**Feeling European in a globalised world and the role of mobility, networks and consumption**

**A comparative approach to British exceptionalism**

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**Introduction**

The rise of populism and nationalism has raised with great urgency concerns about which factors lead citizens of European nations to feel European. These issues reach new intensity with the success of the Brexit campaign in the 2016 British European referendum. On the face of it, the British vote to leave could be interpreted as a revival of nationalism, associated with a populist backlash driven by those who have not benefited from the ‘European project’ and may not feel part of it (Goodwin & Heath, 2016; Hobolt 2016). Our paper responds to a need to explore further European identity (or the lack of it) by re-assessing the role of cross-border practices. Following the lead of transactional theorist Karl Deutsch, and the recent emphasis by Delhey and his colleagues (Delhey et al 2014; 2015) to assess the relevance of the national, European and global reference frame for people’s everyday activities and interactions, we analyse the EUCROSS survey on the nature of cross-border practices in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the UK in 2012. Our aim is to reflect on the complex ways that mobility histories, social networks and cultural consumption might be associated with people’s attachment to Europe and the world as whole. We outline that cultural consumption practices have often been ignored so far, and we are breaking new ground by considering how they may play a pivotal role in the formation of a European identity.

Another distinctive contribution of our paper is disentangling how wider processes of globalisation might affect both national and European identifications (on which see Duchesne, Haegel, Frazer, Van Ingelgom, Garcia & Frognier, 2010; Delhey et al 2014), and to broaden our analysis to include a wider range of practices and identities associated with globalisation and Europeanisation. At a very general level there may be some convergence between European and the global transnational practices, linked to certain core rationalistic cultural assumptions (Meyer, 2009). However, Europeanisation and globalisation may refer to very different – even potentially clashing - processes. The colloquial term of ‘Fortress Europe’ for instance, points to the way that an idea of Europe can be mobilised in opposition to global migration flows (Delanty, 2002). Self-identification with Europe might thus rely on different dimensions from those which relate to globalisation (Bruter 2005; Delhey et al 2014). Having said this, research has shown that people’s identification with Europe need not be mutually exclusive compared to other identitifications, such as national and local ones (Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001; Risse, 2003; Rother & Nebe, 2009).

This article has two main aims, first to explore the relations between national, European and global self-identification, and, second, to explore how these supranational feelings are associated with networks, mobility and cultural consumption practices both at a European level and at a national level. Using a more sophisticated analysis of transactionalism than has often hitherto been the case, we will be able to better understand the specificity of the British case, which should not simply be seen as a nationalist reaction so much as a complex interweaving of global identities and internal divisions. We show that the British are not, in any obvious ways, more nationalist than other Europeans but they feel much less part of a larger entity than their own country. Furthermore, when they do express supranational feelings, their historic global connections, notably including those of empire, can lead to a more singular kind of cosmopolitan, and possibly anti-European, attitude.

**European and global identification: the role of networks, mobility and consumption**

Debates about cosmopolitan identifications are strongly influenced by transactionalist theory. The latter was most notably developed in the work of Karl Deutsch (1954; 1969), which sees the development a wide range of cross-border exchanges and interactions as generating broader transnational attachments. Because the European Union has emphasised the need for European integration, much substantive research in this vein has been focused on the European case. This has led to a focus on the significance of cross-border practices for the development of a European identity (Recchi and Favell, 2009; Kuhn, 2015; Recchi, 2015). A particularly striking recent example is Fligstein’s *Euroclash* (2008), which draws attention to the way that a European ‘field’ with its own rules for the game has developed as a result of the transnational practices and of European oriented professionals and managers. It also shows how less advantaged groups in European nations feel marginal or even excluded from this European project, and thus how this might generate a potential backlash.

To date, most research in the transactionalist vein has therefore focused on the intra-European dimensions and showed that people who move across the EU are more likely to feel European than the rest of the population (see the Pioneur project[[1]](#endnote-1) led by Recchi and Favell (2009)). Similarly, the EUMARR project[[2]](#endnote-2) coordinated by Díez Medrano focuses on binational marriage between European Union citizens and argue that it equally has a positive link with European identification (Schroedter et al., 2015). Mau, Mewes and Zimmermann (2008) also show the links between stays abroad and regular and private transnational relations and cosmopolitan attitudes. Social networks and physical mobility thus seem to foster a European and global identification.

Given these arguments, amidst the evident proliferation of cross-European interactions in recent decades, the apparent backlash against the EU comes as something of a surprise. Part of the problem here is that this research has not addressed the precise mechanisms by which contacts can have these effects. Is there a difference if one is socialised early within a foreign context? And, if yes, is there a difference of impact when this context is European and when it is not? Perhaps also, the practices of virtual mobility (Urry 2007; Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring, 2008) have distinctive links with European and global identifications? Furthermore, there is the possibility, explored by Delhey and his associates (2014) that ‘European closure’ means that some people with ties to other parts of the world may feel a lack of sympathy with Europe. This is the argument of Flemmen and Savage (2017) who claim that political support for Brexit came not simply from the ‘excluded white working class’ (as Fligstein might predict), but also a privileged group of ‘white imperial racists’ who are highly internationalised, but to the Anglophone nations of the former British empire.

This line of argument can be extended to emphasize that it is the symbolic, as much as the practical and experiential components which are central to developing European or global identifications. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005) argue that younger generations of northern English who have openly espoused a cosmopolitan identity might actually have a rather limited range of actual practices which extended outside Britain (see also Savage et al 2010). Instead, their cosmopolitanism marks a symbolic resistance to what is seen as old-fashioned nationalist idioms rather than being based on extensive knowledge or experience of other nations. Furthermore, Favell (2008) and Andreotti, Le Galès and Moreno Fuentes (2013) show that those middle class European citizens who actually live and/ or work outside their home nations come to realise the difficulties of genuine European identification.

Currently, there is little research examining how consumption practices might play a role in these transnational identifications. Although Calhoun (2002) perceives these as superficial forms of cosmopolitan engagement, it has been argued that they can have considerable power (Woodward et al., 2008; Kendall, Woodward & Skrbis, 2009). Drawing on neo-institutionalism emphasising an embedding ‘world culture’ (Meyer, 2010; Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997), Lizardo (2005) shows that feelings of world citizenship (Boli & Thomas 1997) is associated with omnivorous cultural consumption (i.e. eclectic patterns of consumption crossing the boundaries between high and low culture – see Peterson & Simkus 1992; Peterson & Kern 1996). However, there is no significant relationship with European identification. Following the logic of Delhey et al (2014), self-identification with Europe could operate following a nationalist logic and might not be associated with inclusive and open global patterns of consumption. In similar vein as Lizardo, Rössel and Schroedter (2015) found that self-identification with the world was more relevant in the understanding of a wide cultural knowledge and taste than self-identification with Europe[[3]](#endnote-3).

Similarly, Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde, Gayo-Cal and Wright (2009) contend that British cultural engagement with Europe is possibly declining as interests in European ‘high culture’ also fade amongst well educated younger generations. They demonstrate that whereas older middle-class Britons show high levels of engagement with European artists, musicians, and writers, younger generations are more drawn to Anglophone reference points, especially those emanating from the United States and (related) mass culture (see also Savage, Wright & Gayo-Cal 2010). Similar arguments are made by Meuleman and Savage (2013) in their discussion of the Dutch cultural field.

By considering the potential significance of consumption practices, and in recognising the difference between European and global transnationalism, this article seeks to offer a new empirical contribution to the debates about the role of cross-border practices on self-identities in the European space and at the national level. The latter analysis will enable us to assess whether and to what extent Britain is different from other countries in the continent. We will show that an anti-European attitude does not necessarily imply the absence of supranational identification. This is the crucial issue that we take up in this paper, which we operationalise through three more specific questions.

1. Are individuals’ identifications to Europe different from a wider cosmopolitan identification to the world?
2. To what extent are the supranational self-identifications associated with networks, consumption and mobility practices and traditional socio-demographic variables?
3. What kind of comparative differences within Europe are revealed by this focus on the actual practices and consumption patterns? Is the UK different from other countries in this respect?

**Methods and data**

Our sample comes from the EUCROSS[[4]](#endnote-4) survey, a wide-ranging survey of physical and virtual mobility and practices of cultural consumption as reported by nationals of six European countries (Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom). The EUCROSS fieldwork was conducted between June 2012 and January 2013. Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI)were carried out by trained interviewers, all of whom were native speakers. Sample selection was based on random digit dialling (RDD). In total 6016 respondents were interviewed by phone in 2012 – that is, around 1000 per country. The cooperation rate varied between 9% in the UK and 38% in Romania (see Pötzschke Ciornei and Apaydin vom Hau 2014). This is a low rate for the UK; however, our sample has been randomly drawn and is large enough to reliably illustrate interesting patterns. We do not have any reason to believe that there are systematic biases in the data collection for the UK and the low rate is likely to be related to contextual factors such as a high number of marketing phone calls in this country[[5]](#endnote-5). As it has been established, response rates (related to the cooperation rates) are not necessarily a key indicator of survey data quality (Holbrook, Krosnick & Pfent, 2008).

The core analysis of this article refers to a multinomial logistic regression performed at the European level first, and then at the country level, examining the effect of different variables on whether respondents feel that they are citizens of the world but not European, European but not citizens of the world, or both European and citizens of the world.

*Dependent variable*

The concept of European identity, which is explored in this paper, has been flexibly used in the literature so that some have started to call it ‘loose and baggy’ (Favell 2005). Taking this into account, we have adopted here a rather encompassing definition of European identity as an active, conscious and also emotional identification to Europe, which also corresponds to one that is frequently used in quantitative research. In comparison with Bruter’s approach (2005), our aim is not to explore the multidimensionality of European identity but to capture more broadly the extent to which people reflexively identify with Europe as a whole. This is inspired by Duchesne and colleagues’ definition of “European identity as a psycho-sociological or socio-political process of citizens’ attachment to the European space or to the political community designed by integration” (Duchesne, 2010: 7; translated by Recchi, 2014, p.119). We will nevertheless preferably use the term of ‘identification’ or ‘self-identification’ with Europe (Belot, 2010) since it also prevents us from reifying a process that is at least in gestation.

European and global identifications are obtained by combining two variables, previously recoded as dichotomous (with values 1, 2, 3 being recoded as 0 and values 4 and 5 as 1).

1. ‘I feel European’: please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement?
2. I feel citizen of the world (scale from 1 ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 ‘strongly agree’)

*Independent variables*

For our independent variables, we draw on questions measuring physical and virtual mobility, social networks and cultural cosmopolitan consumption and competence on Europeans’ feelings of being European and/or citizen of the world. In order to be able to disentangle a specific Europeanisation of identity, we have discriminated wherever possible between transnational practices between different European nations, and in other parts of the world in order to allow us to differentiate specifically European processes from more global ones. Table 1 lists the independent variables associated with mobility and network practices.

---- Table 1. Independent variables: mobility and network practices HERE -----

The cross-border practices inserted in the model include ‘mundane’ aspects of life such as eating foreign cuisines as well as a measure of linguistic competence which can be treated as significant for cosmopolitan practices (see table 2). We not only assess respondents’ knowledge of other languages, but also how they use it in their everyday life. We also include a measure for buying goods from sellers or providers located abroad: this might represent an additional step towards Europeanisation or globalisation depending on the nationality of the sellers. It requires more effort than simply going to the nearby restaurant or buying music online as people have to look for what they want. Finally, we asked people whether they were very familiar with one or several countries besides their country of residence, that is, that they knew well enough to feel comfortable in. They will enable us to assess people’s level of spatial competence.

----- Table 2. Independent variables: Cultural cosmopolitan consumption and competence HERE ----

These cross-border practices are all contextualised by socio-demographic variables of age, gender, educational level, and the Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status ISEI, developed by Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman (1992). Before discussing the results of the regressions, we first present some descriptive data on national differences in terms of supranational self-identifications.

**Countries’ supranational self-identifications**

Table 3 cross-tabulates these European and world identifications, broken down by the six national samples. It indicates that although 46% of our sample have both European and worldly identities, there is a sizeable group – 30% who have one, but not the other, identity. It also shows that the British responses are distinctive in two ways. Firstly, Britons are much more likely to see themselves as neither citizens of the world, nor of Europe, than any other nation. However, with 40%, there is no simple nationalist majority even in the UK. Secondly, Britons are more likely to see themselves as citizens of the world - but not of Europe - than any other nation – 23%. This suggests that the Brexit vote may not have been only a simple nationalist reaction, and that the British might have greater non-European global ties. Outlining the framing importance of history and culture over economics and geopolitics to account for national divergences in terms of support for the EU, Diez Medrano (2003) characterises the UK as exhibiting pride in feeling British and by the belief in British cultural distinctiveness compared to the (European) continent, which is inscribed historically, notably through the role of the British Empire. By contrast, in Denmark and Germany, over a quarter of respondents feel European but not citizen of the world. A greater support to the EU in Germany can be interpreted as a wish to re-build trust after its role in World War II and it is translated into a ‘European approach’ in school textbooks appearing as ‘a lesson to be learned from the destructive nationalism of the German past’ (Soysal, Bertilotti, Mannitz, 2005, p. 23). In the UK, although they may have changed over time, recent curriculum analyses have shown a focus on Britishness in education, which has related to multicultural values, and on more global than European dimensions when a supranational level is discussed (Faas 2011). Besides, negative perceptions of other European groups have been fostered by tabloids, toying with images of invasions, floods of migrants (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy 2012), and have most likely influenced people’s opinions of the EU, increased the separation between the British island and the ‘Continent’ and eventually contributed to the Brexit win.

-----Table 3. Feeling European and/ or feeling citizen of the world by country HERE-----

We should also emphasize that having European or global identities is not in a zero-sum relationship with identifying with one’s nation. Table 4 reports the mean scores of national feelings, broken down by the strength of respondents’ orientations to European and world identities. For instance, in the U.K., those who feel European and citizen of the world score on average 4.36 on the scale ‘Feeling citizen of their country of residence’ (where 5 means they strongly feel as such), while those who feel neither European nor citizen of the world have lower sense of national belonging with an average score of 4.25. It shows that in every case – including Britain then - it is those who identify with Europe and the world who also report high levels of national identity.

----Table 4. Means of national feelings by country and forms of supranational identity HERE ----

**Modelling European or global identifications**

We use a multinomial logistic regression[[6]](#endnote-6) to assess the relations between supranational self-identifications, on the one hand, and socio-demographics, social participation and virtual and concrete mobility practices, cosmopolitan and European consumption practices, on the other. No causal patterns will be assumed here, given the nature of our analysis. The analysis focuses on the whole sample of European citizens.

If we follow the variables’ order of appearance in Table 5, we can see that as expected **age** has a positive (but small) impact on forms of supranational identity that include a European dimension (odd ratios higher than 1). Older people are more likely to feel European more generally than neither European nor global. In contrast, younger people are more likely to feel citizens of the world, but not European, compared to feeling none of these. This supports Savage et al’s (2010) argument that younger people are less European oriented, and more attracted by a more general global cosmopolitanism. In addition, **women** are more likely than men to feel both European and global, and they are not predisposed to distinguish between these two identities.

---- Table 5. Multinomial logistic regression measuring the factors impacting the European and global identification at the European level HERE ----

Despite the emphasis on socio-economic and status differences in shaping European identities (notably Fligstein 2008), in our analysis **ISEI**’s role is muted. It has a negative impact on feeling citizen of the world (and not feeling European), but this needs to be interpreted with caution (its contribution on average is not significant at a 0.05 α-level over the 5 imputations). A closer examination of the average for each form of identity shows that feeling European only and feeling both European and citizen of the world are associated with higher ISEI compared to feeling neither or ‘simply’ citizen of the world. Yet, the differences are rather small, which may explain the lack of significance.

With regard to the **level of education,** we observe that those with a tertiary education degree have in general higher odds to identify as a world citizen but not European (than to feel neither) compared to people with a higher secondary diploma or to those who have an in-between lower and higher secondary diploma. It seems that the well-educated are especially drawn to global rather than specifically European identities. In addition, there is no significant difference between those who have achieved lower secondary education or less and those with tertiary education. If education has a role, it is certainly not a linear or straightforward one.

It is not surprising that being **active in associations** oriented towards other countries or cultures turns out to be strongly associated with supranational identities. This kind of associational social capital evidently tends towards a more outgoing set of identifications, both European and global.

**Not being born in the country of residence** has no impact on people’s identification. Since our sample is composed of national citizens, we will only use this variable as an imperfect proxy for migration status and it seems that we cannot establish a link between it and people’s sense of belonging.

In terms of concrete and virtual mobility practices, none of the variables linked to an **experience of life abroad before and after 18** is significant. And generally, one’s actual history of mobility practices has relatively little significance whether for Europe or for the world at a whole. The actual experience of migration does not itself appear very significant in shaping transnational identities in Europe, which is an arresting finding for addressing one vein of transactionalist theory that focuses on mobility practices.

By contrast,it makes a significant difference **whether trips are to the EU or outside it**. The more one travels outside the EU, the more respondents feel citizens of the world - and not European - and the more one travels in the EU, the more they consider themselves European and not citizen of the world. This is a striking demonstration of the need to differentiate between globalisation and Europeanisation.

**Virtual communications** are negatively associated with feeling European and not citizen of the world. The more virtual contacts people have, the less European they feel.

Furthermore, our model shows that **having friends** in and outside Europe increases one’s likelihood of identifying as a global citizen alongside or not a self-identification as European. Having a non-native partner clearly makes a big difference. The odds of those who have a **partner** from another part of the EU to feel European (including or not a global identity) compared to feeling neither European nor citizen of the world are at least twice those who do not have a partner from another country of the EU. Having a partner from outside the EU decreases substantially the odds to feel both European and citizen of the world.

In addition, other variables such as the **number of countries inside and outside the EU** respondents are **familiar with** and music tastes continue to be associated with the European identity – though not always positively. For instance, the more countries outside the EU people are familiar with, the lower the odds are for them to feel European but not citizen of the world, compared to having no supranational identity. However, being familiar with a large number of EU countries increases the odds of feeling European and a citizen of the world. In addition, listening to **world** **music** increases the odds of developing supranational forms of identity. It is interesting to note that a taste for world music is positively linked to all three forms of supranational identity. World music benefits from enjoying a ‘universal’ appeal which crosses geographical boundaries. A taste for traditional European music is also associated with a European and global identity, just as is a taste for traditional music from the country of residence. A preference for European cuisine has no significant link with supranational identity, partly because it depends too much on the national cuisine of the country of residence.

Still in terms of consumption practices, following sport at an international level is positively associated with feeling both European and citizen of the world. Purchasing in the EU is positively related to European self-identifications (with or without a global one), while purchasing outside the EU is negatively related to them.

Other variables related to cosmopolitan competence are significantly related to different forms of supranational identifications. The more languages one knows, the more likely one feels European (but not citizen of the world). Watching TV in another language seems to have a similar effect.

In general, our findings suggest that consumption and network practices are significant in extending transactional analyses, and that, in comparison, transnational mobility practices seem less important in differentiating European from world identifications. Actual life experience in other European nations does not necessarily make much of a difference to feeling European. It is trips to Europe, rather than living in other Europe nations, which is important. Our model seems to suggest that experiencing European diversity may reinforce less a European sense of belonging than enjoying bits of what one might think is European culture. The coefficient patterns indicate that it would be too quick to confuse European identification with global identification and underscore the role of practices anchored in the European space, especially that of consumption and network ones.

**Unpacking national variation: British exceptionalism revealed**

Now that we have unravelled general findings for the European space, we turn to consider how they can vary at a national level[[7]](#endnote-7). We ran identical models separately for Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK, as they cover different parts of Europe (North, Centre, South, Europe continental and the UK). We omitted the other two nations since half of Romanians and Spaniards surveyed felt they were both European and citizens of the world (table 1). In addition, for these two countries, the model may not be as reliable because some variables have very low frequencies. The model is most explanatory for the UK with a Nagelkerke R2 ranging from 0.376 to 0.381 across the five imputed datasets and with Germany with a Nagelkerke R2 ranging from 0.261 to 0.269. For Italy (Nagelkerke R2 from 0.213 to 0.214), but most of all for Denmark (Nagelkerke R2 from 0.132 to 0.143), the model is less powerful with a fewer number of significantly contributing variables. In what follows, results of each national regression will be presented graphically for key selected independent variables. We will focus on variables that have a significant contribution for one or several countries, with a special attention to the British case. Although we concentrate on the graphs showing predicted probabilities, odd ratios, p. values and confidence intervals will be provided to further illustrate the role of these variables, and especially their level of significance for the national model (Appendix 1 shows the full model with significant odd ratios for each country).

Figure 1 presents the relationships between the predicted probabilities of supranational feelings and network practices for each selected country. In each country, people with a non-EU partner have higher probabilities to feel citizen of the world and not European and also lower probabilities to feel both European and global. This latter pattern is somewhat more pronounced in the UK, where the odd ratio for British with a non-European partner to feel both European and global rather than neither is significant and shows a negative effect (odd ratio=0.126, p.value < 0.001, 95%CI: 0.042-0.376). Note that, in the UK, having a partner from a non-EU country leads to somewhat higher probabilities to have no supranational feelings but the difference between the two is small and should be interpreted with caution.

Similarly, having friends from outside the EU leads to a higher increase in the probability of feeling a citizen of the world rather than European in the UK compared to the other countries (odd ratio=1.565, p. value < 0.001, 95%CI: 1.320-1.856). This is a clear and direct trend in every case where those with friends from at least six different countries have very low levels of no supranational identification. With regard to being a member of an association oriented towards other cultures, the pattern is similar across countries: yet the difference between members and non-members in terms of their global and European feelings is slightly greater in the UK (odd ratio=3.630, p. value < 0.001, 95%CI: 1.874-7.032).

Figure 1. Network practices and predicted probabilities of supranational self-identities in Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK

If we turn specifically to musical consumption, the relationships between listening to world music or to traditional European music, on the one hand, and levels of identification are also telling. Those disliking world music and European music are less likely to feel European and a citizen of the world (Figure 2). The pattern is visually very clear for the UK. The odd ratios for those who feel European and global compared to those who feel neither are indeed significant in the UK for both types of music (world music: 1.354, p. value =0.001, 95%CI: 1.138-1.611; traditional European music: 1.474, p. value =0.001, 95%CI: 1.181-1.840). The odd ratio is also significant for world music in Germany (1.560, p. value < 0.001, 95%CI: 1.292-1.884) and for traditional European music in Italy (1.234, p. value < 0.05, 95%CI: 1.045-1.457).

Figure 2. Music consumption and predicted probabilities of supranational self-identities in Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK

In Figure 3, the variables ‘purchase in the EU’, ‘number of languages learnt’ and ‘watching television in another language’ reveal some British specificity. First, although all countries follow the same trend, the association between the number of languages learnt and the probability to have supranational feelings is visually pronounced in Britain. This is especially visible for the probabilities of feeling European and not citizen of the world and feeling neither (UK odd ratio of feeling European and not citizen of the world compared to feeling neither for that variable: 1.489, p. value < 0.01, 95%CI: 1.148-1.932). In Germany, the odds of feeling both European and global compared to feeling neither also significantly increase with the number of languages learnt (1.327; p. value < 0.05, 95%CI: 1.054-1.670). Purchasing in the EU has also a significant contribution to the model in both countries (according to the likelihood ratio test). The graph show that the UK follows a similar trend as the other countries for feeling citizen of the world and not European or feeling the opposite. It seems, for instance, that people who purchase in the EU have higher probabilities to feel European and not citizen of the world (UK odd ratio comparing with feeling neither: 3.021, p. value < 0.01, 95%CI: 1.512-6.038). The graphs also point at a distinctive pattern for the UK especially for the probabilities to feel both European and citizen of the world. With regard to watching television in another language, Figure 3 reveals that, quite distinctively for the UK, it is mainly those who watch at least once a week but not every day who are most likely to feel most European and citizen of the world[[8]](#endnote-8).

Figure 3. Purchase in the EU, number of languages learnt and watching television in another language and predicted probabilities of supranational self-identities in Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK

In addition, being familiar with other countries has a significant contribution to the German and Danish model, but it is not significant in the UK. A quick look at Figure 4 shows that, although the UK follows for most parts a similar trend as in the other countries, the line of predicted probabilities indicates a less linear pattern for the higher values of the EU familiarity variable[[9]](#endnote-9).

Figure 4. Familiarity with EU countries and predicted probabilities of supranational self-identities in Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK

In line with the European model, the results at the national level endorse our argument that personal mobility practices are less significant in shaping identification. Yet, at the national level some mobility practices, especially outside the EU, can play a role. This appears particularly visible for the UK, as Figure 5 indicates. Those who have lived out of the EU at adult age have higher probability to feel European and global and lower probability to feel neither (UK odd ratio=2.868, p. value =0.001, 95%CI: 1.583-5.196). A similar observation holds for Germany (German odd ratio=3.455, p. value < 0.05, 95CI%: 1.244- 9.594). The relationship between this abroad life experience and all three forms of supranational feelings is significant there but the UK is distinctive given the significant contribution of trips outside the EU in its model. Figure 5 clearly shows that, in the UK, the more one visits a place outside the EU, the more she or he feels citizen of the world and not European, (UK odd ratio=1.358, p. value < 0.01, 95%CI: 1.081-1.707).

Figure 5. Mobility practices and predicted probabilities of supranational self-identities in Denmark, Germany, Italy and the UK

Finally, in terms of the influence of sociodemographic variables, the UK is the country for which the level of education makes a significant contribution. Those with a university degree are more likely to have supranational feelings than to have none in comparison with those with a lower educational degree. Similarly, ISEI has a significant negative contribution only in the UK (differentiating those with a European and global self-identity compared to those who have none). Although the graphs show a tendency to feel European and citizen of the world or only European associated with middle or older ages and an inclination to feel only citizen of the world with younger ages, the association between age and supranational feelings is only significant in Germany and Italy, and for the odd ratios of feeling European without or without the global self-identity.

We saw that our model explains more variation in the UK, where contacts with a foreign environment have an especially important role to play. The graphs demonstrate that Britain follows similar trends as other countries and, hence, is in a way not that different; yet, Britain’s position is particular for two reasons. First, a greater number of variables has a significant influence in the model, showing that network, consumption and sociodemographic variables induce a greater variation among British citizens in terms of supranational feelings, compared to the other countries investigated. Importantly, cultural consumption practices are important, especially for feeling both European and citizen of the world. The significance of consumption variables, such as those related to music or television watching, tends to corroborate the idea that people can be more cosmopolitan *and* European if they can feel part of a larger community which shares some cultural communality. Second, geographical boundaries seem to matter for the links between practices or tastes and supranational identities more in the UK than in the other countries. European-centred activities, such as purchasing in the EU or listening to traditional European music, are associated more directly with pro-European feelings than in other nations. Similarly, there are greater differentiations between those with and without relationships with parts of the world outside the EU (through, for instance, having friends or making trips outside the EU) amongst Britons than for other Europeans. Britain arguably sees clearer differentiation between the forces of globalisation and Europeanisation.

This clearly outlines strong internal divisions about how people feel towards Europe and towards the world, which are engrained in historical and cultural dynamics and tensions specific to the UK as already briefly discussed. As Díez Medrano showed, ‘there is less agreement about how to characterise the country in the United Kingdom’ (2003, p.59).

It may therefore be erroneous to see Brexit voters as simple nationalists. In fact, the crucial issue seems to be the bifurcation between two different kinds of global networks, one looking to the former empire, the other to Europe. Indeed, compared to other researches which indicate that younger Britons were more likely to vote in favour of staying in the EU (Goodwin & Heath 2016), our data do not show a significant relationship with age in the British case when it comes to assess self-identification. Hence, wanting to stay in the EU may be justified by other – maybe more pragmatic – reasons than feeling European. There is, however, a very strong effect of educational qualifications for all kinds of transnational identities.

In addition, our model suggests that the socio-geographical position of the countries is also important. Research on linguistic capital has, for instance, suggested that the size of a country (defined as the size of the population) could motivate an attachment to Europe that could not be reduced to mobility, network and consumption practices if one looks at Italy but most especially at Denmark (Gerhards 2014). Yet, Denmark is similar to Germany with almost a quarter of its population feeling European only. As a small nation, Denmark is one of the most globalised countries according to the 2015 KOF index (7th)[[10]](#endnote-10) but its apparent openness has its limits observable through its reluctance to further open the EU’s frontiers (Dosenrode, 2007, p. 186) and a certain Euroscepticism. As Wivel (2014, no page) explains, Denmark holds a dual position towards the European integration complaining but still loyal partly because, as a small country, the European project is a way for Denmark to ‘maximise national interests by moderating the agendas of the great powers and viewing international institutions as the most effective way to do so’. Therefore, any pragmatic European identity Danes might have does not prevent them from feeling strongly about their own nation too (see table 2). The lack of differentiation (or absence of impact of most independent variables) between Danes in our model might come from the fact that Denmark is a ‘highly affluent, yet highly cohesive and relatively homogenous society. Yet it combines high levels of social transnationalism with high levels of national loyalty’ (Favell, Reimer & Solgaard Jensen, 2015, p. 161).

In comparison, Italy looks less anchored in the local and more oriented towards the world. European integration might be perceived in more global terms in this country. European identification is associated with global belonging with more than half of its population feeling both European and citizen of the world. This global identification seems to be a long-standing orientation (Kohli, 2000) and may have a link with ‘Italy’s many diaspora’ (Gabaccia, 2003) and the movements of worldwide emigration and immigration that have characterised the history of the country.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In this paper, we have elaborated a revised transactionalist approach to transnational practices. We have shown how it is important to distinguish between transactions with European partners and other parts of the world, and also to recognise how practices are different in their significance for wider identifications. We thus showed in detail how national identities can be consistent with being part of a wider transnational sense of belonging. Most respondents in the six nations which we studied reported high level of identification with Europe and/or the world as a whole. Only in the UK do less than half of respondents not identify with Europe, and even here, only a minority has neither a European nor a world identity. The British case, we argue, reflects the ongoing power of extra European ties (especially those associated with imperial Anglophone connections), rather than a simple protest of those ‘left behind’ by globalisation.

Second, we demonstrated how there are interesting contrasts in the way these supranational feelings are associated with networks, mobility and cultural consumption practices both at a European level and at a national level. Our findings demonstrate the importance of networks and consumption practices, such as familiarity with other countries, partners from abroad, musical taste or purchasing abroad. In contrast, concrete physical mobility experience and especially a life experience abroad, is less significant in shaping identities than anticipated. Indeed, the actual experience of spending longer time abroad, especially in the EU, seems of less importance in affecting one’s identification both at the European and national levels. Possibly these practices are less significant for Europeans (especially for the EU-15) as they tend to take the right of freedom of movement for granted. The importance of physical mobility experience is likely to be more significant for those for whom frontiers within and around Europe are still very much in place, especially non-EU migrants (Teney, Hanquinet & Bürkin, 2016).

As literature has long established (e.g, Díez Medrano, 2010; Hooghe, & Marks, 2004) and as we have already suggested ourselves, the links between identity and support for European integration are not straightforwardly related. Yet, our analysis has helped us to question the validity of some hypotheses regarding the Brexit vote, such as the nationalist backlash. With our model being most explanatory for the UK, it is evident that the British case cannot be reduced to a straightforward nationalist current, as the British’s supranational self-identifications are very complex, linked to different patterns of mobility, network and lifestyle.

In conclusion, we have extended the analysis of transnational practices to show how intra- and extra-European interactions tend towards complex patterns of identification which can hold global and European identities apart and are not necessarily reduced to a simple dichotomy between affluent Europeans and nationalist ‘left behind’. This is very clear in the British case. By recognising how European identifications are not necessarily part of a larger process of global identification, we are much better able to understand the nature and gravity of current challenges.

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1. http://www.obets.ua.es/pioneur/, retrieved on August 4 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.ibei.org/projects/eumarr/, retrieved on August 4 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Interestingly both Lizardo’s and Rössel and Schroedter’s papers used the variables of identification as predictors of cultural consumption. Yet, and although the relationship is bi-directional in the life course, a detour by cognitive sociology (Vaisey, 2009) could suggest that consumption practices constitute a first practical contact with and knowledge of diversity which would possibly foster a more discursive vision of oneself as feeling European or citizen of the world. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.eucross.eu/cms/, retrieved on August 4 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Smith, S. (22 May 2016) Nuisance callers account for almost half of all calls to UK homes, The Telegraph:

   <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/22/nuisance-callers-account-for-almost-half-of-all-calls-to-uk-home/>, retrieved on 28 July 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Multiple imputations (based on linear regressions) were used to deal with a high number of missing values in the model. Five imputations were used. Friends in and out of the EU, World music, Traditional EU music were predicted. The data are also weighted. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. To be able to fully assess the role of each variable within the different countries, we decided to run a regression in each country, instead of using interactions. Plus, it appears to us that it was also the most appropriate choice given the relatively small sample size for the number of variables. We were able to control that, for each country investigated, the number of cases by category of answer was adequate. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The associated significant odd ratio needs to be interpreted with caution then. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. In Denmark being familiar with the EU is related to feeling citizen of the world and not European (1.317, p. value < 0.05, 95%CI; 1.057-1.642) and to feeling both (odd ratio=1.206, p. value<0.05, 95%CI: 1.029-1.413), compared to feeling neither. In Germany, familiarity with European countries is also associated with feeling citizen of the world not European (1.323, p. value < 0.05, 95%CI: 1.004-1.743), feeling European and not citizen of the world (1.332, p. value = 0.001, 95%CI: 1.122-1.581) and feeling both global and European (odd ratio=1.350, p. value < 0.001, 95%CI: 1.150-1.584). In Italy, although the model explains up to 21% of variation, most variables are insignificant. Being a member of an association oriented towards other cultures, making trips inside the EU and a taste for traditional European music increase the odds of feeling European and citizen of the world, compared to feeling neither. Age has also a positive role, illustrating the fact that young people may have been socialised in a context less favourable to the EU than their parents, in light of growing Euroscepticism (Serricchio, 2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/media/filer\_public/2015/03/04/rankings\_2015.pdf, retrieved on August 4 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)