



Departamento de  
Teoría e Historia  
Económica

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**Título:** Europe Beyond Money: Identity and Perceived Benefits in Support for Integration

**Sala:** E22

**Hora:** 12:30

**Resumen:** Public support is central to the future of the European project, yet citizens differ widely in their demand for further European integration. This paper studies why some individuals want “more Europe” while others prefer to stop or reverse the integration process. We argue that integration preferences reflect a trade-off between perceived benefits from the EU and identity-based frictions that make deeper integration psychologically and politically costly. We develop a simple micro-founded model in which individuals choose their preferred level of additional European integration. The model features two forces. On the one hand, citizens may value integration because they perceive tangible economic benefits associated with EU-funded programmes, in addition to an intrinsic valuation of integration. On the other hand, supporting further integration entails increasing costs related to sovereignty, political control, and identity. Crucially, these costs are heterogeneous: individuals who feel more national than European face steeper marginal costs of additional integration, whereas individuals who feel at least as European as national do not incur extra identity-related costs. The model yields clear predictions about how perceived benefits and identity jointly shape the preferred level of integration. We then confront these predictions with individual-level evidence. The results underscore the central role of identity in structuring support for European integration. Individuals’ national-versus-European self-identification is



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strongly associated with their integration preferences, consistent with the presence of identity-based costs. Perceived benefits from the EU are also positively related to support for further integration. However, we find limited evidence that these perceived benefits scale with objective local exposure to EU transfers: citizens who report benefiting from EU programmes are not systematically more responsive to higher regional transfer intensity. Overall, the findings suggest that perceptions and identity are key components of the political economy of “more Europe,” and that the link between redistribution and pro-integration attitudes depends less on the objective amount of transfers than on how citizens experience and interpret EU involvement.