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*Document Version*
Accepted author manuscript

*Published in:*
West European Politics

*DOI:*
10.1080/01402382.2019.1577632

*Publication date:*
2019

*License*
Unspecified

*Citation for published version (APA):*
Ejrnæs, A., & Jensen, M. D. (2019). Divided but United: Explaining Nested Public Support for European Integration. *West European Politics*, *42*(7), 1390-1419. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2019.1577632

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**Please cite this article as**:
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This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *West European Politics* on 29 March 2019, available online:

DOI: http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/01402382.2019.1577632

**Divided but United: Explaining Nested Public Support for European Integration**

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**Divided but United: Explaining Nested Public Support for European Integration**

***Abstract***

Academic and general interest in public support for European Integration is on the rise. Theoretically, the Utilitarian, Identity, Reference, Cue-taking and Signalling models have been developed to explain this perplexing phenomenon. While these models have been tested, there is no comprehensive up-to-date account of how well they perform separately, relative to each other and across levels. Empirically, this study utilizes a comprehensive data set with 110873 respondents from the European Social Survey. Methodologically, a multilevel model is used to address causal heterogeneity between levels. The study shows that 'attitudes towards multiculturalism' at the individual-level and 'corruption' at the country-level are the strongest predictors. When interacted across levels, it is demonstrated that individual trust in the national political establishment is being moderated by the level of corruption in a country in influencing support for European integration. On this basis, two models are proposed, named the 'savior model' and the 'anti-establishment model'.

Key words: public opinion, European integration, identity, anti-establishment, Euroscepticism, European Union

## Introduction

Public support for European Integration is an area that has attracted growing academic and public attention. The interest is driven by the increased importance of the citizen's voice with regard to European integration, expressed in a multitude of ways through referendums on treaty changes, elections to the European Parliament, and national elections where Eurosceptic parties are gaining strength (Anderson 1998; Hooghe & Marks 2005; Hobolt and de Vries 2016). Over the past few decades, a growing body of studies has generated knowledge about the key factors that shape the public attitudes towards European integration. This article builds on and seeks to advance this burgeoning literature in three ways.

In terms of theory, a systematic inventory is created with explanations at the individual and country level. The purpose is to take stock of existing explanatory models of support for European integration and organise them according to the theories they are derived from, their underlying mechanisms and the predictions they yield at the individual and country level. Special attention is paid to theorizing potential interaction effects between the two levels. When it comes to methods, the article utilises multilevel analysis to examine the explanatory power of the theoretical framework. The multilevel analysis allows us to test explanations at different levels in one model, address causal heterogeneity by including cross-level interactions, and minimise the risk of false significant findings (type 1 error). The empirical domain of the article consists of a comprehensive data set from the European Social Survey, in which 15 European countries are studied over five year-rounds with a total of 110873 respondents. This enables us to answer the following research question: what are the most significant explanations operating at the micro and macro level for public support for European integration and how do these interact?

The study demonstrates that attitudes towards multiculturalism have the strongest explanatory power at the micro level, whereas the level of corruption is the most significant predictor at the macro level. When interacting levels within models it is shown that individuals who distrust the political establishment nested in countries with low levels of corruption also tend to be skeptical about European integration. Conversely, individuals who distrust the political establishment nested in countries with high levels of corruption tend to support European integration. This finding gives rise to two models, which can be called the 'anti-establishment model' and 'savior model'.

The article comprises five parts. The present introductory section sets out the topic of the article and outlines the contribution. The theory section establishes the theoretical framework of the article, which organises various explanations proposed in the literature. The methods section presents the indicators of the dependent and independent variables as well as the applied statistical approach. The analysis section outlines and discusses the statistical results. The conclusion summarises the main findings and discusses avenues for future research.

**Theory**

The field has produced various models to explain public support for European Integration (for an overview see Hooghe & Marks 2005; Boomgarden et al. 2011; Hobolt and de Vries 2016), including the *utilitarian model* (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Garry & Tilly 2009); the *identity model* (Carey 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2005; McLaren 2006); the *reference model* (Tversky & Kahneman 1974; Hobolt and de Vries 2016; de Vries 2018); the *cue-taking model* (Zaller 1992; Hooghe & Marks 2005; Hobolt 2009) and the *signalling model* (Reif & Schmitt 1980; Franklin et al. 1994, 1995).

There are also a few theories that deal with the relationship between different models, suggesting that these may be complementary in some respects, rather than competing (McLaren 2007; Hooghe et al, 2007; Garry & Tilly 2009; Kuhn et al. 2016). The impact of time has also been analysed, in particular with respect to the economic crisis (Elsas & van der Brug 2015; Serricchio et al. 2013; Armingeon & Ceka 2014; Hobolt & Wratil 2015; Kuhn & Stoeckle 2016).

Based on the existing literature, a theoretical framework for explaining citizens' attitudes towards European integration is constructed. In so doing, the framework makes use of reviews of factors which have been argued to mold citizens' attitudes towards European integration (in particular Hobolt and de Vries 2016). The framework is outlined in table 1, which was constructed by organising some of the most prominent theories along the following parameters: 1) their theoretical foundation; 2.) their assumed causal mechanism; 3.) how they work at the micro level (individuals) and/or macro level (countries). Subsequently, we consider interactions between levels and time. Though not exhaustive, the framework captures explanations with different theoretical foundations and causal mechanisms: the utilitarian model and reference model assumes that the citizens relies on instrumental rationality; the identity model assumes the application of value rationality and the cue-taking model and the signaling model are based on assumptions about how citizens process information.

Table 1. Explanations of public attitudes towards European Integration

| **Name** | **Utilitarian** | **Identity** | **Reference** | **Cue-taking** | **Signalling** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| **Theory** | Economic theory | Social theory | Behavioural theory | Opinion formation theory | Opinion formation theory |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mechanism** | Utility maximising | Value fit | Bench-marking | Cue-taking from elites | Signalling opinions |
| **Micro** | The utility of European integration for the individual | The fit between the values promoted by the EU and the individual | The level of trust in the political establishment | - | The individual opinion about the incumbent government. |
| **Macro** | The utility of European integration for the country | The fit between the EU and the country | The performance of the national political establishment | The opinion of political parties about European integration | - |

*Utilitarian model*

The *utilitarian model* comes from economic theory and rests on the mechanism of utility maximising. Quite simply, it predicts that that the more utility one gets from something, the more one will be in favour of that thing (Anderson and Reichert 1995; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Gabel 2009 Garry & Tilly 2009). If that thing is the EU, it can be hypothesised that those who receive fewer distributional benefits from European integration will be less supportive (Gabel and Palmer 1995; Gabel 2009). But who receives fewer distributional benefits from European integration? European integration fosters competition and the movement of production factors across borders (Hooghe & Marks 2005; Kuhn & Stoeckel 2017). At the individual level, the literature suggests that older, less educated, poorer and unemployed people will see firms move away to cheaper locations, and jobs lost to foreigners due to free movement. Conversely,

younger, better educated, wealthier people who are active in the labour market are more likely to benefit from European integration and thus be in favour (ibid.). Thus, the first hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

*H1: The less economic utility the individual receives from European integration, the less supportive that individual will be.*

At the country level it has been suggested that the economic benefits a country receives from EU membership are correlated with how favourably disposed that country is towards European integration (Garry & Tilly 2009). Thus, if a country is a net recipient from the EU budget, it is likely that its citizens will be more in favour of European integration. By contrast, citizens in countries which are net contributors to the EU budget are more likely to oppose European integration. The second hypothesis therefore states:

*H2: The less economic utility a country gains from European integration, the less supportive its citizens will be.*

*Identity model*

The *Identity model* emerged from social theory, and proposes that people evaluate their environment according to their norms and values (Carey 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2005; McLaren 2007). If something

in our environment is in line with our norms and values, we will sympathise with it, and if not we will be sceptical. According to the identity model opposition towards European Integration is driven by the perception that the in-group's national identity is threatened by the out-groups', as in the case of immigration (De Vreese & Boomgaarden 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on this line of reasoning, it has been suggested that individuals who are suspicious towards out-groups (in terms of migrants) are more likely to be less in favour of European integration, which promotes the dissolution of borders and free movement between member states. On the other hand, individuals who display the opposite traits (i.e. who support migration), are expected to be more supportive of European integration.

Hence, the third hypothesis:

*H3: The more an individual opposes multiculturalism, the more s/he will oppose European integration.*

At the macro level, it has been argued that individuals belonging to federal states are more likely to support European integration as they are familiar with being a part of a multilevel system (Hooghe 1999). By contrast, individuals living in unitary states are expected to be more sceptical because they are less familiar with multilevel systems and suspicious of power centres other than the national capital (ibid). Hence, hypothesis four reads:

*H4: Citizens living in federal states will be more supportive of EU integration than citizens living in unitary states.*

The comparative politics literature has shown that countries with high level of ethnic and linguistic cleavages are more used to complex and power sharing constitutional designs (Lijphart 2012). Thus, the level of ethnic fractionalisation could also be a proxy for the *Identity model* at the macro level. It might be expected that people living in a country with more ethnic and linguistic diversity will be more supportive of European integration than people living in more homogenous countries, who are more likely to see the EU as threat towards the country's national identity. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is:

*H5: The more ethnically fractionalised a country is, the more its citizens will support European integration.*

*Reference model*

The *reference model* builds on behavioural theory, according to which individuals make judgements about the environment they are living in through benchmarking (Hobolt and de Vries 2016; de Vries 2018). Instead of calculating economic utility as in the rational *utilitarian model*, or making value judgements as in the cultural *identity model*, individuals rely on heuristics by benchmarking the performance of two or more entities and choosing the one which is performing best (Tversky & Kahneman 1974; Hobolt and de Vries 2016; de Vries 2018). Thus, the reference model is closer to the utilitarian model; however where the utility function is not economic interest, but political interest regarding the pros and cons of delegating greater decision-making powers to supranational institutions. It therefore might be expected that one's opinion about European integration would be based on how

well the national political establishment is performing. In cases where the national political establishment is performing poorly, support for further European integration will be higher than in cases where it is performing well. The literature has suggested that support for European integration in some countries is not only a consequence of direct economic benefits, but also arises because the EU is perceived as an engine of improvement and/or stability vis-à-vis the national political establishment (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000).

The reference model can be applicable both at the micro and macro level. At the micro level, the focus is on individual trust in the political establishment; hence, the sixth hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

*H6: The more trust an individual has in the national political establishment, the less likely it is that s/he will support European integration.*

At the macro level, trust is based on the functioning of the political establishment in terms of the level of corruption and government stability in the country in which one lives, hence the seventh and eighth hypotheses read:

*H7: The less corrupt a country is, the less its citizens are expected to favour European integration.*

*H8: The more stable a country's government is, the less its citizens are expected to favour European integration.*

*Cue-taking model*

The *Cue-taking model* is also derived from behavioural theory, specifically from opinion formation research. The mechanism in this model is based on the observation that most people do not have clear and stable opinions about most political topics (Anderson 1998; Zaller 1992). Instead, people consciously or unconsciously make use of heuristics when forming an opinion by taking cues from the party they sympathise with the most (Anderson 1998; Hoogher & Marks 2005; Hobolt 2009). Thus, according to the ninth hypothesis, it can be expected that:

*H9: The larger the share of anti-establishment national parties in a country, the less supportive of European Integration its citizens will be.*

*Signalling model*

The *signalling model* is also based on opinion formation theory and is inspired by the famous second-order hypothesis (Reif & Schmitt 1980). It states that politics at the national level is the focal point of most citizens, and that when asked about the supranational level or subnational level, they will instead focus on the national level and judge the performance of the government in office (Franklin et al. 1994, 1995). While this model has been developed in the context of elections to the European Parliament it has

been extended to apply more broadly (Hobolt and de Vries 2016). In other words, in line with the *signalling model,* the tenth hypothesis reads:

*H10: The more an individual is dissatisfied with the incumbent government, the more that individual is expected to oppose European integration.*

*Crisis*

Studies of public support for European integration have highlighted the importance of time (Garry & Tilly 2009) in terms of propitious or unpropitious circumstances, in particular the economic crisis. Attention will therefore be paid to the extent to which the economic crisis which began in 2008 is likely to have had a significant impact on levels of support for European integration. Hence, hypothesis 11 states:

*H11: After the economic crisis in 2008, individuals are less in favour of European integration.*

*Interactions between explanations*

We examine interactions within the Utilitarian, Identity and Reference models, as these operate both at the micro and macro-level. Regarding the *Utilitarian model*, it is likely that individuals who benefit less from European integration are more likely to be less sceptical if the country is overall a net recipient from the EU budget (utilitarian micro-level*macro-level):

*H12: The more a country benefits overall from the EU's budget, the less sceptical individuals who benefit less from European integration will be.*

For the *Identity model*, we expect individuals who see a mismatch between their own values and the values promoted by the EU to be more in favour of European integration if they live in a state which is more like the EU (identity micro-level*macro-level). We might therefore expect that federalism would moderate the relationship between multicultural attitudes and support for EU integration. EU support should, then, be driven less by multiculturalism in federal states than in more unitary states.

*H13: The more a country resembles the EU, the less sceptical individuals who do not favour multiculturalism will be of European integration.*

Following the reference model, we expect that individuals who distrust the national political establishment will be less sceptical of the EU if they live in a country where corruption is high. By contrast, individuals who distrust national institutions, but who live in a country where the level of corruption is low, are also expected to distrust European integration (reference model micro-level*macro-level). We expect that EU scepticism is more driven by discontent with the political establishment in low corruption countries than in high corruption countries. Muñoz et al. (2011) show that the relationship between trust in national institutions and trust in EU institutions operates at different levels: on the micro level, trust in national institutions is positively associated with trust in EU institutions. On the macro level, high-performing national institutions hinder trust in EU institutions.

However, it is also important to add a cross-level interactions to the model because it might be expected that a strong correlation between trust in the political establishment and EU support would only be found in high-performing countries. In countries with high levels of corruption, individuals who distrust the political establishment will, to a greater degree, see the EU as a vehicle to improve the national political system (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). Based on these considerations, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H14: In countries with high levels of corruption, individuals who distrust the national political establishment will be more supportive of EU integration.*

**Data and Methods**

Studies of public support for European integration have addressed a variety of subjects and countries (Vasilopoulou 2017). Most studies take either public attitudes towards European Integration as their dependent variable or party-based attitudes (Taggert 1998), but a few have looked at both. In terms of countries, studies covering both EU-15 and/or the new 13 member states which joined in the new millennium have become more numerous in recent years, whereas older studies, not surprisingly, focus on EU-12 or a subset of countries and tend to be single case studies or comparative studies.

The data used in this article for the dependent variable are derived from the ESS Rounds 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012 and 2014. There are no data from 2010. Our sample includes respondents from 15 EU countries, which have been chosen pragmatically as they are included in all the examined ESS Rounds. Table 2 shows the number of respondents for each country and round. The difference between the 145241 respondents listed below, and the 110873 (76.3%) used in the regressions, is due to missing answers.

Table 2. Respondents per round including missing values

| | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2012 | 2014 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 1778 | 1798 | 1760 | 1869 | 1769 | 8974 |
| Denmark | 1487 | 1505 | 1610 | 1650 | 1502 | 7754 |
| Finland | 2022 | 1896 | 2195 | 2197 | 2087 | 10397 |
| France | 1806 | 1986 | 2073 | 1968 | 1917 | 9750 |
| Germany | 2870 | 2916 | 2751 | 2958 | 3045 | 14540 |
| Hungary | 1498 | 1518 | 1544 | 2014 | 1698 | 8272 |
| Ireland | 2286 | 1800 | 1764 | 2628 | 2390 | 10868 |
| Netherlands | 1881 | 1889 | 1778 | 1845 | 1919 | 9312 |
| Poland | 1716 | 1721 | 1619 | 1898 | 1615 | 8569 |
| Portugal | 2052 | 2222 | 2367 | 2151 | 1265 | 10057 |
| Slovenia | 1442 | 1476 | 1286 | 1257 | 1224 | 6685 |
| Spain | 1663 | 1876 | 2576 | 1889 | 1925 | 9929 |
| Sweden | 1948 | 1927 | 1830 | 1847 | 1791 | 9343 |
| United Kingdom | 1897 | 2394 | 2352 | 2286 | 2264 | 11193 |
| Total | 28335 | 28441 | 29166 | 30837 | 28462 | 145241 |

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey. The aim of the ESS is to measure the attitudes, beliefs and behavioural patterns of citizens in different European countries. The ESS employs rigorous methodologies and has the lowest unit nonresponse biases compared to other comparative surveys such as Eurobarometer and the European Quality of Life Survey (Kohler 2007). The ESS is therefore one of the most reliable sources of European comparative data. It provides a large data sample with minimum 1,200 respondents per country.

We combined individual-level data from the ESS with macro-level indicators from the Comparative Political Data Set (CPDS) created by Armingeon et al. (2017) and the Quality of Government OECD Dataset, as well as data from the European Commission.

*Dependent variable*

To measure support for European integration, we used the answer to the ESS item 'Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?' The respondent is asked to give an answer on a ten-point scale ranging from 10 'Unification go further' to 0 'Unification already gone too far'. The question is intended to capture attitudes toward European integration, and the formulation for each country has been tested on focus groups to achieve a similar understanding across countries. When correlating the variable with other widely used measures of support for European integration in the literature, it is significantly and strongly correlated with the percentage answer "A good thing" to the Eurobarometer question "Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the EU is ...?" (see appendix 1). The question, thus, seems to tap into general attitudes towards European integration.

*Independent variables*

In the following, we outline the indicators for independent variables which may explain the variation in support for European integration.

Utilitarian model

To test the *Utilitarian model*, we selected several sociodemographic variables, such as length of education, age, and labour market status, from the ESS. We also included gender as a control variable, even though this is not normally a part of the utilitarian model. The labour market status is used as a material indicator for whether or not European integration creates or destroys jobs. We have also included the perceived economic situation of the respondents in a robustness analysis, but as data is missing for

France, this is not a part of the present regression (see appendix 2). At the macro level, we use the EU's Operating Budgetary Balance (% GNI) calculated by the Commission (2015), which is an indicator for the significance of the financial costs and benefits derived from the EU for each Member State.

Identity model

For measuring support for multicultural attitudes, we use answers to three item-scalesin the ESS. The items are:

- "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Please use this card. Measured on a scale which goes from 0 (Bad for the economy) to 10 (Good for the economy).
- And, using this card, would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? Measured on a scale which goes from 0 (Cultural life undermined) to 10 (Cultural life enriched).
- Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? Please use this card. Measured on a scale which goes from 0 (Worse place to live) to 10 (Better place to live)".

To check the internal reliability of the additive scale, we conducted a principal component analysis. The principal component analysis indicates that the items load strongly on one dimension which explains 76% of the three items' variance. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the data was .85. This indicates a highly satisfactory correlation between the three items and a high level of internal reliability from which to construct an index. The scale ranges from 0 – 30 where 30 indicates an extremely positive

attitude towards immigrants while 0 indicates an extremely negative attitude towards immigrants. The index is intended to capture attitudes towards multiculturalism.

Table 3. Factor Loadings for multi-cultural attitude

| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2.285 | 76.166 | 76.166 | 2.285 | 76.166 | 76.166 |
| 2 | 0.401 | 13.360 | 89.527 | | | |
| 3 | 0.314 | 10.473 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

| | Component 1 |
|---|---|
| Immigration bad or good for country's economy | 0.855 |
| Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants | 0.873 |
| Immigrants make country worse or better place to live | 0.889 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

The identity model at the micro-level sometimes also focuses on the feeling of belonging and national pride. However, as the European Social Survey does not cover these variables in its battery of questions, it is not possible to include more indictors for the identity model.

On the macro level, we included a dummy variable from the CPDS indicating whether the country is a federal state or a unitary state. In this study, only Spain, Belgium and Germany are classified as federal

states. Another measure of identity at the macro level is the countries' level of Ethnic Fractionalisation, based on the CPDS. The definition of ethnicity involves a combination of racial and linguistic characteristics. Fractionalisation measures the probability that two randomly selected individuals from the same country will not be from the same ethnic or linguistic group. The variable indicates whether the country has a monocultural identity or a multiethnic identity at the macro level.

Reference model

The third main independent variable is trust in the national political establishment, based on the ESS. The question about trust was phrased as follows: "Please tell me on a scale from 0 to 10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. The institutions are: 1.) national parliament, 2.) politicians, 3.) political parties, 4.) the legal system, and 5.) the police."

Table 4. Factor Loadings for trust in the political establishment

| | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Component | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 3.452 | 69.049 | 69.049 | 3.452 | 69.049 | 69.049 |
| 2 | 0.755 | 15.093 | 84.142 | | | |
| 3 | 0.370 | 7.403 | 91.545 | | | |
| 4 | 0.294 | 5.883 | 97.428 | | | |
| 5 | 0.129 | 2.572 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

| | Component 1 |
|---|---|
| Trust in country's parliament | 0.860 |
| Trust in the legal system | 0.816 |
| Trust in the police | 0.697 |
| Trust in politicians | 0.893 |
| Trust in political parties | 0.874 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

To check the internal reliability of the additive scale we also conducted a principal component analysis. The principal component analysis indicates that the items load strongly on one dimension which explains 69% of the five items' variance. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the data was .89. This indicates a very satisfactory correlation between the five items and a high level of internal reliability. The scale ranges from 0 minimum trust to 50 maximum trust, and the intention is to capture general trust in the political system.

To measure the quality of government on the macro level we used the Bayesian Corruption Index (BCI) from the Quality of Government OECD Dataset. The Bayesian Corruption Index is a composite index of the perceived overall level of corruption. Corruption refers to the abuse of public power for private gain. The BCI index is a perceived measure of corruption that combines information from different surveys from each country. Respondents come from companies, NGOs, and officials working both in governmental and supra-governmental organizations. The BCI index values lie between 0 and 100, with an increase in the index corresponding to an increase in the level of corruption. As a proxy for

Governmental stability, we use a variable from the CPDS indicating the number of changes in government per year.

Cue taking model

To measure whether citizens take cues from political parties, we included the share of extreme right and left-wing parties as well as protest parties in parliament, as these are the most likely to be Eurosceptical. We constructed a variable, based on the CPDS, which indicates the share of seats held by anti-establishment-parties (communist, right wing or protest parties).

Signalling model

The scale that measures satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the government is based on the following question in the ESS: Now thinking about the (country) government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job? The scale ranges from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Left or right ideology is measured by a self-placement scale ranging from 0 left to 10 right.

Episodic model

To study the impact of time and in particular the economic crisis, we used one dummy that captures the episodes before and after the crisis (2004, 2006; 2008 vs. 2012, 2014). We also included a dummy that distinguishes Eurozone from non-Eurozone member states.

Summary

Table 5 summarises the independent variables in terms of indicators, measurement level and data source.

Table 5. Overview of the independent variables

| **Model** | **Definition** | **Indicator(s)** | **Measurement level** | **Source** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Utilitarian (micro) | The utility of European integration for the individual | (1) Age<br>(2) Length of Education<br>(3) Gender<br>(4) Labour market status | (1) Number of years (Ratio)<br>(2) Number of years (Ratio)<br>(3) Female/male (dichotomous)<br>(4) ….. (nominal) | European Social Survey |
| Utilitarian (macro) | The utility of European integration for the country | EU's Operating budgetary balance | % GNI (Ratio) | European Commission |
| Identity (micro) | The fit between the values promoted by the EU and the individual | Additive index comprising three items: (1) Immigration bad or good for country's economy; (2) Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants; (3) | Ratio | European Social Survey |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Immigrants make country worse or better place to live | | |
| Identity (macro) | The fit between the EU and the country in question | (a) Federal/unitary state<br>(b) Ethnic Fractionalisation | (a) 1 or 2 (dichotomous)<br>(b) Ratio | (a)Comparative Political Data Set 1960-2014 (Armingeon et al. 2017) |
| Reference (micro) | The level of trust in the political establishment. | Additive index comprising level of trust in (1) country's parliament; (2) the legal system; (3) the police; (4) politicians and (5) political parties | Ratio | European Social Survey |
| Reference (macro) | The performance of the political establishment | (a) Bayesian Corruption Index.<br>(b) Number of changes in government per year | Ratio | (a) The Quality of Government OECD Dataset (Teorell et al. 2017)<br>(b) Comparative Political Data Set 1960-2014 (Armingeon et al. 2017) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cue-taking (macro) | The opinion of parties about European integration | Share of extreme right- and left-wing parties as well as protest parties in parliament | % ratio | Comparative Political Data Set 1960-2014 (Armingeon et al. 2017) |
| Signalling (micro) | The individual opinion about the incumbent government. | Now thinking about the (country) government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job? | 1-10 Ordinal | European Social Survey |
| Time | The impact of the economic crisis in 2008 | (1) Dummy for before and after the crisis.<br>(2) Dummy for Eurozone countries | | (b) Comparative Political Data Set 1960-2014 (Armingeon et al. 2017) |

*Methods*

Different methods have been used to study the multifaceted nature of public support for European Integration. Most studies adopt a Large-N approach, which is not surprising given the existence of readily available survey data such as Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey and European Election Studies, and the possibility of collecting one's own data. A wide battery of quantitative techniques has been applied to identify the causes of, and variations in, public support for European Integration, such as

ordinary least squares models (McLaren 2007; Roeder 2011; Munoz et al. 2011), linear models with fixed effects (Elsas et al. 2016); hierarchical models (Kumlin 2009; Roeder 2011), time series models (Elsas & van der Brug 2015), hierarchical time series models (Kuhn et al. 2016), logistic models (Serricchio et al. 2013); logistic multilevel models (Armingeon & Ceka 2013) structural equation models (Hooghe et al. 2007) and factor analysis (Boomgarden et al. 2011). Some qualitative studies have also been conducted comprising either single case studies or comparative case studies (Evans 1998; Green-Pedersen 2012).

We used a three-level multilevel regression analysis to estimate variations in supportive attitudes towards EU integration simultaneously at various levels. The three-level hierarchical structure consists of individuals (level 1) nested in rounds (level 2), which are nested in countries (level 3) (Fairbrother 2014). At level 1, we have 110873 individuals: these individuals are nested in 5 X 15 rounds which give a total of 75 observations at level 2. The observations from level 2 are nested in 15 selected EU countries at level 3.

There are both methodological and substantial arguments for using a multilevel model when analysing hierarchically structured data (Steenbergen & Jones 2002). First, in contrast to OLS regression, which ignores the possibility that the perceptions of people from the same countries are correlated, multilevel models avoid overestimating statistical significance. Because EU support is influenced by contextual factors, which means that individuals within one country and period are more similar than individuals in different countries and periods, the assumption in OLS regression that the error term is independent will be violated. Ignoring the clustering data structure carries the possibility of incorrect and inflated standard errors, which could increase the likelihood of type 1 errors (rejecting a null hypothesis even though it is

true). Multilevel regression is therefore a more appropriate method than standard OLS regression. Second, a multilevel model makes it possible to analyse data at different levels in one comprehensive model which includes both individual and contextual variables. Third, a multilevel model allows the researcher to examine causal heterogeneity by including a nested level interaction. It is then possible to analyse whether an effect of a lower level variable is conditioned or moderated by contextual variables.

In this article, we first used a three-level random intercept model to estimate variations in attitudes toward the EU at various levels. This model allows the intercept to vary across the selected countries and years. The multilevel analysis is then able to simultaneously model the effects of individual, year and country-specific variables on EU support. In order to test for possible cross-level interactions, we also included a random slope term for the most important individual predictors of EU support. This model allows the coefficient to vary across time and country. To compare the size of the effect, we standardised all the independent variables.

**Analysis**

This section presents the results of the analysis. First, we describe differences across time and countries. Second, we present the results of the multilevel analysis for each explanation at either the micro- or macro-level. Third, the results of interactions within models are presented and discussed.

*Descriptive*

Table 6 shows the change in EU support during the period from 2004-2014 among the 15 selected EU countries. The table shows both cross-country and cross-time variation in support for EU integration. Among the countries least supportive of further integration in 2014 we find the UK, Finland, Ireland and Hungary. The countries most supportive of further EU integration are Spain, Poland, Denmark and Germany. The table also indicates that, in general, there is declining support for EU integration. We find the greatest decrease in support for further EU integration in Poland, Hungary, Ireland and the UK; and a small increase in support for EU integration in Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Finland.

Table 6. Changes in average support for further EU integration (10=Unification go further- 0 = Unification already gone too far)

| | **2004** | **2006** | **2008** | **2012** | **2014** | **Difference 2004- 2014** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 4.98 | 4.77 | 5.36 | 5.31 | 5.06 | 0.08 |
| Denmark | 5.79 | 5.77 | 5.71 | 5.72 | 5.39 | -0.40 |
| Estonia | 5.26 | 5.37 | 5.47 | 4.50 | 4.79 | -0.48 |
| Finland | 4.40 | 4.34 | 4.51 | 4.26 | 4.43 | 0.04 |
| France | 5.07 | 4.74 | 5.03 | 4.97 | 4.87 | -0.19 |
| Germany | 5.19 | 4.76 | 5.25 | 5.54 | 5.47 | 0.27 |
| Hungary | 5.66 | 5.02 | 5.04 | 4.85 | 4.68 | -0.98 |
| Ireland | 5.67 | 4.94 | 4.97 | 4.51 | 4.56 | -1.11 |
| Netherlands | 5.27 | 5.05 | 5.53 | 5.13 | 5.11 | -0.16 |
| Poland | 6.66 | 6.72 | 6.48 | 5.71 | 5.53 | -1.13 |
| Portugal | 5.14 | 5.35 | 5.12 | 4.59 | 5.33 | 0.19 |
| Slovenia | 5.83 | 5.61 | 5.63 | 5.34 | 5.37 | -0.46 |
| Spain | 5.97 | 5.72 | 5.29 | 6.01 | 5.76 | -0.21 |
| Sweden | 4.54 | 4.81 | 4.97 | 4.69 | 4.74 | 0.20 |
| United Kingdom | 4.58 | 4.18 | 4.15 | 4.01 | 3.76 | -0.81 |
| Total | 5.28 | 5.07 | 5.18 | 4.98 | 4.96 | -0.33 |

*Multilevel analysis*

Table 7 reports the results of the multilevel model. The coefficient represents the increase in the EU integration scale for a one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variable. The interclass correlation from the empty model shows that 94.6 per cent of this variation is found at the individual level and 5.4 per cent stems from variations among countries. Surprisingly, the country level and the round variance increase after including individual level variables. Therefore, the r square or the proportional reduction in variance tends to be negative. Normally, country-level variance decreases due to composition effects, which means that some of the countries' level variance may be explained by the individual variables. It is likely that unexplained variance at the country level has increased because countries least supportive of the EU also have a lower score on the individual variables that predict support for further European integration. That is the case for a multicultural attitudes, trust in the political establishment, and satisfaction with the economy and education.

Table 7. Multi-level regression - Explaining support for European integration

| | 0 Model | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | | 5.11 | *** | 5.26 | *** |
| Male (ref female) | | 0.09 | *** | 0.09 | *** |
| Age | | -0.08 | *** | -0.08 | *** |
| Education | | 0.08 | *** | 0.08 | *** |
| Immigrant | | 0.00 | | 0.00 | |
| Paid work (ref other) | | -0.12 | *** | -0.12 | *** |
| Education | | 0.16 | *** | 0.16 | *** |
| Unemployed | | 0.00 | | 0.00 | |
| Retired | | 0.05 | | 0.05 | |
| Multiculturalism | | 0.73 | *** | 0.73 | *** |
| Trust in political establishment | | 0.31 | *** | 0.31 | *** |
| Satisfaction with economy | | 0.09 | *** | 0.09 | *** |
| Satisfaction government | | 0.19 | *** | 0.19 | *** |
| Placement left-right scale | | -0.02 | ** | -0.02 | ** |
| After crisis (2012. 2014) | | | | -0.25 | *** |
| Operating budgetary balance as percent of GNI | | | | -0.01 | |
| Federalism | | | | 0.46 | |
| Ethnic fractionalism | | | | -0.08 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corruption bci | | | | | 0.49 | *** |
| Number of changes in government per year | | | | | 0.09 | * |
| Seat share anti-establishment parties | | | | | -0.11 | * |
| Emu | | | | | -0.27 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Random effects | | | | | | |
| Level 1: Individual | 6.15 | *** | 5.22 | *** | 5.217 | *** |
| Level 2: Round X country | 0.08 | *** | 0.09 | *** | 0.055 | *** |
| Level 3: Country | 0.28 | *** | 0.49 | *** | 0.200 | *** |
| Total | 6.52 | *** | 5.79 | *** | 5.47 | *** |
| | | | | | | |
| Level 1 r square individual | | | 15% | | 15% | |
| Level 2 r square round X country | | | -6% | | 34% | |
| Level 3 r square country | | | -71% | | 30% | |
| Overall r square | | | 11% | | 16% | |
| | | | | | | |
| Level 1 Individuals | 110873 | | 110873 | | 110873 | |
| Level 2 Round X country | 75 | | 75 | | 75 | |
| Level 3 Number of country | 15 | | 15 | | 15 | |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

In model 1 we find that in line with H1 in the *Utilitarian model*, younger and more highly educated people are more in favour of European integration. When it comes to the labour market, people with education are more in favour of the European integration compared to the reference category "other". Surprisingly, people in paid work are less likely to be in favour of European integration than the unemployed. A possible explanation could be that, on the one hand, people in paid work may be more concerned about losing their jobs due to the free movement of labour; and that on the other hand the unemployed may see the EU as providing an opportunity to get a job in another EU country.

We find a significant and strong positive correlation between a multicultural attitude and support of European integration as predicted by H3. For an increase of one standard deviation in the index indicating multicultural attitude, support for further European integration increases by 0.73. A multicultural attitude seems to be the strongest predictor of support for European integration when we compare the

standardised coefficients. This means that people who have a positive attitude towards immigration are significantly more in favour of European integration. This result is in line with H3 in the *Identity model* at the micro level, which suggests that people who fear multiculturalism are more likely to be less in favour of European integration.

Trust in the national political establishment is the second strongest predictor of support for further European integration. People who trust the national political establishment are significantly more likely to support further European integration. The results, therefore, do not confirm H6 in the *Reference model*, which suggests that our opinion about European integration will be based on a comparison of the EU and the national political establishment.

We also find that satisfaction with the national government has a positive effect on European integration. EU support seems to be driven by evaluations of national governments. This result supports the *Signalling model* which, according to H10, states that the more people are dissatisfied with the incumbent government, the more likely they are to oppose European integration. These results are in line with Armingeon et al.'s (2014) study which shows that the most significant determinant of support for the EU is still trust in national governments.

In model 2 we included several macro indicators on the country X wave level. The results show that the most important predictor of EU support is the level of corruption, as suggested by H7. Individuals in countries with a high level of corruption are more likely to support further European integration. In accordance with H8, governmental instability – in terms of changes of government – also has a positive

effect on support for European integration. The explanation for this relationship could be that in countries with corrupt and unstable governments, people will be more willing to transfer sovereignty to the EU (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). At the macro level, the results support the *Reference model* which claims that among citizens in countries where the national political system is performing poorly, support for further European integration will be higher. However, at the individual level we find the opposite relationship, as mentioned earlier, i.e. that trust in the political establishment is positively correlated with European integration.

At the country level, the results do not support H2 in the *Utilitarian model* that the more a country is a net recipient from the EU budget, the more its citizens will be in favour of European integration. We find an insignificant relationship between budget balance as a percentage of GNI, and support for European integration. When it comes to the *Identity model,* we do not find evidence that individuals from federal states or more ethnically fractionalised countries are more likely to support European integration as predicted by H4 & H5.

A larger share of anti-establishment parties such as protest parties, extreme right-wing parties and extreme left-wing parties have a significant negative impact on the support for European integration, as suggested by the *Cue-taking model* expressed in H9. However, the size of the effect is relatively small compared to the effect of corruption. In line with H11, the regression analysis also shows that support for European integration decreases by 0.24 points on the scale in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

After inclusion of the macro level variable, the proportional reduction in variance (r square) increases at level 2 and level 3 to 34% and 30%, respectively. This means that the model explains 34% percent of the time variation and 30% of the cross-country variation. On the individual level, the model explains 15 percent of the variation.

*Interaction effects*

In table 8, a random slope model is conducted to test possible cross-level interaction effects within the Utilitarian model, Identity model, and Reference model. To allow for the effect of education, a multicultural attitude, and trust in the political establishment to vary across contexts, we included a random slope for these variables. The random area of the table shows that the correlation between support for European integration on the one hand, and trust in the political establishment, education and multicultural attitudes on the other, varies significantly across countries and rounds.

Table 8. Random slope model with cross-level interaction

| | Model 1: Random slope | | Model 2: Utility interaction | | Model 3: Identity interaction | | Model 4: Reference Interaction | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5.16 | *** | 5.16 | *** | 5.16 | *** | 5.15 | *** |
| Male (ref female) | 0.08 | *** | 0.08 | *** | 0.08 | *** | 0.08 | *** |
| Age | -0.08 | *** | -0.08 | *** | -0.08 | *** | -0.08 | *** |
| Education | 0.07 | *** | 0.07 | *** | 0.07 | *** | 0.07 | *** |
| Immigrant | 0.02 | | 0.02 | | 0.02 | | 0.02 | |
| Paid work (ref other) | -0.13 | *** | -0.13 | *** | -0.13 | *** | -0.13 | *** |
| Education | 0.14 | *** | 0.14 | *** | 0.14 | *** | 0.14 | *** |
| Unemployed | 0.00 | | 0.00 | | 0.00 | | 0.00 | |
| Retired | 0.05 | *** | 0.05 | *** | 0.05 | *** | 0.05 | *** |
| Multiculturalism | 0.71 | *** | 0.71 | *** | 0.65 | *** | 0.71 | *** |
| Trust in political establishment | 0.29 | *** | 0.29 | *** | 0.30 | *** | 0.30 | *** |
| Satisfaction with economy | 0.09 | *** | 0.09 | *** | 0.09 | *** | 0.09 | *** |
| Satisfaction government | 0.18 | *** | 0.18 | *** | 0.18 | *** | 0.18 | *** |
| Placement left-right scale | -0.01 | | -0.01 | | -0.01 | | -0.01 | |
| Corruption bci | 0.51 | *** | 0.51 | *** | 0.51 | *** | 0.51 | *** |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Operating budgetary balance as percent of GNI | -0.04 | | -0.04 | | -0.04 | | -0.04 | |
| Federalism | 0.15 | *** | 0.15 | *** | 0.15 | *** | 0.16 | *** |
| Before / after crisis | -0.34 | *** | -0.34 | *** | -0.34 | *** | -0.34 | *** |
| Cross-level interaction | | | | | | | | |
| Years of education X Operational budget balance GNI | | | **0.00** | | | | | |
| Multicultural X Ferderalism | | | | | **0.30** | *** | | |
| Trust in political establishment X corruption | | | | | | | **-0.10** | *** |
| Random effects | | | | | | | | |
| Level 1 Individual | 5.137 | *** | 5.137 | *** | 5.137 | *** | 5.137 | *** |
| Level 2 Round X country | 0.061 | *** | 0.061 | *** | 0.061 | *** | 0.060 | *** |
| Slope variance years of education | 0.003 | * | **0.003** | * | 0.003 | * | 0.003 | * |
| Slope variance multicultural | 0.056 | *** | 0.056 | *** | **0.041** | *** | 0.055 | *** |
| Slope variance trust in the political establishment | 0.034 | *** | 0.034 | *** | 0.034 | *** | **0.023** | *** |
| Level 3: country | 0.137 | * | 0.137 | * | 0.137 | * | 0.135 | * |
| Proportional reduction in slope variance | | | 0.00 | | 0.27 | | 0.31 | |
| Level 1: Individuals | 110873 | | 110873 | | 110873 | | 110873 | |
| Level 2 Round X country | 75 | | 75 | | 75 | | 75 | |
| Level 3 Number of country | 15 | | 15 | | 15 | | 15 | |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

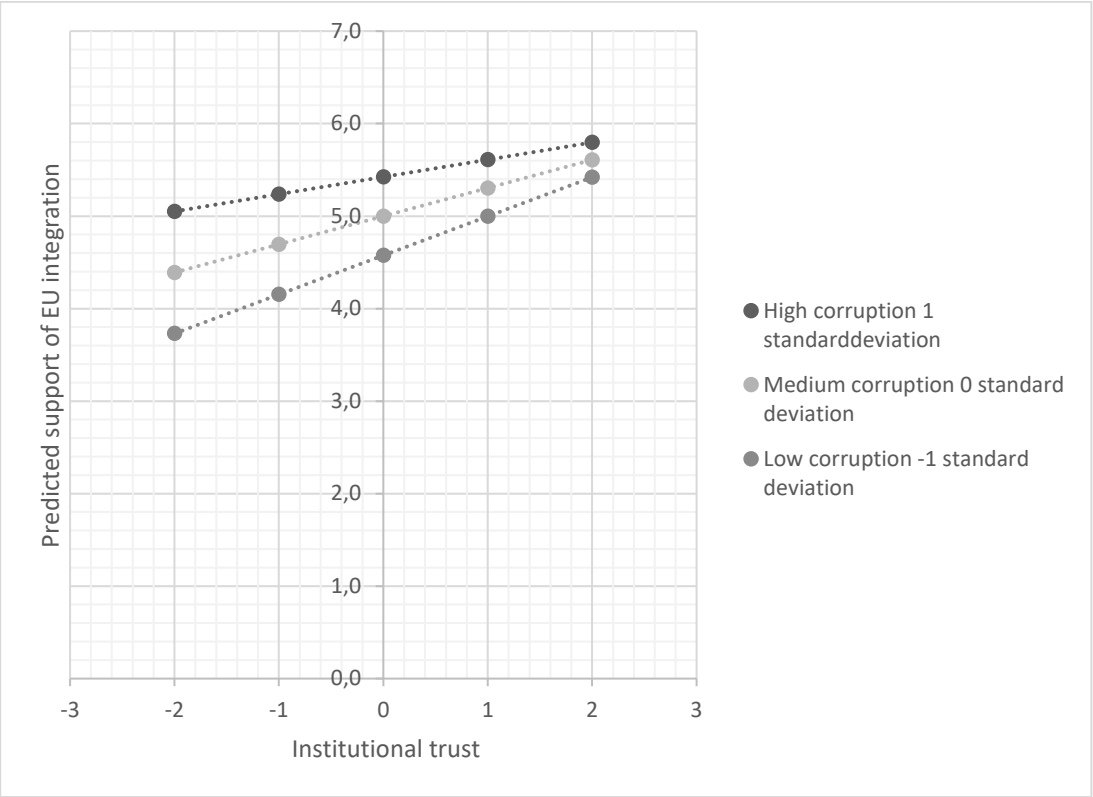
In model 2 we include an interaction term between education and the countries' operational budget. The model does not confirm hypothesis H12 that EU support is associated more with better education in countries that are high net contributors to the EU budget, than in countries that benefit from the EU budget.

Model 3 shows significant interaction effects between multicultural attitudes and federalism. The results indicate that a positive attitude toward multiculturalism has a stronger negative impact on support for European integration in federal states than in more unitary national states. The effects of anti-immigrant sentiment on support for European integration are then much greater in federal states than in more unitary states. This result does not confirm hypothesis H13, which states that in federal states, multiculturalism

has less impact on support for European integration. The cross-level interaction effects explains 27% of the slope variance of the multicultural attitude variable.

Model 4 displays significant interaction effects between trust in the political establishment on the micro level, and corruption on the macro level. The relationship between support for European integration and trust in the political establishment is moderated by the level of corruption in the country. This implies that the positive correlation between support for European integration and trust in the political establishment is weaker in countries with high levels of corruption. In countries and periods with a low level of corruption, opposition towards European integration is more driven by distrust of the political establishment than in countries and time periods where corruption is high. Figure 1 illustrates the cross-level interaction effect between trust in the political establishment and corruption for different values of corruption (1, 0-1).

Figure 1. Cross level interaction effect between corruption and trust in the political establishment

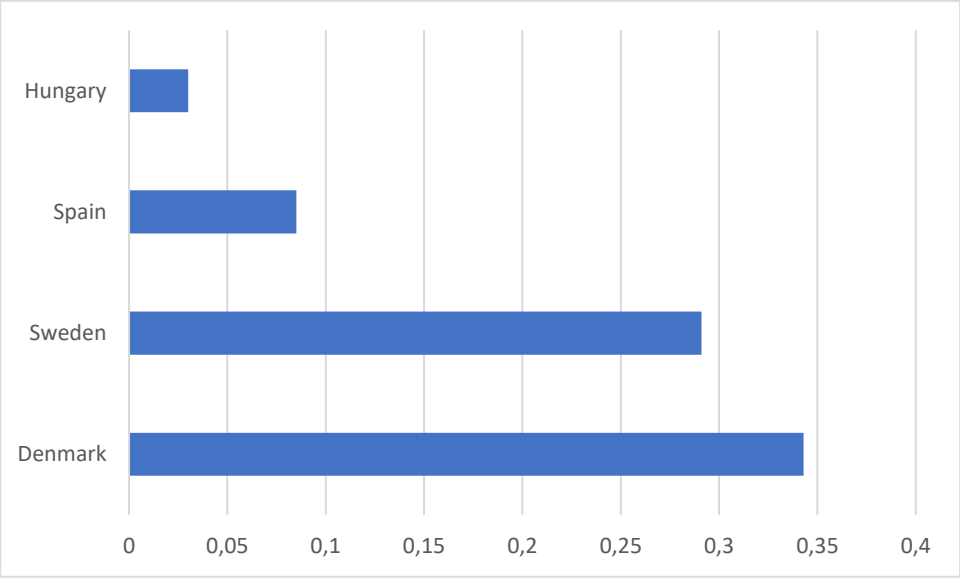



The figure shows that people in countries with low levels of corruption and low levels of trust in the political establishment also show low levels of support for European integration, while people who have low levels of trust in the political establishment in high corruption countries have much higher levels of support for further European integration. Among people with high levels of trust in the political establishment, the impact of corruption on EU support almost disappears.

In order to dig deeper into how the level of corruption influences the relationship between trust in the political establishment and support for European integration, we have calculated the correlation coefficient for the two variables in two high corruption countries (Hungary and Spain) and two low

corruption countries (Denmark and Sweden) respectively. As shown in figure 2, in Hungary, which has one of the highest level of corruption, the correlation between trust in the political establishment and support for European integration is almost zero. In Denmark, which has one of the lowest levels of corruption in the EU, the correlation between trust in the political establishment and support for EU integration is 0.34.

Figure 2. Pearson correlation coefficient between support for EU integration and trust in the political establishment in 2014




The interaction effect indicates that the mechanisms behind opposition towards European integration may differ in highly corrupt countries compared to less corrupt countries. In less corrupt countries, opposition reflects distrust in political institutions and in the political elite to a much larger extent than in countries with high corruption. Opposition towards European integration in less corrupt countries could then be interpreted as a consequence of distrust in the political establishment and as an experience

of political alienation. Attitudes towards Europe in less corrupt countries are not developed independently of the evaluation of the national political establishment. In countries with a high level of corruption, further European integration will, to a greater extent, be seen as a way to improve the national political system independently of people's trust in their own political establishment. An increase in distrust in the political establishment will then probably have more impact on the level of opposition in countries with a low level of corruption than in countries with a high level of corruption. The random section of the table shows that the cross-level interaction term explains 31% of the slope variance.

## Conclusion

Dissatisfaction with the process of European integration is not a new phenomenon but has fluctuated over the years.

This article has developed a systematic framework which organises prominent explanations in the literature according to 1) theoretical foundation; 2) underlying mechanism; 3) how these explanations work at the micro level (individuals) and/or macro level (countries). The framework has been tested, using a multilevel model, on a dataset from the European Social Survey comprising 15 European countries over five year-rounds (2002, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2014) with a total of 110873 respondents. The results are summarised in table 9.

Table 9. Explanations for support for European integration

| **Hypotheses** | **Model** | **Result** |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| H1: The less economic utility the individual receives from European integration, the less supportive that individual will be. | Utilitarian (micro) | Partly confirmed |
| H2: The less economic utility a country gains from European integration, the less supportive its citizens will be. | Utilitarian (macro) | Disconfirmed |
| H3:The more an individual opposes multiculturalism, the more s/he will oppose European integration. | Identity (micro) | Confirmed |
| H4:Citizens living in federal states will be more supportive of EU integration than citizens living in unitary states. | Identity (macro) | Disconfirmed |
| H5:The more ethnically fractionalised a country is, the more its citizens will support European integration. | Identity (macro) | Disconfirmed |
| H6:The more trust an individual has in the national political establishment, the less likely it is that s/he will support European integration. | Reference (micro) | Disconfirmed (Significant reverse effect) |
| H7: The less corrupt a country is, the less its citizens are expected to favour European integration. | Reference (macro) | Confirmed |
| H8: The more stable a country's government is, the less its citizens are expected to favour European integration. | Reference (macro) | Confirmed |
| H9: The larger the share of anti-establishment national parties in a country, the less in favor of European Integration its citizens will be. | Cue-taking (macro) | Confirmed |
| H10: The more an individual is dissatisfied with the incumbent government, the more that individual is expected to oppose European integration. | Signalling (micro) | Confirmed |
| H11: After the economic crisis in 2008, individuals are less in favour of European integration | Time/crisis | Confirmed |
| H12: The more a country benefits overall from the EU's budget, the less sceptical individuals who benefit less from European integration will be. | Utilitarian (micro*macro) | Disconfirmed |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| H13: The more a country resembles the EU, the less sceptical individuals who do not favour multiculturalism will be of European integration. | Identify (micro*macro) | Disconfirmed (Significant reverse effect) |
| H14: In countries with high levels of corruption, individuals who distrust the national political establishment will be more supportive of European integration. | Reference (micro*macro) | Confirmed |

The table shows that eight out of fourteen hypotheses are completely or partly confirmed, four are disconfirmed and two are significant but work in the opposite direction to that than predicted by the theories. The results resonate with and add to previous studies of support for European integration. At the micro-level, individuals who benefit from the EU (H1), support multiculturalism (H3), have high trust in the national political establishment (H6) and are satisfied with the incumbent government (H8) will be more likely to support European integration. At the macro level, individuals living in countries with high levels of corruption (H7), government instability (H8) and a smaller share of anti-establishment parties (H10) are more likely to be in favor of European integration. When looking across the explanations, the attitudes towards multiculturalism (H3) at the micro-level and the level of corruption (H7) at the macro level, are the strongest predictors of support for European Integration.

In terms of interactions, the analysis rejected H12 which predicted that the more a country receives in net terms from the EU's budget, the less sceptical individuals who receive fewer material benefits from European integration will be. In short, there is no significant interaction between the micro and macro levels in the *Utilitarian model.*

In the *Identity model*, there is significant interaction, but this goes against the predictions laid out in H13, as it shows that in federal states, individuals who are less in favour of multiculturalism are also less

supportive of European integration. The explanation could be that federal systems are more likely to limit the influence of anti-establishment parties, which might in turn fuel anti-multicultural and anti-European feelings.

The final interaction expressed in H14 within the *Reference model* is in line with the previous logic as it shows that individuals who distrust the national political establishment in countries with low levels of corruption also tend to distrust European integration. In contrast, individuals who distrust the national political establishment in countries with high levels of corruption tend to support European integration. In that way, there is a strong interaction between the micro and macro levels in the reference model. While this interaction merits further attention, it indicates that in countries with a low level of corruption, a negative attitude towards European integration is driven by distrust in the political establishment. The reason could be that the national political establishment and the European integration process are perceived as one and the same thing. By contrast, in countries with a high level of corruption, individuals tend to trust European integration, perhaps because it is seen as an alternative to the national political establishment and/or a force to discipline it (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000).

Based on the significant cross-level interaction effects within the reference model, two sub-models of support for European integration are proposed. On the one hand, we have the anti-establishment model in low corruption countries where the support for European Integration is lower and is related to discontentment with the national political establishment. On the other hand, we have the savior model in high corruption countries where support for European integration is higher but disconnected from the evaluation of the national political establishment.

The study opens up three avenues for future research. First, this study could be combined with qualitative case studies that investigate the significant interactions in order to tease out potential causal mechanisms behind them. Second, the findings of this analysis can be utilised in the quest for causal inference by, for instance, using panel data, matching techniques, structural equation models or instrumental variables. Third, while this study has examined explanations working across countries, focusing on variation in explanations between countries would yield further insights into the nature of public support for European integration.

**Acknowledgements**

This article has greatly benefitted from comments from several people to whom we would like to express our deepest gratitude. First, different versions of the paper have been presented at the Globalization & Europeanization Research Group, the Roskilde School of Governance, the Department of Business and Politics and the Danish Association for European Studies where the participants provided helpful feedback. Second, we have received detailed valuable suggestions from Susana Borras, Manuele Citi, Katjana Gattermann, Holly Snaith and David Willumsen. Third, the reviewers and editor Anand Menon made the review process highly rewarding in terms of advancing the article. The standard disclaimer applies.

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**Data availability**

The data used in this paper is described in section 'Data and Methods'. The replication data and syntax that support the findings of this study has been stored on https://dataverse.harvard.edu/ at [URL/DOI], reference number [reference number]. As the data set has been created by merging and sometimes recoding existing data sets the original sources should be credited in case of use.

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Appendix 1. Correlation between Eurobarometer and European Social Survey (2004, 2006 and 2008*)

**Correlations**

| | | | Eurobarometer | European Social Survey |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Eurobarometer | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .469** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .001 |
| | | N | 45 | 45 |
| | EuropeanSocialSurvey | Correlation Coefficient | .469** | 1,000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | . |
| | | N | 45 | 45 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Note: Eurobarometer percentage at the country level answering "A good thing" to the Eurobarometer question "Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the EU is ...? correlated with the country level score to the European Social Survey question 'Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?' The respondent is asked to give an answer on a ten-point scale ranging from 10 'Unification go further' to 0 'Unification already gone too far'. 2012 is not included as the item was removed from Eurobarometer in 2011

Appendix 2. Multi-level regression - Explaining support for EU integration (Perceived economic deprivation is included)

| | Mode 0l | | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5,17 | *** | 5,14 | *** | 5,29 | *** |
| Male (ref felmale) | | | 0,09 | *** | 0,09 | *** |
| Age | | | -0,08 | *** | -0,08 | *** |
| Education | | | 0,08 | *** | 0,08 | *** |
| Perceived Economic deprivation | | | -0,07 | *** | -0,07 | *** |
| Immigrant | | | 0,01 | | 0,01 | |
| Paid work (ref other) | | | -0,13 | *** | -0,13 | *** |
| Education | | | 0,14 | *** | 0,14 | *** |
| Unemployed | | | 0,01 | | 0,01 | |
| Retired | | | 0,03 | | 0,03 | |
| Multi culturalisme | | | 0,73 | *** | 0,73 | *** |
| Trust in political establishment | | | 0,30 | *** | 0,30 | *** |
| Satisfaction with economy | | | 0,08 | *** | 0,08 | *** |
| Satisfaction govenrment | | | 0,19 | *** | 0,19 | *** |
| Placement left right scale | | | -0,02 | ** | -0,02 | ** |
| After crisis (2012, 2014) | | | | | -0,25 | |
| Operatingbudgetarybalance as percent of GNI | | | | | -0,01 | |
| Fedralisme | | | | | 0,45 | |
| Ethnic fractionalism | | | | | -0,08 | |
| Corruption bci_bci | | | | | 0,49 | * |
| Number of changes in government pr year | | | | | 0,09 | * |
| Seat share anti establishment parties | | | | | -0,11 | * |
| Emu | | | | | -0,28 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Random effects | | | | | | |
| Level 1: Individual | 6,14 | | 5,22 | *** | 5,22 | |
| Level 2: Round X country | 0,09 | | 0,09 | *** | 0,06 | |
| Level 3: Country | 0,28 | | 0,49 | *** | 0,18 | *** |
| total | 6,51 | *** | 5,80 | *** | 5,45 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Level 1 r square individual | | | 15% | | 15% | |
| Level 2 r Round X country | | | -6% | | 30% | |
| Level 3 r square country | | | -72% | | 38% | |
| Overall r square | | | 11% | | 16% | |
| | | | | | | |
| Level 1 Individuals | 108780 | | 108780 | | 108780 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Level 2 Round X Country | 74 | 74 | 74 |
| Level 3 Number of country | 15 | 15 | 15 |

*Data from France is missing in 2004

Appendix 3. Multi-level regression - Explaining support for EU integration with welfare control

| | Model 9 | |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5,32 | |
| Male (ref female) | 0,09 | *** |
| Age | -0,08 | *** |
| Education | 0,08 | *** |
| Immigrant | 0,00 | *** |
| Paid work (ref other) | -0,12 | *** |
| Education | 0,16 | *** |
| Unemployed | 0,00 | |
| Retired | 0,05 | |
| Multiculturalism | 0,73 | *** |
| Trust in political establishment | 0,31 | *** |
| Satisfaction with economy | 0,09 | *** |
| Satisfaction government | 0,19 | *** |
| Placement left-right scale | -0,02 | ** |
| After crisis (2012. 2014) | -0,23 | *** |
| Operating budgetary balance as percent of GNI | -0,01 | |
| Federalism | 0,15 | |
| Ethnic fractionalism | -0,06 | |
| Corruption bci | 0,45 | ** |
| Number of changes in government per year | 0,09 | * |
| Seat share anti-establishment parties | -0,12 | * |
| Emu | -0,33 | |
| Welfare regime | | |
| Continental | 0,25 | |
| Nordic | -0,09 | |
| South Europe | 0,36 | |
| Anglo Saxian | -0,50 | |
| Ref: Post communist | | |
| Random effects | | |
| Level 1: Individual | 5,22 | |
| Level 2: Round X country | 0,06 | |
| Level 3: Country | 0,21 | |
| Total | 5,48 | |
| | | |
| Level 1 r square individual | 15% | |
| Level 2 r square round X country | 31% | |
| Level 3 r square country | 26% | |
| Overall r square | 16% | |
| | | |
| Level 1 Individuals | 110873 | |
| Level 2 Round X country | 75 | |
| Level 3 Number of country | 15 | |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001