



JATSS, 2026; 8(2), 213-233

First Submission:31.03.2026

Revised Submission After Review:09.06.2026

Accepted For Publication:24.06.2026

Available Online Since:25.06.2026

Research Article

**Determinants of No-Vote Behavior in the European Union Constitution
Referendums: A Post-Functionalist Logistic Regression Analysis^a**

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Abstract

Introduction: The idea of drafting a constitution in the European Union (EU) has been regarded as a significant step toward achieving political integration in Europe. However, its rejection in the 2005 referenda in France and the Netherlands revealed the necessity of examining the underlying reasons for these outcomes within the context of European legitimacy.

Method: This study conducts a descriptive analysis of Eurobarometer 63.4 survey data and evaluates factors influencing referendum outcomes through a binary logistic regression analysis using SPSS.

Results or Findings: The findings indicate that individuals who feel unrepresented in the EU, fear the loss of national identity and culture, and are dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in the Union are significantly more likely to vote against the constitution.

Discussion or Conclusion: Considering contemporary developments such as Brexit and the rise of right-wing populist movements, the slowdown of integration in the early 2000s emerges as a relevant issue. The study suggests that addressing democratic deficits and identity-based concerns is crucial for the future of the European project.

Keywords: European Union, European Constitution, referendum, voter behavior.

JEL Codes: F50, K10, D70, D72

^a This study is derived from the Ph.D. dissertation titled "The securitization trends of the European Union: The effects of 21st century crises on security perception" completed by the first author under the supervision of the second author at the Department of European Union, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul University.

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JATSS, 2026; 8(2), 213-233

İlk Başvuru: 31.03.2026

Düzeltilmiş Makalenin Alınışı: 09.06.2026

Yayın İçin Kabul Tarihi: 24.06.2026

Online Yayın Tarihi: 25.06.2026

Araştırma Makalesi

**Avrupa Birliği Anayasası Referandumlarında Karşı Oy Davranışının
Belirleyicileri: Post-Fonksiyonalist Bir Lojistik Regresyon Analizi^a**

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Öz

Giriş: Avrupa Birliği'nde (AB) bir anayasa taslağı hazırlama fikri, Avrupa'da siyasi entegrasyonun sağlanması yolunda önemli bir adım olarak kabul edilmiştir. Ancak, 2005 yılında Fransa ve Hollanda'da yapılan referandumlarda anayasanın reddedilmesi, bu kararların ardındaki nedenlerin Avrupa meşruiyeti bağlamında incelenmesi gerekliliğini ortaya koymuştur.

Yöntem: Bu çalışma, Eurobarometer 63.4 anket verilerinin betimsel bir analizini yapmakta ve ardından SPSS kullanarak ikili lojistik regresyon analizi yoluyla referandum sonuçlarını etkileyen faktörleri değerlendirmektedir.

Sonuçlar ya da Bulgular: Analiz sonuçları, AB içinde temsil edilmediğini hisseden, ulusal kimlik ve kültür kaybı korkusu yaşayan ve Birlik içindeki demokrasinin işleyişinden memnun olmayan bireylerin anayasaya karşı oy kullanma olasılığının daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir.

Tartışma ya da Yapılan Çıkarımlar: Brexit ve sağ popülist hareketlerin yükselişi gibi güncel gelişmeler dikkate alındığında, 2000'li yılların başındaki entegrasyon yavaşlaması önemli bir mesele olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Çalışma, demokratik açıkların ve kimlik temelli kaygıların giderilmesinin Avrupa projesinin geleceği için temel önemde olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Birliği, Avrupa Anayasası, referandum, seçmen davranışı

JEL Kodlar: F50, K10, D70, D72

^a Bu çalışma İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Avrupa Birliği Anabilim Dalı'nda birinci yazar tarafından ikinci yazarın danışmanlığında tamamlanmış olan "Avrupa Birliği'nin güvenlikleştirme eğilimleri: 21. yüzyıl krizlerinin güvenlik algısı üzerindeki etkileri" başlıklı doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

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Introduction

The EU is a project regarded as the most successful regional integration to date, aiming to establish lasting peace on the European continent after two world wars, to initiate economic cooperation between Germany and France – two states that caused the wars – and to ensure that this cooperation spreads across the entire continent (Segers & Van Hecke, 2023). The idea of unity in Europe, which argues that lasting peace can be achieved through economic integration, has, through the determined stance of member states, evolved toward achieving political, social, and even military integration. The European integration process, which began with the European Coal and Steel Community, progressed through the Treaties of Rome, Maastricht, and Nice, and efforts were made to ensure more effective use of the EU's decision-making mechanisms by establishing its institutional structure (Bajda, 2025; Nugent & Ripoll Servent, 2026).

In the process of further integration of the EU, it was planned to prepare an EU Constitution in order to strengthen decision-making mechanisms and to create a source of legitimacy (Duff, 2023). This plan was approved at a Summit attended by EU heads of state and government; subsequently, the approval process was completed in the parliaments of some states; however, the draft constitution was rejected in referenda held in France and the Netherlands (Ruiz et al., 2023). The rejection of the draft constitution brought about various debates within the EU. First of all, it became evident during the process that the EU, which had begun as an elite project, could no longer continue in this manner, and that public opinion and voter behavior had gained the power to influence the integration process (Niikawa & Corcaci, 2024). This power held by the public revealed the importance of EU legitimacy and support for integration.

Different perspectives have developed in the literature regarding whether integration in Europe is possible. The early theories developed within these perspectives, functionalism and neo-functionalism, emphasized that economic cooperation and institutional interaction would, over time, direct integration into different paths, deepen it, and create a spill-over effect (Mitrany, 1943; Haas, 1958). Another perspective on integration, the intergovernmentalist approach, argued that the integration process takes place between states and that the main factor is the interests of states (Schimmelfennig, 2021). As EU integration progressed, the insufficiency of these early theories began to emerge. Consequently, especially with the emergence of new situations such as the constitutional crisis that constitutes the subject of this study, it became necessary to reconsider the direction of theories, as EU integration was not merely a process driven by state decisions or spill-over, but rather a model of politicization in which public opinion also played an active role (Schmidt, 2024; Rapp, 2025). At this point, post-functionalism argues that EU integration in the post-Maastricht period has become a political process in which public opinion is active, and that individuals living in the EU, as voters, can develop support or opposition to integration projects based on factors such as identity, representation, and democratic legitimacy (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Toshkov, 2026).

From a post-functionalist perspective, referenda on the EU Constitution represent an important step in examining the impact of public opinion on EU political processes. When the literature on EU integration is examined, various studies addressing the constitutional crisis and the effects of referenda can be found (Hodson & Puetter, 2025). However, it is observed that the relationship between voters' anti-constitution voting behavior and political and perceptual factors has not been fully examined. The absence of studies specifically investigating the effects of representation perception, trust in EU institutions, and evaluations

of the Union's democratic functioning on referendum outcomes indicates a gap in the literature.

Considering this gap, the study aims to examine the dynamics behind the rejection observed in the referenda. Eurobarometer 63.4 survey data conducted after the referenda were used as data, and voter behavior observed in the referenda in France and the Netherlands was analyzed. Descriptive analysis was applied to the data obtained from survey responses; subsequently, the factors determining voter behavior were examined through logistic regression analysis using SPSS. Various hypotheses were tested in the logistic regression analysis, allowing for the evaluation of the effects of variables such as individuals' perception of representation, trust in the Union, satisfaction with the functioning of democracy at the Union level, and level of knowledge about the Union on voting behavior.

The study contributes to the literature on the EU constitutional crisis in two ways. First, it provides empirical findings for examining public attitudes toward politicization processes through referenda conducted on the constitutional draft. Second, by combining the findings of the logistic regression analysis with post-functionalist theory, it links empirical results on the politicization of public opinion with a theoretical framework and attempts to address the empirical limitations of the theory.

The study is structured in three sections. The first section discusses theoretical approaches explaining European integration, particularly Post-functionalism. The second section presents the process of drafting the EU Constitution and descriptive findings related to the referenda. The third section examines the determinants of no-vote behavior during the referendum process through logistic regression analysis. The final section discusses the findings and provides evaluations regarding the future of European integration.

Post-Functionalist Theory and the Emphasis on Identity

When the idea of forming a union in Europe is examined from a historical perspective, it dates back quite far. However, due to the conditions of the period, the idea of establishing a Union only became possible in the 20th century (Segers, 2023). The conditions under which the Union was formed, the reasons and purposes for its establishment, and how it could be sustained have also become subjects of inquiry for scholars working in the field of International Relations. In general, International Relations theories, which aim to examine relations among actors and developments in the international arena, have also sought to analyze the emerging Union and have developed various arguments (Speyer & Stockmann, 2024). The main theories accepted in the field examining the Union are Federalism (Spinelli & Rossi, 1991), Intergovernmentalism (Schimmelfennig, 2021), Liberal Intergovernmentalism (Lamoso-González, 2025), Functionalism (Mitrany, 1943), Neo-functionalism (Haas, 1958), and finally Post-functionalism (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). While Functionalism, Intergovernmentalism, Liberal Intergovernmentalism, and Neo-functionalism were sufficient to explain the early periods of the Union, as the Union continued to develop, expand its borders, and establish integration in new areas, these theories began to be questioned (Cini et al., 2019; Freudlsperger & Schramm, 2025). Today, due to globalization and technological developments, the scope of studies in the international arena has begun to change. A growing belief has emerged that non-state actors such as individuals, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations are also influential in the international arena, and that the concepts used by theories in the field until now should be reconsidered (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Westerwinter, 2022). This changing perspective toward the international system has also transformed the way the Union is viewed.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, who recognized the inadequacy of other International Relations theories in explaining developments and stagnations in the EU integration process, laid the foundation of Post-functionalism with their article titled “A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus,” published in the 2000s (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Post-functionalism presents its arguments with a critical perspective toward the “spill-over” concept and the elitist stance of Functionalist theory (Hooghe & Marks, 2002). First, it emphasizes that it is not possible to explain the European integration process solely at the level of economic cooperation and intergovernmental relations. However, at this point, post-functionalism does not ignore the importance of economic cooperation and intergovernmental relations for the early periods of the EU. On the contrary, while it acknowledges that the EU’s integration process began in this way through elites, it emphasizes the fact that, other factors have emerged and now play a role in the continuity of integration (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2021). Post-functionalism argues that, while tracing the development of the Union, the transformation in the EU after the 2000s-progressing differently from earlier periods-should be monitored, and it divides the European Union’s integration process into two periods. For the initial period of the Union, it uses the concept of “permissive consensus” and defines this period as 1950-1990, during which public interest in integration was low and the integration process, driven by elites, continued without losing momentum (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Ferrara & Kriesi, 2021). For the period following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty up to the present, it introduces the concept of “constraining dissensus,” emphasizing that, with globalization, the increasing importance of identity has led individuals to question “Who am I?”, that public opinion has become a more active actor in shaping attitudes toward integration, and that decisions made by elites regarding integration can be questioned, slowed down, or even halted by the public (Hooghe & Marks, 2019).

In addition to dividing the institutional history of the Union into two periods, the theory also emphasizes the role of identity in examining later stages of EU integration, noting that political parties and political positions in member states can influence public opinion, and that developments occurring through referendum processes can have a direct impact on integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2019; Malang & Schraff, 2024). The concept of identity emphasized by post-functionalist theory is a concept that holds a highly important place in defining the social structure to which individuals belong (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). The individual defines those outside the social structure to which they belong as the “other” and positions themselves accordingly. Likewise, for those within the other social structure defined as the “other,” the individual is also in the position of the “other.” Such expressions in global society enable individuals to feel that they belong to a community (Subramani, 2024). For individuals living on the European continent, there are two common identity definitions. The first of these is the “European” identity that emerges when the history of the continent and the efforts of the EU are considered together; indeed, during the constitution-making process and referendums, the EU assumed that this identity would be active (Wiesner, 2025). The second identity for individuals living in Europe is the “national” identity belonging to the state of which they are citizens, and this identity came to the forefront in referendums (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). The fact that individuals experience the threat of losing their national identity and culture has manifested itself in referendums as a factor that slows down the EU’s political integration. Naturally, post-functionalist theory also emphasizes the importance of this identity dilemma and states that whichever identity individuals feel closer to, their political tendencies will tend to act in line with the interests of that identity (Hooghe & Marks, 2019).

The Constitution-Making Process in the EU and Descriptive Analysis

Constitutions are documents that determine the form of governance of a society, define the powers of the institutions involved in governance, and protect individuals' rights against the state. Although the EU did not have a constitution prior to the idea of constitution-making, it was able to establish a body of rules through treaties (Craig & de Búrca, 2021). The idea of a constitution has been highly important in Europe in terms of completing the integration process, transforming the ideas that constitute Europe into a written and binding form, and enabling faster decision-making and more decisive implementation of common policies (Walker, 2024). During the process of preparing the constitution, many preparatory conditions were sustained from the Maastricht Treaty to the Nice Treaty (Palmer, 2025). For the direct preparation of the constitution, a Convention was established in 2002 and completed its work in 2003 (Di Caruso, 2025; Hutter, 2025). The process unfolded as envisioned at the Summit that prepared the Nice Treaty, where the "Declaration on the Future of the EU" was published by heads of state, and before 2004, a new structure called the "Convention on the Future of Europe," consisting of 105 members and chaired by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, was established to carry out the necessary work (Dinan, 2014). The Convention completed three phases: listening, decision-making, and proposal development. Alongside the Convention, a Forum was organized to gather citizens' views, and after a 16-month process, the draft constitution was presented at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003 (European Parliament Research Service, 2019). No consensus was reached on the draft at the Thessaloniki Summit; therefore, the Brussels Summit held in 2004 became the venue where agreement on the draft constitution was achieved, and it was signed by the heads of state and government of EU member states with pens inscribed with "Europae Rei Publicae Status" (Constitution of the European Republic) (Dinan, 2014). The draft treaty submitted to the European Parliament was approved by 500 members, rejected by 137, and 40 members abstained from voting. The date for the entry into force of the draft adopted by the Parliament in 2005 was set as 1 November 2006 (Silveira et al., 2024).

In the stage following parliamentary approval, each member state was required to submit the EU Constitution draft for approval in accordance with its own constitutional procedures. However, even at the draft stage, certain issues arose that led to complications (Crum, 2024). For example, the Vatican emphasized that religion should be explicitly mentioned in the constitution (Bărbulescu & Andreescu, 2009). Likewise, in France and the Netherlands-the two countries that would hold referenda-Standard Eurobarometer reports from 2004-2005 indicated that support for the constitution was rapidly declining, trust in the EU was decreasing, economic concerns were increasing, Euroscepticism was rising, and concerns over national sovereignty were intensifying (European Commission, 2012; European Commission, 2014).

Various campaigns were conducted by governments in member states to ensure the approval of the draft constitution. However, due to hesitations regarding the transfer of authority, although governments supported the constitution, it was criticized by opposition groups within these countries (Palmer, 2025). The draft constitution was approved by 18 EU member states in their parliaments (European Commission, 2003). In France, one of the countries to hold a referendum, President Jacques Chirac made intense efforts to secure a "yes" vote. However, opposition leader Jean-Marie Le Pen argued that voting "yes" would constitute "treason." Prior to the referendum, divisions within French society became increasingly sharp. In France, which held the second constitutional referendum in the EU, the referendum conducted on 29 May 2005 resulted in a 55% "no" vote (Warlouzot, 2022). Similarly, in the Netherlands, the referendum held on 1 June 2005 resulted in a 61.6% "no"

vote, giving rise to a constitutional crisis (Malet, 2022). This constitutional crisis, which can be considered a typical example of “crises that generate dynamism” within the EU, was attempted to be resolved through intensive negotiations (Gherghina & Qvortrup 2024).

Studies examining the reasons behind the rejection of the constitution by the public in France and the Netherlands indicate that there were multiple causes behind this rejection. Surveys were conducted within the Eurobarometer framework to determine why citizens in France and the Netherlands rejected the draft constitution, why some did not participate in voting, and why those who voted “yes” supported the constitution.

Table 1

Likelihood of Participation in the EU Constitution Referendum in France

	Definitely No	Probably No	Maybe	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes	Total
Number of Respondents	167	28	47	58	670	970
Percentage	17,22%	2,89%	4,84%	5,98%	69,07%	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

The statistical data on the likelihood of participation in the EU Constitution referendum in France are presented in Table 1. When the table is examined, it is observed that those living in France showed interest in the Constitution Referendum. Their interest in the referendum also indicates that the public is engaged in policy-making processes and demands inclusion. According to the results of the survey conducted in France, the proportion of those who did not consider participating in the vote appears to be 20.11%. Based on the survey results, in which a total of 970 individuals participated, it was estimated that public participation in the EU Constitution referendum would be 75.05%. In the referendum held in 2005, these estimates were largely realized, and 69.34% of the public participated in the referendum (European Commission, October 2005).

Table 2*Reasons for Rejection of the EU Constitution in France*

Items	Agreeing %	Disagreeing %	Number of Respondents Participating	Total %
The constitution-making process progressed quickly	10,71%	89,29%	448	100%
Loss of national sovereignty	18,30%	81,70%	448	100%
The constitution does not go far enough	2,46%	97,54%	448	100%
The constitution is too liberal economically	20,76%	79,24%	448	100%
It is insufficient for a social Europe	27,01%	72,99%	448	100%
It contains too many regulations	13,62%	86,38%	448	100%
Lack of information	25,45%	74,55%	448	100%
The constitution is too complex	24,55%	75,45%	448	100%
Absence of reference to Europe's Christian roots	2,90%	97,10%	448	100%
It is not considered sufficiently democratic	9,15%	90,85%	448	100%
Opposition to the national government	4,02%	95,98%	448	100%
Opposition to European integration	8,93%	91,07%	448	100%
No positive aspect is seen in the constitution	22,54%	77,46%	448	100%
Opposition to Turkey's inclusion in EU enlargement	19,42%	80,58%	448	100%
Other	26,79%	73,21%	448	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

The statistical data on the reasons for the rejection of the EU Constitution in France are presented in Table 2. The results of the survey conducted by Eurobarometer 63.4 to determine the reasons of those who voted "no" to the EU Constitution were evaluated. Among the respondents, 27.01% stated that the constitution was insufficient in creating a social Europe, 25.45% indicated that they lacked information about the constitution, 24.55% found the constitution too complex, and 22.54% reported that they did not see any positive aspect in the constitution. Of the participants, 20.76% considered the constitution too liberal economically, 19.42% rejected it because they believed it would accelerate Turkey's full membership in the EU, and 18.30% expressed fear of losing national sovereignty. According to the survey results, the 27.01% group who were able to examine the constitution criticized the absence of provisions that would enable the EU to become a more democratic and more social entity, which was expected to be achieved through the constitution. However, a considerable proportion of respondents stated that they lacked sufficient knowledge about the constitution and found it too complex.

Table 3*Likelihood of Participation in the EU Constitution Referendum in the Netherlands*

	Definitely No	Probably No	Maybe	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes	Total
Number of Respondents	56	33	89	112	668	958
Percentage	5,85%	3,44%	9,29%	11,69%	69,73%	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

The statistical data on the likelihood of participation in the EU Constitution referendum in the Netherlands are presented in Table 3. According to the Eurobarometer 63.4 surveys conducted in the Netherlands, participation of 81.42% of the public in the referendum was expected, and the referendum held in June 2005 resulted in a turnout of 62.8% (European

Commission, July 2005). Both the group that indicated an intention to participate in the Eurobarometer 63.4 survey and the group that actually voted represent a significant portion of society, indicating that the process was also taken seriously in the Netherlands. The rejection of the constitution despite a high level of participation led to curiosity about the dynamics of the referendum process. The statistical data on the reasons for the rejection of the EU Constitution in the Netherlands are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Reasons for Rejection of the EU Constitution in the Netherlands

Items	Agreeing %	Disagreeing %	Number of Respondents Participating	Total %
The constitution-making process progressed quickly	20,83%	79,17%	432	100%
Loss of national sovereignty	28,01%	71,99%	432	100%
The constitution does not go far enough	1,16%	98,84%	432	100%
The constitution is too liberal economically	5,79%	94,21%	432	100%
It is insufficient for a social Europe	7,64%	92,36%	432	100%
It contains too many regulations	19,91%	80,09%	432	100%
Lack of information	26,39%	73,61%	432	100%
The constitution is too complex	16,20%	83,80%	432	100%
Absence of reference to Europe's Christian roots	13,89%	86,11%	432	100%
It is not considered sufficiently democratic	13,89%	86,11%	432	100%
Opposition to the national government	5,09%	94,91%	432	100%
Opposition to European integration	8,33%	91,67%	432	100%
No positive aspect is seen in the constitution	14,58%	85,42%	432	100%
Opposition to Turkey's inclusion in EU enlargement	6,02%	93,98%	432	100%
Other	32,18%	67,82%	432	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

When the reasons of those who voted “no” in the constitutional referendum are examined based on the Eurobarometer 63.4 survey, 28.01% stated that they were concerned about the loss of national sovereignty, 26.39% indicated that they had a lack of information about the constitution, and 20.83% stated that the constitution-making process progressed too quickly. Among the respondents, 19.91% reported that the constitution was a highly technocratic and legal text containing too many regulations, 16.20% found the constitution too complex, and 14.58% stated that they could not find any positive aspect in the constitution. When the relevant table is examined, it is observed that the fear of loss of sovereignty, which is commonly seen across the EU, is also intense in the Netherlands despite being one of the founding countries. However, further examination of the table shows that, similar to France, the second most important reason for rejecting the constitution was the lack of knowledge about it, and the third group complained that the process progressed so rapidly that it led to insufficient information. Subsequently, the reasons of those who voted “yes” in the referendum were examined, leading first to Table 5 for France and Table 6 for the Netherlands.

Table 5*Reasons for Supporting the EU Constitution in France*

Items	Agreeing %	Disagreeing %	Number of Respondents Participating	Total %
Necessary to continue the construction of the EU	44,75%	55,25%	467	100%
Necessary to manage the integration of new EU member	13,28%	86,72%	467	100%
Necessary for the smooth functioning of EU institutions	30,41%	69,59%	467	100%
First step/symbol toward a social Europe	13,06%	86,94%	467	100%
Strengthening European identity	21,63%	78,37%	467	100%
Creating a real EU citizenship	17,56%	82,44%	467	100%
First step/symbol toward political unity in Europe	14,99%	85,01%	467	100%
Strengthening the EU against the USA	32,98%	67,02%	467	100%
Always being in favor of EU construction	18,84%	81,16%	467	100%
Strengthening democracy in Europe/consulting citizens	17,77%	82,23%	467	100%
Supporting national governments/certain political parties	3,43%	96,57%	467	100%
No negative aspect is seen in the text	6,64%	93,36%	467	100%
Other	18,20%	81,80%	467	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

When those who voted “yes” in the EU Constitution referendum in France were asked about their reasons, 44.75% stated that they considered the constitution necessary to continue the construction of the EU, 32.98% believed that it would strengthen the EU against the USA, and 30.41% indicated that EU institutions would function more smoothly with the constitution.

An examination of the reasons cited by those who voted “yes” in the French referendum on the EU Constitution reveals that participation rates were quite low for some of the points cited as justification. For example, the point about “supporting the national government or specific political parties” was limited to 3.43%, while “necessity to manage the integration of new EU members” received 13.28%, and “A first step towards a social Europe” received 13.06%. In conclusion, it appears that voters who chose “yes” did not share a common core idea. The fact that support rates remained so low across different points demonstrates that the approval of the constitution was based on scattered and weak justifications.

Table 6*Reasons for Supporting the EU Constitution in the Netherlands*

Items	Agreeing %	Disagreeing %	Number of Respondents Participating	Total %
Necessary to continue the construction of the EU	26,32%	73,68%	494	100%
Necessary to manage the integration of new EU member	11,54%	88,46%	494	100%
Necessary for the smooth functioning of EU institutions	23,08%	76,92%	494	100%
First step/symbol toward a social Europe	15,79%	84,21%	494	100%
Strengthening European identity	20,04%	79,96%	494	100%
Creating a real EU citizenship	5,26%	94,74%	494	100%
First step/symbol toward political unity in Europe	20,04%	79,96%	494	100%
Strengthening the EU against the USA	15,18%	84,82%	494	100%
Always being in favor of EU construction	10,53%	89,47%	494	100%
Strengthening democracy in Europe/consulting citizens	27,13%	72,87%	494	100%
Supporting national governments/certain political parties	3,24%	96,76%	494	100%
No negative aspect is seen in the text	6,07%	93,93%	494	100%
Other	27,94%	72,06%	494	100%

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

When those who voted “yes” in the EU Constitution referendum in the Netherlands were asked about their reasons, 27.13% emphasized that they believed it would strengthen democracy in the EU, 26.32% stated that it was necessary for the continuation of EU construction, and 23.08% indicated that it was important for the smooth functioning of EU institutions. When the two tables regarding those who voted “yes” to the constitution are examined, it is observed that 44.75% in France and 26.32% in the Netherlands commonly voted “yes” because they considered the constitution necessary for the EU’s construction process. In addition, when other highly rated items are taken into account, it is seen that those who voted “yes” also did not examine the constitution in terms of its content; rather, they had various formal justifications such as the continuation of the EU, the necessity of a constitution for democracy, and the strengthening of EU institutions.

Multivariate Analysis of No-Vote Behavior in the European Constitution Referendum

The descriptive analysis based on survey data regarding the EU Constitution draft has shown that the reasons for acceptance or rejection of the draft are shaped around different parameters. However, the descriptive analysis did not provide a full statistical evaluation of the reasons for rejection. The necessity of measuring the effect of public opinion in order to fully analyze the progress of integration in Europe, and the argument that the public has the power to halt integration, have also been emphasized in the literature (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; De Vries, 2021). Post-functionalist theory similarly argues that public opinion in EU integration has become politicized and that individuals, as voters, can oppose projects that may deepen integration when they are not included in political processes (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). In post-functionalism, it is observed that voters’ behavior is associated with political attitudes such as perception of representation, democratic satisfaction, and institutional trust (Sczepanski, 2023). In order to test this relationship, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Individuals who believe that they are not represented are more likely to oppose the constitution.

H2: Individuals who are dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in the EU are more likely to oppose the constitution.

H3: As the level of trust in the EU increases, the likelihood of opposing the constitution decreases.

H4: Individuals with lower levels of knowledge and understanding about the EU are more likely to oppose the constitution.

H5: Individuals whose national identity is stronger than their European identity are more likely to vote against the European Constitution.

The hypotheses were designed to encompass the possible reasons for rejection in constitutional referenda. In order to examine and test the suitability of the hypotheses, binary logistic regression analysis was conducted using the SPSS program. The reason for choosing the logistic regression method is that the dependent variable has a binary structure (1 = against, 0 = in favor) (Zeltermann, 2022; Christensen, 2025). During the analysis, the data used in SPSS were obtained from the dataset of the Eurobarometer 63.4 survey, which includes questions related to the European Constitution. While opposition to the constitution was used as the dependent variable, the independent variables were selected from the relevant questions in the dataset.

Among the independent variables, the perception of representation was derived from the question measuring individuals' evaluations of whether their views are taken into account in EU decision-making processes (QA14B-4). Another independent variable, the perception of understanding how the EU functions, was taken from the question measuring whether individuals understand how the EU works (QA14B-5), while subjective knowledge level was obtained from the question measuring how much individuals believe they know about the EU and its institutions (QA18). Another independent variable, democratic satisfaction, was derived from the question measuring the level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the EU (QA34B). The independent variable related to institutional trust was taken from the question measuring trust in the EU (QA7), and for the identity variable, the question measuring fear that the EU poses a threat to national identity and culture (QA16-6) was used.

In evaluating the hypotheses and examining the dependent and independent variables, the overall significance of the established relationship was first analyzed in the logistic regression analysis. According to the results of the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients, the obtained chi-square value was found to be significant ($\chi^2(5) = 277.44$, $p < 0.001$). This result indicates that when considered together, the independent variables have a statistically significant relationship with no-vote behavior (Field, 2024; George & Mallery, 2024). The Nagelkerke R^2 value, calculated to evaluate the explanatory power of the analysis, was found to be 0.442. Considering that pseudo- R^2 values in logistic regression analyses are typically lower than those in linear regression models, this value indicates that the variables included in the analysis explain no-vote behavior at a moderate-to-high level (Manly et al., 2024). In addition, the non-significant result of the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test ($p = 0.789$) indicates that there is no significant difference between predicted and observed values and that the established model fits the data at an acceptable level (Zeltermann, 2022; Christensen, 2025). The correct classification rate of the analysis was calculated as 76.5%. The

classification accuracy indicates the model's success in correctly predicting observations. The result shows that the variables included in the analysis can significantly predict individuals' preferences for voting against or in favor of the constitution (Field, 2024; George & Mallery, 2024). The coefficients of the logistic regression analysis explaining no-vote behavior toward the European Constitution are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Logistic Regression Model Explaining No-Vote Behavior Toward the European Constitution

Variables	B	SE	Wald	P	OR	95% Confidence Interval	
						(Lower)	Upper
Perception of being represented (QA14B-4)	0,556	0,202	7,564	0,006	1,744	1,173	2,592
Not understanding how the EU functions (QA14B-5)	0,478	0,215	4,958	0,026	1,613	1,059	2,456
Subjective level of knowledge (QA18)	0,013	0,060	0,045	0,832	1,013	0,901	1,139
Dissatisfaction with democracy in the EU (QA34B)	0,783	0,145	29,276	0,001	2,817	1,647	2,904
Trust in the EU (QA7)	1,598	0,204	61,528	0,001	4,941	3,315	7,365
Fear of loss of national identity and culture (QA16-6)	0,809	0,202	15,968	0,001	2,246	1,510	3,339

B = Logistic regression coefficient, SE = Standard Error, P = Significance Level, OR = Odds Ratio

Note. Created by the author using the Eurobarometer 63.4 (May-June 2005) data set in IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

The significance at the variable level shown in Table 7 was evaluated based on the Wald statistic and the corresponding p-values. The threshold value of $p < 0.05$, which is frequently accepted in studies conducted in the social sciences, was taken as the basis (Starbuck, 2023). Since logistic regression coefficients are expressed in terms of log-odds, their direct interpretation is difficult. Therefore, the interpretation was based on the odds ratios (OR), which are the exponential values of the coefficients (Manly et al., 2024).

The results obtained from the logistic regression analysis and presented in Table 7 show that EU citizens who believe that they were not represented during the preparation and adoption process of the EU Constitution have a significantly higher probability of opposing the constitution (OR = 1.744; $p = 0.006$). This result indicates that the perception of representation is a factor influencing the voting behavior of EU citizens. Regarding another independent variable, satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the EU, democratic dissatisfaction increased the likelihood of voting against the constitution by approximately 2.8 times (OR = 2.817; $p < 0.001$). This finding shows that the ideal of the EU as a Union with a strong democratic character did not receive support from society during the constitutional crisis.

The independent variable related to trust in the EU produced a more striking result. EU citizens who do not trust the EU were found to be nearly 5 times more likely to reject the constitution draft (OR = 4.941; $p < 0.001$). A similar pattern was observed for the independent variable related to identity. Citizens who believe that the EU poses a threat to national identity and culture were found to be 2.2 times more likely to vote “no” to the constitution draft (OR = 2.246; $p < 0.001$). However, at this point, one of the hypotheses used in the study did not

produce a significant result. It was found that the subjective knowledge level variable did not have a specific role in explaining opposition to the constitution ($p = 0.832$).

In order to evaluate the reliability of the results, 95% confidence intervals were also examined. The fact that the confidence interval of the odds ratio does not include the value of 1 provides an additional indication that the relevant variable is statistically significant (Zelterman, 2022; Christensen, 2025). The confidence interval for the representation perception variable ranges between 1.173 and 2.592 and does not include the value of 1. Similarly, the confidence interval for the democratic dissatisfaction variable ranges between 1.647 and 2.904 and also does not include the value of 1. The confidence interval for the trust in the EU variable ranges between 3.315 and 7.365, entirely above 1. The confidence interval for the identity variable ranges between 1.510 and 3.339, again not including the value of 1. The fact that these confidence intervals are above 1 supports that EU citizens who perceive the EU as a threat to national identity and culture are significantly more likely to reject the constitution. In contrast, the confidence interval for the subjective knowledge level variable ranges between 0.901 and 1.139 and includes the value of 1. This indicates that this variable does not produce a statistically distinguishable effect on no-vote behavior.

Based on the findings obtained, the hypotheses were evaluated. The results support hypothesis H1 related to perception of representation. It is observed that individuals who feel unrepresented during the European Constitution process are more likely to vote against the constitution. Similarly, hypothesis H2, which predicts that dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the EU increases no-vote behavior, is also confirmed. Hypothesis H3 related to institutional trust is also supported by the analysis results. It is observed that individuals who do not trust the EU are more likely to vote against the constitution. However, the level of knowledge that individuals believe they have about the EU does not have a significant effect on no-vote behavior. Therefore, hypothesis H4 related to subjective knowledge level is not supported. Finally, the findings showing that individuals who believe that national identity and culture are threatened by the EU are more likely to vote against the constitution support hypothesis H5.

When the results of the logistic regression analysis are evaluated, it is observed that in the dynamics of rejecting the EU Constitution, individuals' level of knowledge about the constitution, expressed as subjective knowledge, does not play a significant role. During the approval process of the EU Constitution, factors such as whether individuals are satisfied with the democratic functioning of the EU, whether they trust the institutional structure of the EU, and whether the EU would harm their national identity were influential in the referendum process. Individuals' lack of trust in the democratic functioning, institutional structure, and common identity framework of the EU formed the basis of their opposition to the constitution draft.

The reactions of individuals to political behaviors in the EU, represented by the independent variables, indicate that public opinion has become politicized in European integration processes and that voters no longer interpret the Union solely on an economic basis (Kovář, 2026). The results of the logistic regression analysis are consistent with the post-functionalist argument that EU integration has become politicized at the level of public opinion following the Maastricht Treaty (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). At the same time, they align with the concept of "constraining dissensus," which characterizes the post-Maastricht period emphasized in post-functionalist theory (Gruszczak, 2022).

Conclusion

After completing economic integration, the EU turned its direction toward political integration. The EU Constitution was also considered an important step in this direction. Through the constitution, the EU aimed to accelerate decision-making processes and planned to complete its institutional and political integration. The rejection of the constitution in the referenda held in France and the Netherlands demonstrated that the European integration process could not continue in the manner it had been carried out up to that point. It is noteworthy that, as an elite project, EU integration could no longer be sustained solely through elites as of the 2000s. In particular, the fact that the process was halted through referenda made it evident that public opinion and voter behavior play a significant role in political processes.

The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that voter behavior during the referendum process is shaped by variables such as political representation, trust, and democratic satisfaction. The use of Eurobarometer surveys allows for an empirical testing of the approaches proposed by post-functionalist theory, which constitutes the study's original contribution. In this respect, the study employs descriptive analysis and binary logistic regression analysis using Eurobarometer 63.4 data. During the analyses, the determinants of voter behavior that emerged during the referendum process were examined. Descriptive analysis results showed that factors such as lack of information, the perception of the text as complex, concerns about the weakening of national sovereignty, and the view that the constitution was insufficient in terms of social Europe objectives contributed to the rejection of the constitution in France and the Netherlands. From a comparative perspective, when the reasons of those who supported the constitution are examined, it is observed that political considerations such as continuing the EU integration process, enabling institutions to function more effectively, and strengthening Europe as a global actor were prominent. Descriptive analysis results indicate that both supporters and opponents of the constitution were clustered around certain justifications.

Since descriptive analysis alone did not provide sufficient information, logistic regression analysis was applied in order to fully understand the reasons for rejecting the constitution. The results of the logistic regression analysis revealed that those who voted against the constitution were driven by political considerations. The findings demonstrate that EU citizens who do not feel sufficiently represented no longer support political processes and that this significantly increases the likelihood of voting against in processes such as the constitution. Similarly, dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the EU was also found to increase no-vote behavior. The perception among EU citizens that their national identities and cultures are under threat also contributes to the interpretation of opposition voting behavior. While an increase in trust in the EU reduces the likelihood of opposing the constitution, the level of knowledge about the constitution did not create a statistically significant difference in referendum outcomes. This indicates that the rejection of the constitution was driven more by political factors than by informational ones. Among the variables included in the analysis, "trust in the EU" has the strongest effect. As examined in H3, this indicates that as trust in the EU increases, the likelihood of voting against the constitution decreases. This finding suggests that there was a significant level of distrust toward the Union among voters in France and the Netherlands. Voters did not feel secure about whether EU policies posed a threat to their national identity or interests, and this concern appears to have influenced their voting behavior. Conversely, voters who trust the Union tend to support its political processes, including the constitution. In this context, it is

evident that the EU bears responsibility for fostering trust among its electorate. By strengthening citizens' trust, the EU may facilitate and accelerate the process of integration.

The results of the logistic regression analysis applied to Eurobarometer data demonstrate that the EU must acknowledge the increasing role of public opinion in completing integration and that the public is becoming more involved in political processes. These findings are consistent with the core assumptions of post-functionalism. The emphasis on identity, which lies at the core of post-functionalism, has been tested within the scope of this study, and it has been observed that identity-related fears influence individuals' voting behavior and are reflected in referendum outcomes. While EU integration in its early stages was driven by elites, post-functionalist theory argues that public opinion has become more influential after the Maastricht Treaty. The results obtained from the logistic regression analysis also show that individuals who feel unrepresented by the EU or who do not trust EU institutions can halt the progress of integration. The analysis demonstrates that referenda are important political mechanisms in understanding European integration and measuring its societal legitimacy.

The results of the logistic regression analysis demonstrate the growing importance of political parameters and identity perceptions in the process of completing EU integration. In particular, the findings reveal the limitations of approaches that explain the crisis solely through a lack of information. In order to overcome the crisis and prevent similar outcomes in the future, it becomes essential for the Union to examine societal concerns in a more comprehensive manner. Beyond providing an opportunity to empirically test post-functionalist theory, the findings also offer support for its core assumptions. At the same time, the study diverges from research that attributes referendum outcomes primarily to information deficits. This distinction stems from the fact that the "lack of information" variable does not yield statistically significant results in the analysis. For instance, the approach developed by Zaller (1992) emphasizes a relationship between individuals' levels of information and their political preferences; however, the findings here do not support such a relationship.

The study also produces certain implications for the EU's future integration initiatives. The data analyzed within the scope of the study and the referendum outcomes indicate that public support is necessary for EU integration projects. It can be observed that the EU needs to ensure societal participation in all institutional processes it plans, make these processes transparent so that citizens can follow them, and provide regular information to the public. Aligning integration initiatives with societal expectations and demands will contribute to enhancing the legitimacy of the EU. It is important for EU institutions to adopt measures that enhance public inclusion in political processes. Information campaigns targeting citizens, the active involvement of societal actors, the inclusion of national parliaments in the process, and the establishment of mechanisms that ensure public feedback will facilitate citizens' active participation in such political processes.

There are certain limitations to the study. The analysis was conducted using Eurobarometer 63.4 survey data, and it was not possible to include all political, economic, and cultural factors that may influence voter behavior in the model. Additionally, the study focuses on the referenda in France and the Netherlands, where the constitution was rejected. Future research could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the public dimension of European integration by comparatively examining different referendum cases and using broader sets of variables to explain voter behavior.

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Information About the Article/Makale Hakkında Bilgiler

The Ethical Rules for Research and Publication / Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği

The authors declared that the ethical rules for research and publication followed while preparing the article.

Yazarlar makale hazırlanırken araştırma ve yayın etiğine uyulduğunu beyan etmiştir.

Conflict of Interests/ Çıkar Çatışması

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Yazarlar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir.

Grant Support/ Finansal Destek

The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Yazarlar bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

Author Contributions/ Yazar Katkıları

The draft process of the manuscript/ Taslağın Hazırlanma Süreci C.S./B.S.G., Data Collection/Verilerin Toplanması C.S., Writing the Manuscript/ Makalenin Yazılması C.S./B.S.G, Submit, Revision and Resubmit Process/ Başvuru, Düzeltme ve Yeniden Başvuru Süreci C.S.

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