of voting to leave becoming statistically significant in comparison to when it was included as an independent mediator (model 5). For each unit increase on this item the chances on an individual voting to leave increase by 1.112 times (OR = 1.112; $p < .001$). For Satisfaction with EU democracy, the effect showed minimal change and remained a very strong indicator for reducing the likelihood one voted to leave. A relatively small change is observed in the odds ratio for ethnocentrism (OR = 1.458; $p < .001$ vs. OR = 1.640; $p < .001$ *with ethnocentrism and an independent mediator*), namely, a decrease of 18.2 %.

In model 6, inferences about the control variables can also be made. Perceived cultural and economic threat posed by immigrants had the largest influence on an individual's vote choice in one way or another. A single unit increase in these items resulted in a significantly higher likelihood one would vote to leave (OR 1.318; $p < .001$; OR 1.368; $p < .001$ respectively). This should not come as a surprise as whilst these constructs were not included as core theoretical concepts, they are of high relevance to the mechanisms described in the theoretical framework, specifically in the context of ethnocentrism. Education had the second largest effect size (OR = .812; $p < .001$) showing that higher levels of education decreased the likelihood that an individual voted to leave.

4.3 - Direct Relationship between Identity and Mediators (Linear Regression Analysis)

The direct effects the different conceptions of identity have on the mediating variables is both of theoretical interest and a necessary step in the confirmation of mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The results of the linear regression analysis follow:

Table 2 - Linear Regression Table Depicting Relationship between Conception of Identity and Mediating Variables: $N = 7384$

	<u>Model 1 (Sat Dem EU)</u>		<u>Model 2 (Trust MPs)</u>		<u>Model 3 (Ethnocentrism)</u>	
	Unst. B	SE	Unst. B	SE	Unst. B	SE
Inclusive, <i>high identity Salience</i> (1)	.052 (.149***)	.028 (.031)	.537*** (.692***)	.061 (.062)	.242*** (.184***)	.025 (.028)
Inclusive, <i>prioritizing Britishness</i> (2)	.156*** (.527***)	.028 (.043)	.327*** (.718)	.088 (.088)	-.035 (-.382***)	.036 (.039)
Inclusive, <i>low identity salience</i> (3)	.208*** (.681***)	.041 (.043)	-.234** (.277**)	.088 (.086)	-.460*** (.910***)	.036 (.038)
Perceived Cultural threat	-.124***	.007	-.64***	.014	.045***	.006
Perceived Economic Threat	-.029***	.007	-.120***	.016	.011	.006
Authoritarian/Libertarian scale	-.016***	.005	-.030**	.010	.103***	.004
Education level	-.030***	.007	.062**	.014	-.002	.006
Gender (ref = female)	.105***	.016	.048	.035	-.080***	.014
Age group	-.071***	.006	.111***	.012	.049***	.005
Constant	2.711***		3.049***		2.335***	
R ²	.219		.080		.335	

Note: at significance levels *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$. Parenthesis within table indicates the coefficients and standard errors for model excluding control variables. For the identity items, the reference category is an exclusive conception of identity.

Satisfaction with EU democracy

The results from model 1 show that having an exclusive conception of identity is negatively related to Satisfaction with EU democracy. Inclusive identifiers who prioritize Britishness (unstandardized $B = .156$; $p < .001$) and inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience (unstandardized $B = .208$; $p < .001$) were both positively correlated with Satisfaction with EU democracy in comparison to those with an exclusive conception of identity. The relationship between inclusive identifiers with a high identity salience (strongly English *and* strongly British) and satisfaction with EU democracy became (marginally) statistically insignificant ($p = .070$) after adding controls. Bearing the controls in mind, perceived cultural threat displayed the strongest effect size, which was negatively correlated with satisfaction with EU democracy (unstandardized $B = -.124$; $p < .001$). The less one has faith in what the EU represents, the more likely they are to feel culturally threatened by the presence of immigrants.

Domestic Political Trust

With regards to domestic political trust, not all the categories of an inclusive conception of identity displayed an effect in the expected direction. Inclusive identifiers with a high identity salience were more trusting of British MPs than those with an exclusive conception of identity (unstandardized B = .537; $p < .001$) as were inclusive identifiers prioritizing Britishness (unstandardized B = .327; $p < .001$). Inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience however, were *less* trusting of MPs than exclusive identifiers (unstandardized B = -.234; $p < .001$).

Ethnocentrism

With regards to ethnocentrism, the direct effects the different categories of identity had were also not entirely in the expected direction. Inclusive identifiers who feel both strongly English *and* strongly British were *more* ethnocentric than exclusive identifiers (unstandardized B = .242; $p < .001$). Inclusive identifiers who felt *neither* strongly English nor British were less ethnocentric (unstandardized B = -.460; $p < .001$) and the effect for those prioritising Britishness was statistically insignificant after including the controls. Of the controls, being authoritarian in one's beliefs had the largest effect in increasing one's embodiment of ethnocentrism (unstandardized B = .103; $p < .001$). Worth noting is the R^2 for this model (.335), which is the highest of the three that include the mediators, indicating that ethnocentrism accounts for a comparatively large degree of the variation in relation to the other mediators.

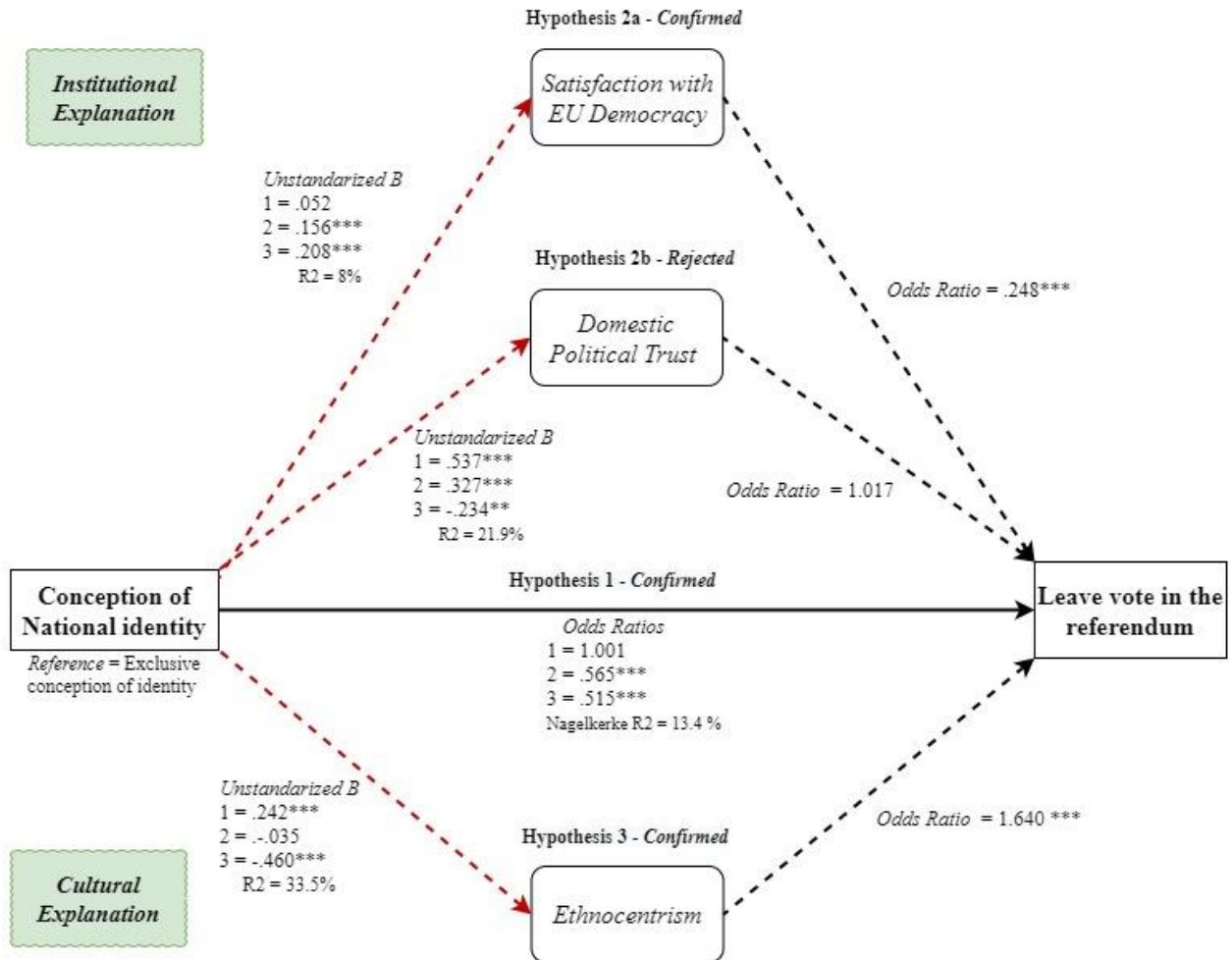
4.4 – Implications for the hypotheses

With all the relevant information summarized, a brief account of what it means regarding confirming or rejecting the hypotheses concludes the results section. Figure 3 also provides a visual representation of the results in line with the conceptual model and the hypotheses. With regards to the direct relationship between identity and voting to leave, the logistic regression indeed showed that having an exclusive conception of identity increased one's likelihood to vote to leave the EU, meaning *hypothesis 1* is confirmed.

The remaining hypotheses require an inspection of both the logistic and linear regressions in tandem. For the relationships that were statistically significant, having an inclusive conception of identity related to higher levels of satisfaction with EU democracy and this was also directly linked to decreasing likelihood of voting to leave – this group felt more connected to the EU than their exclusive counterparts and displayed as much in the referendum. Partial although not comprehensive mediation, occurred when controlling for this construct, thus allowing a tentative confirmation of *hypothesis 2a*. Domestic political trust was the least convincing of the three mediators, with little to no mediation occurring, after controlling for this construct. Additionally, the direct relationships between identity and domestic political trust did not all manifest in the expected direction. Thus, *hypothesis 2b* is rejected.

Finally, inclusive conceptions of identity did not relate to ethnocentrism exactly in the way that was expected, however it was strongly correlated with increasing the odds one voted to leave. Of the statistically significant relationships, one displayed mediation and the other did not. All in all, *hypothesis 3* is cautiously confirmed although not without nuance. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Figure 3 – Conceptual Model Indicating the Odds Ratios and Unstandardized Beta values for the Respective Paths in the Conceptual Model.



Notes: dashed lines represent mediating paths; solid line is direct relationship. Red lines refer to linear regressions, black lines refer to logistic regression. Values that are numbered relate to the three categories of inclusive conception of identity as operationalized throughout this study (i.e. see Figure 2).

5 – Conclusion

The plethora of studies that approach the ‘Brexit question’ from every angle imaginable are tribute to the complexity that has fascinated researchers, punters, and master’s students alike. With this in mind, the purpose of this research was not to reveal the hidden secret of Brexit, but merely to inform the debate in such a way that contributes a small degree of nuance. In this endeavour, I used secondary data from the *BES*, collected in the aftermath of the referendum and tested the degree to which cultural and

institutional mechanisms mediated the relationship between one's conception of their (English) identity and a leave vote. What the findings suggest is that whilst both types of mechanisms mediate this relationship, political trust, namely satisfaction with EU democracy, represents the most telling link between one's identity and their vote choice. Hereafter, the main conclusions of the research are summarized, and a discussion section follows:

Identifying exclusively, that is, strongly English and *not* strongly British, proved to be the strongest determinant of a leave vote out of all categories of identity. Whilst this affirms McLaren's (2007) and Moreno's (2006) suggestions that EU membership threatens and devalues the distinctiveness of one's culture in the eyes of exclusive identifiers, there is more to be seen than after an initial glance. Following a closer look, the results point to the interesting outcome that in reality, the role of the English facet of one's identity is disproportionately weighted in driving Euroscepticism rather than the exclusive/inclusive distinction that was theorized to make the biggest difference. The title of the introduction to this paper is 'England Speaks Up', referring to England's disproportionate role in deciding the outcome of the referendum. What we can conclude upon reflection, is that not only England, but also *Englishness* as an identity construction played an equally important role in determining this outcome, more so than was originally suspected.

Satisfaction with EU democracy, as an indicator of political trust at the EU level had the strongest effect on one's vote choice, dramatically decreasing the likelihood an individual voted to leave. Exclusive identifiers were theorized to be the least trusting of the EU due to low levels of diffuse support for what the EU represents (rather than what it 'does') (Wessels, 2007; Easton, 1975), resulting predominantly from the absence of a shared identity with the inclusively oriented European community (McLaren, 2007). The results confirm this expectation, as proof of partial mediation between identity and vote choice was found via this mechanism. Moreover, exclusive identifiers were the least satisfied with EU democracy and also the most likely to have voted to leave. The highest levels of mediation occurred for inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience. Their particularly high satisfaction with EU democracy had a big influence over their vote choice. The fact that political trust in the EU is highest when identity is of low importance to an individual, indicates that going forward, framing EU integration from the perspective of identities may cause further strain on an already fractured union. These learnings we can at least take from the British context but have also been found elsewhere, particularly in politicized contexts (Hooghe and Mark, 2009; Hutter and Grande, 2014)

Domestic political trust was operationalized as a mechanism complementary to Satisfaction with EU democracy whereby the levels of trust placed in British MPs extrapolate onto attitudes towards the EU (Harteveld et al, 2013). The results of this research find no support for such a claim and the specific effects it had on different conceptions of identity did not all occur entirely as expected. Inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience were the least trusting of domestic politics. This is in spite of the expectation that exclusive identifiers would be the least trusting due to the 'ethnic' character of their identity, prioritising cultural traditions and heritage rather than institutions and civic procedures in

defining nationhood (Hjerm and Berg, 2010). That this low identity salience group are the most satisfied with EU democracy but the least satisfied with domestic politics potentially points to an overtly nationalist character of English *and* British identities.

A small caveat should be included however when interpreting these results. The ‘extrapolation effect’ reported by Hartevelde et al (2013) pertains quite specifically to institutional trust and with no items on institutional trust in the *BES* dataset, general trust in MPs as a proxy may not have aptly replicated the mechanism in the way it was originally conceptualized.

As expected, ethnocentrism also turned out to be an important predictor of a leave vote. The more ethnocentric one was, the more likely they were to have voted to leave. Ethnocentrism was theorized to stem predominantly from a symbolic threat posed by immigrants (Sides and Citrin, 2007) causing English citizens (particularly exclusive identifiers) to react in a way that causes their in-group favouritism to become accentuated, even pitting the ‘outgroup’ as significantly inferior (Hammond and Axelrod, 2006). It appears for many in England, the EU was fuelling this symbolic threat in their country and action needed to be taken.

Whilst the direct effect ethnocentrism had on voting certainly existed, the way that it mediated the relationship between identity and the aforementioned vote choice was not entirely as expected. Mediation occurred in the expected direction for inclusive identifiers with a low identity salience except it did not occur for inclusive identifiers prioritizing Britishness. This group were just as likely to vote leave if they were ethnocentric or not. Another interesting finding is that inclusive identifiers with a strong identity salience were actually more ethnocentric than exclusive identifiers and inclusive identifiers prioritizing Britishness were just as ethnocentric. Exclusive identifiers were thought to have held a particularly negative cultural frame regarding their perception of immigrants and thus be the most ethnocentric (De Koster et al, 2016; Aschauer and Mayerl, 2019) however, this framing effect was not found.

This observation must again be countered with a methodological caveat that pertains to the prevailing limitation of this whole research project. In the *BES* dataset, the items operationalizing ethnocentrism refer to British rather than English superiority. Naturally then, this group scored higher on this item than exclusive identifiers. Unfortunately, when using secondary data, there will oftentimes be inconsistencies of this nature.

Do cultural and institutional mechanisms differ in the way they mediate the relationship between one’s identity and a leave vote in the Brexit referendum of 2016? This research has shown that that they do not differ *per se*, but one may be more explanatory than the other. Political trust at the EU level, in the form of satisfaction with EU democracy, is the most important mediator, thus giving the institutional explanation slightly more weight. This, however, is by no means at the expense of a cultural explanation which has also proven to be a significant factor in this relationship.

6 - Discussion and Recommendations for future research

Conceptualizing identities is a tricky task particularly when trying to boil down the complex notion of hierarchical identities into normative concepts with a quantitative study in mind. Yack (1999) notes that whilst the distinction between civic and ethnic (read: inclusive and exclusive) identities are valid analytical concepts, they are also ideal types that are contextually negotiated. Classifying identities in this relatively coarse manner and applying them across the board, where situational differences can lead to varied outcomes, must be approached with caution (Kumar, 2010). Further work is required to improve the translation of this theoretically intricate concept into a methodologically applicable questionnaire for example. This would perhaps require a case-specific (country/region) battery of questions, building on the approach of Moreno (2006) for example, who created the ‘Moreno Question’ specifically with Scottish and Catalan identities in mind.

Despite the findings of this research suggesting that they should, English identities have received limited scholarly attention, particularly in comparison to those of the neighbouring countries in the British and Irish Isles⁹. Moreover, when English identities have been investigated most agree that they do not have a strong character. Young (Quoted in Kumar, 2010) for example, describes a “curious emptiness of Englishness” due to the deterritorialized character of English ethnicity, that is, an ‘etherized’ national identity that has not developed into anything particularly distinct (p.470). This he claims, is due to the history of imperialism in England and “how important outsiders have been to the elaboration of [...] Englishness” (p.471). The result of this is British identity subsuming English identity and Englishness more or less equating to Britishness.

Building on these insights, and with the findings of this research in mind, a reasonable inference to make is that identifying strongly as English where British identity normally prevails may act as a proxy for how an exclusive identity is theorized to manifest itself in the broader European context. The literature on exclusive vs. inclusive identities is contextualized within a macro-European framework (McClaren, 2007; Hooghe and Marks, 2005) yet it appears that closer attention needs to be paid to how English identities specifically (not exclusive ones *per se*), antagonize the notion of European integration.

Recommendations for future research

Future research should build on the two points made in the discussion. Strong English identities have been shown here to result in opposition to the EU but not enough is understood about why exactly this is the case. Sharper focus on the specific constitution of English identities is required to understand why it played the important role it did throughout the Brexit process. Longitudinal studies comparing perceptions of such identities around the time of the Referendum to times before or equally to times after may shine a light on how this identity was primed around that time. Finally, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews investigating the nature of English identities in relation to Euroscepticism,

⁹ For a (rare) dive into nature of English identities, see Kumar (2010)

would complement the first recommendation and in turn assist the creation of more comprehensive and nuanced questionnaires that do justice to the unique nature of English identities that could be applied in a more appropriately generalizable manner to Britain's (and England's) ongoing Brexit debacle.

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8 – Appendix

Table 3 - Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exclusive identity	8849	0	1.00	.08	.284
Inclusive identity, <i>High Identity Salience</i>	8849	0	1.00	.07	.261
Inclusive identity, <i>prioritising Britishness</i>	8849	0	1.00	.75	.430
Inclusive identity, <i>low identity salience</i>	8849	0	1.00	.08	.274
Vote Choice in referendum (ref = leave)	8313	0	1	.52	.499
Satisfaction with EU democracy*	8972	1	4	3.30	.811
Trust MPs in general	8743	1	7	3.30	1.571
Ethnocentrism scale *	8972	1	5	3.51	.734
Perceived Cultural Threat	8483	1	7	3.64	2.010
Perceived Economic Threat	8424	1	7	4.07	1.801
Authoritarian/Libertarian Scale*	8972	0	10	6.57	2.062
Gender (ref = female)	8972	0	1	.50	.500
Education level	8529	0	5	2.91	1.390
Age group	8972	1	7	5.22	1.508
Sat Dem EU dummy (missing value = 1)	8972	0	1	.11	.319
Valid N (listwise)	7384				

*variables whereby missing values are replaced by the series mean

Table 4 – Effects of Englishness and Britishness on voting to leave in the referendum (ref = exclusive conception of identity)

	Exp(B)	95% C.I.	
		Lower	Upper
Englishness	1.310*	1.237	1.387
Britishness	.992	.942	1.046
Satisfaction with EU democracy	1.608*	1.517	1.705
Trust MPs	1.024	.982	1.067
Ethnocentrism Scale	1.515*	1.363	1.684
Perceived Cultural Threat	.710*	.678	.744
Perceived Economic Threat	.756*	.717	.797
Authoritarian vs. Libertarian Scale	1.106*	1.064	1.149
Gender	.888	.787	1.003
Education level	.890*	.847	.934
Age group	1.091*	1.043	1.140
Constant	.055*		

Note: at significance level * $p < .001$; Nagelkerke's R^2 for the model is .520

Checklist: Ethical and Privacy Aspects of Research

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Identity based Euroscepticism in England: Testing cultural and institutional theoretical approaches on the relationship between an exclusive conception of identity and voting to leave the EU

Name, email of student: **Andrew Ramsay – 515459@student.eur.nl**

Name, email of supervisor: **Gijs Custers - custers@essb.eur.nl**

Start date and duration: **February 1st – June 21st**

Is the research study conducted within DPAS **YES** - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: TYPE OF RESEARCH STUDY

Please indicate the type of research study by circling the appropriate answer:

1. Research involving human participants. YES - **NO**

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - **NO**

2. Field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - **NO**

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else).

YES – NO

Part III (not applicable)

Part IV: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

My data is provided by the British Election Study (BES). The downloaded data is stored on my personal laptop

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

With the secondary data retrieved from the BES organisation I (Andrew Ramsay) will be responsible for the storage and backup

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

For short-term data security I will back up my data on a weekly basis

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

The data which I will use is already anonymized

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: **Andrew Ramsay**

Name (EUR) supervisor: **Gijs Custers**

Date: 20/03/2020

Date: 20/03/2020

