
Italian Public Opinion on Turkey's EU Accession: Utilitarian Calculations, Identitarian Evaluations or Perceived Threats?

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Abstract

This article provides an in- depth analysis of Italian citizens' attitudes towards Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU). It identifies opinion patterns in Italy concerning Turkey and key determinants of variation in popular support for Turkey's possible membership of the EU. This article first analyzes whether the Italian public adopts a utilitarian approach in calculating the perceived costs and benefits of EU enlargement with Turkey. Second, turning to identity- related determinants, it examines whether Italians consider Turkey's cultural, religious and universal values to be compatible with those of the EU and Italy. Third, in terms of threat- based determinants, it examines whether Turcoscepticism in Italy is based on the fear of an influx of Turks into Europe, both from realistic and symbolic threat perspectives. This article contributes to the burgeoning literature on public opinion by testing how these competing theories help explain attitudes of Italian citizens in the 2000s toward Turkey's possible EU accession. Through binary logistic regression analysis of Eurobarometer survey data (2000-2008), the article concludes that pragmatist sociotropic utilitarian considerations, in concert with mutual comprehension of values based on

'we- feeling' and perceived symbolic threat of loss of identity and culture, have significant effects on Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's protracted EU membership bid.

Key Words

Italy, public opinion, Turkey- EU relations, utilitarian theory, identity theory, threat perception, binary logistic regression.

Introduction

Turkish- Italian relations, which date back to at least the 14th century, have been fairly friendly and cordial at the political and diplomatic levels and have rarely suffered from tensions. Especially during the Cold War, bilateral dialogue was punctuated by commitments of both countries for further economic and political cooperation. As Alessandri and Canan argued, “[i]n the European context, Italy has traditionally been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Turkey's EU membership...Italy has been one of the earliest and most committed supporters of Turkey's accession.”¹ Although Italian economic stakeholders

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strongly support Turkey's accession, a certain level of resistance exists at the political level among political parties, and supporters from the Communist to regionalist parties have mixed and differing motivations for resistance, including religion, identity, and the Kurdish question. The regionalist and Eurosceptic Northern League's remarkable electoral victory in 2008 showed that Italy's traditionally positive attitude towards Turkey's entry into the European Union (EU) is likely to reverse in the foreseeable future. This observation introduces the need to account for the determinants and trends of Italian public opinion on the debate over Turkey's EU accession.

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Italian public opinion has been studied through the Eurobarometer (EB) surveys since the first inception of the systematic surveys in 1974. The earliest EB surveys provided thematic coverage of European citizens' priorities in the six member states about issues such as the Common Market (EB No: 3, 1975), the then upcoming European Parliament elections in 1979, and the institutional formulation of the European Community (EC). In comparison with

more immediate concerns, like the EC's social policies, regional development differences or the common fight against inflation, Turkey's relations with the EC have appeared neither on the political nor the public agenda. Even after the third enlargement of the EC in 1986, when Turkey applied for full EC membership (1987), Europeans (including the Italians) still did not see the possibility of a new state joining the EC as a crucial issue. Instead, driven mainly by utilitarian motivations, Europeans (as well as Italians) were frustrated more by the relative costs and benefits of membership for their own country.

After Turkey applied for full membership, only 3% of Italians supported Turkey's admission (EB No: 30). However, only one out of four Italians considered the "expansion of the EC Turkey" to be "a very important problem." At the same time, Italians were among the more Turcosceptic Europeans and in 1988 they were more supportive of EC enlargement with countries such as Malta and Cyprus rather than Turkey (EB No: 37).² By 1992, while EU citizens overall were divided against Turkey's accession (41% for versus 42% against), Italians were more Turcosceptic with 44% against Turkey's accession (EB No: 38). That is, Italy was in general not among those European countries favouring EU enlargement.

At the outset of the 21st century, Turkish- EU relations became more politically positive, which was also followed by a positive opinion climate.

The European Council adopted the EU-Turkey Accession Partnership in 2001, which provided a road map for Turkey's EU accession process. Later, at the Copenhagen Summit (2001), the European Council decided to increase EU financial support through the pre-accession instrument. This positive political mood was matched by a four point increase in public support in Italy (to 34%). However, there was also a one point increase in opposition to Turkish accession (to 46%, EB No: 56).

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The 2002 Copenhagen Summit decided that accession negotiations with Turkey would be opened if, by December 2004, the European Council decided that Turkey could meet the Copenhagen political criteria. The lack of a predetermined membership date for Turkey, however, rekindled the debate over its accession. In Italy, this was reflected in a mood of increased Turcoscepticism at the mass public level (with 31% support versus 48% opposition, EB No: 57). Until the EU's historical enlargement in the east in 2004, Italian support for enlargement had remained *stable* with Turkey having the least support of any applicant country. That is, although the European Council decided to open membership talks with Turkey, by 2005, Italian public opinion did not support Turkey's accession (EB No: 63).

Although a significant proportion of Italians accepted that Turkey forms a part of European geography and to lesser extent of European history (54% and 45% respectively), 56% of Italians nevertheless believed there were significant cultural differences between Turkey and the EU. For Italians, the human rights issue was another problem, with 73% believing that Turkey should respect human rights (EB No: 63). Italy has thus become one of the EU member states in which public opinion generally favoured EU enlargement, yet remained rather sceptical regarding Turkish EU membership, with only 39% approving in 2006 (*Special Eurobarometer 255 Report on Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*).

This brief insight into Italian public opinion on Turkey's EU accession introduces the need for an in-depth analysis of the determinants of public opinion to create a constructive and focused discussion of EU-Turkey relations. This article examines the key determinants of Turcosceptic and Turco-enthusiast attitudes. The rationale that inspired this study is two-fold. Firstly, a number of academic studies have demonstrated the importance and relevance of studying public opinion on EU enlargement, and there is no doubt that understanding the nature and determinants of public opinion are essential to future Turkey-EU relations. As Canan-Sokullu and Kentmen argued, "Turcosceptic citizens might halt Turkey's accession to the EU by voting against it

in referenda or by electing Turcosceptic policy-makers at national and the European levels who would work against Turkey”.³ Yet, research into Italian public opinion regarding enlargement and Turkey’s accession is rather scarce.⁴ Secondly, as well as its normative imperative, this study is motivated by the need to generate empirical evidence about the dynamics of public attitudes toward candidate countries. As the issue of Turkey’s EU membership climbs higher in the public agenda, and as the public’s attitude is contingent on a complex set of factors rather than a single one, a multidimensional approach is needed. Therefore, it is timely to investigate whether Italians evaluate Turkey’s EU membership bid in terms of the economic utility of enlargement for Italy and Italians, or in terms of identitarian perceptions, or in terms of fears about Turkey prevalent at a public level.

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In what follows, I first analyze whether the Italian public adopts a utilitarian approach in calculating the perceived costs and benefits of EU enlargement with Turkey. Do utilitarian calculations of egocentric or sociotropic costs and benefits in a wide range of

considerations affect Italian public opinion on Turkey’s EU membership? Second, turning to identity-related explanations, I ask whether Italians consider Turkey’s cultural and religious values to be compatible with those of the EU. To what extent do Italians feel that Christian values and principles, and shared European norms, such as belief in democracy, the rule of law and protection of and respect for human and minority rights, are shared with Muslim Turkey’s values? Third, borrowing from threat-based explanations on EU enlargement, I examine whether Turcoscepticism is based on the fear of an influx of Turks into Europe, from both realistic and symbolic perspectives. To this end, I provide a theoretical overview of public opinion on EU enlargement in the first section. Following the methodological map, through binary logistic regression analysis of Eurobarometer surveys (2000-2008), I examine the determinants of Italian public opinion on Turkey’s EU membership.

Theoretical Overview of Public Opinion on EU Enlargement

There is an extensive literature on the determinants of public support for the EU. This article concentrates on two main sets of theories on public opinion-utilitarian- and identity-based theories-while also developing a threat perception approach with specific reference to realistic and symbolic threats.

Utilitarian Theories: Sociotropic and Egocentric Calculations

Scholars have long debated whether utilitarian calculations are important determinants of public opinion about the EU.⁵ Utilitarian theories assume that individuals are rational actors who calculate costs and benefits when they make decisions. Among different alternatives, they choose the most advantageous option while rejecting the least beneficial ones. According to the utilitarian model of public opinion, there are two levels of calculations, namely the sociotropic and egocentric level of utilitarianism.

On the macro-economic level, sociotropic utilitarianism suggests that citizens' attitudes toward the EU and enlargement are based on how supranational economic policies at the EU level affect national economic conditions, such as inflation and unemployment rates, in the country.⁶ It assumes that if EU integration and further enlargement engender costs on member state economies, individuals tend to oppose integration. Considering the impacts of EU enlargement at the national economic level, sociotropic utilitarian theory argues that if the economic benefits of enlargement exceed the costs, individuals tend to support EU enlargement. Given that objective evaluations of macro-economic impacts increase support for European integration, I examine the role of three different

indicators of sociotropic utilitarianism on public opinion on Turkey: *macro-economic costs of enlargement on European and member state economies (Hypothesis 1); compatibility between the levels of economic development of the candidate country and the EU (Hypothesis 2); and financial benefits of enlargement for member states (Hypothesis 3).*

At the micro level, egocentric utilitarianism concentrates on calculations of personal economic and financial costs and benefits as a determinant of support for enlargement. It claims that if individuals' economic and financial situations get better as a result of integration, then they tend to support integration. The personal economic utility of integration depends on an individual's human capital, which is closely related to their having the occupational skills to take advantage of free movement in the EU and of the internal market. Low-skilled individuals who are worse off in the internal market as a result of integration tend to develop negative views on the EU.⁷ Economic integration encourages production to migrate to locations with the cheapest labour, leaving local labour jobless if it is more costly.⁸ Therefore, unskilled workers develop negative attitudes towards further enlargement because it will either lower their own wages or risk them losing their jobs. In contrast with unskilled workers' negative approach to enlargement, skilled labour in the EU should support it because the new member state may also import skill-intensive goods and services from skill-abundant Western European

states. Concentrating on egocentric utilitarianism, I examine *the impact of the level of occupational skills of Europeans on the level of support for Turkey's membership in EU (Hypothesis 4)*.

Identity-Based Theories

Identity-based theories argue that utilitarian theories are simplistic because they assume that people are motivated primarily by economic incentives. Identity studies concentrate on how identities and values affect individual attitudes.⁹ Their main argument is that people tend to develop social identities and make distinctions between their group ('in-group') and outsiders ('out-group') on the basis of shared characteristics, such as cultural, geographical and historical traits, and 'we-feeling'. Individuals develop favourable feelings towards their in-group and maintain beliefs about in-group supremacy.¹⁰ Studies suggest that due to a sense of 'we-feeling' individuals tend to preserve inter-group distinctiveness, and develop scepticism and hostility towards outsiders.¹¹ Europeans might view those who do not share the common traits of European culture as 'others'.¹² Thus, such an identity should lead to increased protection of the in-group and favourable attitudes toward group members that share some common traits while rejecting the 'others'.¹³ On the issue of enlargement, I predict that *the perceived vicinity to Turkey according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities determines the*

level of attitudes towards Turkey's inclusion in the EU (Hypothesis 5).

The other strand of identity theory suggests that Europeans share common values based on liberal democracy and respect for universal and human rights. Such values create a bond among EU citizens and differentiate them from other parts of the world. Scholars suggest that Europeans do not view Turkey as European since it does not have a consolidated democracy, it did not experience the Renaissance or reformist movements at the same time as Western Europe, and it has a problematic record of human rights.¹⁴ Regarding democracy, this may be a misperception, given that, as Casanova puts it, "Muslim democracy is as possible and viable today in Turkey as Christian democracy was half a century ago in Western Europe".¹⁵ On this issue of how rights-based European identities affect individuals' attitudes concerning Turkey's accession to the EU, I examine *if a candidate country meets European criteria regarding rights and democracy then public opinion becomes more pro-enlargement (Hypothesis 6)*.

Identity-based debates on rights and democracy also relate to the impact of religious identities on individual political attitudes. Scholars claim that the norms and values attached to religious identities provide heuristics for understanding politics and developing preferences.¹⁶ According to Casanova, the issue of Europe's cultural and religious identity, and the prospect of Turkey's joining the EU, have caused increasing unease

among Europeans, Christian and 'post-Christian' alike.¹⁷ In the context of EU integration, Huntington asserts that "the identification of Europe with Western Christendom provides a clear criterion for the admission of new members to the western organizations".¹⁸ From a viewpoint of compatibility between religion and rights, Alessandri and Canan argue that "[t]he contested nature of Islam and democracy in Europe among the public inextricably relates to the EU membership of Turkey- a predominantly Muslim but secular state founded on democratic values and principles".¹⁹ In light of this debate, I examine *if religious identities affect public opinion on predominantly Muslim Turkey's EU membership (Hypothesis 7)*.

Fears and Threat Perceptions

A number of researchers have taken a comprehensive threat-based approach to the problem of EU enlargement.²⁰ Matonyte and Morkevicius, for example, argue that historically the EU was created "to avoid internal and external threats that Europe faced".²¹ Because the EU evolved as a socio-cultural agent, with its supranational institutions and European polity, a social constructivist meaning of threats gained importance.²² However, as Kirchner and Sperling claim, there is neither a satisfactory typology of the threats confronting Europe nor a conceptual consensus on the content, form or agents of the threats posed.²³ I therefore aim to develop an immigration-related threat perception approach to

public opinion on EU enlargement by borrowing certain assumptions from utilitarian and identity-related theories.

Firstly, in the context of EU enlargement, immigration poses a perceived egocentric threat to an individual's pocket economy. As economic integration moves production to member states with cheap unskilled labour, foreigners and immigrants are perceived to be stealing jobs from the host country citizens.²⁴ McLaren describes these perceived threats of competing with foreigners for jobs available in the home country as 'realistic threats'.²⁵ "Members of the dominant group", McLaren argues, "may come to feel that certain resources belong to them, and when those resources are threatened by a minority group, members of the dominant group are likely to react with hostility".²⁶ Furthermore, as a result of Europe's aging population and low birth rate, competition in job markets with young immigrant labour is likely to be another future source of perceived challenge to Europeans.²⁷ Thus, we can expect Europeans (especially unskilled workers) to be against enlargement since (as they might believe) it will result in an influx of (probably cheaper and younger) foreign workers into Europe. I, therefore, examine *the role of perceived realistic threat of immigrants from EU enlargement with Turkey (Hypothesis 8)*.

Secondly, immigration also raises certain perceived threats to identity, considering people's tendency to distinguish between 'self' and

‘other’.²⁸ McLaren conceptualizes this ‘identitarian’²⁹ threat as a ‘symbolic threat’: the fear that others will change the domestic culture.³⁰ As Canan-Sokullu and Kentmen argue, “[t]he identity-centric public opinion research focuses on attitudes concerning political incorporation and social visibility of out-group- the ‘immigrants’- with reference to protection of shared in-group identity and xenophobia”.³¹ Scholars expect individuals who favour in-group protection to be less supportive of immigration into Europe as a result of enlargement because immigrants who have different morals, values, beliefs and attitudes than their own majority group pose a significant perceived ‘symbolic’ threat to the collective (national/ European) identity.³² As well, for Buzan, immigration threatens ‘communal identity and culture’ by changing the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics of the population.³³ Thus, the out-group is seen as a symbolic threat to the ‘self’.³⁴ Following on from McLaren’s argument that “threats are likely to be at play in explaining extreme anti-immigrant hostility in Europe”,³⁵ I examine the impact of *the fear that Turkish immigrants pose a threat to the in-group identity on the popular debate on Turkey’s EU membership bid (Hypothesis 9)*.

Methodology

To explore Italian public attitudes towards Turkey’s EU membership bid, I utilized the pooled data from the

following Eurobarometer (EB) surveys: EB53 (April-May 2000), EB54.1 (November-December 2000), EB58.1 (October-November 2002), EB63.4 (May-June 2005), EB66.1 (September-October 2006), and EB69.2 (March-May 2008). These surveys explicitly covered the indicators that enable me to carry out empirical analysis of the three theories discussed earlier and to operationalise my dependent, independent and control variables.

The dependent variable in the analysis is ‘public opinion on Turkey’s EU membership’. To operationalise it, I used the following EB question: “For each of the following countries, would you be in favour of or against it becoming part of the European Union? Turkey” (Appendix I). The binary response to the dependent variable was whether individuals were ‘in favour of’ (y=1) or ‘against’ (y=0) Turkey’s EU membership.

I constructed six logit models. Since the EB surveys did not systematically incorporate identical questions and indicators in every round and even addressed some of them only once, each model gauged the different annual impacts of utilitarian calculations, identitarian evaluations, and threat perception. All models included the same control variables: age, gender and ideological self-placement.³⁶ Measurement of each independent and control variable is explained in Appendix I. Descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis

Variable	Model EB53 (2000)		Model EB54.1 (2000)		Model EB58.1 (2002)		Model EB63.4 (2005)		Model EB66.1 (2006)		Model EB69.2 (2008)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Turkey's membership 'in favour'	.325	.468	.329	.470	.323	.467	.321	.467	.258	.438	.251	.434
Turkey's membership 'against'	.456	.498	.491	.500	.484	.499	.526	.499	.595	.491	.581	.493
No costs for Italy	^a	^a	.782	.412	.305	.460	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Compatible economic development	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.728	.445	.756	.429	^a	^a
Less financial aid to Member States	^a	^a	.365	.481	.404	.491	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a
Self-employed	.125	.330	.132	.339	.136	.343	.160	.367	.135	.342	.156	.363
Managers	.068	.251	.064	.246	.064	.245	.051	.221	.057	.233	.061	.240
Other white collars	.131	.337	.133	.340	.132	.338	.174	.379	.191	.393	.223	.416
Manual workers	.105	.306	.140	.348	.129	.335	.163	.369	.159	.365	.163	.369
House persons	.123	.328	.107	.309	.114	.318	.158	.365	.194	.396	.141	.349
Unemployed	.064	.244	.043	.202	.027	.164	.048	.198	.037	.190	.034	.181
Retired	.256	.436	.244	.429	.259	.438	.140	.347	.144	.311	.154	.361
Mutual comprehension of values	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.389	.487	^a	^a	^a	^a
Turkey part of European geography	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.531	.499	.562	.496	^a	^a
Turkey part of European history	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.443	.497	.422	.496	^a	^a
Respect for human rights and democracy	.965	.183	^a	^a								
Democracy best represents the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.294	.455	.238	.426
Religion best represents the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.031	.175	.023	.151
Religiosity: Strong	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.316	.465	.284	.451	^a	^a
Religiosity: Weak	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.360	.480	.389	.487	^a	^a
Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs	^a	^a	.485	.500	^a	^a	.712	.452	^a	^a	^a	^a
Risk of immigration to the EU	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.571	.495	.610	.487	^a	^a
Loss of identity and culture	^a	^a	.381	.485	^a	^a	.348	.476	^a	^a	^a	^a
Significant cultural differences	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	^a	.567	.495	.644	.479	^a	^a
Immigrants from Muslim countries: Not accepted	.092	.289	^a	^a								
Immigrants from Muslim countries: Accepted	.302	.459	^a	^a								
Left	.229	.420	.252	.434	.276	.447	.287	.452	.245	.430	.279	.449
Right	.204	.403	.185	.388	.196	.397	.188	.391	.229	.420	.209	.407
Male	.478	.499	.487	.500	.468	.499	.396	.483	.357	.479	.458	.498
15-24 years	.182	.386	.141	.349	.151	.358	.127	.333	.107	.309	.089	.284
25-39 years	.274	.446	.286	.453	.279	.448	.369	.482	.326	.469	.305	.460
40-54 years	.221	.415	.224	.417	.229	.420	.264	.441	.330	.470	.345	.475
N	1000		987		1043		1004		1006		1022	

^a Variables not included in the Eurobarometer data and therefore excluded from the analysis.

Each model was tested through binary logistic regression to detect the relationship between the binary scale dependent variable and a set of independent categorical variables.³⁷ Logit models predicted the probability of favourable opinion on Turkey based on utilitarian or identitarian considerations, or threat perception. In order to predict the value associated with a positive or negative opinion category, I reconceptualised the problem of Turkey's EU membership as an attempt to predict the probability that an individual is either a *Turcosceptic* ($y=0$) or *Turcophile* ($y=1$). A coefficient of the independent and control variables with a positive coefficient indicated an increasing likelihood of favourable (Turcophile) opinion, while a negative coefficient indicated an increase in the likelihood of unfavourable (Turcosceptic) opinion on EU enlargement including Turkey. Standard errors provided the parameter estimates (log-odds) that I requested for 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the odds-ratios.³⁸

Empirical Analysis

Before proceeding with the logistic regression analysis, I checked for collinearity to test how much the independent variables are linearly related to each other. Menard suggests that a tolerance value less than 0.1 indicates a serious collinearity problem,³⁹ while Myers suggests that a variance inflation factor (VIF) greater than 10 is a cause for concern. In this study, VIF and tolerance values in all models were within

these bounds.⁴⁰ This indicates that in estimating the models in this study, collinearity between the independent variables is not a problem.

Table 2 presents the logit estimates of the six models. Model EB 53 included egocentric utilitarian measures (the level of occupational skills), the right-based identity measure of respect for human rights and democracy, and two measures of symbolic threat perception concerning immigration from Muslim countries. Among these three groups of measures, the findings of the first model (Model EB No: 53) showed that Italians who supported the idea that immigrants should be unconditionally accepted into the EU were significantly supportive of Muslim Turkey's EU membership in 2000. For every one-unit increase in support for immigration from Muslim countries into Europe, I expect a 0.758 unit increase in the log-odds of support for Turkey's EU membership, holding all other independent variables constant. On the contrary, given a one-unit increase in perceiving the threat of Muslim immigration as important, I can expect Italian public opinion to be more Turcosceptic. This model showed that Italians feared that Muslim and Turkish immigrants would threaten the in-group's Italian and European identities. The finding that Italians' concerns about Turkey were closely associated with their perceived symbolic fears about 'out-group' immigrants was confirmatory of Hypothesis 9. However, Italians' right-based concerns proved to be insignificant which rejected Hypothesis 6.

Table 2. Logit Results for Italian Public Opinion on Turkey's EU Membership (2000-2008)

Predictors	Coefficient (Standard Error)					
	Model EB53 (2000)	Model EB54.1 (2000)	Model EB58.1 (2002)	Model EB63.4 (2005)	Model EB66.1 (2006)	Model EB69.2 (2008)
Intercept	.188 (.580)	.890*** (.436)	-.793 (.422)	-.540 (.626)	-3.157*** (.663)	-.667*** (.083)
Utilitarian Calculations						
Sociotropic Utilitarianism	a	.512*** (.155)	.928*** (.155)	a	a	a
No costs for Italy						
Compatible economic development	a	a	a	b	-.910*** (.276)	a
Less financial aid to Member States	a	-.290* (.158)	-.487*** (.153)	a	a	a
Egocentric Utilitarianism						
Managers	b	b	b	b	b	b
Self-employed	b	b	b	-1.117** (.476)	b	b
Other white collars	b	b	b	b	b	-1.91*** (.079)
Manual workers	b	b	b	b	b	-1.76** (.073)
House persons	b	b	b	b	b	-2.65* (.087)
Unemployed	b	b	b	b	b	b
Retired	b	b	b	-1.556** (.589)	b	b
Identitarian Factors						
Cultural values	a	a	a	2.319*** (.223)	a	a
Mutual comprehension of values						

<i>Common geography</i>	<i>Turkey part of European geography</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	.729** (.247)	1.250*** (.244)	<i>a</i>
<i>Common history</i>	<i>Turkey part of European history</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	.825*** (.233)	1.412*** (.214)	<i>a</i>
<i>Rights</i>	<i>Respect for human rights and democracy</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Democracy best represents the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	<i>Religion best represents the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
	<i>Religiosity: Strong</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Religiosity: Weak</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
Threat Perception						
<i>Realistic Threats</i>	<i>Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Risk of immigration to the EU</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Symbolic Threats</i>	<i>Loss of national identity and culture</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Significant cultural differences</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	-1.334*** (.215)	-1.569*** (.213)	<i>a</i>
	<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries: Not accepted</i>	-0.777* (.298)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
	<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries: Accepted</i>	.758** (.169)	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
Control Variables						
<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	.143*** (.033)
	<i>Right</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-1.109*** (.034)
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	-.003 (.028)

<i>Age</i>									
15-24 years	<i>b</i>	.496*** (.070)							
25-39 years	<i>b</i>	.379*** (.047)							
40-54 years	<i>b</i>	.209*** (.045)							
Cox and Snell R²	.069	.090	.082	.388	.265				.012
Nagelkerke R²	.093	.122	.110	.528	.374				.017
Log-likelihood	1004.431	1014.738	1061.740	712.021	789.402				30268.818

Note 1: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

^a Variables not included in the Eurobarometer data and therefore excluded from the analysis.

^b Variables not significant (p > .05) are not reported in Table 2 to make the interpretation of the table easier. Results available from the author upon request.

In the second model (Model EB No: 54.1) I tested the impacts of sociotropic costs of enlargement with Turkey concerning the possibility of less financial aid to Italy, realistic fears about the transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs and symbolic fears about the loss of national identity on Turkey. I found a direct association between support for enlargement and thinking that Turkey's EU membership would not cost 'more' to Italy. Given a one-unit increase in the costs of enlargement to Italy from important to unimportant, I expect Italian public opinion to be significantly more Turcophile. In contrast, when respondents believed that the cost of enlargement would mean less financial aid for Italy, there was an increased risk of Turcoscepticism. These findings confirmed Hypotheses 1 and 3 about sociotropic utilitarian calculations. Similarly, in 2002, the results of Model EB 58.1 showed that Italians were even more pro-Turkish in so far as the expansion would not impose any costs on themselves (Hypothesis 1) and would not result in cuts of financial aid for Italy, which confirmed also Hypothesis 3 about sociotropic utilitarian calculations. The results of Model EB 54.1 showed that the odds of being a Turcophile decreased as the odds ratio of the likelihood of the transfer of jobs to cheaper countries with lower production costs increased. This confirmed my expectations about the negative impacts of realistic threat perception (Hypothesis 8). However, as fears about the loss of national

and cultural identity as a result of enlargement remained insignificant, the symbolic threat hypothesis (Hypothesis 9) was rejected.

When respondents believed that the cost of enlargement would mean less financial aid for Italy, there was an increased risk of Turcoscepticism.

In Model EB 63.4 (2005), I tested the impacts of identitarian factors with the measures of shared values, and human rights, and of realistic and symbolic threat perceptions on Italians' support for Turkey's EU membership. Results showed that there was a strongly positive impact of believing that Turkey's accession to the EU would favour the mutual comprehension of Turkey's Muslim values and European values. Holding all other independent variables constant, a one-unit increase in shared values resulted in a dramatic 2,319 increase in the log-odds of being a Turcophile. Furthermore, the log-odds of being a Turcophile increased when the tendency to consider Turkey as a part of European history increased. These results confirmed the value-based identity hypothesis (Hypothesis 5) that the perceived vicinity to Turkey according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities determined the level of attitudes towards Turkey's inclusion in the EU. However, since neither the rights-based values nor religiosity and religious values had statistically

significant effects on opinions about Turkey ($p > 0.05$), I rejected Hypotheses 6 and 7, respectively. On the other hand, for every one-unit increase in significant cultural differences a 1,334 decrease increase in the log-odds of Turcophilia was expected. This confirmed Hypothesis 9, as Italians who believed there are significant cultural differences between the 'out-group' Turkey and the 'in-group' Europe were much more Turcosceptic. From this result, I conclude that, while a belief in shared values is so important in increasing support for Turkey's EU accession, fears about the existence of a cultural gap creates a source of opposition to Turkey.

While a belief in shared values is so important in increasing support for Turkey's EU accession, fears about the existence of a cultural gap creates a source of opposition to Turkey.

In Table 2, the results of the Model EB 66.1 (2006) estimated that, like in 2005, Italians who thought that Turkey and Europe had shared cultural values, that Turkey was geographically a part of Europe, and that it shared a common history with Europe were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership. Coefficients of these three indicators were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) in the expected direction. This finding of logit Model EB 66.1 confirmed Hypothesis 5 that the perceived vicinity to Turkey

according to cultural, geographical or historical commonalities increased favourable opinion on towards Turkey's EU membership. Concerning the sociotropic utilitarian calculations, the odds ratio associated with the belief that Turkey can achieve the required level of economic development significantly increased support for Turkey's EU membership (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, Italians' concerns about significant cultural differences between Turkey and Europe proved to be a remarkable deterring factor for them to support Turkey's EU membership.

Neither religious- nor rights-based concerns over liberal democratic values in Turkey had a significant impact on Italian public opinion. Like logit Model EB 63.4, Model EB 66.1 failed to confirm the hypotheses about the rights- or religion-based identity (Hypotheses 6 and 7, respectively). Predictions about the role of religion and values were rejected from the results of the EB 69.2 data. Model EB 69.2, which tested the impact of the importance of religion and of democracy, showed that, with other variables held constant, neither of these factors had a significant impact on public opinion in Italy about Turkey's accession to the EU. Thus, I rejected the religion- and rights- based hypotheses (Hypotheses 6 and 7). This indicates the need to study Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's EU membership with reference to explanations other than religion or rights based identities.

In all models, the control variables added hardly any interesting findings. Age, ideological self-placement and gender had statistically significant effects on opinions about Turkey's EU membership only in the logit estimates of Model EB 69.2. In this model, the 'left' dummy variable exerted a statistically significant positive effect on Italian public opinion on Turkey, indicating that individuals with left-wing ideological position were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership than those with right-wing ones. Similarly, this effect appears when 'democracy as the best value that represents the EU' variable was included in the model. Turning to the demographic characteristics of individuals, age shows a significant positive relationship with support for EU membership in Model EB 69.2. Younger Italians were more likely to support Turkey's EU membership.

Conclusion

This article investigated the determinants of Italian public opinion concerning Turkey's EU accession in the past decade. Theoretically, it concentrated on two mainstream approaches to public opinion prevalent in the literature, utilitarian and identitarian, and developed a third approach of threat perception. First, it suggested that utilitarian calculations of the costs and benefits of enlargement might play a role in the formation of Italians' attitudes toward Turkey. The findings

indicate strong support for utilitarian predictions. As far as sociotropic utilitarian calculations are concerned, an increase in the macro benefits of enlargement for Italy, in the forms of no specific costs of enlargement for Italy and continuation of the financial flows from the EU to Italy, is associated with an increase in public support for Turkey's EU membership. In contrast, egocentric concerns related to occupational skills of Italian citizens have only partial impact on attitudes toward Turkey.

Although the traditionally positive attitude of Italian foreign policy towards Turkey's entry into the EU is unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future.

Second, this study showed that identity-based concerns might affect attitudes towards Turkey's EU membership. Among value-based, rights-based and religion-based social identities, Turcophilia increased only in association with a 'we-feeling' based on beliefs that Italy, Europe and Turkey share a common past, geography and values. On the contrary, it revealed that Italian public opinion towards Turkey is neither shaped by concerns about Turkey's 'unconsolidated' democracy nor by 'problematic' human and minority rights record. Contrary to common sense, this article disproved 'Christian public opinion' assumptions and found

that religiosity does not have a significant effect on Italian public opinion on Turkey either.

The further strengthening of the comprehension of shared values and the economic benefits of Turkish accession could pave the way for reducing Turcoscepticism in Italy.

Third, this article included threat perception as an important indicator of attitudes toward enlargement, with a specific focus on realistic and symbolic considerations of threats posed by the out-group. The analysis demonstrated that, as well as sociotropic or egocentric utilitarianism significantly affecting people's calculations about enlargement, realistic and symbolic threats also influence their attitudes. Just as the Italian *vox populi* is Turcophile when there are shared cultural and geographical traits that bridge Turkey and Europe and if Turkish enlargement would add to cultural richness and mutual understanding of values, it becomes

excessively Turcosceptic if significant cultural differences are on top of minds.

In conclusion, this article produced an all-inclusive study of Turcoscepticism versus Turco-enthusiasm in Italy. It also offered a multidimensional approach to understanding the *vox populi* based on a complex set of dynamics rather than any single factor. The general implication of this article is as straightforward as it is important: *pragmatist sociotropic utilitarian considerations*, in concert with *mutual comprehension of values based on we-feeling, perceived symbolic threats of loss of in-group identity and culture* together have persistent effects on public opinion about Turkey's protracted EU membership bid. Although the traditionally positive attitude of Italian foreign policy towards Turkey's entry into the EU is unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future, Italian public opinion is likely to remain Turcosceptic due to macro-economic concerns and fears embedded in the public consciousness. Nevertheless, the further strengthening of the comprehension of shared values and the economic benefits of Turkish accession could pave the way for reducing Turcoscepticism in Italy.

Appendix I: Operationalisation of Variables

Dependent Variable	Variable	Hypothesis	Survey Question	Response categories
Utilitarian Calculations <i>Sociotropic Utilitarianism</i>	<i>Public opinion on Turkey's EU membership</i>		For each of the following countries, would you be in favour of or against it becoming part of the European Union? Turkey (EB No: 53, EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1, EB No: 63.4)	1 in favour 0 against (a)
	<i>No costs for Italy</i>	H1	For each of the following countries and territories, would you be in favour or against it becoming part of the European Union in the future? Turkey (EB No: 69.2)	1 in favour 0 against (a)
	<i>Compatible economic development</i>	H2	Thinking about the enlargement of the European Union to include new countries, do you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements? The enlargement will not cost more to existing member countries like (our country) (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1)	1 agree 0 disagree
Egocentric Utilitarianism	<i>Less financial aid to Member States</i>	H3	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: To join the European Union in about ten years, Turkey will have to significantly improve the state of its economy (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree (b)
	<i>Occupational skills</i>	H4	Thinking about the enlargement of the European Union to include new countries, do you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements? Once new countries have joined the European Union, (our country) will receive less financial aid from it (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 58.1)	1 agree 0 disagree (b)
			Occupation (self-reported)	1 Self-employed 2 Managers 3 Other white collars 4 Manual workers 5 House person 6 Unemployed 7 Retired 8 Students(c)

Identity					
<i>Cultural values</i>	<i>Mutual comprehension of values</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey's accession to the European Union would favour the mutual comprehension of European and Muslim values (EB No: 63.4)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Common geography</i>	<i>Turkey part of European geography</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its geography. (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Common history</i>	<i>Turkey part of European history</i>	H5	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey partly belongs to Europe by its history (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	
<i>Rights</i>	<i>Respect for human rights and democracy</i>	H6	For each of the following criteria, please tell me if it seems important to you, or not in deciding whether a particular country should join the European Union, or not? The country has to respect Human Rights and the principles of democracy (EB No: 53, EB No: 54.1)	1 important 0 not important	
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Democracy best represents the EU</i>	H6	Which three of the following values, best represent the European Union? Democracy (EB No: 66.1, EB No: 69.2)	1 mentioned 0 not mentioned	
	<i>Religion best represents the EU</i>	H7	Which three of the following values, best represent the European Union? Religion (EB No: 66.1, EB No: 69.2)	1 mentioned 0 not mentioned	
	<i>Religiosity: Strong</i>	H7	Apart from weddings or funerals, about how often do you attend religious services? (EB No: 66.1)	1 Once or more than once a week 0 other ^(d)	
	<i>Religiosity: Weak</i>	H7	Apart from weddings or funerals, about how often do you attend religious services? (EB No: 66.1)	1 About once a year or less 0 other ^(e)	
Threat perception					
<i>Realistic threats</i>	<i>Transfer of jobs to countries with lower costs</i>	H8	Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are currently afraid of it, or not? The transfer of jobs to countries which have lower production costs (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 63.4,)	1 currently afraid of 0 currently not afraid of	
	<i>Risk of immigration to the EU</i>	H8	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: Turkey's joining could risk favouring immigration to more developed countries in the European Union (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)	

<i>Symbolic threats</i>	<i>H9</i>	Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are currently afraid of it, or not? The loss of our national identity and culture (EB No: 54.1, EB No: 63.4)	1 currently afraid of 0 currently not afraid of
<i>Significant cultural differences</i>	<i>H9</i>	For each of the following please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree: The cultural differences between Turkey and the European Union Member States are too significant to allow for this accession (EB No: 63.4, EB No: 66.1)	1 agree 0 disagree ^(b)
<i>Immigrants from Muslim countries 'not accepted' / 'accepted'</i>	<i>H9</i>	If people from Muslim countries wish to work here in the European Union, do you think that they should... (EB No: 53)	1 not be accepted 2 accepted without restriction 3 accepted with restriction ^(f)
<i>Age</i>			1 15-24; 2 25-39; 3 40-54; 4 55+
<i>Gender</i>			1 male 0 female
<i>Ideology</i>		Ideological self-placement on a 10-scale spectrum	1 Left (1-4); 2 Right (5-6); 3 Centre (7-10)

Control Variables

- ⁽⁴⁾ The 'don't know' category is treated as a missing value.
- ^(b) The original EB question comprised four categories: (1) totally agree, (2) tend to agree, (3) tend to disagree, (4) totally disagree. The scale is recoded into a categorical one with values of (1) 'agree' (merging values 1 and 2) and (0) 'disagree' (merging values 3 and 4).
- ^(c) Each of these response categories are created as dummies (with 'students' being the reference category).
- ^(d) The original EB question measuring religiosity comprised seven categories: (1) More than once a week, (2) Once a week, (3) About once a month, (4) About each 2 or 3 month, (5) Only on special holy days, (6) About once a year, (7) Less often. The 'religiosity: strong' variable was created as dummy which consisted of merging the values of 1 to 2 into 'religiosity: strong' (1) against the reference category of 'other' (0).
- ^(e) The original EB question measuring religiosity comprised seven categories: (1) More than once a week, (2) Once a week, (3) About once a month, (4) About each 2 or 3 month, (5) Only on special holy days, (6) About once a year, (7) Less often. The 'religiosity: weak' variable was created as dummy which consisted of merging the values of 6 to 7 into 'religiosity: weak' (1) against the reference category of 'other' (0).
- ^(f) I created two dummies as 'immigrants from Muslim countries not accepted' and 'immigrants from Muslim countries accepted'.

Endnotes

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