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## Europhoria! Explaining Britain's pro European moment, 1988-92

James Dennison

European University Institute
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## Abstract

British attitudes to “Europe” have been characterised as an “awkward partner” of “reluctant Europeans”. This article expounds a period in which Britain was Europe’s primary “proactive partner”, composed of highly “enthusiastic Europeans”. To explain this, it then proposes an expanded “calculation, cues, and community” theoretical framework using emotions, non-material calculations, and a dynamic understanding of “Europe”. Europhoria is thus explained using: (1) calculations driven by the emotional anticipation of “1992” and trust engendered by unrealised negative predictions raised during the 1975 referendum campaign; (2) proactive domestic European policy leading to harmonious, influential, insider status; (3) benchmarking of comparable, better performing European economies; and—the only factor remaining today—(4) newfound belief that Europe was Britain’s most important international community. Europhoria interplayed with a sense of European community stimulated by the fall of the Berlin Wall and unusually “European” British cultural trends in media, sports, and arts. The removal of most of these factors—often at pan-European level—explains the rapid British return to Euroscepticism thereafter.

## Keywords

attitudes to European integration; public opinion; Britain and Europe; Thatcher; single market

'Just think for a moment what a prospect that is. A single market without barriers—visible or invisible—giving you direct and unhindered access to the purchasing power of over 300 million of the world's wealthiest and most prosperous people. Bigger than Japan. Bigger than the United States. On your doorstep … It's not a dream. It's not a vision. It's not some bureaucrat's plan. It's for real. And it's only five years away.' - Margaret Thatcher, alongside Jacques Delors, 16 April 1988, addressing the Europe Open for Business launch event

'Britain is slowly adapting to being more "European". The Channel Tunnel … will tie our offshore islands to the Continent through what is tellingly described as a "fixed link". We take it for granted that British foreign policy is increasingly coordinated with that of the other Eleven … Our businessmen commute as naturally to Amsterdam or Copenhagen as to Swindon and Liverpool. EEC mergers loom.' – *The Times*, 30 January 1989

'This column is prepared to own up that it voted "No" in the 1975 referendum on whether Britain should stay in the European Community … To be sure, British withdrawal from the EC is a mere fantasy now.'

-*The Guardian*, 11 December 1989

'As the actual event of German unification unfolds on the world's TV screens, many observers view the spectacle as a precursor … of enlarged clout for [Europe] as a whole. Only a couple years ago, the continent suffered from what some called "Eurosclerosis". Now, "Europhoria" has overtaken the 12 present members of the European Community. They exude confidence that "the decade of Europe" is underway.' – *The Washington Post*, 5 July 1990

## Introduction

Britain's relationship with "Europe" has long been described in overwhelmingly negative terms: an "awkward partner" composed of "reluctant Europeans". In late 2015, The Economist dedicated its cover to "The Reluctant European" and a nine-article special report variously described British attitudes to Europe as 'natural ambivalence', 'always [having] been rather half-hearted' and 'a transactional business', with 'deep … opposition ' whereas for other members 'the project has always been a matter of the heart' (The Economist, 2015). Academic uses of the term are numerous, framing British Euroscepticism as unique, constant, and precluding any pro-Europeanism beyond instrumentalism fuelled by post-imperial desperation (Appendix 1). Indeed, well-documented moments of the relationship—the UK's initial dismissal of the project, repeated rejected applications, rebates, opt-outs, vetoes, vocal challenges from media and statespersons, and finally a dramatic popular and governmental rejection of membership altogether—support this characterisation.

While this account is compelling, it is incomplete. Indeed, there was a time when British citizens were overwhelmingly united in seeing a bright European future as the focus of their ambitions for their country and, in many cases, themselves. Similarly, British governments took the lead in deepening the European project with profound, lasting consequences for both the UK and "Europe". From roughly the mid 1980s until the early 1990s, rather than being an "awkward partner" of "reluctant Europeans", the United Kingdom could better be described as Europe's primary "proactive partner" composed of "enthusiastic Europeans". This period can be labelled with a portmanteau used by media in the UK, Europe, and beyond to describe the contemporary political, economic, and cultural sentiment of the time: *Europhoria*.

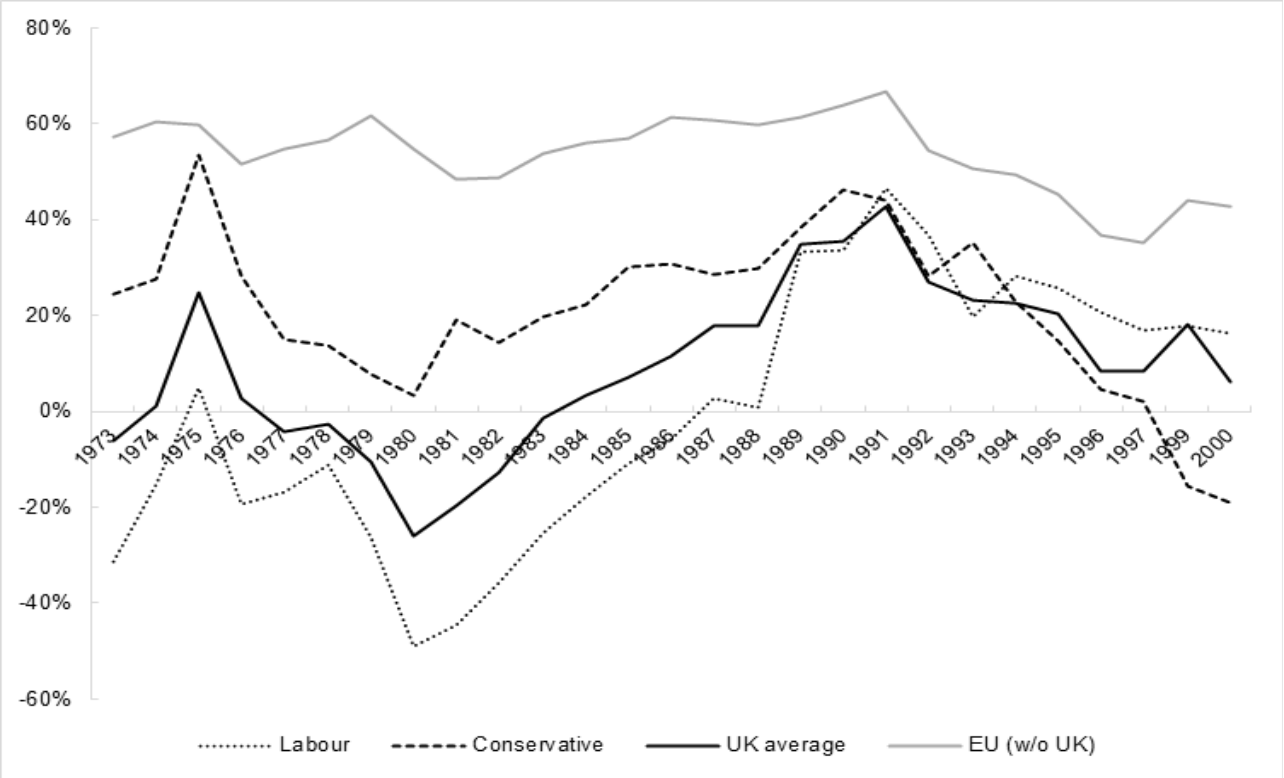
The article aims to both describe and explain *Europhoria*. It utilises, contributes to, and tests theories of attitudes to European integration with quantitative and qualitative data sources from a comparative perspective—both top-down and bottom-up—that also factors in the changing nature of the European project itself. This approach brings together numerous sub-fields of contemporary history by focussing on a definitive period of British history as the post-war consensus broke down, the history of European integration at the founding of both the single market and European Union,

and a period of global transition as the Cold War ended. Similarly, explaining British *Europhoria* is of theoretical interest for the science of attitudinal formation with its myriad sociological, economic, and psychological determinants. It is also of substantive importance for those seeking to understand why political unions gain and lose support.

## The case: Enthusiastic Europeans

According to the Eurobarometer, net belief that European membership is a good, rather than bad, thing has always been lower in the UK than across the rest of the EU as a whole (Figure 1). However, Britons have not always been substantively Eurosceptic. Nor have British attitudes been constant. In October 1980, Britons had a net belief that membership of the then-EEC was a good thing of -0.26 percentage points. By March 1992, the same figure was 42 percentage points, higher than in several other countries (for country trends, see Figure A2).

**Figure 1. British and European net belief that EU "membership is a good thing" rather than "bad thing", 1973-2000 (yearly averages)**




Notes: Schmitt et al, 2008. % stating EEC / EC / EU membership is a good thing minus % stating EEC / EC / EU membership is a bad thing. "Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is ... ?" "A good thing"; "Neither good nor bad"; "a bad thing"; "don't know"

Similarly, first, Mori polling on a hypothetical membership referendum showed overwhelming support for "stay in" anomalously between 1988 and 1992 (see Figure A2). Second, Britons expressed overwhelming support for "the unification of Western Europe" between 1985 and 1992—in every year but one 50 per cent more were for than against and the proportion of Britons "very much for" was higher than several other countries (Eurobarometer, Figure A3). Finally, third, Britons were split about whether British links to the European Community should be closer or about the same, with only a tiny minority favouring less close links—notably the case across all age, gender, class, educational level, and regional groups (British Social Attitudes, Table A1). How can we explain this seemingly anomalous and counterintuitive data?

## Theories of attitudes to European integration

Early works explaining individual variation in support for European integration identified several—since repeatedly validated—factors including age, class, cognitive skills, income, occupation, partisanship, political values, and support for the domestic government (Gabel, 1998). Hooghe and Marks's classic work (2005; see also Hobolt and de Vries, 2016) proposed and tested a three-factor combined model of "calculation, community, and cues", showing that feeling European ("community") has a larger effect than economic calculations and that Eurosceptic elites cue Euroscepticism in those without a European identity. Works thereafter have confirmed the mixed and small effects of economic calculation (e.g. Garry and Tilley, 2015). "Community" has received the most unambiguous support (also Hewstone, 1986; Dennison et al, 2020, 2021) notwithstanding concerns regarding endogeneity between its typical operationalisation—European identity—and support for the EU (Hobolt and de Vries, 2016; Carl et al, 2019). Cueing by politicians has been shown to be primarily effective in explaining variation between countries though liable to reverse-causality while media cueing has been shown to have modest effects (Gabel and Scheve, 2007; Steenbergen et al, 2007). Partially related to cues, perhaps the most important addition to Hooghe and Marks' (2005) three factors is that of "benchmarking", whereby the worse one's country seems to be doing politically and economically, the more positively one views European integration (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; Hobolt and de Vries, 2016). Hobolt and de Vries (2016) lament the lack of understanding of exactly what citizens benchmark against—neighbouring countries, trading partners, the EU average, or so on—and the lack of consideration of the increasingly multidimensional nature of attitudes to European integration. De Vries (2018) expanded benchmarking to include the process of Brexit as a benchmark.

Most studies of attitudes to Europe focussed on individual or cross-country variation and thus overlook the causes of over-time variation and changes in the object of attitudes—the EU—either as a constitutional construct with changing powers or a political body subject to evaluations (Dennison, 2023: 41; though, e.g., McLaren, 2005: 157). That said, Hooghe and Marks (2009) argue that post-1992 integration transformed public opinion from a "permissive consensus" to a "constraining dissensus" across the EU. Moreover, rather than over time change being uniformly distributed, distinct aspects of changing integration interact with distinct national histories and rationales for integration on a national-basis (Diez-Medrano, 2003). Moreover, personal and national "calculations" have been conceptualised primarily in economic terms, and not considered non-economic issues, such as environmental protection, labour rights, and foreign affairs and defence (Amato et al, 2019). Finally, first, factors explaining attitudes to Europe have been operationalised with broad or conceptually distant variable (such as "types of capitalism" and education-level used to measure "calculations" and left-right self-placement to measure cueing), an approach criticised as ineffective at explaining complex historical processes (Olsen, 2004; Kousser, 1984). Second, attitudes to Europe have been measured along single dimensions of affect and so not considered qualitatively distinct emotions beyond simple positivity and negativity, despite attitudes having inseparable emotive and cognitive components (Clifford, 2019).

As such, the "calculation, community, cues" framework and benchmarking approaches can be developed, in part by incorporating the changing nature of European integration and Britain's experience. First, the "calculations" of personal and national contemporaneous economic instrumentalism can be expanded to include: (1) retrospective calculations (the UK's 1975 membership referendum campaign acting as a benchmark, see de Vries, 2018); (2) prospective calculations (of integration following the Single European Act and Jacques Delors' "1992" plan (Cowles, 1995)) and prospective enlargement following the fall of the Berlin Wall (Smith, 2009)); (3) qualitatively distinct emotional forms of affect; (4) non-economic calculations; and (5) "benchmarking" calculations vis other member states' performance (Delanty, 2012). Second, "cues" from: (6) the changing nature of Europe; (7) Britain's—primarily its government's—position therein; (7) the British government in official information campaigns on Europe (Smedley, 2021); (8) the European Commission (Mitchell, 2012); and, more studied, (9) parties; and (10) media. Third, "community" can include (11) European

*vis* exclusive national identity; (12) the relative importance of alternative international relationships as communities (in the UK's case, Winston Churchill's three concentric "majestic circles" of the Commonwealth, the Anglo-American relationship, and Europe) and (13) cultural expressions of a European identity in media, the arts, and sport (Snow, 2001).

### Methodology and data

This article is concerned with multiple causal dynamics *within* a single case over *time*. Thus, process-tracing is a relevant method. It offers robust, systematised analysis of *both* quantitative and qualitative data to describe and explain processes over time, adding leverage over purely quantitative studies that make up the bulk of the extant literature on attitudes to European integration (Mahoney, 2012). Process-tracing depends on identifying "diagnostic evidence" using conceptual frameworks, recurring empirical regularities, and theory. Because it needs to compare multiple potential causal processes to explain an outcome, process-tracing is particularly reliant on 'intensive description that should be a foundation of process tracing' (Collier, 2011: 824) so that causality can be inferred by demonstration of covariance with the dependent variable and elimination of alternatives (Bennet and Checkel, 2015). Processes should be traced over time in a consistent manner. This will be done by both over time and between countries within each of three time periods: 1983-1985; 1986-1992; and 1992-1997. Eurobarometer trends are used for comparative time-series; national polling and manifesto data is used for British time-series (and some one-off polls where applicable), while relevant policies, speeches, newspaper articles, commentary, and cultural artefacts qualitatively measure processes.

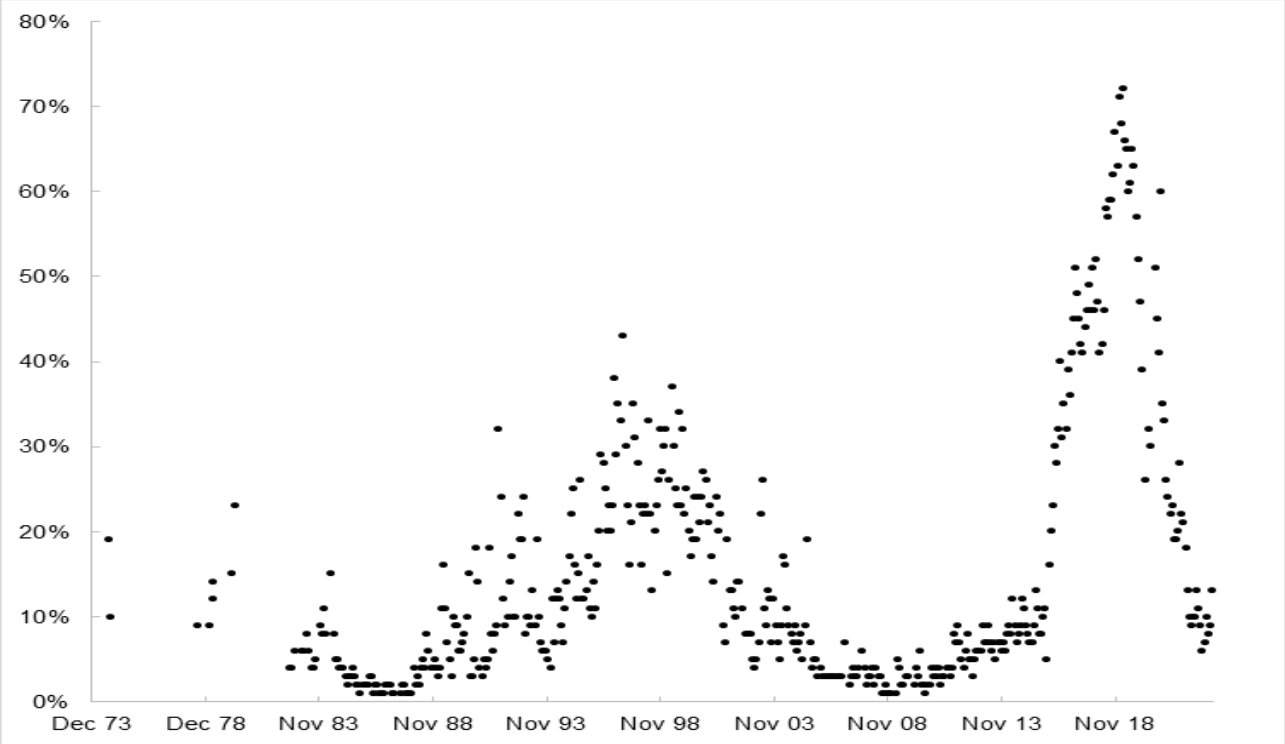
## 1983-1985: The background to Europhoria

> '[P]eople are coming to see the Community as at best irrelevant, and at worst obstructive … The revolutionary British suggestion is that the Community should establish a *common market***.** This does not currently exist … a host of new policies and new initiatives, some public but many more private, would become viable.' – British Foreign and Commonwealth Minister Geoffrey Howe (Howe, 1984: 187, 190)

> 'This is a good deal for Britain. It also means that the way is now clear to get our refund for last year, and to press ahead with the development of the Community.' – Margaret Thatcher, 26 June 1984, following Fontainebleau Summit

The year 1983 saw a broad range of books and articles published to commemorate and reflect on Britain's ten years of member (Young and Bridgewater, 1993: 147). In January, *The Times* ran a week-long series of op-eds by British and world leaders—some pro- and some anti-European—that are notable for, first, the similarity of arguments those used in the 1975 referendum and, second, the near unanimous verdict that British membership thus far had been rancorous and disappointing (*The Times*, 1983; see Appendix 2). Reflecting Britain's rancorous relationship and the lack of obvious progress or benefit of integration, public attitudes to Europe became increasingly negative in the years following the 1975 referendum (Figure A3). From the nadir of 1980 until 1983 there was only the slightest trend towards positivity (Figure 1), in line with the temporary resolutions to the British Budgetary Question (BBQ) and ongoing integration gridlock. By contrast, perceptions across the other eight members remained stable and far more positive. As such, while academics have characterised the years 1976-86 as 'a decade of stagnation in the integration process' as a whole, Britain's volatile and sceptical attitudes likely had causes peculiar to Britain (Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993: 507).

**Figure 2: Percentage of Britons answers "Common Market" as one the most important issues affecting Britain**




Source: Ipsos[1].

That said, the public issue salience (or perceived importance) of the "Common Market' declined significantly from around 15 per cent at the 1979 election to around 5 per cent at the following 1983 election. Similarly, as shown in Table 2, the emphasis that each party placed on Europe in the 1983 manifestos was similarly lower than that in 1979—with the Conservatives again only giving positive mentions to Europe and Labour again giving only a promise to withdraw.

**Table 2: Conservative and Labour Party manifesto emphasis on positive and negative apects of Europe, 1970-2016**

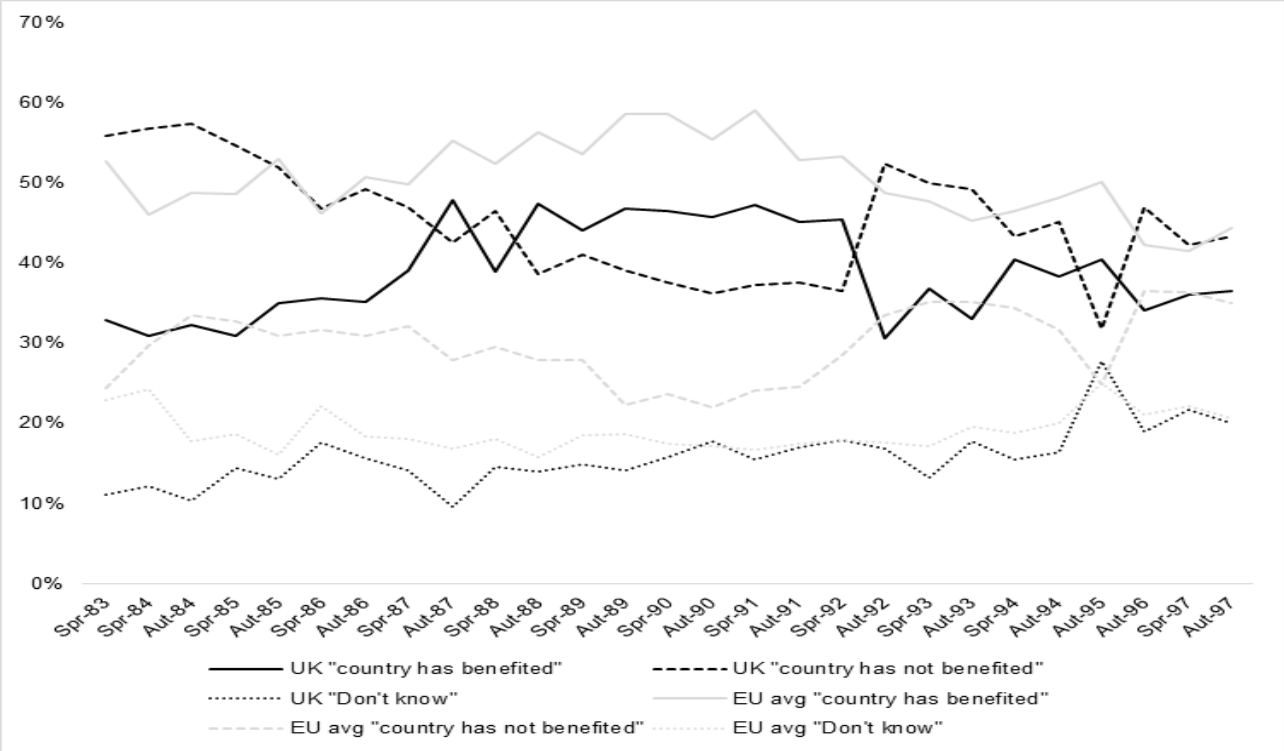
| | Conservative | | Labour | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Positive | Negative | Positive | Negative |
| Feb-74 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 7.1 |
| Oct-74 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| 1979 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 5.1 |
| 1983 | 1.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.3 |
| 1987 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| 1992 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 1.9 | 0.0 |
| 1997 | 2.9 | 3.9 | 3.4 | 0.4 |
| 2001 | 1.0 | 4.0 | 2.4 | 0.0 |
| 2005 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 0.2 |
| 2010 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 0.3 |
| 2015 | 0.6 | 4.6 | 2.9 | 0.1 |
| 2017 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 0.2 |
| 2019 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 0.4 | 0.3 |

1 Accessed at https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/important-issues-facing-britain on 29 July 2023

Source: Manifestos Project Database (Lehmann et al, 2023)

Planned governmental campaigns from 1980 onwards to shift public opinion were shelved due to the gridlock over the BBQ. 'Britain in the European Community: A Positive Approach' was published prior to the 1983 election, emphasising that membership helps the government achieve domestic objectives (FCO, 1983). The minimal domestic press coverage focussed on Thatcher's lack of involvement and there is no evidence that it changed retrospective evaluations of membership (Figure 3) although there is evidence that its positive tone may have helped to increased other governments' trust in Britain (Amante, 2015).

**Figure 3. Retrospective calculations about the effects of membership in the UK and across the EU**




Notes: source: Eurobarometer trend file[2]. "Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has (would) on balance benefited (benefit) or not from being a member of the EU?"

Although voters in 1983 remained ambivalent about membership thus far, there was one exception. When asked two months before the 1983 General Election which of seven policies they believed Thatcher's first government had achieved, a majority only responded "achieved" to two: "Reduced inflation" and "Get a better deal from the EEC" (56 per cent). The same two were the only ones to have a higher percentage stating "achieved" in 1983 than "expected" when asked in 1979. Moreover, after the election, polling showed that 30 per cent supported and 56 per cent opposed Labour manifesto promise of withdrawal (BPO, Jun. 1983). Despite seeing things moving in the right direction and having rejected withdrawal, in Table 3, we can see that one year later Britons still saw three of four effects of membership (notably all key in the 1975 referendum campaign)—prosperity, autonomy, and prices—in negative terms, and only one—peace in Europe—in positive terms.

2 Accessed at https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/about/other on 29 July 2023

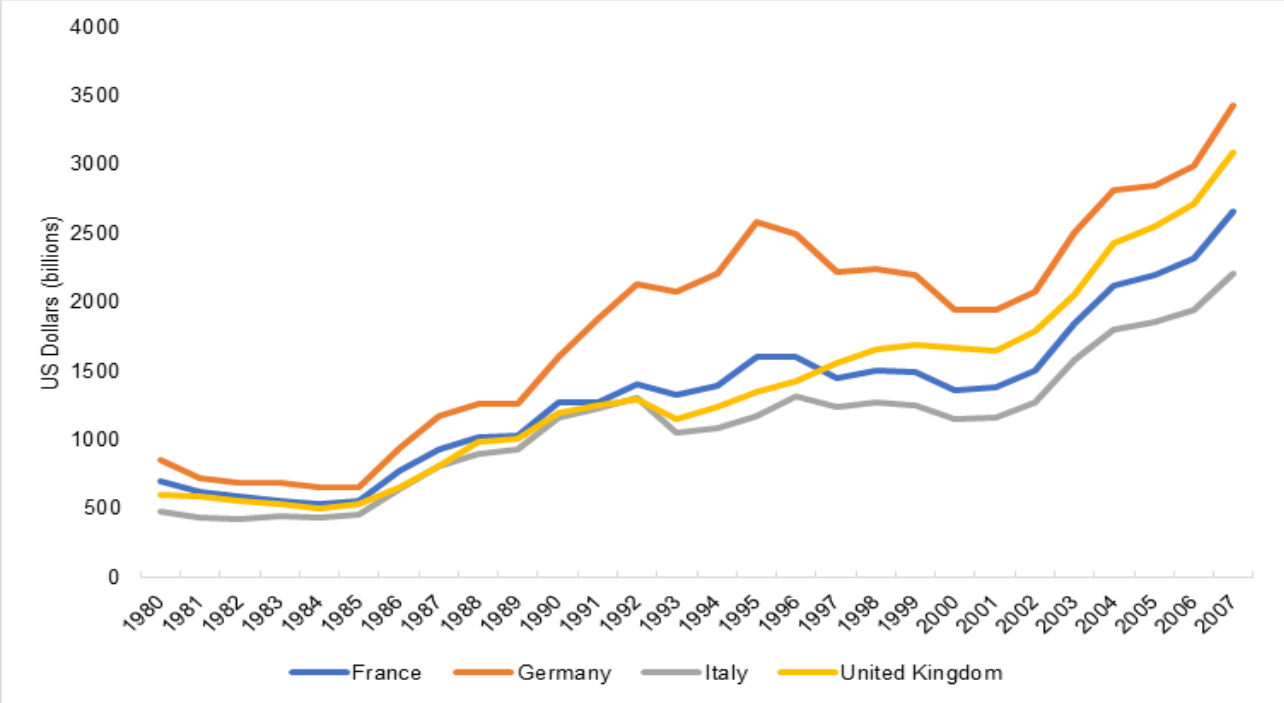
**Table 3. Retrospective evaluations of European membership in the terms of the 1975 referendum campaign**

| 7-8 June 1984: "Do you think Britain's membership of the Common Market has or has not … | Has | Has not | DK |
|---|---|---|---|
| Made Britain more prosperous than it would have been?" | 26 | 60 | 14 |
| Reduced Britain's control over her own destiny?" | 64 | 28 | 8 |
| Safeguarded the peace and political stability of Europe?" | 51 | 35 | 14 |
| Made food prices go up more than they would have done?" | 76 | 16 | 8 |

Source: BPO, 1984 (June)

Later that June, the BBQ was resolved at the Fontainebleau European Council, at which Thatcher circulated her "Europe, the future" (HMG paper, 1984) paper to fellow Heads of Government, outlining a radical vision and call for action for the creation of a new Europe dynamised through a single internal market, empowered through common defence, foreign, environmental, research, and developmental policies, governed through the Council, and united through the active development of a common identity amongst citizens. That spring, Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe had also publicly outlined a similar vision, arguing that following recent general election result 'the debate about whether we should be in or out is over' (Howe, 1984: 187).

**Figure 4: GDP, current prices, by major EU economy, 1980 to 2007**



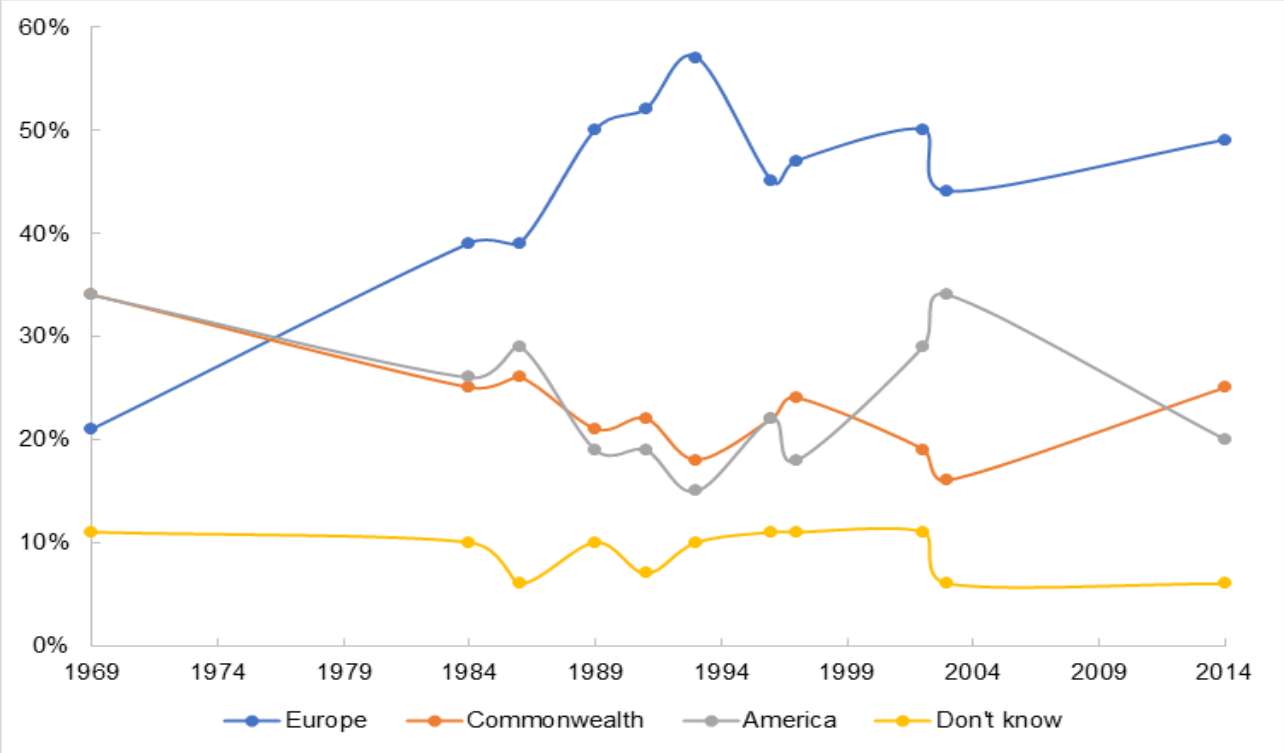

Source: International Monetary Fund[3]

This unprecedented British governmental proactivity can be proximally explained by the resolution of a key sticking point and the rejection of withdrawal at the 1983 election, despite negative retrospective evaluations. More distally, we can see the effects of calculations, community, and benchmarking. First, during the first half of the 1980s, the four major economies of the EEC underwent highly similar economic trajectories of stable decline with no relative ordinal change (Figure 4). As such problems—and thus solutions—were viewed as common and moved benchmarking from internal comparisons to

3 Data downloaded from https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/ on 29 July 2023

external ones, regarding the high-growth USA, Japan, and "newly industrialised countries" (George, 1990: 164), which were repeatedly cited in Thatcher's "Europe, the future". Second, although British attitudes had not become more favourable to Europe since joining, Britons had adopted a far more European orientation to their place in the world (Figure 5). Whereas in 1969, 68 per cent of Britons saw either the Commonwealth or the United States as the most important to Britain and only 21 per cent saw Europe as most important, by 1984 those positions had been reversed. Contemporary polling—and even Howe (1984)—variously negatively reflected that American ambivalence during the invasion of the Falkland Islands, the invasion of Grenada—a Commonwealth Realm (BPO, Oct. 1983), various business and diplomatic snubs, placing American-operated missiles on British soil, and Reagan's unpopularity all created the conditions for anti-Americanism that were 'exacerbated by a closer relationship with [the UK's] European partners in the EEC (BPO, Jan. 1986).' Late 1985 polling showed that Britons regarded the United States and Soviet Union as posing an equal threat to Europe (BPO, May 1985). By contrast, Kohl, in the Times, explicitly highlighted European solidarity during the Falklands War and the 1986 Anglo-French Treaty of Canterbury began the construction of the Channel Tunnel.

**Figure 5: "Which of these—Europe, the Commonwealth, or America—is the most important to Britain?"**




Source: Archive of Market and Social Research[4]

In 1984, the Eurobarometer showed that slightly more Britons thought that EC membership was a good thing than thought it was a bad thing for the first time since 1976. The following year, 1985, saw a series of Council meetings to draw up a timetable for the creation of a single market and agree to achieve its creation by the end of 1992 including by abandoning the use of national vetoes. In following meetings—and to Thatcher's opposition and long-term regret (Liddle, 2014: 11)—the single market project was linked to a new treaty, a wider set of reforms including the permanent, partial end to national vetoes, and plans for monetary union following ill-tempered Council meetings decided on by majority voting (e.g. Young and Bridgewater, 1995).

4 Collated from https://amsr.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/MORI-BPO/search on 29 July 2023

## 1986-1992: Prospective calculations and *Europhoria*

> 'As recently as 1985 there was the widespread impression that Europe was going nowhere fast. The Community had no real achievement except the limited one of the European Monetary System, and the public associated it with an endless and sterile internal budgetary dispute. Then came the Single European Act, and "1992"' – Boris Johnson, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 April, 1989

> '[Entering the Exchange Rate Mechanism] could help bring down the British rate of inflation … it would indeed be a disaster if Mrs Thatcher's desire to play de Gaulle left Britain on the sidelines as the superpower of the next century, the United States of Europe, came into being.' – *Daily Mail*, "1992: Why it has to be all or nothing", 2 August 1988

> 'I got it wrong' – Trade Union Congress president Clive Jenkins on his opposition to EEC membership in the 1975 referendum, 8 September 1988

> 'Not long ago, it was fashionable to diagnose Eurosclerosis. Now we have something like Europhoria … People in Europe feel a fresh start is being made … At last, 30 years after the European Community was founded … The idea of European integration is gaining momentum.' - *The American Banker*, "Is there a place for Americans in post-1992 Europe?", 3 February 1989

By 1986, Britain appeared as a more "normal" member state: more established than the Iberian newcomers, less peculiar and troublesome since Fontainebleau, and now able to frame issues such as CAP reform in Community-wide rather than adversarial terms. Moreover, Britain had proposed and, under the leadership of the UK's Commissioner Lord Cockfield, was establishing the Community's new flagship policy of a Single Market. Conversely, a project so 'Thatcherite in its essentials' (Dyson and Featherson, 1999: 534) lead British elites to believe that Europe was 'moving our way' (Grant, 1994: 89).

A September 1987 poll on membership showed an eight point lead for "stay in" over "get out"—the largest since the aftermath of the 1975 referendum (Figure A2) . That it was the first Mori poll on the question since June 1984 underlines how much of an *non*-issue Europe was at this point. Between 1985 and early 1988, the "Common Market" was deemed as an unimportant issue to Britons (Figure 2). At no general election before or after was less of the Conservative and Labour manifestos dedicated to Europe than that of June 1987 with the latter party taking on a quiet and ambivalent stance to the project after their 1983 drubbing and the in-fighting that followed (Table 2). Indeed, although 1986 had seen public opinion on the benefit of membership continued its long positive rally since nadir of 1980—a rally driven, at least since 1984, by those planning on voting Labour—1987 actually saw stability (Figure 1). The following year, 1988, saw a massive uptick in British pro-Europeanism, from a net 18 percentage point positive belief in that membership was a good thing to 34 percentage points in 1989 and from 0 percentage points to 33 for Labour voters. An additional smaller rally would see positivity peak at an overwhelming 46 percentage points in 1991 (see also Figure A2). Less overwhelmingly, positive retrospective evaluations quickly spiked up to large plurality in the mid-1980s but stayed stubbornly stable there until 1992 failing to rise with other attitudes, while negative retrospective evaluations continued their long fall from the early 1980s (Figure 3).

## Table 4: Support for various proposals for European integration

| | 1987 | | 1989 | | 1990 | | May 1991 | | Nov 1991 | | 1993 | | 1996 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose | Support | Oppose |
| Common system of legal practices | 58 | 26 | 59 | 26 | | | | | | | 43 | 34 | | |
| Fully integrated armed services to defend Europe | 58 | 29 | 57 | 32 | | | 61 | 31 | | | 55 | 28 | 36 | 50 |
| European passport instead of individual country passports | 51 | 38 | 53 | 41 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supreme Court of Europe should be introduced | 52 | 26 | 51 | 31 | | | | | | | | | 35 | 48 |
| Britain should become a member of the European Monetary System | 31 | 32 | 46 | 30 | | | | | | | | | | |
| A common system of taxes | 41 | 38 | 44 | 33 | | | | | | | 43 | 34 | | |
| Customs checks between member states should be abolished | 27 | 63 | 34 | 58 | | | | | | | | | | |
| More power should be transferred to the European Parliament from national parliaments | 28 | 50 | 28 | 55 | 30 | 56 | 32 | 53 | 18 | 70 | 20 | 59 | | |
| Fixed standards of workers' rights | | | | | | | 74 | 19 | | | | | | |

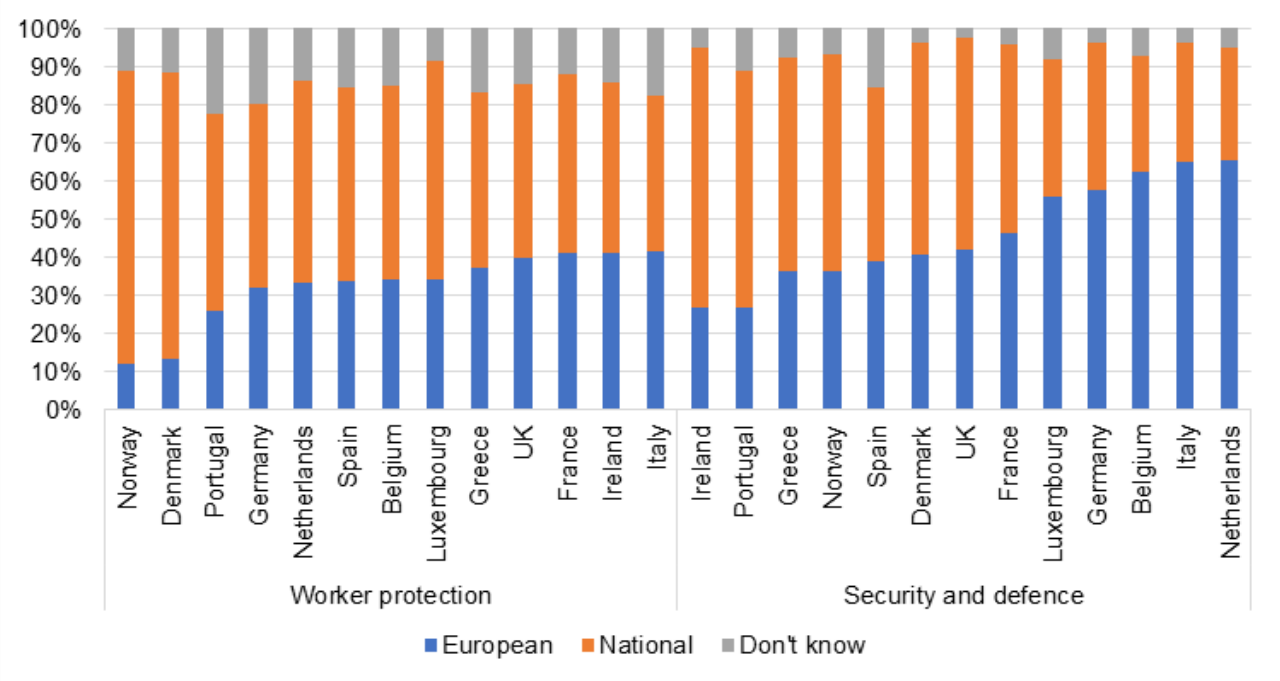
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EC countries should coordinate their foreign policies more | | | | | | | 74 | 13 | | | | | | |
| Decisions made by the Council of Ministers should be passed by majority voting, to get rid of the right of one country to veto decisions | 57 | 28 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| East European countries, such as Poland and Hungary, should be allowed to become members of the EC | | | 74 | 14 | | | 42 | 31 | | | | | | |
| A European Central Bank should be established | | | | | | | 53 | 31 | | | | | 31 | 54 |
| A single, coordinated European foreign policy | | | | | | | | | | | 37 | 36 | 29 | 49 |
| Sterling should rejoin the European exchange rate mechanism | | | | | | | | | | | 18 | 55 | | |
| A single European currency | | | | | | | | | | | 29 | 56 | 32 | 58 |
| A United States of Europe | | | | | | | | | | | | | 27 | 57 |

Source: Archive of Market and Social Research[5]

5 Collated from https://amsr.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/MORI-BPO/search on 29 July 2023

Prospectively, in 1987—and to a larger extent in 1988—there was widespread support for various proposal for European integration in terms of legal, judicial, defence, foreign policy, and tax integration, majority voting in the Council, and enlargement (Table 4). Notably, and partially in line with Thatcher's vision, popular opinion remained opposed to empowering the European Parliament and initially opposed British membership of the European Monetary System, though by 1989 had become in favour. A June 1989 poll showed that 58 per cent of Britons saw protection of the environment as a matter to be decided at Community level, compared to just 38 per cent for the British government (BPO, Jul. 1989). High support for common protection for workers—as well as worker participation—and defence integration put British attitudes well within the European mainstream (Figure 6). A December 1989 poll showed that a whopping 85 per cent of Britons supported the EC Social Charter, with just 10 per cent opposed (BPO, Jan. 1990). Similarly, a February 1991 poll, in the wake of the Gulf crisis, showed that 78 per cent of Britons favoured a European Community defence body, compared to "just" 71 per cent across the EC (BPO, 1991 (March)).

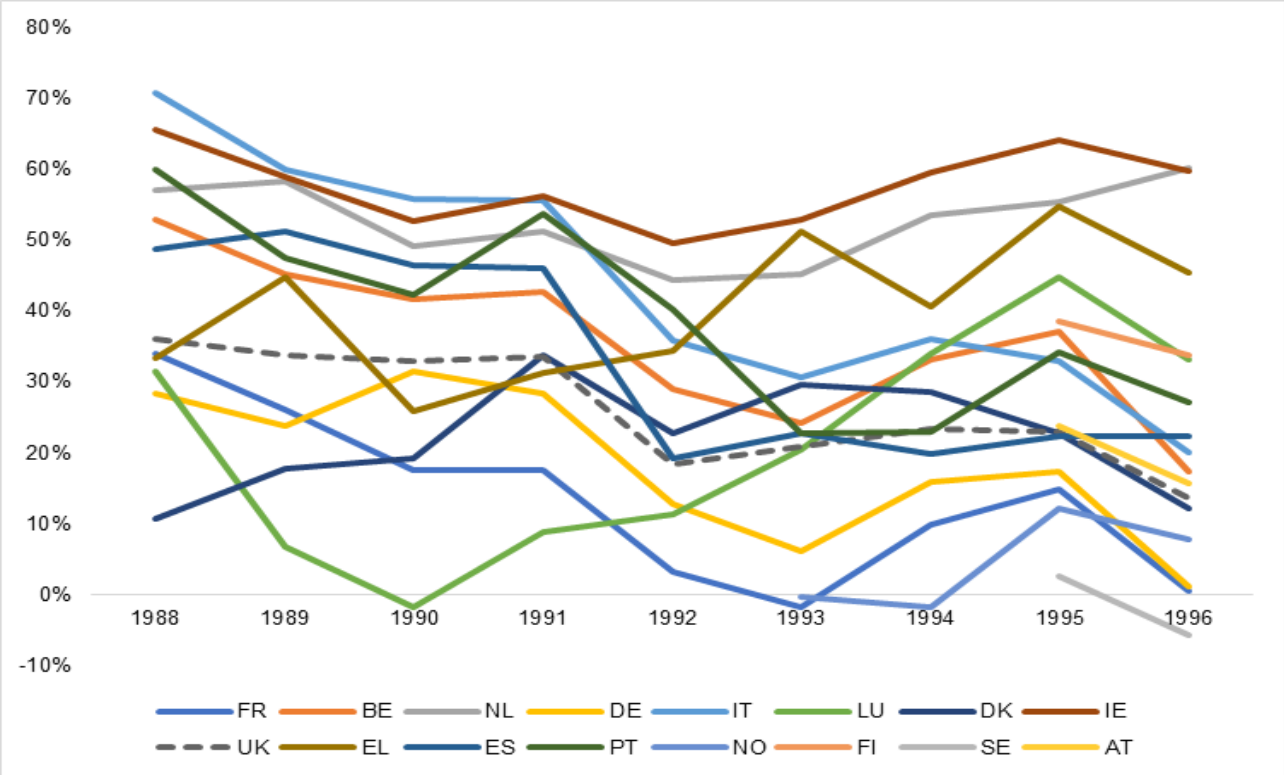
**Figure 6: Support for single European policy on workers protection and security and defence, 1990**




Britons characterised their emotional attitudes to the prospective Single Market as overwhelmingly more "hopeful" than "fearful", and they were more likely to do so consistently than respondents in Germany or France (Figure 7). The British government took an active stance towards encouraging business—though not popular—support and engagement with "1992" with a flurry of campaigns in the late 1980s (Smedley, 2021). Nine years before becoming Prime Minister, Tony Blair wrote in *The Times* in March 1988 that such campaigns were 'belated' given that closer cooperation is desirable and inevitable'[6]. By October the same newspaper stated that 'For months ministers have been attempting to instil into Britain's corporate mentality a kind of "Europhoria".[7] The 1988 "Europe Open For Business" campaign was not only kicked off with a conference of British CEOs with speeches from Thatcher and Delors (see introduction), but also featured television advertisements in which Richard Branson and Alan Sugar—two of Britain's most famous businessmen—emphasised that 'the opportunities coming up for British business can't be stressed enough' and viewers were encouraged to 'seize the opportunity' and call "01-200-1992" for a "Single Market information pack".[8]

6 *The Times*. "Europe's challenge". 15 March 1988
7 "Dangerous Walls", *The Times*, Wednesday, 12 October 1988
8 Accessed at https://twitter.com/Jon_Danzig/status/1593524462204653568?fbclid=IwAR2CHJVOeLsAqkHHRoaK-

**Figure 7: Hope versus fear as emotional reactions to the Single Market, by country 1988-1996**




Notes: Eurobarometer. "Personally, would you say that the Single European Market which will come about by 1992 makes you feel very hopeful, rather hopeful, rather fearful or very fearful?"

Simultaneously, newspaper readers were informed of the glut of financial investment to Europe that the plan for a single market and, later, the fall of the Berlin Wall and its promise of CEEC markets heralded. Domestically, *The Guardian* headlined "Time to invest in Europe's renaissance" reasoning "The discovery of a large scale, generally skilled and reasonably educated workforce on the fringe of the EC [and] the possibility of bringing Western consumer goods and services to Eastern Europe, as currencies gradually become more convertible, seems too good to miss.'[9] While across the English-speaking world, newspapers argued "Investors are grabbing their chequebooks and heading for Europe"[10] as "Eurosclerosis has changed to Europhoria on the strength of 1992 [and] Eastern Europe being added to the economic picture"[11], and "The number of European stock funds nearly doubled last year [1989] from 11 to 19 as eager investors rushed to profit from communism's collapse and the prospect of a free market stretching from Greece to Ireland by 1992.'[12] Financial advertisements encouraged would-be investors to make "1,000% in the 1990's" in Europe as "the investment opportunity of the decade!"[13]

RoWj6ptMiok12dK0lPBGGhUn6AKcUJvN_21VKXY on 29 July 2023.

9 T*he Guardian* (London), 'Time to invest in Europe's renaissance: How governments, capital and firms are responding to the tumultuous changes in the Socialist bloc' December 18, 1989

10 *The Financial Post* (Toronto, Canada). "Germany Fund Shines On Wall Street", December 29, 1989

11 *Australian Financial Review*, Investors Shrug Off Tokyo's Tumble, March 21, 1990 Late Edition

12 *USA TODAY*, Rush to European funds fails to pan out, January 7, 1991

13 *The European, Advertisement*. 11 May 1990. Section 2, page 20

Simultaneously, the UK was falling behind its high-growth European benchmark countries (Figure 4). One OECD official argued that 'Europhoria has definitely whipped Eurosclerosis off the ground' due to 'terrific dynamism', a 'continued investment boom', and 'wage moderation … except in Britain, Portugal and Spain.'[14] Most famously, however, was *Il Sorpasso*—"the overtaking"—in 1987 and again in 1992, in which the Italian economy overtook the British economy to become the fifth largest worldwide. Future Labour minister and then Economics Editor for the *Guardian,* Chris Huhne, already wrote in 1986 one of several favourable comparisons between the high achieving Italian socio-economic model and Britain's, concluding 'the real laggards these days are those rain-drenched western islanders' while *The Economist* stated in 1988 that 'the Romans conquer Britain' and *The Telegraph* in December 1990 still talked of 'much swaggering talk about *il sorpasso*'[15]. Thatcher commented that she was unconcerned because it meant a higher Italian contribution to the EC budget (Begg, 2016: 42-43).

Although much as has been made of the effect of Thatcher's turning against Europe during the late 1980s—with her 1988 "Bruges Speech" to the College of Europe inspiring the formation of a Eurosceptic grouping—any effects on public attitudes were certainly not immediately visible. Positivity to the EC amongst Conservative voters continued to rise during this period (Figure 1). This may have been due to other, stronger countervailing effects, but it is just as likely that, first, the Euroscepticism on display within the speech has been overplayed perhaps due to the contrasting "Europhoria" abroad at the time, and, second, Thatcher's increasing Euroscepticism did far more to isolate her from the public and her party than it did to turn either against Europe, at least prior to 1992. Indeed, one poll from December 1989 showed that 60 per cent of the public viewed her as hostile to Europe and only 29 per cent as friendly, with the same poll showing widespread support for Eastern enlargement, near universal support for the Social Charter, rapidly widening poll leads for Labour, and disapproval of Thatcher's government (BPO, Jan. 1990). Tellingly, in April 1989, Boris Johnson contributed to the *Daily Telegraph*'s "Countdown to 1992" series by describing the "Bruges Group" as 'grouches', 'super-nationalists' and 'people with a prejudice against anything that sounds vaguely foreign', characterising the "Bruges Speech" as having only 'a bit of scepticism from Mrs Thatcher about peripheral aspects of the 1992 programme', though warning that 'powers of hype have allowed it ["1992"] to become a sacred cow' and that the pro-marketeers must drop their 'oppressive idealism … [i]f they want to win the argument—and it is they who must'.[16] One July 1990 poll showed that a pluralities of the electorate and Conservative voters and a majority of Labour voters agreed that 'Britain should become a member of the Exchange Rate Mechanism before the end of the year', which it did in October (BPO, Aug. 1990).

The improved Conservative poll ratings after Thatcher's November 1990 removal by pro-Europeans within her cabinet allowed Major to significantly soften his tone on Europe (Bale, 2010: 36). Early reports in *The Times* noted a 'more pragmatic approach' and determination to 'not repeat the 11-1 confrontations of the Thatcher era'[17] while by March 1991 the same newspaper reported 'With Mr Major striking up such a good personal relationship with Herr Kohl, there is already talk in official circles of rapid progress towards a Europe in which all three countries share the responsibility for leadership.'[18] Whereas Thatcher's Euroscepticsm had been side-lined, her shrewd public appeals for a referendum on the single currency—rather than opposition—received widespread support. Meanwhile, the Conservative's 1992 election manifesto stated that the UK should be at the 'heart of Europe'.[19] That year's election would be the only in British history in which *both* major parties had

14 Aapintnews, World Growth To Quicken: Oecd, November 18, 1989 Saturday

15 *The Guardian*, They didn't retain the World Cup but the Italians are winning the GNP stakes. Aug 18, 1986. Pp 19; *The Economist*. Lies, damned lies and Italy's GDP. 27 February 1988, Vol 306, Issue 7539; Barker, Godfrey and Georgina Adam. The Telegraph. Sex, siestas, and Italian art buying. 17 December 1990, pp 14; see also Keegan, William. *The Guardian*. 'The not-so sick man of Europe', 8 September 1985. pp.27

16 Johnson, Boris. 'Time to remove gloves in the Great Debate'. *Daily Telegraph*. 17 April 1989.

17 *The Times*. Hurd will present softer stance on Europe's future. 10 December, 1990

18 *The Times*. Major and Kohl seek shared view. 11 March, 1991

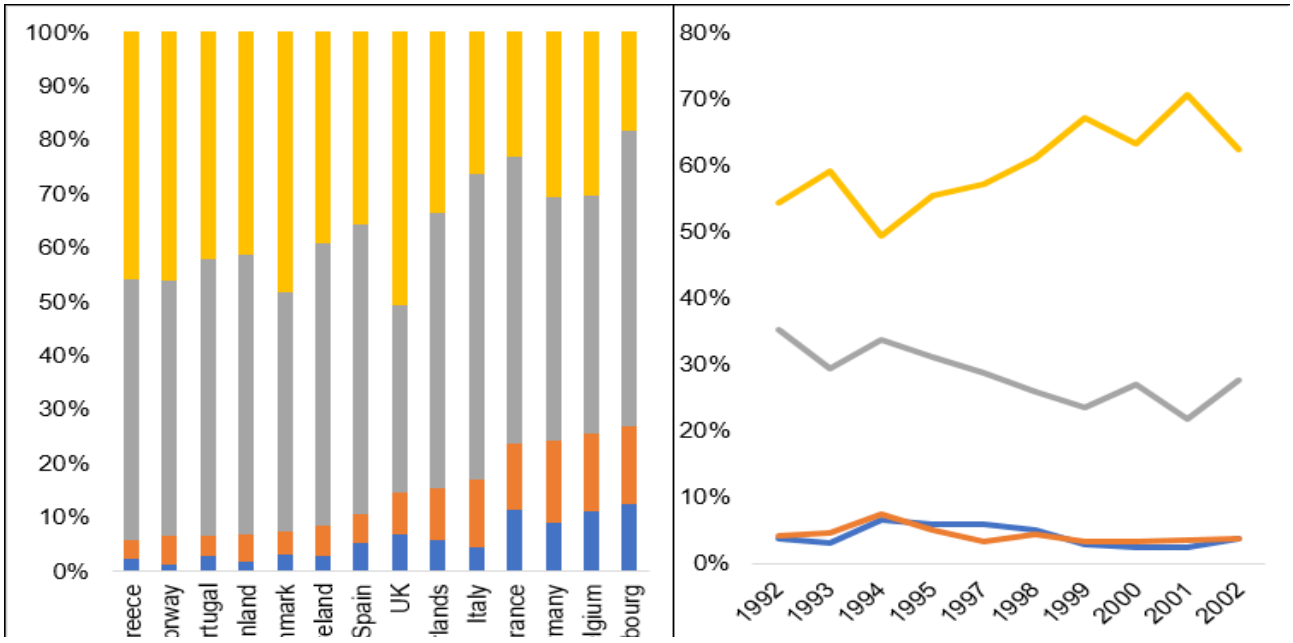
19 'The best future for Britain', 1992 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto, cited in Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 137–138.

more good to say about European integration in their manifesto than bad (Table 2).

Like the "Bruges Speech", Delors' speech to the TUC—in which he assured his audience that its social chapter, including the likes of the right to collective bargaining, would be 'vital'—has also been widely studied (Cowles, 1995; Mitchell, 2012; Cole, 2020). Its power is not only reflected in the instant U-turn on support for membership by the TUC president and sky-rocketing support amongst prospective Labour voters—and the British public as a whole—but in the favourability of the British public to the European institutions. Whereas in 1987 only 25 per cent of Britons had a "generally favourable"—rather than neutral or unfavourable—attitude to the Commission, by 1990 it had risen to 53 per cent, just shy of the 56 among the other 11 as a whole and ahead of four member states' averages (Schmitt et al, 2008). Labour under Kinnock had already been setting out a more active stance towards Europe, earlier in 1988 stating, 'our non-engagement would mean the unimpeded movement to the complete economic and political domination of Western Europe by market power' and calling for something similar to the forthcoming Social Chapter. One month after the TUC speech, the Labour Party's annual conference committed the party to implement a social programme whereby 'the benefits of the unified market are shared by all people in the EC'—not only for the 'benefit [of] the business community' (Cole, 2020: 434). The following year *The Economist* reported that the Labour Party had a 'new zest for Europe' after that Delors's speech 'confirmed their new faith. It has also to be said, though few in the party admit as much, the Labour's thinking includes a strong anti-American strand'.[20] Indeed, in addition to the episode of the early 1980s, polling showed widespread British disapproval of America's involvement in Nicaragua (BPO, Feb. 1987) in 1987 and Panama in 1990 (BPO, Jan. 1990).

During this period, "Europe" was rapidly increasingly seen as more far important than the United States or the Commonwealth to Britain with the former reaching its peak of 57 per cent and the latter each hovering around 20 per cent in 1993 (Figure 5). Moreover, in 1992, 45 per cent of Britons identified themselves at least to some extent as Europe rather than only British (Figure 8). Comparatively, although Britain retained an unusually high proportion of individuals who identified as "British only", it also had a relatively high proportion of those who either identified as "European only" or "European, then British" and considerably higher than the Nordic countries, southern European countries (bar Italy), and Ireland.

**Figure 8: Feeling European (left, 1994 by country; right, UK 1992-2002)**




20 *The Economist*. Bridging views at Westminster. (London, England), Saturday, July 1, 1989; pg. 27; Issue 7609.

Source: Schmitt et al, 2008

This high-water mark of European identity saw an unprecedented production of British cultural output—across the arts, sports, and media—framed in European terms (Figure 9). Musically, major British artists drew on "continental" electronic influences, culminating with indie band's *Carter USM*'s album "1992: The Love Album" reaching number 1 in the album charts; 'The European Union flag providing the cover and title refers to the then-groundbreaking fusion of governments and policies in the continent'[21], achieving critical acclaim. The period saw British football clubs banned from European competition for five years due to hooliganism from 1985 to 1990; the result was the outflow of dozens of top British players to continental European clubs which 'went up another notch following Italia 90'.[22] The 1992 transfer of Paul Gasgoigne to Lazio cemented British interest and lead to terrestrial coverage of the—then far wealthier and higher quality—Italian league's games and a weekly "*Gazetta*" magazine programme set in Italian caffes and *piazze*, 'winning British hearts'.[23] Other television programmes of the period included the high-budget *Eurotrash*, co-presented by French fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier, which provided British viewers with a surreal and smutty taste of culture from across the continent from 1993 to 2007, with a one-off special on the evening before the 2016. Perhaps most notable of all was the May 1990 launch of weekly *The European* newspaper, self-described as "Europe's first national newspaper", which would run until 1998 and had an initial circulation of around 180,000, over half of which was in the UK.[24] Its first issue featured contributions by Thatcher, Wildred Martens, Jacques Santer, Mário Soares, and the President of the Bundesbank as well as polls showing majority support for a single currency (in the UK and others, but not Germany or Denmark), soft anti-Americanism, new pan-European Ecu-denominated financial indices, and coverage of the disintegration of the eastern bloc.

21 https://www.allmusic.com/album/1992-the-love-album-mw0000613763
22 https://thesefootballtimes.co/2018/11/21/the-relationship-between-sampdoria-and-english-players/
23 https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/sep/05/fun-glamour-and-chaos-how-gazzetta-football-italia-won-our-hearts
24 https://web.archive.org/web/20080803142025/http://norumbega.co.uk/2008/06/30/the-european/

**Figure 9: Cultural artefacts of *Europhoria*. Clockwise, starting top-left: UK no. 1 album "1992: The Love Album"; "Gazetta Football Italia" promotional still; "The European" weekly newspaper vo1. 1 and 83; "Eurotrash" promotional still**


By the April 1992 General Election, net belief that British membership of the EC was a good thing hit an all-time high of 44.4 percentage points (Table 5), higher than the 1991 average (Figure 1).

## 1992-1997: Precipitated calculations

> ‘First it was Eurosclerosis … Then, Europhoria … Now this week’s EC summit in the Dutch city of Maastricht suggests that the 33-year-old Community has entered a more difficult stage. Call it Eurorealism.’ – *Newsweek*, ‘All together now – sort of’, 16 December, 1991

> ‘Until last week, Britain seemed to have decided that its future lay wholeheartedly with Europe … Before the currency mayhem and France’s wafer-thin *Oui* to Maastricht’ – *The Economist*, ‘Time to Choose?’, 26 September, 1992

> ‘A year later, it is hard to find anybody in Britain … who admits that they ever supported sterling’s membership of the ERM … Britain’s first year outside the ERM has left the economy healthier than the rest of Europe. and healthier than it might have been.’ - *The Economist*, ‘Whitewash Wednesday’, 18 September, 1993

> ‘While the federalists hurl their energies into organising a single European currency, as the *pièce de résistance* of European integration, the single market in goods, services, capital and labour lies unfinished, and littered with hidden barriers.’ – *The Daily Telegraph*, ‘Single but not fancy free’, 17 February 1996

After the 1992 general election, British attitudes to Europe spent the rest of the 1990s in decline. The likelihood that this resulted from cueing seems fairly slim given, first, the downward trajectory of Labour and Conservative voters was highly similar—at least until 1997—and, second, the trajectory of non-British Europeans was *also* highly similar, albeit from a higher constant (Figure 1; Figure A1 for country trends), reflecting the transition of public opinion on Europe from a “permissive consensus” to a “constraining dissensus” (Hooghe and Marks, 2009) and in contrast to earlier bouts of British Euroscepticism, which were largely unique to Britain. Furthermore, the government tried to cue voters with another pro-European information campaign to promote the Maastricht Treaty and Europe, with a pamphlet published in November 1992—Britain in Europe: The European Community and Your Future’—and an information pack for secondary schools.

This is not to say that uniquely British events did not have an effect, but more that following initial shocks they tended to be absorbed into broader trends. The effects of Britain’s chaotic and damaging exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism, “Black Wednesday”, on 16 September 1992 were a sudden and marked increase in Euroscepticism across various metrics (Table 5, Figure 3). However, there was some degree of rebound in the following six months and the other members of the EC saw a steady increase in Euroscepticism during the same period. As such, whereas the full year following April 1992 saw a nine-point reduction in the percentage of Britons seeing EC membership as a good thing, the same period *also* saw a five-point reduction across the rest of the EC. By Spring 1993, around a quarter of both groups saw membership a bad thing, but with far less ambivalence in the rest of the EC (see Figure 7 on hope versus fear for the single market). Similar trends are visible across the other metrics, such as the still-high favourability to unification, but with a notable dip in the UK in the weeks after “Black Wednesday”.

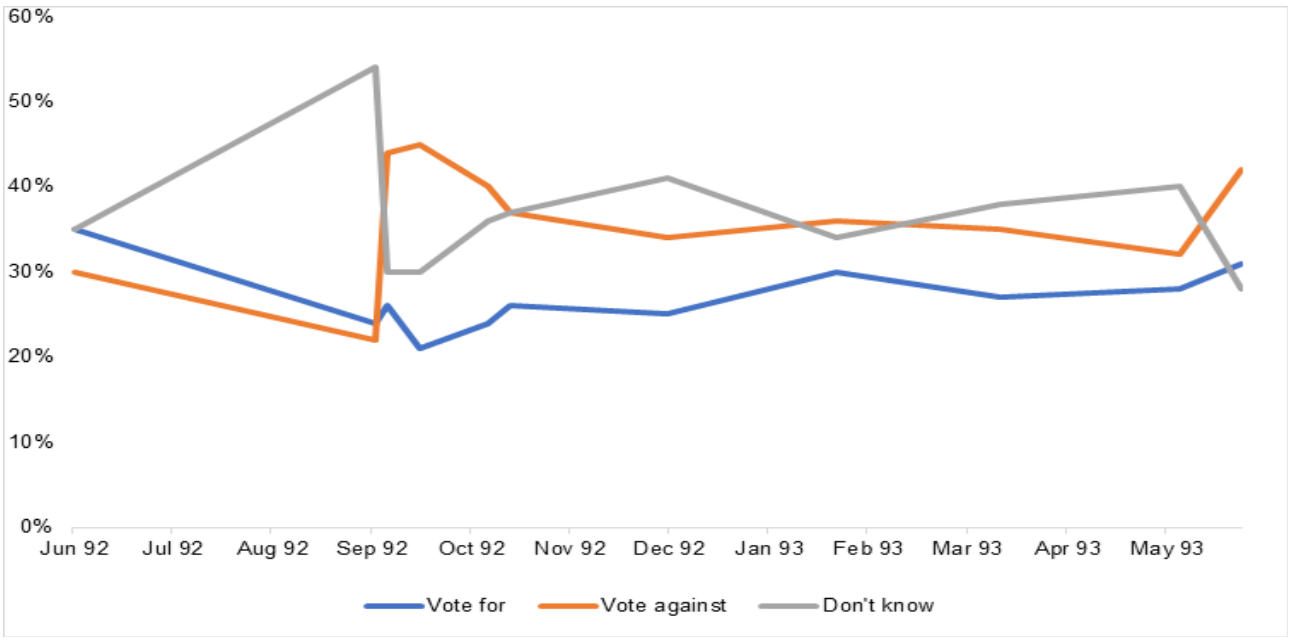
**Table 5: Attitudes to Europe before and after "Black Wednesday"**

| | | UK | | | EC11 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mar -Apr | 23 Sept - 16 Oct | Mar – Apr | Mar-Apr | Sept – Oct | Mar – Apr |
| | | 1992 | 1992 | 1993 | 1992 | 1992 | 1993 |
| EC membership is a … | Good thing | 58.8 | 46.9 | 50.0 | 70.7 | 67.4 | 66.2 |
| | Neither | 27.1 | 26.5 | 23.2 | 19 | 23 | 10.5 |
| | Bad thing | 14.4 | 26.6 | 26.8 | 10.3 | 9.6 | 23.3 |
| Common currency | In favour | 40.0 | 33.5 | 34.4 | 69.6 | 66.5 | 64.5 |
| | Not in favour | 60.0 | 66.5 | 65.6 | 30.5 | 33.5 | 35.5 |
| Maastricht effect on country | Positive | 69.2 | 49.2 | | 73.1 | 61.0 | |
| | No effect | 14.9 | 8.4 | | 8.7 | 7.1 | |
| | Negative | 16 | 42.4 | | 18.2 | 31.9 | |
| European unification | For very much | 26.4 | 18.7 | 20.5 | 34.9 | 31.5 | 29.6 |
| | For to some extent | 51.5 | 45.1 | 47.7 | 50.0 | 51.5 | 53.6 |
| | Against to some extent | 14.9 | 21.5 | 20.7 | 10.4 | 12.2 | 12.1 |
| | Against very much | 7.2 | 14.6 | 11.2 | 4.6 | 4.9 | 4.7 |
| Country has benefit-ted from EC | Benefitted | 55.4 | 36.9 | 42.4 | 67.1 | 64.5 | 60.1 |
| | Not benefitted | 44.6 | 63.1 | 57.6 | 33.0 | 35.5 | 39.0 |

Indeed, other member states—both at elite and popular level—saw major resistance to at least some degree of the Maastricht Treaty and, particularly, the single currency, even across countries, such as Germany and those in southern Europe, that remained highly supportive of the project. One commentary argued that the decline in public favourability was because of the treaty itself: 'complex, obtuse, in parts unreadable, with little thought for how it would "play in Peoria" and apparently no consideration for the adoption process to ensure its passage, ignoring its impact on public opinion … [which] was mismanaged to the point of neglect''[25] Commission favourability dropped across the newly fashioned EU at a similar rate to in Britain. Feeling "national only", as opposed to European, rose in Britain and across the EU up until 1997, thereafter diverging as other Europeans refound their Europeanness (Schmitt et al, 2008).

However, there were important differences, the importance of which would emerge later. The extraordinarily high public salience of "Europe" in 1992 and then from 1994 onwards (Figure 2) reflects two things. First, domestically, the passage of Maastricht and later the debate over the single currency gradually led to the transformation of Conservative party politics. Conservative MPs initially hailed Maastricht as triumph: 'the handful of anti-federalist MPs on both sides who dared try to spoil the party staged for Mr Major in a crowded House of Commons, were overwhelmed by the tide of Tory relief and delight at what ministers were busy portraying as a victory.[26] Similarly, the *Daily Mail* celebrated the Maastricht Treaty 'in shaping an ever-closer European union' and still contemplated joining the Single Currency (Young, 1999: 434). However, the party's membership increasingly sided with Thatcher's wing of the party—marginalised as a threat to British centrality in Europe throughout "Europhoria"—and so became ascendant following the 1997 election defeat (Liddle, 2014: 15). Second, within Europe, Britain again became involved in acrimonious Council meetings—a September 1992 meeting ended in a shouting match over German refusal to lower interest rates following conference calls on Black Wednesday in which Bundesbank officials 'suddenly' claimed to not be able to speak English (Liddle: 2014: 40). This contrasted with 'longstanding member countries['s … ] years of experience of co-operation' (Inman, 2012). In terms of both relationships and the road to monetary union, Britain was again an outsider and by the 1997 general election, a major party's electoral offer was again Eurosceptic (Table 2).

**Figure 10: How would you vote in a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty?**




25 Worcester, R. 1999. 'Europe: The State of Public Opinion'. Accessed at https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/europe-state-public-opinion on 29 July 2023

26 T*he Guardian*. Tories hail Major triumph: Opposition attacks 'semi-detached' role in European union as Maastricht opt-out deal revives general election jockeying. 12 December 1991

Perhaps most profoundly, the highly similar trends in Britain and across the continent were enough to damage pro-Europeanism's status as the majority position only in Britain. In Figure 8, we can see how Black Wednesday converted British ambivalence about Maastricht into opposition overnight. Moreover, as Figure 3 and Table 5 show, the event instantly put retrospective evaluations of the impact of European membership on Britain into negative territory and, with "1992" just around the corner, very little road left for prospective enthusiasm, which was perceived to have failed to pan out after 1992 (see beginning of this section).

This is not to say that Britons had lost all of their *Europhoria*—support for joining the Social Chapter—as happened after 1997—was high and support for Eastern enlargement—as happened in 2004—was higher in Britain than many western European members. Indeed, November 1994 showed both support for 'closer European links', a single currency and eastern enlargement to be higher in Britain than Germany—though support for European Parliamentary oversight of a European Central Bank was far considerably higher in the latter. Indeed, two of the major EU policy advances of Maastricht—a single currency and an empowered European Parliament at the expense of the House of Commons—were the two that Britain had been most wary of, whereas the likes of defence and foreign policy integration were far more limited in their advances (Table 4).

Whereas Britain still saw its future in Europe (see also Figure 5) and much Maastricht-inspired negativity was EU wide, Britain again stood out in terms of more fractious relationship, its outsider position, and a governing party's internal moves Euroscepticism (after 1997, at least). Furthermore, for the first time since membership, the UK outperformed Italy economically from 1993 outperforming Italy, from 1994, France and Germany, which—as shown in the *Economist* quote above—was widely credited as the result of withdrawing from a European policy. With the advent of "Cool Britannia", "Britpop", the YBAs ("Young British Artists"), the founding of the English Premier League and England's hosting of the 1996 European football championships, and a flow of more explicitly British-centred film and television output, the public mood changed from forward-looking hopeful idealism to contented celebration and self-assurance. Although the relationship between these artistic movements and "Europe" was more ambiguous and indifferent than their flat rejection of America, the explicitly national iconography and swaggering attitude left little room for the, by now more bureaucratic than idealistic, Europe (Huq, 2016)

## Conclusion and discussion

What caused British "Europhoria"? Initially, the radical proposals by the British government for "Europe, the Future" in 1984 were caused by: (1) recognition that Europe was by then more important to Britain than America or the Commonwealth (i.e. "community"); (2) common stagnation across major European economies in contrast to elsewhere in the world ("benchmarking"); (3) despite negative retrospective evaluations, post-1980 moves towards resolution of the British budget question lead to lower public salience and a belief that Britain had a better deal ("calculations"); (4) Labour's 1983 election loss delegitimised their electoral offer of withdrawal ended the debate over membership, framed in terms of the 1975 referendum ("cues"). Subsequently, Britain's proposals immediately made its membership appear constructive and lead to the central cause of Europhoria: the Single Market Act and "1992" plan, which had multiple effects.

Immediately it associated Europe with anticipation over a wide range of possible forms of integration that caused a large and well-publicised wave of financial investment into Europe, reinforced by the post-1989 promise of eastern European markets ("calculations"). Delors' 1988 TUC speech and addition of a social component lead to Labour's support for the Community ("cues"). *Il Sorpasso* aided the impression that the European social model was superior ("benchmaking"). There is no evidence that Thatcher's 1988 Bruges speech had an initial effect; conversely it led to her removal in 1990, further marginalising Euroscepticism and making Britain seem an even more central and harmonious member ("cues'). These events created a strong European identity, reinforced by

Europeanising cultural forces in sports, arts, and media (“community”).

Thereafter, Maastricht caused a widespread turn towards Euroscepticism across Europe that, particularly initially, was stronger in Britain due to its September 1992 exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism, which: redeemed Thatcher’s marginalised Eurosceptic wing (“cues”); lead to faster economic growth than in the rest of Europe (“benchmarking”); in the short-term made Britain’s relationship fractious again and in the long-term made it a policy outsider union (“cues”).

Theoretically, we can see that several operationalisations of “calculations, community, and cues” and “benchmarking” operate differentially over time. First, benchmarking can be internal and regarding of other member states—both for the better and worse—but also external to how the EU is relative to other markets. Cues affect attitudes far more via the perceived harmony of European relations, centrality within the Community, and popular policy changes to Europe than via domestic politician, party, media cueing or government information campaigns. Calculations are shown to be multifaceted, with prospective hope overriding retrospective negativity, and often regarding multiple, non-economic issues. Finally, “community” goes beyond feeling European to, on the one hand, the relative importance of various international relationships—for Britain: Europe, the Commonwealth, and Anglo-America and, on the other, cultural manifestation of European identity.

Future research should build on this work by expanding this explanatory framework further, by providing additional tests of the above variables either in distinct contexts—in Britain and other member states, and regarding other unions—or with further evidence, and by validating each of the mechanisms with more robust testing.

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# Appendices

## *Appendix 1: selected uses of "Reluctant Europeans"*

Findlay, A., King, R., Stam, A., & Ruiz-Gelices, E. (2006). Ever reluctant Europeans: The changing geographies of UK students studying and working abroad. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, *13*(4), 291-318

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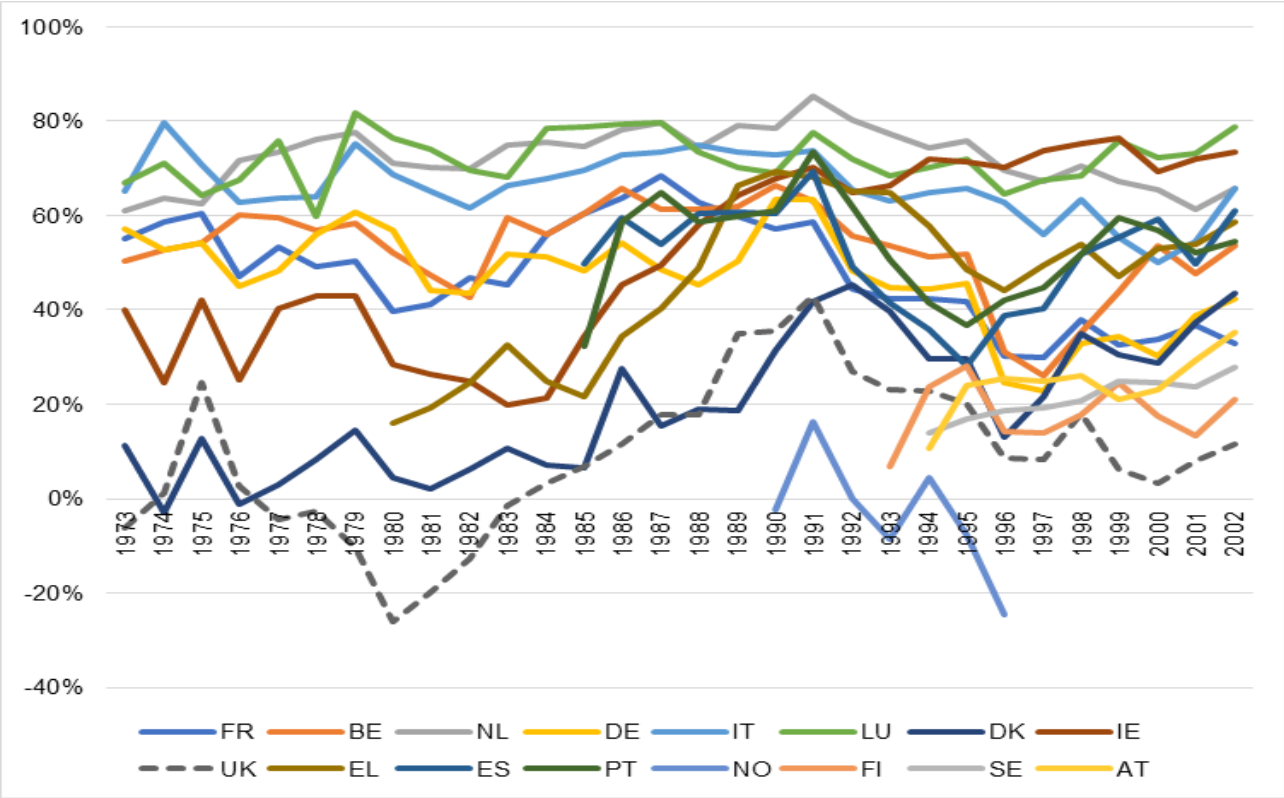
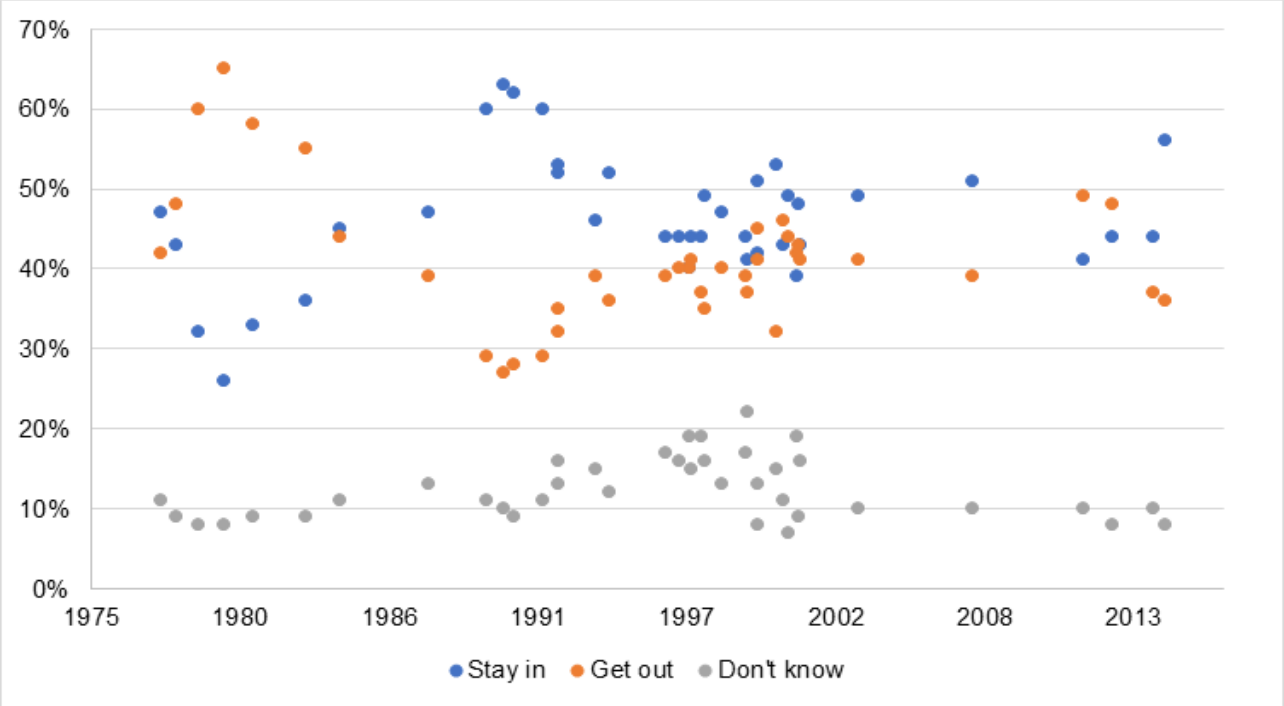
**Figure A1: Net belief that EU "membership is a good thing" rather than "bad thing", 1973-2001 by country (yearly averages)**



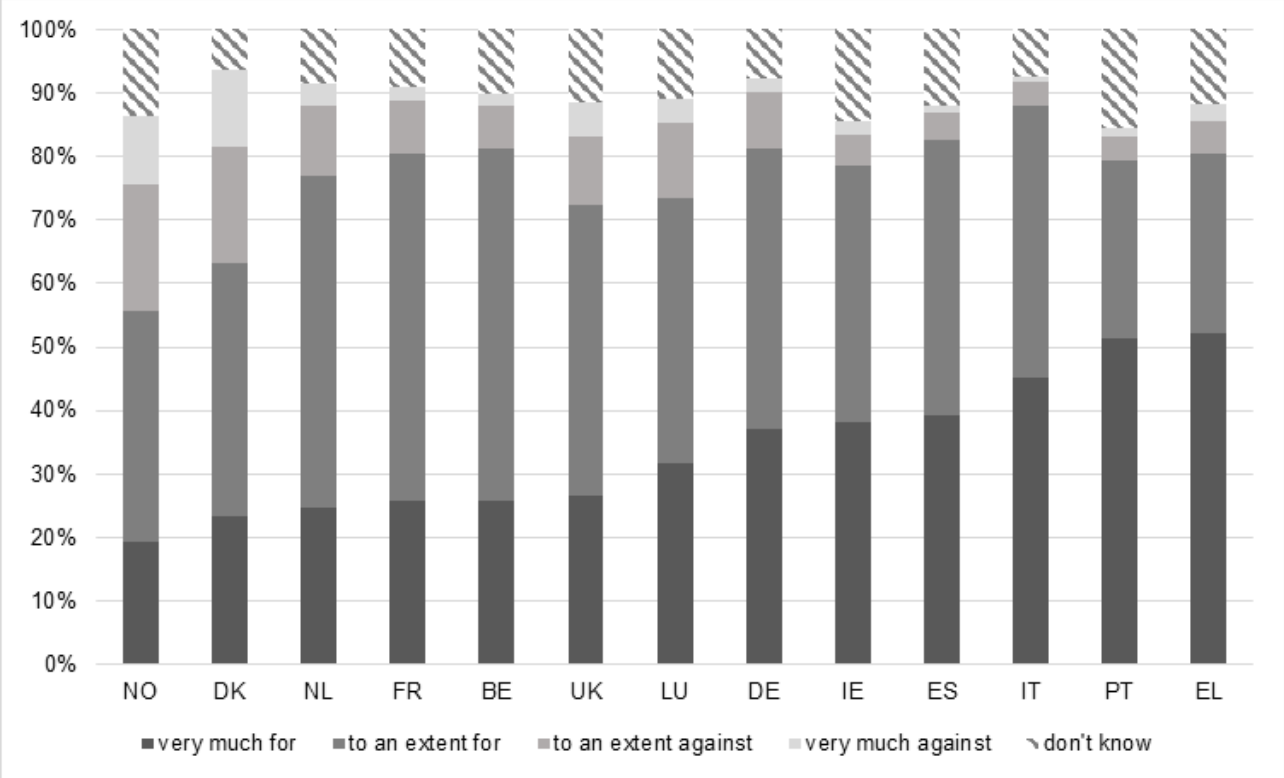
Notes: Schmitt et al, 2008. % stating EEC / EC / EU membership is a good thing minus % stating EEC / EC / EU membership is a bad thing. "Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is ... ?" "A good thing"; "Neither good nor bad"; "a bad thing"; "don't know"

**Figure A2: Mori polling on a hypothetical British referendum on European membership**




Source: Ipsos, collated from https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/europe-eu-and-euro on 29 July 2023

**Figure A3: Support for European unification by country, 1990**




Notes: "In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?" "very much for"; "only to some extent for"; "to some extent against" "very much against". Source: Eurobarometer, 1990

**Table A1: Preferences towards Britain's role within the European Community in 1991**

| | British links to the European Community should be … | | | | | % of sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Closer % | About the same % | Less close % | Don't know % | | |
| Total sample | 38.9 | 41.4 | 10.8 | 8.9 | | 100 |
| Age group | | | | | | |
| 18-35 | 42.2 | 41.6 | 6.6 | 9.6 | | 35.2 |
| 36-60 | 43.5 | 41.1 | 11.5 | 7.5 | | 39.6 |
| 61+ | 34.3 | 41.7 | 16.2 | 10.4 | | 25.2 |
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Male | 43.4 | 40.8 | 12.4 | 3.4 | | 45.7 |
| Female | 35.2 | 41.9 | 9.5 | 13.4 | | 54.3 |
| Social Class | | | | | | |
| Professional | 46.4 | 43.4 | 8.9 | 1.4 | | 5.2 |
| Managerial and technical | 43.9 | 41.9 | 8.9 | 5.3 | | 24.0 |
| Skilled | 40.3 | 39.7 | 11.2 | 8.8 | | 43.9 |
| Partly skilled and unskilled | 30.3 | 44.1 | 13.6 | 12.0 | | 26.9 |
| Education | | | | | | |
| University degree | 56.3 | 32.8 | 6.0 | 5.0 | | 8.9 |
| 'A' levels / higher tech | 46.3 | 42.4 | 6.9 | 4.5 | | 25.3 |
| 'O' levels / CSE | 38.0 | 44.2 | 10.6 | 7.2 | | 27.5 |
| No qualifications | 30.8 | 40.5 | 14.7 | 14.0 | | 38.4 |
| Region | | | | | | |
| Scotland | 35.0 | 45.6 | 9.5 | 9.9 | | 10.1 |
| North England | 35.9 | 41.3 | 11.9 | 11.0 | | 26.3 |
| Midlands | 36.6 | 45.3 | 7.8 | 10.4 | | 16.9 |
| Wales | 39.7 | 40.1 | 6.6 | 13.6 | | 5.2 |
| South England | 40.9 | 40.1 | 13.2 | 5.9 | | 31.6 |
| Greater London | 48.3 | 35.8 | 8.4 | 7.5 | | 9.9 |

Source: British Social Attitudes, 1991

## *Appendix 2: Times Ten Years in Europe series*

> 'The damage to the democracy, to the prosperity and the self-confidence of the British people has been, and will continue to be, immense.' - Peter Shore, Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary, in *The Times* 'Ten Years in Europe' series, 4 January, 1983

> 'Missed opportunities, hurt feelings", "hard and often frustrating", "failure to assume the leading role", which "threw light on the limitations of British involvement in Europe' –Helmet Kohl, Francis Pym, Ted Heath, Emilio Colombo, characterising UK membership of the EEC in respective pro-European contributions to *The Times* 'Ten Years in Europe' series, 3 - 10, January, 1983

Ted Heath, Helmut Schmidt, and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs respectively highlighted Europeanisation of British trade patterns and EEC legislative achievements and called for further economic and political integration beyond the "British problem" and "balance sheet" instrumentalism. By contrast, the Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary called for withdrawal, the Prime Minister of New Zealand highlighted damage to "blood ties"—both cited unrealised benefits from membership promised during the 1975 referendum—while the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth argued that the EEC was drifting to protectionism despite the promise of British membership. Tellingly, the prescriptions and their justifications on both sides had changed little from those used in the referendum eight years earlier (Aqui, 2020). Each of the four European-authored articles lamented the rancorous ten-year relationship. That Sunday, the Foreign Secretary wrote a reply to the series headlined simply "The EEC must be our future" despite agreeing that the relationship had been unproductive thus far.

## Authors

**James Dennison**

Migration Policy Centre

European University Institute

james.dennison@eui.eu