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The Psychology of Supranationalism:

Its Ideological Correlates and Implications for EU Attitudes and post-Brexit Preferences

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Abstract

Existing research highlights the roles of group identities and concerns about mass migration in explaining attitudes towards the European Union (EU). However, studies have been largely silent on whether EU attitudes are also shaped by people's attitudes towards the principles and practices of supranational governance. This research provides a first test of the nature and role of supranational attitudes. We introduce a new measure of supranationalism and, in two studies using samples drawn from the British population, test the psychometric properties of the supranationalism scale. We then identify the socio-ideological correlates (right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation) of supranationalism, along with its effects in predicting EU attitudes and post-Brexit preferences. Our core finding is that supranationalism predicts attitudes towards the EU over and above established factors such as national identity and immigrant threat. Our study thus shows the existence of supranational attitudes among individuals, and the relevance of such attitudes to people's opinions about international organisations like the EU.

Key Words: supranationalism; Brexit; Euroscepticism; authoritarianism; social dominance; European integration

"…and if we vote leave and take back control, I believe that his Thursday can be our country's independence day." (Boris Johnson, Member of Parliament for the Conservative Party)

In his final public call to vote *Leave* in the Brexit referendum, Boris Johnson, a prominent Brexit campaigner, stated that a vote to leave would be a vote for democracy. He further emphasised the importance of British identity, control over British borders, economic prosperity, and national sovereignty. A few days later 52% of UK citizens voted to leave the European Union (EU).

Empirical research has identified that national identity and attitudes towards immigrants play key roles in explaining voters' opposition to EU membership in the UK and across Europe (e.g. Clarke, Goodwin, & Whiteley, 2017; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016, McLaren, 2007; see also Cram, Moore, Olivieri, & Suessenbach, 2018). Yet little work has been done on examining how far attitudes towards the EU are shaped by more general concerns about supranational governance. Our aim is to investigate supranationalism at the individual level, to examine its core ideological underpinnings and to identify its effects on citizen's opinions towards the EU and Brexit.

As an attitude, supranationalism can be defined as a broad orientation towards an arrangement in which several state governments transfer authority over certain policy domains to a centralised institution, which possesses jurisdiction over those domains for all states involved (Sandholtz & Stone Sweet, 1998). The typical aim of supranational institutions is to generate collective benefits on issues that cannot solely be managed at the national level (Simon & Valasek, 2017, Tallberg, 2002).

Opposition to supranationalism has recently been a clarion call among a number of (mainly right-wing) parties across Europe, such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP), the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, and the National Front in France (de Vries & Edwards,

2009). These parties do not reject the EU merely because of that institution's particular features or performance, but also because it represents a form of supranational government (Hutter, Braun, & Kerscher, 2016, Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002). A large part of these parties' discomfort with the EU stems from the institution's aim of an ever-closer union between nation-states (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). The recent electoral success of these parties, alongside the concerns of many commentators and citizens over globalisation and supra-national institutions, suggests that greater attention should be paid to the nature and effects of supranationalism.

The Nature of Supranationalism

As an attitude or orientation at the individual level, supranationalism is argued to comprise four key elements (Nugent, 2006; Sandholtz & Stone Sweet, 1998; Tallberg, 2002): a) a willingness to participate in supranational projects; b) a belief in the proposed problem-solving capacity of supranational governance; c) a commitment to binding international rules outside of national control; d) a desire to see supranational institutions play a greater role in global governance.

The aspect of *participation* refers to the extent to which individuals generally support the idea of engaging in and committing to supranational institutions and projects. Belief in the proposed *problem-solving capacity* of supranational governance denotes whether or not citizens believe that a centralised institution can address and solve transnational or global issues more effectively than individual states, which is the primary purpose of such a commitment (Tallberg, 2002). The aspect of *commitment to binding rules* refers to a normative acceptance of the right of supranational organizations to institute collectively binding rules (Sandholtz & Stone Sweet, 1998). The last aspect, *desire for a supranational role* reflects the extent to which individuals think that supranational institutions should play a larger role in global politics.

Importantly, the concept of supranationalism does not merely reflect the opposite pole of supportive attitudes towards national governance, nor can it be inferred from reversing individual's identification with the national ingroup. Supranationalism captures attitudes towards aspects of transnational cooperation and organisation that are unique to this level of governance and go beyond attitudes towards the nation state. Despite the extensive discussions on supranationalism in recent political debates and theorising, to date no published research has investigated people's attitudes towards the fundamental principles underpinning supranational governance. A scale measuring supranationalism is thus lacking. The only attempt that we are aware of comes from Coromina and Saris (2012), who explored supranationalism by asking respondents about their preferences for either national or European jurisdiction over specific policy domains. Although valuable, this approach is not only limited by an exclusively European conceptualisation of supranationalism, it also conflates attitudes towards supranational governance with preferences over policy competences. The aim of the present research is therefore to introduce a new scale measuring attitudes to supranationalism, capable of allowing us to explore what role supranationalism plays in predicting attitudes towards the EU.

The Ideological Underpinnings of Supranationalism

We are also concerned to identify the core roots of attitudes towards supranational governance. In particular, we anticipate that supranational attitudes will be underpinned by two aspects of individuals' ideological predispositions. These concern a social-cultural dimension, often indicated by right-wing authoritarianism (RWA, Altemeyer, 1981; 1998), and an economic-hierarchical dimension, typically indicated by social dominance orientation (SDO, Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). RWA expresses underlying motivations of maintaining order and social cohesion and is rooted in the belief that the world is a dangerous place (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Van Hiel, Cornelis, & Roets,

2007). It is manifested in preferences for traditional values and submission to local authority structures that can preserve cultural norms (Altemeyer, 1981; 1998). SDO reflects preferences for group-based dominance and hierarchical intergroup relations, driven by competitive power motivations and desires for the superiority of one group over others (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). It has a strong negative association with support for international harmony and predicts, for instance, support for war (e.g. Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, & Leeson, 2006).

Both predispositions and their underlying motivations stand in contrast to principles of supranational governance. Supranational governance involves the transfer of power from the national to the supranational level, leading to increased dependence on foreign political partners and increased social and cultural exchange. Given that they rely on local ingroup authority structures to provide order and security, people high in RWA should hold negative attitudes towards international institutions that reduce national control over decisions and resources (see also Tillman, 2013). Furthermore, increasing supranational integration to accommodate increased rates of transnational exchange requires a willingness to cooperate with other national and international actors as well as high levels of openness to change. However, right-wing authoritarians are more resistant to change and perceive greater external threats, such as threats coming from governments of other countries and outgroups (Duckitt & Sibley 2010; Onraet, Dhont, & Van Hiel, 2014; Van Assche, Asbrock, Dhont, & Roets, 2018; see also Capelos & Katsanidou, 2018).

Supranational governance also emphasizes transnational collaboration at a single (supranational) level, bypassing national discrepancies regarding legal procedures and socio-economic status. This requires members to acknowledge regulations under the jurisdiction of an external institution, under which all members gain equal status. This collaborative focus reflects a perspective on European supranationalism, where supranational regulatory

capacities are used to redistribute human and social capital and promote solidarity among members (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). This goal goes against the competitive motivations among people high on SDO to maintain status hierarchy and inequality between groups and nations (Ho et al., 2012; Pratto et al., 1994).

Supranational integration used to be promoted and championed in the UK on the basis of economic conservative values, which pursued a competitive neoliberal project in which supranational institutions were seen as aids in abolishing barriers to trade and promoting economic competition between countries (Pinder & Usherwood, 2013). Economic conservatism reflects preferences for a limited role for government in regulating free market economic processes, and is strongly correlated with SDO, with both being indicators of the economic-hierarchical ideology dimension (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002). Hence, we would expect SDO and economic conservatism to have similar relations with supranationalism. Yet, whereas SDO focuses on group-based competition and intergroup hierarchies, economic conservatism emphasizes a preference for free market competition and the rejection of policies designed to alleviate socio-economic inequality, such as redistributive or affirmative action policies. Though these ideological constructs capture attitudes towards the same general issue of status differences between people and groups, SDO focuses primarily on intergroup relations and differences, while economic conservatism focuses more on individuals' economic freedoms. Therefore, their association with supranationalism might not completely overlap.

Alongside RWA, SDO and economic conservatism, we anticipate attitudes to supranationalism being shaped by people's sense of national identity. More specifically, citizens who hold strong and exclusive national identities are more likely to reject supranationalism and such supranational institutions as the EU, because they view the exchange of people and resources across national borders as threatening their national,

cultural and economic interests (Golec de Zavala, Guerra, & Simao, 2017; Hobolt & De Vries, 2016; McLaren, 2007). Yet it is worth noting that some citizens are able to embrace national and European identities, suggesting that inclusive national identities may not always be associated with hostility to supranational principles and institutions (Hooghe & Marks, 2005). Finally, when it comes to assessing the effects of supranational views, we must also take into account the extent to which people's attitudes towards such supranational institutions as the EU are affected by the perceived threats arising from mass immigration (e.g., Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Meleady, Seger, & Vermue, 2017; Swami, Barron, Weis, & Furnham, 2018).

The Present Research

The tasks undertaken in the current research are threefold. First, we design a new measure of supranationalism and test its psychometric qualities. Second, we investigate the predictors of supranationalism, specifically focusing on the role of RWA and SDO, while simultaneously controlling for national identification (Studies 1 and 2) and economic conservatism (Study 2). Third, we examine the role of supranationalism in shaping people's attitudes towards the EU and the Brexit negotiations. More specifically, we test whether opposition to supranationalism explains the relations between ideological attitudes (RWA and SDO) and opposition to the EU, or whether this relation is instead primarily shaped by people's national identity and negative perceptions of immigration.

We study these issues among a sample of British citizens. This case was selected not because the attitudes of British citizens necessarily generalize to citizens in other countries; British citizens have long manifested a weaker sense of European identity than their counterparts in other EU countries (Ormston, 2015), and– as shown in successive Eurobarometer surveys – more critical attitudes towards the EU. The relevance of the British case lies in the fact that supranational principles and practices have – as a result of the Brexit

debate – formed part of the national political discourse (reflected in the former Foreign Secretary's remarks quoted at the head of this article). This context facilitates the testing of supranational attitudes and their effects. Whether any such effects are detectable in other countries must await further research. But the British case is 'critical' in that if no significant effects of supranationalism are identified here, it is doubtful whether they would be recorded in other west European countries.

Study 1

Methods

Participants. The sample for this study was collected in December 2016, six months after the Brexit vote, and consisted of 336 British adults who were recruited via the online platform Prolific Academic (69% females; $M_{age} = 37.50$, $SD_{age} = 12.00$).

Measures. Participants completed measures of RWA, SDO, national identification, supranationalism, immigrant threat, and attitudes towards the EU. All measures were scored on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 7 = *Strongly Disagree*), unless specified otherwise.

Supranationalism. We developed a new scale consisting of eight items to measure supranationalism. Participants were first presented with a brief text that explained the concept of supranational governance and the different forms this can take (e.g. trade agreements, or political and military unions). We also provided participants with a few well-known examples of supranational institutions (e.g. the UN, WTO) to help them understand what type of organisations were typical of supranational governance. We then presented participants with a pair of statements – one positively worded and one negatively worded – to test attitudes towards particular aspects of supranationalism that we considered central to the concept (see Table 1). The statements tapped the aspects of *participation* (e.g. 'Being part of a supranational institution like the UN is a good thing for a nation'), *problem-solving capacity* (e.g. 'Supranational institutions are more likely to solve global issues than nationally

elected governments'), *adherence to binding rules* (e.g. 'We achieve more at the international level if all states follow global rules rather than do whatever each likes'), and *supranational desire* (e.g. 'Supranational institutions should be granted more powers in the future so that they can have a greater impact on global issues').

After recoding the negatively worded items, we investigated the psychometric qualities of the scale. All items were positively inter-correlated with an average inter-item correlation of $r = .47$ (ranging from $r = .26$ to $r = .65$, all ps $< .001$; see Appendix A for full results of inter-item correlations). The scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88, demonstrating that the scale has high internal consistency.

Next, we entered the eight items in a factor analysis using maximum likelihood analysis with oblique rotation. The analysis showed two highly correlated factors ($r = .62$) (see Appendix B for full results of factor analyses) explaining a total of 57% of the variance. The content of the items did not differ between the two dimensions. Rather, the first factor included all positively worded items, whereas the second factor included the recoded (i.e. negatively worded) items. The high correlation between the two factors, and the fact that the two factors differed only because of the direction of the items and not their content, support the idea that attitudes towards supranational governance are distributed on a single dimension (Hooghe & Marks, 2001). Thus, we averaged all items into a single score of supranationalism, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes towards supranational governance. The strong psychometric properties of the new scale confirmed the successful development of a reliable supranationalism scale, meeting our first research aim.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism. RWA was measured using a shortened 9-item version of the scale by Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, and Heled (2010, based on Altemeyer, 1981; see also Dhont, Hodson, & Leite, 2016). Sample items are: 'Our country will be great if we show respect for authority and obey our leaders' and 'Obedience and respect for authority are the

most important virtues children should learn'. Negatively worded items were recoded and all items were averaged, with higher scores reflecting stronger RWA. The scale reliability was good (α = .88).

Social Dominance Orientation. We measured SDO using the short SDO_7-scale by Ho et al. (2015). Sample items are: 'It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others' and 'Group equality should not be our primary goal'. Negatively worded items were recoded and all items were averaged, with higher scores reflecting stronger SDO. The scale showed a good internal reliability (α = .90).

National identification. Levels of national identification were measured with 5 items (based on Leach et al., 2008), including statements such as: 'The fact that I am British is an important part of my identity' and 'I am glad to be British'. Item scores were averaged with higher scores indicating higher levels of national identification (α = .96).

EU attitudes. Attitudes to the EU were measured through responses to a single-item measure of how respondents 'feel generally towards the European Union' (1 = *Very Negative*, 7 = *Very Positive*).

Immigrant Threat. Perceived immigrant threat was measured by two items (based on Stephan & Renfro, 2002) tapping challenges to the economy and society: 'Immigrants are posing a threat to the economic and political system of the United Kingdom' and 'The presence of immigrants is problematic for our cultural norms and values in the United Kingdom'. Item scores were averaged with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceive immigrant threat (α = .89).[1]

[1] To verify the conceptual distinction between supranationalism, national identification, and perceived immigrant threat, we entered the items of these scales into a factor analysis with oblique rotation. Results confirmed that the items loaded onto three separate factors, representing the three expected constructs, with no cross-loadings higher than .25 (Online appendix I).

Results and Discussion

Correlations

Means and standard deviations for all measures are presented in Table 2, along with zero-order correlations. As expected, supranationalism was significantly negatively correlated with RWA, SDO, and national identification. Supranationalism was also positively correlated with EU attitudes, whereas all other variables were negatively associated with EU attitudes.

Model Test

To investigate the associations between the variables, we conducted structural equation modelling (SEM) with observed variables in Mplus (version 7.2, Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2014). We focused in particular on the associations between RWA and SDO and attitudes towards the EU, and whether supranationalism would account for these associations, over and above perceptions of immigrant threat. To ensure that results are robust, we also control for various factors shown in previous studies to predict attitudes towards the EU. Primary here are national identification and potential economic gains and losses, with higher-status individuals often argued to favour EU integration for reasons of economic gain (Abts, Heerwegh, & Swyngedouw, 2009; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; 2007). We control for individual socio-economic status by including education as a covariate in the model and further checked whether the results hold after controlling for income levels. Age and gender are also included, to ensure these factors do not confound any identified relationships. All predictors were allowed to co-vary, as were the residual terms of immigrant threat and supranationalism.[2] The results of this model are presented in Figure 1, which shows significant standardized estimates only (full model results are presented in Tables 3 and 4).

The model shows, first, that supranationalism is negatively shaped by RWA, but not by SDO or national identification (Table 3). Furthermore, positive attitudes towards

[2] The model was fully saturated ($df = 0$)

supranational governance significantly predicted positive attitudes towards the EU, even when all the other factors are included in the model (Table 4).

Estimating the indirect associations of RWA with EU attitudes revealed that RWA was significantly indirectly associated with less positive EU attitudes through lower levels of supranationalism (standardized estimate = -.09, CI_{95} [-.145, -.040], p = .001), in addition to the indirect effect through immigrant threat (standardized estimate = -.11, CI_{95} [-.169, -.052], p < .001) (see Appendix C for full results of indirect associations).

Overall, the results of Study 1 demonstrated that the supranationalism scale proved to have good psychometric properties. As hypothesised, both RWA and SDO were negatively related to supranationalism, although when both predictors were simultaneously entered into the model, only RWA remained a significant predictor of supranational attitudes. Finally, the results demonstrated that besides concerns about mass migration, principled opposition to supranational governance plays a critical role in anti-EU sentiment and helps to explain why right-wing authoritarians show stronger anti-EU sentiments.

Study 2

The first aim of Study 2 was to further increase confidence in the reliability and validity of the supranationalism scale by establishing its psychometric quality and predictive power in a second sample. Furthermore, instead of relying on a single-item measure of EU attitudes as in Study 1, we included a multi-item measure, increasing the content validity of the measured construct. Importantly, the use of a multi-item measure of EU attitudes also allowed us to test the concept distinctiveness between EU attitudes and supranationalism.

The second aim of this study was to examine the relations between supranationalism and EU attitudes, on the one hand, and RWA and SDO, on the other. Our approach was similar to that in Study 1, except in this study we also included a measure of economic conservatism to test whether the associations between ideological dispositions and

supranationalism and EU attitudes are driven by economic conservatism. More specifically, despite the conceptual overlap between SDO and economic conservatism in their acceptance of unequal group status, we wanted to explore whether attitudes to supranational governance are shaped more by concerns over financial autonomy (i.e. better captured by economic conservatism) or by views on group-based inequality (i.e. better captured by SDO). Furthermore, some scholars have suggested that economic ideological preferences may show a curvilinear relationship with Euroscepticism, such that those on both extremes of the economic ideological spectrum hold stronger Eurosceptic attitudes than moderates (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2018). Theoretically, those on the economic radical left might reject the EU due to the EU's neoliberal capitalist character, whereas those on the economic right might perceive the EU as a form of 'social capitalism', in which free markets are unduly controlled by the EU through a variety of economic and social regulations.

The third aim of Study 2 was to extend our understanding of the effects of supranational attitudes, by examining what objectives people believe the British government should prioritise in the Brexit negotiations. We designed survey items that tap into these objectives, drawing on the priorities for the negotiations identified by the British Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brown & Waitzman, 2016). These priorities included regaining national jurisdiction over domains such as border control and laws, and continued cooperation with the other EU members on issues such as safety and trade.

We expected that supranationalism would predict more positive attitudes towards cooperative goals and more negative attitudes towards control-related goals. Furthermore, we hypothesised that these post-Brexit preferences would also be related to people's RWA and SDO orientations. In particular, we theorised that RWA would be of particular relevance in predicting preferences towards regaining national jurisdiction, while SDO was expected to show a stronger association with preferences towards inter-state cooperation.

Method

Participants. The sample for this study was collected in November 2017, four months into the first round of Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU, and one and a half years after the EU referendum. The sample consisted of 400 British adults who were recruited via the online platform Prolific Academic (73% females; M_{age} = 38.59, SD_{age} = 11.58)

Measures. Participants completed the same measures of RWA (α = .85), SDO (α = .87), and immigrant threat (α = .94) as in Study 1. All measures were scored on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 7 = *Strongly Disagree*), unless specified otherwise.

National Identification. We used the same measure of national identification as in Study 1 (Leach et al., 2008), but changed the phrasing from 'British' to 'English'. By measuring a narrower form of national identification, we attempted to test for a stronger association between national identification and EU attitudes. The Cronbach's alpha in this study was .94.

Supranationalism. We used the new supranationalism scale but extended the description of the definition of supranationalism.[3] The satisfactory psychometric quality of the scale was also confirmed in this study. More specifically, the items were highly intercorrelated with an average inter-item correlation of r = .49 (ranging from r =.26 to r = .66, $p < .001$, see Table 1), and a Cronbach's alpha of .88. Again, factor analysis using maximum likelihood analysis with oblique rotation revealed two strongly correlated factors (r = .63) that distinguished between the positively and negatively worded items (see online Appendix B). Hence, the items were averaged into a single measure of supranationalism.

EU attitudes. Rather than relying on a single item measure of attitudes towards the EU as in Study 1, we used 12 items (Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas, & de Vreese, 2011)

[3] In Study 2, we provided a more detailed description of supranationalism than in Study 1, explaining some of its core features along with an extended list of example institutions (online Appendix E).

tapping different aspects of the EU including identity (e.g. ‘The European Union poses a threat to British identity and culture’; ‘The fact that I am a European citizen is an important part of my identity’) and performance (e.g. ‘The European Union is wasting a lot of tax money’; ‘The European Union fosters the preservation of the environment’). After recoding negatively worded items, item scores were averaged with higher scores indicating more positive EU attitudes. Factor analysis indicated a unidimensional scale, with an excellent internal reliability ($\alpha = .96$).

Economic conservatism. We used 5 items to measure economic conservatism (De Witte, 1990). Example items are: ‘The wealthy have an unfair advantage in our society’ (reverse coded), and ‘The government should take actions to decrease income differences’ (reverse coded). After recoding negatively worded items, item scores were averaged with higher scores indicating more conservative economic attitudes ($\alpha = .83$).

Post-Brexit Preferences. We used 5 items to measure post-Brexit preferences by asking participants how important they thought it was to achieve the following issues during the Brexit negotiations: ‘Bringing back control of our laws to Parliament’, ‘Bringing back control of decisions over immigration to the UK’, ‘Maintaining the strong security cooperation we have with the EU’, ‘Establishing the freest possible market in goods and services with the EU and the rest of the world’, and ‘Securing rights of UK citizens living abroad in the EU, and EU citizens living in the UK’. Participants had to rate the importance of each goal on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not important at all;* 5 = *Extremely important*). Factor analysis revealed two distinct factors which distinguished the issues of ‘prioritising control’ in terms of laws and immigration and ‘prioritising cooperation’ in terms of security, trade and citizen rights. We averaged these items into measures of ‘prioritising control’ ($\alpha = .89$) and ‘prioritising cooperation’ ($\alpha = .77$).

Results and Discussion

Correlations

Means and standard deviations for all measures are presented in Table 5, along with zero-order correlations. As expected, supranationalism was negatively correlated with RWA, SDO, national identification, and economic conservatism. Furthermore, supranationalism was positively related to EU attitudes and prioritising cooperation, whereas negative relations were found with prioritising control.

Construct distinctiveness

Despite the marked theoretical differences between the concepts of supranationalism and EU attitudes, the high correlation between the variables, may suggest concept overlap. Yet, the use of a multi-item measure of EU attitudes in Study 2 enabled us to statistically test whether the scales of supranationalism and EU attitudes measure distinct constructs. More specifically, entering all items of the two scales into factor analysis with oblique rotation revealed that the items of both scales clearly load on two separate factors. All the items on the EU attitude scale loaded highly onto one factor (individual item loadings ranging from .58 to .91), while all supranationalism items loaded highly onto a separate factor (loadings ranging from .40 to .84). Furthermore, the items in both scales showed non-existent or only weak cross-loadings (all cross-loadings <.25). Hence, we argue that the two scales measure distinctive constructs of supranationalism and EU support (see online Appendix F). [4]

Model Test

We tested the same associations as in Study 1, but also included the two Brexit preference measures as additional criterion variables. The residual terms of all criterion

[4] Additional analyses showed that the correlations between supranationalism and EU attitudes are comparable in size to those between supranationalism and attitudes towards other supranational projects, such as the United Nations and the Paris Climate Agreement (online Appendix G). Attitudes towards supranationalism are thus related to opinions towards a range of other supranational projects, and not only to opinions towards the EU.

variables were allowed to covary.[5] With regard to the predictors of supranationalism, the results showed that higher levels of RWA and SDO significantly predicted lower supranationalism scores (Figure 2, Table 4), whereas economic conservatism and national identification did not significantly predict supranationalism.[6]

The model also showed that supranationalism positively predicted EU attitudes and prioritising cooperation after Brexit, and negatively predicted prioritising control after Brexit. Critically, these effects of supranationalism remained over and above the variance explained by all other factors in the model (Table 6).

Estimating the indirect associations of RWA and SDO with EU attitudes further revealed, in line with our hypotheses, that both predictor variables were significantly indirectly related to EU attitudes via supranationalism, over and above the indirect associations through immigrant threat (Table 4)

Similar patterns of indirect associations were observed for Brexit priority preferences (Table 6). Both RWA and SDO were indirectly positively associated with Brexit preferences of control, and indirectly negatively associated with cooperation priorities, via supranationalism. In line with our expectations, RWA was also directly positively related to prioritising regaining national control (but not to prioritising cooperation), while SDO was directly negatively related to prioritising the continuation of cooperation with the EU (but not to prioritising national control).

In both studies, we found a negative relationship between SDO and supranationalism. Yet, when tested simultaneously with RWA, SDO only predicted supranationalism and EU attitudes in Study 2. Additional analyses for Study 2 showed that the difference between the studies was not due to the inclusions of additional controls (e.g. economic conservatism) in

[5] The model was fully saturated ($df = 0$)

[6] We found no evidence for a curvilinear relationship between economic conservatism and either attitudes to the EU or attitudes to supranationalism.

Study 2 given that the effect of SDO did not change with or without these controls (online Appendix H). A possible explanation for this difference could be the shift in public and media discourse between data collection of Study 1 and 2. Study 1 was conducted six months after the referendum, but before the UK Supreme Court had decided whether the UK parliament must formally approve the triggering of Article 50.[7] Study 2 was conducted 16 months after the referendum, at a point when the UK was four months into Brexit negotiations and the competing interests between the UK and the EU were highly salient. It is possible that the different contexts in which the data for the two studies were gathered meant that the competitive motivations underlying SDO (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Van Hiel et al., 2007) were triggered more in Study 2 than in Study 1.

Overall, Study 2 largely replicated the results of Study 1 and established that our supranationalism scale is a reliable and valid measure of attitudes towards supranational governance, and not just towards a particular embodiment of supranationalism, such as the EU. We found people's socio-ideological orientations to be predictors of supranationalism, notably RWA (Studies 1 and 2) and also SDO (Study 2). Once these variables are included in the models, economic conservatism and national identification did not provide any additional value in predicting supranationalism. Furthermore, the findings indicated that concerns over national control are predominantly associated with authoritarian predispositions, whereas concerns over international cooperation are more strongly related to dominance strivings and desires for social hierarchies.

General Discussion

The current research investigated, for the first time, supranationalism as a distinctive orientation among individuals, its ideological correlates, and its role in predicting Euroscepticism. We demonstrated that supranationalism can be reliably measured with a

[7] Article 50 is the part of the Lisbon Treaty that provides for any member state to leave the EU.

newly developed scale, which consistently predicted attitudes towards the EU, even while controlling for a range of variables (ideological, intergroup, and identity-based) found in previous studies (e.g., Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Hobolt & de Vries, 2016) to shape people's orientations to the EU. This finding supports the hypothesis that Euroscepticism is not only shaped by instrumental and affective factors, such as attitudes towards immigration and feelings of national identity, but is also shaped by people's views towards the general principles of supranational governance. This finding is in line with recent analysis by Clarke et al. (2017), which shows that popular support for Brexit was substantially driven by concerns about Britain's sovereignty under EU membership, quite apart from concerns about immigration. In sum, our findings inform public debate and add to the growing body of literature on Euroscepticism by highlighting the role played by attitudes towards supranational principles of governance (see also Rico & Guinjoan, 2018).

When it comes to the predictors of supranationalism, the studies showed a clear role for RWA. This finding supports the idea that supranational governance is intrinsically unattractive for authoritarians, given that a core feature of supranationalism is the transfer of authority and a reduction of control over local institutions and decision-making processes. Our findings thus align with recent work which shows that authoritarian attitudes manifest themselves in nationalist and anti-globalist positions (Scotto, Sanders, & Reifler, 2018).

Furthermore, although national identification was negatively associated with supranationalism, it did not predict supranationalism when controlling for RWA and SDO. This is consistent with the idea that attitudes towards supranational governance cannot be inferred merely from an individual's national identity.

Our understanding about the inter-relationship between ideological and supranational attitudes, public discourse, and opinions over Brexit, would benefit greatly from a dynamic perspective using a longitudinal design. Cross-sectional designs do not allow us to draw any

conclusions about changes in the relations between such individual and environmental factors. Furthermore, while the crowdsourcing platform *Prolific Academic* provides high quality data, benefitting from a large, socio-economically diverse participant pool (Peer, Brandimarte, Sama, & Acquisti, 2017), the use of online crowdsourced samples limits the generalisability of our findings. To address this issue, future studies using more representative samples are needed.

As we noted earlier, supranationalism arguably plays a more central role in public debates on the EU in Britain than in other west European countries. The findings presented here are thus suggestive, but not conclusive, for other countries, for which we would urge additional empirical study. After all, in many of these countries (see Curtis & Nielsen, 2018), there are intense public debates about the merits – and more often the limits – of supranational institutions and practices. The nature and role of supranational governance is thus a topic on which policy makers' and public attention is only likely to grow.

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Table 1

Supranationalism Scale and Corrected Item-total Correlations.

		Item-total correlation	
		Study 1	Study 2
1.	Engaging in supranational politics is generally a good thing for a nation. (Participation +)	.62	.73
2.	Every nation is best off acting independently on the global stage, without commitment to supranational institutions. (Participation -)	.72	.70
3.	National governments should never give up authority to supranational institutions on important global issues. (Problem-solving Capacity -)	.73	.59
4.	Supranational institutions are more likely to solve global issues than nationally elected governments. (Problem-solving Capacity +)	.65	.67
5.	We achieve more at the international level if all states follow global rules rather than do whatever each likes. (Binding Rules +)	.59	.64
6.	Every nationally elected government should decide independently which rules and standards their citizens must abide by. (Binding Rules -)	.54	.54
7.	Supranational institutions should play a bigger role on the global political stage in the future. (Supranational Desire +)	.62	.65
8.	We should keep political power at the national level and nations should decide on global issues independently. (Supranational Desire -)	.65	.67

Note. Three items were slightly rephrased in Study 2 to reflect more nuanced statements.

In Study 1, item 1 read ‘Being part of a supranational institution is a good thing for a nation’, Item 2 ‘Every nation is best off acting independently without interference from supranational institutions.’ and Item 7 ‘Supranational institutions should be granted more powers in the future so that they can have greater impact on global issues.’

Table 2

Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables in Study 1.

	M (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. RWA	3.57 (1.13)	.47***	-.47***	.45***	.54***	-.50***
2. SDO	2.84 (1.16)	-	-.28***	.28***	.50***	-.32***
3. Supranationalism	4.48 (1.10)		-	-.29***	-.54***	.61***
4. National Identification	4.87 (1.48)			-	.38***	-.32***
5. Immigrant Threat	3.45 (1.83				-	-.63***
6. EU Attitudes	4.57 (1.97)					-

Note. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Table 3.

Results (standardised estimates) of Study 1 (S1) and Study 2 (S2) for the associations of RWA and SDO predicting supranationalism and immigrant threat, controlling for national identification, economic conservatism, and demographic variables.

		Supranationalism		Immigrant threat	
		β [CI_{95}]	*p*	β [CI_{95}]	*p*
RWA	S1	-.35 [-.471, -.220]	<.001	.29 [.156, .416]	<.001
	S2	-.27 [-.388, -.113]	<.001	.30 [.344, .779]	<.001
SDO	S1	-.07 [-.181, .040]	.211	.32 [.196, .436]	<.001
	S2	-.21 [-.317, -.097]	<.001	.19 [.152, .583]	.001
National Identification	S1	-.10 [-.209, .014]	.070	.14 [.032, .241]	.010
	S2	-.08 [-.174, .018]	.145	.17 [.082, .417]	.003
Economic Conservatism	S1	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.03 [-.111, .062]	.580	-.12 [-.346, -.019]	.026
Age	S1	-.12 [-.216, -.013]	.026	.13 [.037, .214]	.005
	S2	-.03 [-.010, .004]	.420	.05 [-.005, .022]	.210
Gender	S1	.05 [-.049, .142]	.339	-.02 [-.106, .062]	.612
	S2	.11 [.034, .491]	.029	-.06 [-.655, .091]	.137
Education	S1	.16 [.055, 265]	.003	-.12 [-.213, -.023]	.015
	S2	.18 [.087, .294]	<.001	-.24 [-.640, -.301]	<.001

Note: Gender (*1* = Male, *2* = Female), Education (*1* = GCSE, *2* = A-Levels, *3* = BSc/Ba, *4* = MSc/Ma, *5* =PhD). Testing our models while controlling for personal and household income (S1, N = 217; S2, N = 292), revealed highly similar results (Appendix J).

Table 4

Results (standardised estimates) of Study 1 (S1) and Study 2 (S2) showing the effects of supranationalism on EU attitudes and post-Brexit preferences, controlling for ideological, intergroup, identity-based, and demographic variables.

		EU attitudes		Brexit Cooperation		Brexit Control	
		β [CI_{95}]	*p*	β [CI_{95}]	*p*	β [CI_{95}]	*p*
Supranationalism	S1	.23 [.188, .333]	<.001	/	/	/	/
	S2	.39 [.421, .627]	<.001	.33 [.152, .374]	<.001	-.24 [-.373, -.198]	<.001
RWA	S1	-.23 [-.338, -.116]	<.001	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.03 [-.165, .084]	.530	.04 [-.083, .141]	.598	.22 [.162, .351]	<.001
SDO	S1	.05 [-.053, .152]	.347	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.03 [-.165, .078]	.477	-.13 [-.202, -.006]	.042	.05 [-.038, .151]	.231
National Identification	S1	.06 [-.043, .156]	.264	/	/	/	/
	S2	.07 [-.018, .162]	.118	.15 [.024, .176]	.011	.13 [.058, .203]	.001
Immigrant Threat	S1	-.34 [-.456, -.221]	<.001	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.41 [-.353, -.219]	<.001	-.12 [-.105, .008]	.086	.39 [.193, .304]	<.001
Economic Conservatism	S1	/	/	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.03 [-.134, .073]	.566	-.01 [-.087, .067]	.816	-.04 [-.113, .041]	.371
Age	S1	-.11 [-.189, -.028]	.008	/	/	/	/
	S2	-.17 [-.028, -.012]	.037	.05 [-.003, .010]	.338	.07 [.001, .014]	.037
Gender	S1	.05 [-.033, .132]	.237	/	/	/	/
	S2	.11 [.093, .554]	.005	.02 [-.152, .211]	.753	-.02 [-.207, .117]	.590
Education	S1	.08 [.000, .162]	.050	/	/	/	/
	S2	.01 [-.093, .111]	.886	.08[-.022, .143]	.155	-.03[-.114, .053]	.470

Note: Gender (*1* = Male, *2* = Female), Education (*1* = GCSE, *2* = A-Levels, *3* = BSc/Ba, *4* = MSc/Ma, *5* = PhD). Testing our models while controlling for personal and household income (S1, N = 217; S2, N = 292), revealed highly similar results (Appendix J).

Table 5

Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables in Study 2

	M (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. RWA	3.57 (1.13)	.45***	.36***	-.45***	.45***	.50***	-.42***	.61***	-.18***
2. SDO	2.84 (1.16)	-	.55***	-.38***	.23***	.33***	-.35***	.38***	-.25***
3. Economic Conservatism	2.78 (1.21)		-	-.26***	.21***	.14**	-.19***	.21***	-.14**
4. Supranationalism	4.48 (1.10)			-	-.28***	-.51***	.64***	-.60***	.40***
5. National Identification	4.87 (1.48)				-	.37***	-.24***	.46***	-.01
6. Immigrant Threat	3.45 (1.83					-	-.65***	.71***	-.27***
7. EU-Attitudes	4.57 (1.97)						-	-.71***	.39***
8. Brexit-Control	3.46 (1.23)							-	-.16**
9. Brexit-Cooperation	3.95 (0.82)								-

Note. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Table 6

Results of Effect Decomposition Analyses (standardized estimates) for the associations of RWA and SDO with EU attitudes and post-Brexit preferences, controlling for national identification, economic conservatism, and demographics in Study 2

	EU-Attitudes		Brexit Control		Brexit Cooperation	
	β [CI_{95}]	*p*	β [CI_{95}]	*p*	β [CI_{95}]	*p*
Total effect for RWA	-.26 [-.386, -.130]	<.001	.40 [.299, .503]	<.001	-.08 [-.242, .076]	.307
Direct effect for RWA	-.03 [-.127, .065]	.530	.22 [.140, .298]	<.001	.04 [-.104, .180]	.598
Total indirect effect for RWA	-.23 [-.311, -.144]	<.001	.18 [.116, .247]	<.001	-.13 [-.183, -.059]	<.001
Indirect effect via Supranationalism	-.10 [-.163, -.045]	.001	.06 [.027, .099]	.001	-.09 [-.143, -.029]	.003
Indirect effect via Immigrant threat	-.12 [-.175, -.071]	<.001	.12 [.067, .171]	<.001	-.04 [-.077, .007]	.099
Total effect for SDO	-.19 [-.309, -.077]	.001	.18 [.081, .265]	<.001	-.22 [-.337, -.094]	.001
Direct effect for SDO	-.03 [-.124, .078]	.477	.05 [-.030, .126]	.231	-.13 [-.246, -.005]	.042
Total indirect effect for SDO	-.16 [-.237, -.083]	<.001	.13 [.062, .187]	<.001	-.09 [-.142, -.038]	.001
Indirect effect via Supranationalism	-.08 [-.127, -.036]	<.001	.05 [.018, .081]	.002	-.07 [-.113, -.023]	.004
Indirect effect via Immigrant threat	-.08 [-.129, -.026]	.003	.08 [.028, .123]	.002	-.02 [-.052, .008]	.145

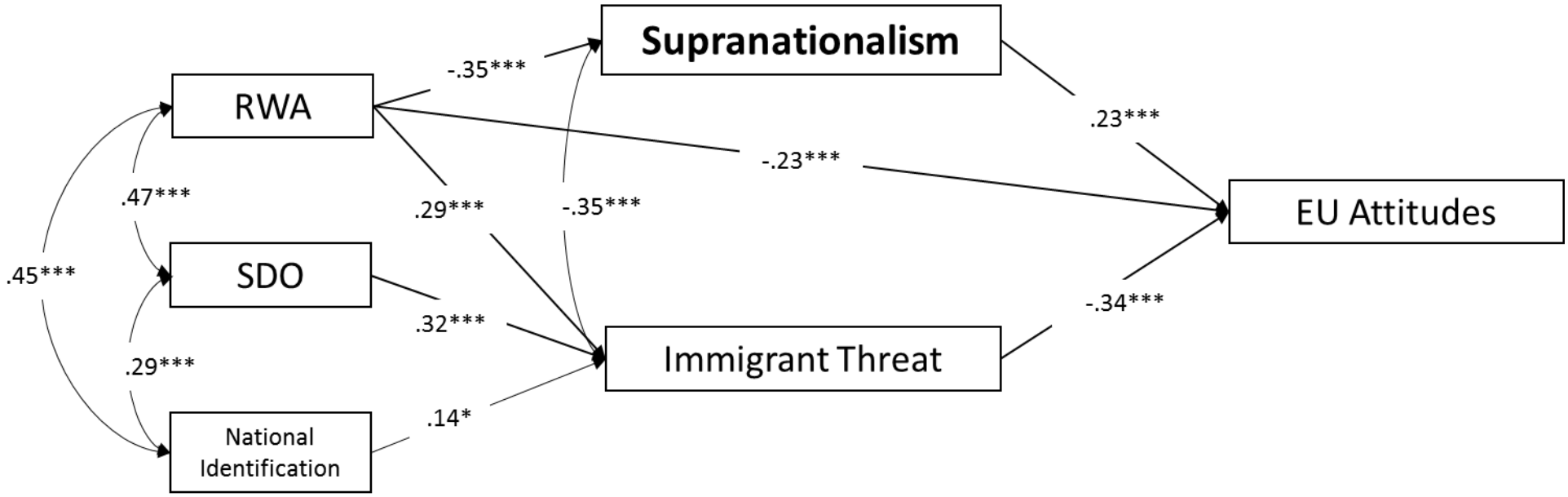

Figure 1. Associations (standardised estimates) of RWA, SDO with EU-attitudes via Immigrant-threat and supranationalism, controlling for national identification, age and gender (see Tables 3 and 4 for full results).

*p<.05, ** p<.01**, ***p<.001

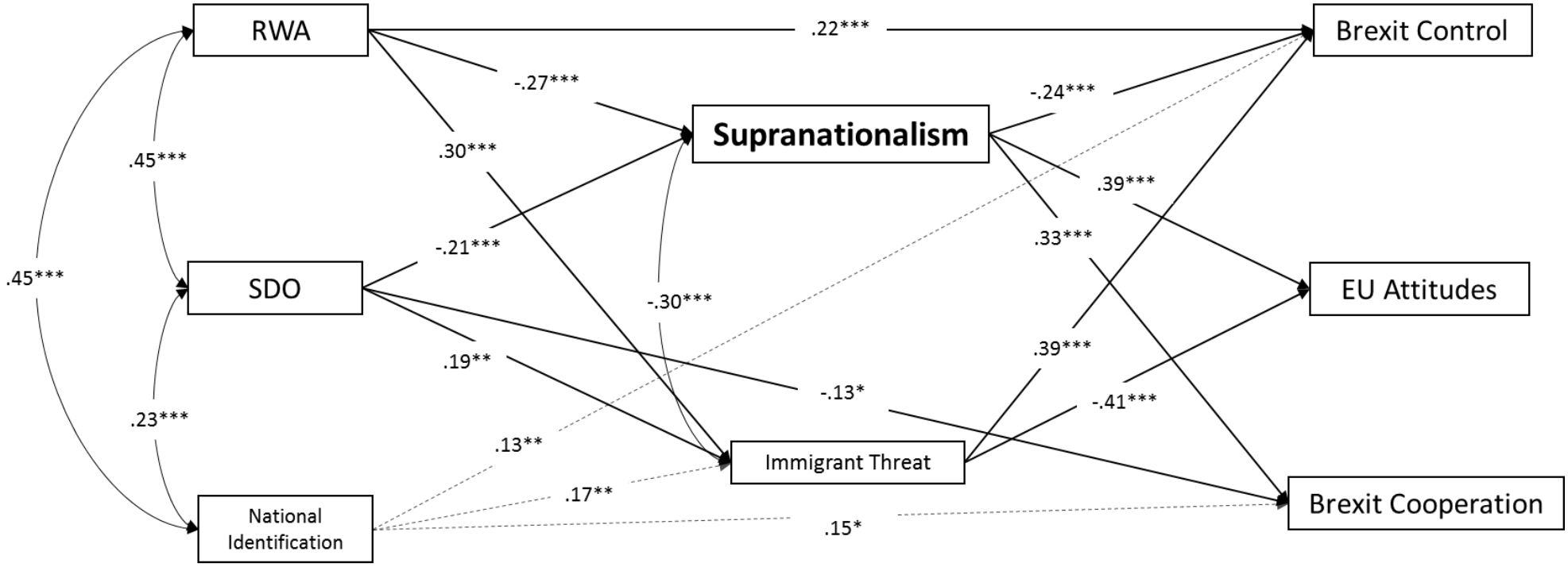

Figure 2. Associations (standardized estimates) of RWA, SDO with EU attitudes and Brexit-priorities via Immigrant-threat and supranationalism. Dashed lines depict the effects of national identification (control variable). Other control variables were economic conservatism, age, gender and education (see Tables 3 and 4 for full results).

*p<.05, ** p<.01**, ***p<.001