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# Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories

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Public opinion, through its impact on mass behavior, shapes and constrains the process of European integration. Why do citizens vary in their support for European integration? Previous research offers a variety of sometimes conflicting explanations, but the available evidence is insufficient to determine which explanations are valid. This article seeks to contribute to the resolution of this controversy by empirically examining five prominent theories of support for integration. Through regression analyses of European ere surveys from the period 1978–1992, the analysis shows that the partisan context of integrative reforms and the utilitarian consequences of integrative policy provide robust explanations for variation in support. In contrast, two other prominent theories—political values and cognitive mobilization—are only valid in a limited context, and in this context they exert a small substantive impact on support.

Public attitudes, through mass political behavior, shape and constrain the process of European integration. The influence of public attitudes is most apparent in national referenda on integration. For example, the 1992 Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty delayed and ultimately modified the institutional reform of the European Union (EU). Public attitudes also influence EU politics through traditional channels of citizen politics such as lobbying, public protest (e.g., French farmers), and elections. More generally, public attitudes provide the political foundation for integration. Since EU law lacks a supranational means of enforcement, the endurance of the EU political system vitally depends on public compliance with and acceptance of EU law (Caldeira and Gibson 1995; Gibson and Caldeira 1995). Thus, public attitudes—particularly public support—are an important component of European integration.

Why do EU citizens vary in their support for European integration? Several previous studies have identified systematic differences in individual-level support for integration related to partisanship, age, income, occupation, cognitive skills, and political values (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Feld and Wildgen

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1976; Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren 1994; Franklin, Marsh, Wlezien 1994; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Marsh 1995; Gabel 1998; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Handley 1981; Hewstone 1986; Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991; Janssen 1991). However, much controversy remains concerning the theoretical microfoundations for these empirical regularities and their implications for European integration.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, in order to predict and explain mass behavior concerning European integration, we need to discern which (if any) of these theories is accurate.

An obvious method for resolving this theoretical controversy is to examine the empirical veracity of the different theoretical claims. Unfortunately, existing empirical evidence is insufficient for such an evaluation. Previous research suffers from two methodological problems. First, previous empirical studies relied primarily on bivariate analyses, which may conceal intervening or spurious relationships. This is an important problem because many of the theories offer explanations for the same evidence. For instance, education may be positively related to support for integration because it raises cognitive mobilization or because it enables citizens to exploit economic opportunities in an integrated market. Without controlling for alternative explanations, it is impossible to test accurately these competing theoretical claims.

Second, the results of these studies—and the validity of the explanations they tested—are difficult to evaluate because they employed different survey questions as dependent variables. This is not merely a problem for comparing empirical results. Since no study has established that a particular measure of support for integration is related to support for actual integrative policies, it is unclear whether the findings of these studies are relevant for making inferences about mass behavior regarding actual European integration.

In this article, I seek to contribute to the resolution of this theoretical debate by performing a rigorous empirical test of five prominent individual-level theories of public support for European integration. In the first section of the paper, I present these five theories and specify testable hypotheses. In the second section, I statistically test these hypotheses using Eurobarometer survey data from 1978–92. To overcome the problems of previous studies, the statistical analysis uses a dependent variable that measures support for actual integrative measures and introduces controls for a variety of potentially confounding factors. In the third section, I discuss the empirical results and their implications for our understanding of public support for European integration.

<sup>1</sup>For example, extant theories offer contradictory hypotheses concerning how citizens respond to the content of integrative reforms. One theory contends that citizens' support reflects their political values (e.g., postmaterialism), which are largely unrelated to the content of integrative policies (Inglehart 1970b; Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991). In contrast, a second theory contends that citizens' attitudes reflect their economic concerns related to the content and consequences of integrative policy (Gabel and Palmer 1995).

#### Five Explanations of Public Support for European Integration

While there are numerous anecdotal and event-specific explanations for public attitudes toward European integration, this article will focus on five theoretical explanations. I chose these explanations because they offer generalizable hypotheses for which previous studies offer at least some empirical evidence. Thus, they are viable explanations that provide a theoretical basis for prediction and explanation. This section provides a brief description of these five theories.

# Cognitive Mobilization

The first theory to be tested involves the relationship between citizens' cognitive skills and their attitudes toward European integration. Ronald Inglehart (1970a), who first investigated this relationship, argued that high cognitive mobilization, characterized by a high level of political awareness and well-developed skills in political communication, enables citizens to identify with a supranational political community. This argument is based on two assumptions. First, Inglehart (1970a) contended that well-developed cognitive skills are necessary for understanding information about European integration because this information is often at a high level of abstraction. Second, according to Inglehart's operationalization of this hypothesis, the influence of cognitive mobilization is message independent—all information about integration promotes support (e.g., Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991).<sup>2</sup> Thus, as a citizen's cognitive mobilization increases, she is more familiar with and less threatened by the topic of European integration (Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991, 147; Janssen 1991, 467).

Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif (1991) and Janssen (1991) provided evidence supporting this hypothesis. Inglehart et al. (1991) used bivariate analyses of Eurobarometer surveys of all EU member-states from 1973–86. Janssen (1991) found evidence from the 1973–89 Eurobarometer surveys in Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, while controlling for political value orientations. However, these studies did not include necessary control variables for alternative and potentially confounding explanations that will be discussed below.

# Political Values

The second theory to be tested is Ronald Inglehart's theory of a Silent Revolution, which is arguably the most often cited explanation for Europeans' attitudes toward European integration (Janssen 1991, 444). Inglehart (1970b, 1990) posited that support for European integration is associated with value orientations regarding economic and political issues. According to the theory,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Note that Inglehart (1970a, 48) mentioned that cognitive mobilization could be related to the content of elite messages. However, scholars have neither theoretically developed nor empirically examined this contention.

citizens' political attitudes are shaped by the socioeconomic conditions surrounding their formative, or preadult, years. These conditions are expected to instill certain values and attitudes, including national identity, that tend to persist over an adult's lifetime. Value priorities primarily concerned with economic and physical security are considered "materialist," and value priorities that include such needs as intellectual fulfillment, self-actualization, and belonging are "post-materialist." Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif (1991, 152) argued that the EU represents a vehicle for social, political, and economic reform toward a less nationalistic, more egalitarian society that would be more attractive to postmaterialists than materialists. Consequently, citizens with postmaterialist values should be more supportive of European integration than those with materialist values.

The existing empirical evidence regarding this theory is inconclusive. Evidence from surveys of the publics of the original EU member-states is consistent with this explanation (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Inglehart 1970b; Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991, 152) while more recent and comprehensive evidence is unclear. Anderson and Reichert (1996) found that the hypothesis held for citizens in the original member-states but that postmaterialists expressed less support than materialists in the later member-states. Janssen (1991) found scant supportive evidence once he controlled for cognitive skills, but he only studied public attitudes in four EU member-states. While these findings are suggestive, they remain dubious because they derive from analyses that lacked controls for alternative explanations. Several factors (e.g., income, education, and partisanship) that are potentially related to both support for integration and political values need to be controlled for in order to estimate the independent effect of values on support for integration.<sup>3</sup>

# Utilitarian Appraisals of Integrative Policy

The third theory to be tested is a utilitarian model of public support for European integration first proposed by Gabel and Palmer (1995) and further developed by Gabel (1998). Gabel and Palmer (1995) argued that EU citizens in different socioeconomic situations experience different costs and benefits from integrative policy; that these differences in economic welfare shape their attitudes toward integration; and consequently, that citizens' support for integration is positively related to their welfare gains from integrative policy. Specifically, Gabel and Palmer investigated how the economic consequences of EU market liberalization for capital, goods, and labor influence support for integration. They argued that market liberalization provides differential benefits for EU citizens

<sup>3</sup>Of those who have conducted studies, Anderson and Reichert (1996) provide the most rigorous examination of the political values hypothesis. They control for several individual-level characteristics: education, income, age, gender, and being employed as a farmer. However, they did not control for three of the theories discussed in this article that may confound the relationship between values and support: cognitive mobilization, class partisanship, and support for government.

depending on their physical proximity to other EU markets and their capital resources—both human and financial.

According to Gabel and Palmer (1995), the liberalization of the EU labor markets affects citizens differently according to their level of education and occupational skills—that is, their human capital. Human capital is a strong indicator of a citizen's ability to adapt to the occupational competition introduced by a liberalized EU labor market (Tsoukalis 1993, 230). Thus, Gabel and Palmer (1995) predicted that a citizen's support for integration would be positively related to his or her level of education and of occupational skills.

Second, Gabel and Palmer (1995) posited that the liberalization of capital markets and the movement toward Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) affect EU citizens differently depending on their income level. Wealthy EU citizens are more likely to benefit from capital liberalization since they can exploit the greater investment opportunities provided by more open financial markets (Frieden 1991, 434). In addition, the European Monetary System (EMS) provides a general benefit to holders of financial assets: low inflation.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, EU citizens with low incomes are generally hurt by capital liberalization because they depend primarily on wages from labor for their welfare. Capital liberalization reduces their welfare by making it less costly for capital to move rather than accede to labor demands (Frieden 1991, 434). In addition, low-income citizens are more dependent upon social welfare spending, which is constrained by capital mobility and the EMS.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Gabel and Palmer (1995) argued that the free movement of goods and people influences citizens differently depending on where they reside. Europeans residing near borders with other EU members benefit more from increased economic interaction between the neighboring countries than do nonborder residents. Thus, Gabel and Palmer (1995) posited that, all things being equal, residents of border regions should express greater support for integration than residents of nonborder regions.

Gabel and Palmer (1995) and Anderson and Reichert (1996) presented evidence from multivariate analyses that supported these hypotheses. Income, education, occupational skills, and proximity to border regions were all positively associated with support for integration. However, this evidence is not conclusive because the analyses did not include controls for several alternative explanations. For example, since education, income, and occupational skills are

<sup>4</sup>Due to the anti-inflationary bias of German monetary policy, membership in the Exchange Rate Mechanism of the EMS requires low domestic inflation so as to maintain exchange-rate parities. In general, this anti-inflationary bias has also been present in non-ERM member-states, as they adjusted their economies in anticipation of eventual ERM membership. This anti-inflationary bias represents a benefit for citizens holding capital assets, since the value of financial assets is inversely related to inflation.

<sup>5</sup>The anti-inflationary bias of the EMS limits spending on social welfare programs by constraining its members' fiscal policies.

positively correlated with cognitive skills, the evidence supporting the utilitarian theory may merely capture the influence of cognitive mobilization on support.

# Class Partisanship

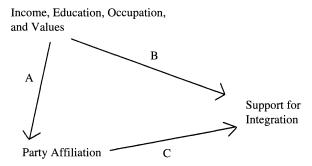
Many studies of public attitudes toward European integration have investigated how citizens' partisanship relates to their support for integration (Franklin, Marsh, and Wlezien 1994; Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren 1994; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Marsh 1995; Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991). A general contention is that citizens adopt attitudes toward integration that reflect the position of the party they support (but see Siune and Svensson 1993). That is, the party shapes its supporters' attitudes toward integration independent of their personal characteristics (e.g., occupation, income, and values) that might influence both their choice of party and support for integration. The arrow labeled C in Figure 1 represents this partisan influence.

Specifically, Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif (1991) identified a class-based partisan cleavage in support for European integration. They found in Eurobarometer surveys from 1973–89 that supporters of Left parties were less favorable toward integration than supporters of Right parties, and they attributed this difference to the positions of Left and Right parties on European integration. Generally, parties of the Left (particularly Communist parties) have been more skeptical of integration than parties of the Right because of their perception that integration is a manifestation of capitalist forces (Wessels 1995). Consequently, Left parties have been generally less supportive of integration than parties of the Right (Budge, Robertson, and Hearl 1987).

It is important to note, however, that this empirical evidence came from a simple bivariate relationship that did not control for personal political and economic characteristics that may be related to partisanship and support for

FIGURE 1

# Partisanship and Support for Integration



integration.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the apparent relationship between class-based partisanship and support for integration may be spurious. With reference to Figure 2, this means that the arrow labeled C may not exist. Of course, one might also argue that arrow B does not exist because partisanship accounts for the relationship between personal characteristics (e.g., income) and support for integration. To resolve this debate, the ensuing analysis will estimate the independent effects of these personal characteristics and partisanship.

## Support for Government

Another group of scholars posits that parties play a different role in shaping public support for integration. Several studies by Franklin and other scholars (1994, 1994, 1995) have argued that voters tie their support for integration to their support for their government (the presidency in France). The prime minister of each member-state (the president in France) is responsible for negotiating all integrative reforms and for designing and representing his or her national position vis-à-vis the EU. Consequently, these studies contend that citizens project their evaluations of the party of the national leader onto integration.<sup>7</sup> Evidence from aggregate-level bivariate analyses of referendum votes in France, Ireland, and Denmark supports this assertion (Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Marsh 1995). However, there is no evidence that this relationship holds outside referenda or in the presence of controls for other predictors of support for integration.

#### Measurement and Methodology

#### Data

To test these competing hypotheses, I use a series of ordinary least squares regressions of Eurobarometer survey data from fall 1978 through spring 1992 including all EU member-states.<sup>8</sup> I chose these data for both theoretical and

<sup>6</sup>Some readers might criticize the "class partisanship" hypothesis on the grounds that strong opposition to integration currently comes from extreme parties, not mainstream parties from the Left or the Right (Taggart 1995). While this may be true, it is not particularly relevant to the time period of this analysis. The only relevant concern for this study is that evidence in support of the "class partisanship" hypothesis could be explained by the influence of extreme parties. This seems implausible, since extreme parties exist on both the Left and the Right and command a small amount of electoral support (particularly during the period of this study) relative to the mainstream parties.

<sup>7</sup>Note that the relationship between citizens' support for government and their support for integration may be attenuated when the government is not seen as clearly prointegration, such as the British Labor government of 1974 and the British Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, particularly in 1987.

<sup>8</sup>The Eurobarometer data were originally collected by Jacques-Rene Rabier, Helene Riffault, and Ronald Inglehart, and made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research. Neither the collectors of the Eurobarometer data nor the consortium bear any responsibility for the interpretations presented here. Note that I exclude surveys of nations that were not yet members in the year surveyed (e.g., Portuguese in 1986). practical reasons. Theoretically, I want to test the validity of these hypotheses independent of time and nation. Since these hypotheses specify individual-level mechanisms presumably common to all EU citizens in all years, using this dataset allows for the most general test of these hypotheses while controlling for national and temporal factors. In addition, most of the previous empirical tests of these explanations were conducted upon Eurobarometer data from this time period. By using this dataset, I reduce the chance that any discrepancy between this analysis and those of previous studies is an artifact of the data.

A large dataset is also necessary on practical grounds due to multicollinearity. In any one year for a particular nation, several of the explanatory variables—e.g., occupation, income, values, and partisanship—are highly correlated. This generally serves to widen confidence intervals and reduce the power of hypothesis tests for each parameter. A simple solution to the problem of multicollinearity is to obtain more data (Corlett 1990), which is achieved in this case by merging surveys together. The combination of these surveys maximizes the independent variation from which to draw statistical inferences and thereby enhances our confidence in the estimated relationships for these variables. Surveys prior to fall 1978 were omitted because they lacked the necessary questions for the dependent variable, and surveys after spring 1992 were omitted due to unavailability.

# Dependent Variable

To measure citizens' support for European integration, one would ideally use an indicator that explicitly captures variation in support for actual integrative reforms over time and across nations. Unfortunately, such a measure is not available for any substantial sequence of surveys. Occasionally, the Eurobarometer includes survey questions related to specific integrative reforms (e.g., monetary union), but these questions are asked in only a small number of surveys and sometimes in only a subset of EU member-states. Consequently, one must construct an indicator of support for integration from survey questions of a more general nature.

Previous researchers identified the following two Eurobarometer survey questions as general indicators of support for integration:

*Membership*<sup>9</sup>: Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership in the European Community (Common Market) is a bad thing (1), neither good nor bad (2), or a good thing (3)?

 $Unifv^{10}$ . In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe? very much against (1); somewhat against (2); somewhat for (3); very much for (4).

<sup>9</sup>Responses of "don't know" were excluded from the analysis since respondents could express indifference through the intermediate category. Note that the inclusion of the "don't know" responses as an intermediate category did not alter the results reported in tables 1 and 2.

<sup>10</sup>Responses of "don't know" were coded as 2.5.

Researchers have not established empirically that these questions are related to support for actual integrative policies. This casts doubt on any inferences drawn from these survey measures. Consequently, before adopting either of these questions as a dependent variable, I will assess whether they are related to support for integration.

To answer this question, I examined the relationship between responses to these two questions and responses to four questions from the Fall 1988 Eurobarometer that explicitly asked respondents whether they supported concrete proposals for European integration: a collective organization for defense, a single European currency, a common foreign policy, and a European Government responsible to the European Parliament.<sup>11</sup>

Correlations among responses to these four questions are displayed in Table 1.<sup>12</sup> The strength and direction of these correlations indicate that EU citizens who were supportive of a particular integrative measure were also supportive of the other proposals. This suggests that respondents have a general pro- or antiintegration orientation that informs their support for integrative proposals. To capture this orientation, I combined responses to these variables to construct an index of support for integrative policies ranging from 0 (against all proposals) to 4 (support all proposals). This index, called *Policy*, is highly correlated with each of the four questions (see Table 1).

How do the survey responses to *Unify* and *Membership* relate to *Policy*? The correlations of *Policy* with *Unify* and *Membership* are 0.53 and 0.47,

	Common Defense	Common Foreign Policy	Single Currency	European Government	Policy
Common Defense	_	.27	.21	.32	.67
Common Foreign Policy			.41	.44	.77
Single Currency				.45	.75
European Government	_				.79

TABLE 1

# Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for Integrative Policy Variables

All correlations are significant at .001 level.

<sup>11</sup>Each of the four question asked the respondent if she were for or against implementing the particular proposal between the twelve countries of the EC by 1992. I coded a response of "against" as (0), "don't know" as (0.5), and "for" as (1).

<sup>12</sup>In calculating the correlations, national weights were applied to all observations so as to provide a representative sample of the EU population. In addition, an identical analysis was conducted that excluded all responses of "don't know". The results were very similar to those presented here. In interpreting the correlations, remember that discrete variables allow only a crude representations of the actual continuum of responses to each question. This tends to attenuate the magnitude of the correlations among the variables (Kim and Mueller 1978, 74). respectively. Thus, both *Unify* and *Membership* capture respondents' support for actual integration. Their correlations with *Policy* are in the expected direction and large given that the survey questions have a small number of response categories.<sup>13</sup> However, a better indicator of support would include more response categories so as to capture more fully the range of support for integration. Since *Membership* and *Unify* are the only appropriate and consistently asked survey questions, the sole option is to combine responses to these questions into a single indicator. Gabel and Palmer (1995, 14) argued—but never demonstrated—that this combined indicator provides a better measure of the underlying level of support for integration than either question alone.

To demonstrate this, I created a variable, *Support*, by adding together responses to *Membership* and *Unify*. The correlation between *Support* and *Policy* is 0.57, which indicates that *Support* is indeed more strongly correlated with *Policy* than either *Unify* or *Membership* alone. Consequently, I use *Support* as the dependent variable in the regression analysis. In the regression analysis, I scale *Support* so that it ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores representing greater support for integration. This scale, although not continuous, eases interpretation of the results.

# Explanatory Variables

The explanatory variables are constructed so as to examine the five individuallevel theories of support for European integration. To test the cognitive mobilization theory, I adopt the same survey question that was used in previous studies (e.g., Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991, 147): "When you get together with friends, would you say you discuss political matters, frequently, occasionally, or never?" I created a dummy variable for each response category. The expectation is that support will increase with frequency of political discussion.<sup>14</sup>

To test the political values theory, I use a survey question adopted by Inglehart for this purpose in previous studies (Inglehart 1990). Respondents were asked to choose what should be their nation's goals (first and second choice) from the following list of options: maintaining order; (c) giving the people more say in important government decisions; (c) fighting rising prices; and (d) protecting freedom of speech. Respondents choosing (a) or (b) as their first and second choices were coded as "materialist." Respondents choosing (b) or (d) as their

<sup>13</sup>Recall that correlations between discrete variables are generally attenuated due to the limited variation in responses (Kim and Mueller 1978, 74). Thus, the magnitude of the correlation is, at least in part, a result of the limited number of response categories for *Membership* and *Unify*.

<sup>14</sup>Note that previous research has also used a question concerning the frequency with which a respondent "persuades friends to share his views" as a measure cognitive mobilization. I do not include both measures in the analysis for two reasons. First, if they are included simultaneously they may be severely collinear. Second, the results and implications of the regressions in table 6 are very similar when the alternative measure of cognitive mobilization is employed. These supplemental regression results are available from the author on request. first and second choices were designated as "postmaterialist." The theoretical expectation is that postmaterialists will be more supportive of European integration than materialists.<sup>15</sup>

To test the utilitarian theory, I identified respondents according to occupational skill level, income level, education level, and residence. The coding replicates that used by Gabel and Palmer (1995). First, I constructed occupational dummy variables for manual laborers, unemployed citizens, executives, and professionals.<sup>16</sup> The expectation based on human capital is that manual laborers and the unemployed will be less supportive of integration than executives or professionals. Second, I constructed dummy variables for four levels of income<sup>17</sup> and for four levels of education.<sup>18</sup> The expectation is that support will increase with income (financial capital) and with education (human capital). Third, I constructed a dummy variable for respondents living in regions bordering on EU member-states.<sup>19</sup>

To test the class partisanship theory, I coded respondents according to whether they supported a party of the Left or the Right. In all of the surveys from 1978–92, respondents were asked a variation of the following question<sup>20</sup>: "If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you support?" Based on responses to this question, I created two dummy variables: *Support for Proletariat Party* and *Support for Bourgeois Party. Support for Proletariat Party* is coded 1 for respondents who named a party that represents

<sup>15</sup>Note that previous research indicates that this survey question may not in fact measure materialist or postmaterialist values and that the theory itself is suspect (e.g., Clarke and Dutt 1991; Duch and Taylor 1993). For the purposes of this article, I am only interested in testing whether the previous empirical results regarding this theory hold up when appropriate controls are added to the analysis. Thus, I employ this survey question because it replicates the one used in previous studies.

<sup>16</sup>The occupational dummy variables are coded according to the categories reported in the Eurobarometers. Eurobarometer surveys beginning in 1989 adopted more specific categories than those prior to 1989. For these later surveys, I combined occupational categories so that they matched those of the pre-1989 surveys.

<sup>17</sup>Note that I follow Gabel and Palmer (1995) and use income defined in the Eurobarometer according to national quartiles, not EU-wide quartiles. This is appropriate because the adverse effects of integration on those of "low income" concern how capital mobility and the anti-inflationary bias of the EMS constrain welfare spending. Welfare benefits are distributed according to a citizen's relative national income. Thus, by defining income in comparison to other citizens from the same nation, I can distinguish citizens according to whether their welfare is enhanced or reduced by European integration.

<sup>18</sup>Educational categories are divided according to the age the respondent completed his or her education. Respondents completing their education before age 15 were coded as "low". Respondents completing their education between ages 14 and 20 were coded as "low-mid". Respondents completing their education at ages 20 or 21 were coded as "high-mid". Respondents completing their education after age 21 were coded as "high".

<sup>19</sup>Respondents residing in regions with land borders with other EU member-states were coded as border residents

<sup>20</sup>For pre-1986 Eurobarometer surveys, Italians were asked: "Do you feel closer to any one of the parties on the following list than to all others? If yes, which one?"

working-class interests and 0 otherwise. I identified proletariat parties based on party platform descriptions (Delury 1983; Featherstone 1988; Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 1992).<sup>21</sup> *Support for Bourgeois Party* was coded 1 for respondents who named a party that represents the interests of capital and 0 otherwise, based on information from the previously cited sources.<sup>22</sup> The expectation is that supporters of proletariat parties will be less supportive of integration than supporters of bourgeois parties.

Finally, to test the support for government theory, I created a dummy variable coded 1 for respondents who supported the prime minister's party (or, for France, the president's party) and coded 0 otherwise. Coding was based on responses to the same survey question that was used to assign class partisanship. The expectation is that respondents supporting the government will express greater support for integration than respondents not supporting the government.

### Control Variables

I also include several variables that are designed to control for other potentially confounding factors. First, I control for age,<sup>23</sup> since the distribution of occupations, values, and level of education may have some generational trends. Second, I include several demographic variables—gender and occupation—that often influence political attitudes and may be related to the explanatory variables.<sup>24</sup> Although the effects of these control variables on support may be interesting in their own right, my analysis will focus on the explanatory variables.

# Model Estimation

To estimate the relationships between these variables and support for integration, I use ordinary least squares regressions of pooled cross-sectional data. The pooled design has become infamous for its associated methodological problems (see Beck and Katz 1995; Sayrs 1989; Stimson 1985). However, this study uses individual-level rather than aggregate-level data and thus many of these methodological problems do not apply. In particular, the time-series problems (e.g., autocorrelation) of pooled models of cross-national (panel) data are

<sup>21</sup>The proletariat parties were (France) Communist Party, Socialist Party, and Lutte Ouvriere; (Belgium) Communist Party and Socialist Parties—Walloon and Flemish; (The Netherlands) CPN and PVDA; (West Germany) Social Democratic Party; (Italy) PCI and PSI; (Luxembourg) KP and LSAP; (Denmark) DKP, SD, SPP, and Socialist Left; (Ireland) Labour Party and Workers' Party; (United Kingdom) Labour Party; (Greece) KKE, KKE international, and PA.SO.K; (Spain) PCI and PSOE; (Portugal) CDU and PSP.

<sup>22</sup>The bourgeois parties were (France) RPR and UDF; (Belgium) PRL and Liberal Parties— Walloon and Flemish; (The Netherlands) CDA, and VVD; (West Germany) CDU/CSU and FDP; (Italy) CD and PLI; (Denmark) KF; (United Kingdom) Conservative Party; (Spain) CP; (Portugal) PDC and CDS. I was not able to identify a bourgeois party in Luxembourg or Ireland.

<sup>23</sup>Age is coded as the self-reported number.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>The variable *Female* is a dummy variable coded 1 for female and 0 for male.

not applicable to this statistical design, which pools a series of independent cross sections.

I am concerned about potential bias in estimation resulting from fixed effects for particular nations and years. Previous research identifies a number of theoretical reasons to believe that varying national traditions may influence the baseline values for citizens of particular nations and that particular events may influence the baseline for a particular year (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel and Palmer 1995).<sup>25</sup> Such fixed effects, if not accounted for, can cause biased and imprecise parameter estimates. To avoid this problem, the statistical model includes dummy variables for each nation and each year.<sup>26</sup> These year variables also capture any time trend (time series) in the errors. Finally, I correct for any heteroskedasticity by calculating White's heteroskedastic-consistent standard errors (see Greene 1993, 391; White 1980).

# Statistical Results

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 2. I estimated five regression models. Model 1 includes the full sample of respondents. Models 2–5 examine the robustness of the hypothesized relationships over time and across nations. Previous research suggests two reasons that these hypotheses may not hold in certain national and temporal subsamples. First, as Anderson and Reichert (1996, 236) argued, the project of European integration has changed over time. In particular, the Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 revised the agenda for economic integration, modified the institutions of the EU, and coincided with the accession of Spain and Portugal. By redefining the geographic boundaries, economic goals, and institutional character of the EU, this event may have altered the way citizens perceived and evaluated European integration. To control for this temporal effect, I divided the full sample into pre- and post-SEA subsamples.

Second, the national context of EU membership may influence citizens' perceptions of European integration. The most noted distinction is between the original member-states—France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg—and those that joined later (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993). The original member-states initiated European integration to promote cooperative solutions to their economic and

<sup>25</sup>Gabel (1998) and Gabel and Palmer (1995) found that national baselines vary due to differences in the commercial or security benefits the nation derives for European integration. Dalton and Eichenberg (1993) found that baselines differ across years because of elections to the European Parliament.

<sup>26</sup>I have also estimated a model that includes all of the explanatory variables and interaction terms for each nation in each year, i.e. France in 1978, Belgium in 1978, etc. This permits me to control for time-specific fixed effects for each nation. The results are consistent with the estimates presented in Table 2. Since this expanded model requires over one hundred additional variables, the results are not presented here.

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#### TABLE 2

Dependent Variable: Support for European Integration								
Explanatory Variables	Original Members			Later Members				
	1. 1978–92	2. 1978–86	3. 1987–92	4. 1978–86	5. 1987–92			
Discuss politics never	-2.72*	-3.10*	-2.53*	-2.50*	-2.11*			
Discuss politics frequently	0.45*	1.36*	2.58*	-1.58*	-0.14			
Materialists	-0.30*	-0.93*	-2.19*	0.79*	-0.51			
Postmaterialists	-0.21	2.01*	2.42*	-4.73*	-2.67*			
Professional	3.09*	0.61	1.19*	4.90*	3.85*			
Executive	3.19*	1.20*	1.76*	5.89*	4.73*			
Manual worker	-3.08*	-2.33*	-2.62*	-3.43*	-3.42*			
Unemployed	-2.16*	-1.20*	-2.45*	-4.55*	-2.18*			
Low education	-2.58*	-2.16*	-2.58*	-3.38*	-1.89*			
High-mid education	1.38*	2.11*	1.30*	2.93*	0.60*			
High education	2.11*	3.53*	3.10*	0.91	0.55			
Low income	-2.03*	-1.67*	-1.66*	-1.80*	-2.66*			
High-mid income	1.05*	1.40*	0.77*	1.71*	0.63			
High income	3.16*	2.88*	2.91*	4.10*	3.65*			
Border	0.72*	-0.13	-0.24	-2.62*	2.34*			
Support proletariat party	-3.08*	-0.47*	0.92*	-11.71*	-2.30*			
Support bourgeois party	2.26*	2.63*	2.72*	2.13*	-1.19*			
Support governing party	2.50*	2.49*	0.62	4.05*	6.64*			
Number of cases	235855	75261	52664	50243	57687			
Adjusted $R^2$	.15	.07	.06	.13	.16			

# Regression Analysis of Five Theories of Public Support for European Integration

\*Denotes .01 significance level based on standard errors calculated from a heteroskedasticity-consistent covariance matrix (see White 1980).

Results for the control variables are presented in Table 3.

security concerns resulting from World War II. The later members joined the EU under dramatically different conditions. There was no serious threat of war among West European nations and the postwar economic expansion had slowed considerably. Consequently, citizens in the later member-states may evaluate and perceive European integration in fundamentally different terms than citizens of the original member-states. For this reason, I have also divided the full sample into two groups according to nationality: original members and later members. Models 2 and 3 report regression results for citizens from the original member-states in the pre- and post-SEA time periods. Models 4 and 5 display regression results for respondents from the later member-states in these two time periods.

#### TABLE 3

Dependent Variable: Support for European Integration							
Control Variables	1. 1978–92	2. 1978-86	3. 1987–92	4. 1978–86	5. 1987–92		
Female	-2.89*	-1.77*	-1.87*	-3.83*	-4.02*		
Retired	0.58*	-0.24	0.84	1.55*	0.22		
Small business owner	-0.23	-1.22*	-1.02	0.35	-0.10		
Farmer	1.11*	-3.53*	-4.51*	4.93*	0.15		
Student/military	1.09*	0.95*	1.40*	-0.58	1.61*		
Housewife	-0.22	-0.43	0.18	-0.93	-0.51		
Age	0.03*	0.05*	0.01	0.07*	-0.01		
France	14.99*	-6.58*	-7.22*	_			
West Germany	13.90*	-6.97*	-9.61*				
Italy	22.13*	_					
The Netherlands	16.05*	-4.34*	-6.39*	_			
Luxembourg	18.20*	0.02	-5.67*	_			
Belgium	15.43*	-5.92*	-5.60*				
Ireland	9.88*	_	_	6.76*	10.23*		
Denmark	-6.63*	_		-5.00*	-7.96*		
Greece	12.88*	_		12.86*	13.64*		
Portugal	21.55*	_			17.66*		
Spain	18.36*	_			14.21*		
1978	-0.18	0.76		0.74	_		
1979	-1.31*	1.11*		-3.12*			
1980	-4.41*	-1.26*		-7.34*			
1981	-6.20*	-3.45*	_	-7.63*	_		
1982	-6.10*	-3.90*	_	-6.12*			
1983	-3.52*	-1.61*	_	-3.80*			
1984	-5.64*	-3.29*	_	-6.21*	_		
1985	-3.40*	-0.52		-4.93*			
1986	-1.14*	_	_		_		
1987	-0.29		2.58*		-3.61*		
1988	-0.52		0.20		-2.49*		
1990	2.58*	_	1.02*		3.72*		
1991	3.93*		1.11*		6.13*		
1992	0.57		-2.79*		2.23*		
Intercept	62.82*	80.72*	82.04*	62.90*	67.62*		

# Results for the Control Variables in the Five Models in Table 2

\*Denotes .01 significance level based on White (1980) standard errors.

The baseline respondent in each model has the following characteristics: "occasionally" discusses political matters with friends; has "mixed" political values;<sup>27</sup> works in a white-collar profession; finished school between age 14 and 20; falls in the second-to-lowest national income quartile, and resides in a non-

<sup>27</sup>A combination of "materialist" and "postmaterialist" responses to the value question.

border region. The baseline year and nation differ across models so that the largest national and annual sample serves as the omitted categories.

Focusing first on the cognitive mobilization theory, the regression results offer limited support. In the original member-states, support for integration is positively related to the frequency of political discussion. In contrast, the results for the later member-states are less consistent with the hypothesis. In models 4 and 5, political discussion is related to support in a curvilinear fashion. Moreover, in model 4, respondents who frequently discuss politics expressed, on average, less support than those who occasionally discuss politics. The results also provide only limited support for the political values theory. The results for the original member-states are consistent with the hypothesis that postmaterialists express greater support for integration than materialists. However, the results are exactly the opposite for the later member-states. In models 4 and 5, materialists were, on average, more supportive of integration than postmaterialists.

The results offer strong support for the utilitarian hypotheses. First, support for integration was positively related to the level of human capital. In all models, the least-educated respondents were, on average, less supportive of integration than the most-educated respondents. Also, respondents from skilled occupations (i.e., professionals and executives) expressed, on average, greater support for integration than respondents whose occupation did not provide skilled training (i.e., manual laborers and the unemployed). Second, in all models support for integration was positively related to the level of financial capital. Respondents from the highest income quartile expressed, on average, greater support than respondents from the lowest income quartile. Fourth, the results offer some evidence that residence in an intra-EU border region is positively related to support. Residents of border regions were greater than two points more supportive of integration than nonborder residents in the later member-states. However, border residents in the original member-states expressed the same support for integration than nonborder residents.

Finally, the results support the class partisanship theory and the support for government theory. Respondents who identified with a proletariat party were less supportive of integration than respondents who identified with a bourgeois party. Respondents who indicated electoral support for the prime minister (president in France) expressed, on average, greater support for integration than respondents who did not intend to vote for the incumbent. The only exception was in model 3, where support for government did not have a statistically significant effect on support for integration.

Note that the *R*-squared statistic is reported out of convention. *R*-squared, as a measure of goodness-of-fit, is largely irrelevant to this analysis. This analysis is designed to estimate the relationship between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable, not to explain all variation in support for

integration.<sup>28</sup> Here the primary concern with a low R-squared is that it might signal the absence of other causal variables that possibly confound the estimates for the explanatory variables. By including control variables for a variety of potential confounding factors, I minimize this possibility.

# Substantive Significance

Up to this point, I have focused primarily on appraising the validity of the five explanations according to the direction and statistical significance of the parameter estimates. But we are also interested in substantive significance: the magnitude of the impact each explanation has on support for integration. We would like to distinguish explanations that account for large differences in public support for integration across all member-states and years from those whose impact is small or limited to only a particular set of nations or years. To assess substantive significance, I calculated the maximum difference in support associated with each theory and compared these differences across theories and models.<sup>29</sup>

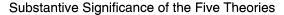
Figure 2 provides a visual comparison of the substantive significance of the five explanations. Each filled bar on the figure represents the maximum difference in support accounted for by a theoretical explanation. Thus, I do not report results that contradict a theory.<sup>30</sup> The height of each bar represents the number of points of support associated with the largest possible impact of the variable(s) for each theory, holding all other variables constant. For example, for the class partisanship hypothesis in model 1, bourgeois partisans expressed, on average, 5.34 (2.26 + 3.08) points greater support for integration than proletarian partisans. For the utilitarian theory, I added the difference in support associated with

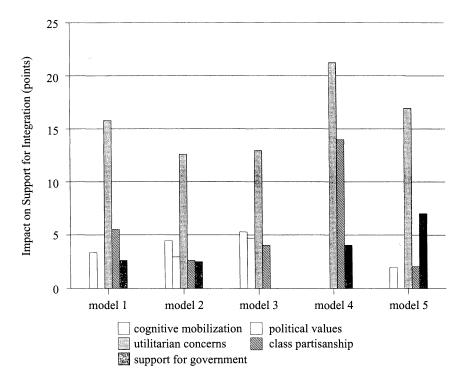
<sup>28</sup>Also, as a measure of goodness-of-fit, *R*-squared is likely to underestimate the amount of variation in support for EU membership explained by the model. The dependent variable is polychotomous and consequently suffers from measurement error in capturing the continuous range of support. Limited response categories necessarily impose some restrictions on how well respondents can express their exact level of support. Thus, some of the variance in the dependent variable is not systematic and therefore cannot be accounted for by the explanatory variables. Note that this measurement error does not bias the parameter estimates for the explanatory variables.

<sup>29</sup>Some readers may prefer to calculate substantive significance by weighting the impact of the variables according to the distribution of responses across categories and then comparing the weighted effects of the theories. Calculated in this way, the relative substantive significance of the theories is largely consistent with the conclusions drawn from the results in Figure 1. These alternative calculations are available from the author upon request.

<sup>30</sup>I calculated substantive significance for all explanations with a statistically significant difference in the predicted direction between the corresponding variables. To estimate whether there was a statistical significant difference, I used the following t-test for each pair of parameter estimates (e.g., low and high education):  $t = (b_1 - b_2) / [var (b_1) + var (b_2) - 2 \text{ cov } (b_1b_2)]^{1/2}$ .







high and low education, high and low income, skilled and unskilled occupation, and border residence.<sup>31</sup>

By comparing the height of the bars within and across models, one can appraise the relative substantive importance of each theory. It is clear from the comparison that the utilitarian theory has by far the greatest consistent impact on support for integration. In all five models, the combined independent effects of the utilitarian variables is greater than that of any other theory. Thus, the evidence indicates that the utilitarian theory is robust in both its statistical and its

<sup>31</sup>Note that estimating the difference in support associated with occupational skills is complicated by the fact that there are two regression coefficients for skilled occupation (executives and professionals) and two coefficients for unskilled occupations (unemployed and manual laborers). I used the difference between the average of the coefficients for the skilled occupations and the average of the coefficients for the unskilled occupations. In model 1, for example, the coefficients for the skilled occupations (3.09 and 3.19) average to 3.14 and the coefficients for the unskilled occupations (-3.08and -2.16) average to -2.62. The difference in support associated with the occupational skills in this model is then 5.76 substantive significance. Where the evidence supports the political values and cognitive mobilization theories (models 2 and 3), their substantive impact is relatively small. Class partisanship has a small substantive impact except in model 4 where the impact is almost 14 points. The support for government theory also has a generally small substantive impact, with a larger influence in the later member-states than in the original member-states.

# Summary and Discussion

The previous analysis rigorously tested five prominent individual-level theories of public support for European integration. The analysis improved upon previous studies in two important ways. First, it identified and analyzed a dependent variable that measures public support for actual integrative measures. Second, it estimated the independent effect of each theory on support while controlling for a variety of potentially confounding factors and for different national and temporal contexts.

The results support five conclusions, some of which differ substantially from those of previous studies. First, consistent with previous findings, the utilitarian theory provides a robust explanation for variation in support for integration. Across various sets of nations and years, citizens' support for integration is positively related to the level of economic benefits they expect to derive from European integration. Second, the class partisanship theory also offers a robust explanation for support. The results demonstrate that class partisanship exerts an influence on support for integration independent of a variety of socioeconomic characteristics that might confound the relationship. That is, the partisan influence represented by arrow C in Figure 2 exists. Third, the support for government theory provides a systematic explanation for support for integration except in the original member-states in the post-SEA period. This finding, based on survey data, complements previous evidence of this relationship based on studies of referendum votes. Also, the statistical analysis showed that this relationship is robust in the presence of controls for several potentially confounding factors.

Fourth, the results indicate that the political values and cognitive mobilization theories only clearly provide valid explanations for citizens in the original EU member-states. The result concerning political values confirm those of Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif (1991) and Anderson and Reichert (1996). The results concerning cognitive mobilization, however, differ substantially from previous findings. Previous research concluded that cognitive mobilization is positively related to support for integration across member-states and years (Inglehart, Rabier, and Reif 1991; Janssen 1991). Using the same survey measure of cognitive mobilization employed in these previous studies, this analysis indicates that the theory is only clearly valid for citizens in the original member-states.

Fifth, the analysis identified differences in the substantive significance of the five theories—an issue that has not been addressed in previous studies. The

results indicate that the utilitarian theory is the strongest and most robust predictor of support for integration. It is also worth noting that, in addition to having limited applicability, the cognitive mobilization and political values theories have a relatively small impact on support.

What are the implications of these conclusions for our understanding of mass behavior regarding European integration? The most obvious implication is that a citizen's support for integration is (at least potentially) flexible. To see this, it helps to divide the theories into two groups. On one side, the cognitive mobilization and political values theories posit that a citizen's support for integration is based on personal political characteristics that are generally immutable throughout adulthood. On the other side, the remaining theories contend that citizens may change their support for integration depending on certain factors: how integrative policy affects their welfare (utilitarian), how their political party portrays integration (class partisanship), and their support for the governing party (support for government). The results indicate that, across nations and time, the latter group of theories account for much greater variance in support for integration than the former group. In other words, citizens differ in their support for integration due largely to factors that may change over time.

While this conclusion applies in general, there is an interesting difference between the original and later member-states in the sources of variation in support. The first group of theories exerts an influence on support in the original member-states while it appears to have little effect in the later member-states. This means that elites in the original member-states may have less success in shaping public support for integration than elites in the later member-states. Regardless of how elites reform the EU or structure partisan debate, citizens in the original member-states will continue to support or oppose integration based, in part, on their political values and cognitive mobilization. In contrast, elites in the later member-states have relatively greater opportunity to manipulate public opinion through partisan channels, the timing of referenda in response to support for government, and by modifying the economic impact of integration.

Finally, these results have implications for current efforts toward Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). It appears likely that many of the EU memberstates will only adopt EMU if it succeeds in a public referendum. The findings of this study indicate that public support for such a reform will depend on the popularity of the governing party, the context of partisan politics, and how the economic benefits and costs are distributed. While it is too early to speculate about the future popularity of the governing party or the context of partisan politics, the economic consequences of EMU deserve some attention. An obvious economic consequence of EMU is that member-states must reduce (often dramatically) their national deficits and debts. To meet and maintain these fiscal standards, member-state governments have privatized national industries and reduced social spending. According to the findings of this study, one would expect citizens who are disadvantaged by these reforms to oppose EMU.<sup>32</sup> This implies that the success of referenda on EMU will depend, at least in part, on how well the EU accommodates these "losers" from EMU.

Surprisingly, prointegration elites seem to have ignored this point. EMU is generally promoted on its macroeconomic merits—EU-wide GDP growth and price stability—with little attention to the adverse microeconomic consequences. Given the findings of this study, these elites might consider packaging EMU with some sort of fiscal federalism or redistributive policies at the EU level so as to compensate the economic "losers." Otherwise, EMU may fail in referendum or, if passed, elicit considerable public controversy.

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<sup>32</sup>Recent public sector labor strikes in response to fiscal austerity packages in France illustrate this opposition.

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