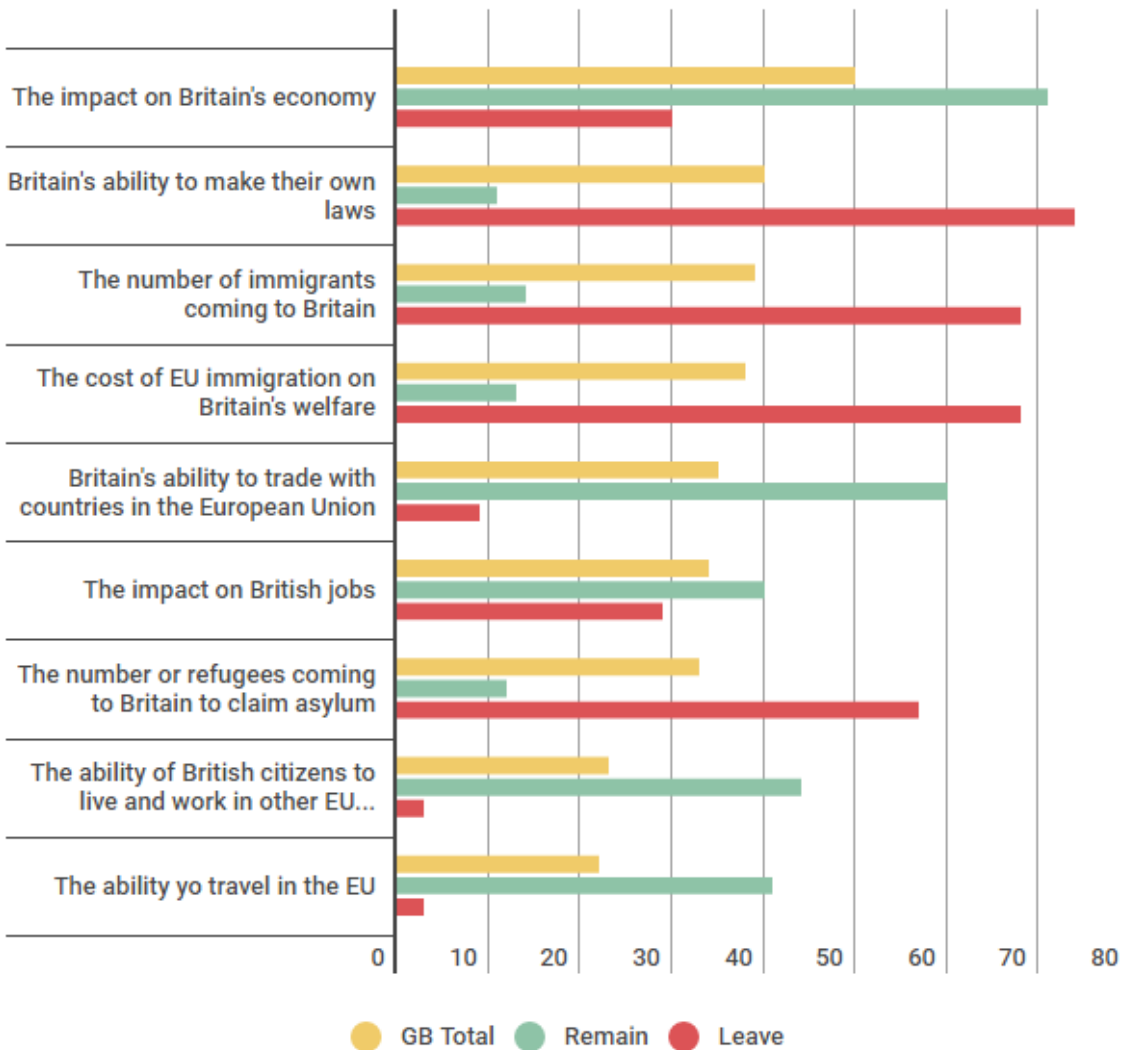


After the outcome of the referendum on **Brexit**, several analysts were concerned about a potential “domino effect” across other EU member states. However, public opinion data, [as we have shown](#) earlier, seem to avoid this risk. In most of the EU countries, UK included, [public opinions regained confidence in their country’s national economy and in the EU](#) as well. Nevertheless, our knowledge of which factors drove Britons vote for leaving the EU is still too limited. Analysing the motivations that lie at the basis of Brexit could help us understand citizens’ worries also in other countries.

Which issues were important in deciding referendum vote?



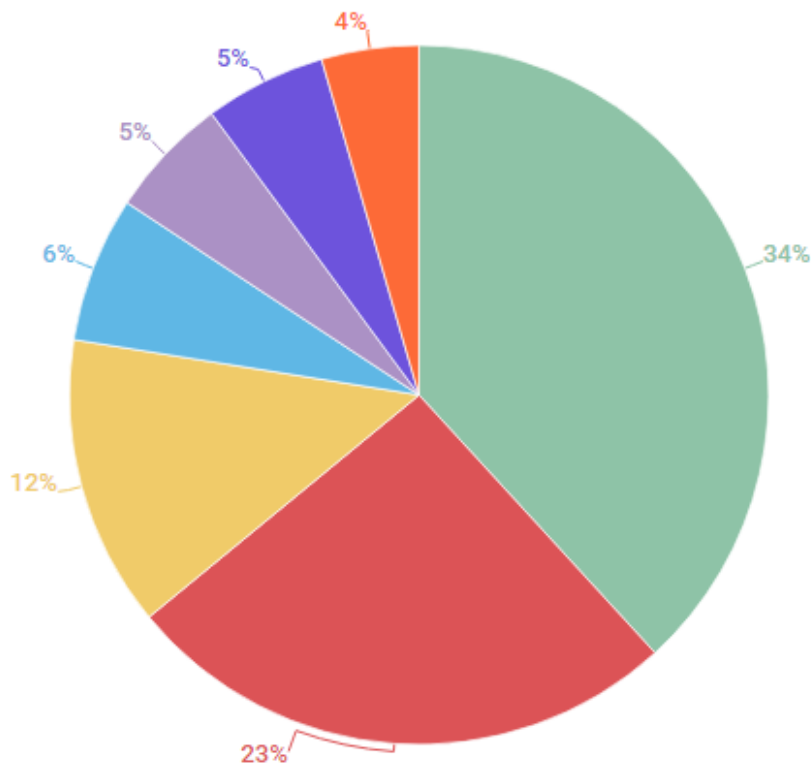
Question: "Thinking about the Referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union on 23 June, which, if any, issues were very important to you in helping you decide which way to vote?"

Base: 2,765 British adults (16+) completing an online panel survey between 13-20 October 2016

Source: IPSOS-Mori Shifting ground: 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes toward immigration and Brexit

[IPSOS Mori](#) conducted an accurate [seven-wave longitudinal study](#) – started before the **2015 General Election Campaign** and concluded after the **2016 referendum on EU membership** – that investigated a range of attitudes that could be useful in helping to explain why Britons voted the way they did in the referendum. The first graph displays how British respondents answered to a question asking them **which issues were important in deciding how to vote in the referendum on EU membership**. Some of these issues are listed according to the share of preferences they obtained in the entire sample of British voters. Among them, we find political economic and socio-cultural aspects. Important differences emerge about which of these issues actually drove the vote of “Remainers” and “Leavers”. The impact of Brexit on Britain’s economy raised concerns in **71%** of Remainers but only in **30%** of Leavers and the ability of British citizens to live and work in other EU countries had an impact on vote for **44%** of Remainers, but only for **3%** of Leavers. On the contrary, the number of immigrants coming to Britain and their cost on British welfare were important issues for **68%** of Leavers, but only for **14%** of Remainers.

Explaining the EU referendum vote



- Nativism and anti-immigration
- Distrust in experts
- Opposed to political correctness
- Against globalisation
- Does not value diversity
- Strong sense of authoritarianism
- Nostalgic for Britain's past

Technique: Factor analysis and OLS. Base: 2,765 British adults (16+) completing an online panel survey between 13-20 October 2016

Source: IPSOS-Mori Shifting ground: 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes toward immigration and Brexit

Examining these issues and other questions included in the survey IPSOS-Mori **researchers found the degree of correlation between different groups of variables and how much they affected Britons' vote**. Percentages shown in the second graph give us an indication of how different factors were associated with the vote for "Leave". The **anti-immigration and nativist factor** (which is focused on protecting the interests of native-born against those of immigrants) was by far the most powerful explanatory factor (**34%**). This was followed by **distrust in experts (23%)** and **opposition to political correctness (12%)**. These results confirmed that cultural and values-related aspects were much more important than a direct **sense of being "left behind"** in economic terms to explain the decision to vote for Leave in the Brexit referendum.

Photo Credits CC: [Brian Yap \(🇮🇵\)](#) feat. Alexander Damiano Ricci