

***DOES RELIGION MATTER?
CHRISTIANITY AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE
EUROPEAN UNION***

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Does religion matter politically in Europe? On the one side, religion itself seems to be in some distress. Church attendance is down, fewer people are opting for church baptisms, weddings, or funerals, and a smaller proportion of the population believe God is important in their lives (Dalton 1996). And, if Ronald Inglehart (1990) is truly prophetic, traditional religion and its values will slowly fade away as older age cohorts are replaced by younger, more secular ones. Nevertheless, religion still plays an important role in European social and political life. Scholars agree that religious cleavages were key factors in the early formation of European political parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Allardt and Rokkan 1970; Rose 1974; Lane and Ersson 1991), and many argue that religion remains the single most important influence over voting behavior (Lijphart 1979; Dalton 1996).

In addition, religiosity accounts for attitudes on a wide range of cultural values, including homosexuality, divorce, contraception and the role of women (Inglehart 1990). Despite these important findings, many scholars follow Inglehart's practice of subordinating religious influences to a much broader shift in cultural values, from "materialist" to "postmaterialist" concerns. Nevertheless, Le Roy and Kellstedt (1995) find that while postmaterialism is valuable in explaining many political attitudes, it is not as powerful as religion in predicting views toward some issues, particularly those relating to the sanctity of life, such as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Thus, while many indicators point to the decline of formal religion in Europe, strong evidence also suggests that it continues to shape attitudes and behavior.

Does religion affect attitudes toward the European Union (EU)? The literature reveals almost no studies on this question and few insights. Although we understand a good deal about the general structure of public attitudes toward the EU, we know less about the factors creating that structure. It is clear, for instance, that public support for integration is very high and quite stable in the original six member countries (Benelux, France, Germany, and Italy) and in Spain and Portugal, but other members—particularly Britain, Denmark, and Sweden—exhibit less support (Inglehart 1977, 1990; Reif and Inglehart 1991; Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren 1994). We also know that backing for the EU comes from the vast political center, while the far left and right and the occasional national farm sector oppose integration (Inglehart 1977; Nelsen and Fraser 1995). And we know that women in Nordic countries, at least, oppose integration (Laatikainen 1996). But we understand remarkably little about why particular individuals favor or oppose the EU. Eichenberg and Dalton (1993) have tried to explain support for European integration over time and between countries, concluding that a combination of domestic and international factors (e.g., inflation, direction of trade, East-West conflict, and national tradition) explain aggregate national opinion on integration. What they do not explain is why *individuals* take the stances they do.

Other studies provide some added insight. At the individual level, knowledge of politics and EU institutions (cognitive mobilization) increases the likelihood of support (Inglehart 1977; Niedermayer 1991; Caldeira and Gibson 1995), as does a postmaterialist orientation (Inglehart 1977). But only one study has considered the impact of religiosity. Mac Iver (1989), using *Euro-Barometer 19* (1983) data, examined the impact of religious politicization—"the existence (or nonexistence) of a conscious link between religious beliefs and political views within the belief system of an individual" (p. 112)—and support for the EU [then the European Community (EC)]. She found that "individuals who claim that their religious beliefs play a role in their political

preferences are significantly more likely than their secular neighbors to demonstrate high support for the EC in France, Belgium, Italy, Great Britain, and Greece” (p. 121). She explained this result by pointing to the “strong emphasis in Christian social teaching on the transnational character of the Christian community and the danger of destructive nationalism that divides Christians from one another” (p. 121). But her analysis ran into trouble in Northern Ireland where religiously politicized individuals strongly *opposed* the EC. Once again she identified religious belief as a possible explanation, citing the Ulster Unionist Ian Paisley’s opposition to integration with a *Roman Catholic* EC. Mac Iver raised the possibility that religious tradition (i.e., Catholic vs. Protestant) may affect attitudes toward the EC, but her data set did not have the denominational variable needed to test this hypothesis.

Mac Iver’s study leads us to believe that religion may be important to individual attitudes toward integration, adding power to analyses focusing on ideology, political mobilization, and demographic factors. How important is religion in this mix? Can a systematic explanation for attitudes be developed? This study addresses these questions. We begin with a discussion of how we might expect religion to affect attitudes toward integration. Next, we turn to a multivariate examination of religious factors and other variables that have been credited with influencing attitudes toward integration. Then we test these same hypotheses in individual member states. Finally, we close with some observations on the role of religion in shaping European opinion and suggest some lines for further research.

Catholic Internationalism versus Protestant Nationalism?

Mac Iver is right to stress the “transnational character” of Christian social teaching. Jesus of Nazareth offered access to God’s kingdom to a Greek woman (Mark 7), a Roman centurion (Matthew 8), and a Samaritan adulteress (John 4). And Paul taught that in the church of Jesus Christ there was neither Jew nor Greek (Col. 3:11). Various Christian traditions, however, have applied this teaching differently. Roman Catholicism, drawing on the experience and ideology of the High Middle Ages, has always emphasized the unity of Christendom under the Pope’s spiritual (and in the past, temporal) leadership. Modern popes have abandoned any notions of a united Europe under their own control, but have strongly supported secular efforts to unite Europe. And Catholicism’s historic influence on the EU goes even further. Indeed, the origins of the European project after World War II emanated from the minds of several committed Catholic planners and found its strongest constituency among Christian Democratic politicians. Like Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy is ecumenical and international, with a transnational spiritual authority residing in its patriarchs, especially the one in Istanbul.

Protestant Christianity, on the other hand, has been far less enamored of internationalist schemes. The religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries forced Protestants not only to defend themselves against Catholic religious hegemony, but also against Catholic political domination. As a result Protestants often clung for survival to princes who could guarantee their safety. The international system of nation states that emerged from the wars of religion ensured Protestantism’s survival on a predominantly Catholic continent. Thus Protestants have been less visible and less enthusiastic supporters of European integration than Roman Catholics have. Nevertheless, in principle the churches emerging from the Reformation—whether Anglican,

Lutheran or Reformed--still retained an important internationalist element, rooted in their existence in several states and their transnational lines of communication. All of this nurtured the sometimes flickering candle of Christian universalism. And, one might argue, the lessons of World War II about the dangers of nationalism were learned especially well by many Protestant communions.

Do these religious orientations affect public attitudes toward integration? If so, we would expect two clear tendencies: 1) given the more explicit internationalism and the historic experiences of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions, members of these traditions should support the EU more than Protestants do, and 2) insofar as participation in a religious tradition produces a natural identification with a larger community than the nation state, "religious" Europeans should support the EU more than "secular" Europeans (confirming Mac Iver's findings). In fact, we see both results, with some important national qualifications.

*Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Integration:
Multivariate Analysis of the Pooled Sample*

Data and Methods.

We are fortunate to have access to a very rich source of attitudes on European integration, the European Communities Studies, 1970-1992 Cumulative File, compiled by Inglehart, Reif, and Melich (1994). These merge three European Communities Studies (1970-1973) with biannual Euro-Barometers from 1974 to 1992. Attitudinal, socio-demographic, and analysis items were included if they were asked in at least four surveys. Given the time period, twelve countries of the European Union (plus Northern Ireland) are represented. The total number of unweighted cases is 452,188. We have weighted the sample according to national populations to approximate the "citizenry" of a united Europe, but have used the unweighted data for our individual country analyses below.

Our dependent variable is attitude toward the European Union. Operationalizing the variable required some experimentation. The Cumulative File contains six questions tapping European attitudes toward integration, ranging from an item on whether EU membership is a good thing to another on whether a member of the European Parliament should give priority to European interests or national concerns. A preliminary factor analysis reveals that the questions tap a single attitudinal dimension: support for integration. Unfortunately, only about 5,500 respondents in the entire data set were asked all the questions, so we use an additive index consisting of just two questions: "Is EC membership a good thing," and "Are you for or against European unification?" We defend this strategy on three grounds. First, these two questions address most directly the existence of support or opposition to the EU. Second, these items were the most-frequently asked in the surveys, maximizing both the scale's variance over time and across nations and the number of cases for analysis. Third, these two items loaded most strongly on the exploratory factor analysis of all six questions. The alpha coefficient of reliability for this two-item index is .68. For ease of presentation, we have recoded the scores to run from 1 (strongest support) to 9 (strongest opposition).

The scale appears to tap nicely attitudes toward integration, confirming that support for the European Union is strong and widespread. As one might expect, that support is highest in the "sunbelt" states of Portugal and Italy (mean score= 2.16), followed closely by Luxembourg (2.31) and Spain (2.33). Opinion is also overwhelmingly favorable in several other original member states, but with slightly more dissent: the Netherlands (2.42), Belgium (2.52), France (2.69), and Germany (2.70). Among the more recent entrants, opinion is slightly more critical in Greece (2.88) and Ireland (2.93), but opposition mounts notably in Northern Ireland (3.82), the United Kingdom (3.98), and, finally, Denmark (4.52). Thus, although there is only a modest level of disagreement about the desirability of the European Union among its "citizenry," the variation is considerably greater in a few member states. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that we are attempting to explain fairly modest amounts of variance in our dependent variable.

Our primary focus, of course, is on how religion shapes support for integration. For a strong test of our expectations, however, we must incorporate other variables that have been found to influence opinion on the EU. Here we organize our independent variables in four broad categories: religious, ideological, political engagement, and socio-demographic. Let us say a few words about each before moving to our multivariate analysis.

Religious Variables. Until recently, social scientists have neglected the influence of religion on contemporary politics in the Western world, in part because of their notion that religion was disappearing as a social force, and in part because they lacked personal familiarity with and interest in religion itself. Although political scientists are now reexamining the role of religion, their efforts to develop better religious measures are too recent to benefit the secondary analyst of historical data. Unfortunately, religious measures available in the Cumulative File are quite crude and often difficult to use. Nevertheless, we can tease out enough information to construct indicators of two important religious variables: religious tradition and religious commitment.

The religious tradition variable includes seven categories: "Roman Catholic," "Protestant-established," "Reformed," "Non-Conformist Free," "Other," "None," and "Orthodox." Careful examination of the national distributions reveals a number of problems with this code, which obviously is an amalgam of even simpler codes used in various national surveys. The first problem is the inability to differentiate among specific Protestant denominations; not only are the "established" Protestant churches different in various countries, but it is evident that many minority Protestant believers are included in the "other" category, which bulks large in places like Northern Ireland and the Netherlands. And the "Reformed" and "Free Church" categories were not used in the most surveys (including those with the other independent variables), so we can not make use of them in the multivariate analysis. Thus, we used a radically simplified measure of religious tradition with four variables: Catholic/Orthodox, Protestant, Sectarian/Other, and None. Nevertheless, we will comment on some bivariate findings for Reformed and Free Church respondents where appropriate.

Our second religious variable, religious commitment, is tapped by two measures in the data set: church attendance and importance of religion. Church attendance is widely--and correctly--used as an indicator of commitment (Wald, Kellstedt, and Legee 1993). Although the four-point scale available here is not as differentiated as those now used in American survey research, it is

adequate. Respondents were asked if they attended church "several times per week," "once per week," "a few times per year," or if they never attend (or have no religious preference). Frequency of attendance varies greatly across EU members, of course, ranging from Ireland, where 87.3% go to church once a week or more, to Denmark, where only 4.8% claim to attend that often.

The Cumulative File also contains another religious variable intended to tap religious commitment: the importance of religion in an individual's life. Such variables have often proven useful in surveys, especially in conjunction with other items on commitment (Guth and Green 1993), but we faced several difficulties incorporating this indicator in our analysis. First, the question was asked in two different formats. In 1976, 1977, 1979, and 1986, respondents were asked the following question: "Do you personally feel, irrespective of how often you go to church, that your religion is of great importance, some importance, or only of little importance in your life? From 1989 to 1992, Euro-Barometers asked this question: "Whether you do or don't follow religious practices, would you say that you are (1) Religious; (2) Not religious; (3) An agnostic; (4) An atheist. Thus, these items are not directly comparable. Although responses to both questions correlate with our other measure of religious commitment, church attendance, the former item has a much stronger relationship. After considerable analysis, we decided on grounds of both face and external validity to create a two-category "religious/nonreligious" measure by assigning the "very" and "somewhat important" responses to the first item as "religious," along with the first responses to the 1989-1992 query. Though this dichotomous measure is much cruder than we would like (the religious importance question in the early surveys is much more powerful), it does allow us to incorporate a second measure of religious commitment for a large number of respondents.

Ideology. One of the fundamental objectives of European Union has been to diminish national identifications and partisan rivalries within and between member states. Political cleavages nevertheless persist, and have made the integration process much more interesting for participants and observers. The Maastricht treaty, which established the EU, was ratified by all parties, but not before revealing deep divisions in Denmark, France, and Ireland. What ideological and political factors have influenced opinion toward regional integration? We have argued elsewhere that opposition to integration particularly arises from a "red-green-brown" coalition (Nelsen and Fraser 1995). Leftist parties and groups tend to be the strongest opponents to integration, arguing that construction of a new architecture for Europe will weaken the carefully constructed edifice of the welfare state, as well as preserve an economic system erected on the backs of the working class, the environment, or both. On the other end of the spectrum, the nationalist right espouses authoritarian, anti-immigrant, nationalistic positions that make any reduction in the significance of borders unacceptable. Some other conservative parties and groups argue that integration poses a significant threat to national sovereignty.

We hypothesize, then, that ideology is related to preferences on integration, and that, all things being equal, the greatest support will come from the ideological center. Put another way, we expect that the left and right will manifest the least support. Our data set contains responses to a question asking respondents to place themselves on a ten-point ideological spectrum, with 1 indicating the extreme left, and 10, the extreme right. Given our expectations on the impact of

ideology, we could not use this measure in its original form. We created two new measures of left and right ideologies, respectively, with 0 as “non-left” (or “non-right”) and degrees of ideology from 1 to 5 (“extreme” left or right).

There is another important perspective on ideology which must be incorporated into our analysis. Ronald Inglehart’s sustained and careful analysis of Western European publics has led him to conclude that long-term shifts in values constitute a “silent revolution” in European politics. Central to his argument is the concept of postmaterialism, a refinement of Maslow’s hierarchy of values, which holds that as individuals satisfy “lower-order” materialist goals of sustenance and security, these objectives are replaced with new, “higher-order” values. These goals reflect a desire to gain greater awareness of one’s self and how one is connected to the broader world. Inglehart has found that those holding postmaterialist values tend to be younger, better educated, more secular, more leftist, and, interestingly, more dissatisfied with the state of social and political life.

From this perspective of changing value systems, support for the European Union should be positively associated with postmaterialism. Implicit in this orientation, in our view, is a corollary that as the revolution in values continues, the role of religion in shaping orientations toward European integration will diminish. That is, if we include both sets of indicators in a multivariate analysis, the expectation is that postmaterialism will mute the explanatory effect of religious tradition and commitment. Here we used the Cumulative File indicator of postmaterialism, constructed from two questions asking a respondent’s assessment of the two most important national goals.

Political Engagement. Many scholars have argued that political engagement is an important feature of mass politics. The politically engaged often differ in significant ways from those isolated from, or hostile to political life (Zaller 1992). Here we use two measures of political engagement. The first is a two-item scale tapping frequency of political discussion and persuasion efforts. Those who talk about politics and try to persuade others on candidates and issues not only constitute an “attentive public” for decision-makers, but also have distinctive positions on important national issues.

Another indicator of political engagement is strength of partisanship. The intensity of involvement with a political organization is a reflection of a multifaceted evaluation of the utility of supporting one party over another. One presumably supports a party out of agreement with its policies, programs, and underlying values. Our partisanship item classifies individuals on the basis of involvement with a party: (1) very involved, (2) fairly involved, (3) merely a sympathizer, and, (4) no partisan affinities. As most major European political parties support integration, respondents with the strongest partisanship should approve of integration more than those with little or no partisan affinity.

Socio-demographic Factors. Other observers have suggested that socio-demographic factors such as income, subjective social class, education, gender and age also contribute to more favorable attitudes toward European integration. As a result, our expectations on these factors are fairly clear. Affluent respondents (and those with subjectively “higher” class status) should

support integration more fervently than those of modest means (and “lower” status). Similarly, the better-educated should also provide more enthusiastic support for the European Union. We also expect a “gender gap,” with women tending to be less supportive of integration than men, along with older citizens, who will be more nationalistic and less pro-integration than younger Europeans. Of course, several of these variables are correlated with other variables in the analysis, so we need to sort them out in a multivariate analysis.

Findings

A preliminary bivariate analysis using the entire data set revealed considerable support for our predictions, so we included all the variables in a multivariate analysis (OLS). Given the absence of particular items in one or more surveys, this procedure reduced the sample to a much smaller, but still massive pool (N= 34,512). Nevertheless, each country was still represented with thousands of actual respondents. Table 1 reports the results of our analysis for the pooled sample, with the bivariate Pearson correlations [*r*] between each variable and the integration scale (based on the final data set, not the entire sample) and the standardized regression coefficient [*b*] from an OLS analysis.

[Table 1 about here]

The results are quite straightforward. Religious tradition demonstrates the expected relationships, at both the bivariate and multivariate levels: Catholics and Orthodox respondents are most positive about integration, while Protestants are less enthusiastic, although this tendency almost washes out in the multivariate results. Both sectarian and secular groups are less favorable toward the European Community. Although “Reformed” and “Free Church” respondents are not included in the reduced pool, an inspection of the entire sample reveals that they are much less enamored of the EU than even Established Protestant church identifiers are. Thus, there appears to be a religious continuum from the most “universalistic” churches to the most “particularistic,” with the former favoring the Community and the latter much less enthusiastic.

Religious commitment also works as we anticipated. Simply put, as church attendance and religious salience rises, so does support for European integration. Inspection of the data reveals that this relationship holds among almost all religious traditions: Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, and Free Church alike. Although the traditions differ in their level of support for the EU, within each tradition churchgoers are more pro-integration. Only in the “Other” category does church attendance and religious salience push respondents in the opposite direction, so that the most active believers are most critical of the European Union. This relationship is confirmed in the regression analysis by the significant interaction term for this phenomenon. On the whole, however, religious engagement is most conducive to an internationalist perspective.

What about ideology and values? Here our expectations are only partially confirmed: at the bivariate level the right is more critical of Europe while the left is slightly more supportive, but the multivariate results diverge somewhat. The impact of rightist ideology increases when everything else is controlled, while the leftist ideology variable actually switches signs to become slightly predictive of less support for integration. As we shall see below, these aggregate figures conceal

massive differences in the impact of ideology from country to country. Postmaterialism performs more predictably, although at levels which might disappoint Ronald Inglehart. Postmaterialists are slightly more friendly toward integration than are materialists, but when all other factors are taken into account, the relationship is not very strong, falling far short of the impact of religious tradition, and weaker than either church attendance or religious salience. Postmaterialism, as we will see, has more impact among the publics of a few member states, but is not a powerful factor anywhere. Political engagement, however, is more of a rival for its religious analog, religious commitment. High levels of political discussion and, to a lesser extent, strong partisanship, are both conducive to more favorable orientations toward political integration.

Finally, the social and demographic variables also help us understand public attitudes on the European Union. Social class identification remains a potent explanation for attitudes, with middle- and upper-middle class respondents much more positive about integration than their working-class counterparts. Higher education is also conducive to Europeanist perspectives, but income retains only a modest effect when everything else is taken into account. As anticipated, men are more supportive of the EU, both in the bivariate and multivariate analysis. Age, on the other hand, drops out when the effects of education are taken into account. Older citizens are less supportive of integration primarily because of their lower levels of education. All the variables together explain more than seven percent of the modest variance in opinion.

Thus, we find confirmation for many of the theoretical strands explaining support for the emerging European Union. Nevertheless, it is fascinating that even at the end of the twentieth century, as at its beginning, religion and class (and class ideology) are still formative factors in European political attitudes (cf. Lipset and Rokkan 1967). And these factors are truly cross-cutting, at least when it comes to attitudes toward the integration process. As a result, religion serves to soften the resistance of opposition groups to the emerging European entity. If, for example, one looks at church attendees among the natural Euro-skeptics, one finds that in almost every conceivable opposition group, the religious faithful are much *less* opposed to Europe than their non-religious counterparts. Hence, church-going leftists (and rightists), working-class and trade union members, rural residents, and the poorly educated are all considerably warmer toward a transnational community than are those who share the same traits, but are not religious.

Country Analysis: Qualifying the Big Picture

If the European Union were a nation state, the previous analysis would be sufficient to explain the factors influencing attitudes toward integration. But, of course, it is not. The religious and political history of each country represented in the data set may well produce distinct configurations of factors influencing attitudes. In Table 2 we report the results of a replication of the analysis in the pooled sample for respondents from each nation represented in the data set, with the exception of Luxembourg. The table illustrates the considerable differences in the way religious, political, and socio-demographic factors influence support for the EU in each member state. There is much diversity in the Table and the interested reader is invited to peruse the results at leisure and in detail, but we will summarize some general patterns apparent in the data.

[Table 2 about here]

First, note that in the four religiously divided states—Northern Ireland, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands—Catholicism is a strong factor influencing support for the European Union, while the influence of Protestant affiliation varies, from strongly positive in Germany and, to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom, to quite negative in Northern Ireland, with little effect at all in the Netherlands. Sectarian groups are also strongly negative in Great Britain and the Netherlands, although the latter coefficient barely misses statistical significance. In Germany, in contrast, the “other” groups support the European Union. Remember, the “none” category is the excluded reference group, so in most of these countries those with no religious affiliation are generally more negative about integration.

In these four nations, religious commitment has mixed effects. As Mac Iver might predict, in Northern Ireland frequent attendance actually predicts less support for integration, as it does in the Netherlands. In Germany, however, frequent attendees are significantly more integrationist when everything is taken into account. Our other measure of religious commitment works more consistently: in all four countries the subjectively religious are more supportive of the EU, but only in Germany does the coefficient achieve statistical significance. In addition, in Great Britain sectarian attendees are much less likely to back integration. Political ideology also provides some help in explaining attitudes: in all four countries the extreme right is more critical of the European project, joined by the extreme left only in the Netherlands. Postmaterialism also provides a net boost to support for the EU in all but Northern Ireland.

In the overwhelmingly Catholic countries of Italy, Belgium, France, and Ireland, the religious pattern is very simple. Given their religious homogeneity, it is not surprising that religious tradition, which varies little statistically, has no predictive power. Instead, it is church attendance that really matters, with faithful church-goers consistently more pro-Europe. The coefficients for religious salience once again run in the right direction, but are small and not statistically significant once attendance is taken into account. The ideological variables are also fairly consistent: in all four countries both far right and far left ideology predicts less support, although the coefficients miss significance for the right in Ireland and the left in France. Postmaterialism again has the predicted effects, except in Ireland.

A third pattern emerges in the final bloc of nations in the table. In the religiously monolithic states of Denmark, Greece, Spain, and Portugal the tradition and attendance variables have only modest and somewhat inconsistent results. True, in Spain Catholics are distinctly more pro-Union than secular respondents, as predicted, and in both Denmark and Greece the subjectively religious are somewhat more supportive of the European Union, but church attendance also has a slight parochializing effect in Portugal. The powerful influences on attitudes in these states are ideological, but the pattern varies: the right is *more* supportive of integration in Denmark and Greece, but *less* supportive in Spain and Portugal. On the other hand, the left is a powerful opposing force in Denmark and Greece, less so in Portugal, and not at all in Spain.

The influence of other variables can be more briefly summarized: both the political engagement variables provide modest assistance in explaining attitudes toward integration in most countries, with the coefficients always in the expected direction and usually reaching statistical significance. Frequency of political discussion usually generates more support for the EU than

strength of partisanship, perhaps representing in part the variable that other scholars have labeled "cognitive mobilization." Similarly, the findings for the socio-demographic variables we discovered in the pooled sample are also present in almost all the national samples: longer education leads to more support for the EU, as does higher subjective class identification, and income, although the latter measure of class usually washes out when education and subjective class standing are taken into account. Men are usually more supportive, but their net advantage is great only in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark and Greece. Age, on the other hand, is significant only in two countries, France and Ireland, and then in opposite directions.

Conclusions and Implications

What can we conclude about the role of religion in shaping attitudes about the European Union? First, it is evident that religious tradition does influence such attitudes, and in ways that are fairly consistent with our characterization of different traditions from the most internationalist or universalistic to the most nationalist or particularistic. Roman Catholics and Orthodox believers are most supportive of the Union, while Protestants as a category are usually slightly less supportive than purely secular citizens, although their position often depends on national circumstances. Sectarian Protestants and other religious minorities tend to be the least fond of the European Union, although our examination of this tendency is limited by the inadequate identification of religious groups in the Cumulative File.

Although religious tradition is a powerful influence on attitudes, religious commitment also plays a solid role. In both Catholic/Orthodox and most Protestant denominations, church attendance has "internationalizing" tendencies, making attendees more sympathetic to integration projects. Only among sectarian Protestants and other minority religious groups does the opposite effect appear, with observant members least pro-Union. Subjective religiosity, in the form of our religious salience measure, also has a consistent positive impact on support for the EU, despite the crudeness of the measure. Indeed, our results suggest that the use of more sophisticated religious measures in the Euro-Barometers, comparable to those now in use in the American National Election Studies, would reveal even more striking degrees of religious influence over political attitudes than those examined here.

But religion works in concert with other influences, which vary from nation to nation. As the classic works on European party development and voting behavior would predict, social class, however measured, has a strong impact on attitudes toward integration. Subjective social class identification and education are usually the most powerful indicators, followed at some distance by income. Almost invariably the better-off and better-educated are friendlier to the European enterprise.

Both religion and social class have contributed to the ideological divisions in most European countries and those ideological formations have their own independent impact, with the far right and the far left both contributing to the dissent from pro-integration policies. The nationalist right tends to be somewhat more consistent across countries as dissenters from the European enterprise, but the left frequently offers resistance, especially in nations recently joining the EU.

Countering these ideological effects is the impact of political engagement, whether in political discussion or in party politics, which everywhere moves citizens toward a greater appreciation of the internationalist effort.

What do our findings portend for the future of the European Union? If, indeed, religion is slowly dying in Europe (and not all sociologists of religion accept this argument), one of the prime sources of Europeanist sentiment may be gradually drying up. If this is the case, what will replace it? As we have already seen, postmaterialist values seem not to have much power as a motivating political force, but no other dominant value system has appeared on the political horizon. We might also predict, on the basis of our findings, some effects of the recent expansion of the EU. For example, in the long run Catholic Austria is more likely to bring a cooperative spirit to collective decision-making than predominantly Protestant (or really secular) nations such as Sweden and Finland. Beyond the prospects for consolidating the current European Union, our findings also have implications for new members. Among the former Soviet bloc nations, Poland might appear on fundamental value grounds to be more compatible with the European Union than more resolutely secular nations such as the Czech Republic or even Hungary, with its Reformed Protestant minority. Above all, our results demonstrate that the European Union's success depends in part on the underlying values and worldviews shared by its citizens, and not just on its economic successes and failures.

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Table 1
 Influences on Approval of the European Union
 Religion, Ideology, Politics, and Socioeconomic Variables
 Correlation and Regression Analysis
 (N=34,512)

| | <i>r</i> | <i>b</i> |
|---|--------------|----------|
| <i>Religious Variables</i> | | |
| Catholic/Orthodox | .15** | .15** |
| Protestant | -.13** | -.02 |
| Sectarian/Other | -.02* | -.05** |
| None | -.06** | .++ |
| Church Attendance | .10** | .06** |
| Importance of Religion | .07** | .04** |
| Sectarian X Attendance | .00 | -.05** |
| <i>Ideological Variables</i> | | |
| Right | -.07** | -.10** |
| Left | .03** | -.02** |
| Postmaterialism | .06** | .03** |
| <i>Political Engagement</i> | | |
| Political Discussion | .12** | .08** |
| Strength of Partisanship | .04** | .03** |
| <i>Social and Demographic Variables</i> | | |
| Subjective Social Class | .14** | .09** |
| Education | .12** | .06** |
| Income | .06** | .02** |
| Male | .05** | .05** |
| Age | -.06** | -.01 |
| | Adj. R^2 = | .072 |

*Coefficient significant at $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

++ Suppressed reference category for regression.

Table 2
 Influences on Approval of the European Union
 Religion, Ideology, Politics, and Socioeconomic Variables
 Regression Analysis by Nation

| | NIR | GER | UK | NET | ITA | BEL | FRA | IRE | DEN | GRE | SPA | POR |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Religious Variables ++</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Catholic/Orthodox | .31** | .16* | .13** | .08* | .02 | .00 | .03 | -.07 | -.01 | .02 | .08** | -.04 |
| Protestant | -.10 | .17* | .11* | .01 | .00 | -.03 | .02 | -.04 | -.03 | .00 | .03 | -.04 |
| Sectarian/Other | .01 | .08 | -.10* | -.04 | .04 | .01 | .00 | .00 | .05 | .00 | .02 | .00 |
| Church Attendance | -.05* | .04* | .02 | -.09** | .07** | .07* | .06* | .06* | .00 | .02 | .02 | -.04* |
| Importance of Religion | .04 | .08** | .03 | .03 | .03 | .04 | .02 | .01 | .05* | .04* | -.01 | .03 |
| Sectarian Attendance | .01 | .07 | -.13* | -.02 | .02 | .01 | -.03 | .02 | .03 | .03 | .01 | .03 |
| <i>Ideological Variables</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Right | -.05 | -.10** | -.10** | -.08* | -.08** | -.11** | -.17** | -.02 | .08** | .08** | -.17** | -.06* |
| Left | -.02 | -.01 | -.02 | -.06* | -.07* | -.10** | -.02 | -.10** | -.26** | -.29** | .02 | -.14** |
| Postmaterialism | -.04 | .06** | .05* | .06* | .05* | .07** | .08* | .00 | -.05** | .02 | .03 | -.01 |
| <i>Political Engagement</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Political Discussion | .07 | .07** | .08** | .06* | .08** | .05* | .07** | .05* | .01 | .04* | .05* | .02 |
| Strength Partisanship | .00 | .04* | .04* | .04 | .04* | .06* | .01 | .03 | .04* | .00 | .05* | .07** |
| <i>Socio-demographic</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education | .18** | .07** | .10** | .06* | .06* | .11** | .11** | .08** | .06** | .02 | .07** | -.01 |
| Subjective Class | .07 | .07** | .07** | .09** | .03 | .04 | .12** | .08** | .17** | .08** | .05* | .04* |
| Income | .10 | .01 | .07** | .04 | .02 | .04 | .03 | .02 | .03 | .02 | .00 | .03 |
| Male | .04 | .00 | .09** | .07* | .02 | .05* | .03 | .06* | .10** | .07** | .02 | .00 |
| Age | .02 | .03 | -.03 | -.03 | -.01 | -.01 | .06* | -.05* | -.03 | .02 | .00 | .02 |
| Adj. R ² = | .12 | .05 | .08 | .06 | .03 | .06 | .09 | .04 | .20 | .15 | .04 | .02 |

*Coefficient significant at p<.05; ** p<.001.

++ Suppressed reference category for regression is "None."