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## **Location, Location, Location**

### **National Contextual Factors and Public Support for European Integration**

◆ **Adam P. Brinegar**

*Duke University, USA*

◆ **Seth K. Jolly**

*Duke University, USA*

#### **ABSTRACT**

Political scientists have extensively studied how the public forms its opinions about European integration, utilizing a variety of techniques and data sets while focusing on different units of analysis. Much of the public opinion literature suggests that lower-skilled workers are likely to have more negative evaluations of European integration. We argue, by contrast, that ‘socio-tropic’ evaluations of the effects of European integration on national redistribution and capitalist systems are more important than skill. To the extent that skill levels matter, they can be understood only through the frame of national factor endowments and varieties of capitalism. In addition, we find that other individual-level factors, such as ideology, are conditioned or attenuated by national contextual factors, suggesting that cross-level interactions are a promising direction for future research.

#### **KEY WORDS**

- European public opinion
- skill endowment
- ‘socio-tropic’ voting
- varieties of capitalism
- welfare states

When Danish citizens narrowly rejected the Maastricht treaty in a 1992 referendum, they also implicitly rejected the concept of 'permissive consensus', through which widespread public support for European integration allows political elites to push quickly ahead with a deeper and wider Union. Public opinion on the European project is fast becoming a more salient consideration for Europe's political elite. Bowing to this new reality, governments across the European Union (EU) agreed to hold referendums on the European Constitution, placing the document's future in doubt.

Political scientists have extensively studied how the public forms its opinions about European integration, utilizing a variety of techniques and data sets while focusing on different units of analysis. Party manifestos and elite surveys provide mechanisms to study which factors influence party positions on European integration (Ray, 1999, 2004; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001; Marks et al., 2002; Aspinwall, 2002). Eichenberg and Dalton (1993) focus on national economic performance and relative economic position within the EU to explain aggregate international differences in support for European integration. Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) finds differences in institutional quality between a state's national institutions and the European Union to be a significant explanatory variable. At the individual level, a long and rich scholarship utilizes Eurobarometer data to identify variables affecting citizens' preferences (Caldeira and Gibson, 1995; Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Scheve, 1999, 2000; Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2002; Gabel and Anderson, 2004; Brinegar et al., 2004). Expanding on these studies, scholars have begun to combine multiple levels of analysis, including, in some cases, individual-level, party-level and national-level factors to explain individual support for European integration (Marks and Hooghe, 2004; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; Scheve, 2000; Steenbergen and Jones, 2002; Rohrschneider, 2002).

One of the most important contributions to the literature on public support for European integration suggests that lower-skilled citizens are likely to have more negative evaluations of the EU (Gabel, 1998a, 1998b; Hix, 1999; Scheve, 2000). Lower-skilled workers are thought to be less competitive in an integrated market, and may also stand to lose redistributive benefits if competition erodes national tax bases (Scheve, 1999). The competitive advantage of lower-skilled workers on the international labor market, however, is unlikely to be fixed across countries, as labor conditions and employment opportunities vary substantially across the EU.

Previous individual-level research on citizen support for European integration is thus insufficiently nuanced to capture the opinion divide among EU residents based on skill. Although Scheve (1999) provides some preliminary evidence of how skill may be affected by the comparative skill endowment of different countries, our understanding of the influence of different

national-, party- and individual-level factors remains incomplete without analyzing the many contextual factors recently identified as important by the public opinion literature, such as the specific configuration of education and social protection found in different varieties of capitalism (Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Brinegar et al., 2004).

Theoretically, we argue that citizens' attitudes are influenced by their country's configuration of political-economic institutions, factor endowment and other national contextual influences. Citizens thus make 'socio-tropic' evaluations of the EU by taking into account how the outcomes of choices made under their home institutions will be affected by greater European integration. Failure to specify the relationships between individual and national contextual factors may lead to biased conclusions about the influence of different variables on support for European integration within member countries.

Using Eurobarometer data, we find that a citizen's skill level has a much weaker effect on support for European integration than is commonly supposed. Individual-level factors in general are weak predictors, and there is substantial evidence to suggest that citizens make 'socio-tropic' evaluations of European integration. To the extent that skill levels matter, they can be understood only through the frame of national contextual factors, such as factor endowments and varieties of capitalism.

Following the logic of the Heckscher–Ohlin (H–O) model, low-skilled workers in economies with an abundance of low-skilled labor are likely to welcome European integration, whereas low-skilled citizens in countries with a scarcity of low-skilled labor are likely to be more Euro-skeptical because protection benefits the owners of scarce factors of production (Rogowski, 1989: 3). In addition, high-skilled citizens in coordinated market economies in which the education system focuses on the development of specific skills are less likely to support European integration than are their high-skilled counterparts in countries with more general education systems. High-skilled citizens in social democratic welfare states are also significantly less likely to support European integration than are those in conservative or liberal welfare states.

This paper contributes several important findings to the public opinion literature on European integration. First, we demonstrate that national contextual factors can explain more individual variation in support for European integration than individual-level factors. Second, the effect of individual skill and ideology on public support for European integration can be understood only in interaction with relevant national contextual factors. Third, cross-level interactions in a hierarchical linear model offer one of the most promising lines of future research into public support for European integration.

We proceed as follows. First, we analyze the policy appraisal model, focusing specifically on the problems with neglecting the importance of national contextual factors as both independent predictors and interactive terms with individual-level predictors. We then identify the national contextual factors that are theoretically important for understanding public support for European integration. Next, we discuss the methodological choice of Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) and we specify the model to be estimated. We conclude by analyzing our findings and their implications for the future analysis of public support for European integration, particularly the need to explore cross-level interactions.

### **(Re)considering the policy appraisal model**

The recent literature on the human capital argument often takes Gabel (1998a) as its theoretical departure. Whereas his analysis considers multiple hypotheses, we focus our attention on the human capital argument. Gabel theorizes that the benefits of liberalization are distributed asymmetrically within a country to those citizens with higher education and more occupational skills (Gabel, 1998a: 43–4). These workers will be more able to adapt to a liberalized market, making them more optimistic about job opportunities. This optimism leads to higher levels of support for European integration for more skilled citizens than for their unskilled and uneducated counterparts (Gabel, 1998a: 44).

Using a pooled sample of nearly 300,000 respondents across 17 years and 11 countries, Gabel tests the human capital hypothesis with ordinary least squares (OLS). Both the basic policy appraisal regression model as well as more sophisticated versions support Gabel's hypothesis, finding that professionals and executives are more likely to support European integration whereas manual laborers are less likely to do so (Gabel, 1998a). Similarly, lower levels of education have a negative effect on public attitudes towards European integration (Gabel, 1998a: 44).

However, although the individual-level predictor coefficients of interest are statistically significant, the country dummies in the appendix are revealing (Gabel, 1998a: Appendix B). In both the standard individual-level factor model and the revised model that includes some national-level factors, the country dummies account for a substantial share of the actual variation, indicating that significant cross-national variation remains. In short, the country dummies are not just statistically and substantively significant, but much larger in magnitude than the key explanatory variables of interest. In this paper, we extend the model to gain additional leverage on this national-level

variation and explore whether the individual-level predictors, such as skill and ideology, behave differently under different national contexts.

To illustrate this problem, consider two sets of individuals in the standard policy appraisal model. Dutch citizens start with a level of nearly 92 points on the 'Evaluation of Membership' scale. A professional in the Netherlands scores 96 whereas the manual laborer scores 87, a difference of 9 points in the scale. A pair of citizens from the United Kingdom would start with a score of nearly 60, with the professional at 64 and the manual laborer at 55. Thus, the manual laborer in the Netherlands is nearly 23 points more supportive of integration than the professional in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The coefficients on the education variables are even smaller. Although the human capital variables are significant, this simple illustration demonstrates that the intra-country differences are not nearly as substantively significant as the international differences. Significantly, even the revised model does not test whether skill-based differences are uniform across countries, which is the main contribution of this article.

We analyze how skill might be conditioned by contextual factors, following the H-O model of factor endowment (Rogowski, 1989). The specification of a relationship between factor endowment and support for European integration follows Scheve (2000), who finds that national skill endowment conditions or attenuates the effects of skill. Suppose a country has a high level of unskilled labor and skilled labor is relatively scarce (e.g. Spain or Greece). In this case, the H-O logic suggests that it is the unskilled workers who would support integration because it would open up new markets for their goods and services. The professionals and executives would be less supportive of further integration because it would reduce their income advantage gained by holding scarce factors of production.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the skilled labor may still see overall advantages to integration, but they would be likely to be less supportive than their counterparts in countries with abundant levels of skilled labor.

Thus, when comparing support for European integration between skilled and unskilled labor, a breakdown by factor endowment may illuminate the story more than aggregate numbers. Though professionals in general are much more optimistic about job opportunities in an integrated Europe than are manual workers (Gabel, 1998a: 44), analyzing support based on factor endowment illustrates the problems of assuming homogeneity across countries.

In order to measure skill endowment, we use the percentage of the population completing secondary education, following Scheve (2000). As Table 1 shows, there is more variance in support between manual workers in countries with different factor endowments than between manual workers and professionals in countries with low skill endowment. The survey data suggest

**Table 1** Support for European integration by occupation and factor endowment (percentage responding that European integration is a good thing<sup>a</sup>)

<i>Skill endowment</i>	<i>Professional</i>		<i>Manual worker</i>		<i>Difference</i> %
	%	<i>No.</i>	%	<i>No.</i>	
Low <sup>b</sup>	67.9	1767/2604	55.9	1782/3185	12.0
High <sup>c</sup>	60.9	1928/3165	41.8	1620/3880	19.1
Difference	7.0		14.1		

*Notes:*

<sup>a</sup> The full question, from *Eurobarometer 44.2bis*, reads: 'Generally speaking, do you think that (our country's) membership of the European Union is . . . a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad, or don't know?'

<sup>b</sup> Low skill endowment is defined as whether the country's percentage of the population completing secondary education is below the EU mean. Countries included are Belgium, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and the UK.

<sup>c</sup> High skill endowment is defined as whether the country's percentage of the population completing secondary education is above the EU mean. Countries included are Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and Sweden.

not only that there is significant variation at the national level, but also that skill may work differently in different institutional settings.

In countries with low skill endowment, unskilled labor presumably is a more abundant factor of production. The H–O model predicts that workers in labor-abundant countries will be more supportive of European integration than their counterparts in labor-scarce markets. With over 14% more manual labor respondents in favor of integration in low-skill-endowment countries compared with high-skill-endowment countries, the simple analysis supports this hypothesis and suggests that skill cannot explain the differences in opinion without regard to a country's overall level of skill endowment. Although the data show that professionals in low-skill-endowment countries favor European integration more than their counterparts in high-skill-endowment countries, this effect may simply be the result of the major economic benefits that EU integration has brought to many low-skill-endowment countries with substantially lower incomes, such as Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Note that this illustrative analysis does not include the many individual-level and national-level controls included in regression analysis, which may clarify the relationship between these particular variables and support for integration.

A further disaggregation of these measures by country demonstrates that this descriptive inference is not simply the product of any single country's particular divisions. Table 2 breaks down support for European integration by occupation and country. As the data demonstrate, with a few notable exceptions (Belgium and the UK), the division between professionals and

**Table 2** Support for European integration by occupation and country (percentage responding that European integration is a good thing<sup>a</sup>)

Skill endowment	Country	Professional		Manual worker		Difference %
		%	No.	%	No.	
Low	Belgium	64.0	181/283	47.3	138/292	16.7
	Greece	63.0	145/230	61.2	112/183	1.8
	Spain	65.6	273/416	56.1	444/792	9.5
	Ireland	89.1	156/175	82.1	253/308	7.0
	Italy	77.9	554/711	66.5	276/415	11.4
	Portugal	66.0	128/194	59.4	314/529	6.6
	UK	55.5	330/595	36.8	245/666	18.7
	Total (Low-skill countries)	67.9	1767/2604	55.9	1782/3185	12.0
High	Denmark	65.9	180/273	48.6	214/440	17.3
	Germany	54.9	485/884	36.4	528/1451	18.5
	France	60.6	446/736	48.1	391/813	12.5
	Netherlands	85.5	395/462	79.7	177/222	5.8
	Austria	49.8	105/211	35.5	133/375	14.3
	Finland	54.1	145/268	40.0	126/315	14.1
	Sweden	52.0	172/331	19.3	51/264	32.7
	Total (High-skill countries)	60.9	1928/3165	41.8	1620/3880	19.1
EU-wide total		64.0	3695/5769	48.2	3402/7065	15.8

**Notes:**

<sup>a</sup> The question, from *Eurobarometer 44.2bis*, reads: 'Generally speaking, do you think that (our country's) membership of the European Union is . . . a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad, or don't know?'

<sup>b</sup> Low skill endowment is defined as whether the country's percentage of the population completing secondary education is below the EU mean.

<sup>c</sup> High skill endowment is defined as whether the country's percentage of the population completing secondary education is above the EU mean.

manual laborers in low-skill-endowment countries is less than the difference between manual laborers in high- and low-skill-endowment countries, suggesting greater cross-national differences in support for European integration. This basic difference is not affected if you remove countries with large numbers of respondents that may be driving the aggregates, such as Spain for low-skill-endowment countries and Germany for high-skill-endowment countries. The aggregate numbers are consistent without these two countries, as the difference between professionals and manual laborers in low- and high-skill-endowment countries is still 12.3% and 18.3%.

Belgium and the United Kingdom are outliers because their skill

endowment is relatively high – 59.5% and 55.2%, respectively – compared with other low-skill-endowment countries. Portugal, for example, has the lowest percentage of the population completing secondary education, at 20.7%. France, on the other hand, has one of the lowest educational attainment levels of the high-skill-endowment countries, at 62.4%, explaining that country's relatively small difference between manual and professional workers.<sup>4</sup>

Our theoretical perspective thus explains the deviating cases, although the table also demonstrates that there are still wide international differences in support for European integration that cannot be fully captured by simply including relative skill endowments in a multivariate regression. In Ireland and the Netherlands, manual laborers support integration more than professionals do in any other country. Also, the Swedish manual laborers are far and away the least supportive of the European project, at least as measured by the simple 'good versus bad' question. Clearly, citizens in different EU countries interpret the benefits gained from EU membership in ways that must make reference to specific national contextual variables.

Considering the (relatively) vast international differences in public support for European integration, it should be possible to isolate theoretically relevant contextual variables that affect individual-level preferences. Simple country dummies allow the researcher to isolate interesting individual-level variables while controlling for country effects, but it does not address which contextual factors are important nor does it resolve the problem of causal heterogeneity. In revisions of the policy appraisal model, Gabel (1998a) introduces some contextual factors, such as trade dependence and war deaths, but recent research suggests other factors may have greater explanatory power, such as capitalist political-economic variables and national factor endowment. Compared with earlier models, these national contextual variables may explain why the Right in some countries and the Left in others support integration (Ray, 2004; Brinegar et al., 2004). Also, they directly address the issue of why skill matters differently in different countries.

### **Bringing the context in**

Better specifying models of public support for European integration thus requires bringing context into our theoretical and empirical analyses. Although much research has been devoted to explicating the linkage between capitalist political-economic institutions and economic outcomes, few studies have focused on their influence on public support for European integration (Scheve, 2000; Brinegar et al., 2004). Scheve (2000) advances this line of



research by introducing skill endowment and wage-bargaining centralization as critical contextual variables that may condition or attenuate public support for European integration. In addition to clarifying how skill endowment mediates the effect of skill on support for European integration, Scheve notes that higher levels of wage-bargaining centralization are associated with lower levels of wage inequality (Scheve, 2000: 5–6). In general, unions and employers are better able to moderate wages when wage bargaining is more centralized, thereby reducing inequality and managing inflation. In countries with higher levels of wage-bargaining centralization, lower-skilled citizens thus have less to fear from integration, resulting in the theoretical proposition that wage-bargaining institutions ought to reduce the significance of skills as a determinant of support for European integration.

In addition to incorporating into his model stronger contextual variables that focus on factor endowment and comparative institutional differences, Scheve utilizes a Bayesian hierarchical model. As Steenbergen and Jones (2002) discuss, simple dummy variable models cannot discern why the different subgroups vary. Even more, multi-level or Bayesian hierarchical models allow the researcher to test for causal heterogeneity, or to determine whether contextual variables condition or attenuate the individual-level variables (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). This statistical method allows Scheve (2000) to test his hypothesis that the skill cleavage is conditioned by contextual variables such as factor endowment and wage bargaining.

Using the hierarchical model, he demonstrates that higher levels of wage-bargaining centralization significantly reduce the impact that skill, or education level, has on support for European integration. The relative factor endowment of skilled labor increases the value of the skill coefficient, suggesting that citizens in those countries well endowed with skilled, rather than unskilled, labor are more divided in their attitudes towards European integration based on their relative skills (Scheve, 2000: 17). Scheve's analysis suggests that a more sophisticated hierarchical model is needed to understand public attitudes about the European project.

In another application of multi-level models, Steenbergen and Jones (2002) consider a three-level model, with party cues as a middle level and intra-EU trade and duration of membership as national-level variables. Their ANOVA analysis demonstrates that significant variation in public opinion occurs at all three levels of analysis (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002: 231). Their more sophisticated statistical analysis finds that income is not a significant explanatory variable at the individual level, casting some doubt on Gabel's income hypothesis (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002: 232). Their analysis, combined with Scheve (2000), provides a starting point for analyzing the contextual and individual-level factors that determine public support for

European integration, but neither work incorporates many of the more theoretically important variables in explaining international variation.

By contrast, we focus on welfare state type and varieties of capitalism as critical contextual factors influencing how citizens form their views on support for European integration. Two different logics may explain the relationship of these factors with support for European integration. One is based on the variety of capitalism's emphasis on the importance of institutional complementarities in managing individual risk and reward. The other stems from the desire of workers – particularly lower-skilled workers – for greater redistribution.

The first logic is that citizens' support for integration will be weaker in residual and social democratic welfare states, because the fear of an expected convergence to the median welfare state (conservative) will negatively affect the political-economic arrangements in their host countries, which may have substantial consequences for their own financial and life outcomes (Brinegar et al., 2004; Ray, 2004). In liberal market economies (LMEs) with residual welfare states, greater redistribution may result in fears of job loss and higher taxation; in coordinated market economies (CMEs) with social democratic welfare states, lower redistribution may result in more insecurity for the average worker and less investment in specific skills sets that benefit diversified quality producers (Iversen and Soskice, 2001). The 'stakeholder' capitalism of coordinated market economies has clearly benefited wage earners and poorer citizens, and many citizens – particularly low-skilled workers – would be reluctant to see these institutions dismantled (Brinegar et al., 2004). Thus, citizens in either residual or social democratic welfare states would be less supportive of integration than citizens in conservative systems.

The second logic is that median citizens generally support more welfare spending, and citizens' support for integration will increase as their host country falls below the EU mean level of redistribution. Citizens in this model, regardless of institutional configurations, always feel more secure if there are additional social protections. Hence, citizens of residual welfare states – particularly low-skilled citizens – should hold the greatest preferences for European integration, given their comparatively lower social benefits. But this effect is likely to be influenced by skill level, since high-skilled individuals in low-skilled countries are likely to benefit more from lower tax rates than from greater social redistribution. In general, high-skilled citizens may feel less vulnerable to economic shifts. On the other hand, high-skilled citizens in social democratic welfare states might have internalized the 'varieties of capitalism' logic and may seek a perpetuation of high redistribution if it benefits the functioning of the country's political-economic institutions.

Thus, previous research on contextual factors and support for European

integration set the stage for further analyses through the identification of relevant variables and appropriate statistical methodology. This article, however, improves on these analyses by including more theoretically relevant national contextual factors and cross-level interactions into our analysis.

## Exploring multi-level models to explain support for European integration

Much of the work on support for European integration relies on individual-level predictors with country dummies as controls. This type of analysis leaves two questions unanswered. First, how much of the variation in individual-level opinion can be traced to individual rather than national or contextual factors? Second, what predictors explain this variation? If significant variation occurs at each level and the evidence supports a nested data structure, then hierarchical linear models are the appropriate way to pursue these questions.

The first step in understanding at what level variation occurs is a simple ANOVA analysis to decompose the variance. With ANOVA, we determine whether individual variation in support for European integration is 'nested' within countries. Hence, if there is no cross-country variance in our data, then we would expect individual responses drawn from any EU country to vary from the EU15 mean respondent in the same way. If there is cross-country variance, then individuals in different countries will vary together from the EU15 mean respondent in a systematic way. If systematic cross-national difference exists and we fail to account for it, the residuals will not be independent and we could substantially underestimate the standard errors and inflate the *t*-scores.

The reduced form equation for the random effects ANOVA is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} y_{ij} &= [\gamma_{00}] + [\mu_{oj} + r_{ij}] \\ E(y_{ij}) &= [\gamma_{00}] \\ \text{var}(y_{ij}) &= \text{var}[\mu_{oj} + r_{ij}] = \tau_{00} + \sigma^2 \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

in which  $y_{ij}$  is the dependent variable,  $r_{ij}$  is the residual between the individual and the mean within group  $j$ ,  $\mu_{oj}$  is the residual between the mean of  $y$  in group  $j$  and the grand mean of  $y$ . Thus, we have one fixed effect ( $\gamma_{00}$ ), which is the grand mean of EU support, and two random effects  $[\mu_{oj} + r_{ij}]$ .

We first estimate our ANOVA model using equation (1) to determine whether significant variation occurs at the contextual level. The results are summarized in Table 3.<sup>5</sup> Both variance components are statistically significant, demonstrating that individual-level EU support varies at both levels.

**Table 3** ANOVA

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Estimate</i>
<b>Fixed effects</b>	
Intercept	66.0660** (1.9919)
<b>Variance components</b>	
Individual-level ( $\sigma^2$ )	282.99** (1.7076)
Country-level ( $\tau_{00}$ )	55.4622** (21.4646)

The intra-class correlation, or ICC, provides the proportion of the total variation accounted for by differences between countries. In this case, the ICC ratio is 16.4%.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly with opinion data, the majority of the variance can be accounted for at the individual level; however, 16.4% is a significant amount of variation and demonstrates empirical evidence of nesting within countries. This result is consistent with previous studies (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002).

Since this analysis confirms that variation occurs at both the individual and the cross-national level, the next question is: what predictors explain this variation? In choosing our variables, we attempt to test Gabel's human capital argument with a more fully specified model. For parsimony, however, we utilize skill and income but exclude the occupational categories. We thus develop a model that evaluates the robustness of the standard human capital argument against a more nuanced theory focusing on national contextual factors – *skill endowment, welfare state type and varieties of capitalism* – alone and in cross-level interaction with citizens' skill level.

Our model does not include wage-bargaining centralization because it is highly collinear with our skill endowment and welfare state type variables. As controls, we do include several important individual-level factors – *ideology, sociocultural beliefs, age, income and party cue* – and national-level factors, including a dummy variable for *Christian democracy* and the *net European Union economic transfers* to member countries. Thus, we do not entirely replicate Gabel's policy appraisal model, but we test the skill finding while expanding the analysis to include additional national and individual-level variables. In addition, and particularly significant for our welfare state argument, we test the hypotheses on 1996 data, which include more social democratic countries than Gabel's (1998a) pooled data, which end in 1992.

Below we elaborate on our theoretical hypotheses and the variables we use in our estimation.

At the individual level, our model uses for its skill variable the year in which respondents stopped attending school. Following Gabel, we divide the skill variable into dummy categories: low, low-mid, high-mid and high.<sup>7</sup> Our expectation for the skill variables is that they will follow the logic of Gabel's human capital model.

**H1:** As respondents' education levels increase, support for European integration will also increase.

At the national contextual level, we utilize several theoretically relevant variables to explore hypotheses related to the role of factor endowment and capitalist political-economic institutions in public support for European integration. Following Scheve (2000), we include a variable measuring the relative skill endowment of a country, which is simply the proportion of the population that completes secondary education. This variable allows us to investigate whether the skill coefficient behaves differently at different levels of skill endowment. The skill endowment variable is consistent with other aggregations of this variable. Only Austria, which ranks ninth on our Eurobarometer measure of skill and fourth on the percentage of respondents completing secondary education, significantly changes rank order.<sup>8</sup> We thus expect the skill endowment variable to be negative.

**H2:** Higher levels of skill endowment will be negatively associated with support for European integration, because of the greater popularity of European integration in low-skill-endowment countries.

Our model also examines our two welfare state logics. We test the varieties of capitalism argument with a simple dummy variable that accounts for whether or not the welfare state is a conservative Christian democratic welfare state. If citizens fear a convergence to the mean welfare state, both residual welfare state countries, such as the United Kingdom, and social democratic countries, such as Sweden and Finland, will be less supportive of integration.

**H3:** Christian democracy is positively related to support for European integration, because citizens in Christian democratic welfare states theoretically are more likely to support integration than are citizens in social democratic and residual welfare states because they are less likely to fear alterations in their social welfare institutions.

The second variable tests citizens' general impulse for greater redistribution and divides the European countries into Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare states, allowing us to test whether support for integration

is higher in those countries with less redistribution. If the median voter always prefers more redistribution, then citizens evaluate whether convergence will result in an increase or a decrease from their country's status quo. Citizens in social democratic states are more likely to expect their welfare benefits to drop if convergence occurs, whereas respondents in residual welfare states would expect benefits to rise to the median European level (Ray, 2004: 53). As the comprehensiveness of the welfare state decreases, we expect support for integration to increase.

**H4:** Welfare state type is positively related to support for European integration – higher values reflect a less comprehensive welfare state with citizens having less to fear, or possibly even expecting greater benefits, from European integration.

With the HLM used in this paper, we explore the effects of our contextual variables both on the dependent variable and on the individual-level coefficients with two sets of critical multi-level interactions. The first set of variables evaluates the interaction of our education dummies with skill endowment [education \* skill endowment]. Following the H–O model, less-educated workers in countries with lower skill endowments are more supportive of European integration than are less-skilled workers in high-skill-endowment countries. Highly educated workers in high-skill-endowment countries should be more supportive of integration than their counterparts in low-skill-endowment countries.

**H5:** The coefficient on the [low education \* skill endowment] interaction will be negative, because less-educated workers are theoretically less supportive of integration as their labor becomes scarcer. The coefficient on the [high education \* skill endowment] interaction will be positive, because higher-educated workers should be more supportive of integration as their labor becomes more abundant.

Our second set of variables evaluates the interaction of the education dummies with welfare state type [education \* welfare state]. Regardless of their education level, citizens in residual welfare states support EU integration more than higher-skilled workers in Christian democratic and social democratic welfare states, because the more general education system in the residual welfare states may make workers less vulnerable to economic shifts caused by European integration.

**H6:** The coefficient on each of our [education \* welfare state] interactions – skill endowments with low, low-mid, high-mid and high education – will be positive, reflecting the greater levels of support for European integration by citizens of residual welfare states.

As a control, we include a political party variable that measures the individual's favored party's opinions regarding European integration, ranging

from 1 (strongly against integration) to 7 (strongly for integration) in Ray's elite survey (1999). If party elites support or campaign against European integration, then party supporters will follow their lead and support or oppose the EU as well. Since previous studies demonstrate that party cueing does in fact have a significant effect on individual support for European integration (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002; Brinegar et al., 2004), we expect this variable to be positive because increases in party support for European integration should lead to similar increases in individual support.<sup>9</sup>

Ideology is included as a control. Theoretically, right-leaning citizens may support integration less than their leftist counterparts because they are against greater governmental regulation [ideology]. Left-wing citizens, on the other hand, would prefer the additional regulation created under the umbrella of a supranational organization (Hooghe et al., 2004). We thus expect the ideology variable to be positive as higher values on the 10-point scale indicate self-placement of the respondent further to the ideological right.

In order to control for theoretical arguments concerning ideology and welfare state type – and to further explore a promising line of research into cross-level interactions – we also evaluate the interaction of ideology with welfare state type [ideology \* welfare state type]. In general, left-leaning citizens are thought to prefer higher levels of redistribution and right-leaning citizens lower levels of redistribution. Hence, citizens will theoretically support European integration depending on whether they expect redistribution to increase or decrease relative to their national status quo. We thus expect that respondents on the right in residual welfare states will be less supportive of EU integration because they fear a convergence to the EU median, which would result in more redistribution and higher tax rates. We also expect those on the left in residual welfare states to be more supportive of European integration, because the median level of EU redistribution is higher than domestic rates. For social democratic welfare states, we expect those on the left to be less supportive than those on the right, because of the fear of the loss of welfare benefits associated with greater European integration (Ray, 2004: 58).

In an attempt to capture Lauren McLaren's argument (2002) that perception of a cultural threat is another significant individual-level factor in explaining support for European integration, we utilize proxies of *fear of the loss of social benefits* and *fear of the loss of culture*. We expect both variables to be positive, suggesting that, as fear decreases, support for European integration increases.

At the national level, we also include the *net financial transfers* that states receive from the EU. This variable measures the amount a country contributes to the EU less the amount a country receives from Brussels through EU

programs, as a percentage of gross domestic product (Mattila, 2004). We expect this variable to be positive because greater transfers should result in increased support for European integration.

Now that the relevant predictors have been identified, and expectations about their effects on support for European integration specified, the equations for the hierarchical model can be stated. Again, the first level is the individual and the second level represents our critical national contextual factors. The equations are as follows:

$$\text{Level 1: } y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\text{LowEduc}_{ij} + \beta_{2j}\text{HiMidEduc}_{ij} + \beta_{3j}\text{HiEduc}_{ij} + \beta_{4j}\text{Ideo}_{ij} + \beta_{5j}\text{LoInc}_{ij} + \beta_{6j}\text{HiMidInc}_{ij} + \beta_{7j}\text{HiInc}_{ij} + \beta_{8j}\text{PartyCue}_{ij} + \beta_{9j}\text{FearCult}_{ij} + \beta_{10j}\text{FearSoc}_{ij} + \beta_{11j}\text{Age}_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level 2a: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{Christian Democracy}_j + \gamma_{02}\text{Welfare State Type}_j + \gamma_{03}\text{Skill Endowment}_j + \gamma_{04}\text{Net EU Transfers}_j + \mu_{0j}$$

$$\text{Level 2b: } \beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}\text{Skill Endowment}_j + \gamma_{12}\text{Welfare State Type}_j + \mu_{1j} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{Level 2c: } \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + \gamma_{21}\text{Skill Endowment}_j + \gamma_{22}\text{Welfare State Type}_j + \mu_{2j}$$

$$\text{Level 2d: } \beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30} + \gamma_{31}\text{Skill Endowment}_j + \gamma_{32}\text{Welfare State Type}_j + \mu_{3j}$$

$$\text{Level 2e: } \beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40} + \gamma_{41}\text{Welfare State Type}_j + \mu_{4j}$$

$$\text{Level 2m, where } m = f, \dots, l : \beta_{kg} = \gamma_{k0} + \mu_{kj}, \text{ where } k = 5, \dots, 11$$

Notice that the equations allow for random variation in the intercept and slopes at the individual level. Following our interaction hypotheses, the model utilizes second-level predictors to account for some of the variation in certain of the first-level predictors. Using this equation, along with the associated cross-level interactions, we can investigate the effects of first- and second-level predictors and also whether the effects of individual-level predictors are uniform or heterogeneous across contexts.

## Data

Data for this project are from *Eurobarometer 44.2bis*, a survey taken in 1996 (Reif and Marlier, 2001). Included are all respondents aged 15 and older, yielding a sample size of 54,944. This particular Eurobarometer not only has a large sample size, but also has all of the standard dependent variables measuring support for European integration, allowing for robustness checks across different operationalizations of the dependent variable.

We do not conduct a time-series regression for two reasons. First, many countries did not join the Eurobarometer until much later. Sweden and



Finland, for example, were not included in Eurobarometer surveys until 1994, and the only social democratic welfare state to be included in the Eurobarometer since 1973 is Denmark. Since welfare state type is a critical national contextual factor, we cannot utilize the entire set of Eurobarometers. Pooling responses across time might bias our results by over-counting responses from countries that have always been included in the Eurobarometer.

Second, many of our 'socio-tropic' theoretical arguments assume that citizens will be developing their expectations about the European Union within the context of the EU15. Citizens' expectations about the mean level of redistribution, for example, change as countries enter the EU. On the other hand, we do not expect time to be a significant theoretical factor in the structure of our analysis. We would expect time to be important only if we were analyzing European integration when there were fewer than 15 member states, which might change citizen expectations about the likely direction of integration. Although it is true that expectations about the effects of European integration on national labor markets and capitalist political-economic institutions may have deepened over time, the cross-national divide ought to be relatively stable, given the relative stability of national contextual factors.

Individual support for European integration has been measured in a variety of ways. The most common measure is the simple 'good/bad' question considered in Tables 1 and 2. Another common measure is the question that asks whether respondents think their country benefits from membership in the European Union. However, the simple trichotomous or dichotomous nature of the variables does not allow the respondent to register some level of disapproval of the EU while still supporting the overall project. Moreover, the questions do not consider how respondents perceive current integration or where they want integration to head in the future. In other words, an individual could believe the EU is a good thing but not desire any more integration. That person is substantively different from a person who thinks the EU is a good thing and wants to see more integration. The 'good/bad' measures cannot differentiate between these individuals.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the significant advantage of these two measures is their wide use in Eurobarometers, allowing for more complete cross-sectional time series analysis.

In an attempt to resolve some of the problems with Eurobarometer questions, Brinegar et al. (2004) constructed a new dependent variable, labeled Overall European Integration View (OEIV). Using a question to anchor respondents in their current perception and inquire as to their preferred speed, OEIV can better distinguish between the types of people described above. For example, a militant opponent would think the EU is moving quickly and want it to slow down (scoring ~0). A militant supporter would

think it is moving slowly and want integration to proceed more quickly (scoring ~100). Since the scale is 21 points even before it is standardized to a 100-point scale, the range and the ability to distinguish between different types of supporters and opponents make OEIV a useful dependent variable. Also, though not as widely used as the 'good/bad' questions, OEIV can be found in most Eurobarometers since 1990. For this paper, we utilize the OEIV measure, although we find substantively similar results using other operationalizations of the dependent variable in robustness checks.

## Results

The ANOVA estimates from Table 3 answered the question of whether variation occurs at the individual or the national level. Next, we can test equation (2) to evaluate whether these predictors can explain this variance. Table 4 presents the results of the hierarchical linear model. The Bayesian Information Criterion suggests this model is an improvement over the simple ANOVA model.

Overall, the individual-level predictors do a poor job of explaining the variance at the individual level. Comparing the residual variance from the model in Table 4 and the ANOVA analysis, the predictors account for only 4.4% of the individual-level variance. Many of the coefficients behave as previous studies would predict, although the coefficient of high education is surprisingly negative. In our robustness test using the standard 'good/bad' variable, we also find high education – along with high-mid education – to be significant and negative. But, as our cross-level interactions demonstrate below, much of the significant negative effect of education level may originate from highly educated individuals in social democratic welfare states, theoretically reflecting the fear that European integration would erode their successful – and highly redistributive – capitalist political-economic arrangements.

Although this finding is substantively interesting, and worthy of additional tests for robustness, the more important finding for our purposes is that education level is generally insignificant, except at the very highest levels of educational attainment. Education alone – i.e. not in interaction with national contextual factors – is not a particularly important factor in understanding citizen divides over European integration in our more fully specified model.

At the national level, welfare state type and Christian democracy are insignificant except in interaction with education and ideology. This finding is not unexpected, given the multiple interactions included in our model. Skill

**Table 4** Predicting support for EU integration

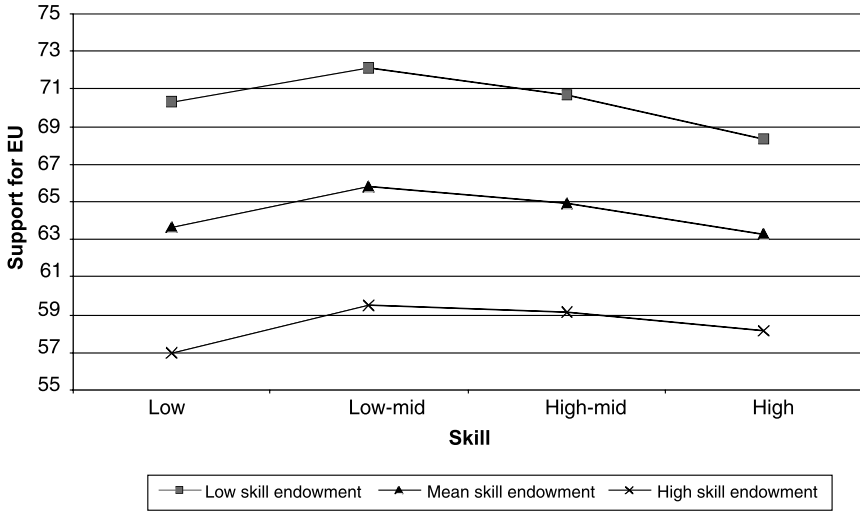
<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Std. error</i>
<b>Fixed effects</b>			
Constant		70.9918***	0.0001
Low education	0.20	-2.0585	0.3465
High-mid education	0.10	-3.6413	0.1492
High education	0.19	-9.4486***	<0.0001
Ideology	5.26	1.3193***	<0.0001
Party cue	5.00	0.9420***	<0.0001
Fear loss of culture	2.22	1.7362***	<0.0001
Fear loss of social benefits	1.78	0.4008**	0.0306
Low income	0.19	0.2131	0.2828
High-mid income	0.19	0.1045	0.5964
High income	0.18	-0.07688	0.7041
Age	43.00	-0.06245***	<0.0001
Christian democracy	0.75	3.7737	0.3786
Welfare state type	1.93	3.7584	0.3282
Skill endowment	60.37	-0.3647**	0.0107
Net EU transfers (as % of GDP)	0.41	1.5939*	0.0582
Low education* Skill endowments		-0.01852	0.3561
High-mid education * Skill endowments		0.03228	0.1858
High education* Skill endowments		0.07176***	0.0008
Low education* Welfare state type		1.2724*	0.0891
High-mid education* Welfare state type		0.7729	0.3218
High education* Welfare state type		2.5578***	0.0002
Ideology* Welfare state type		-0.7370***	<0.0001
<b>Random effects</b>			
Individual level		270.53***	<0.0001
Country level		32.7218**	0.0201

Notes: For the models,  $N = 54,944$ . \*\*\* significant at the 1% level, \*\* at the 5% level and \* at the 10% level.

The coding of the variables is as follows: OEIV100 0–100; education divided into quartiles, following Gabel (1998a), with low = 1 if education < 15; low-mid = 1 if education between 15 and 19; high-mid = 1 if education between 20 and 21; and high = 1 if education > 21; ideology 1–10 (Left–Right); party cue 1–7 (least supportive–most supportive); Christian democracy 0–1 (1 = Christian democratic); welfare state type 1–3 (social democratic = 1, Christian democratic = 2, residual = 3); income 0–1; fear the loss of social benefits (1 afraid – 3 not currently afraid); fear the loss of culture (1–3); age (15–97); skill endowment (20.7–82); and net EU transfers (–0.56–3.88).

endowment, however, is significant and negative, suggesting that respondents in low-skill-endowment countries support European integration at a greater level than respondents in high-skill-endowment countries.

Since coefficients in models with interaction variables are difficult to

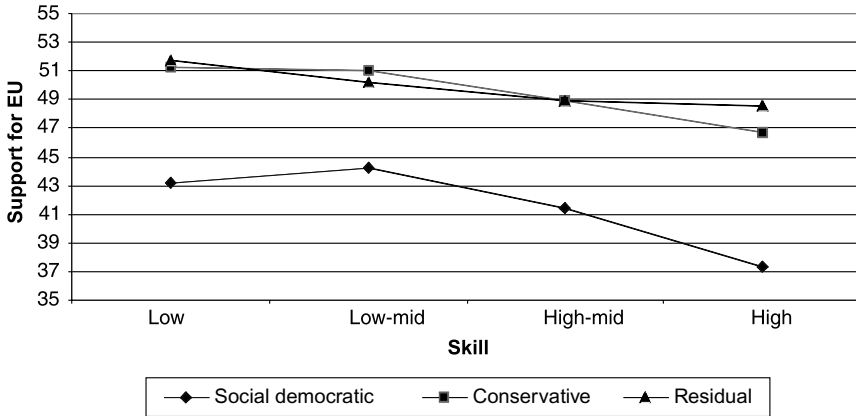


**Figure 1** Interaction effects of skill and skill endowments on support for European integration.

interpret, we use graphs to probe the interactions while controlling for other variables (Aiken and West, 1991). For the [education \* skill endowment] set of interactions, we chart our four education levels across our three different levels of skill endowment, finding the intercepts to be substantively more interesting than the slopes (see Figure 1).

In all countries, the level of education generally affects the support for integration in a slightly negative way. Low-skilled workers in the high-skill-endowment countries exhibit significantly less support for European integration, a result of their relatively less advantageous economic position in the EU zone. Respondents with higher education in the low-skill-endowment countries support European integration less than the low-skilled workers. We find similar results in the high-skill-endowment countries, although the fitted line is flatter and the very lowest-skilled workers are actually slightly less supportive than the highest-skilled workers.

In Figure 2, we observe an interesting and important difference in the effects of skill in different types of welfare state. Support for European integration decreases much faster among respondents in social democratic welfare states than in residual welfare states as education level increases. At the very highest levels of education, there is almost a 13-point difference on the 100-point scale between respondents in residual welfare states and those in social democratic welfare states. In each type of welfare state, our analysis shows a decline in support as education increases, but in conservative welfare

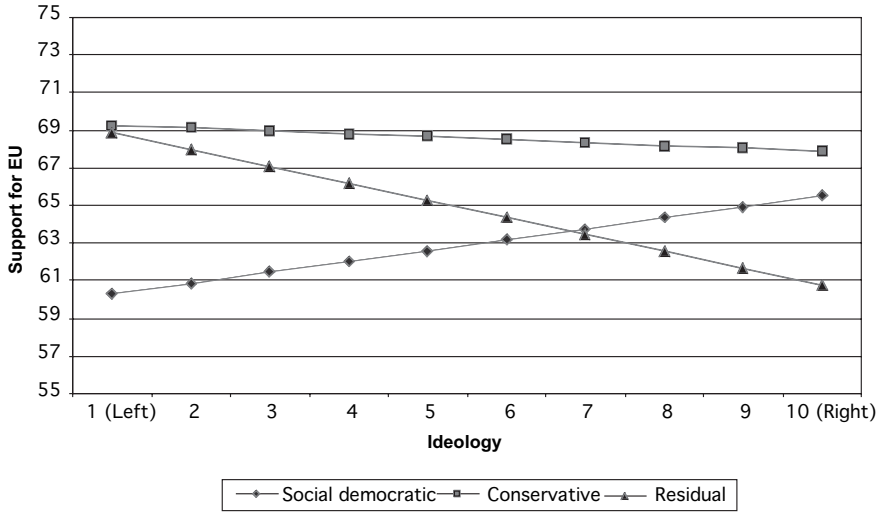


**Figure 2** Interaction effects of skill and welfare state on support for European integration.

states the difference in support between the lowest and highest educated worker is only 4 points. This finding may indicate that high-skilled workers in social democratic states have more to fear than high-skilled workers elsewhere because their relatively more generous welfare states permit investment in specific skills and high economic openness. Residual welfare states' high-skilled workers are theoretically Euro-skeptical because of a preference for lower taxes, but job losses ought to fall disproportionately on lower-skilled workers. In conservative welfare states, individuals have strong incentives to invest in specific skill sets, but they represent the median welfare state in Europe and so their citizens may expect little change.

To a certain extent, the results also capture the argument that people in more residual welfare states have less need to be protected from unemployment than citizens in Christian democratic and social democratic welfare states because they are more likely to invest in general skills. The difference between residual and Christian democratic welfare states, however, is not particularly large, presumably because Christian democratic welfare states do not have much to fear given that they represent the EU convergence point. With this finding, we demonstrate that skill is thus affected not only by a country's overall level of skill endowment but also by the social protection and education complementarities of different varieties of capitalism.

For the individual-level controls, supporters of parties that favor the European Union are more likely to support integration (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002), with the most supportive parties increasing support for European integration among citizens by 5.7 points over the least supportive



**Figure 3** Interaction effects of welfare state and ideology on support for European integration.

parties. Individuals who do not fear loss of culture or social benefits are more supportive of the European Union than those who do (McLaren, 2002), with the least fearful increasing their support for European integration by 4.3 points over the most fearful. Older people are less supportive of integration, with every eight additional years leading to about a half-point drop. Ideology is strongly positive, suggesting that right-wing citizens are generally more supportive of European integration. However, this variable, like skill, is substantially mediated by the status quo welfare state, as Figure 3 dramatically depicts.

Support for European integration falls significantly as respondents' ideology shifts to the right in residual welfare states and increases significantly as respondents' ideology shifts to the right in social democratic welfare states. In conservative welfare states, the line is nearly flat, suggesting that ideology is not a particularly important factor in citizens' support for European integration in those countries. The general effect of ideology is thus even more dramatically conditioned by context than is skill. Contestation over Europe is characterized by a Left-Right conflict in some countries and not in others, and takes on a different shape depending on the status quo welfare state. When the welfare state is residual and the Right fears a convergence to a more continental welfare state, support for integration diminishes. This finding supports our hypothesis and provides a robustness test for earlier work (Brinegar et al., 2004).

A final control is net EU transfers, which we find to be significant and positive. Hence, citizens seem to recognize when their countries are benefiting economically from Europe, resulting in more positive feelings towards Brussels.

## Conclusion

Along with previous work by Scheve (2000), Ray (2004) and Brinegar et al. (2004), this article supports the notion that comparative institutional differences condition or attenuate the importance of human capital in shaping attitudes towards European integration. Our article's most significant contribution, however, is encouraging scholars towards greater research into cross-level interactions in hierarchical models. Factor endowment and capitalist political-economic institutions clearly influence the opportunities and decisions made by citizens. Expectations about the probable shape of institutions in a more integrated Europe influence the effects of individual-level variables such as skill and ideology.

Shifting the debate in favor of research into cross-level interactions in a hierarchical model allows greater exploration into a variety of linkages between individual-, party- and national-level factors. For example, the interaction between ideology and support for European integration is a critical application of this approach that we intend to pursue in future research. Most of the literature argues that the effect of ideology on support for European integration is characterized by an inverted-U in which centrist political parties are the most pro-integration. Yet, in the HLM we find that ideology is substantially filtered by the national status quo welfare state.

## Notes

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We would like to thank Matt Gabel, Herbert Kitschelt and three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. Seth Jolly would also like to thank the National Science Foundation for work completed on this article under the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

- 1 Though this example refers to the original policy appraisal model (Gabel, 1998a: Table 12), the results from the revised model tell a similar story (Gabel, 1998a: Table 16). *Ceteris paribus*, a manual laborer from Spain scores nearly 10 points higher than a professional in the United Kingdom.
- 2 Over time, the advantages of scarce factors of production within a particular EU country may dissipate if the factors of production are highly mobile within the internal market. But, in the short term, we assume labor to be relatively immobile (as in the Ricardo–Viner model), though this is obviously an

- empirical question. Based on this assumption, labor preferences over trade and European integration should be structured by the relative factor endowments of the country (Hiscox, 2002).
- 3 The result is not an artifact of the opening of a relatively high-skill-endowment Europe to low-skill-endowment markets worldwide. As two reviewers helpfully noted, even low-skilled workers in low-skill-endowment countries stand to lose from the opening of competition to low-skill-endowment countries outside of the EU (many of which have substantially lower skill endowments than the lowest-skill-endowment countries in the EU15). That said, the greater support for European integration of manual workers in low-skill-endowment countries than in high-skill-endowment countries reflects the real opening of labor-scarce European markets to manual workers within Europe.
  - 4 The percentages of respondents completing secondary education for the rest of the EU countries are as follows: Spain, 36.0%; Italy, 44.0%; Ireland, 51.3%; Greece, 51.4%; the Netherlands, 62.4%; Finland, 73.3%; Austria, 76.2%; Sweden, 77.4%; Denmark, 80.0%; Germany, 82.0%.
  - 5 We conducted the analysis using SAS proc mixed. The code and full results can be found at <http://www.duke.edu/~skj3/NCFandSupportAppendix.pdf>.
  - 6 The ICC formula is:  $(\tau_{00})/(\tau_{00} + \sigma^2) = 0.164$ .
  - 7 Education attainment ranges from 6 to 81, although 95% of individual skill levels is captured between 8.6 and 27.2 years. Low education is coded 1 if education is less than 15; low-mid education is coded 1 if education is between 15 and 19; high-mid education is coded 1 if education is between 20 and 21; and high education is coded 1 if education is greater than 21.
  - 8 The following countries are ordered by the mean age at which respondents completed their studies: Denmark (21.4), Finland (20.0), Sweden (19.8), the Netherlands (19.2), Germany (18.4), Belgium (18.3), France (18.2), Italy (17.8), Austria (17.6), the UK (17.3), Ireland (17.1), Greece (16.6), Spain (16.4), Portugal (15).
  - 9 Carrubba suggests that the relationship may also point in the opposite direction – public opinion drives party positions on European integration rather than parties cueing their supporters – but he does not test whether there is a cueing effect owing to data limitations (2001: 142). Though untangling this relationship deserves further attention, we nevertheless include the variable as a control because previous studies demonstrate there is significant variation at the party level that can be explained by party position on European integration (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002).
  - 10 See Brinegar et al. (2004) and Brinegar and Jolly (2004) for a more complete discussion of the argument against the good/bad and benefit variables as well as the Overall European Integration View (OEIV) variable.

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## About the authors

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**Adam P. Brinegar** is a PhD candidate at Duke University, 326 Perkins Library, Box 90204, Durham, NC 27708–0204, USA.  
Fax: +1 919 660 4330  
E-mail: apb7@duke.edu

**Seth K. Jolly** is a PhD candidate at Duke University, 326 Perkins Library, Box 90204, Durham, NC 27708–0204, USA.  
Fax: +1 919 660 4330  
E-mail: skj3@duke.edu

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