

# A Postfunctionalist theory of European integration

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This paper is prepared for presentation at "Causes and Consequences of Euroskepticism," VU Amsterdam, July 1-2, 2005. It is work in progress not intended for citation or circulation. (References are incomplete.)

The past decade has been a period of remarkable intellectual productivity in the study of European integration. As EU decision making has come to encompass mass publics, political parties, and social movements, so researchers have rushed to describe and theorize about these phenomena. They have drawn on middle range theories in comparative politics, but they have rarely reflected back on the major theories that guided the field of regional integration in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.

At certain times in the history of a discipline, theories extend beyond the empirical facts that have been discovered to test them; at other times, new facts come to light that cannot be comprehended in terms of the theories available. For the past decade or more, European integration has thrown up a series of facts that escape the theories on offer.

The purpose of theory, according to Imre Lakatos, is to frame research agendas – to direct empirical research to new and interesting facts, as well as to generalize. For more than a decade, European integration has been shaped by a series of public debates within and among political parties that have framed referenda and spilled out into national and European elections. National identity as well as economic interests has motivated these debates. In this chapter we outline a theory of regional integration that “makes sense” of these new facts and the middle-range theories that have developed to account for them.

We do so by using the building blocks of the multi-level governance approach to European integration. Multi-level governance, as both its proponents and critics recognize, is not a theory of European or regional integration, but a proto model which subsumes regional integration and regional or subnational empowerment as part of a single, more general phenomenon, the (re)articulation of authority away from central states (Bache and Flinders 2004 eds.; Hooghe and Marks 2001). The multi-level governance approach rests on a set of assertions (a hard core) which is not itself empirically disconfirmable, but which is deemed necessary to explain authoritative reform in general, and regional integration in particular:

- National states, international regimes, and subnational governments are fundamentally similar in that they are sets of rules that specify the allocation and operation of authority for a collectivity. These regime forms are seamless with respect to individual preferences.<sup>1</sup>
- States are more usefully conceived as sets of rules that constrain actors, than as actors themselves. This avoids the trap of state reification, and leads the researcher to analyze private as well as public preferences of those in positions of authority. The private preferences of state actors include, above all, a preference to exercise authority, which is a sine qua non for their public preferences.<sup>2</sup> To exercise authority, leaders must have the support of political parties that compete in elections.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> That is to say, we assume that individuals have consistent preferences across jurisdictional scale.

<sup>2</sup> We depart from Douglass North’s assumption of income maximization.

<sup>3</sup> The link is direct for national leaders and for members of the European Parliament, and indirect for members of the College of Commissioners.

- An empirical claim: By 1986, the process of authoritative (re)allocation in Europe had created a distinctive political form – a system of multi-level governance – in which authority is shared across jurisdictions at diverse territorial scales.

Every theory is grounded on a set of assumptions – intellectual short cuts – that simplify a complex reality and direct our attention to causally powerful factors. A theory of regional integration should tell us about the political choices that determine its course. In order to explain the level and scope of integration, we need to understand the pressures on decision making. We need to inquire into the underlying conflicts that shape decision making: which actors are involved on what issues, and how are they expected to behave.

The theory we outline is based on presumptions about what is important and how to theorize about it. These are logically consistent with the hard core of multi-level governance, but are not deducible from it.

We pay detailed attention to the substantive character of the *debate* over regional integration. What do key actors strive for? How does the debate connect to domestic conflict? Does the debate have an underlying structure? The debate is complex and multi-faceted, but it is not *sui generis* or unfathomable. In fact, as recent research has discovered, the debate is structured and explicable. While some have tried, no one has succeeded in reducing the debate to rational economic interest, and, for reasons that we turn to next, we believe that it is impossible to do so.<sup>4</sup>

We claim that *identity* is decisive for jurisdictional (re)allocation in general, and regional integration in particular. The reason for this derives from the nature of governance. Governance has two utterly different purposes.<sup>5</sup> Governance is a means to achieve collective benefits by coordinating human activity. Given the variety of public goods and their varying externalities, efficient governance will operate over diverse territorial scales. But governance is also an expression of community. Citizens care – passionately – about who exercises authority over them. The challenge for a theory of (regional) governance is that the functional need for human cooperation rarely coincides with the territorial scope of community. Communities demand self rule, and the preference for self rule is almost always inconsistent with the functional demand for regional authority. We theorize that the outcome of this conflict is a decisive constraint on regional integration.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To be more precise, reducing the debate to rational economic interest loses causally decisive information.

<sup>5</sup> We define governance as binding decision making in the public sphere.

<sup>6</sup> An extension of our argument concerning community is that *trust* appears to be necessary in situations of incomplete contracting, i.e. where moral hazard may lead to non-consensual redistribution. Many international organizations, including pareto optimizing non-redistributive ones, fall into this category. There is some evidence that the extent of trust is positively related to the incidence of such jurisdictions (Hooghe and Marks 2005c).

The simplest way to argue this is to examine the logical underpinnings of Robert Axelrod's claim that cooperation is possible in the absence of trust (1984). Axelrod emphasizes that the tit-for-tat family of strategies does not involve trust, which is true. But Axelrod is wrong to argue that cooperation in general does not need to build on trust. Trust can be ignored as a source of cooperation only under extreme simplifying assumptions that eliminate ambiguity, and hence the role of perception. However, most regimes (including most international regimes that appear pareto optimal) do not meet the assumptions implicit in game theoretic models of cooperation without trust:

The purpose of this article is to summarize several strands of research – on political parties, public opinion, and identity – to explain the conflicts that have structured European integration. We describe the resulting theory as postfunctionalist because the term reflects our agnosticism (or scientific detachment) concerning whether the jurisdictions that humans create are, or are not, efficient. While we share with neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism the view that regional integration is triggered by a mismatch between efficiency and the existing structure of authority, we make no presumption that the outcome will reflect functional pressures, or even that the outcome will reflect these pressures mediated by their distributional consequences. Functional pressures are one thing, regime outcomes are another. Political conflict makes all the difference, and that conflict, we argue, is in large part rooted in communal identities.<sup>7</sup>

We begin by summarizing the two most influential theories of regional integration – neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism – and go on to argue that an understanding of European integration and its politicization requires that one explains the positioning of political parties and public opinion. To do so, one must theorize identity alongside instrumental economic interests.

#### NEOFUNCTIONALISM AND INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

Both neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism refine a prior and simpler theory – functionalism – which shaped thinking about political integration among scholars and policy makers from the end of World War I until the 1950s (Caporaso 1972; Hooghe and Marks 2005a; Mitrany 1966). Functionalism theorizes that the sheer

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- Behavior is not easily reducible to uniform discrete moves. That is to say, there is some ambiguity about what actually counts as a move in *this* game, as opposed to some other game with different norms.
  - Behavior is not easily reducible to a light switch function: *either* cooperate *or* defect. That is to say, there is some ambiguity about the *interpretation* of behavior in relation to the rules of the game. There is therefore room for disagreement about whether a particular move is (non)cooperative.
  - Players have more information about their own payoffs than those of other participants. Information about the preferences of others is incomplete, and, in the context of mixed motives situations, is a private good that can influence distributional outcomes. It is in the self-interest of any participant to convince other that she is more indifferent to mutual defection than she actually is.

Ambiguity provides space for divergent perceptions, and the greater the scope for different perceptions of the same behavior, the greater the causal importance of trust (or distrust) in explaining cooperation (or defection). When behavior is ambiguous, one's capacity to evaluate *motivations*, to trust or to distrust, becomes a vital resource. Does the other conceive of the association as durable? Will he reciprocate cooperation, or will he exploit it? To trust or distrust someone is an expression of one's prior evaluation of another's motivation with respect to oneself (Gambetta 2000). Trust and distrust are deeply rooted human emotions because they go beyond what a person actually does to probe the reasons why they do it. Humans do not interact with each other on a move by move basis, but seek to find a pattern of motivation in the other's behavior. In a controlled game against a computer program, this may be counter-productive, but it is highly efficacious in real world situations. People attach great store to evaluating the motivations of those around them because this provides a profound, economical, and durable guide to action in complex environments. Life is complicated – and human beings have an innate and highly developed capacity to read the minds of those they interact with.

<sup>7</sup> Our focus is on Europe, but we see no compelling reason why the structure of causality we detect in Europe is not valid for other parts of the world.

existence of a mismatch between the territorial scale of human problems and that of political authority generates pressures that lead to jurisdictional reform. David Mitrany, the principal functionalist thinker after World War II, was not much concerned with the politics of jurisdictional reform, but believed that the welfare benefits of supranationalism would exert an ineluctable attraction for policy makers.

Later, scholars elaborated more complex theories from a more detached scientific standpoint. But they retained the central insight of functionalism – that regional integration is a response to the collective benefits to be reaped by the territorial extension of jurisdictions. However, they realized that the mismatch between collective welfare and the structure of authority does not speak for itself.

Neofunctionalists were puzzled by the speed and breadth of regional integration in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s (Haas 1958). They also noted the stirrings of regional integration in several other parts of the world (Haas 1961). How, they asked, could rapid jurisdictional reform take place among embedded national states with distinct national identities? Rather than point to the particularities of the post-World War II experience or the welfare benefits of supranational jurisdictions, neofunctionalists identified systematic political processes that intervened between functionality and the structure of authority (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970; Schmitter 1969). Jurisdictional reform had to be initiated and driven by transnational interest groups demanding supranational authority to reap (mainly economic) benefits. Once it was set in motion, the process was self-reinforcing. As integration deepened and supranational institutions gained power, so more and more transnational interests would be drawn to the supranational level. Supranational actors would themselves demand more authority. Progress in one area would give rise to new opportunities and pressures for regional integration in other areas. In short, neofunctionalists refined the functional model by conceiving a political process of transnational mobilization, supranational activism, and policy spillover intervening between sectoral pressures for jurisdictional reform and institutional outcomes.

After the debacle of Charles de Gaulle's opposition to supranationalism and the ensuing empty chair crisis of 1965-66, neofunctionalist predictions of supranational empowerment appeared too rosy. The most influential alternative view – intergovernmentalism – emphasized the continued domination of national states and their role in mediating, framing, or blocking regional integration. Stanley Hoffmann (1966) conceived the sources of this in embedded geopolitical interests and distinctive national cultures, interpreted by forceful political leaders. Alan Milward (1992) argued that European integration "rescued" the nation state by engineering a bargain in which citizens accepted economic modernization in return for social welfare. In the wake of the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, Andrew Moravcsik (1998) developed a political economic theory of integration in which national states represent the economic preferences of domestic interest groups in negotiating treaties. The European Union is an emanation of national economic interests.

The puzzle for this generation of intergovernmentalists was not the speed or breadth of regional integration, but the decision of national states to create an international regime in the first place. Given their political domination and

resources, why should a state pool its authority in a regime like the European Union?<sup>8</sup> Robert Keohane's answer was that an international regime provides states with the functional benefit of facilitating compliance (1982). The outcomes of state bargaining reflect the preferences of individual national governments mediated by their relative power in international negotiation. Regional integration is therefore driven by functional efficiency, but the form it takes reflects distributional bargaining among national governments.

Neofunctionalists and intergovernmentalists have engaged in a decades-long debate that focused on whether the impetus for regional integration comes from national governments or from supra- or transnational actors, whether supranational institutions such as the European Commission are autonomous from national governments, and finally, on the conceptual issue of whether regional integration transforms national states.

To a considerable extent, advocates of these theories talked past each other (Peterson 2001; Wallace 2000). Neofunctionalists were most concerned with day-to-day policy making, in which transnational groups played a large role (Stone Sweet and Brunell 1998; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998), while intergovernmentalists were most concerned with the major treaties (Moravcsik 1998). But we should not be dismayed that facts did not settle the issue. Facts do not stand up for themselves in validating or invalidating a theory, but are deployed and debated by proponents of contending theories. This debate rarely yields a clear winner. What distinguishes positive from negative research agendas is the ability of a theory to shed light on new facts without adopting ad hoc hypotheses (Lakatos 1970).

#### PUBLICS, PARTIES, REFERENDA

Despite their differences, neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism both stress the centrality of economic interest groups, particularly those representing business interests.<sup>9</sup> Neofunctionalists hypothesized that these groups would operate at the supranational, as well as at the national level. Transnational economic interest groups, i.e. European-wide functional associations, would lobby supranational institutions directly.<sup>10</sup> Intergovernmentalists conceived interest group pressures within discrete national arenas. "Producer groups," in Andrew Moravcsik's

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<sup>8</sup> The puzzle was motivated by a debate with realism in international relations, but its solution was especially fruitful for our understanding of Europe, which had gone further than any other region in creating international institutions.

<sup>9</sup> Neofunctionalists also considered trade unions (see Haas 1958).

<sup>10</sup> Ernst Haas argued that the chief impetus of functional economic interests was transnational. If national governments did not go with the flow of transnational interest demands, they would be outflanked, as groups would focus their activity on the arena that best served their interests. Later neofunctionalists, such as Philippe Schmitter, gave more credence to national sectoral interests, especially neocorporatist actors. In their analysis of the single market program, Sandholtz and Zysman (1989) emphasized the role of trans-European and even global industrial interests: "The effort to shape the European Communities has so far been guided by three groups: Community institutions, industrial elites, and governments. The Commission proposes and persuades. Important business coalitions exercise indispensable influence on governments. Governments are receptive because of changes in the world economy and shifts in the domestic political context" (1989: 128; see also Cowles Green 1995).

terminology, would focus their lobbying on their national governments because this was the most direct way to exert political influence over EU decision making.<sup>11</sup>

Emphasis on functional representation was most appropriate for the late 1950s to the early 1990s when the central theme of European integration was market-making. These were the years of permissive consensus, when deals were made by insulated elites. Writing in 1958, Ernst Haas defended an elite perspective on the grounds that the general public was indifferent or impotent: “The emphasis on elites in the study of integration derives its justification from the bureaucratized nature of European organisations of long standing, in which basic decisions are made by the leadership, sometimes over the opposition and usually over the indifference of the general membership” (p. 17). Neofunctionalism had the deep insight that this was a temporary state of affairs, which would eventually give way to a process of “politicization” in which European publics would be drawn into the political arena.<sup>12</sup> However, the early neofunctionalists believed that the effect of politicization would be to pressure national governments to further integration, while later neofunctionalists relaxed this assumption, but did not frame expectations about what would drive politicization in one direction or the other.<sup>13</sup> Intergovernmentalists were silent on the topic because they placed public contestation outside their theories on grounds of parsimony.

As the influence of politicization on the course of European integration has grown, so has the effort of political scientists to understand it. Over the past fifteen years, diverse streams of research have revealed, and theorized, positioning on European issues among the general public and political parties.

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<sup>11</sup> “Most important among these winners and losers are producers. The systematic political bias in favor of existing producer groups and against those, notably consumers, taxpayers, third-country producers, and also potential future producers, stems from the former’s more intense, certain, and institutionally represented and organized interests. Producers may exert direct, instrumental pressure on politicians or may wield structural power, as when a desire to encourage business investment and growth requires the satisfaction of broad business demands. For the sake of simplicity, I assume throughout that domestic producers influence policy solely through the peak organizations representing three broad economic sectors: industry, agriculture, and services. By focusing on producer pressures, weighted only by their size and the intensity of gains and losses, this explanation remains deliberately simple, abstracting away from the complex sectoral splits of “supply side” issues, such as varying levels of collective action, formal institutions, partisan competition, and issue linkage; it is designed to capture only the most fundamental of economic interests” (Moravcsik 1998: 36.)

<sup>12</sup> Philippe Schmitter defined politicization as the increasing controversiality of joint decision making as more and more issues are drawn in, which in turn would determine the scope and level of political integration. “Politicization thus refers initially to a process whereby *a) the controversiality of joint decision making goes up. This in turn is likely to lead to b) a widening of the audience or clientele interested and active in integration. Somewhere along the line c) a manifest redefinition of mutual objectives will probably occur. . . . It . . . involves some collective recognition that the original objectives have been attained . . . and that the new ones involving an upward shift in either scope or level of commitment are operative. Ultimately, one could hypothesize that . . . there will be d) a shift in actor expectations and loyalty toward the new regional center*” (1969: 166. Italics in original; alphabetization added).

<sup>13</sup> Schmitter (1996) is an exception.

### Partisanship matters

Government in Europe is party government. Viewed from the outside, as an international phenomenon, states appear as organizations representing national interests. From the inside, however, states are more usefully seen as sets of rules which convey authority to elected governments composed of party leaders.

There are two ways in which a party-political conception affects the substantive preferences of national governments. First, political parties have distinctive constituencies to which they are predictably responsive. So, for example, Elmar Rieger (1996) explains that the creation of European agricultural policy in the early 1960s was facilitated by the fact that governments in five of the six member countries of the European Union were Christian democratic, and had close strategic ties to agrarian interests. Mark Pollack (2000) attributes the commitment of the Amsterdam Treaty to social and environmental issues and its lack of neoliberalism to the preponderance of left and centre-left governments at the time.

Second, political parties have policy commitments that guide their actions in government. While all governing parties say that their actions are in the national interest, on many issues the national interest is contested. Partisan contestation usually runs deeper in parliamentary than in presidential systems, but a partisan imprint on domestic *and* foreign policy can be observed to some extent in all democracies, including classical ones.

### Public opinion matters

The elite-centered view of European integration shared by neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism survived the creation of a European Parliament and even direct elections beginning in 1979. As Karl-Heinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980) persuasively argued, European elections were second order. Although ostensibly about European issues, they were, in fact, dominated by national issues, including particularly the popularity of the sitting national government.

However, the elite perspective is based on three assumptions, none of which now hold. First, that the public's attitudes towards European integration are superficial, and therefore incapable of providing a stable structure of electoral incentives for party positioning. Second, that European integration is a low salience issue for the general public (in contrast to its high salience for business groups), and therefore has little influence on party competition. And third, that the issues raised by European integration are *sui generis*, and therefore unrelated to the basic conflicts that structure political competition in western democracies.

The experience of the past 15 years – and the research it generated – has dismantled each of these assumptions. Public opinion on European integration, as we discuss below, is rather well structured (Franklin and van der Eijk 2004; Karp, Banducci, and Bowler 2003), affects national voting (Evans 1999; Gabel 2000; Tillman 2004; Netjes 2005), and is connected to the basic dimensions that structure contestation in European societies (Marks and Steenbergen 2004; Pennings 2002). As a result, the incentives facing governments have been transformed. On issues that are salient for the public, governments, i.e. party leaders in positions of government authority, try to anticipate the effect of their decisions on domestic publics. Public

opinion on European integration is a field of strategic interaction among party elites in their struggle for political power.

### When does politicization bite?

When political parties, national elections, or referenda come into play, they dominate decision making and preempt the efforts of small, highly motivated, groups to control outcomes. This is true even in pluralist political systems, such as the United States, where political parties are relatively weak and where interest groups have “multiple cracks” at influencing policy (Kollman 1998; Lowery 2005). However, we cannot simply replace a theory of functional interests with a theory of parties or public opinion, but must hypothesize the conditions under which one or the other decision making process comes into play.

The distinction we have in mind concerns the *quorum* of decision making (Verdier 1994). *High quorum* decision making – elections, referenda, legislative votes – involves a large number of actors, or actors who represent large aggregates in highly visible fora. Aggregate interests, i.e. political parties, and to a lesser extent, broad-based factorial groups, edge out narrow sectoral groups. *Low quorum* decision making – in legislative committees, iron triangles, or in some other hived-off policy arena – privileges sectoral groups (Alt et al. 1996; Hiscox 2002).

What are the conditions for high quorum decision making? When, in other words, will decision making over regional integration enter the contentious world of party competition, elections, and referenda?

In the first place, party competition, elections, and referenda constrain only a subset of issues. Referenda permit only dichotomous responses. Elections allow citizens to express preferences on an issue only to the extent it is associated with the dimensions on which political parties compete. Elections and referenda are inclusive, but crude. They aggregate the preferences of very large numbers of people, but do so by narrowing choice.

Parties bundle issues to create distinctive electoral profiles, and support or opposition to European integration feature as a highly aggregated issue in such dimensions. One dimension is focused on issues of authority and community, and engages the tension between national independence versus European integration. A second reflects the basic division between left support for collective allocation of resources and right support for market allocation. This dimension engages European regulated capitalism versus market liberalism. When political parties align themselves on these dimensions, they are making commitments on European decision making.

Technical issues tend to be unconnected with these dimensions, and hence, are settled in low quorum settings. Low visibility decision making – the smoke-filled room – facilitates deals because costs can be externalized to excluded general interests. When it comes to substantive details of trade agreements, tariffs, quotas, and technical specifications, ordinary citizens tune out.

So some issues lie beneath the horizon of partisan competition. But there are many issues that could be politicized, but are not. To understand which issues lay fallow and which are fought over, one must examine strategic interaction among political parties.

Party leaders will politicize an issue when they see electoral advantage in doing so. This depends on three factors: the party's position on the issue; the prospect that the electorate will respond on the basis of the issue (i.e. the salience of the issue for the electorate); and the extent to which the party will be able to present a united position on the issue.

- Party leaders prefer that their parties have electorally popular positions rather than unpopular positions. But the ability of party leaders to chase votes by radically switching positions is constrained by reputational considerations (Hinich and Munger 1994). Political parties are not simply machines for aggregating the votes necessary to catapult ambitious individuals into government. They are membership organizations with clearly articulated, durable programmatic commitments. A party must strive to convince voters that it will actually do what it says it will do. Political convictions among party leaders are not merely constraints on programmatic flexibility, but are valuable character signals.
- The greater a party's relative electoral popularity on the issue, the more it is induced to inject the issue into competition with other parties. But popularity is not enough. The party must also perceive that voters will come to regard the issue as salient, if they do not already. Elections are struggles about what issues are important, and a party's decision to raise an issue in party competition rests on its strategic calculation that the issue will count.
- Party leaders will be reluctant to raise the heat on an issue that threatens to divide the party. This may be a core issue on which the party competes, but which has become contested, or it may be an issue that is orthogonal to the party's main concerns. Disunity not only reduces a party's electoral popularity, it is the most frequent known source of party death.

Until the 1980s, most major parties steered clear of European integration. First, the issue was not salient among the public. The creation of a single European market was conceived as trade liberalization, which had large effects on importers and exporters, but which affected the general public only to the extent it made consumer products slightly cheaper. Second, to the extent that citizens had opinions on Europe, they were more skeptical than mainstream parties. Christian democratic and liberal parties had long staked out pro-integrationist positions. Until the 1980s, social democratic parties were dubious about economic integration, but once they came to realize that exit was infeasible, most campaigned for regulated capitalism, which would extend the scope of integration. Third, internal dissent was the reward for mainstream parties that toyed with the issue. The identity concerns raised by European integration are orthogonal to *left/right* conflict which predominated in European party competition. When nationalist-oriented Gaullists or British conservatives campaigned against further integration, they were resisted by market liberals with nasty results for party unity.

Notwithstanding the general reluctance of governing elites to politicize European integration, there were interesting exceptions. The sheer existence of a constitutional issue that cuts against the axis of party competition is both a constant irritation and a standing temptation for party leaders. The flash point is the referendum. Referenda, as we discuss below, are elite-initiated events which can

have elite-defying consequences. They are the modern equivalent of magic tokens, used for immediate effect, but having inestimable consequences. And once used, they cannot be forgotten.

Harold Wilson, who served as British Prime Minister from 1974, decided to hold a referendum on UK membership to shift the issue out of a deeply divided Labour Cabinet. In the face of a public majority in favor of membership, Wilson succeeded in preserving party unity, but opened the door to consequent demands for referenda (on Economic and Monetary Union and the Constitutional Treaty) that have proved hard to resist.

When the Danes rejected the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992, François Mitterrand responded by calling a French referendum that would be held in November of the same year. Mitterrand said that he wished to demonstrate France's (and Europe's) overwhelming support for the European project, but he was also lured by the prospect of dissension on the right and the possibility of shoring up his own popularity. The first expectation was fulfilled, but the second was shattered in an extremely close-fought contest. As in Britain, the referendum set a precedent: important EU decisions could no longer be legitimized by the executive and legislature operating in the normal way— direct popular approval was required. The precedent is either extra-constitutional or anti-constitutional depending on one's perspective, but writing this paper in the Netherlands in the wake of the recent referenda here and in France one must say that its force is compelling.

The referendum of November 1992 can be regarded as a turning point in the causal underpinnings of European integration. Unlike the Irish and Danish referenda on the Maastricht Treaty, the one in France was exceptional and politically weighty for Europe as a whole. It was followed by a series of national public, parliamentary, and judicial debates that alerted publics to the fact that European integration was undermining national sovereignty.

Most mainstream parties continued to resist politicizing the issue. But a number of small, non-governing, parties sensed a new opportunity. In the first place, their instinctual Euro-skepticism was closer to the pulse of public opinion. Second, opposition to European integration was consistent with their ideological core. On the far left, opposition to European integration expressed fierce antipathy to capitalism; on the populist right, it expressed equally deep-rooted defense of national community.

This sets the scene for the response to the Constitutional Treaty (2004). The length of the document belied its minimalistic ambition to produce a single document out of a labyrinth of treaty provisions. The fact that this was a constitution gave the treaty heavy symbolic significance. By the time the Convention was finalizing the constitutional Draft Treaty, in Spring 2003, only a handful of governments had indicated they wished to hold a referendum (France, Portugal, and Italy; Financial Times, April 3, 2003: p. 10). By the time the governments signed the Treaty on October 29, 2004, no less than nine referenda had been announced.

#### National referenda: the public strikes back

National referenda have shaped the course of European integration. European integration has shaped the use of the referendum.

[Table 1 about here]

From 1990 to the present (July 2005), referenda on Europe were held in eight of the fifteen states in the pre-accession EU, and three more (Luxembourg, Portugal and the United Kingdom) had planned referenda on the Constitutional Treaty but postponed them after the negative French and Dutch referenda. In this period, sixteen referenda have taken place, and another nine took place in the enlargement countries. The only EU countries **never** to have held a referendum on a major EU issue are Belgium Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, and Portugal.<sup>14</sup> The referendum has no constitutional place in Germany's Basic Law, though the question has come under debate in recent months.

In the 1990-2005 period just four countries held referenda on non-EU topics – Italy (39), Ireland (12), Portugal (2), and France (1). Beyond these four countries, the referendum has played a staple role in Denmark, and was also, if rarely, used in Austria, Greece, Spain, and Sweden prior to 1990. The first (and, up to this point in time, only) national referenda in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Finland have taken place on EU issues. The last two columns of Table 1 summarize recent experience: up to 1990, referenda had been used in six countries only, and in only one of those (UK) were more referenda staged on EU issues than on non-EU issues; since 1990, thirteen countries have used the referendum instrument, and in nine of those EU votes outnumbered non-EU votes.

Referenda are wild cards that take place outside the normal game of representative democracy. National governments, interest groups, European actors, and party leaders respond to public opinion, and try to shape it, but they can find themselves being swept in unanticipated directions. The fact that national governments agree to a treaty, such as the Constitutional Treaty, does not make it happen.

Referenda shift the initiative to citizens and single issue groups. Party elites are disarmed.<sup>15</sup> In general elections (but not referenda), party elites squelch internal party debate on the grounds that unity is indispensable for winning. Referenda are a response to populist pressures; and they intensify and legitimate populism. Several Dutch political leaders opposed holding a referendum in the Netherlands, but once the decision was made, they came around to argue that it was good to hear from the people after all. It would have been awkward for them to campaign for “yes” votes if they opposed the referendum itself. The French *éminence grise* (and president of the Constitutional Convention) Valérie Giscard d’Estaing argued against having a referendum in France, but changed his mind once the referendum campaign was under way – as did president Jacques Chirac. In the UK, the referendum is a standing challenge to the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, but there was little opposition to the notion that parliamentary consent would be inadequate to bring the UK into economic and monetary Union or into a European constitution. The people must speak.

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<sup>14</sup> After the rejections of the French and Dutch referenda of May 29 and June 1, 2005, the six remaining referenda were put on the table.

<sup>15</sup> The extent to which party elites lose control over the outcome under referenda is analyzed by Lawrence Leduc (2002). For a comparative study of the eastern enlargement referenda, see a special issue edited by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak in *West European Politics* (2004).

## FROM ECONOMIC TO NON-ECONOMIC PREFERENCES

To explain the course of regional integration we need to generalize about preferences. We base our theory on recent research that has discovered how the debate on European integration is structured. While this research has been construed as an extension of middle-range comparative politics theory, and has not connected much with theories of regional integration, it is directly relevant to regional integration. This research has generated – and been validated against – an impressive diversity of data, including European and national party manifestos, expert surveys of party positioning; surveys of European and national members of parliament, roll call data for the European parliament, social movement events data, media content analysis, national and European election surveys, and public opinion surveys (Imig and Tarrow 2002; Katz and Wessels 1999; Tsebelis and Kreppel, s.d.; Kreppel 2002; for overviews see Gabel, Hix, and Schneider 2002; Schmitt 2003; Marks forthcoming).

One thrust of this research is to examine non-economic motivations, and in particular those associated with territorial identities. It therefore departs from neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism. Neofunctionalists like Ernst Haas emphasize the integrationist pulling power of pareto-improving gains. Haas called this the strategy of low politics, whereby transnational interest groups and supranational actors pursue incremental economic reforms that take the line of least resistance, until the national state and even identities are transformed in a European direction. Andrew Moravcsik also argues that economic factors determine preferences, but stresses the distribution of economic gains among producer groups and national governments, and this, he argues, can put a brake on regional integration. Integration must traverse the distribution of economic gains, and this confines institutional reform to lowest-common denominator amendments to an existing state-centered political architecture.<sup>16</sup>

While this focus on economic preferences does not work well for the early period of European integration (cf. the 1954 rejection of the European Defense Community in the French National Assembly)<sup>17</sup>, it can tell us much about market making policies. In the 1970s and 1980s, for example, European integration consisted primarily of legal reforms and piecemeal policies to reduce trade barriers (Keohane and Hoffmann 1991; Sandholtz and Zysman 1989). By that time, trust (see footnote 4) among key actors could be taken for granted. A remarkable extension of the competencies of the European Court of Justice was driven by the demands of interest groups for adjudication in international economic exchange (Alter 2001; Slaughter and Mattli 1993; Stone Sweet and Brunell 1998). But the economic approach to preferences over regional integration is contradicted by two streams of research in the 1990s and 2000s. The first is concerned with public opinion and mass electorates (Carey 2002; de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005; Hooghe and Marks 2005b; McLaren

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<sup>16</sup> This reflects a lively debate in international relations theory about the relative role and interplay of pareto-optimality (or functional pressure) and distributional conflict. See Martin and Simmons (1998, 2001) for overviews; Milner (1988); Verdier (1994); Oatley (2004).

<sup>17</sup> For a geopolitical explanation of the EDC episode, which emphasizes the desire to bind Germany, see Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Verdier (2005).

2002; Niedermayer and Sinnott 1995; Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Wessels 1995). The second is concerned with political parties (Hix 1999; Hooghe, Marks, Wilson 2002; Kriesi and Lachat 2004; Marks and Steenbergen 2004; Schmitt and Thomassen 1999; Thomassen and Schmitt 1999; Thomassen, Noury, Voeten 2004).

### Public opinion and identity

The first attempts to theorize public opinion on European integration began by hypothesizing how market liberalization would affect individual incomes from a sectoral or factorial point of view (overviews are provided by Eichenberg and Dalton 2005; Gabel 1998a,b; McLaren 2002). The variables that were tested in empirical analysis summarized the objective economic situation of an individual, and therefore focused on income, occupation, and education. This research drew on the rational choice research program which sought to explain individual behavior as a function of economic preferences. It did not matter if individuals did not actually calculate their economic interests; what was important is that they acted as if they did.

When research on individual economic interest failed to explain more than ten percent of the variance in public attitudes toward European integration, additional variables were explored: *socio-tropic* effects (e.g. effects on an individual's entire country), *subjective* effects (e.g. a respondent's economic well-being), and finally *subjective socio-tropic* effects (how good do you feel regional integration is for your country). However, stretching the theory yielded models whose validity did not match their complexity.

This intensified the search for better explanation. One approach was to conceive public opinion as contextual (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenza 2000). The fact that the most important contexts were national aligned this research with intergovernmentalism. However, this approach was snookered by the surprising fact that only around one-fifth of the variance in public opinion is country-specific.<sup>18</sup> Ideology, and in particular, *left/right* ideology, was another candidate (Anderson 1998; Gabel and Scheve 2005; McLaren 2002; Ray 2004). Ideology was conceived either as tapping individual values or as tapping elite cues. A respondent's party loyalty could also cue him or her on political objects, including European integration.

In the early 2000s, some researchers began to analyze identity, and in particular, the character of national identity, as a constraint on support for European integration (Carey 2002; Christin and Trechsel 2002; Diez Medrano and Gutierrez 2003; McLaren 2002; Van Kersbergen 2000).<sup>19</sup> This work drew from a venerable stream of public opinion research and American politics emphasizing the potency of group identities for attitudes towards immigration and race (Citrin 1990, 2004a; Marcus 2002; Sears 1993).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> A promising refinement of the country-specific approach is to consider countries as contexts which mediate individual-level interests (Brinegar et al. 2004; Ray 2004; Steenbergen and Jones 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Examining the development of European identity was an important element of the neofunctionalist research program, but there identity was conceived as the dependent – not an independent – variable (Inglehart 1970).

<sup>20</sup> This work is consistent with evolutionary and neurological research which has established the primacy of affect and emotion, and in particular group attachments, in a broad swathe of human decision making. In his presidential address to the American Sociological Association, Douglas

Social psychologists have been at the forefront of the turn towards values, deeply held beliefs which structure the way humans understand and evaluate their social world. The deeply held beliefs that are most relevant to jurisdictional design are those concerned with group identities, and most particularly identities to territorial communities. Social identity theory posits that group identifications shape individual self-conception (Tajfel 1981; Herrmann and Brewer 2004; Hays Gries 2005; Huddy 2001, 2003; Sniderman et al. 2004). The core of the theory is that humans have an “innate ethnocentric tendency” which almost invariably leads a person to favor his or her own group over others (Citrin and Sides 2004a: 4). But favoritism for one’s own group does not automatically lead to conflict or hostility towards other groups (Brewer 1999; Hays Gries 2005). Marilyn Brewer notes that “any relationship between ingroup identification and outgroup hostility is progressive and contingent rather than necessary and inevitable” (2000).

Individuals typically have multiple identities, that is to say they identify with territorial communities at vastly different scales, from the local to the regional, to the national, and beyond. What appears decisive is how identities relate to each other (Brewer 1999; Herrmann and Brewer 2004). There is no necessary zero-sumness here: in fact, we and others have found that strong national attachment is *positively* associated with desire for deeper European integration (Citrin and Sides 2004b; Haesly 2001; Marks and Llamazares 2005; Marks 1999; Risse 2002). However, individuals who express *exclusive* national identities tend to resent the communal implications of European integration, its erosion of norms of “us” and “them” (Kriesi and Lachat 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2005b).

To make headway here one must explain how group differences are politically constructed. Why do some citizens have exclusive or inclusive identities, and how does one or the other pattern of identity come to constrain attitudes for particular political objects? No general explanation has been put forward, but the literature on the topic suggests the scope for scientific (i.e. empirically disconfirmable) constructivism, drawing the researcher’s eye to processes of *framing, socialization, persuasion, manipulation, and cueing*.

Several researchers have investigated these processes in the context of European integration. Juan Diez Medrano brings to light how distinctive historical experiences shape the construction of identity: e.g. the British experience of empire; German guilt following World War II; Spanish determination to modernize (Diez Medrano 2003). A research team led by Bo Stråth and Anna Triandafyllidou (2003) examines the consistency of discourse across different arenas of public debate: party programs, public opinion, educational curricula, and media in nine EU countries. Claes De Vreese compares the effect of reporting on European integration in British, Dutch and Danish media on public opinion (2003). Paul Sniderman and his colleagues demonstrate that priming is required for values to become politically salient. In an experiment examining immigrant attitudes among Dutch citizens, they find that individuals who are prompted to think about national identity are much

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Massey (2002) surveys this research and suggests some implications for key questions in sociology and political science. Massey writes that it is “incontrovertible that human behavior has both rational and emotional components and that the latter cannot be reduced to the former. On the contrary, if anything, emotionality supersedes rationality in both timing and influence.” (2002: 25).

more likely to oppose immigration than respondents whose personal identity is primed (Sniderman et al. 2004). Catherine Netjes and Erica Edwards show that the presence of radical right parties has a systemic effect in mobilizing national identity against European integration (Netjes and Edwards 2005). Elite division on the issue appears to have the same effect (Hooghe and Marks 2005b).

In summary, social identity theory directs scholars of European integration to investigate a) the mechanisms through which identity entrepreneurs, elites, and the media cue ingroup and outgroup comparisons and b) how group identification, and in particular national identity, shapes views on European integration. The generalizations mustered so far are preliminary and imprecise, but researchers have begun to formulate the important questions.

### Political parties and Gal/Tan

We hope the reader will forgive us if we begin this section with a personal reminiscence. In early 2000, the authors of this paper were pouring over newly collected data on the positioning of national political parties across the European Union. We hoped, indeed expected, to see a strong association between the *left/right* position of parties and their stance on European integration. We found an association, but to our astonishment, it was dwarfed by one we had not expected. Marco Steenbergen, who co-organized the survey, had suggested inserting an item tapping the “new politics” dimension, measured with wording approximating Herbert Kitschelt’s libertarian/authoritarian dimension (1994), and this variable proved extraordinarily powerful in constraining party positioning on European integration. We came to realize that our understanding of politicization as a conflict between regulated capitalism versus market liberalism (first published in 1996) was seriously incomplete.<sup>21</sup>

Our reading of this finding is that libertarian/authoritarian values connect with a larger set of non-economic values having to do with traditional values and defense of the national community. So the statistical association between libertarian/authoritarian values and party positioning on European integration runs through national identity. If this is correct, the force that shapes public opinion on European integration also structures debate among political parties.<sup>22</sup>

This leads us to conceptualize the new politics dimension as one that summarizes several non-economic issues – ecological, life-style, and communal. The weighting of these issues varies across time and space.<sup>23</sup> In some countries, environmental protection and sustainable growth are the core issues; in others, it is traditional values rooted in a secular/religious divide; in yet others, immigration and defense of the national community are at the core. We therefore describe the poles of this dimension with composite terms: Green/Alternative/Libertarian (or

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<sup>21</sup> Our first drafts of the “Making of a Polity” included a section on nationalism as a source of contestation on Europe, but we later dropped this section because it did not “fit” with our political economic approach.

<sup>22</sup> We leave aside the debate concerning the causal priority of citizens and political parties (Carrubba 2001; Gabel and Scheve 2005; Steenbergen, Edwards, Netjes 2005; Steenbergen and Scott 2004).

<sup>23</sup> The same is true of the classic economic *left/right* dimension (Laver forthcoming; Bakker, Edwards, and Netjes 2005), but the variation is probably greater for the new politics dimension.

*Gal*) and Traditionalism/ Authority/Nationalism (or *Tan*) (Hooghe, Marks, Wilson 2002; Marks et al. 2006).

The relationship between *Gal/Tan* and support for European integration is particularly strong for parties located on the *Tan* side of this dimension. *Tan* parties oppose European integration because they believe it weakens national sovereignty, diffuses self-rule, and introduces foreign ideas. In other words, they oppose European integration for the same reasons that they oppose immigration: it undermines national community. Conservative parties are also influenced by their location at the moderate *Tan* side of the *Gal/Tan* dimension. While not so extreme as radical right parties, they defend national culture and national sovereignty against immigrants, international regimes, and competing sources of identity within the state. But nationalists in conservative parties have to compete with neoliberals who are staunch supporters of free trade. While nationalists oppose dilution of national sovereignty, neoliberals are prepared to limit national control if necessary for economic integration. This clash has dominated the internal politics of the British Conservative party since the Maastricht Treaty, alienating the party from its traditional constituency – affluent, educated, middle-class voters – whose pragmatic pro-European attitudes fit uncomfortably with the party’s principled Euro-skepticism (Evans 1998, 1999). Similar disagreements in the Gaullist RPR propelled two anti-Europeanist factions to break away in the early 1990s (Flood 1997). In Germany, Angela Merkel, leader of the traditionally pro-European CDU, has had her hands full with Euroskeptics in the CSU. The CDU recently adopted the CSU’s opposition to Turkish membership on the grounds that a Muslim country is not European.

For parties on the *Gal* side, European integration has become an increasingly important component in their project for a multicultural, tolerant European society. In recent years, green parties have shifted to support for European integration – notwithstanding their misgivings about the EU’s democratic legitimacy and bureaucracy. *Les Verts* and *Groenlinks* came out in favor of the Constitution in the 2005 French and Dutch referenda.

If we are right in arguing that there is a second dimension of contestation in European party systems and that this dimension taps the communitarian issues raised by European integration, we can expect the following:

- European integration transforms conflict in Europe, not by introducing an issue orthogonal to existing dimensions of competition, but by reinforcing a previously subsidiary non-economic dimension. In a psychological sense, this non-economic dimension might be described as tapping “pre-material” (rather than post-material) values having to do with basic emotional affinities arising from group (non)membership.
- This is bad news for mainstream political parties competing on an economic *left/right* dimension to the extent it introduces salient concerns that cannot be slotted into their existing ideologies. The threat is that a political party confronted by such an issue will lose leverage over its erstwhile supporters. Mainstream party leaders and activists wrote the Constitutional Treaty. It had the support not only of those party leaders who actually negotiated the Treaty while in government, but also of their strongest partisan opponents. Hence, the

Constitution was supported by political parties that gather preponderant shares of the vote from **both** sides of the *left/right* conflict but, given the character of the issue, this was not enough.

- As the scope of European integration has expanded to non-economic aspects of life, so Euroskepticism has become more *Tan*. In 1984, two years before the single market, the main source of opposition to European integration was social-democratic (Ray 1999). By the late 1990s, the largest reservoir of opposition was among radical *Tan* parties (Hooghe, Marks, Wilson 2002).

Where does this leave left versus right conflict on European integration? Some ten years ago, several observers hypothesized that EU politics would resolve along an axis pitting proponents of regulated capitalism against market-liberals (Crouch and Streeck 1997; Delors 1992; Hooghe and Marks 1996, 1999; Rhodes and Van Apeldoorn 1997; Ross 1993; Wilks 1996). This conjecture made sense of coalitional politics underpinning the single market. Social-democratic and several Christian democratic parties, trade unions, and a variety of social movements were coalescing around a “European social model” (Delors 1992) which would dampen regulatory competition by creating a floor of European legislation. Conservative and economic-liberal parties, business and financial interests sought to block this. Conflict along these lines would replay the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century struggle to create a welfare state, this time at the European level (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

In the same years that evidence was accumulating about the causal force of identity, researchers were finding that *left/right* did indeed underlie preferences of actors in a range of EU institutions, including the European Parliament (Hix, Noury, Gerard 2005; Gabel and Hix 2004; Kreppel 2002; Thomassen, Voeten, Noury 2004), the Council of Ministers (Aspinwall 2002), the European Commission (Hooghe 1997), EU policy making (Falkner 1998; Keman 2005; Ross 1997; Thomassen and Schmitt 1997), and in Treaty making (Crum 2004; Manow, Schäfer, Zorn 2005; Pollack 2000).

However, left versus right conflict does not translate onto European integration in a uniform way, but is mediated by national institutions. European integration is double-edged for the left in countries which have social democratic political economies (Brinegar et al 2004; Ray 2004). Social democratic strategy over the past century and a quarter has been to build a capacity for authoritative regulation that encompasses the scope of market exchange. For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries this meant building up the national state. Now that market exchange is (at the least) continental, a logical extension of this strategy is to deepen European integration. This argument has greater weight for the left in market-liberal societies where the median voter is less in favor of redistribution than the EU median voter. In social democratic societies, the reverse is the case. Regional integration may produce an inferior outcome: it may weaken national institutions without commensurately increasing European capacity to regulate.

Mustering electoral majorities around a common redistributive program is one challenge the left faces, but it is not the most fundamental one. Many on the left have the vague, but uneasy feeling that the European Union may simply be too diverse to support heavily redistributive policies.

This conjecture has a scientific basis. The extent to which a group is a community constrains its capacity for consensual redistribution. The stronger a community, the more it engenders a shared sense of fate and a willingness to make sacrifices for the collective welfare. Also, the stronger a community, the more costly exit will be for its members, and the more they will be attracted to loyalty or voice. One finds the highest levels of redistribution – reaching peaks of around one-quarter of GDP – in Scandinavia, and in other small, relatively homogenous societies. More heterogeneous communities have a lower redistributive ceiling. Communities that encompass regional regimes are weaker and more diverse than almost all state regimes, while those that encompass international regimes, such as the WTO, are considerably more heterogeneous still. Literature on international regimes stresses the pareto improving (i.e. non redistributive) character of such regimes and the difficulties that arise when they confront redistributive issues – and for good reason, because international regimes do not have the coercive capacity impose redistribution (references). Regimes that have engaged in major redistribution among very heterogeneous groups (e.g. the Mongul empire from in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Third Reich, the Soviet Union), have done so non-consensually. This law-like relation between community and consensual redistribution provides a comparative frame of reference for the EU. The European Union is the most diverse regional regime in existence, yet redistributes 0.75 percent of the EU's GDP through its agricultural and cohesion policies. This is a small figure by comparison to national states, but a large one by comparison to international organizations.

In line with this argument, surveys of party positioning and surveys of public opinion confirm that left leaning parties and individuals are more Euroskeptic in social democratic countries, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, than in market liberal countries, such as the United Kingdom. By the same token, right-leaning parties and individuals are more Euroskeptic in market liberal countries than in social democratic countries.

#### When does identity bite?

The causal influence of identity is variable, not fixed, and it seems obvious that the same is true for economic calculation. Can one generalize about the circumstances under which one or the other is most influential?

- Identity frames issues that engage the authenticity of a community, e.g. regulating language use in higher education, rights for minorities, immigration and asylum policy. *Left/right* ideology predominates on distributional issues, e.g. concerning maximum hours of work, working conditions, workplace consultation. Some EU policies fall unambiguously into one or the other category. These include EU asylum and immigration policy or EU social policy. Issues of jurisdictional design can engage both. Should more authority be vested in the European Parliament or the European Court of Justice? This question involves national sovereignty, and hence should load on identity (or, in the case of political parties, *Gal/Tan*). But it also involves the extent to which European institutions have regulatory authority, and therefore connects, in lesser degree, to *left/right*.

- The less politically sophisticated an individual and the less informed a person is on an issue, the greater the influence of emotional attachments, including in-group/out-group attachments. This is weakly confirmed in Eurobarometer data. The statistical influence of exclusive national identity for public opinion on European integration is greater for less politically sophisticated and less educated individuals (Hooghe and Marks 2005b).
- High quorum decision making facilitates identity politics; low quorum decision making facilitates economic calculation. Reasons for this are: a) economic calculation is only feasible for those transparently affected by a policy. The significant economic effects of trade liberalization are concentrated on relatively small groups; b) interest groups participating in low quorum decision making tend to pursue explicitly rational policies based on expert calculation of economic interests; c) identity appeals are most effective for the public.
- Referenda provide unusually favorable contexts for identity politics. EU Referenda involve grand architectural decisions (accession, introduction of the Euro, Constitutional Treaty) having tangible communal implications. Referenda are a form of mass politics, unmediated by voting for individuals or practical matters, such as choice of government. Referenda set the stage for a political free-for-all liberating single-issue entrepreneurs and populists from party discipline.
- We speculate, following social identity theory, that in the context of mass politics, the mobilization of group differences is intrinsically more powerful than the mobilization of group affinities. Consistent with this, there is evidence that the sheer presence of a radical *Tan* party appears to have a system-wide effect increasing the causal influence of exclusive national identity on opinion for European integration (Netjes and Edwards 2005; Kopecky and Mudde 2002, Beichelt 2004).

These generalizations have the virtue of simplicity, of counterposing economic calculation and identity so that checking facts against expectations becomes less ambiguous, but they do not capture the way in which identity and economic preferences interact. For example, it seems plausible to hypothesize that economic pressures and exclusive identity reinforce each other. One may expect “economic losers” of regional integration to have the most exclusive identities. The data we have does not allow us to adequately test this, but we do know that individuals who view their nationality in exclusive terms tend to be less educated, less well-off and less mobile. A better theory of preferences on regional integration would figure out how and identity and economic calculation interact.

## OUTCOMES

The theory outlined in this paper is a work in progress. Instead of protecting it against possible counter-arguments, we have sought to show how it makes sense of recent research in comparative politics. The theory we present has several lacunae, the most important of which appear to us to be a) an incomplete account of the construction of identity; b) a lack of clinching evidence that identity underlies public opinion on European integration; c) elegant (read simplistic) expectations about the

relative causal weight of values and economic calculus; and d) inadequate attention to geopolitics.<sup>24</sup>

A challenge for evaluating the relative merit of contending research programs is that they usually converge in their predictions over all but a small proportion of phenomena. Moreover, new facts are interpreted by proponents of one theory or another to support their expectations.<sup>25</sup>

The hard core of postfunctionalism is that preferences over jurisdictional architecture are the product of three irreducible logics: efficiency, distribution, and identity. We have sought to generalize about how these have played out empirically in the European Union. We have argued that the European Union is part of a system of multi-level governance which is driven by identity politics, as well as functional and distributional pressures. Because identity intervenes between functional pressures and regime outcomes, postfunctional theory makes no presumption that jurisdictional design is efficient. As European integration has engaged basic issues of community, EU decision making has become politicized in party competition, elections, and referenda. The ensuing conflict is consistent across jurisdictional scale: *left/right* and particularly *Gal/Tan* structures competition in national and European arenas.

In the remainder of this paper we set out some expectations that are consistent with this interpretation. When European issues are debated in the public realm, elite problem solving and distributional conflict among sectoral interests give way to mass appeals, often stressing exclusive conceptions of national identity. The political force of this has increased as Eastern enlargement has added to the cultural and economic heterogeneity of the EU. Moreover, the public is more skeptical of integration than is the elite in every EU country for the following reasons (Hooghe 2003):

- Elites benefit more from regional integration than the average citizen. Economic integration privileges mobile factors, and elites have mobile human and financial capital portfolios. Elite assets, to apply Iversen and Soskice's concept of asset specificity (2001), tend to be high-value, generalist, and transferable.
- Ordinary citizens are more likely than elites to have exclusive identities, for reasons we outline above.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> With respect to geopolitics, we suspect that the standard defense – “we ignore this in the interest of simplicity” – leads in the wrong direction. When inter-state rivalries rear their head, they are a far more powerful influence on elite decision making than economic interdependence. A decisive condition for European integration appears to be the absence of inter-state rivalries that typically characterized European geopolitics. Economic influences were powerful precisely – and only – because geopolitics allowed this to happen (for a sophisticated exposition of the contrary view see Moravcsik 1998).

In this respect, the postfunctional theory offered here can perhaps claim to be least worst. While liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism neglect the heavy conflicts that determine decision making in domestic arenas, as well as the heavy conflicts that determine international relations, postfunctional theory ignores only the latter!

<sup>25</sup> Imre Lakatos stressed time and time again that there is no logical limit to the defense of an existing theory by “explaining away” discordant results (1970; 1978).

<sup>26</sup> A 2002 survey of top officials in the European Commission finds that no top official identifies exclusively with her national country, but Eurobarometer data show that just over 40 percent of citizens do (Hooghe 2003). We do not have similar data for other elite sectors, though we have data on

- Elites are more alert than publics to the functional benefits of cooperation. Such benefits feature more prominently in elite preferences over jurisdictional architecture.<sup>27</sup>

So, to the extent that the future of European integration will be determined in high quorum decision making, we should expect some combination of the following:

- A greater incidence of non-compliance in implementation. The incentives facing party decision makers may shift in the direction of non-compliance when the costs of particular pieces of legislation for domestic constituencies are debated in public and subject to electoral shaming (Mbaye 2004; Boerzel 2001).
- A greater incidence of deadlock, derogations, and opting-out in intergovernmental bargaining. The fate of national leaders, unlike that of EU leaders, is in the hands of national constituencies. Hence, they are not subject to cross-cutting territorial pressures. Grandstanding and unwillingness to compromise national interests can pay domestically in public debates that stress symbolic "strength" of national leadership. In scenarios of competitive electoral bidding, compromise is attacked as weakness. At the end of the first summit following the Dutch referendum the Spanish deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega summarized this state of mind: "It is always better to return without an agreement than with a bad one that hurts the interests of Spain" (International Herald Tribune, June 23: 3).

One can expect these effects to intensify if political elites begin to distrust each other. Trust is a vital ingredient in incomplete contracting and the European Union is the most extensive incomplete international contract in history. Distrust creates space for disagreement about whether a particular behavior is cooperative or exploitative. Such perceptual ambiguities intensify conflict, because they extend strategic interaction to the *interpretation* of behavior. In game theoretic terms, distrust reduces an iterated game into its discrete, single-shot, components by increasing discount rates and shortening time horizons (Hooghe and Marks 2005c).

Geopolitical pressures can intensify the fissiparous pressures we have diagnosed. The point of departure for geopolitical theorizing on regional integration is the systemic interdependence of states in international relations. Mars and Venus cannot pursue their own policies as if they lived on separate planets. The most basic constraint on human existence is that it takes two to make peace, but only one to make war. The projection of force by one state frames the context for all. The rise of populist nationalism in one country precipitates its rise in another.

The recent militaristic unilateralism of the United States, belatedly justified under the guise of abstract universal principles of freedom and democracy, will have a deep impact on regional integration in Europe. The master question, in our view, is whether populist nationalism in the United States will foster a series of mutually

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European pride among national and European parliamentarians. A 1996 survey of parliamentarians in twelve member states finds that 78 percent feel proud or somewhat proud to be European, compared to 62 percent of the general public in Eurobarometer data. These data do not clinch the matter, but they point in the expected direction.

<sup>27</sup> Elites want to Europeanize policies that have continental externalities, including currency, foreign policy, third world aid, immigration, environment, and defense. Public preferences, on the other hand, are detached from such concerns (Hooghe 2003; Vaubel 1994).

acrimonious populist nationalisms in Europe or a unifying populist nationalism that will deepen European international and military cooperation. If the latter, it is most likely to take place in a subset of European countries that are willing to shed national sovereignty for a common purpose.

The topic demands its own paper (and different authors), but we can make one observation based on the positioning of national political parties. As we have observed, new populist *Tan* parties have mobilized national identity in Europe. We call them nationalist, but their delineation of the favored ingroup that needs to be defended against outgroup pressures is surprisingly variable. In its recent electoral manifestos, the Vlaams Blok (now the Vlaams Belang) is, as we noted, vociferously anti-EU on the grounds that European integration is threatening the Flemish community by introducing alien influences, alien authority, and most disturbing, alien voters. But the party also calls for a **stronger** EU-wide commitment on military defense to resist American hegemony.

Finally, and crucially, speculation about the future must take into account the strategic options of ruling elites. The political pressures we have identified are, in part, manipulable. Institutions can be designed to minimize public pressures. Elites may insulate European institutions from party competition and public opinion by delegating policy to functionally specific jurisdictions oriented to problem solving. Elsewhere, we describe these as type 2 jurisdictions (Hooghe and Marks 2003), set up to solve particular policy problems, such as managing a public good or bad, or setting a technical standard. Examples include independent European agencies, of which there are currently more than a dozen, for, among others things, aviation, drug addiction, the environment, food safety, maritime safety, medical product evaluation, satellites, training, work safety and health, and vocational training.

Such jurisdictions attenuate the link between identity and governance. They are flexible with respect to territorial coverage, and generally deal with problems that are amenable to pareto optimal solutions. Instead of encompassing territorial communities, type 2 jurisdictions are comprised of individuals who merely share some geographical or functional space, for example, as machinery exporters, part-time workers, medicine consumers, or shippers. Membership in such functional communities is *extrinsic*; it encompasses merely one aspect of an individual's identity, and an individual, no matter where he or she is located, can be a member of several. There is no logical limit to the number of purpose-driven jurisdictions. Such jurisdictions usually make decisions that are beneath the horizon of electoral competition, and where not, they are insulated from public pressure.

There is a second way in which ruling party elites could lower the heat on European integration – by avoiding the kind of behaviors that ignite referenda. They could do this by a) making fewer treaties or b) by negotiating treaties that escape referendum treatment. Both possibilities suggest that the institutional form of intergovernmental cooperation – of which the treaty is just one possibility – can be theorized in terms of postfunctionalism. If it makes sense to endogenize referenda in a theory of regional integration, why not treaties? Treaties, like referenda, are instruments of purpose. If the referendum could miraculously be eliminated, not a

few political leaders would breathe a sigh of relief. Could not referenda be stemmed by cutting off their source: the grand treaties?<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is one possibility. Another arises from the very human temptation to call the bluff of the skeptics, and raise the stakes in an up-down vote on membership. Would this not split defenders of the national?

**Table 1: EU and non-EU referenda in 15 pre-accession member states since 1960**

	REFERENDA pre-1990		REFERENDA post-1990		EU vs. NON-EU referenda #	
	EU	Non-EU*	EU	Non-EU*	Pre-90	Post-90
AUSTRIA	None	1 ('78)	1 ('94) ( <sup>'00</sup> : govt. cancels referendum after EU lifts sanctions)	None	-	+
BELGIUM	None	None <sup>b</sup>	None	None	0	0
DENMARK	2 ('72 <sup>aa</sup> , '86 <sup>aa</sup> )	8 (last in '78)	4 ('92 <sup>aa</sup> , '93, '98 <sup>aa</sup> , '00 <sup>aa</sup> ), 1 on Constitution postponed	None	-	+
FINLAND	None	None <sup>b</sup>	1 ('94)	None	0	+
FRANCE	1 ('72)	6	2 (92, May '05)	1 (last in '00)	-	+
GERMANY	None	None <sup>b</sup>	None	None	0	0
GREECE	None	2 (last in '74)	None	None	-	0
IRELAND	2 ('72 <sup>a</sup> , '86 <sup>a</sup> )	10	4 ('92 <sup>a</sup> , '98 <sup>a</sup> , '01 <sup>a</sup> , '02 <sup>a</sup> ), 1 on Constitution postponed	12	-	-
ITALY	1 ('89)	18 <sup>c</sup>	None	39 <sup>c</sup>	-	-
LUXEMBOURG	None	None <sup>b</sup>	1 planned on Constitution (10 July '05)	None	0	+
NETHERLANDS	None	None <sup>b</sup>	1 (June '05)	None	0	+
PORTUGAL	None	None	1 on Constitution postponed ('98: constitutional court rejects government referendum question)	2 (last in '98) <sup>c</sup>	0	-
SPAIN	None	3 (last in '86)	1 (March '05)	None	-	+
SWEDEN	None	2 (last in '80)	2 ('94, '03)	None	-	+
UK	1 ('75)	None <sup>b</sup>	1 on Constitution suspended	None	+	+
	7	50	16 (+ 1 planned, 4 postponed)	54		

# The symbols indicate: + : more EU than non-EU referenda ; 0 : no referenda ; - : fewer EU than non-EU referenda in this period.

Notes: \*Since 1960 for all countries; for Greece, Portugal and Spain, we count referenda since the transition to democracy.

<sup>a</sup> Required by constitution/ constitutional court ;<sup>aa</sup> Required because there was insufficient parliamentary support

<sup>b</sup> No constitutional provisions for referenda (Luxembourg has a vague constitutional provision, but no enabling act; the Netherlands passed a law in 2000 authorizing consultative referenda.)

<sup>c</sup> Referenda on international treaties are in principle not allowed.

Sources: Centre d'études et de documentation sur la démocratie directe in Geneva, Switzerland (<http://c2d.unige.ch/>; accessed June 20, 2005); Hug 2002 ; and the European Union's official website of the Constitutional treaty, which closely monitors the ratification process: [http://europa.eu.int/constitution/ratification\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/constitution/ratification_en.htm) (accessed, June 24, 2005).

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