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The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-wide Government

Robert Rohrschneider Indiana University

This article suggests that the EU's representation deficit undermines mass support for Europe's political integration, especially when national institutions work well. Combining public opinion surveys from twelve West European publics with ratings of nations' institutional quality, we estimate a multi-level model. The results show that when citizens perceive that they are unrepresented, their support for the EU is reduced independent of economic perceptions; this reduction is especially strong in nations with well-functioning institutions. The study (1) suggests that transition and EU analyses converge on the impact of regimes' democratic performance in shaping regime support; (2) proposes guidelines to model mass support for new institutions; (3) contains disquieting implications for Europe's political integration and its eastward enlargement.

The democracy deficit of the European Union increasingly receives attention in the scholarly literature (Blondel, Sinnott, and Svensson 1998; Scharpf 1999; Katz and Wessels 1999). Surprisingly, despite the fact that these discussions focus on whether publics are represented by the EU, no crossnational study examines whether citizens feel represented by the EU. Neither do prior studies examine whether such views affect EU-support. This article addresses these issues.

Prior research about mass support for European integration often points to economic factors to explain why citizens support the EU (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Gabel 1998). From the perspective of democratic representation, such a focus implies an output-based conception of representation: citizens presumably base their evaluations of a regime on its capacity to deliver desired goods. However, democratic representation also means that a system provides democratic procedures for expressing mass preferences (Dahl 1989). Empirically, transition research in Central Europe shows, for example, that citizens are quite concerned with the quality of the democratic process independently of regimes' economic performance. In turn, such procedural evaluations shape mass support for new systems, at times exceeding the influence of economic evaluations (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Mishler and Rose 2001). Our first goal is therefore to probe whether mass support for the EU is lowered when citizens perceive the EU as being unresponsive to their preferences.

A second argument develops an insight advanced by Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) who suggests that higher levels of corruption at the national level directly increase EU-support. However, we argue that the quality of national institutions *mediates* the effect of the perceived democracy deficit on EU-support. Accordingly, we expect perceptions of under-representation to reduce mass support for the EU when citizens reside in nations with superior institutions.

One theoretical contribution of this article is to show the influence of a regime's democratic performance on mass support for institutions. This

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remains a perennial issue because surprisingly few studies examine the linkage between these factors (for exceptions see Evans and Whitefield 1995; Hofferbert and Klingemann 1999). Further, by linking the emerging EU-order to the democratic transition literature, we assess whether a central lesson from democratic transitions among nation-states can be transferred to an evolving supra-national regime.

This research also contributes to the EU literature because the nature and consequences of the EU's democracy deficit continue to be debated. Some conclude that the lack of a strong EU parliament, the absence of simple majority voting in the Council of ministers, or the lack of an EU-wide party system reduce the odds that EU-institutions represent citizens (Bodganor, 1989; Reif 1993). Others dispute this conclusion (Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999: 258). Surely, the consequences of the democracy deficit depend, in part, on citizens' appraisal of the representation process, and the consequences of this evaluation for EU-support.

We will first develop the conceptual connection between representational performance and mass support for the EU. This section also conceptualizes the link between the quality of national institutions and the EU's representation deficit. Second, we will test the arguments using a Eurobarometer conducted in the fall of 1994, along with a measure of the quality of national institutions. The conclusion develops the implications of this research.

Political Representation and European Integration

Essential to our argument is the recognition that political representation contains a substantive and a procedural component (Dahl 1989: chapter 2). Substantively, citizens must get what they want some of the time, because they would be unlikely to support a system that never delivers goods they prefer. In addition, however, the concept of representation requires "that each person should receive an . . . equal chance to gain the scarce item" (Dahl 1989, 108). The procedural aspect is particularly important given that individuals rarely obtain everything they value: what counts, to a considerable degree, is the belief that institutions provide a fair articulation of one's interests.

Figure 1 captures this conceptual distinction in the EU-context. The bottom half summarizes the familiar logic of output-based representation. When the EU is perceived to improve the economic situation for nations and individuals, EU support usually increases. For, as

Eichenberg and Dalton put it, "if the EC has promised anything, it has promised the enhancement of member states' national economic welfare" (1993, 510). More recently, Gabel's analyses indicate that citizens' competitiveness in an integrated economy affects their support for integration because "EU membership provides significant economic gains and losses to skilled and unskilled workers depending on their position in the EU labor market" (Gabel 1998, 938). Therefore, to the extent that economic perceptions influence support for political integration, prior research shows—and we expect to confirm—that positive economic perceptions increase EU-support.

The top part of Figure 1 encapsulates our argument concerning the EU's political performance. Evaluations of the EU's procedural capacity to represent citizens no doubt reflect how well the EU has previously delivered what citizens expect, thus constituting a "running tally" of the EU's economic performance.¹ These evaluations may also be motivated by citizens' commitment to the idea of democratic representation.² The confluence of these processes likely entails that citizens not only assess the EU's economic outputs but also hold views about how well the EU articulates their interests. Thus, to some degree, representational appraisals reflect publics' confidence in the capacity of the EU to properly articulate mass preferences.

These evaluations, in turn, may shape mass support for political integration. As Evans and Whitefield formulate it for new democracies in Central Europe:

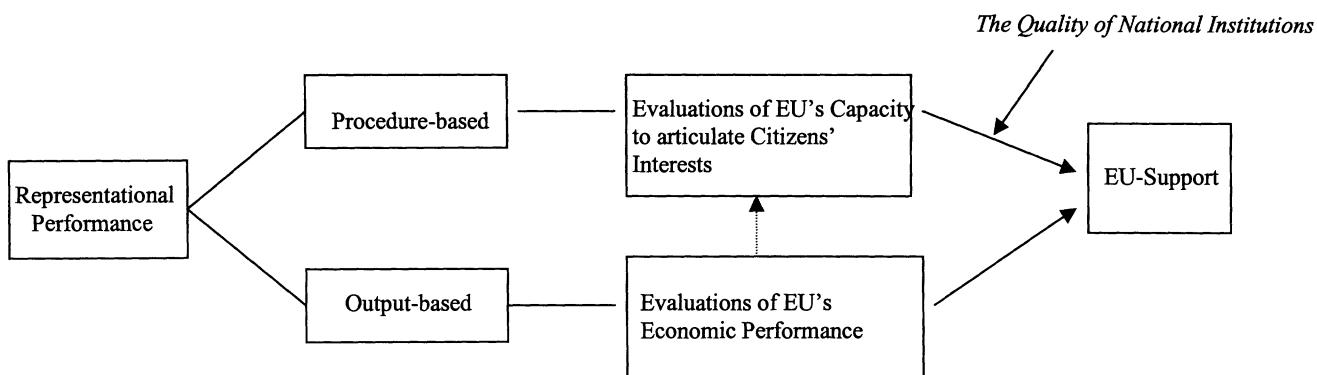
the experience of democratic politics could itself explain popular levels of support for democracy. . . . Against the economic experience variables . . . we propose to set indicators of democratic performance: (i) evaluation of democracy in practice and (ii) respondents' perceptions of the responsiveness of the political system. (1995, 487)

Their study shows the influence of democratic performance on regime support; a pattern that also emerges in other analyses of mass evaluations of new democracies (Hofferbert and Klingemann 1999; Mishler and Rose 2001).

¹To acknowledge this possibility, we include a dotted line from economic to political performance. This linkage will be explored in a separate study.

²For example, about 80 percent of West Europeans agree that "guaranteeing the rights of the individual and respect of the principles of democracy in Europe" should be a priority for the EU. See question 37 in Eurobarometer 50.0 (fall 1998); country-specific patterns reflect the Europe-wide average.

FIGURE 1 Political Representation and EU Support



A key issue is whether these patterns from Central Europe (or other countries) can be applied to the EU. One might contend that the EU is a system-in-progress and that citizens therefore continue to support it even if they believe the EU is unresponsive to their preferences. To state it pointedly (and optimistically), citizens may support the formation of an EU-wide government *in order* to overcome the EU's current representation deficits. One might also argue that a new supra-national order is always evaluated on the basis of specific (economic) outputs because publics attribute to national systems the responsibility to articulate their preferences. If this logic holds, representational evaluations would be largely irrelevant in engendering mass support for a future EU government.

We are skeptical about these arguments. The first argument in the preceding paragraph presumes that citizens have the information and skills to compare the representational capacity of a *future* EU-wide regime with that of the *present* EU-framework. Given the complexity of such an assessment, we question whether this process appreciably undercuts the impact of current representation deficits on EU-support. In addition, direct elections to the European parliament have been held since 1979 and are justified on the grounds that elections increase the democratic legitimacy of the European parliament. The EU has also substantially increased the number of EU-laws which "vividly [records] the extent to which the domain of EC law has expanded" (Stone-Sweet and Brunell 1998, 72).

All of this means that the EU not only lays claim to represent citizens, but directly influences how a growing number of Europeans conduct their economic and political affairs. We therefore expect that support for the EU depends on the EU's *current* representational performance. Even if one prefers the optimistic view, it is ultimately an empirical question whether the EU's represen-

tational performance influences mass support for it. We therefore test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of under-representation reduce EU-support independent of economic factors.

The Quality of National Institutions

We expect the individual-level relationships to emerge in all West European countries. But we also argue that the effect of the EU's representational performance on EU-support varies systematically with the quality of national institutions.

Consider that citizens typically have multiple contacts with national institutions, such as a country's legal institutions or bureaucracies. These contacts undoubtedly add up to a general appraisal of how well they implement policies, administer them, and adjudicate disputes (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). In short, high-quality national institutions exemplify the idea of substantive *and* procedural representation. In contrast, when national institutions are corrupt, or bureaucracies ineffective, citizens can be less certain that their interests are considered properly.

We, in turn, expect that the quality of national institutions affects how much weight individuals attach to flaws of EU-institutions. When citizens live in a country with high-quality institutions, the contrast in institutional quality between the two levels in all likelihood increases the salience of the EU's representation deficit. This, in turn, should increase the odds that citizens actually evaluate the EU on the basis of its representation deficit rather than another feature (e.g., the common market). Second, group-level processes may also affect how much importance individuals assign to the EU's democracy deficit. Opponents to political integration, for example, or the mass media are more likely to mobilize

opposition to integration on the basis of the EU's democracy deficit when national systems work well.³

Theoretically, once we move towards the low-quality end of national institutions, it is conceivable that the "net quality" between national and supranational institutions is balanced so much in favor of the EU that even a flawed EU-representation process appears preferable to national institutions. In this scenario, supporters of the EU or the mass media may mobilize mass support for greater integration on the basis of the (imperfect) representational structures of the EU. That is, when national institutions work poorly, the EU's representational capacity may be an asset, rather than a liability. In turn, the effect of the EU's representational dimension on EU-support should be weaker when both institutional levels are of comparable quality.

Yet, we do not expect these forces to work *symmetrically* as one moves from nations with well-functioning institutions to those with lower quality systems. For supporters of the EU may find it difficult to defend the EU's representation process when a large number of citizens considers it flawed—even when national institutions are worse than EU institutions. In short, we expect that it is easier to frame the representational deficit as a liability when national institutions work well than to present it as an asset when institutions work poorly. It thus becomes an empirical question whether the gap between the two institutional levels is sufficiently tilted in favor of the EU.

In sum, we argue that the quality of national institutions enhances the odds that the EU's democracy deficit becomes politicized, either through individuals' own deliberations or through the domestic political process. The second hypothesis summarizes this expectation but leaves the direction of the effect open because we will test whether the EU's (imperfect) representational capacity constitutes an asset in nations where institutions do not work well:

Hypothesis 2: The quality of national institutions mediates the effect of the representation deficit on EU-support.

Measurement and Results

Eurobarometer 42 (EB 42) conducted in the fall of 1994 contains several measures of citizens' views about a Europe-wide government and how well EU-institutions

³Previous analyses show that domestic elites affect how mass publics evaluate the EU (Franklin et al. 1995; Wessels 1995).

represent citizens. More recent Eurobarometers exclude several key variables needed to estimate the model (especially the representational and economic indicators). Several key questions pertinent to this study were not asked in Austria, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

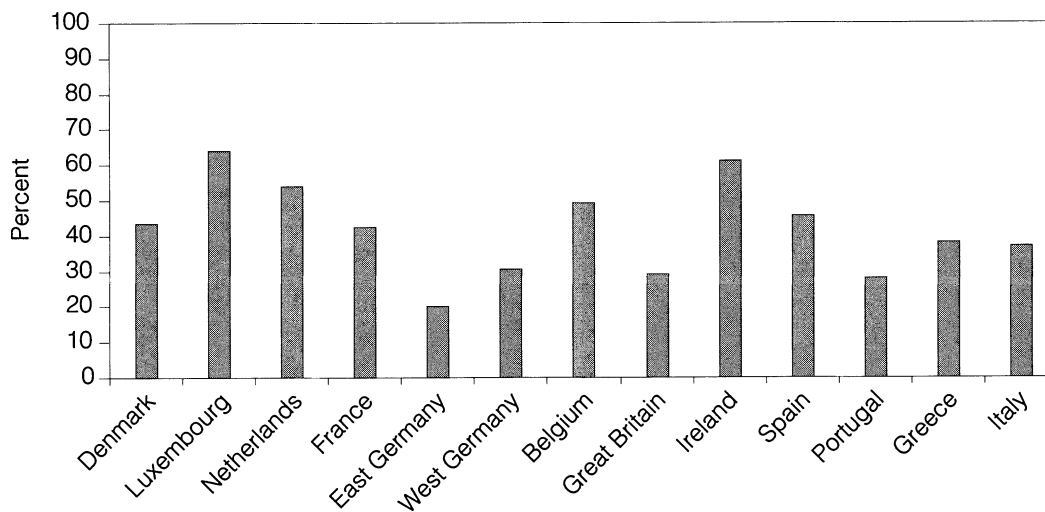
Two indicators measure EU-support. First, an additive index gauges how strongly West Europeans support the formation of an EU-wide government (see Appendix A for question wording and details on the construction of indicators). This indicator gauges mass support for a central institutional variant presently considered for the EU. A second indicator appraises how satisfied citizens are with the EU's current democratic processes.

Perceptions of representation are the key predictor of EU-support in our model. Respondents were asked: "Many important decisions are made by the European Union. They might be in the interest of people like yourself, or they might not. To what extent do you feel you can rely or not on each of the following institutions to make sure that the decisions taken by this institution are in the interest of people like yourself?" Respondents evaluated the European Commission, the European parliament, and the Council of Ministers. Another question asks: "As a European citizen, do you think that the European parliament protects your interest?" We constructed an additive indicator ranging from 4 to 12.

The representational questions tap a different aspect of the EU than the items measuring support for a Europe-wide government. This interpretation is supported by a factor analysis of the seven institutional and representational items: a two-dimensional solution emerges in the pooled sample and in every national survey.

Figure 2 shows that the majority of European citizens does not believe that the EU properly accounts for their interests. (All figures and tables arrange countries based on a measure of institutional quality, to be discussed below, from left (high quality) to right). Detailed analyses show that most institutions receive comparable marks when viewed within countries; the main variation occurs across nations. We register this cross-national pattern but do not attempt to explain it in the present article for reasons of space.

Naturally, these patterns do not necessarily mean that the EU never delivers what citizens want (the substantive dimension of representation). Given the multi-layered system of governance, involving regional, national, and supra-national organizations, publics may simply be unable to give due credit to the EU. However, the blurred institutional responsibilities among institutions reinforce a point made earlier—that we ought to bear in mind *citizens'* views when we evaluate the representation process at the EU-level.

FIGURE 2 Do Citizens Feel Represented by the EU?

Note: Entries are the proportion of respondents who feel represented (categories 10–12 on the EU-representation index ranging from 4–12)

Predicting EU-Support

We conducted several OLS analyses in order to examine whether the perceived democracy deficit reduces EU-support when we control for output-based perceptions. The model includes indicators gauging evaluations of the common market, national, and personal economic circumstances. It also controls for evaluations of national institutions (Anderson 1998). The analyses also consider a range of other predictors that may affect EU-support (Caldeira and Gibson 1995; Gabel 1998). The inclusion of these variables entails that the EU-representation index largely measures popular views about the EU's procedural capacity to articulate mass preferences.

It is immediately apparent that perceptions of under-representation decrease support for an EU-wide government in every West European country (Table 1). This effect emerges in addition to citizens' economic perceptions and their dissatisfaction with the current EU-democracy. Note also that the EU's representational performance affects popular support for a European government as strongly as evaluations of the common market.

In contrast, when citizens are satisfied with the performance of a nation's democracy, their support for an EU-wide government decreases marginally, conflicting with the argument that EU-support is driven by appraisals of national systems (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). Respondents' assessment of national and personal economic conditions hardly influence popular views about the EU-process. In short, the strongest predictors are directly attributable to the EU—evaluations of its economic *and* representational performance.

When we turn our attention to predicting popular satisfaction with the existing EU-process (Table 2), perceptions of under-representation are again one of the two strongest predictors. While citizens' views about national democracies seemingly affect how they evaluate current EU-institutions, this linkage no doubt emerges, in large part, because both satisfaction indicators were asked as part of the same question in the survey. Despite the inflated size of this coefficient, the EU-representation indicator remains a strong predictor of mass satisfaction with the EU-process.

In sum, representational perceptions emerge as one of the strongest predictors of both institutional dimensions across West Europe. Given that we include several indicators measuring the EU's output-capacity of the EU and national systems, we conclude that Europeans' concerns with the procedural capacity of the EU to represent them influences their support for political integration.⁴

⁴In another model, we examined whether information gaps about the EU engender the link between representational perceptions and EU-support. We divided the sample in each country into respondents high and low in subjective knowledge about the EU. With the exception of East Germany, however, the size of the representation coefficients do not differ substantially across the two groups. We also tested whether citizens rely on their general feelings about the EU to evaluate EU-institutions and their representational capacity: "Generally speaking, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?" However, the representation coefficients change fairly little from those presented in Tables 1 and 2 when this variable is included. Because of the ambiguous result concerning East Germany, where representational views do not affect EU-support among knowledgeable citizens, we excluded the East German survey in the pooled analysis below.

TABLE 1 Predicting Support for an EU-wide Government

Predictor	Denmark		Netherlands		France		East Germ.		West Germ.		Belgium		Great Britain		Ireland		Spain		Portugal		Greece		Italy	
	Luxembourg																							
EU-Representation	.30**	.17	.21**	.24**	.31**	.21**	.27**	.25**	.26**	.26**	.26**	.25**	.25**	.26**	.26**	.23**	.23**	.17**	.22**	.17**	.22**	.22**	.16**	.16**
Hopeful about EU Market	.23**	.35	.20**	.22**	.22**	.35**	.22**	.23**	.30**	.30**	.30**	.23**	.23**	.30**	.16**	.27**	.27**	.33**	.33**	.33**	.22**	.22**	.19**	.19**
Satisfaction EU-Democracy	.07	.11	.18**	.03	.11**	.08*	.04	.11**	.16**	.16**	.16**	.11**	.16**	.16**	.09*	.09*	.09*	.09*	.09*	.09*	.07*	.07*	.03	.03
Satisfaction National Democracy	.04	.07	.02	.06	-.09*	-.06	.03	-.04	.07	.07	.07	-.04	.07	.07	-.05	.07	.07	.02	.02	.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02
Representation-Nation	-.08*	-.14	.10	.02	.03	.04	.001	.01	-.02	-.02	-.02	.01	-.02	.03	.03	.08*	.08*	.03	.03	.03	.01	.01	.01	.01
National Economy	.05	.02	.02	-.03	.01	.09*	.08	.03	.05	.05	.05	.03	.05	.05	.05	-.01	-.01	.01	.01	.01	.02	.02	.04	.04
Household Economy	.06	.05	.03	.01	.02	.07*	.06	-.01	.08*	-.02	-.02	-.01	.08*	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	.05	-.01	.05	-.01	.02	.02	.03
National Pride	-.06	-.10	-.04	-.03	.02	.04	-.11**	.01	-.07*	.04	.04	-.05	-.07*	.04	.04	.01	.01	.06	.06	.06	.05	.05	-.03	-.03
Interest in EU Politics	.05	.07	.22**	.20**	.09**	.18**	.27**	.21**	.08*	.14**	.14**	.21**	.08*	.14**	.14**	.18**	.18**	.06	.06	.06	.15**	.15**	.08	.08
General Political Interest	.05	.06	.02	.02	.07	.04	.02	.03	.01	.07	.07	.03	.01	.07	.07	.19	.19	.01	.01	.01	.15	.15	.08	.08
Media Usage	.05	.11	.03	.02	.01	.02	.02	.03	.05	.03	.03	.02	.05	.03	.03	.04	.04	.04	.04	.04	.04	.04	.06	.06
Postmaterialism	.01	.007	.11**	.11**	.01	.06	.12**	.06	.04	.03	.03	.06	.04	.03	.03	.02	.02	.03	.03	.03	.05	.05	.10**	.10**
Left Ideology	.04	.04	.08	.08*	.13**	.02	.02	.02	.10**	.02	.02	.02	.10**	.02	.02	.03	.03	.06	.06	.06	.07*	.07*	.20	.20
Age	.02	.002	.11*	-.08*	-.03	.02	-.04	.01	.04	.04	.04	.01	.04	.09*	.09*	.03	.03	.09*	.09*	.09*	.06	.06	.01	.01
Education	.02	.006	.05	.04	.001	.02	.02	.02	-.04	.02	.02	.02	-.04	.006	.006	.02	.02	.05	.05	.05	.04	.04	.13**	.13**
Sex (Female)	.02	.08	.01	.05	.05	.03	.01	.05	.04	.02	.02	.009	.04	.02	.02	.007	.007	.01	.01	.01	.03	.03	.03	.03
Subjective Upper Class	.05	.08	.03	.13	.16	.09	.001	.15	.14	.05	.05	.15	.14	.05	.02	.02	.02	.03	.03	.03	.09	.09	.08	.08
N-of Cases	830	369	833	808	829	812	782	857	623	695	749	857	623	695	749	623	695	749	623	695	749	623	695	749
R-Square	.31	.35	.24	.29	.33	.36	.31	.40	.32	.32	.32	.40	.32	.32	.28	.32	.32	.32	.32	.32	.29	.29	.23	.23

Note: The first cell entries are standardized regression coefficients (OLS), the second entries are unstandardized coefficients. All variables have been recoded so that high values as expressed by the variable label express greater support for the EU. Nation-weight is used. * p < .05; ** = p < .01

TABLE 2 Predicting Satisfaction with EU-Democracy

Predictor	Denmark	Netherlands	France	East Germ.	West Germ.	Belgium	Great Britain	Ireland	Spain	Portugal	Greece	Italy
	Luxembourg											
EU-Representation	.35**	.23**	.26**	.14**	.17**	.31**	.16**	.27**	.25**	.13**	.18**	.16**
Hopeful about EU Market	.14	.09	.12	.06	.08	.14	.07	.11	.09	.06	.06	.07
Satisfaction National Democracy	.08*	.06	.06*	.13**	.09**	.07*	.06	.13**	.14**	.12**	.06	.10**
Representation-Nation	.07	.05	.09	.11	.08	.06	.05	.13	.13	.12	.05	.09
National Economy	.29**	.41**	.31**	.46**	.42**	.32**	.55*	.28**	.40**	.44**	.58**	.28*
Household Economy	.35	.50	.32	.44	.37	.32	.51	.25	.32	.43	.52	.27
National Pride	-.04	.04	.02	-.06	.01	-.05	-.04	-.07**	-.08**	.01	-.02	.001
Interest in EU Politics	-.04	.03	.02	-.05	.006	-.04	-.03	-.06	-.06	.03	-.02	.001
General Political Interest	.01	.09	.02	-.03	-.04	.05	.04	-.04	.01	.01	-.01	.04
Media Usage	.01	.04	.02	-.03	-.04	.02	.02	-.01	.001	.003	-.004	.01
Postmaterialism	.03	.01	.08*	.01	.02	.08*	.04	-.02	.01	.06	.01	-.05
Left Ideology	.02	.02	.07*	.05	.03	.01	.05	-.01	.03	.02	.02	.02
Age	.02	.06	.07*	.05*	.07*	.02	.08*	.01	.12**	.10*	.05	.07
Education	.02	.05	.07	.05	.06	.02	.07	.004	.08	.08	.04	.05
Sex (Female)	.09*	.09	-.16**	-.11**	.06	.07	-.09	.05	.08	-.10*	.06	.01
Subjective Upper Class	.08	.08	-.14	-.09	.05	.06	-.07	.04	.05	-.08	.04	.001
N-of Cases	.04	.01	.01	.04	.01	.03	-.01	.05	.02	.01	.02	.01
R-Square	.06	.02	.01	.05	.004	.05	-.006	.07	.02	.02	.02	.004
	.01	.04	-.04	.03	.01	.03	-.03	-.02	-.04	.02	.01	-.02
	.01	.06	-.07	.04	.02	.05	-.05	-.04	-.06	.03	.001	-.04
	-.13**	.06	.05	.02	-.03	.04	.02	.11**	.06	.05	.02	-.11**
	-.09	.04	.03	.008	-.02	.03	.01	.07	.03	.02	.01	.05
	.04	.02	-.13**	.02	-.05	.02	-.07*	-.14**	.04	.01	.03	-.03
	.003	.001	-.008	.001	-.03	.001	-.004	-.007	.003	.003	.002	-.001
	.07**	.06	.05	.01	.03	-.05	.01	-.04	.06	.01	.03	-.03
	.02	.01	.01	.004	.007	-.02	.004	-.02	.02	.001	.007	.006
	-.08**	.13**	.09*	.01	.03	.02	.02	.05	.02	.02	.03	.01
	-.19	.27	.19	.02	.07	.05	.03	.10	.04	.04	.05	.03
	.04	.02	.03	.03	-.02	-.06	-.01	.01	.02	.01	.03	.06
	.05	.02	.03	.04	-.02	-.07	-.01	.002	.01	.002	.03	.07
	830	369	833	808	829	812	782	857	749	695	623	702
	.37	.38	.30	.31	.28	.31	.42	.24	.33	.34	.47	.15

Note: The first cell entries are standardized regression coefficients (OLS), the second entries are unstandardized coefficients. All variables have been recoded so that high values as expressed by the variable label indicate greater support for the EU. Nation-weight is used. * p= <.05; ** p<.01

The Quality of National Institutions and EU-Support

These individual-level results match the micro-level processes summarized in Figure 1. What must still be done, however, is to test whether the quality of national institutions mediates the influence of representational perceptions on EU-support. Does the quality of national institutions help explain why Danish citizens, for example, are more than twice as likely ($b = .17$) than Italians ($b = .07$) to reduce support for an EU-wide government when they believe the EU to be unresponsive? One challenge in testing this hypothesis is to develop an indicator of the quality of national institutional processes. Because our argument focuses on the procedural quality of institutions, not merely their outputs, economic measures cannot be used to test it. Neither would it be appropriate to use a measure of citizens' satisfaction with national democracies. These evaluations are based on a variety of considerations, often economic in nature, and do not necessarily focus on national institutional procedures per se.

We therefore use the ratings of national institutions provided by an independent business firm, the *International Country Risk Guide*. Since 1982, the ICRG has provided investors and governments with monthly information about the state of property rights worldwide. Three dimensions assess the quality of national institutions: the extent of corruption, the degree to which the rule of law is used to adjudicate disputes, and the political independence of a nation's bureaucracy (see Appendix B for details).

We combined the institutional quality variable with the individual-level data in order to model their joint effect on EU-support. We also include a nation's GDP/Capita, because the less affluent nations obtain lower institutional ratings and because prior research argues that national affluence affects EU-support.

Because the model merges data from two different levels, OLS create a number of statistical problems, including underestimating the standard errors for contextual variables (Jones and Steenbergen, 2002). We therefore estimate the model using a software developed by Bryk and Raudenbush (1992) for multi-level models (HLM version 5.04). Given our theoretical goal, HLM requires the specification of three equations:

$$\text{EU-support} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\text{representation}_{ij} + \beta_k x_{kij} + e_{ij} \quad (1)$$

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{Quality}_j + \gamma_{02}\text{GDP/Capita}_j + \delta_{0j} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}\text{Quality}_j + \delta_{1j} \quad (3)$$

The first equation models the influence of k individual-level predictors on EU-support. The j subscript for the representation coefficient indicates that it is expected to vary across the j nations. Equation 2 models the influence of institutional quality and GDP/Capita on crossnational differences in EU-support. In HLM, this effect is modeled through the influence of macro-level factors on the intercepts from equation 1. Equation 3 models the interaction between institutional quality and representational views. The interaction is captured by estimating the effect of nations' institutional quality on the representation coefficients from equation 1. Note that equations 2 and 3 contain an error term; unlike OLS, multi-level estimation techniques do not assume that a contextual variable completely determines the coefficient from the individual-level (see Jones and Steenbergen, 2002, for details).⁵

In a first step, we estimate a baseline model which includes all the micro-level predictors of EU-support but excludes the contextual factors. HLM provides an estimate of whether the crossnational variance of a micro-level coefficient is statistically significant (the variance component).⁶ For example, when we estimate the baseline model for popular views about an EU-wide government, the variance component of the representation coefficient is statistically significant (.00191; chi-square = 88.81; $p = .000$). The same result emerges for mass satisfaction with the current EU-framework (0.00065; chi-square = 61.73; $p = .000$). These results indicate that the influence of the representation coefficient on EU support varies systematically across nations.

Does the quality of national institutions help to explain why the influence of perceived under-representation on EU-support differs crossnationally? Table 3 suggests yes: the interaction term (γ_{11} in equation 3) is statistically significant for both dependent variables. (The positive sign denotes that the representation coefficient is larger in nations with higher institutional quality.) Note also that the variance components of the representation coefficients are reduced by nearly fifty percent when compared to the base-line models. These patterns indicate that citizens are *especially* likely to penalize the EU for not representing them when they reside in nations with superior institutions. Importantly, citizens not

⁵We estimated each model using restricted and full maximum likelihood, and the results are virtually identical.

⁶Generally, if the variance component of the intercepts is significant, it indicates the presence of systematic, crossnational variation in levels of EU-support. If the variance component of a coefficient is significant, it indicates that its effect on EU-support varies systematically across nations (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992: Chapter 3).

TABLE 3 Individual and Nation-level Predictors of EU-Support

Dependent Variable:	Support EU-wide Government	Satisfaction with EU-Democracy
<i>Nation-level Predictors:</i>		
Institutional Quality	.22	.07
Interaction Representation*Quality	.02**	.01*
GDP/Capita	.00003	.00004
<i>Individual-level Predictors:</i>		
EU-Representation	.15**	.09**
Hopeful about EU-Market	.31**	.10**
Satisfaction EU-Democracy	.10**	a
Satisfaction National Democracy	-.03*	.37**
Representation-Nation	.02	-.04*
National Economy	-.001	-.003
Household Economy	.004	.006
National Pride	-.03*	-.02
Interest in EU Politics	.16**	.04**
General Political Interest	.007	.07**
Media Usage	.07**	.01
Postmaterialism	.13**	.04*
Left Ideology	.02*	.02**
Age	-.003**	-.002
Education	.02**	.01**
Gender (Female)	-.009	-.08**
Subjective Upper Class	.04*	-.004
Constant	4.802261**	3.0626**
<i>Variance of Random Effects:</i>		
Constant	.284**	.075**
Representation Coefficient	.00097**	.00037**
-2xLogLikelihood	26929.570	21596.314

Note: Entries are Full Maximum Likelihood estimates of coefficients (HLM 5.04). Nation-weight is used. N=7968. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

only lower support for the current EU-framework for its democracy deficit, but also reduce support for a future, EU-wide government.⁷

Importantly, the direct effect of the institutional quality indicator is insignificant at the .05 level for both dependent variables. This contradicts Sanchez-Cuenca's (2000) finding that national corruption levels directly affects EU-support. Also note that GNP/Capita does not pass conventional levels of statistical significance (for the same finding using different data, see Jones and Steenberg, 2002). These patterns indicate that previous analyses, which do not account for the multi-level nature

⁷The variance components for the intercept and representation slope remain statistically significant after we include the contextual factors. We used the exploratory procedures in HLM to examine whether other contextual factors, such as type of institutions or length of EU-membership further reduce the variance of the intercept and slopes. None of these factors, however, are statistically significant.

of such data, overestimate the impact of these national-level characteristics on EU support.⁸

There is a final point we must tackle. Theoretically, we suggested earlier that the EU's representational capacity may actually constitute an asset when national institutions perform worse than those of the EU. We address this issue in two ways. First, we compare whether the European parliament is viewed more favorably than national parliaments. It turns out that only a minority perceives the European parliament as a better agent of interest representation than the national parliament in each country. In the four countries with the worst institutional quality ratings, for example, the proportion of respondents viewing the European parliament more

⁸In an earlier model, we also included a country's length of membership as a predictor of EU-support but it does not affect our main variables of theoretical interest. When we delete the GNP/Capita variable, the direct effect of the institutional quality indicator remains insignificant. Our results, in short, are quite robust.

favorably⁹ are: Italy (22 percent), Greece (18 percent), Portugal (14 percent), and Spain (28 percent). Given these basic patterns, it is unlikely that the EU's representational capacity can be used to mobilize support for the EU even in nations with lower institutional quality. In technical terms, the representation coefficients are not expected to become significantly larger as one moves towards nations with low institutional quality scores.¹⁰

To test this expectation, we estimated another HLM model, using all variables from the model in Table 3, and including a quadratic term of the institutional quality indicator as a predictor of the representation coefficients (equation 3). As expected, the quadratic coefficient is statistically insignificant (for both dependent variables). There is no statistically significant curvilinear effect of the ICRG indicators on the representation coefficients. In sum, the EU's representation deficit is a liability everywhere; it does not constitute an asset in nations with lower institutional quality.

Conclusion

Mass evaluations of the EU's democracy deficit constitute a serious liability to Europe's political integration. A majority of West Europeans does not believe that the EU represents them; these perceptions not only increase dissatisfaction with the current EU-framework but also lower support for a future, EU-wide government. These effects are especially strong in countries with high-quality institutions.

Perhaps a promising sign for the EU is that a significant number of Europeans is still uncertain about how well the EU represents them. These citizens may be persuaded by appropriate institutional changes that the EU represents their interests (e.g., by increasing the authority of the European parliament). Perhaps even those who presently do not believe that the EU represents citizens may change their views after the EU introduces more democratic procedures. One question, which future research should address, then, is: how much change in EU-structures is necessary so that citizens feel represented by the EU?

⁹We created a net score of respondents' evaluations of the national parliament and the EP by subtracting the evaluations of the European parliament from those of the respondents' home parliament.

¹⁰The percentages giving the European parliament higher marks than the national parliament in the remaining countries are: Denmark (6 percent), Luxembourg (6 percent), Netherlands (19 percent), France (22 percent), West Germany (13 percent), Belgium (19 percent), Great Britain (26 percent), Ireland (34 percent).

Theoretically, this article points to the relevance of the EU's representational performance in engendering mass support for the EU. The general implication of our research is as straightforward as it is important: the EU's democratic performance should be made a central part of systematic, empirical research.

Relatedly, this research also shows that the quality of preexisting institutions mediates just how much weight citizens attribute to the EU's representation deficit. However, unlike previous research, we do not find that the quality of national systems directly affects popular support for the EU. The micro-level patterns presented in Tables 1 and 2 also conflict with accounts that the EU is primarily judged on the basis of national factors. All of this evidence supports our contention that the influence of national institutions on EU-support is mediating, not direct.

Beyond the EU, several patterns revealed here broadly parallel those revealed by analyses in Central Europe. First, evaluations of the democratic process are as important to West Europeans in judging the EU as they are to Central Europeans in appraising new democracies. This suggests that any theory of institutional support concerning national and supra-national orders should include predictors of institutions' economic *and* political performance.

Another parallel is that evaluations of the EU are indirectly shaped by the quality of national institutions, just as appraisals of old regimes affect support for democracies in Central Europe (Mishler and Rose 1997). One general lesson, then, is that citizens judge new institutions against their experience with the regime that is to be replaced. This similarity provides a compelling case for the generalizability of this process because it emerges in different regions and with different data: transition studies use survey data where respondents evaluate the old and new national institutions; our study combines survey data concerning the EU with independent ratings of the quality of national institutions. Consequently, analyses of regime support—both national and international ones—should model how mass evaluations of preexisting institutions affect support for a new regime.

Our results also hint at some of the potential problems that may arise from the addition of Central European nations to the EU. The growing quality of national institutions in new democracies may stimulate public opposition to the EU's eastward expansion. The first wave of new member states from Central Europe obtain ICRG ratings rivaling and at times exceeding those of national institutions in Southern Europe. Poland, for example, obtained an ICRG score of 15 in 1993, up from 12.2 in 1990, and it remains at that level in the late 1990s. Assuming

that institutions in these new democracies continue to improve, the representation deficit may eventually become politicized in these countries as well, with ramifications which are difficult to anticipate at this juncture.

Probably the single most important conclusion of this study is that the EU's democratic performance substantially shapes support for integration, especially when national systems works well. For analysts, a major task is to integrate institutions' economic and political performance into a general model of institutional support. And for the EU, a central project is to establish institutions that deliver economic affluence and democratic representation.

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Appendix A

This appendix describes the construction of indicators. If a variable is of central theoretical import to this article, the appendix also describes the question wording. For space-related reasons, variables that represent standard controls in modeling mass support for the EU, we describe the recodes only and list the variable number from the ICPSR codebook (ICPSR 6518, second edition). For all variables, the small number of "Don't knows" is included as a middle category.

EU-Representation (v306, v308, v310) and Representation-Nation (v307, v309). Question wording is presented in the main text. Response categories are: 1. Can rely on; 2. Cannot rely on; 3. Don't Know. The indicator concerning the parliament (v311) contains the response categories: 1. Very well; 2. Fairly well; 3. Not very well; 4. Not at all well. 5. "Don't know" (collapsed into 3 categories). We created an additive index ranging from 4 to 12. The national representation index gauges whether citizens can rely on the national government and the national parliament to represent their interests.

EU-wide Government. An additive index (ranging from 3 to 9) of three indicators:

"Are you for or against the formation, for the European Union, of a European government responsible to the European parliament?" (v90).

After being told that the Maastricht treaty provides greater power to the European parliament, citizens were asked: "Do you think that it is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither a good nor a bad thing?" (v187).

"Would you personally prefer that the European parliament played a more important or a less important part than

it does now?" More important; about the same (volunteered); less important. (v302).

The results remain unaffected when we conducted the analyses with a broader integration measure which includes the three indicators listed above, plus the following three items:

"In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe? For-very much; For-to some extent; Against-to some extent; Against-very much. (v63).

"Generally speaking, do you think that (Country's) membership of European Union is: A good thing; Neither good nor bad; A bad thing." (v64).

"If you were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped, would you be very sorry about it, indifferent, or very relieved. (v66).

Evaluations of the Common Market (v97). "Personally, would you say that the Single European Market which came about at the beginning of 1993 makes you feel very hopeful, rather hopeful, rather fearful or very fearful?" The "Don't Know" responses are included as a middle category.

National Economic Assessments. Two indicators, each based on four items, were constructed. One indicator measures citizens' assessments of nations' current and future economic and employment situation (v37, v39, v41, v43); another additive indicator measures respondents' current and future financial and job situation (v38, v40, v42, v44).

Satisfaction with EU-Democracy (v59). After being asked how satisfied they are with the way democracy works in their country: "And how about the way democracy works in the European Union?" (Satisfied-very, to some extent; Dissatisfied-to some extent; very).

Satisfaction with National Democracy (v58). The small number of "Don't Know" responses are included as a middle category.

Interest in European Politics (v57).

Left-Ideological Identification (v457).

Media Usage (v538).

National Pride (v52).

Political Interests (v56).

Postmaterialism (v534).

Education (v465).

Age (v470).

Sex (v469).

Subjective Knowledge about EU (v62).

Subjective Social Class (v495).

Appendix B Measuring the Quality of Institutional Processes

This research uses a data set assembled by Stephen Knack and the IRIS center at the University of Maryland to measure institutional quality. Using the country ratings of the *International Country Risk Guide* (ICRG), the IRIS III data provides annual averages for over one hundred countries between 1982 and 1997. We use the 1990-1993 averages concerning the extent of corruption, the rule of law, and the quality of bureaucracies.

The ICRG employs regional experts on its staff to rate countries once a month (personal communication with the ICRG editor). First, a regional expert uses publicly available information to suggest a score for a country for each dimension. Scores range from 0 (indicating low institutional quality) to 6. Second, in a monthly "ratings conference" all experts discuss the suggested ratings and arrive at a final score. The following guidelines are used:

Corruption in Government. Countries receive a low score when "high government officials are likely to demand special payments" or when "illegal payments are generally expected throughout lower levels of government" such as "bribes connected with import and export licenses, exchange controls, tax assessment, police protection, or loans."

Rule of Law. This assessment "reflects the degree to which the citizens of a country are willing to accept the established institutions to make and implement laws and adjudicate disputes." Higher scores indicate: "sound political institutions, a strong court system, and provisions for an orderly succession

of power." Lower scores indicate: "a tradition of depending on physical force or illegal means to settle claims."

Quality of the Bureaucracy. High values indicate "an established mechanism for recruitment and training," "autonomy from political pressure," and "strength and expertise to govern without drastic changes in policy or interruptions in government services" when governments change.

We assessed the quality of the data from various angles. First, Knack and Keefer (1995: p. 210) report a strong correlation ($r = .9$ and higher) between the ICRG ratings of over one hundred countries and the ratings provided by the Business Risk Intelligence. Secondly, the ICRG corruption indicator correlates strongly with a corruption indicator developed by Transparency International ($r = .82$) in our 12 countries. Third, the rankings of the 12 European countries match our expectations: Northern democracies rank higher on the 3 indicators than Southern European nations. Fourth, there is a strong correlation between the institutional quality indicator and publics' average satisfaction with national democracies ($r = .79$). Fifth, the data has been extensively used in the economic growth literature (Barro 1999).

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TABLE A1 The Quality of Institutional Processes in West Europe

Country	Rule of Law	Corruption	Bureaucracy	Institutional Quality
Denmark	6	6	6	18
Luxembourg	6	6	6	18
Netherlands	6	6	6	18
France	5.75	5.68	6	17.43
Germany-West	5.6	5.53	6	17.03
Belgium	6	5	5.95	16.95
Great Britain	5.75	5	6	16.75
Ireland	5.2	5	5.95	16.15
Spain	5.53	4.63	4	14.16
Portugal	5.08	5	4	14.08
Greece	4.85	5	3.8	13.65
Italy	5	3.55	4.95	13.5

Note: Entries are ICRG ratings ranging from 0 (indicating low quality) to 6, averaged for the 1990-1993 period. Institutional Quality is an additive index of the 3 separate indicators.

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