

European Union Politics

<http://eup.sagepub.com>

Europe Divided?: Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration

Liesbet Hooghe

European Union Politics 2003; 4; 281

DOI: 10.1177/14651165030043002

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://eup.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/3/281>

Published by:

 SAGE Publications

<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *European Union Politics* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://eup.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://eup.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations (this article cites 7 articles hosted on the
SAGE Journals Online and HighWire Press platforms):
<http://eup.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/3/281#BIBL>



European Union Politics

[1465-1165(200309)4:3]

Volume 4 (3): 281-304: 034654

Copyright© 2003

SAGE Publications

London, Thousand Oaks CA,

New Delhi

Europe Divided?

Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration

◆ **Liesbet Hooghe**

University of North Carolina, USA

ABSTRACT

This article compares preferences for Europeanizing 13 policies among European elites, national elites, and public opinion. Elites are more willing to cede national authority in sovereignty areas, but citizens are more favorable to EU social policies. Are there contrasting logics at work? The answer is two-sided. Elites and public preferences are similar in that both are least enthusiastic about Europeanizing high-spending policies. Here is a common distributional logic: shifting authority could destabilize vested interests. However, as the single market intensifies labor market volatility, the public seeks to contain this distributional risk through selectively Europeanizing market-flanking policies. In contrast, elite preferences are consistent with a functional rationale that conceives European integration as an optimal solution for internalizing externalities beyond the national state.

KEY WORDS

- European integration
- distribution
- public opinion
- political economy

Time and again, political pundits and scholars stress that the general public is less keen on shifting authority to the European level than are elites. Elites, it is said, have pushed European integration beyond the will of the people.

How real is the divide between elites and public opinion? There is an extensive literature on public perceptions of European integration (Anderson, 1998; Dalton and Eichenberg, 1998; Gabel, 1998a,b, 2002; Gabel and Anderson, 2002; Handley, 1981; Hewstone, 1986; Inglehart, 1970; Inglehart and Rabier, 1991; Shepherd, 1975; Vaubel, 1994; Wessels, 1995). But there are few comparisons between public and elite views (Vaubel, 1994). The few data on elites usually pertain to a small sector of the elite, and they employ different questions: Schmitt and Thomassen (2000) on European parliamentarians, Egeberg (1999) and Beyers and Dierickx (1997) on national representations, Hug and König (2002) and Aspinwall (2002) on government elites, and Hooghe (2001) on top Commission officials. Here is a case where conventional wisdom rests on a weak empirical base. Elite data were rare until the 1996 national elites survey conducted by EOS Gallup Europe on behalf of the European Commission. The entire data set has not been officially released. However, an unofficial version, together with my own survey of Commission elites, allows comparison of public opinion and elites.

The standard questions tapping general support for European integration indicate that the gap between public and elites is wide. A more nuanced picture emerges, however, when one disaggregates European integration into its policy components. Elites and citizens desire to shift different policy bundles to the European level.

Why is that so? Are there separate logics at work? Drawing from recent work in political economy, I explore three lines of argument, and I test these using three sets of data. Data on European elite preferences come from a survey among top Commission officials, which I conducted between February 2001 and February 2002,¹ data on national elites from a special elite survey (fieldwork between February and May 1996),² and public opinion data from Eurobarometer 54.1, released in 2002 (fieldwork in fall 2000; Hartung, 2002). The European and national elites' surveys are one of a kind and, because they were conducted five years apart, some caution in comparing the results is warranted. The national elites were questioned when the future of economic and monetary union (EMU) and enlargement was still uncertain, whereas the European elite data set and Eurobarometer 54.1 were collected after the introduction of EMU and with the European Union on course to include eight new members from Central and Eastern Europe (plus Cyprus and Malta).³

The citizen/elite divide

The conventional wisdom is that elites are more in favor of European integration than is public opinion. The standard measures of support for European integration substantiate that view: 93% of national elites but only 53% of the public think that their country's EU membership is on balance a good thing; 89% of national elites believe that their country has benefited from EU membership, whereas only 52% of the public do so. There is a gulf between the public and elites.

These are aggregate questions measuring something akin to Easton's (1965) notion of affective support or Scharpf's (1999) notion of input legitimacy (Gabel, 1998a; Green, 2001). From time to time, Eurobarometer also carries a more concrete question, which asks respondents how they want to distribute authority between the European Union and national governments. This question is posed for individual policies. It is also included in the national elite survey and in the survey of top Commission officials. The virtue of this question is that it provides a more fine-grained measure of preferences. Rather than affective support, it taps policy-specific, utilitarian support, or, in Scharpf's terms, the European Union's output legitimacy.⁴

Let us start by averaging preferences across the 13 policies for which we have comparable data (Table 1). There is a difference between elites and the public, but it is not large. The mean level of support among Commission officials is 65%, against 56% for national elites and 53% for the public. This overall difference is significant for Commission elites and public opinion, but not for national elites and public opinion.

Once one disaggregates European integration into its component policies, the conventional view that elites lead citizens in support for integration dissolves. Commission officials and national elites lead public opinion in seven policy areas, whereas public opinion is more favorable to the following policy areas: social inclusion, regional policy, health, research, and education. The public also leads Commission elites (but not national elites) on employment policy, and it leads national elites (but not the Commission) on foreign policy. This is illustrated in Figure 1. In immigration policy, at the extreme left, the difference between national elite support (67.9%) and public support (44.4%) is 24%. In regional policy, at the extreme right, the public (65.3%) leads national elites (32.4%) by 33%. These differences are significant.⁵

Can one summarize these differences in a meaningful way? One bundle of policies stands out on the left of Figure 1: most of these policies are 'high politics,' that is, they are concerned with core sovereignty, including immigration, foreign policy, defense, and monetary policy. Public support for integration in these policy areas is exceeded by national elites (14%) and by

Table I Support for EU policies: Proportion of Commission elites, national elites, and public opinion in favor

	<i>Commission elites</i>	<i>National elites</i>	<i>Public opinion</i>
<i>Mean for all policies</i>	64.7	55.6	53.0
Currency	97.8	78.4	57.5
Humanitarian aid/ third world	93.5	70.9	65.1
Foreign policy	92.4	64.3	71.6
Immigration and asylum	90.3	67.9	44.4
Environment	89.1	75.2	58.8
Agriculture	82.4	56.0	48.5
Defense	68.8	64.5	43.6
Research & development	64.5	64.6	69.2
Regional policy	50.0	32.4	65.3
Employment	41.3	52.0	49.6
Social inclusion	29.3	40.7	62.1
Health policy	22.8	29.6	30.2
Education	18.3	25.7	29.8
<i>High politics^a</i>	88.6	69.2	55.1
<i>Social model^b</i>	54.8	53.0	61.0
<i>Redistribution^c</i>	53.9	43.0	58.6

Notes:

^a High politics issues consist of currency, humanitarian aid/ third world, foreign policy, defense policy, and immigration and asylum.

^b Social model policies consist of environment, employment policy, social inclusion, regional policy, and research.

^c Redistribution consists of agriculture, regional policy, and social inclusion.

Commission elites (33%). The policies that dominate on the right of Figure 1, where public support for Europeanization is higher than elite support, concern market regulation and redistributive policies. The citizen lead in redistributive policies (agriculture, regional policy, and social inclusion) ranges from 5% with Commission officials to 16% with national elites. For social model policies (environmental regulation, employment policy, social inclusion, regional or cohesion policy, and research and development), the citizen lead varies between 6% for Commission and 8% for national elites.⁶ The label 'social model' summarizes policies identified by former Commission president Jacques Delors as policies flanking the single market, which, if implemented at the EU level, would distinguish 'Europe's social model' from Anglo-Saxon liberal capitalism (Delors, 1992; see also Ross, 1995). Figure 2 shows that there is considerable structure in the differences between elite and public preferences.

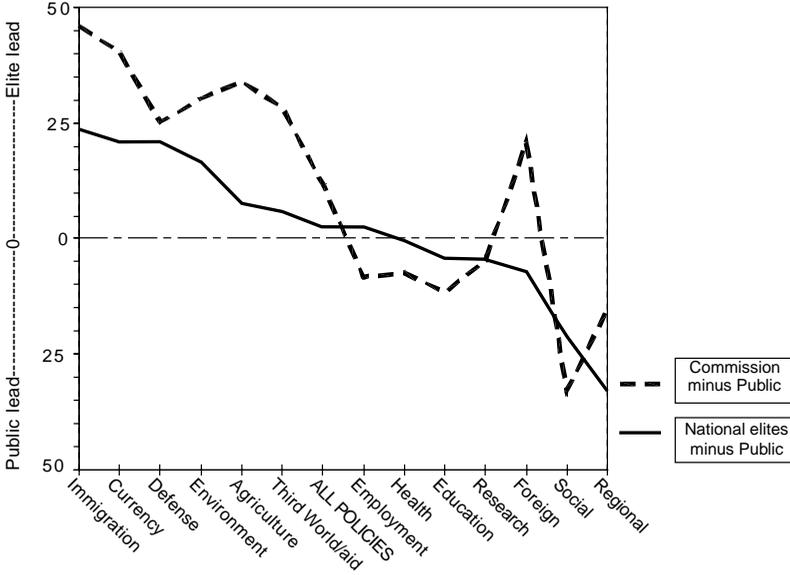


Figure 1 Relative support for EU policies: Elite lead versus public lead (%).

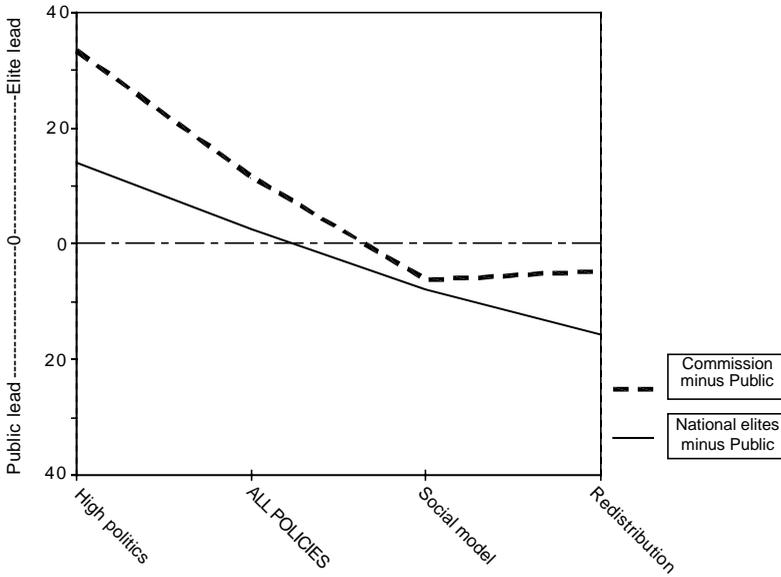


Figure 2 Relative support for Europeanizing policy bundles: Elite lead versus public lead (%).

Table 2 Priority lists of European integration: Commission, national elites, and public opinion

	Commission elites	National elites	Public opinion
<p>Highest</p> <p>Lowest</p>	Currency	currency	foreign policy
	Third World aid	environment	research
	Foreign policy	Third World aid	regional policy
	Immigration	immigration	Third World aid
	Environment	research	social inclusion
	Agriculture	defense	environment
	Defense	foreign policy	currency
	Research	agriculture	employment
	Regional policy	employment	agriculture
	Employment	social inclusion	immigration
	Social inclusion	regional policy	defense
Health	health	health	
Education	education	education	

Notes: The dotted lines (---) indicate where approximately 70% (upper line) or 50% (lower line) of respondents favor European integration; policies above the line obtain higher support, and policies below lower support.

Social model policies are **in bold**.

Correlations: Commission with national elites: .87 ($p = .00$); Commission with public opinion: .40 ($p = .17$); national elites with public opinion: .31 ($p = .30$)

There is a clear bottom line. When one asks *in principle* whether European integration is a good idea, elites are much more favorably inclined than is the public. However, when one asks *concretely* what kind of policies national or European governments should be responsible for, elites are not significantly more favorable to European integration than is the public. Yet elites and the public want different things from Europe.

Lines of argument on the double-edged divide

Table 2 presents elite and public opinion rankings – priority lists – for European integration. How can one explain differences across these rankings? Is there a single overarching logic?

My analysis departs from conventional analyses of preferences on European integration. First of all, I am interested in understanding variation in the *pattern* of support across EU policies. Most existing research seeks to explain variation in the overall *level* of support. Furthermore, my objective is

to analyze the *gap* between elites and public opinion, so I focus on *inter*-group differences rather than *intra*-group variation. I therefore use aggregate data – for each of these 13 policies, the proportion of Commission elite, national elite, or public opinion supporting Europeanization – not individual-level data.

Under what conditions does one desire to disperse authority away from the central state? What is the attraction of multi-level governance, and how are preferences about multi-level governance formed? This has been the subject of extensive research by economists and political scientists. The thrust of much normative analysis is about achieving Pareto-optimality: policies should be allocated at multiple governmental levels because it is efficient to do so. Positive analyses, in contrast, tell us that Pareto-optimality is rarely achieved. A major reason is that distributional concerns often motivate decisions of authoritative allocation. Drawing on these traditions, I distill three lines of thinking on why elites and public opinion may want to shift some policies to the European level, while maintaining other policies at the national level. And I consider how these motivations could affect elites and public opinion *differently*.

Functionality

My first hypothesis takes up the functional argument for distributing policies between the national and EU levels.

Scholars of international relations, federalism, public policy, local government, and EU studies have grappled with a strikingly similar question: Under what conditions is authority diffused from the central (national) state upwards or downwards? Notwithstanding many differences in approach, there is a broad consensus that the dispersion of authority across multiple levels of authority is more efficient than centralization (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). This functional rationale underlies Wallace Oates's Theorem of Decentralization: 'The provision of public services should be located at the lowest level of government encompassing the relevant benefits and costs' (Oates, 1999: 1122). Centralization is desirable if and only if there are economies of scale or externalities that should be internalized. A political economy literature applies this thinking to the European Union (Alesina et al., 2001; Casella and Frey, 1992; Kölliker, 2001).

My first hypothesis is, therefore, that elites and citizens desire Europeanization *if and when it is functional*. The leitmotiv of the functional argument is straightforward: one should adjust the scope of a jurisdiction to the scope of the policy problem. If a policy has benefits or costs encompassing other European countries, then one should Europeanize it. Europeanization may be advantageous to maximize economies of scale, as in defense,

monetary policy, or foreign policy. Or it may be desirable to internalize negative externalities, as in the cases of environmental pollution or immigration policy. Where such economies of scale or policy externalities are weak, say in education or health policy, the relevant jurisdiction is national (or regional or local).

Functional arguments appear well ensconced among Europe's elites. Jean Monnet and his successors argued for integration on the particular merits of the policy. This is the basis of European integration. In recent years, functional pressures have been expressed in the concept of subsidiarity. This principle, which is written in the Treaty of the European Union, enjoins the institutions of the European Union to act in areas of concurrent competence 'only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States.' European institutions should refrain from acting, even when constitutionally permitted to do so, if their objectives could effectively be achieved at or below the national level. In practice, the Commission is required to submit written argumentation outlining why an EU action is necessary – not why it is politically desirable.

This functional thinking appears present among top Commission officials (Hooghe, 2001). There is also evidence that it may influence the permanent representations and the Council working groups, which bring thousands of national civil servants, experts, and interest representatives into regular contact with 'Brussels' (Egeberg, 1999; Jörges and Neyer, 1997; Lewis, 1998; and, for a qualified view, Franchino, 2000).

Ordinary citizens are far removed from Brussels decision-making and the functionalist logic that underpins it. Yet Wallace Oates's Theorem may summarize a folk wisdom. If ordinary citizens are able to distinguish the extent to which policies have externalities or economies of scale, they may be inclined to adopt a functional logic.

However, it is not easy to operationalize the functional logic of policy externalities, transaction costs, and economies of scale (Alesina et al., 2001; Kölliker, 2001; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998; Scharpf, 1999; Tallberg, 2002; Weber and Hallerberg, 2001; Wessels and Kielhorn, 1995). Measuring externalities or economies of scale is not an exact science. A promising approach is Wessels and Kielhorn's (1995) effort to tap cross-border externalities in the EU by distinguishing between externalities (and economies of scale) due to policy problems that traverse borders naturally (e.g. pollution, defense) and externalities arising because prior integration has reduced national capabilities (e.g. liberalization of capital constrains monetary policy). This reasoning appears consistent with Fritz Scharpf's (1999) concept of constraints on national problem-solving capabilities.

This ordinal *Functionality* variable takes a value of 1 for policies with low

externalities or economies of scale, 2 for medium, and 3 for high externalities/scale economies (see Table 6 in the appendix). Wessels and Kielhorn allocate values of 1 for education, health, regional policy, social inclusion, and employment policy; 2 for research and development; and 3 for environment, defense, foreign policy, Third World aid, immigration, currency, and agriculture. These judgments by and large have face validity, perhaps with the exception of regional and social policy. National policies of regional development in an EU-wide single market could create negative externalities because differential public investments may divert investment. Differential social inclusion policies could create externalities when states with a limited social policy foist their social problems onto neighboring, less tightfisted governments. I increase the estimate for regional and social policy from 1 to 2. These scores are by and large consistent with Alesina et al.'s (2001) empirical evaluations of EU policies on a two-point scale ($R = .67$).

Distributional logic I: Government spending

The consequences of shifting authority are not limited to Pareto-optimality. Shifting authority often has distributional implications. How might such cost/benefit perceptions influence preferences for Europeanization? I apply two lines of thinking in recent political economy to elite/public preferences on European integration.

The distributional risk of shifting some policies to the European Union may simply be too great. That may be especially so for policies with big financial outlays from state to citizens. In many West European countries, distributional policies arose from decades of political conflict between labor and capital, center and periphery, or one religious group and another (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Rueschemeyer et al., 1992). Many of these policies have deep historical roots, and their continuation is intimately connected with the political power of vested interests in society. By 2002, these distributive policies absorbed on average 47% of national GDP in the 15 EU countries. Many interests have a stake in these policies.

Tinkering with jurisdictional authority on distributional policies could destabilize the status quo. Shifting such policies, or chunks of them, to the EU level may re-open distributional debates. This will be resisted by interests vested in the status quo (Pierson, 1994).

Shifting authority for a policy also carries more mundane risks. New administrations have to be set up, resources allocated, and procedures structured. Policy change stirs things up, and this may disrupt policy delivery. Ordinary citizens have practical reasons for avoiding Europeanization of these policies. Would schools get their funding on time? Who would

reimburse hospital expenses? For elites, the cost of disrupted policy delivery is less direct, but they can be held accountable by the public. I hypothesize therefore that public and elites may be least enthusiastic about Europeanizing policies with big spending programs.

To evaluate whether citizens or elites wish to avoid integration of such policies, I assign to each policy a score based on its average *Government Spending* as a percentage of GDP for the 14 largest EU countries in 2000. This ordinal variable ranges from a value of 1 for policies with minimal government spending to a value of 5 for high-budget policies (see Table 6 in the appendix).⁷

Distributional logic II: Social model

The above rationale makes sense as long as these spending programs are stable in the face of global pressures. But are they? That is debated among political economists who study how increased trade and capital mobility affect the capacity of governments to regulate market forces. Although few believe that globalization inevitably shrinks national spending programs, there is broad consensus that it constrains certain policy instruments, particularly taxation, and social or process regulation (Huber and Stephens, 2001; Scharpf, 1999, 2000).

Trade liberalization and capital mobility also intensify economic insecurity. They increase substitutability of labor and, as a result, jobs become more insecure and wage differentials grow (Rodrik, 1997). Some policy analysts, including the American economists Dani Rodrik and Paul Krugman, have proposed a 'global institutional mini-settlement,' that is, global political regulation to mitigate insecurity caused by global capitalism.

European integration is – among other things – an advanced form of trade liberalization and capital mobility, in which many citizens stand to lose. Jacques Delors responded to this by promising that the EU would cushion the negative effects of increased market competition. In his speeches and writings, he explains how this requires policies that flank the single market (Delors, 1992; Hooghe and Marks, 1999; Ross, 1995). The list of policies was never fixed once and for all, but the core consists of regional policy, employment, social policy, industrial relations, environmental regulation, and some capacity for industrial policy.

Perceptions of economic insecurity have increased over the past 15 years, and economic data confirm that these perceptions by and large have an empirical basis (Gallie and Pauman, 2002; Rodrik, 1997; Scheve and Slaughter, 2002). Many citizens connect feelings of insecurity to economic internationalization. The distributional risk of keeping some policies at the

Table 3 Should a policy be Europeanized? Explaining variation in support for EU policies (OLS regressions)

	<i>Commission elites</i>	<i>National elites^a</i>	<i>Public opinion, 2000^a</i>	<i>Public opinion, 1996</i>
Constant	53.50*** (15.43)	13.02 (10.94)	70.25*** (5.53)	73.44*** (17.61)
Functionality	18.81*** (3.87)	17.66*** (4.06)	–	0.92 (4.41)
Government spending	–10.34** (2.33)	–	–7.45*** (1.67)	–8.12** (2.66)
Social model	0.96 (4.58)	4.65 (6.86)	17.57** (4.62)	12.77* (5.22)
R^2	0.95***	0.66**	0.73***	0.72**
Adjusted R^2	0.93***	0.59**	0.68***	0.62**
N	13	13	13	13

Notes: Unstandardized coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses.

^a The national elite and public opinion 2000 models are best models, not full models, to minimize distortion of estimates as a result of multicollinearity.

*** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

national level may simply be too great. I hypothesize therefore that citizens would want selectively to shift some policies to the European level. The social model logic provides an amendment to the government spending logic set out above.

I use a dichotomous variable *Social Model*, which takes on a value of 1 for the five policies singled out as central to regulated capitalism: employment, social inclusion, regional policy, environment, and research and development (see Table 6 in the appendix).

Functionality and distribution

How do these lines of argument fare in explaining variation in desired Europeanization? Is the same logic at work for elites and public, or are there different logics? I report bivariate correlations in Table 7 in the appendix, and multivariate regression results in Table 3. The last two columns in Table 3 indicate that the results for the 1996 public are very similar to those for the 2000 public.

Functional logic

The views of European and national elites are consistent with the *Functionality* hypothesis. Correlations between this variable and Commission and national elites' preferences are .91 and .80 respectively (see Table 7). Elites appear to internalize the view that one should shift policies with negative externalities or economies of scale to the European level. Jean Monnet would have nodded approvingly; elite preferences are consistent with a desire to find optimal solutions to problems. The fit is markedly poorer for public opinion: the correlation is positive, as expected, but falls short of significance ($R = .46$).

Why is there a difference between elites and the public? I conjectured above that citizens may be open to the functional logic – *provided they understand the complex argument about functionality*. Research on public support for European integration has shown that, the more individuals know about the European Union, the more they support it (Gabel, 1998a). Could political sophistication also shape the *pattern* of support? If it does, the most sophisticated citizens should have preferences similar to those of elites.

I test this for three different measures of political sophistication – objective knowledge of European politics, subjective knowledge, and education⁸ – and I find that political sophistication generally makes citizens more receptive to functional arguments. For the top 3% and the top 20% on subjective knowledge, the association between support and functionality is .51 ($p = .08$) and .52 ($p = .07$), respectively, against .41 ($p = .17$) for the bottom 20%. Similarly, for citizens with higher education, the correlation is .59 ($p = .03$) against .44 ($p = .13$) for those who finished school at age 15 or younger. The difference is less pronounced for objective knowledge. By and large, these results suggest that differences in political sophistication account in part for the elite/public gap on functionality, but they do not settle the issue. Even for politically sophisticated citizens, the association between support and functionality never climbs above .60, and this compares with .91 for European elites and .80 for national elites.

Distributional logic I: Government spending

Does *Government Spending* influence preferences on integration? The answer is 'yes' for both citizens and elites. Table 7 in the appendix shows that the association between citizen support for integration and government spending is strongly negative ($R = -.59$). That means that support for Europeanization is lowest for policies with the highest financial flow from state to citizen. Government spending is even stronger for elites: $R = -.91$ for Commission elites and $R = -.75$ for national elites.

Table 4 Interaction between functionality and government spending (partial correlations)

	<i>Commission elites</i>	<i>National elites</i>	<i>Public opinion</i>
<i>Functionality</i>			
All govt. spending categories (<i>N</i> = 13)	0.91***	0.80***	0.46
Government spending = high (<i>N</i> = 5)	0.81°	0.74	0.41
Government spending = low (<i>N</i> = 8)	0.94***	0.65°	-0.46
<i>Government spending</i>			
All functionality categories (<i>N</i> = 13)	-0.90***	-0.75**	-0.59*
Functionality = high (<i>N</i> = 7)	0.88**	0.38	-0.65
Functionality = low/medium (<i>N</i> = 6)	-0.95**	-0.57	-0.74°

*** *p* < .001; ** *p* < .01; * *p* < .05; ° *p* < .10

How does this distributional logic relate to functionality? It is difficult to answer this question definitively, because the number of cases is small (*N* = 13) and the two variables are highly correlated (-.74). But there are reasons to believe that the logics work in tandem. The litmus test is whether a particular logic works as well within subsets of policies as for all. Thus functionality should capture variation within high-spending policies, and it should do so more consistently for elites than for the public. In other words, of the subset of high-spending policies, policies with low externalities (e.g. social policy) should receive less support for Europeanization than those with high externalities (e.g. defense). Conversely, government spending should work within the subset of policies with high externalities/economies of scale, and it should do so for elites and public alike. Among policies with the same high level of externalities, those with higher government spending (e.g. defense) should receive less support than those with lower government spending (e.g. foreign policy).

Table 4 reports correlations and partial correlations. The first three rows compare correlations between functionality and support for all policies, for policies with high government spending, and for those with low government spending. The same pattern emerges across the three rows. The last three rows repeat this for government spending and support: correlations for all policies, for those with high functionality, and for those with low/medium functionality. The associations are very similar, with the partial exception of national elites. These results are only indicative, but they do suggest that the factors capture distinct causal effects. Functionality does not appear to be a proxy for

government spending, and nor does government spending seem a proxy for functionality.

Distributional logic II: Social model

The *Social Model* hypothesis, with a nod to Jacques Delors, is powerful for understanding public views on Europeanization. Here is a subset of issues for which citizens want higher than average integration, *irrespective* of whether these are high- or low-spending policies. These are the policies that flank the single market, and which distinguish regulated capitalism from market liberal capitalism: social inclusion, employment, regional policy, environment, and research. The social model variable is powerfully and positively associated with support for integration. The increase in support is sizeable: social model policies can count on average on almost 18% higher support for Europeanization than other policies, holding constant the spending character of these policies. The coefficient of determination jumps to .73. In contrast, the social model has little bite on elite preferences. Why is this so?

The social model hypothesis suggests that EU citizens prefer regulated capitalism. This is grounded in recent work in comparative political economy. As Iversen and Soskice (2001) argue, the demand for social protection – regulated capitalism – is highest among individuals who have skills that are specific to a particular firm, industry, or occupation. Individuals with specialized skills, or – in Iversen and Soskice’s terms – with high asset specificity, are more vulnerable to labor market volatility because they cannot easily transport these skills to other firms, industries, or occupations. Workers and firms will therefore invest in specialized skills only if they receive some protection against labor market risk. Europe’s continental economies have relied heavily on employees with high asset specificity. Here lies a rationale for continental Europe’s extensive national welfare states and systems of vocational training (Iversen and Cusack, 2000; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Soskice, 1999). And here rests, in the context of European integration, a rationale for social protection at the European level (Brinegar et al., forthcoming).

Eurobarometer surveys do not provide reliable indicators for individual asset specificity (on operationalizing this concept, see Iversen and Soskice, 2001). This makes it quite difficult to test the hypothesis that individuals with high asset specificity support regulated capitalism. However, a test at the aggregate level shows that the social model is weakest for the UK, where asset specificity is relatively low, and strongest for Scandinavian countries, which have high asset specificity.

Why, then, does this line of thinking not influence Europe’s elites? In

contrast to the public, the bivariate correlation between social model and support is negative for Commission elites ($R = -.28$) and national elites ($R = -.12$), and the variables remain insignificant in both multivariate models. The Iversen/Soskice argument suggests that there are good personal reasons why elites would not support Europeanizing social model policies. Compared with the public, elites are characterized by low asset specificity – their high level of education provides them with ample opportunity to change jobs or careers. Labor market volatility entails much less personal risk for them.

The mismatch between elites and public is reflected in opinion surveys on economic integration. Confronted with the same questions (national elites survey and Eurobarometer 54.1), the public expresses far greater concern about the destabilizing effects of the single currency than do national elites. A smaller proportion of citizens thinks EMU would bring faster economic growth (38% for public opinion versus 56% for elites) and create more jobs (30% versus 42%), and a greater proportion expects higher inflation (31% versus 18%), a widening gap between rich and poor (34% versus 18%), and generally more disadvantages than advantages (26% versus 14%).

It is interesting to note that these results are consistent across elite sectors. Elected politicians are *not* more open to the social model logic, notwithstanding the fact that they have incentives to adjust their position to the median voter. Support is weakly and negatively associated with the social model variable ($R = -.05$), which is not meaningfully different from the overall elite average ($R = -.12$). Nor is the multivariate model for political elites different from that for all elites: the social model variable is positive but insignificant, while the functionality variable is highly significant.

The results are also quite robust across countries. The association of social model with elite support remains for all countries well below the association with public support. In the separate national multivariate analyses, social model is insignificant in all but two models: the UK ($p = .02$) and Greece ($p = .08$), and functionality is the most consistently powerful factor.

The picture is somewhat different when one divides national elites by ideology. Leftist elites are by and large more likely to support the social model than are right-leaning elites, which is consistent with recent work that examines how ideology structures positioning on European integration (Marks, forthcoming). However, they too are considerably less enthusiastic than ordinary citizens. The public lead is 6% over left-leaning elites, against 10% over right-leaning elites. In separate multivariate analyses for the two ideological groups, the social model variable is insignificant and functionality highly significant. Moreover, leftist support is not consistently higher for every social model policy. Leftist elites are keener than their right-wing colleagues to Europeanize employment, social inclusion, and to some extent

regional policy, but they are no different on environment and research and development. Left-leaning elites *selectively* champion the social model.⁹

The social model logic taps deeply felt distributional effects of European integration. The European single market intensifies labor market insecurity for ordinary citizens. This anxiety does not lead them to reject the single market altogether. Rather, they appear to want to counterbalance it with policies that dampen the negative consequences of increased competition. However, elites do not perceive these policies as primarily the European Union's responsibility.

Conclusion

Is there a divide between elites and public opinion on European integration? The answer is 'yes' when one examines support in principle for European integration. Elites are by and large more Euro-enthusiastic than are citizens. Perhaps this indicates that elites are more content than the public with the basic rules of the EU polity. But the answer is less unequivocal when one poses the practical question of how, in particular policy areas, authority should be distributed between the European Union and national governments. The difference between elites and public is subtle, but real. Elites desire a European Union capable of governing a large, competitive market and projecting political muscle; citizens are more in favor of a caring European Union, which protects them from the vagaries of capitalist markets. They support different aspects of European integration.

Are there contrasting logics at work here? The answer is two-sided. Elites and public preferences are similar in that both are least enthusiastic about Europeanizing high-spending policies such as health, education, or social policy. There is a common distributional logic here: shifting authority in these policies could destabilize powerful vested interests and disrupt policy delivery. However, the public wants to Europeanize market-flanking policies, and elites do not. This is where elites and public part ways. As the single market intensifies labor market volatility, the public seems intent to contain this other distributional risk through selectively Europeanizing policies that flank market integration: employment, social policy, cohesion policy, environment, and industrial policy. Elite preferences do not follow this logic. Instead, their views are consistent with a functional rationale, which conceives European integration as an optimal solution for internalizing externalities beyond the national state and for reaping economies of scale. The policies elites want to Europeanize most are the ones predicted by functionalism: currency, foreign policy, Third World aid, immigration, environment, and defense. This logic of functionality does not explain citizens' preferences.

Appendix

Table 5 Average support for Europeanization

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Commission officials (10-point scale, 1–10)</i>	<i>National elites (10-point scale, 1–10)</i>	<i>Public opinion (2-point scale, 1–2)</i>
Currency	9.5	7.7	1.58
Humanitarian aid/ Third world	7.8	7.1	1.65
Foreign policy	7.8	6.6	1.72
Immigration and asylum	7.8	6.9	1.38
Environment	7.5	7.4	1.59
Agriculture	7.4	6.2	1.49
Defense	6.8	6.7	1.44
Research & development	6.1	6.7	1.69
Regional policy	5.6	4.7	1.65
Employment	5.2	5.9	1.50
Social inclusion	4.5	5.3	1.62
Health policy	3.8	4.5	1.30
Education	3.6	4.3	1.30
Mean for all policies	6.4	6.3	1.53

Note: The higher the average, the greater the support for Europeanizing a policy.

Table 6 Values assigned to independent variables

	<i>Functionality</i>	<i>Government spending</i>	<i>Social model</i>
Currency	3	1	0
Foreign policy	3	1	0
Immigration and asylum	3	2	0
Humanitarian aid/ Third World	3	2	0
Environment	3	3	1
Agriculture	3	3	0
Defense	3	4	0
Research & development	2	3	1
Regional policy	2	3	1
Social inclusion	2	5	1
Employment	1	4	1
Health	1	5	0
Education	1	5	0

Table 7 Correlations

	<i>CEC%</i>	<i>NAT%</i>	<i>PUB%</i> <i>2000</i>	<i>PUB%</i> <i>1996a</i>	<i>PUB%</i> <i>1996b</i>	<i>FUNCTIONALITY</i>	<i>GOV</i> <i>SPENDING</i>
<i>NAT%</i>	0.91***	1.00					
<i>PUB% 2000</i>	0.50°	0.47	1.00				
<i>PUB% 1996^a</i>	0.67*	0.59*	0.84***	1.00			
<i>PUB% 1996^b</i>	0.63*	0.56°	0.96***	1.00	1.00		
<i>FUNCTIONALITY</i>	0.91***	0.80***	0.46	0.51°	0.51°	1.00	
<i>GOVSPEND</i>	-0.91***	-0.75**	-0.59*	-0.73**	-0.69*	-0.74**	1.00
<i>SOCIAL MODEL</i>	-0.28	-0.12	0.45	0.23	0.39	-0.30	0.26

Notes:^a = 13 policies (including 'industrial rights' as 'social policy');^b = 12 policies (excluding 'industrial rights').*** *p* " 0.001; ** *p* " 0.01; * *p* " 0.05; ° *p* " 0.10

Notes

I am indebted to Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Peter Kotzian, Hermann Schmitt, Gerald Schneider, Hossein Shahla, Bernhard Wessels, and three anonymous reviewers for comments and useful hints on the data. Special thanks to Gary Marks for inspiring feedback on many occasions. Earlier drafts were presented at Birkbeck College, London (October 2002), the Mannheim Zentrum für Europäische Studien (November 2002), the Free University of Amsterdam (December 2002), and the Technische Universität München (January 2003). This research was partially conducted while I was an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung in Berlin. Outstanding errors of data or judgment remain mine. The Eurobarometer dataset was made available by the Mannheim Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen (ZUMA). The data set for this article (in SPSS 11.5) is available on my website: <http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe>.

- 1 Of the 250 directors-general, deputy directors-general, directors, principal advisors, and chefs or deputy chefs de cabinet in the European Commission, 93 participated. One-third provided face-to-face interviews; the rest were surveyed by post. More details are available on my website.
- 2 EOS Gallup drew a representative sample from a database of 22,000 individuals from five elite sectors: elected politicians (national and European parliamentarians), senior national civil servants, business and trade union leaders, media leaders (including heads of broadcast and print media), and cultural elites (persons playing a leading role in the academic, cultural, or religious life). The survey was conducted by telephone ($N = 3778$). The report (Spence, 1997) is available on the Commission's website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/top/top_en.htm.
- 3 I also analyze Eurobarometer 46.0 (fieldwork in the fall of 1996), the timing of which coincides with the national elites survey. This survey offers a list of policies that is near-identical to the one used in 2000. The results for 1996 are not significantly different from those for 2000 (see Tables 3 and 7).
- 4 Question 30 in Eurobarometer 54.1 reads: 'For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the (nationality) government, or made jointly within the European Union? 1 = nationality, 2 = jointly within the European Union, 3 = don't know.' The question formulation for national elites and Commission officials differs slightly from that for public opinion, in that it allows respondents to indicate, in addition to the direction, the degree of support or opposition: 'To what extent should each of the following policy areas be decided at the national or regional level and to what extent at the European level? We have a scale from 1 to 10. . . . The scores in between allow you to say how close to either side you are.' So elite responses are on a 10-point scale and public opinion data are binary. Table 5 in the appendix provides the raw scores. To be comparable, the data need to be transformed. Any transformation necessitates explicit assumptions about an imperfectly known response distribution. The most convincing transformation strategy consists of reducing the elite data into a binary categorization; that is, for each policy, one counts the proportion of elite respondents who prefer the policy

to be primarily a European responsibility. This figure expresses a simple idea – that the fundamental choice is whether an issue should be primarily national or European. I have repeated the analysis with more complex transformations and have found results across groups and policies to be quite robust.

- 5 One-way ANOVA means tests for group differences show that, as regards *average support* for Europeanization, group differences between Commission and public, and between Commission and national elites, are significant ($p = .008$), whereas those between national elites and public are insignificant ($p = 1.000$). As regards *support* for Europeanization *by policy*, almost all group differences tests are highly significant. Of the 26 group difference tests between Commission and public and between national elites and public, 20 are significant at the .001 level, 1 at the .01 level, and 1 at the .05 level, and 4 are insignificant ($p > .05$). According to the Gabriel test, only one group difference is insignificant. Bonferroni and Tukey are the most commonly used tests when variances are equal, and I report here and below the most conservative results. Where different, I also report the Gabriel test, which takes into account unequal group sizes. (The statistical package used for all analyses is SPSS 11.5.)
- 6 For the three sets of policies, differences between national elites and public are significant at the .001 level. The differences between Commission and public are highly significant for high politics, but less pronounced for ‘social model’ policies ($p = .01$ with the Gabriel test and $p = .08$ with Bonferroni/Tukey) and for redistributive policies ($p = .08$ with the Gabriel test but $p = .22$ with Bonferroni/Tukey.)
- 7 I follow the COFOG classification (Classifications of the Functions of Government), last revised in 1999 by the United Nations (see www.un.org/Depts/unsd/class.htm). For comparable data for all EU countries, I rely heavily on a recent report by the Commission of the European Communities (2002: 71–92), which provides credible estimates for the bulk of policies for all EU countries except Luxembourg. I complement these data with my own estimates for regional policy (not a separate category in COFOG; source: Commission of the European Communities, 2000), Third World aid (OECD figures), foreign policy, currency policy, and immigration policy (own extrapolations from national accounts). The categories are 1 for $x < 0.1\%$ of GDP (currency, foreign policy); 2 for $0.1 \leq x < 0.5\%$ of GDP (immigration, Third World aid); 3 for $0.5 \leq x < 1.5\%$ of GDP (agriculture, environment, regional policy, research); 4 for $1.5 \leq x < 4.5\%$ of GDP (defense, employment); 5 for $x \geq 4.5\%$ of GDP (education, health, social inclusion).
- 8 Students of public opinion generally recommend using measures of objective knowledge to gauge political sophistication (Zaller, 1992: 333–7). Question 24 in Eurobarometer 54.1 asks, for nine EU institutions, ‘Have you heard of [European institution]?’ and Q32 reads, ‘On which of the following do you think most of the European Union budget is spent?’ I construct an additive index of these 10 dichotomous variables, which varies between 0 (not one right answer) and 10 (knows all institutions, and answers correctly that agriculture is the largest category on the EU budget). I also calculate an index of subjective knowledge constructed from Q14, which reads, ‘How much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions’ (scale of 1 to 10). And I use education as a proxy for political sophistication; Eurobarometer asks respondents at what age they finished education.

- 9 An independent means *T*-test reveals that average support among left-leaning elites is significantly higher for social model policies as a bundle ($p = .00$), employment policy ($p = .00$), social inclusion ($p = .00$), and regional policy ($p = .08$), but not for research and development ($p = .45$) and environment ($p = .61$).

References

- Alesina, Alberto, Ignazio Angeloni, and Ludger Schuknecht (2001) 'What Does the European Union Do?', Washington, DC: National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 8647.
- Anderson, Christopher J. (1998) 'When in Doubt, Use Proxies: Attitudes toward Domestic Politics and Support for European Integration', *Comparative Political Studies* 31: 569–601.
- Aspinwall, Mark (2002) 'Preferring Europe: Ideology and National Preferences on European Integration', *European Union Politics* 3(1): 81–111.
- Beyers, Jan and Guido Dierickx (1997) 'Nationality and European Negotiations: The Working Groups of the Council of Ministers', *European Journal of International Relations* 3: 435–71.
- Brinegar, Adam, Seth Jolly, and Herbert Kitschelt (forthcoming) 'Varieties of Capitalism and Political Divides over European Integration', in Gary Marks and Marco Steenbergen (eds) *European Integration and Political Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Casella, Alessandra and Bruno Frey (1992) 'Federalism and Clubs. Towards an Economic Theory of Overlapping Political Jurisdictions', *European Economic Review* 36: 639–46.
- Commission of the European Communities (2000) *Second Report on Economic and Social Cohesion*. Luxembourg: Directorate-General for Regional Policy.
- Commission of the European Communities (2002) *European Economy, 3/2002*. Luxembourg: Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs.
- Dalton, Russell and Richard Eichenberg (1998) 'Citizen Support for Policy Integration', in Wayne Sandholtz and Alec Stone Sweet (eds) *European Integration and Supranational Governance*, pp. 250–82. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Delors, Jacques (1992) *Our Europe. The Community and National Development*. London: Verso (translated from the French: *La France par l'Europe*, 1988).
- Easton, David (1965) *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Egeberg, Morten (1999) 'Transcending Intergovernmentalism? Identity and Role Perceptions of National Officials in EU Decision Making', paper presented at the European Community Studies Association Conference, 2–5 June 1999, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Esping-Andersen, Gösta (1990) *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Franchino, Fabio (2000) 'Control of the Commission's Executive Functions: Uncertainty, Conflict, and Decision Rules', *European Union Politics* 1(1): 63–92.
- Gabel, Matthew J. (1998a) *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Gabel, Matthew J. (1998b) 'Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories', *Journal of Politics* 60: 333–54.
- Gabel, Matthew J. (2002) 'Public Opinion and European Integration: The State of the Field', *EUSA Review* 15(3): 9–10 and 16.
- Gabel, Matthew J. and Christopher J. Anderson (2002) 'The Structure of Citizen Attitudes and the European Political Space', *Comparative Political Studies* 35: 893–913.
- Gallie, Duncan and Serge Pauman (2002) *Social Precarity and Social Integration*. Brussels: report for the European Commission, Director-General of Employment, based on Eurobarometer 56.1.
- Green, David (2001) 'Support, (Mostly) Yes – But for What? Multilevel Governance, Policy Competencies and European Public Opinion', paper presented at the European Community Studies Association Conference, 31 May–2 June 2001, Madison, WI.
- Handley, David H. (1981) 'Public Opinion and European Integration: The Crisis of the 1970s', *European Journal of Political Research* 9: 335–64.
- Hartung, Harald (2002) *Eurobarometer 54.1: Building Europe and the European Union. The European Parliament, Public Safety, and Defense Policy, November–December 2000*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- Hewstone, Miles (1986) *Understanding Attitudes to the European Community*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hooghe, Liesbet (2001) *The European Commission and the Integration of Europe: Images of Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks (1999) 'The Making of a Polity. The Struggle over European Integration', in Herbert Kitschelt, Gary Marks, Peter Lange and John Stephens (eds) *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*, pp. 70–97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks (2003) 'Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of Multi-Level Governance', *American Political Science Review* 97: 2 (June).
- Huber, Evelyne and John Stephens (2001) *Political Choice in Global Markets: Development and Crisis of Advanced Welfare States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hug, Simon and Thomas König (2002) 'In View of Ratification. Governmental Preferences and Domestic Constraints at the Amsterdam Intergovernmental Conference', *International Organization* 2.
- Inglehart, Ronald (1970) 'Public Opinion and Regional Integration', *International Organization* 24: 764–95.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Jacques-René Rabier (1991) 'Analysing Trends in West European Opinion: The Role of Eurobarometer Surveys', in Karl-Heinz Reif and Ronald Inglehart (eds) *Eurobarometer: The Dynamics of European Public Opinion*, pp. 1–26. London: Macmillan.
- Iversen, Torben and Thomas R. Cusack (2000) 'The Causes of Welfare State Expansion: Deindustrialization or Globalization?', *World Politics* 52: 313–49.
- Iversen, Torben and David Soskice (2001) 'An Asset Theory of Social Preferences', *American Political Science Review* 95: 875–93.
- Jörges, Christian and Jürgen Neyer (1997) 'Transforming Strategic Interaction into Deliberative Problem-Solving: European Comitology in the Foodstuffs Section', *Journal of European Public Policy* 4: 609–25.

- Kölliker, Alkuin (2001) 'Bringing Together or Driving Apart the Union? Towards a Theory of Differentiated Integration', *West European Politics* 24: 125–51.
- Kitschelt, Herbert, Peter Lange, Gary Marks, and John Stephens (eds) (1999) *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, Jeffery (1998) 'Is the "Hard Bargaining" Image of the Council Misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Local Elections Directive', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36: 479–504.
- Marks, Gary (forthcoming) 'Conclusion: European Integration and Political Conflict', in Gary Marks and Marco Steenbergen (eds) *European Integration and Political Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oates, Wallace E. (1999) 'An Essay on Fiscal Federalism', *Journal of Economic Literature* 37: 1120–49.
- Pierson, Paul (1994) *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodrik, Dani (1997) *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.
- Ross, George (1995) *Jacques Delors and European Integration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sandholtz, Wayne and Alec Stone Sweet (eds) (1998) *European Integration and Supranational Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scharpf, Fritz (1999) *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scharpf, Fritz (2000) 'The Viability of Advanced Welfare States in the International Economy: Vulnerabilities and Options', *Journal of European Public Policy* 7: 190–228.
- Scheve, Kenneth and Matthew Slaughter (2002) 'Economic Insecurity and the Globalization of Production', Washington, DC: National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 9339.
- Schmitt, Hermann and Jacques Thomassen (2000) 'Dynamic Representation: The Case of European Integration', *European Union Politics* 1(3): 318–39.
- Shepherd, Robert (1975) *Public Opinion and European Integration*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Soskice, David (1999) 'Co-ordinated and Unco-ordinated Capitalism', in Herbert Kitschelt, Peter Lange, Gary Marks, and John Stephens (eds) *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*, pp. 101–34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spence, Jacqueline (n.d. [1997]) *The European Union: A View from the Top*. Waver, Belgium: EOS Gallup Europe.
- Tallberg, Jonas (2002) 'Delegation to Supranational Institutions: Why, How, and with What Consequence?' *West European Politics* 25: 23–46.
- Vaubel, Roland (1994) 'The Public Choice Analysis of European Integration: A Survey', *European Journal of Political Economy* 10: 227–49.
- Weber, Katja and Mark Hallerberg (2001) 'Explaining Variation in Institutional Integration in the European Union: Why Firms May Prefer European Solutions', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8: 171–91.

- Wessels, Bernhard (1995) 'Development of Support: Diffusion or Demographic Replacement?' in Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Sinnott (eds) *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, pp. 137–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wessels, Bernhard and Achim Kielhorn (1995) 'Which Competencies for Which Political Level?', in Richard Katz and Bernhard Wessels (eds) *The European Parliament, the National Parliaments, and European Integration*, pp. 174–96. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zaller, John R. (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

About the author

Liesbet Hooghe is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599–3265, USA; Visiting Fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Abteilung "Institutionen und sozialer Wandel", Reichpietschufer 50, D-10785 Berlin, Germany.
Fax: +49 30 25 491 345
E-mail: hooghe@unc.edu
